

URGENT & IMPORTANT: PLEASE SEE BELOW
ORAL PQ LEADS TO CONFIRMATION OF JOHN HAYES'
STATEMENT RE THE DUTY

MADE TO DAME RUTH SILVER & PAUL CHUBB on
12.3.2012

AND ISSUED AS PRESS NOTICE 15.3.12

Careers Guidance

8. Damian Hinds (East Hampshire)

(Con): What steps he is taking to ensure universal access to independent and professional careers advice and guidance. [100025]

The Minister for Universities and Science (Mr David Willetts): I congratulate my hon. Friend on his work as chair of the all-party group on social mobility. Social mobility is at the heart of our plans for careers guidance, and I am pleased to confirm that we will publish a document, alongside the launch of the national careers service in April, setting out everything that the Government are doing to ensure that young people and adults have access to information and advice on learning and work, and receive support to move forwards in their lives.

Damian Hinds: I thank my right hon. Friend very much for that answer. It is absolutely true that good information, advice and guidance is essential for social mobility. Will he place a particular focus on disadvantaged youngsters to ensure that their ambitions are not limited, bearing in mind that often the best advice is to "Keep your options open"?

Mr Willetts: That is absolutely correct, and often even the most disadvantaged young people have high ambitions, but they do not know the route to achieve them. That is one of the crucial things that information, advice and guidance can secure, including advice and guidance on the key A-levels that will be needed if they wish to study at university.

Simon Hughes (Bermondsey and Old Southwark) (LD): I thank the Government for the work done so far. May I encourage Ministers to keep pressing so that all youngsters at school have guaranteed face-to-face careers advice and guidance, and all school leavers and older people have access to careers advice and guidance in their local colleges? The Association of Colleges is very keen on schools and colleges being a place where such information can be provided to all in the community, of all ages.

Mr Willetts: I thank my right hon. Friend for his very important work in that area.

The Department for Education will publish statutory guidance for schools very soon, and it will make it clear that schools cannot discharge their duty simply by relying on in-house support or by signposting to a website. My right hon. Friend is absolutely right as well about the importance of face-to-face guidance.