



Department
for Education



Department
for Business
Innovation & Skills

Careers Guidance Action Plan

**Government Response to
Recommendations from Ofsted's
Thematic Review and National
Careers Council's Report**

September 2013

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Introduction

From December 2012 to April 2013, Ofsted undertook a Thematic Review of careers guidance in schools. Their report, *Going in the right direction? Careers guidance in schools from September 2012*, was published in September 2013. The report includes recommendations for Government, schools, employers / employer networks, the National Careers Service and local authorities, to improve the quality and delivery of independent and impartial careers guidance.

The National Careers Council (NCC) published their report, [*An Aspirational Nation*](#), in June 2013. The NCC was established in May 2012 to provide advice to the Government on careers provision for young people and adults in England. It draws its members from a range of business, education, voluntary / community and careers sector interests. *An Aspirational Nation* reviews current careers guidance arrangements and makes recommendations for Government, the National Careers Service and employers.

This document provides the Government's response to the recommendations in both these reports.

Government Response to Ofsted's Thematic Review of Careers Guidance

Recommendations for Government

Recommendation 1

Government should provide clear and more explicit guidance to schools on:

- what constitutes a comprehensive careers guidance strategy
- how to secure independent, external careers guidance
- how to monitor the impact of this provision effectively.

Response

We will revise the statutory guidance for schools on their duty to secure independent and impartial careers guidance; ensuring schools are focused on having high aspirations for all students and place inspiration and appropriate support for students at the centre of what they do.

We will highlight the need for schools to build strong connections with employers, ensuring students can benefit from sustained contact with inspiring people from the world of work supplemented by purposeful work experience and taster courses. This should be informed by local and regional labour market information and an understanding of the benefits and risks of education, training and job opportunities.

We know that some schools are not always informing their pupils about alternative options post-14 and post-16 and in some cases refuse to co-operate with alternative providers. As a result, some young people are not able to make well informed choices. We will therefore be much clearer in the guidance about what schools should do to ensure that students have information about all the types of education and training they could pursue, and hear directly from different types of providers including University Technical Colleges, employers delivering apprenticeships, further education and sixth form colleges.

In line with recommendations from the Education Committee, we will be explicit that signposting students to a careers website is not sufficient to meet the careers duty. Face-to-face support from employers, mentors, alumni and careers advisers all have a part to play. We will share the very best of practice from outstanding schools to show what inspiring and innovative practice looks like, how this can be placed at the core of what every school does and how schools can secure the external support they need.

We will emphasise the importance of the use of data on destinations in evaluating the impact of support given to students. We will highlight the inclusion of destinations for 16

year olds in school performance tables, informing Ofsted's consideration of the quality of careers guidance provided in a school.

Recommendation 2

Government should ensure that information on students' destinations at the ages of 16, 17, and 18 is complete and accurate; so that schools can evaluate the impact of the support and advice they give their students.

Response

We will further strengthen key stage 4 and key stage 5 Destination Measures. These new measures already show how successful schools and colleges are in supporting their students into the next stage of education or training, or into work.

We are currently investigating ways of improving the completeness of Destination Measures data, for example by improving the quality of the data in the data sets we use to produce the Measures. In the longer term the quality of the data would be significantly improved if it was possible to cross-refer to employment and benefits data and we will seek the legal authority to link these data sets in the future.

We will explore the feasibility of a range of options for developing Destination Measures for the future, maximising the motivating impact on institutions and making better use of the data to inform our work. Subject to data development and testing, this could include:

- publishing both key stage 4 and key stage 5 Measures earlier;
- producing different breakdowns of the data, for example by prior attainment;
- expanding the types of institutions for which destinations are reported;
- making better use of Destination Measures data to inform development and targeting of policies.

Recommendations for employers and employer networks (such as local enterprise partnerships and chambers of commerce)

Recommendation 3

Employers should work with the National Careers Service to facilitate links between employers, including small- and medium-sized employers, and all local schools by promoting the advantages of having an employer on school governing bodies with responsibility for providing young people with greater direct exposure to the world of work and the full range of career pathways.

Response

The National Careers Service will act as a facilitator to bring schools and employers closer together so that young people can be inspired, mentored and coached by employers. This will build on existing relationships with employers, LEPs and schools.

We will begin by piloting one or more approaches to the facilitation with National Careers Service Prime Contractors and implement the new role fully when new National Careers Service area based contracts commence from October 2014.

