

ISSUES PAPER 5

Guidance and Careers Education

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Introduction

Following its three Annual Reports in 2004, 2005 and 2006, the Nuffield Review of 14-19 Education and Training is producing Issues Papers which focus upon specific areas of concern, with a view to widening the debate and seeking further evidence. Appropriate guidance is seen to be essential to the support given to young people as they progress through an increasingly flexible yet complex system of courses leading to further training, employment and higher education. Therefore, this paper addresses the question: 'How might the present system of guidance in schools and colleges adapt to the changes which are currently taking place?' The answer to this question requires an understanding of how the present system has emerged.

The role of guidance

Guidance is the oil that makes the education and training system work effectively for young people. It helps to make sure that learners are on the right courses for them – the courses where they are most likely to be engaged and to achieve their potential and from which they can move on to their chosen destinations in further learning and work.

Recent, current and emerging reforms to 14-19 education and training mean that young people are, and will be, facing a wider range of options. The reduction in the minimum statutory requirements at Key Stage 4, and the consequent increased flexibility available to offer a wider range of opportunities, the introduction of new qualifications such as the Diplomas and the Welsh Bac and collaboration between providers of education and training to maximise the range of opportunities available to young people are all resulting in more choices from age 14. If young people are to make successful transitions through these choices, they will need access to good quality and appropriate information, advice and guidance, and the knowledge and skills to use them. The increased emphasis on personalisation also underlines the importance of advice and guidance. Young people will need support to determine whether their chosen courses fit together into a coherent programme of learning, to identify what the programme might lead to and to identify what progression routes it might foreclose.

This paper examines the principles and purposes of guidance and careers education, and the changes in policy and practice.

Principles and purposes of guidance and careers education

Guidance in relation to supporting young people's progression into, through and on from 14-19 learning is careers guidance, where 'career' is defined broadly as an individual's progression through learning and work, rather than more narrowly as a job or a series of jobs. The term that has been widely used in secondary and tertiary education has been careers education and guidance (CEG), acknowledging that young people need (i) opportunities in the curriculum to develop the knowledge and skills needed to make choices and manage transitions (i.e. careers education) and (ii) help to use the knowledge and skills developed in careers education to make decisions that are right for them (i.e. careers guidance). Careers education comprises a programme of planned activities taught within the curriculum, often incorporating off-site activities such as work experience; careers guidance is usually provided through one-to-one, or small group discussions. Both careers education and careers guidance are underpinned by careers information: young people need access to comprehensive, accurate and up-to-date information on opportunities, and progression routes, in learning and work, in both paper-based and electronic formats.

In the United Kingdom, CEG is provided through a partnership approach involving, on the one hand, the learning providers (i.e. schools, colleges or work-based training organisations) with their knowledge of the young people and their expertise in teaching and learning, and, on the other, the external guidance service (currently Connexions, previously the careers service, in England; Careers Wales in Wales) with its knowledge of opportunities in learning and work and its expertise in

providing guidance. This approach dates back to at least 1973 when local authority careers services were established, and was clearly set out in the seminal Government publication *Working Together for a Better Future*¹. Schools, colleges and, in more recent times, work-based training organisations provide

- careers information resource centres;
- planned programmes of careers education;
- initial advice and guidance to learners;
- referral of individuals to the external service for more specialised guidance; and

The external guidance service provides careers guidance to learners. It also offers group work sessions, support with planning and reviewing programmes of careers education and assistance with setting up and developing careers libraries. Together, learning providers and the external guidance service provide programmes of CEG which help young people to develop the skills and confidence to plan and manage their progression through learning and into work.

More recently, in England, the term information, advice and guidance (IAG) has been used. This is interpreted to encompass CEG and also to extend to cover information, advice and guidance on a wider range of issues that young people face, including issues that present barriers to participation in learning.

