



Integrating new technologies into careers practice: Extending the knowledge base

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Executive summary

A greater integration of new information and communication technologies (ICT) in careers practice on a UK-wide basis is being mediated by changes occurring within public, private and community sectors. This report examines emerging structures for the delivery of services across the public, private and community sectors, together with the impact of ICT integration, especially for workforce development. By so doing, it complements and extends UK Commission for Employment and Skills (the UK Commission) recently published reports that have examined the way in which technology can enhance careers support and the ways that labour market information (LMI) is already used in online. It also builds upon earlier research findings, which examined governments' role in stimulating, regulating and/or compensating for market failure in careers support services. Through a series of in-depth interviews and consultations with policy-makers, senior executives from industry and commerce, employers and careers practitioners, a complex picture emerges with significant variations and opportunities for integrating ICT more fully into careers policies and practices across the UK.

Many organisations have recognised that within a volatile economic and political context, they cannot function alone. The exploitation of ICT for building sustainable networks is reshaping the economy. This has significant implications for future workforce capacity building, with new market players and system developments operating within a climate of spending cuts, innovation, or a combination of both. This is leading to shifting paradigms for delivery and increasing pressures for the greater use of ICT to help 'achieve more for less'.

Demand for careers support is increasing, from a broad spectrum of individuals, with the emergence of a plethora of new market players and partnerships involving public, private and community sectors. Research findings from this study show differing forms of public-private-third sector cross partnerships operating in England mainly, though not exclusively, in the Welfare to Work area, with greater emphasis on public-community sector partnerships in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. There is cause to celebrate diversity in the use of ICT and careers support services between the four home countries. There is also a strong desire to learn lessons from the evolving integration of ICT and its impact on careers policies, operating in different markets. However, no clear or formal support mechanisms exist to share good and interesting policies and practices across the four home countries. It is argued that efficient and cost-effective practices need to be shared and further developed for the common good.

In broad terms there are three alternative policy strategies for funding careers support to resource this; through public funding as a free service; to offer it as a fee-paying service; or to embed access to careers support in other provision. In England, the latter approach may now feature within Lifelong Learning Accounts (2011), though the extent to which this will operate has yet to be decided. The market for careers services in which individuals themselves pay is likely to remain small and specialised, largely catering for a relatively wealthy minority. Participants in this research were invited to reflect upon the extent to which technological developments might help create 'pay-at-the-point-of-use' in relation to accessing careers services. Could a real payment system work? In all cases, participants indicated there was limited appetite for this, given many online products and services are 'open source' and freely available, or can be purchased by those who can afford to pay, as

and when necessary. It was noted that careers practitioner expertise needs to be branded and marketed more effectively to stimulate appropriate demand. Some government form of investment in this is likely to yield added-value returns for both social mobility and economic growth.

New partnerships and new sources of funding for careers service delivery featured high on the agenda for many organisations, to supplement or replace diminishing budgets within government-funded services. The research also investigated the potential added value of harnessing knowledge and experience from other sectors in order to further strengthen and innovate UK careers support services. Six examples of new working relationships between public, private and community sector organisations are briefly outlined: academies and free schools; wholly-owned subsidiaries in further and higher education; social enterprises; mutuals; social impact bonds; and co-funded alliances.

Alternative market approaches and funding models for interventions and services designed to improve social and economic outcomes were found to be prevalent. Examples presented do not provide a 'magic solution' to securing funds to provide, maintain, and extend careers service delivery, to support innovation in ICT and to build workforce capacity. Instead, they extend the knowledge base in thinking creatively about future possibilities for greater integration of ICT, providing more services online, tracking individuals' progress, and/or developing ICT based products for 'commercial' or 'not for profit' gain. Each has implications for public sector careers services and their workforce.

At present, the main challenge for those operating in the careers support market, particularly those working in the public sector, is a perceived lack of stability in existing structures. An important related issue was found to be the need to integrate ICT more fully in service delivery. The process of integrating ICT in careers delivery was found to be mediated by different interpretations and understandings of technology, as well as an interaction of internal and external factors that shape implementation. Consequently, careers organisations have different ICT workforce development needs, depending on a number of factors, including: emerging and currently diffusing models of careers practice; the shifting nature of the core expertise offered by careers practitioners; current skill levels and the 'technological frames' of different practitioners; the next generation technology; strategic positioning of services within parts of the public-private-community careers sector; and the specification of the goods and services produced within the high to low technology spectrum.

Scenario analysis was used to achieve a better understanding of the integration of ICT into careers support services and its implications for workforce development, with two pivotal dimensions selected, namely, the level of ICT integration within organisations and the level of ICT competency of the workforce. Four possible future scenarios emerged from the research data:

- The first relates to cases where ICT integration appears high, but competence remains low. Here, the ways ICT is used makes low-level demands on the skills of practitioners. Moreover, ICT usage is neither systematically, nor consistently, reflected in the policy or practice of staff development and there is no long-term strategy in place to increase the levels of integration that already exist.

- The second is where ICT integration is low and skill levels are correspondingly low. Organisations here are at the greatest risk. They either lack the interest in ICT or, indeed, are deeply sceptical that ICT can be used to improve performance. Consequently, the use of ICT required by practitioners is limited to a minimal level.
- The third relates to the 'brave new world', where ICT integration is high and workforce competence is also high. Here the use of ICT is integral to all aspects of service delivery. There is a genuine conviction that the full integration of ICT in practice is both possible and desirable. There will be an interest in participating in research and development activities, with an acceptance of the risk involved in experimenting with new approaches and products. Organisations want to position themselves at the cutting edge of developments and will be seen by consumers and competitors as market leaders and trendsetters. In this context, alternative market approaches and new funding models will feature strongly.
- The fourth relates to organisations that employ individuals with a high level of competence and motivation to use ICT. They also have a clear vision of what services the market demands and how these could be delivered. However, higher levels of ICT integration into practice remain somewhat restricted in these cases, mainly because of economic and/or technological constraints. So whilst ICT integration is low, often because of financial restrictions on investment, competence can be high.

Within all of the four scenarios explored, a continuum exists regarding workforce development needs for ICT integration, with careers practitioners who would position themselves at the high skills end of the spectrum, with highly developed levels of competence, compared with those at the lower skills end of the continuum. In addition to shifting the lower skilled members of the workforce higher on the continuum, all members of the workforce will require routine updating on the potential of ICT developments for service delivery. It follows that workforce development needs to be conceptualised at three different levels: human resource development (that is, the skill levels of individual employees); the ICT infrastructure and support (that is, resources and technical support); and the organisational culture (that is, the expectation that employees will engage with ICT and the priority attached to this aspect of CPD). This framework for workforce development, with levels related to particular scenarios, presents a range of opportunities for organisations to plot their existing state of readiness for change and develop a workforce development strategy.

Finally, the report presents suggestions for policy-makers to consider. These include stimulating growth from multiple funding sources and capturing employers' interest in a new and evolving careers support market. Additionally, the need to support workforce development for the careers sector in the use of ICT and self-regulation of the profession are emphasised.

1. Introduction

The UK Commission for Employment and Skills (the UK Commission) has identified the need to improve information, advice and guidance (IAG) services in England because of issues with the quality of matching processes and careers information and advice¹. To achieve this policy ambition, information and communication technologies (ICT) will need to be fully integrated into the delivery of careers services. Such integration would not only have the potential to achieve more for less, but would also increase the flexibility of services and enhance their quality (Bimrose & Barnes, 2010²; Edwards et al., 2010³; Hooley et al., 2010a⁴).

This report explores the workforce development needs of the careers sector as it moves towards a greater integration of ICT, together with the types of private sector arrangements within a public sector context that are indicated by the new political landscape. By so doing, it both complements and extends two recently UK Commission published reports that have examined the way in which technology might enhance careers support (Hooley et al., 2010b)⁵ and the way labour market information (LMI) is currently used in online careers support (Howat & Zaidi, 2011)⁶.