Recommendation 4

Employers should provide more detailed information to schools and careers guidance professionals on local job options, business developments and local skills shortages.

Response

We will enhance the information provided by LEPs on local skills priorities, published on the National Careers Service website. The National Careers Service website currently holds labour market information (LMI) for 35 out of 39 LEPs in response to a commitment made in the 2012 Autumn Statement. We will publish LMI from the remaining LEPs and improve presentation of the data to maximise accessibility and usefulness.

We will promote the availability and use of LEP LMI to schools and career guidance professionals locally.

Recommendations for the National Careers Service

Recommendation 5

The National Careers Service should have an increased role in ensuring that external careers guidance professionals and school staff are updated frequently on the full range of further and higher education provision and vocational training, including apprenticeships, both locally and nationally.

Response

The National Careers Service is a vital part of the careers guidance resourcing that Government has put in place, alongside schools' contribution. But more needs to be done to maximise its effectiveness in helping young people and all those engaged in helping them decide on their career options. In recognition of this we have maintained the National Careers Service budget in the spending review for 2015, against a reduction in the overall BIS budget. Over the next few months we are re-contracting the whole service for October 2014. Through this we will reshape and reprioritise what is available for young people, schools and employers.

A wealth of information is readily available through the National Careers Service website and is updated on a regular basis. We will explore opportunities to make sure careers professionals and school staff are made aware of resources through promotional communications activity.

Recommendation 6

The National Careers Service should market its services more effectively to all young people aged 13 to 18.

Response

The Skills Funding Agency, responsible for the management and operation of the National Careers Service, are seeking a marketing exemption for marketing activity.

A mobile website was recently launched and further improvements to this site are planned. We plan to increase the use of social media, including Twitter and Facebook, to reach young people.

Recommendation 7

The National Careers Service should review the accessibility of their website for young people.

Response

We will work with the National Careers Service to improve the information on its website, building on the review programme already in place. Initial customer evaluation of the website has been undertaken and this will be extended to focus on young people and the results fed into development plans. The original website was developed for adults, but during 2012-13 new developments have included adding pages specifically for young people; links to resources developed for young people such as plotr and mykindacrowd; a mobile website; Lifelong Learning Accounts open to 16-18 year olds.

Existing plans include enhancing the content of the mobile website, promoting the mobile website through availability of apps, developing further resources that are attractive to young people and their parents and increasing links to other specialist web based resources targeted at young people.

Recommendations for local authorities

Recommendation 8

Local authorities should ensure that all vulnerable young people are involved in a wide range of career guidance activities, so that they can make informed and appropriately challenging decisions about the next stage of their education and training.

Response

Local authorities are legally required to make available appropriate support to encourage, enable and assist the participation of young people in education or training. All 16 and 17 year olds are entitled to an offer of a suitable place in education or training under the 'September Guarantee', regardless of what qualifications they had gained when they left school. We expect local authorities to prioritise their resources to focus on those who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET.

We issued statutory guidance to local authorities in March on their duties in relation to participation. We are publishing more local NEET data more regularly, to increase transparency and ensure that local authorities are properly held to account for their performance in promoting the participation of 16 and 17 year olds, and making arrangements to identify those who are not participating.

In preparation for the raising of the compulsory age of participation in education or training, 66 local authorities from across the country have participated in locally-led delivery projects, testing different approaches to supporting young people to participate and sharing their learning with other areas. Information and tools generated by the projects are available online. These include risk of NEET indicators which help schools and local authorities to identify those young people who are most in need of targeted support, including advice and guidance.

Recommendations for schools

Recommendation 9

Schools should develop and implement a clear strategy for careers guidance and ensure that they make good use of the National Careers Service resources, well-trained staff, careers guidance professionals, employer networks, and local colleges and other providers to ensure that students are well supported in making decisions about their career pathways.

Recommendation 10

Schools should use destination data on students' progression after leaving school or transferring to Year 12 in their sixth form to monitor the choices made by students at the end of Year 11 and Year 13; schools should work with local authorities to monitor the destinations of students who have special educational needs or who are disabled.

Recommendation 11

Schools should ensure that every school governing body has an employer representative, and that the vocational route, including apprenticeships, is given equal status to the academic route, for example, by fostering greater links with employers so that young people and their parents/carers are exposed to a wider range of career options.

Recommendation 12

Schools should promote the wider range of progression routes available at further education colleges, independent learning providers, and communities and skills providers.