In the context of choices and transitions in 14-19 education and training, young people's CEG/IAG needs can be defined as follows:

- information on options at key points of transition (e.g. 14+, 16+, 17+ and 18+) and on subsequent progression opportunities;

¹ DES, ED, Welsh Office, 1987.

- access to guidance on their next steps in learning and ultimately into work (i.e. careers guidance), linked to tutoring and mentoring support for their current learning and all brought together through a coherent process of individual learning planning;
- in-depth support and, where necessary, referral to specialist services to resolve issues which present barriers to participation in learning;
- a programme of careers education that equips them with the knowledge and skills to make effective use of the information and guidance available.

Careers education: policy and practice

Careers education lessons first featured in schools and colleges in the 1960s and this area of the curriculum continued to develop throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Careers education received considerable support and resources within the TVEI curriculum development programme which ran from 1983 to 1994². All of this culminated in a clear statement about the importance of careers education in the DES, ED and Welsh office booklet, *Working Together for a Better Future* (1987). Unfortunately this was undermined three months later when the proposals for what became the National Curriculum made no reference to careers education.

Within the National Curriculum, careers education was marginalised as one of five, non-statutory cross-curricular themes and it took a further decade until legislation

was introduced to secure a place for careers education in the secondary school curriculum. From 1998 all schools have had a statutory duty to provide careers education in years 9, 10 and 11.

In England, in 2003, the then DfES published a non-statutory framework for careers education and guidance³ 11-19 and in 2004 the statutory requirement on schools was extended to include years 7 and 8. Schools are encouraged to continue their programmes of careers education into the sixth form and both colleges and work-based training organisations are encouraged to provide programmes of careers education. In Wales, careers education is statutory from age 13 to age 19 and is supported by a non-statutory framework⁴. In England there have been calls for the Secretary of State to use the powers to extend the statutory requirement to provide careers education to include 16-19 year old learners and these may increase as the Government introduces legislation to raise the age of participation in learning to 18⁵.

Despite this policy position, careers education remains a vulnerable area of the school curriculum, as it competes for curriculum time with the core and foundation subjects and is often taught by non-specialist teachers as part of a wider programme of personal and social education. Ofsted's thematic inspections have shown that, in such models, the quality of teaching and learning is not as high as it is in other subjects.

² The Technical and Vocational Education Initiative was a Government funded, local authority managed curriculum development that shared many features with the current 14-19 reforms, particularly with regard to the development of applied learning, the important role of guidance and the encouragement of schools and colleges to work together in consortia.

³ *Careers Education and Guidance in England: A National Framework 11-19* (DfES 2003).

⁴ *A Framework for Careers Education and Guidance for 11-19 Year Olds in Wales* (DELLS 2000).

⁵ The Education and Skills Bill published in November 2007 introduces legislation to raise the age of participation in learning to age 17 from 2013 and then to age 18 from 2015.

No teacher can train initially to be a teacher of careers education, so any professional development for the role has to be provided through in-service training (INSET). After the end of TVEI, professional development for careers education was continued through two sources of Government funding: the Grant for Educational Support and Training (GEST) to local authorities, which included a national priority area for CEG from 1995 to 1998; and a separate grant to careers services to provide INSET for careers teachers. The latter was continued through the funding provided to Connexions in England, and to the Careers Wales companies in Wales.

The new quality standards for young people's IAG in England⁶ include an expectation that the services commissioned by local authorities will include support to learning providers for planning, developing and reviewing programmes of careers education. The support available through Connexions and Careers Wales, alongside two DCSF-funded websites dedicated to supporting IAG and careers education in England⁷ and the professional area of the Careers Wales website, is highly valued by teachers and co-ordinators of CEG. Most of the INSET is not accredited. In different regions of England, Connexions partnerships have worked with local higher education institutions to offer certificate and diploma qualifications for careers co-ordinators, but there is no national professional qualification for CEG equivalent to those developed recently for teachers of PSHE and for teachers of citizenship.