1.1 The changing landscape for careers

Each time the social organisation of work changes, so do society's methods for helping individuals make vocational choices (Savickas, 2008)⁷. Indeed, methods of helping individuals make successful transitions from compulsory education into and through the labour market have, over time, taken different forms (e.g. advice, coaching, counselling, guidance), occupied various structural locations (e.g. schools, employing organisations) and accumulated a varied nomenclature (e.g. careers guidance, vocational counselling, careers

¹ UKCES (2009). *Ambition 2020: World Class Skills and Jobs for the UK*. London: UK Commission for Employment and Skills. Retrieved from http://www.ukces.org.uk/upload/pdf/UKCES_FullReport_USB_A2020.pdf

² Bimrose, J., & Barnes, S.-A. (2010). *Labour Market Information (LMI), Information Communication Technologies (ICT) and Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG): the way forward*. London: UKCES. Retrieved from http://www.ukces.org.uk/upload/pdf/424721%20LMI%20report_2.pdf

³ Edwards, H., Sanders, D., & Hughes, D. (2010) *Future Ambitions: Careers services in Wales*. Cardiff: Welsh Assembly Government.

⁴ Hooley, T., Hutchinson, J., & Watts, A. G. (2010a). *Careering through the Web*. London: UKCES. Retrieved from <http://www.ukces.org.uk/upload/pdf/424720%20-%20Careering%20through%20the%20web.pdf>

⁵ Hooley, T., Hutchinson, J. & Watts, A. G. (2010b). *Enhancing choice? The role of technology in the career support market*. Retrieved from <http://www.ukces.org.uk/commenting/enhancing-choice-the-role-of-technology-in-the-career-support-market>

⁶ Howat, C & Zaidi A. (2011). *The use of LMI in online career direction and learning*. London: UKCES. Retrieved from <http://www.ukces.org.uk/commenting/the-use-of-lmi-in-online-career-direction-and-learning>

⁷ Savickas, M. L. (2008). Helping people choose jobs: A history of the Guidance Profession. In J.A. Athanassou & R. V. Esbroeck (Eds.), *International Handbook of Career Guidance* (pp. 97-114). London: Springer Science + Business Media B.V.

education, information, advice and guidance). Global economic turbulence has marked yet another set of profound structural labour market changes (Wilson, 2008)⁸, posing fundamental challenges to those providing support services for those engaged in labour market transitions globally (Savickas, 2002)⁹.

Across Europe, the Europe 2020¹⁰ strategy illustrates key policy drivers for achieving different types of economic growth:

- *Smart growth*: developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation¹¹;
- *Sustainable growth*: promoting a more resource efficient, greener and more competitive economy;
- *Inclusive growth*: fostering a high employment economy delivering economic, social and territorial cohesion.

The Strategic Framework for European Co-operation in Education & Training 2020¹² also implicitly refers to ‘acquisition of key competences by everyone’ (*Objective 2*), ‘the update and development over a lifetime of job-specific skills’ (*Objective 3*), and ‘the acquisition of all citizens of transversal key competences, such as learning to learn, a sense of initiative’ (*Objective 4*)¹³. With economic growth and the up-skilling of labour forces both key strategic aims across Europe, careers services are increasingly expected to play an important role. In England, a new all-age careers service has been promised for implementation from 2012, with ICT as a key feature. Recent reviews, strategies and government policies in Wales (Edwards et al., 2010)¹⁴, Scotland (Scottish Parliament, 2011)¹⁵ and Northern Ireland (DEL & DE, 2009)¹⁶ have stimulated growing interest in the role of ICT and associated workforce development issues.

Whilst fundamental changes are occurring across the UK related to the delivery of careers services, three separate but overlapping major policy agendas continue to have careers at their centre. First is the *up-skilling* agenda that seeks to address key skill gaps in the workforce, so that the UK can compete globally and play a leading role in economic growth

⁸ Wilson, R. A. (2008). *The Future of Work: What does work mean 2025 and beyond?* London: DCSF/Futurelab. Retrieved from http://www.beyondcurrenthorizons.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/bch_challenge_paper_work_wilson.pdf

⁹ Savickas, M. L. (2002). Reinvigorating the Study of Careers. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 61(3), 381-385.

¹⁰ European Commission Europe 2020. Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm

¹¹ Within the strand for smart growth, three flagship initiatives are proposed, namely, *A Digital Agenda for Europe*, *Innovation Union* and *Youth on the Move*.

¹² European Commission Education & Training. Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc28_en.htm

¹³ ELGPN (2010). *Lifelong Guidance Policies: Work in Progress – A report on the work of the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network 2008-2010*. Finland: The European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN). (p. 64)

¹⁴ Edwards, Sanders, & Hughes (2010) Op.cit.

¹⁵ Scottish Parliament (2011) *Information, Advice and Guidance Draft Consultation Strategy* (unpublished)

¹⁶ DEL & DE (2009) *Preparing to Succeed: Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance* Belfast: Northern Ireland Assembly. Retrieved from <http://www.delni.gov.uk/index/publications/pubs-careers/preparingforsuccess.htm>

(e.g. HM Government, 2007¹⁷; OECD, 2004¹⁸; the UK Commission, 2010¹⁹). Second, is the *lifelong learning* agenda, which aims to facilitate the development of a knowledge society through individuals' engagement in learning and training (e.g. DCSF, 2009²⁰; EACEA, 2010²¹). Third, is the *social equity* agenda, which focuses on fair, inclusive and just processes and practices in the delivery of public services (e.g. DfES, 2003²²; DCSF 2007²³; Women & Work Commission, 2006²⁴; Hughes, 2010²⁵). In addressing these various policy agendas, the careers sector already uses a wide variety of technologies to deliver careers support services across the public and private sectors. These range from the most advanced to the well established and relatively mundane (Bimrose, Barnes & Attwell, 2010)²⁶. However, increasing the current levels of ICT integration in the delivery of services will require systematic approaches to capacity building across organisations located in both the public and private sectors. This is likely to be extremely challenging, because of the shifting landscape in which careers services are being delivered and the shrinking resource base available, due to economic circumstances.

Attempts to nudge²⁷ the careers workforce towards the higher end of the value added spectrum is likely not only to involve skill development, but also broader issues related to the

¹⁷ HM Government & Department for Innovation Universities and Skills. (2007). *World Class Skills: Implementing the Leitch Review of Skills in England*. London: HMSO. Retrieved from http://www.dius.gov.uk/reports_and_publications/~media/publications/W/worldclassskills

¹⁸ OECD. (2004). *Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap*. Paris: OECD. Retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/33/45/34050171.pdf>

¹⁹ UKCES. (2010). *Ambition 2020: World Class Skills and Jobs for the UK*. Wath-upon-Deane, South Yorkshire: UKCES. Retrieved from http://www.ukces.org.uk/upload/pdf/UKCES_FullReport_USB_A2020.pdf

²⁰ DCSF. (2009). *Raising Expectations: Supporting all young people to participate until 18*. Nottingham: Department for Children Schools and Families. Retrieved from http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/documents/raising_expectations_supporting_all.pdf

²¹ EACEA (with Brown, A., Bimrose, J., Barnes, S.-A., Kirpal, S., Grønning, T. & Dæhlen, M.) (2010). *Changing Patterns of Work, Learning and Career Development Across Europe (Final Report EACEA/2007/07)*. Brussels: Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency. Retrieved from http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/publications/2010/brown_2010_changing_patterns_of_working.pdf

²² Department for Education and Skills. (2003). *Every Child Matters*. Norwich: DfES publications. Retrieved from <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/files/EBE7EEAC90382663E0D5BBF24C99A7AC.pdf>

²³ Department for Children Schools and Families. (2007). *The Children's Plan: Building brighter futures*. Norwich: HMSO. Retrieved from http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/childrensplan/downloads/The_Childrens_Plan.pdf

²⁴ Women & Work Commission. (2006). *Shaping a Fairer Future*. London: Women & Equality Unit. Retrieved from http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/publications/wwc_shaping_fairer_future06.pdf

²⁵ Hughes, D.M. (2010). *Social Mobility and Careers Service Provision in England*. London: Careers England.

