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# **Workforce Recruitment and Retention in the Career Sector**



Author: Kieran Gordon, Executive Director - December 2022

## Key findings

- There is **growing concern among careers service providers about the risks to their profession and longer-term business sustainability** brought about by difficulties faced in recruiting new talent and retaining existing talent.
- A Careers Profession Taskforce needs to be established by the government to **address workforce shortages, unfair pay, and workforce planning** over the next 5 years to stem the flow of Careers Advisers leaving the profession across England. This could inform recruitment and retention strategies and begin to restore England as a world leader in all-age career development support services.
- When compared with general figures for the UK, the **career development sector is facing higher than average turnover**, at 23%, based on the views of individual respondents; employers are more pessimistic placing this at 38%<sup>1</sup>.
- When asked 'Do you feel your organisation is able to pay a salary that reflects the skills, experience and qualifications of your Careers Advisers?' **62.5% of organisations said 'no' and 37.5% said 'yes'**. A review of professional salaries shows a Careers Enterprise Coordinator, funded or part-funded via the Careers and Enterprise Company, can earn up to £45k p.a compared to a professional level 6 /7 qualified Careers Adviser's average pay of circa £27.7k.
- **33% of employers are unable to recruit people with the skill levels required.** Careers England members are losing Level 4 and Level 6 qualified staff to DWP Work Coach positions, which pay better and do not require high level career guidance qualifications.
- **Poor pay and lack of progression or development opportunities are the largest reasons for those leaving the profession.** Low salaries - compared to some enterprise and administrative roles, as well as teaching and other human-centred roles - and the cost of living were cited by many in our surveys. Other home nations are attracting trained and qualified Careers Advisers given salary levels are on average much higher.
- **Progression opportunities for Careers Advisers have reduced** markedly, largely due to successive funding reductions requiring careers service providers to flatten and streamline their management and delivery structures.
- **Careers Advisers' professional development in England has significantly reduced** whilst teachers in schools and colleges being funded by the CEC and trained as Careers Leaders has increased.
- **The stresses created by a payment-based results (PBR) scheme** that places pressure on providers to **prioritise throughput** of customers **rather than the quality of outcomes** for them has driven many Careers Advisers to either transfer to other workplaces (e.g. schools, colleges, locally funded NEET provision) when the opportunity arises or to leave the sector altogether.

We asked Careers England members to identify steps that can be taken to mitigate the risks to the profession in the short to medium term. Solution-focused approaches to solving key challenges are presented in the report.

**In conclusion, the report offers four key recommendations to the Department for Education and central government** that, if adopted, will enable our Careers Companies to begin to fill skills gaps needed to deliver the skilled workforce communities and businesses will rely upon in the coming years. More individuals will also be empowered to invest in their career development on a lifelong basis.

<sup>1</sup> The overall average staff turnover rate in the UK is around 15%–17% and whilst the Education sector is towards the higher end, 16.1%, 8.7% of this is considered to be voluntary rather than structural

# Introduction

In July 2022, Careers England set up a task group to investigate the increasing problems experienced by its members to recruit and retain qualified career development professionals. The group undertook two surveys: i) careers service providers ii) a separate survey of careers professionals currently working for the careers service providers.

## Aim

To gather evidence on the perceived difficulties faced by careers service organisations in recruiting and retaining professionally qualified staff and the perceptions/intentions of trained and qualified careers professionals regarding their future in the sector and with their current employer.

The international qualification standard for careers professionals is regarded to be at a minimum Level 6 or level 7 (Degree equivalent or Masters' qualification), although in England the National Careers Service minimum qualification is set at Level 4<sup>2</sup>.

## Focus

The purpose of the survey was to understand the scale of challenges facing the career development sector in terms of its future workforce capacity and to share knowledge about how to attract and retain careers professionals.

Our aim is to identify solutions and share best practice between careers service provider organisations, which may help to address the existential impacts of workforce decline. Also, we wish to enter into constructive dialogue with Government at a national and local level in an effort to improve the way that careers provision is procured and accounted for, including investment in the development of the workforce.

## Methodology

**Two confidential surveys were conducted by the Career Development Institute (CDI) on behalf of Careers England.**

- The first surveyed Careers England member organisations who are major employers of careers professionals operating across schools, colleges, local authorities, National Careers Service and employment and training providers in England.
- The second surveyed careers professionals and support staff, including those in supervisory positions in the employment of Careers England member organisations, with a total of 299 responses.