In both England and Wales, national guidance for careers education is now being viewed as part of a wider area of the

curriculum. Following QCA's review of the secondary curriculum in England, careers education is presented as part of economic wellbeing and financial capability and integrated with work-related learning and enterprise, and personal finance education. In Wales the existing frameworks for careers education and work-related education are being integrated into a single curriculum framework. It could be argued that, by being part of something larger, careers education will be able to secure a stronger position in the curriculum, and it makes sense to link it with other aspects of education concerned with the world of work and individuals' economic wellbeing. As is often the case with such developments, however, it will be important to retain the specific focus on careers education within the wider curriculum area. In a laudable attempt to shift attention away from heavily prescribed content and on to underpinning processes and concepts, QCA has removed from its programme of study for economic wellbeing and financial capability, specific reference to the aims of careers education. For example, 'career exploration' becomes simply 'exploration' and 'career management' disappears and is covered by more generic items under 'enterprise'.

Guidance: Policy and Practice

The Changing Pattern

In both England and Wales, guidance on options in learning and work is provided by both learning providers, which are close to the students, and the external guidance service, which is close to the labour market and to learning provision beyond schools. The first choices that young people face, that have implications for future progression in learning and work, are those related to courses in key stage

⁶ *Quality Standards for Young People's IAG* (DCSF 2007).

⁷ www.cegnet.co.uk, www.iagworkforce.co.uk

4⁸. These choices are made in year 9, or (in some schools now) in year 8. Guidance is provided mainly by school staff. The only students likely to receive guidance from the external guidance service at this stage will be: a small minority referred by the school; those students with special educational needs (SEN), for whom the formal process of Transition Planning starts in year 9; and students targeted for particular help through Aimhigher and gifted and talented programmes. In key stage 4, as students prepare for choices beyond compulsory schooling, the balance changes. A greater number will be seen by the external service. In post-16 learning, both in school sixth forms and in colleges, the balance begins to revert back, with more of the guidance being provided by staff within the organisation.

Within this overall pattern, there have been changes over the years. The local authority careers services that existed from 1973 to the early 1990s tended to focus their work on key points of transition. Until the mid-1980s, careers officers tended to provide interviews to the majority of students in what was then the fifth year (equivalent to year 11 today). Then, from around 1987, so-called 'blanket' interviews were replaced by a more targeted approach, partly as a consequence of reduced budgets but mainly due to a professional judgement that a largely undifferentiated provision was not meeting the needs of young people and did not present the most effective use of careers officers' time.

In the first half of the 1990s, careers services underwent a major change. The local authority services were replaced with

66 privatised careers companies funded directly by grants from central Government. The biggest change in practice occurred not for professional reasons but because of the way in which the new privatised careers services were held accountable for the public money that funded them. They were set targets for the number of interviews undertaken with young people, resulting in a return to the days of blanket interviews, only this time they were called 'entitlement' interviews. Almost all year 11 students received a guidance interview and a written record in the form of an action plan. Lower targets were also set for other year groups between year 9 and year 13.

By the end of the decade there had been a change of Government, and, in England, New Labour re-directed the privatised careers services to spend their resources on those young people who had dropped out of learning or who were at risk of becoming disengaged. This meant that students who were not disaffected became a lower priority for careers guidance, and careers advisers were not able to see so many students. The result was that either students received no guidance, or guidance was provided by school staff who were less qualified to offer it. Also, fewer post-16 students had access to guidance from careers advisers because, as they were participating in post-compulsory education, they were a lower priority for the service. While the 'focussing' agenda led to a reduction in the level of support available to the majority of students, it did cause careers services to examine more flexible and innovative approaches to providing guidance and better means of identifying young people's guidance needs (see Morris et al, 2001⁹, for an extended

⁸ The complexity of advice, and the different sources from which young people actually seek advice, is raised by Foskett, N., 2004, Nuffield Review Working Paper 25, and Hodgkinson, P., 2004, Nuffield Review Working Paper 12, both available on www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk

⁹ Morris, M., Rickinson, M., Davies, D, 2001, **The Delivery of Careers Education and Guidance in Schools**, London, DfES Research Report 296.

account of the outcomes of these policy changes).