²⁶ Bimrose, J., Barnes, S.-A., & Attwell, G. (2010). *An Investigation into the Skills Needed by Connexions Personal Advisers to Develop Internet-based Guidance*. Reading: CfBT Education Trust. Retrieved from http://www.cfbt.com/evidenceforeducation/pdf/Warwick_Connexions_WEB.pdf; and Hooley, et al., (2010a), Op. cit.

²⁷ Related to the concept of "choice architecture", where it is argued that the state can be the architect that arranges personal choice in way that nudges consumers in the right direction.

development of high performance work practices within changing organisational contexts. A critical factor will be the role of government in a careers landscape within which more blended public, private and voluntary/community sector arrangements will be a key feature.

1.2 Careers and ICT: embracing innovation?

Careers guidance (or IAG), has been practised in the UK, in one form or another for around a century. Services are notoriously difficult to specify and define, both from the supply and demand sides of the economy. Careers work is highly variable in nature, ranging from counselling, coaching to advice and information and is embedded in a range of contexts, from educational and training provision to outplacement. Personal services (such as one-to-one careers guidance interviews) are hard to standardise, their impact is difficult to quantify (Bimrose et al., 2004²⁸; Hughes & Gration, 2009a²⁹) and those who are most in need are usually the least able to pay (Grubb, 2004)³⁰. Whilst core principles fundamental to high quality services have continued over time (like impartiality and objectivity), there have been radical changes to delivery structures, including the integration of ICT, to greater and lesser extents, in the delivery of services.

The careers profession, however, needs to embrace, further, innovation and change, so that the full potential of ICT can be used to deliver 'more for less' in a manner that motivates users of services to access learning and labour market opportunities. This is the case irrespective of which sub-sector careers organisations are located in. A key challenge will be to identify the kind of action that will be required to stimulate technological transformation across the whole careers sector. This will be crucially important to any strategy deployed to incentivise career professionals and their managers to change their practice by integrating ICT, fully, into service delivery.

1.3 Building on previous work

Previous work emphasises the potential of ICT for increasing the impact of careers guidance (Hughes & Gration, 2009b)³¹. It also highlights the importance of ensuring an iterative relationship between the all-important client perspective and the sector's workforce development needs. What the client wants and how they want services must be pivotal in framing provision. Existing research findings provide a precise indication of what clients want from careers services. Current patterns of ICT usage by young people, for example, are known, together with the types of services they want and how they want these delivered in

²⁸ Bimrose, J., Barnes, S.-A., Hughes, D., & Orton, M. (2004). *What is Effective Guidance? Evidence from Longitudinal Case Studies in England*. Coventry: DfES/Warwick Institute for Employment Research. Retrieved from <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/publications/2004/egr2004.pdf>

²⁹ Hughes, D., & Gration, G. (2009a). *Literature review of research on the impact offers and guidance-related interventions*. (PMS4858a 07/09). Reading, Berkshire: CfBT Education Trust. Retrieved from <http://www.eep.ac.uk/DNN2/Portals/0/IAG/Literature%20Review.pdf>

³⁰ Grubb, W. N. (2004). An occupation in harmony: the roles of markets and government in career information and guidance. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 4(2-3), 123-139.

³¹ Hughes, D., & Gration, G. (2009b). *Evidence and Impact: Careers and guidance-related interventions*. (PMS4858 07/09). Reading, Berkshire: CfBT Education Trust Retrieved from http://www.hecsu.ac.uk/assets/assets/documents/Literature_review.pdf

the future (Bimrose et al., 2010, p.28)³². This research confirmed the existing view that greater integration of ICT in service delivery would be an effective method of reaching this particular client group. However, the way that young people access and use ICT gives a strong indication that online multimedia information, online information with a personalised element and links to reputable sources of information are all priorities for services – though with differentiation built in to reflect age and stage. Provision of efficient methods for fast and rapid communication, through the use of chat rooms, email and social networking, was also strongly indicated. It is also interesting to note that whilst indicating a strong demand for ICT based services, the majority of research participants specified a strong demand for face-to-face interaction, alongside ICT provision.

Other research tracking adult clients over a period of five years (2003 – 2008) similarly indicates how they valued careers guidance when it gave access to expert information and advice (that is, labour market information and employment networks). The same study also provided insights into four distinct career decision-making styles of adults³³ that provide a strong steer for how ICT services will need to accommodate different decision-making styles. The type of careers guidance that adult clients found effective over a five year period had specific outcomes, such as increased self-confidence, motivation and self-efficacy, as well as providing a 'safe-space' to explore options and aspirations (Bimrose, Barnes & Hughes, 2008)³⁴. Again, the current evidence base provides strong signposting for the ways in which ICT could and should be used creatively to deliver the services and support that clients most valued.

Part of the process of increased professionalisation of the sector, which is at the heart of the recommendations proposed by the Careers Profession Task Force in England (commissioned by Government in February, 2010), is the need to strengthen the competence of the workforce for the use of both LMI and ICT (Department for Education, 2010)³⁵. The Task Force drew on recently published research that had identified the particular skills and competencies required by practitioners using ICT to deliver careers support for young people in England (Bimrose et al., 2010)³⁶ that had concluded career practitioners: '...will need, increasingly, to demonstrate a level of proficiency in internet-based technologies at least equal to those of the young people accessing their expertise (p.5)'. Another conclusion from the same research was that this should be done by embedding ICT skills and competencies as central in both initial work-based and off-the-job training (p.13). Similar conclusions also emerged from the recent review of careers services in Wales³⁷.

³² Bimrose et al. (2010) Op. cit.

³³ That is, evaluative, strategic, aspirational and opportunistic career decision-making styles.

³⁴ Bimrose, J., Barnes, S.-A., & Hughes, D. (2008). *Adult career progression and advancement: A five year study of the effectiveness of guidance*. Coventry: Warwick Institute for Employment Research and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills. Retrieved from http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/publications/2008/eg_report_4_years_on_final.pdf

³⁵ Department for Education. (2010). *Towards a strong careers profession: An independent report to the Department for Education*. Runcorn, Cheshire: Department for Education, (p.2). Retrieved from <http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/CPTF%20-%20External%20Report.pdf>

³⁶ Bimrose et al. (2010), Op. cit.

³⁷ Edwards, Sanders, & Hughes (2010), Op. cit.

The research undertaken for this study, therefore, set out to build on what is already known about the needs and preferences of different client groups, so avoiding replication of existing findings. Its focus on the workforce development required to up-skill careers services to deliver demand-led services and how this is likely to be affected by the emerging delivery contexts in which services are likely to be delivered in the future is one other established priority.

1.4 Structure of the report

In addition to this introduction, the report has four sections. The next section (2) examines the new and emerging paradigms for careers services in the UK. Drawing on evidence from a series of interviews with leading figures from within industry and education, it considers what lessons can be learned for services of the future – in response to the varying social, economic and political contexts of the four home countries of the UK. Section 3 focuses on the use currently made of ICT across different types of organisations and country contexts. It assesses the different levels to which ICT is currently integrated in practice across different sector and country contexts, as well as presenting visions for the future. Four scenarios of current models of delivery are developed, with regard to the levels of ICT integration in practice. Using scenario building as an analytic tool, future workforce development needs are considered, with reference to the parameters of the different scenarios. The fourth and final section develops some implications of the findings from this research study for policy makers.

Brief details of the methodology for the research study that underpins this report can be found in Appendix 1.

