

Implementing the careers strategy in practice: ensuring that everyone makes the most of their skills and talents

Position statement from the Career Management Quality Alliance

January 2018

The Career Management Quality Alliance brings together four key organisations that share a commitment to the provision of high quality, lifelong career management support services for young people and adults in England. These organisations are: Assessment Services Ltd; the Career Development Institute (CDI); Careers England; and the Quality in Careers Consortium.

The provision of support for career development in England remains patchy and of inconsistent quality. In January 2017 the Government announced plans for a comprehensive strategy for careers and last summer we urged the Department for Education (DfE) to publish the strategy as soon as possible, to prevent further erosion of services. The careers strategy was eventually published at the beginning of December. We are now ready to work together, with both the DfE and The Careers and Enterprise Company, to turn the strategy into a detailed plan of action and to build a national system that enables every young person and adult to make the most of their skills and talents.

1. We welcome the strategy as a platform for change, building on the best of existing practice. It includes several elements that will lead to an improvement in support, particularly for young people in schools and colleges and for adults with low qualification levels. However, further actions will be needed to ensure that access to impartial advice and guidance, and support for developing career management and employability skills, are made available to everyone. We are keen to offer our expertise and specialist support to Government and to The Careers and Enterprise Company to bring the strategy to life.
2. The DfE has published revised Statutory Guidance for schools and will soon publish similar guidance for colleges. This provides further details on what is expected in relation to meeting each of the eight Gatsby benchmarks and to appointing a careers leader. Schools will also need information on the support that will be available from The Careers and Enterprise Company for each of the benchmarks, now that the remit of the Company has been extended beyond the two benchmarks supporting employer engagement and workplace experiences. Importantly, they will need to know if they are eligible for support from a careers hub and careers leader training, and how to access such support and training. FE and sixth form colleges similarly will need information and advice on what specifically is required of them and what support and training they can expect.
3. It is worth remembering that the current provision of careers support is based on the change in policy to make individual schools and colleges responsible for securing access for young people to independent careers guidance. The careers strategy helpfully stresses that guidance must be impartial and delivered by qualified practitioners. We urge the DfE to take every opportunity to make sure that schools and colleges understand the distinction between a qualified careers adviser, who provides impartial advice and guidance, and a careers leader, who is responsible for driving change and managing and co-ordinating the careers programme, and the need for both roles.

4. It is important that impartial careers guidance should be available to all young people. If the provision is to be universal, all schools and colleges must be held accountable and it is a matter of concern that a recent Parliamentary Question revealed that the Department does not currently collect data on how many schools contract with a careers adviser or careers company to provide independent careers guidance. Careers guidance must be available to all young people, not just those in disadvantaged areas and the 'cold spots'. Monitoring the provision of careers guidance, and the new requirement to provide access to young people for education and training providers, should form part of all Ofsted inspections.
5. Now that the DfE has provided revised Statutory Guidance, it would be helpful if the Government could also make clear who is responsible for providing careers guidance to young people not in a school or college, i.e. those who are on apprenticeship programmes, other forms of work-based training or, home-educated. And with regard to young people who are at risk of becoming NEET, although local authorities have a duty to support 16- and 17-year-olds to participate in education or training, it is not clear if this extends to providing impartial careers guidance.
6. We welcome the extension of support to schools and colleges that will now cover all eight Gatsby benchmarks. In the immediate future we are well positioned to facilitate: recruiting the additional co-ordinators to support the careers hubs; drafting the job specification and designing the training for careers leaders; more closely aligning the *Quality in Careers Standard* to the Gatsby benchmarks; providing specialist help on working with young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND); and identifying examples of good practice in primary schools. The resources available for the range of support services to schools and colleges remain limited and it will be important to make sure that the increase from four to seven encounters with employers during a pupil's secondary education does not lead to resources being diverted away from other aspects of careers programmes.
7. We have a particular interest in quality assurance and the central role of the established arrangements through the *Quality in Careers Standard* and the *matrix* standard. We welcome the Government's strong recommendation that all schools should work towards the *Quality in Careers Standard* but regret that the strategy provides no incentives or funding to support schools and colleges to gain accreditation. We also welcome the statements in the strategy about Ofsted's role in reporting on careers provision in schools and colleges, and we would be pleased to offer briefing sessions to inspectors on good practice in careers programmes.
8. The careers strategy focuses largely on careers support in schools and colleges, but it does also refer to launching a new, bespoke National Careers Service from next October. We remain concerned that careers services for young people and for adults are being developed separately, with very little coherence between the two. Despite the positive tone of the strategy we know that the re-contracted National Careers Service will be seeing fewer clients as the number of priority groups is reduced. Ofsted has reported that all the current National Careers Service provision is good or outstanding. Furthermore, independent surveys have found that 93% of clients thought the service was good and impact data shows high levels of progression into learning and employment. We therefore urge the DfE to build on the current successful model, achieving value for money and economies of scale, rather than establish a different service.
9. A detailed Action Plan, showing how the DfE intends to build on the strategy to create the world class careers provision the Minister refers to in the foreword is now required. This should

address the points identified above and incorporate clear responsibilities, milestones and timescales. We look forward to contributing to the plan and its implementation.

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Assessment Services Ltd is the assessment body for the **matrix** standard, the Government-owned quality standard for organisations providing information, advice and guidance services. www.assessmentservices.com

The **Career Development Institute (CDI)** is the UK-wide professional body for everyone working in career education, career information, advice and guidance and career coaching. www.thecdi.net

Careers England is the trade association for employer organisations and traders involved in the provision of products and services promoting career education and guidance in England. www.careersengland.org.uk

The Quality in Career Consortium oversees the **Quality in Careers Standard**, the national quality award for careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) in schools, colleges and work-based learning. www.qualityincareers.org.uk