

Our matrix Story

Supporting Schools in Providing High Quality Careers Guidance

Careers Guidance and Inspiration in Schools, the revised statutory guidance for schools was published in April 2014 “*The guidance sets a clear framework for the provision of advice and guidance, giving schools clarity on the required approach to ensure that expectations are set high, and all young people can access the support they need to understand and navigate an ambitious range of career options*” (Matthew Hancock - Minister of State for Skills and Enterprise).

The statutory guidance makes reference to the monitoring the quality of careers guidance and states: *Schools should satisfy themselves of the quality of any external organisations they plan to work with, and can use quality standards where these are available.* The matrix Standard is the national quality standard for information, advice and guidance on career, learning, work and life goals.

Education Business Services International (EBSI)

EBSI is now a commercial organisation that evolved from an Education Business Partnership originally servicing Ealing and Hillingdon Boroughs. The organisation previously supplied work experience and work related programmes to primary, secondary schools and colleges within the two boroughs. The work related learning programme included Enterprise, Skills for Work, Mock interviews and Career Day events. The experience and skillsets of the EBSI staff fell naturally into the careers guidance area, so several staff were trained to level 6 in careers guidance.

EBSI’s Careers Advisers are trained to understand students’ and young peoples’ aspirations and advise what is available to them (academically and personally) through labour market information. Use of the National Careers Service and arranging face-to-face meetings with employers gives the means and motivation to students to progress their career paths. EBSI staff also arrange for employers to visit the schools and deliver talks on particular careers sectors. This approach enhances the schools teaching to include work related learning and emphasises the application of school subjects in the work environment. It gives young people an understanding of employability skills that are transferable between jobs, recognising the ‘job for life’ is extinct.

The **matrix** Standard has also allowed EBSI to be given extra leverage when promoting their CEIAG services – as customer are given assurance that the delivery of this service has been accredited to the standard and that they can expect a quality service from EBSI. Furthermore staff have been developing actions from feedback from students to enable the service to meet the needs of its core customers, these being the students.

Les Prior – Service Adviser, EBSI

Independent Careers Advisers

We are a team of experienced and qualified career advisers (Level 6) who are registered with the Career Development Institute: We are currently working within 14 schools in Birmingham and there is flexibility in negotiating with each individual school to produce a personalised service level agreement.

Our objective is to: *‘effectively deliver high quality impartial careers information, advice and guidance to young people to maximise their life opportunities by increasing and promoting participation and inclusion.’*

During our role we are trying to address the Inspiration Agenda by supporting schools and young people to make links with employers. We do this in a variety of ways, for example: arranging professional employers days in school, i.e. Women Raising Aspirations event, attending events such as the Skills Show, Creative Alliance, WISE Building Futures, referring schools to relevant organisations to give talks to school via group work/assemblies i.e. speakers4schools, Inspiring Futures etc and developing alumni links using destination data and invite ex-students and pupils into school to meet current cohort.

By carrying out the **matrix** Standard it has made us aware of the importance of measuring the impact of what we do and evidencing our work so that we can evaluate and develop our work and service further. We have made sure that we have input from our customers (ie schools) and clients (pupils/students) and developed our service in response to the finding of the research. The support from the **matrix** assessor and mentor enabled us to see how we could develop our business for the future.

Anna Perry, Danny Tehan, Gurjit Matto – Independent Careers Advisers

Bolton Connexions

Connexions in Bolton began in 2002, since then we have worked in both schools and with the post 16 young people. The service went through a review in 2012 with the new service starting in September 2013. After our review we had two smaller teams for post 16 work and school LDA and a smaller team of Personal Advisers to work in the Traded Service (as this was determined by the amount schools bought back). A menu of services was developed for schools to choose from and schools were given options as to what days they required and up to a point which Personal Adviser. We attended BASH (Bolton Schools Headteachers) meetings to give an overview of the new service and address any issues. It is an inclusive process, which is aimed at meeting the needs of the school and young person, provides flexibility and gives ownership to schools of what service will be provided to their pupils. Fourteen schools have bought in to the service.

Using the **matrix** Standard highlights successes and indicates areas for improvement. It has influenced how we approached our training for staff over the coming year. We have recently had a full days' training for all staff 'Moving your service forward' which was based around the Action Plans following the **matrix** assessment.

Martin Simpson - Service Manager, Connexions Careers Service