Please note, since the term used in different sectors for the personnel who deliver careers services varies considerably (for example, career consultant, Personal Adviser, careers adviser, career coach, etc.), the term 'career practitioner' has been adopted throughout this report to refer to all those, irrespective of sector, who are delivering careers services to clients.

2. Transformation of careers services: new & emerging markets

Advances in information communication technologies (ICT) have significantly transformed the way organisations and individuals interact with each other. Careers services and their relationship with clients, customers and/or consumers are becoming increasingly more dynamic and complex with a high demand for online customised products and services catering to the precise needs of individuals, within a time-compressed environment. The term 'customer intimacy' is often used to emphasise the new requirement to understand better and respond to the end user's needs (Goldenberg 2008³⁸; Sauers, 2008³⁹). According to Sauers (2008)⁴⁰, ICT systems will fail if companies do not develop 'intra-personal and inter-personal trustworthy relationships' with the end-user.

The last decade has also witnessed constantly changing business environments wherein revolutionary technologies are resulting in the creation of innovative products with shorter product life cycles and shorter lead-in times. In response, many organisations have recognised that they cannot function alone, with the exploitation of knowledge and building sustainable networks significantly reshaping our economy in the UK and elsewhere (Brinkley, 2008)⁴¹. This has significant relevance to the context of careers service future workforce developments within and across the UK careers sector.

2.1 Rethinking Public, Private and Third Sector services

A radical vision for reforming government has been recently proposed to create a society that is free, fair and responsible (the 'Big Society')⁴² and in which citizens and neighbourhoods drive local priorities and the shape and standard of local services. Decentralisation is the dominant discourse linked to the fundamental redistribution of power for democratic decision-making and public service delivery. Trusting individuals to take control of the decisions that affect them by devolving power and increasing citizen participation, and promoting community ownership are primary goals⁴³. It has been argued

³⁸ Goldenberg, B. J. (2008). *CRM in Real Time. Empowering Customer Relationships*. Information Today Inc.

³⁹ Sauers, A. (2008). *Effective Customer Relationship Management. How emotion Drives Sustainable Success*. Cambria Press

⁴⁰ Op. cit.

⁴¹ Brinkley, I. (2008). *The Knowledge Economy: How Knowledge is Reshaping the Economic Life of Nations*. London: The Work Foundation.

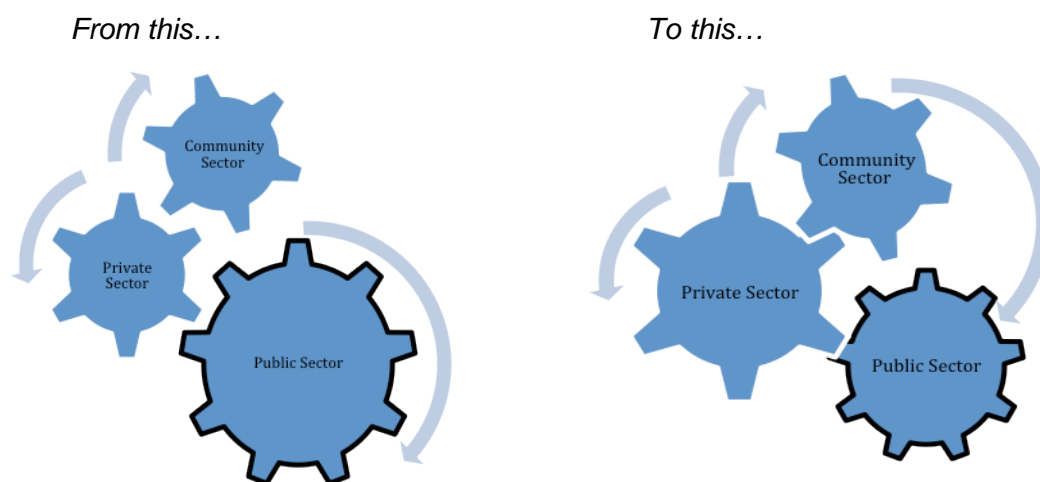
⁴² *Big Society Speech*, Transcript of a speech by the Prime Minister on the Big Society, 19 July 2010. Retrieved from <http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/speeches-and-transcripts/2010/07/big-society-speech-53572>

⁴³ Department for Communities and Local Government (2011). *A Plain English Guide to the Localism Bill*. London: Communities and Local Government. Retrieved from <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/1818597.pdf>

that the 'Big Society' vision is beginning to generate cross-party traction (Sandel, 2010)⁴⁴. Not everyone is convinced however, with sceptics claiming that the 'Big Society' is just a smokescreen for cuts to local government and the public sector. With a growing likelihood of the biggest public sector cuts in post-war history, the question of how these should be implemented most fairly and the question of what scope actually exists for innovation have both taken centre stage. However, across the UK there are significant variations in how this ideology is unfolding through the devolved administrations.

In the context of ICT integration into careers policies and practices across the UK, new systems and programme developments are operating within shifting paradigms of spending cuts, innovation or a combination of both. This will lead inevitably to structural change and the necessity for the integration of ICT, emphasising the need for new workforce development needs, as discussed more fully in section 3, below. It was the changing relationships between public, private and community sector organisations in the short and medium term, regarding the 'actual' or 'anticipated' shrinkage in the size of the public sector⁴⁵ that was investigated in this research: *'Budget cuts have meant we have fewer staff and we have to make further savings'*. Simultaneously, there is an 'anticipated' expansion in the private sector: *'Our organisation is focusing on new investment opportunities in the private sector because this is where we see growth and expansion'*. Also, community sectors are adjusting and adapting to these changes: *'Our services could be under threat if we don't find new partners and new funding streams'*. This shifting paradigm is illustrated below, in Figure 1, though it is important to note that this representation is not to scale:

Figure 1 Shifting paradigms for careers service delivery⁴⁶



As a result of the changing economic and political landscapes, demand for careers support from a broad spectrum of individuals is on the increase, with the emergence of a plethora of new market players and cross-sector partnerships involving public, private and third

⁴⁴ BBC (2011). *Justice: Fairness and the Big Society*. London: The Royal Institution. Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00xyzg7>

⁴⁵ In England this was noted as being particularly prevalent due to the demise of Connexions services

⁴⁶ These diagrams are not to scale: they are used for illustration purposes only.

sectors⁴⁷. The trends are not unique, with the OECD (2010)⁴⁸ reporting that many governments are increasingly using private and non-profit entities to provide goods and services to citizens.

Those operating within the careers support market consequently are experiencing considerable systems change and governments responsible for determining levels of investment in the design of publicly funded careers services are facing tough decisions. Each must develop creative solutions for relevant and cost-effective online careers services.

Findings from this research highlight how there is:

- rising demand for careers support services;
- an increasingly ICT literate generation;
- high levels of consumer usage online;
- benefit to businesses through online advertising revenue;
- significant interest in obtaining individuals' profiling behaviours for marketing and other purposes; and
- new online systems facilitating data exchange between employers, individuals and third parties (such as schools, colleges and universities).

In response to this changing, dynamic environment, there is considerable variety in careers support policies and practices across the UK. At one level, this is unsurprising, given the devolved administration arrangements that exist across the four home countries. However, the multi-layered landscape provides opportunities to learn from, and take strategic advantage of, the opportunities offered by technology, the anticipated expansion of careers support services, together with the 'knock on effect' for workforce development. Policy-makers will have to think through strategies to integrate ICT more fully within careers service delivery and explore possible consequences, as will be discussed in section 4, below.

2.1.1 Variations across the four home countries

In England, a new public sector 'ecosystem'⁴⁹ is gradually unfolding. New Government policies, such as the Education Bill (2011)⁵⁰; Academies Act (2010)⁵¹; National Citizenship pilots (2010)⁵²; Introduction of the Work Programme (2010)⁵³; Local Enterprise

⁴⁷ ACEVO & CBI (2010). *Win Win: The leadership of private and third sector public service partnerships*. London: Centre Point. Retrieved from http://publicservices.cbi.org.uk/uploaded/Win_win_final.pdf

⁴⁸ OECD (2010). *Restoring Fiscal Stability and Lessons for the Public Sector*. Paris: OECD.