The results of the surveys were collated and analysed to produce a single report of the challenges facing the profession and the wider sector. Looking ahead at likely workforce changes a 2-year timeframe was used to gauge levels of satisfaction within the careers sector workforce and in some cases, where difficulties are evident now, a 12-month timeframe has been used to measure the more immediate challenges to careers service employers.

**The findings were discussed with Careers England members, supplementing the free text comments compiled in each of the employee and employer surveys. Careers England has also consulted Unison, the predominant trade union in the sector, to triangulate our findings with those of staff representatives at a national level.**

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean/list-of-qualification-levels>

# Survey Results - Employees/ Careers Adviser Professionals

## Demographics

95% permanent contracts

4% fixed term contracts

- 74% were in full-time employment, the remainder were part-time. No respondents reported being in zero hours or casual employment. Though it is well understood the latter is an increasing trend whereby some schools/MATs only employ a careers adviser during term-time only.
- 80% were in front-line delivery roles, with 13% in management or supervisory and 3% in support roles. Respondents worked across a range of clients and settings: the majority worked across schools, colleges, local NEET programmes and the National Careers Service.
- 55% of respondents work in the North of England, 5% in Yorkshire and Humber region, with 2% in London, 27% in the South East and South West, and the remainder in the Midlands. The geographic spread is indicative only of those organisations who chose to participate in the surveys and not therefore a complete picture of all provision in the country.

## Qualifications

63% qualification level 6 or 7

24% Level 4 career qualification

- 12% were qualified at Level 3, which is assumed to be A level/ T level equivalent or other vocational qualifications, mainly representing those staff in administration roles directly supporting the front-line and front-facing customer 'meet and greet' roles.

## Salary levels

Front-line workers salary levels

range of £21,000 to £32,000

- 43% in £27,000 to £32,000 range
- 41% in the range £21,000 to £26,000
- 4% of respondents are in the £15,000 to £20,000 salary range
- 6% in management roles in the salary range of £33,000 to £40,000
- 4% in senior leader roles who had progressed front-line to professional to senior executive levels in the salary range of £40,000+

## Motivations

Individuals were asked to identify the key drivers in them choosing careers guidance as their career.

- **91% cited altruistic reasons -**
  - » Enjoying working with people (44%)
  - » Helping people overcome barriers in moving to the next stage in their careers (22%)
  - » Helping people achieve their long-term goals (13%)
  - » Addressing social inequality (9%)
  - » Helping people manage through career transitions (3%)
- **7% cited earning an income as a main driver**

On a scale of 1 to 5 individuals were asked to indicate their feelings about working in the careers sector as identified by questions such as -average response rate

- 'I feel proud to work in the career development sector' (4.1)
- 'I feel my work makes a difference to clients/the profession/the economy' (4.1)
- 'I find my work personally rewarding - from a non-financial perspective' (4.1)
- 'I enjoy my work' (4)

On the same scale, the statement:

- 'I find my work stressful' (3.3)
- 'I am paid fairly for the work I do' (2.8)
- 'I feel there are good career prospects with my current employer' (2.9)
- 'I feel valued by my employer' (3.4)

## Likelihood to leave the sector

Individuals were asked to respond to the question 'How likely are you to stop working in career development within the next two years?' (1= 'Not very likely' – 5= 'Extremely likely')

- 23% indicated that they are likely or extremely likely to leave the sector:
  - » 15% = most likely
  - » 8% = extremely likely
- 31% were not very likely to leave
- The remainder were more equivocal being undecided at this point in time or open to the prospect: 28% (3) and 19% (2)

**Reasons cited for considering leaving the sector were:**

- 49% due to 'poor pay'
- 37% due to 'poor progression or development opportunities'
- 31% due to retirement
- 29% due to 'stress or health related issues related to the job'<sup>3</sup>

## Likelihood to leave the employer

In answer to the question: 'How likely are you to leave your current employer within the next two years?' using the same scoring scale: - (1= 'Not very likely' – 5= 'Extremely likely')

- 38% are undecided
- 33% are not likely at all
- 21% are equivocal
- 9% are likely or extremely likely to leave

**Reasons cited for leaving are:**

- 84% 'For better pay and benefits'
- 47% also citing 'To change from the current working culture'
- 42% citing 'For improved working environment'
- 37% citing 'Lack of progression opportunities in my current employer'