Connexions

This change in pattern continued as the careers services were subsumed within Connexions partnerships from 2001. The headline target for Connexions was to reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and while the service was, in principle, inclusive and available to all young people aged 13 to 19, in practice a higher proportion of the resources were targeted on those young people in the 'NEET' group, or at risk of becoming NEET. Pre-16 students engaged in learning and exploring options at 16, and post-16 students considering higher education courses, were viewed as lower priorities for guidance.

Although Connexions partnerships strived to achieve an appropriate balance between the so-called universal and targeted services, perceptions that there was insufficient attention to careers guidance persisted. These perceptions were, in some cases, a reality. A National Audit Office value for money study of Connexions¹⁰ in 2004 found that not all young people who would benefit from careers advice were receiving it. This led the then DfES to undertake an end-to-end review of careers guidance¹¹ which concluded that there was a concern about the priority given to careers guidance in Connexions. In the same year, the Government published proposals for a further change to the system, in the Youth Matters Green Paper, and in 2006 announced that, from

April 2008, responsibility for the universal IAG service would be devolved from Connexions to local authorities, which would be given the funding to commission IAG services for young people.

Quality and Standards

In 2007 the DCSF published national quality standards for young people's IAG, setting out its expectations of the services local authorities should be commissioning and seeking to ensure consistently high quality and impartial IAG services across England. These standards include explicit references to careers information, careers advice and careers guidance. It remains to be seen if this will lead to a change in practice and if all young people who need careers guidance will be able to receive it. There are hopeful signs: following the end-to-end review many Connexions partnerships have paid more attention to careers guidance. There are, however, no plans to introduce a formal programme of regular inspections of local authority IAG services comparable to the inspections, in the past, of careers services by the Careers Service Inspectorate and of Connexions partnerships by Ofsted.

Wales

In Wales, following devolution, developments took a very different direction. Instead of the 'horizontal' integration of services witnessed in England, the careers companies in Wales were brought together under a common Careers Wales brand, to provide a 'vertically' integrated all-age career guidance service. Although Careers Wales has also been directed to work to reduce the number of young people classified as 'NEET', there are not the same concerns about 13-19 year old students not having access to careers guidance. Neither are there any plans for a structural change to

¹⁰ DfES: *Connexions Service – Advice and Guidance for All Young People* (NAO 2004).

¹¹ *Report of the End-to-End Review of Careers Education and Guidance* (DfES 2005).

the service. Careers Wales companies are inspected by Estyn on a four-yearly cycle.

Guidance Related Activities in Schools and Colleges

Alongside these major changes to the external guidance services, there have also been guidance-related developments in schools and colleges. Tutors, and other members of staff, are providing more individual support and guidance today than they did in the past, through tutoring, progress reviews, target-setting, individual learning planning and mentoring. While all of these interventions seek to help students, it remains open to question whether they represent a coherent series of conversations, where each discussion follows on from the previous one, or whether they appear to the students as a series of separate, isolated and potentially confusing conversations. Schools and colleges are beginning to see the need to bring greater coherence to all this support for current and future learning and are trying to find ways forward. It requires a system of effective recording and referral. One of the paper-based means of meeting this need, the Progress File¹², has been discontinued but the principles and processes remain and learning providers are exploring the use of paper-based and electronic portfolios and individual learning plans.

A further issue concerns the link between guidance offered by staff within the school or college and guidance offered by personal advisers, or careers advisers, from the external service. In best practice schools and colleges use the tutoring and mentoring discussions to help diagnose further

guidance needs and to inform referrals to the external service, and then follow up the guidance interviews in later tutoring sessions. Such practice in relation to these points varies significantly from institution to institution and issues of confidentiality and data protection sometimes inhibit the sharing of information between different professionals working with the same individual young people.