⁴⁹ Defined as all the living things in an area and the way they affect each other and the environment.

⁵⁰ The Education Bill (2011). Retrieved from www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmbills/137/11137.i-v.html Part 4, Section 26 and 27 contains amendments to previous legislation, including the duties placed on schools for the provision of careers guidance services in England.

⁵¹ The Academies Act (2010). Retrieved from <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/academies/a0061222/academies-act-2010>

⁵² Prime Minister's office (2010). The National Citizens Service Pilots. Retrieved from <http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/latest-news/2010/07/pm-launches-national-citizen-service-pilots-53775>

⁵³ Department for Work & Pensions (2010). The Introduction of the Work Programme. Retrieved from <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/supplying-dwp/what-we-buy/welfare-to-work-services/work-programme/>

Partnerships (2010)⁵⁴; and Pathfinder Mutuals (2010)⁵⁵ (to name but a few) were cited by research participants as beginning to impact on strategic decision-making, at both centralised and localised levels. The future integration of new technologies into careers practice was indicated predominantly, though not exclusively, within the forthcoming new all-age careers service⁵⁶. Local Authorities were also examining ways to optimise ICT and develop workforce capacity, given their responsibility for delivering a holistic service targeted at young people who have dropped out of education, training and employment, or are 'at risk' of doing so. Schools and colleges are increasingly becoming purchasers of online careers services with existing and new suppliers targeting them within a predominantly free and open market.

Individuals and organisations are 'gearing up' for change, though publicly-funded online careers support services are awaiting further information on the allocated budget and transition plans for the new all-age careers service: *'It's difficult to know how much time and energy to put into online developments when we know everything will change when the new service is launched'*. The demise of many local authority Connexions services has resulted in ICT and workforce developments being put 'on hold' with new players seeking to fill this gap: *'We can offer schools a really good deal through our online matching service and close working relationship with major employers'*.

In England, alliances between public, private and third sector organisations, operating in new types of working relationships, emerged during the research, mostly drawing upon current practices in the Welfare to Work system: *'There is a strong track record in the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) of public, private and third sector alliances and we must learn from this and apply good practice in other areas of government'*. Without exception, new partnerships, new sources of funding for careers service delivery and innovation, to supplement or replace diminishing budgets within government-funded services, featured high on the agenda: *'We can't afford to wait and see what happens; instead we're identifying new partners and funding streams through joint product design and development'*.

In most cases, however, overcoming financial barriers to ensure the delivery of face-to-face and online careers services has proven to be very challenging: *'Uncertainty in the actual budgets available to us this year means we have downsized our workforce and we are looking elsewhere to identify brand new income streams – this isn't easy in a fiercely competitive climate!'*. Interestingly, the parlance of 'markets', 'fierce competition' and 'innovation' was prevalent in interviews with senior executives, policy-makers and practitioners alike.

In contrast, research participants from Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales portrayed an altogether different picture⁵⁷. Whilst a wide range of new education and employment policy

⁵⁴ House of Commons (2010). Local Enterprise Partnerships. Retrieved from <http://www.parliament.uk/briefingpapers/commons/lib/research/briefings/SNEP-05651.pdf>

⁵⁵ Cabinet Office (2010). Pathfinder Mutuals. Retrieved from <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/news/francis-maude-launches-pathfinder-mutuals>

⁵⁶ The budget allocated for this service was not yet published (at the time of writing), so issues concerning future ICT investment and workforce development strategies remain unclear.

⁵⁷ There were, however, significantly fewer participants compared with those from England.

initiatives are implemented in each of these countries, the primary focus is more concentrated on strengthening closer working links across public-sector agencies and with third-sector organisations: *'We are focused on strengthening partnerships between public and community organisations rather than be driven by the private-sector'*. In these countries, the proportion of public sector employees⁵⁸ is greater than in England. Standard procurement regulations and purchasing decisions were generally perceived as a barrier to engaging more fully with the private sector: *'We don't work that closely with private sector companies because our provision is mostly in the public-sector and we have to be very careful with procurement and commissioning arrangements. This doesn't mean we don't talk to private companies but we do have to comply with strict guidelines for commissioning services.'* Further probing revealed the ideology of private sector delivering public and community sector services was certainly less prevalent.

Integrating new technologies into careers practice took different forms in each of these countries:

- Careers Service Northern Ireland has developed its own customised website⁵⁹, including labour market information and access to job profiles. The website has links to all the Sector Skills Councils and to JobCentre Online NI which contains current local vacancies as well as linking to job vacancies in 29 European countries via the European Job Mobility Portal. The official Government website⁶⁰ for Northern Ireland also provides basic careers information and signposting to the Careers Service and JobCentre Online. The Careers Service is currently exploring options for further development of the website to support the differentiated service delivery model and increase accessibility to services across Northern Ireland.
- The Scottish Government and Skills Development Scotland (SDS)⁶¹ have focused on developing a new Careers Information, Advice & Guidance (CIAG) strategy and more in-depth integrated channels of careers service delivery. Work is well underway to build the 'World of Work', a new dynamic web-service based around consumer needs, which will allow greater levels of self-help by individuals seeking information, advice and guidance on careers skills and learning.
- Careers Wales⁶² has undergone a major review that has impacted on its form and function and is now moving into a new stage of web-development. Basically, it is looking at how it can integrate online career planning support into its website, by developing the concept of 'the client's career planning journey'. It is also reviewing how the website can incorporate more interactive tools and technologies to produce an effective channel for self-help and career management as part of a new differentiated service delivery model.

2.1.2 Diversity and differing markets

There is cause to celebrate existing diversity because clearly each country has been innovative in accordance with their individual organisational and financial constraints.

⁵⁸ Office for National Statistics website – Retrieved from <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfir/pse1210.pdf>

⁵⁹ <https://www.careersserviceni.com/Cultures/en-GB/Homepage.htm>

⁶⁰ <http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/>

⁶¹ <http://www.careers-scotland.org.uk/home/home.asp> – For more details visit:

<http://www.ccpscotland.org/assets/files/vssswu/Summarydocuments/SDSCorporatePlanJan10.pdf>

⁶²: <http://www.careerswales.com>, Op. cit.

Research findings show that there is strong desire to learn lessons from the evolving integration of ICT and careers policies, operating in different markets, across all four home countries. Efficient and cost-effective practice need both to be shared and further developed for the common good. At present, there is no clear formal mechanism in place that focuses specifically on cross-fertilisation of integrating ICT and careers practice, or the implications for workforce development.

A further consideration relates to the potential added-value of harnessing knowledge and experience from other sectors in order to further strengthen and innovate careers services in fast changing public, private and third sector settings. How this translates into current practice is discussed below, in section 2.1.3.

2.1.3 Lessons learned from other sectors

Plant (2001)⁶³ indicates that ‘applying market-economy principles to careers guidance and information services implies that guidance either acts as a *market facilitator* (e.g. by helping to balance demand and supply in the labour market), and/or is a *market in itself* (e.g. by selling career development services at a market price)’. The diversity and complexity of careers products and services in the UK (and further afield) has already been mapped⁶⁴. This provides a useful starting point. However, the inter-relationships between government, citizens and service suppliers are in reality cross-cutting themes in other sectors such as health, education, offender management and community development and poverty alleviation. So there is scope for transferring good and interesting policies and practices into and across the UK careers support market. A brief review of NHS reform⁶⁵ and wider public service innovation shows a clear focus on improving public services overall by opening up the system, being competitive and cutting out waste and bureaucracy. Much activity is underway in other sectors where markets are opening up, including online services. It is therefore worth considering what, if any, lessons can be learned from increased use of alternative market approaches that may possibly provide new funding models. Also, to what extent does this impact, if at all, on the workforce within the public sector? This is discussed more fully in section 3, below.