<sup>3</sup> In November 2021 the Career Development Institute (CDI) Big Listen Survey produced similar feedback from its members: "The responses highlighted the pride among careers professionals in the value their work adds, yet they feel it is poorly understood and is undervalued by government, employers and the public. 28% of respondents said they were likely to leave within two years, with 40% of those saying it was due to poor pay and 33% looking towards retirement." <https://www.theccdi.net/CDIBigListen>

# Survey Results – Employers

## Demographics

Eight organisations responded – combined they employ a total of 672 careers professionals with at least a level 4 qualification, plus 264 other careers staff including managers. Of their staff, 124 are studying for level 4 or level 6 careers qualifications.

**8 organisations**    **672 level 4 professionals**    **264 career staff**    **124 studying for level 4 or 6**

- 75% of their staff work in schools and colleges
- 75% with young people who are NEET
- 63% in the National Careers Service
- 38% worked in projects with employers (e.g. Corporates)
- 25% on other funded project for adult unemployed

**As indicated in the responses of individual careers staff, many work across disciplines in their respective roles:** 77% of staff are on permanent contracts, 21% on fixed term contracts and 9% working as freelance/associates.

**The careers service organisations reported that their staff worked in or across regions:** 63% in the North; 13% Yorkshire and Humber; 25% East Midlands; 50% SE England; 25% SE England; 13% East of England.

## Salaries

**Careers service organisations reported their salary scales in the range £20,000 to £26,000**

- An average of £23,535 for Trainee Careers Advisers
- An average of £26,100 for Level 4 qualified Careers Advisers
- An average of £27,773 for Level 6/7 careers advisers and managers

When asked **'Do you feel your organisation is able to pay a salary that reflects the skills, experience and qualifications of your careers advisers?'**

- 62.5% said 'no'
- 37.5% said 'yes'

## Levels of employment of Careers Advisers

**We asked employers: 'Are all the careers advisers you employ qualified to the level you would like (e.g. enough at level 6 or 7)?'**

**75% responded 'no' and 25% 'yes'.**

**In the reasons for the responses:**

- 17% could not afford the salary
- 33% are unable to recruit people with the skill levels required
- 17% stated that not enough people apply for the roles
- 17% do not have work to justify that level of qualification
- 15% of staff do not have the ability or interest in gaining higher qualifications

## Staff turnover projections

**We asked the question: 'How many of your careers advisers do you believe are likely to leave in the next two years?' (1 = 'Not very likely' - 5 = 'Extremely likely')**

- 38% most likely (4)
- 12% likely (2)
- 50% unsure (3)

**The reasons cited included:**

- » 'Pay' (88%)
- » 'retirement' (38%)
- » 'dissatisfaction with the work' (38%)
- » 'finding the work too stressful' (38%)
- » 'lack of progression opportunities' (50%)

## Recruitment and Retention

**We asked employers: 'Have you found it easier or harder to recruit careers advisers over the past year?' On a scale of (1 = a lot easier to 5 = a lot harder):**

- 50% indicate that it has been somewhat harder to recruit
- 25% indicated it is a lot harder to recruit
- 25% indicated that it has neither been easier or harder to recruit

**Amongst the reasons for their responses, employers cited:**

- » 'The salaries being offered'
- » 'lack of Level 6 provision to train new Careers Advisers behind those who left during those hardest years of funding cuts, as well as those reaching retirement'
- » 'shortage of qualified staff'
- » 'increased salaries for non-qualified roles'
- » 'not many people have the requisite qualifications'
- » 'number/calibre of applicants'
- » 'competition from other government funded projects'

**We also asked employers: 'Have you found it easier or harder to retain careers advisers over the past year?'. Using the same scales as above responses were:**

- 50% neither easier or harder
- 25% a lot harder to retain staff
- 13% somewhat easier
- 13% somewhat harder.

**Amongst the reasons for their responses, employers cited:**

- » 'Shortage of qualified staff and increased salaries for non-qualified roles in other sectors'
- » 'more opportunity to access better paid alternative employment outside of sector for those that want it'
- » 'higher pay within private sector'
- » 'pay rates not high enough - job satisfaction poor on National Careers Service'

# > Analysis of Results

**The purpose of the survey was to understand the scale of challenges facing the career development sector in terms of its future workforce capacity and to know more about how to attract and retain careers professionals.**

**Taking account of the views of careers professionals and their employers we have been able to identify what the near future holds for the careers sector workforce and how employers and government can respond, within their powers, to address some of the main challenges.**

The responses to the questions asked and the detail provided in free text comments (88% of respondents provided free text views in responses to the key questions) are a rich source of information, which will be considered in more detail by the Task Group as it makes recommendations to the Careers England Board to enable better workforce planning and development.