Selection of Options

One of the major questions about guidance for 13-19 year old learners is whether or not the advice and guidance they receive on the options available is impartial, i.e. based on their needs and independent of the vested interests of the person, or organisation, providing the advice and guidance. One of the strengths of the partnership approach to CEG in the UK is that the external guidance service is able to offer impartial advice and guidance¹³. However, if there are concerns about the extent to which the service can reach all young people, because of resourcing levels or targets, and it is left to learning providers to provide advice and guidance, then will that advice and guidance always be impartial? Schools in particular are in a difficult position. As well as providing support to all their learners to make successful transitions, they are also providers of some of the learning opportunities available for young people to choose. They have both a guidance function and a marketing function. Therefore when school budgets are determined largely by the number of students on roll, it is tempting sometimes to offer less than impartial advice. The new quality standards for young people's IAG in England include explicit expectations that the advice and guidance provided to young people should be impartial, and the new

¹² The Progress File replaced the National Record of Achievement. In April 2006 the Government ceased providing the Progress File materials free of charge to all schools

¹³ *Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap* (OECD 2004).

progression measure¹⁴ means that schools will be more accountable for ensuring that 16 year olds move on to learning options where they are likely to achieve. Further, the Government is introducing legislation¹⁵ that will require schools to make sure that the careers information and careers education that they have a statutory duty to provide is impartial.

Summary of the present situation

This paper argues that 13-19 year old learners should be entitled to a good quality programme of careers education in the curriculum and access to timely guidance appropriate to their needs. In both England and Wales careers education is a statutory requirement in the curriculum (from 11 to 16 in England; from 13-19 in Wales) and supported by a non-statutory framework that integrates careers education within related areas of the curriculum. The inspection framework for schools in both countries includes questions about the quality of careers education, but the extent to which these are addressed in practice varies considerably. Teachers and co-ordinators of careers education benefit from access to INSET and support but there is no national professional qualification for CEG in either country. Guidance on learning options is provided by both teachers and tutors within schools, colleges and work-based organisations and by external guidance services. In England the external service is currently Connexions and will soon consist of local authority commissioned IAG services, where careers guidance is part of a wider guidance service for young people. In Wales the external service consists of the careers companies offering an all-age careers guidance service, under the branding of Careers Wales.

¹⁴ From 2009 schools will be required to publish data on the percentages of students participating in learning in the first year after the end of compulsory education and on the percentages of students subsequently achieving level 2 and level 3 by age 19.

¹⁵ The Education and Skills Bill published in November 2007.

Proposed improvements

The following proposals for improving the current system to ensure that it works effectively for young people are offered for discussion and to stimulate debate.

1. Extend the statutory duty on schools to provide careers education, in both England and Wales, to cover the age range 11 to 19
2. Make the programme of study for economic wellbeing and financial capability in England, and the curriculum framework for careers and work-related education in Wales, statutory.
3. Develop and resource, in both England and Wales, a national strategy for CEG/IAG that includes:
 - a national professional qualification for co-ordinators of CEG/IAG;
 - a programme of professional development for all teachers, tutors and other staff providing guidance and careers education in schools, colleges and work-based training organisations.
4. Ensure that all inspections of schools, colleges and work-based training organisations report on the quality of guidance and careers education.
5. In England, strengthen the links between the external guidance service and the labour market, to ensure that guidance providers are well informed about employers' skill needs.
6. In England, establish a programme of formal inspections of local authority IAG services.

This paper has been written for the Review by David Andrews, Senior Fellow, National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling (NICEC) and a national consultant for the Association for Careers Education and Guidance (ACEG). Valuable support has been given by Sylvia Thomson, Past President, ACEG. Minor changes have been made in the light of a review of the paper by Marian Morris of the NFER.