The examples developed in the next section are drawn from research undertaken for this study and are used to stimulate ideas by moving beyond earlier findings (Hughes & Gray, 2004⁶⁶; Watts et al. 2005⁶⁷; Hooley et al, 2010b⁶⁸), which focused on governments’ role in stimulating, regulating and/or compensating for market failure.

⁶³ Plant, P. (2001) *Quality in Careers Guidance*. Paris: OECD and European Commission, November 2001, p.18.

⁶⁴ Hooley et al. (2010a). Op. cit.

⁶⁵ Prime Minister’s speech (2011). *Public Service Reform (17/1/11)*. London: RSA.

⁶⁶ Hughes, D. & Gray, S. (2004). *A Market in Career Provision? Learning from Experiences on the East Coast of America*. CeGS Occasional Paper. Derby: Centre for Guidance Studies, Derby University. Retrieved from: http://www.derby.ac.uk/files/icegs_a_market_in_career_provision2004.pdf

⁶⁷ Watts, A. G., Hughes, D. & Wood, M. (2005). *A Market in Career? Evidence and Issues*. CeGS Occasional Paper. Derby: Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby. Retrieved from: http://www.derby.ac.uk/files/a_market_in_career2005.pdf

⁶⁸ Hooley et al. (2010b). Op. cit.

2.1.4 Alternative market approaches and new funding models?

In any examination of alternative market approaches and funding models in the delivery of careers services, a clear distinction needs to be made between those arrangements in which individuals ‘pay at the point of use’ and those where *funding is provided* by government; charitable organisations; opportunity providers; or embedded careers support from trade unions, professional bodies and employers. The new ‘collective responsibility’ philosophy requires a reorientation in mindsets for organisations and individuals to democratic decision-making and public service delivery. Nudges and incentives from the UK governments indicate a stronger drive towards:

- Culture change: investment in skills;
- Behaviour change: increased use of online services;
- Collective responsibility: doing more locally in communities; and
- Economic Growth: skills feeding growth.

Individuals ‘pay at the point of use’

Existing evidence from the UK and from other developed economies suggests that the market for careers services in which individuals themselves pay is likely to remain small and specialised, largely catering for a relatively wealthy minority. For this study, participants were invited to reflect upon the extent to which technological developments might help create ‘pay-at-the-point-of-use’ in relation to accessing careers services. Could a real payment system ever work? In all cases, participants indicated there was limited appetite for this, given many online products and services are ‘open source’ and freely available, or can be purchased by those who can afford to pay if necessary⁶⁹. For example: *‘We have looked at this in great detail and watched other organisations invest in this approach – it doesn’t work because people generally don’t expect to pay for careers advice as there is no absolute guarantee on the return’*. Also, the issue of those who can afford to pay will do so: *‘Parents who have children in private schools are used to paying fees for extras which may include personal one-to-one careers support and, at the end of the spectrum, high flying managers are often willing to pay because they or their employers can afford this.’*

In broad terms there are three alternative policy strategies for publicly funding careers support:

- resourcing this through public funding as a free service (currently available in the four home countries);
- offering it as a fee-paying service (for example, like that available in independent schools); or
- embedding access to careers support in other provision (for example, within schools curricula, further education and higher education programmes).

Each of the three strategies has problems: the public-funding option is likely to be regarded as too costly; the fee-paying option as excluding those unable or unwilling to pay; the embedding option as endangering impartiality. Therefore a ‘mixed strategy’ is indicated for the future.

⁶⁹Three examples are: www.total-CVs.co.uk/order-online; www.myfuturewise.org.uk; www.getthatjob.net/applications.htm.

In England, embedded access to careers support may now feature within 'Lifelong Learning Accounts' (2011)⁷⁰, though the extent to which this will operate has yet to be decided. Earlier research findings from 'Individual Learning Accounts' (Bosley et. al. 2000)⁷¹, highlight the role careers professionals perform in promoting individuals' investment in skills development and ways of engaging non-traditional learners, though, it was noted that careers practitioner expertise needs to be branded and marketed more effectively to stimulate appropriate demand. Some government form of investment in this is likely to yield added-value returns for both social mobility and economic growth.

Additionally, alternative market approaches and funding models for services designed to *improve individuals' social and economic outcomes* are emerging across the UK, based mainly on different ways of channelling differing sources of funding. Indeed, the six examples that follow are drawn from other allied sectors to demonstrate this point. These include:

- academies and 'free schools'⁷²;
- wholly-owned subsidiary companies in Further and Higher Education;
- social enterprises;
- mutuals;
- social impact bonds; and
- co-funded community alliances.

The potential benefits for developing careers support services are considered in these contexts, which complement existing and essential government-funded public-sector online careers support services, as discussed earlier. The examples do not provide any 'magic solution' in securing funds to provide, maintain and extend service delivery, to support innovation in ICT or to build workforce capacity. Instead, they extend the knowledge base in thinking creatively about future possibilities for greater integration of ICT, providing more services online, tracking individual's progress, and/or developing ICT based products for 'commercial' or 'not for profit' gain. Each has implications specifically for public sector careers services and more generally for workforce development for ICT.

Academies and 'free schools'

In England, the government's Academies Act 2010⁷³ paves the way for the growth of existing publicly funded schools to operate outside of local authority control and for the creation of new 'free schools'. Academies have more freedom than other state schools over their finances, the curriculum, and teachers' pay and conditions. The key difference is that

⁷⁰ DBIS (2010). *A Community of Learners: Lifelong Learning Account*. Presentation delivered at ESCR Seminar, 'Reframing service delivery, professional practice and professional identities in UK careers work', London 01/12/10.

⁷¹ Bosley, S., El-Sawad, A., Hughes, D., Jackson, C., & Watts, A. G. (2000). *Guidance and Individual Learning Accounts*. Derby: Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby.

⁷² Whilst this term specifically relates to England, this is relevant in relation to grammar schools, academies and private schools in other parts of the UK.

⁷³ Retrieved from

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/academies/a0061222/academies-act-2010>

they are funded directly by central government, instead of receiving their funds via a local authority. In addition, they receive money, which would previously have been held back by the local authority to provide extra services across all schools, such as help for children with special educational needs. Free schools set up by groups of parents, teachers, charities, trusts, religious and/or voluntary groups will function as academies and will be funded in the same way – directly from central government. The day-to-day running of free schools will often be by an ‘education provider’ – a group or company brought in by those setting up the school. The provider would not be allowed to make a profit from running the school.

The significant media coverage of academies and free schools demonstrates the opposing views of the government, teachers, professional associations and parents on this initiative. It highlights the tensions between local authority-mediated funding and direct central government funding and the associated issues of control, regulation and accountability.

In our study, the Association of Schools and College Leaders (ASCL) and Local Government Association (LGA) highlighted evidence of new forms of careers support services operating in academies, schools and colleges throughout the UK. For example, The b-Live Foundation⁷⁴ is offering an inter-active careers and community youth site and curriculum programme in over 1,000 schools to over 270,000 young people (aged from 11 to 19) to self-manage and maximise their personal and career development. Major employers provide funding to co-ordinate targeted support across Key stage 3, 4 and post 16 to include careers information, employee visits, work experience and opportunities. b-live manage these initiatives across their schools partnership network whilst also personalising relevant information directly to individual young people through www.b-live.com which also provides secure social networking facilities encouraging young people to showcase their achievements. Schools register young people onto the site as part of an integrated curriculum solution which helps to improve literacy, numeracy and employability skills and provide a fully prepared CV.