Response to recommendations 9-12

Ofsted plan to disseminate the findings of their report to schools across England. The revised statutory guidance will provide an opportunity to set clear expectations and highlight Ofsted's recommendations for schools.

Recommendations for Ofsted

Recommendation 13

Ofsted should ensure that inspectors take greater account of the quality of careers guidance and of students' destinations in judging the effectiveness of a school's leadership and management.

Response

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Sir Michael Wilshaw, has already confirmed that he will give careers guidance a higher priority in school inspections from September 2013. Ofsted's lead inspector for careers guidance has contributed to training for inspectors, raising awareness of this issue.

Government Response to the National Careers Council's Report

Recommendation 1

A culture change is needed in careers provision for young people and adults in order to address the mismatch of skills shortages and high unemployment.

Response

The Government plans to support the recommended culture change by promoting stronger links between employers and pupils, young people and adults who need inspiring, into thinking about their careers and the options available to them. This will not be a top down scheme but a change of approach building on the good practice that already happens in many of the best schools and colleges.

Recommendation 2

The development of the National Careers Service should be assisted by the creation of an Employer-led Advisory Board comprising senior representatives from employers, education and the career development profession to help guide its work and ensure it delivers value for money and meets the needs of young people, adults and employers.

Response

The Skills Funding Agency which runs the National Careers Service operates an Advisory Board with employer members. This group provides a suitable vehicle for ensuring effective employer input into the development of the National Careers Service. The membership of that Board is due to be refreshed shortly and BIS and the Skills Funding Agency will work with the National Careers Council to ensure that the Board includes members with an interest in careers. For careers specific pieces of work the Board may appoint a sub group to action the work.

Recommendation 3

The National Careers Service should significantly expand its work with schools, young people and parents.

Response

We plan to extend the activities of the National Careers Service in several ways to improve the careers resources that are available to schools, young people and parents. We want the National Careers Service to:

- Act as a facilitator to bring schools and employers closer together so that young people can be inspired, mentored and coached by employers;
- Ensure that these groups are aware of and utilise the information available through its website;
- Review the website provision with these groups needs in mind and continue its programme of development to better serve them;
- Consider how it can work more effectively with other organisations, nationally and locally which provide support to young people, including youth charities such as the Prince's Trust.

We will embed these changes through re-procuring the service delivery in 2014. Prime Contractors delivering the service will be expected to have a strategy for partnership working which will include their plans for engaging with schools, young people, parents and employers as well as FE and HE institutions.

Recommendation 4

Employers should encourage their employees to volunteer to go into schools and colleges to give students insights into different careers, enthuse them about the world of work and provide access to active experience of work, in particular to help address mismatches in young people's career aspiration.

Response

This is for schools, colleges and employers to decide. Government can help by providing triage and signposting for employers and schools seeking partnership, act as an advocate where young people are not experiencing the inspirational messages we want to give them, and support the development of enduring relationships between schools and colleges, employers and young people over the longer term.

Recommendation 5

The National Careers Service should launch a new initiative to bring together a range of organisations to explore and highlight the importance of 'character' and 'resilience' in a successful working life and identify realistic and effective options for addressing this issue.

Response

BIS will lead work to look at how these factors can be promoted as part of the learning experience. Working with DfE and others we will bring together existing research interests, commission further research if necessary, and identify pragmatic good practice

which can be shared with schools, colleges and third sector organisations. The National Careers Service will play an important part in work to examine how inspirational people and activity can contribute to the development of character, resilience and other qualities which help people succeed in work and life.

Recommendation 6

The National Careers Service should develop and extend its on-line services and bring together key partners in order to consolidate other on-line careers information and tools, enabling trusted information to become more accessible for young people, parents, carers and adults seeking on-line support to their career development activities and plans.

Response

The National Careers Service has an extensive project in place to develop its on-line services, including the resources on its website. We will include a review of the needs of young people and feedback from existing customer research to plan further developments which shape what is available to meet the needs of the different customer groups. Our priority will be not to duplicate other high quality resources, but to provide access to these resources, in ways which engage and inspire customers. Key to this will be the use of social media and modern favoured communication routes, such as the development of the National Careers Service's new mobile website.

Recommendation 7

In order to bring about the culture change needed in careers provision for young people and adults we need to create a movement which include employers, education and career development professionals. To implement the recommendations and practical steps Government also needs to play its role in supporting this movement and ensure these recommendations and the practical steps in this report are implemented.

Response

Government will play its part alongside employers, educationalists and careers professionals showing leadership to bring about a culture change in careers provision.



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