Careers England will wish to share the main findings with key stakeholders, in particular employer and industry bodies, public policy makers and funders of career development services for young people and adults.

The main headlines from the survey centre on the projected workforce turnover in the next two years, the underlying drivers for this and the level of confidence amongst employers to mitigate this by being able to recruit and retain talent and drive growth in the sector.

## **Workforce Turnover Projections**

- When compared with general figures for the UK, the career development sector is facing higher than average turnover, at 23%, based on the views of individual respondents; employers are more pessimistic placing this at 38%.

The overall average staff turnover rate in the UK is around 15%–17% and whilst the Education sector is towards the higher end, 16.1%, 8.7% of this is considered to be voluntary rather than structural<sup>4</sup>. Looking at the career development sector survey results, whilst slightly less than a third of those that indicated they are likely to leave due to retirement in the next two years, which in itself is a concerning development, the vast majority are likely to leave voluntarily (it is acknowledged that a number of retirements may also be voluntary) rather than for structural reasons. Poor pay and lack of progression or development opportunities are the largest reasons for leaving, a potentially fixable problem from an employer perspective.

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<sup>4</sup>CPD Online College Limited, 21st April 2022



## Pay

Feedback in free text comments from careers professionals placed heavy emphasis on poorer pay relative to teachers whom they equate as professionals on the same qualification and skill level. It was not just the relativity of salaries with other professionals, but also the need for salaries to rise in line with the cost of living that was cited by many as important for them in remaining in the sector. Respondents indicated that many are not being paid “the rate for the job” due to the nature of contracts their employers are working to.

### One respondent stated:

// Pay me a fair wage. CIAG is a degree level career, which is completely undervalued in schools compared to teaching.

### In a similar vein, another said:

// I don't think it is the employer, but as part of the profession I feel that the National Careers Service careers advisers should be paid a higher wage in relation to teaching and nursing staff. If I was still a midwife my annual wage would be £10,000 more.

### Another reflected many of the comments made by others:

// Whilst our terms and conditions are very good, pay remains an issue. My employer has, however, recently invested in me by enrolling me on to the NVQ 6 in Advice & Guidance qualification.

Whether this approach can guarantee the required level of salary for a professional remains to be seen, given the very small differentials (£1,600 on average) between Level 4 and Level 6 qualified staff cited in employer pay scales.

**With 75% of employers reporting that not all careers advisers they employ are qualified to the requisite and preferred level** i.e. Level 6/7 - the main reasons lie in the ability to afford such salaries and the inability therefore to attract suitably qualified candidates. In addition, 88% of employers cite the pay levels they can afford are amongst the main reasons why they expect staff to leave in the next 2 years.

### One employer comment mirrored that of careers professionals:

// The main barrier to better pay is the level of funding (either from Government, local authorities, or schools) that is available to sustain this. It is pretty much impossible to pay more than we do, unless we set up and deliver contracts that are loss making.

It is worth noting that most careers service employers rely on cross-subsidies between contracts to sustain those that are least financially viable. The vast majority of Careers England members are not-for-profit entities; a number are Charities, and many are operating on very fine financial margins.

### One company stated:

// We do not make a profit as such all profit is reinvested into the service. It is difficult to pay staff what we feel they deserve, as we need to ensure we can cover their wages. The Strategic Director does not earn much more than Careers Advisers!... We can't afford to pay what these professionals deserve and should be paid - contract values do not allow this.

## Competition for staff

The situation has become more difficult with the increased competition for staff, including from a raft of public-funded initiatives under the Government's Plan for Jobs programme, including Jobcentre Plus Work Coaches. Perversely, Careers England members are losing Level 4 and Level 6 qualified staff to these positions, which pay better and do not require the level of qualification of the staff making the transition. Careers England members have also reported losing professionally qualified staff to Scotland's Careers Service, Skill Development Scotland, due to salary levels.