In contrast, many local authorities have set up new trading services whereby ‘service offer menus’, fully-costed or linked to *pro bono* arrangements are becoming basic standard practice: *‘We are talking with schools and offering them a menu of services to choose from’*. New career guidance frameworks on online products are being developed in response to particular needs. The funding model is based on institutions’ willingness to pay for careers support services.

As schools in England are given greater autonomy over the services they choose to purchase through their own preferred supplier arrangements the market is changing. At present, this has destabilised traditional arrangements and paves the way for existing and new suppliers to compete. The relationship of Academies and schools to the new all-age careers service remains unclear. Problems relating to access, impartiality, standards and quality assurance, as well as inter-operability between ICT systems and training implications for teachers and careers practitioners remain unsolved. In other parts of the UK, policy-makers, head teachers and college principals may well reflect on the implications of these two particular approaches for the future delivery of careers support services.

⁷⁴ <http://www.b-live.com/?rpath=%2Fmakeadifference%2Findex%2Ecfm%3Ftile%3Dcitizenship>

Wholly-owned subsidiary companies in Further and Higher Education

The Charities Act 2006⁷⁵ allows Further and Higher Education institutions to create wholly-owned subsidiary companies through which certain non-charitable activities can be channelled. Such subsidiaries are not charities and can avoid Corporation Tax by paying any profits to the institution as 'Gift Aid'. Although there are certain tax, marketing and incentivising advantages in channelling activities through wholly-owned subsidiary companies, they must nevertheless be able to demonstrate that they are ultimately fulfilling a public benefit.

The activities channelled through subsidiary companies in Further and Higher Education are varied, ranging from: the provision of bespoke short courses tailored to the training needs of commercial organisations; research and consultancy; and the marketing of specific products and services such as innovative learning materials. For example, Loughborough University has a total of eight distinct wholly-owned subsidiary companies⁷⁶, including CASCAiD Ltd., which produces careers software to assist in careers education and guidance throughout UK and internationally. Reading University has developed Destinations®⁷⁷, which can be installed on a variety of online platforms and customised to higher education institutions' needs through a virtual learning environment. In each case, the funding model is focused on generating sales on a UK and international basis. In the Further Education sector, West Nottinghamshire College has 'Skilldrive' as its commercial arm, within which the bksb tool⁷⁸ has been developed and marketed for enhancing functional skills (English, Maths and ICT) of learners and employees across the UK and further afield. These examples highlight ways in which research and knowledge transfer units in colleges and universities have developed 'spin out' ICT projects, through cross-sector partnerships. It appears there is scope to develop more innovative careers products and online services through these mediums. Further research could help illuminate good and interesting policies and practices.

Social enterprises

Social enterprises in the UK represent a growing and increasingly important sector. They are businesses run for social and environmental purposes and are distinctive from traditional charities or voluntary organisations in that they generate the majority, if not all, of their income through the trading of goods or services rather than through donations. This gives them a degree of self-reliance and independence, which puts them firmly in control of their own activities.

The current government in England, like the previous administration, view the social enterprise sector as an important arm of the localisation, accountability and value for money agenda. Results of the first ever 'State of Social Enterprise' survey⁷⁹ found optimism and growth in the sector, particularly when compared with other businesses. In 2009 there were

⁷⁵ Retrieved from http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/Charity_requirements_guidance/Charity_essentials/Public_benefit/default.aspx

⁷⁶ Retrieved from <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/ar/policy/foi/subsids.html>

⁷⁷ Retrieved from <http://www.reading.ac.uk/ccms/destinations/ccms-destinationshome.aspx>

⁷⁸ Retrieved from <http://www.bksblive.co.uk/Default.aspx>

⁷⁹ Retrieved from http://www.socialenterprise.org.uk/pages/state_of_social_enterprise.html

62,000 social enterprises in the UK contributing £24 billion to the UK economy. The survey found that despite the recession, social enterprises are twice as confident of future growth as typical small to medium enterprises (SMEs), with 48% of social enterprises responding positively as opposed to just 24% of SMEs.

Social enterprise is particularly active in the care and health sectors. Within the NHS, through the 'Right to Request' scheme, organisations can apply for support from the Social Enterprise Investment Fund to create a social enterprise. There are now a total of 61 organisations providing services worth about £900m a year and employing almost 25,000 staff that have transferred to the social enterprise sector through the NHS 'Right to Request' scheme⁸⁰. For example, the Leicester Homeless Healthcare Service (LHHS) applied for funding through the Right to Request scheme in 2009. LHHS operates as a multi-agency one-stop-shop for homeless people, offering a GP service, drop in centre, outreach and night shelter. Visiting agencies also provide classes in numeracy and literacy skills for working life, plus computer training, art and home economics sessions. Can this model be replicated into the careers support sector? The benefits of social enterprises in 'trading their goods or services' equally apply for discrete or embedded provision delivered face-to-face or remotely via ICT. The funding model is based on government, employer, charitable bodies investing in trading goods and services. In our study, careers practitioners whose jobs were 'at risk' identified this as an option for utilising their own knowledge and expertise in community settings. This particular trend was apparent in England, though not in other parts of the UK.

Mutuals

In August 2010, Minister for the Cabinet Office⁸¹ announced the launch of a first wave of Pathfinder mutuals to be run by entrepreneurial public sector staff who want to take control of the services they run. As part of the Government's commitment to support the innovation and entrepreneurialism of front line staff, twelve fledgling public service spin-offs have been chosen to be Pathfinders for this initiative⁸². These pathfinders will be trailblazers for the rest of the public sector – helping Government establish, by learning from the front line, what type of support and structures will best enable the development of employee-led mutuals on an on-going basis. The pathfinders will be supported by expert mentors from some of the country's most successful businesses and leaders in employee ownership models. All the mentors have offered their support for free and will work with staff in the Pathfinder projects to help them develop a range of sustainable, efficient and pioneering employee-led services. It is envisaged that mutuals will develop in NHS trusts, Sure Start centres, children's services, welfare provision and the civil service. Cabinet Office Ministers are open-minded about the form such mutuals and co-operatives will take: some could be independent of the state; some could be joint ventures with the state; and others would include users of the service, such as consumers. Mutuals are deemed to be successful because they give employees an emotional stake in the organisation. A total of £10 million in extra funding has

⁸⁰ <http://www.thirdsector.co.uk/news/Article/1041388/Final-wave-Right-Request-will-create-32-social-enterprises-says-Andrew-Lansley/>

⁸¹ Minister for the Cabinet Office, Francis Maude.

⁸² <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/news/francis-maude-launches-pathfinder-mutuals>

been set aside in to help with start-up costs, supported by a green paper⁸³ on commissioning to make it easier to win contracts and to extend mutuals in the public sector. However, a stumbling block to the spread of mutuals in the public sector could be fears of job insecurity or loss of state-supported pension rights. It is most likely that if public sector staff bid to run a service, they might also find themselves subject to EU law requiring there to be a competitive tendering process. In the context of alternative markets and funding models for career support services, it is too early to say whether or not this option is feasible. Further research would be necessary in monitoring and tracking progress in the areas mentioned above.

Social Impact Bonds

The 'Council on Social Action' was tasked in 2007 to explore alternative models for financing improved social outcomes in the UK. The group began to develop the idea of a 'Social Impact Bond' (SIB) based on a commitment from Government to use a proportion of savings that result from improved social outcomes to reward non-government investors who funded the underlying intervention activities. This work is being taken forward by a London-based 'Social Finance' organisation, whose aim is to develop a UK-wide social investment market providing access to capital and advice to investors and social sector bodies interested in delivering improved social outcomes that result in public sector savings. Social Impact Bonds (SIBs) represent a specific and alternative way of funding social enterprise.

Social Finance is already running a pilot operating in Peterborough prison aimed at reducing re-offending and optimising public sector savings in the future. The Ministry of Justice has sold £5 million worth of SIBs to charitable trusts and wealthy philanthropists who could get a return of up to £8 million after six years if re-offending is significantly reduced⁸⁴. If recidivism does not fall, the investors could potentially lose their money.