- In Scotland, Careers Advisers working for the Government's Skills Development Careers Service average salary is £34,290 pa; these roles require a Level 6/7 professional qualification.
- Jobcentre Plus Work Coaches are employed on salaries of £27,565 to £31,877 pa and do not require a professional career guidance qualification.
- Each of these examples above include access to a Defined Benefit Pension, which most Careers England employers have moved away from on grounds of affordability and risk.
- Careers Enterprise Coordinator roles, sponsored by the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) are in the range: £30,000 -£35,000 in Berkshire; £35,000 -£45,000 (senior Careers Enterprise Coordinator) in Liverpool; Careers Leader post in the range of £ 40,000 to £50,000 in Birmingham. Most of these roles do not require qualifications commensurate with that of professionally trained Careers Advisers.

## Professional Development and Progression

A major barrier to recruitment and retention in the careers sector in England is the lack of development and progression opportunities for individuals. Since 2010, the careers sector has lost several university based postgraduate initial training professional courses. This contributed to reducing the profile and visibility of the profession as a career pathway. Consequently, demand for initial training has dropped and employers are expected to support or fund those that wish to qualify to Level 6 or 7.

In 'Towards a Strong Careers Profession' (2010) an independent report to the Department for Education<sup>5</sup> the Government's Taskforce on the Careers Profession recommended that both Careers Advisers and Careers Educators, where they consider themselves to be careers professionals, must uphold the professional standards and meet other expectations of the careers profession. And, that initial training and CPD should include a focus on labour market information (LMI), information and communications technology (ICT), and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), all of which are crucial to all members of the careers profession in delivering high-quality career guidance; and that, through CPD, there should be opportunities for further development of 'specialisms', leading towards the concept of an Advanced Careers Practitioner. Not all of the recommendations were pursued by Government and the profession still lacks visibility in terms of its professional development pathways and its status relative to similar professions.

Careers service organisations have adapted by undertaking in-house training of new recruits via the QCG (Qualification in Careers Guidance) at Level 4 and Level 6 and latterly via newer emerging higher apprenticeship routes. The reality is that this route to training requires a level of investment that is not recognised in many funding streams, including the National Careers Service, in turn placing a greater strain on careers service providers. Funding of initial qualifications draw on the larger part of employers' professional development and training budgets and this has a concomitant impact on CPD programmes for existing professional (and other) staff, who are required to maintain competencies and up-to-date careers and labour market information.

<sup>5</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/175406/CPTF\\_-\\_External\\_Report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175406/CPTF_-_External_Report.pdf)

- “ The option to do CPD, currently it is encouraged by my employer. But finding time to actually do it along my role and responsibility is extremely difficult
- “ For me, I need to feel that there is progression within my role, that I can gain high-level roles or have the opportunities to work in other departments linked to Careers Development
- “ Provide me with opportunities to gain required qualifications to move onto other contracts within the organisation which requires these qualifications as essential
- “ More support, better training, being more realistic about how much time the administrative parts of the job take, so that life balance doesn't get out of kilter... Improvement in pay...Freedom to explore new ideas and events to enhance knowledge... being allowed to grow knowledge.

The lack of access to CPD severely limits the ability of those who aspire to advance in their profession. In addition, progression opportunities have reduced markedly, largely due to successive funding reductions requiring careers service providers to flatten their delivery and management structures. This has an impact on the number of advancement opportunities for professionals, as well as the ability of providers to guarantee the highest levels of quality through supervision and professional leadership from the top.

By its very nature the careers profession, as with other professions, should offer development and progression opportunities to its workforce. Careers Advisers' professional development in England has significantly reduced whilst teachers in schools and colleges being funded by the CEC and trained as Careers Leaders has increased. Career development is the very essence of the profession's mission for the people it serves, young people and adults seeking advancement in their careers, so too should it be for those who assist people in their career paths. Any employee who is on the UK Register of Career Development Professionals will also be required to complete at least 25 hours of CPD per year in order to maintain their registered status. Thus, when these opportunities are denied or are in short supply it has the impact of driving skilled people away from the profession.

### Health at Work

Another significant factor is stress or health related issues to the job, which should be a major source of concern for employers and the wider economy and ought to be addressed as a matter of priority in the way that work is organised and commissioned.

- 29% identified this as a significant factor in leaving the profession
- 4% cited stress or health related issues not related to the job.

- “ I am currently working with a caseload of 9 schools and delivering 3/4 contracts in each. 5 of these schools are special schools or alternative provisions and are much more time intensive. We desperately need to be less heavily caseloaded and employ more career development consultants.
- “ Contracts with impossible targets, high caseloads, over promising to clients the support that can be offered.

// Less pressure to hit targets and a better balance between offering the correct support to each participant at the right time rather than just putting people into work, knowing they will not sustain just to keep within (sometimes) unrealistic targets. More onus on quality of support and less on stats

// If the funding was better i.e. the company is able to draw more funds down for each client so that we could see less people but have more time to work with each client - at the moment it is 100 miles an hour all day every day and still only scratching the surface

// I enjoy progressing clients and spending quality time with them, but feel under constant pressure to reach targets, admin/database and often having to work in a troubleshooting manner (sic).

Many of the comments made by careers professionals referring to workplace stress refer to the outcomes-based target regime, which is described as putting figures before people and thereby creating additional pressures and stress for Advisers. Advisers generally feel that more time is needed with many clients (National Careers Service customers) in order to effectively help them make decisions that are suited to their needs and abilities and therefore make successful transitions into employment or training.

#### **One careers professional illustrated this frustration in saying:**

// I'm not likely to leave in the next 2 years, however, to REDUCE the likelihood it wouldn't be my employer but the contract – payment by results – leads to stress and worry of meeting challenging targets.

#### **Others said:**

// Less pressure to hit targets and a better balance between offering the correct support to each participant at the right time rather than just putting people into work, knowing they will not sustain just to keep within (sometimes) unrealistic targets. More onus on quality of support and less on stats

// Less focus within the National Careers Service contract on targeted outcomes and more focus on quality CIAG

// For the contract to allow a more client centred approach rather than being target driven - less need for paperwork and forms, digital options would mean less admin required during client appointment time.

// Better funding for contracts, less PBR contracts - enables employers to be properly resourced at every level

There is a recognition of the need to measure success and impact of publicly funded provision, however, the stresses created by a payment-based results (PBR) scheme that relies on throughput of customers rather than quality of outcomes has driven many careers advisers to either transfer to other workplaces (e.g. schools, colleges, locally funded NEET provision) when the opportunity arises or to leave the sector altogether.

Employers testify to the higher rates of turnover from National Careers Service contracted work compared with other contracts they manage - this includes staff seeking to transfer to alternative roles internally. A fundamental issue is a belief that professionals should have the flexibility to innovate, to manage client interactions by having the ability to respond to identified needs with time and care as well as follow up advice with clients.

# ➤ Conclusion and Recommendations

**There is growing concern among careers service providers about the risks to their profession brought about by the difficulties faced in recruiting new talent and retaining existing talent.**

Careers England wishes to share this evidence with all employers in the sector and with the principal funders of careers provision, which typically include the National Careers Service, contracts with individual schools where these are in place, local authority NEET provision, Careers Enterprise Company contracts via Local Enterprise Partnerships and EU structural fund programmes. The public sector austerity measures in recent years affecting many of these funding streams has in turn reduced funding to providers. In addition, where careers service providers have been able to attract EU funding to underpin or replace lost local authority investment in programmes of support for young people who are NEET and adults who are unemployed, are now facing greater uncertainty as these Funds disappear as a consequence of Brexit.

We asked Careers England members to identify steps that can be taken to mitigate the risks to the profession in the short to medium term. Our aim is to identify solutions and share best practice between careers service provider organisations, which may help to address the existential impacts of workforce decline. Also, we wish to enter into constructive dialogue with Government at a national and local level in an effort to improve the way that careers provision is procured and accounted for, including investment in the development of the workforce now and in the future.

**Some of the actions being taken as stated by employers are:**

- Broadening the talent pool to reach a wider audience, greater visibility at recruitment events, looking at how we can support our staff/line managers more from the start of their careers with us.
- Greater visibility of BAME people in our recruitment activities, with more employers working towards Investors in Diversity, to send out positive messages to potential job applicants.
- Increased investment in training, including CEIAG qualifications
- Initiating apprenticeship programmes and pathways to careers professional training.
- Reviewing employee benefits packages – increasing starting salaries and annual leave; considering reducing the working week and introducing other flexibilities.
- We have recently taken steps to address this issue as it had been previously identified as a risk. We have appointed an increasing number of Trainee Careers Advisers to help meet our business growth, training internally so that we're better prepared for new business and expansion.

However, these actions are not in the gift of all employers. Smaller and medium size careers service providers often lack the assets and reserves to undertake large-scale investment in workforce reform. **Many reflected on the need for help and understanding from Government and other commissioners, which is reflected in the following comments:**

// The main barrier is the level of funding (either from Government, local authorities or schools) that is available to sustain this. It is pretty much impossible to pay more than we do, unless we set up and deliver contracts that are loss making.

// Competing against salaries set by Government [funded] Departments i.e. Careers and Enterprise Company - Enterprise Advisers is difficult. Levels of funding we receive do not allow for other salaries to be that competitive. [Several careers service providers are supporting the Enterprise Adviser and Coordinator programme of the CEC and subsidising up to 50% of the costs of Coordinator positions]

// We can't afford to pay what these professionals deserve and should be paid, contract values do not allow this.

// We pay as much as we can to make the contracts/programmes deliver if we had more, we would provide this to staff in wages.

### **Employers have identified a number of asks from Government to assist them in meeting the career development sector workforce skills challenges ahead:**

- Recognition of initial and ongoing CPD training costs for Careers Advisers in all public service tenders for careers provision. This includes recognising that whilst professional staff are in initial training (e.g. apprenticeships, QCD, etc.) there are additional costs that providers are unable to cover through productivity.
- Funding to support a Positive Action Programme to bring BAME and disabled individuals to enter the profession across all entry routes. Providers are currently looking to do this from reserves but for some it will only be on a small scale.
- Ensure that funding allows for competitive salaries. The National Careers Service is an example of a contract where the levels and structure of funding prohibits salary increases in line with the market without rendering the contract unviable.
- Ensure an even playing field with allocated funding that allows for equitable salaries across the education, careers and enterprise sector - where the government [agencies] sets the salary, e.g. Careers Hub Enterprise Advisers, other salaries are not able to keep up.
- Introduce training bursaries that will attract more people to undertake initial professional training at Level6/7, thus increasing the pool of qualified workers.

Evidence indicates that the careers guidance provider sector lacks a national profile at a policy level and is significantly under-funded when compared with equivalent areas of education and skills provision. Comparisons of the levels of funding for employability programmes under DWP and National Careers Service under DfE underline this.

In recent Careers England evidence given to the Parliamentary Education Committee Inquiry into Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) information was provided to highlight a fragmentation in the way that careers advice and guidance is commissioned and provided across education, employment, and skills policy areas. A subsequent evidence session pointed to the Career Development Institute (CDI) as responsible for careers workforce planning. This is not the case as responsibility is shared between the Department for Education, Careers England (Industry Body) and the CDI (Professional Body).

**At a strategic level and in advance of a new careers strategy from the Department for Education (DfE) we strongly recommend the Department:**

1. Works more closely with Careers England, the UK Career Development Institute (CDI), National Careers Service, the Institute of Employability Professionals (IEP), the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) to jointly evaluate and assess the risks to achieving the government's economic - skills and productivity - ambitions, in the light of these critical workforce development issues. There is an urgent need to secure the future of a career development profession in England, without which Government will struggle to deliver its policy aims.
2. Demonstrates greater recognition, actively recognising the role and added-value contributions that the career development sector plays in achieving the objectives set out in the Skills White paper and the forthcoming Skills Bill.
3. Establishes a Careers Profession Taskforce to address urgent workforce shortages, unfair pay, and increased diversity and workforce planning over the next 5 years to stem the flow of Careers Advisers leaving the profession across England and bring new recruits into the sector. This could inform recruitment and retention strategies and begin to restore England as a world leader in all-age career development support services.
4. Engages in the development of a National Framework of Training and Continuous Professional Development (TCPD) across the complexity of government-funded careers, employment, and skills programmes. A central training support 'spine' can bring strength to existing fragmented approaches and produce cost-saving benefits. It can also provide structural support and balance to sustain a more diverse workforce and enable progression through flexible learning pathways. In countries outside England such an approach exists, for example in Estonia, Germany, Canada, N. Ireland, Scotland, Wales and further afield.

By adopting these recommendations UK Government can build an informed, professional and coherent system of career development support across the entire education, skills and employment policy realm. This will ensure that citizens have access to independent and professional advice and guidance across all transition points, from leaving school to navigating changes in the labour market and planning personal skills development and advancement.

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*promoting social mobility, achievement and economic well-being*

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