It was reported that a number of charities are actively working with Government officials on other schemes where SIBs might be used: cutting school truancy and exclusion; increasing youth employment; reducing acute hospital care by improving community support; and improving provision of fostering to cut the cost of residential placements for children in care⁸⁵. The Young Foundation⁸⁶ makes clear that SIBs rely heavily upon good evidence-based practice and the need to be able to measure, accurately, social outcomes and reliably relate them to specific interventions. In 2009, the Cabinet Office published the results of work to find ways to measure and to 'monetise' the success of social projects⁸⁷. The 'Social Return on Investment Tool' was produced with the hope that it could be used to specify the cash saving of a particular scheme.

Yet even in the case of a relatively controlled environment like a prison and the well-established follow-up and support services for ex-inmates, the challenge of ultimately validating the success of Ministry of Justice SIBs will be significant. This challenge of

⁸³ <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/commissioning-green-paper.pdf>

⁸⁴ <http://www.justice.gov.uk/news/announcement100910a.htm>

⁸⁵ http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/thereporters/markeaston/2011/01/the_name_is_bond_social_impact.htm

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⁸⁶ http://www.youngfoundation.org/files/images/01_10_Socail_Impact_Bonds_FINAL.pdf

⁸⁷ http://www.thesroinetwork.org/component/option,com_docman/task,doc_view/gid,75/Itemid,38/

validating the use of SIBs is likely to be much greater in areas such as supporting teenage mothers, as proposed recently by Graham Allen, MP⁸⁸, where the outcomes are longer-term and where the interacting variables are even more complex. This is a useful example since similar complexities and challenges apply in evidencing the effectiveness of careers support services, whether they are delivered face-to-face, or remotely via ICT. For the UK careers sector this relatively new initiative may be of particular interest. It could widen the debate on how strategies for measuring impact and added value returns on investment.

Co-funded community alliances

The ACEVO and CBI (2010)⁸⁹ reported the development of co-funded public, private and community sector alliances in areas such as welfare-to-work, offender management, health, education and community development and poverty alleviation. Findings suggest 'Welfare-to-Work' has seen some of the most significant cross-sector partnerships through programmes such as the Flexible New Deal and Pathways to Work, with around 40% of subcontractors being third sector organisations. Research participants reaffirmed this earlier finding. DWP has sought to manage their supply chain by connecting potential partners and developing the 'Merlin' Standard to encourage good practice in supply chain management. Similar partnerships have evolved in offender management markets, including 'The Alliance', comprising: Serco, Catch 22 and Turning Point (p.4). A renewed focus on 'outcomes' and 'payments by results' has stimulated renewed interest in co-funded community alliances delivering online (and face-to-face) education, employment and careers support services.

Additional examples of co-funded community alliances between public, private sector and third sector organisations were provided by research participants. For example in Wales, the National Leadership & Innovation Agency (NLIAH) for Healthcare: Well Being Through Work Initiative⁹⁰, is led by Remploy and NLIAH. It draws from different national and EU funding streams, to create a seamless vocational rehabilitation and well-being service to support well-being, social mobility and help reduce individuals' dependency on state provision. In contrast, the JHP Group Ltd in England operates as a training organisation in cross-sector partnerships, for example, with Birmingham City Council and East Birmingham Pump Centre to provide online functional skills, personal social development, employability and life skills to help get the city fit and active. Clearly, differing forms of online careers support services are made available through various co-funded community alliances. New approaches are becoming increasingly common, with careers support embedded to a greater or lesser degree within differing initiatives in all four home countries.

Also, cross-sector partnerships are evolving as commissioners seek to develop improved ICT tracking systems and online services for capturing 'social and economic outcomes' linking in with other personal data. For example within the Ministry of Justice, the National Offenders Management Service (NOMS)⁹¹ has created a 'trading arm', in association with

⁸⁸ <http://www.cypnow.co.uk/news/ByDiscipline/Social-Care/1050038/Allen-review-recommends-early-intervention-body-promote-best-practice/>

⁸⁹ ACEVO & CBI (2010) Op cit

⁹⁰ <http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/829/page/41538>

⁹¹ NOMS and Sun Gard (a supplier of technology-driven effectiveness and efficiency to the Public Sector) have teamed up to maximise the intelligent use of their assets and resources.

SunGard⁹², designed to promote an online 'Case Assessment and Tracking System'. This public-private sector venture connects ICT specialist expertise and public sector 'know how' to produce online services that can be commercialised and promoted both within and outside of the UK. Links to careers support services do exist, but mostly grounded in the Welfare to Work area.

Another example from the public and private sector involves a formal 'Memorandum of Understanding', established between the Recruitment and Employment Confederation (REC) and DWP⁹³. This is specifically designed to deliver face-to-face and online career coaching, as well as outplacement support, for previously high earning adults most disadvantaged by the current economic climate. The lack of connectivity to careers professionals working in the public sector was not considered by either of these parties to be of major concern. If the end goal is to encourage more individuals to access self-help or specialist support services, it seems a missed opportunity for those working in the public sector careers support market not to be more fully engaged in some way to learn from this experience.

Generally, it was argued that diversity in the public, private and third sector markets can potentially deliver better outcomes for communities and help government spend less money. However, the skills of leaders, managers and practitioners in building and maintaining new working relationships, products and services were viewed as crucial.

2.2 ICT and careers service transformation

The majority of research participants from the public sector in England expressed concern about a shift in expectation to start trading their services and expertise: *'We have to get on with this otherwise we may be out of job in the longer-term'*. Also, the culture within government agencies and their 'state of readiness' to commission services to new players in the careers support market was questioned: *'the extent to which cross-sector partnerships have evolved in different areas of public services has varied depending on: the relevant government department's attitude to commissioning; the scale of commissioned services; the pre-existing involvement of third and private sector organisations in service delivery; and the nature of the work'* (CBI).

Some private and third sector organisations reported having fairly limited direct involvement with Government departments responsible for education and business. This was generally viewed as a missed opportunity for contributing to ICT digital strategies and delivery plans for the design of careers services and products, in particular the new all-age careers service in England.

2.2.1 Opportunities

It is possible to take this discussion beyond simply identifying concerns, given there are a number of shared benefits from developing services and sharing expertise with others including:

⁹² Sun Gard is one of the world's leading software technology services companies. Visit:

<http://www.sungard.com/>

⁹³ http://www.rec.uk.com/_uploads/documents/1MemorandumofUnderstanding.pdf

- access to complementary skills and experience;
- cross-sector learning with valuable pooling of knowledge and expertise;
- access to new approaches and new perspectives – working with people with different views broadens horizons and opens up new possibilities; and
- improved outcomes for service users.

Emerging communities of interest in ICT and careers innovation are evident - despite spending cuts - in many public sector careers services. Two examples are the Virtual Careers Centre, developed by Prospects at Milton Keynes⁹⁴ and the Careers Work Innovation website⁹⁵. Some participants noted how, in austere times, innovation and creativity are stimulated, alongside a culture of ‘act now’ rather than a ‘wait and see’ approach. The well known saying: ‘*Necessity is the Mother of Innovation*’ featured prominently in this regard.

Innovation in ICT and careers support services was reported as being driven forward mainly through consumer demand, professionals’ interest and creative ideas generated largely between careers practitioners (in the broadest sense), higher education researchers, trainers and product developers. Apart from a few examples (like the Careers Innovation Website), there is currently no clear mechanism for sharing policies and practices for implementation of ICT and career management skills, within a fast changing careers support market. This, therefore, presents an important opportunity for a more focused government supported drive to increase coherence in this area. Such a drive could bring together existing *ad hoc* approaches within different organisations, regions and UK countries to create a more coherent approach to service delivery for the consumer.

2.2.2 Challenges

The main challenges for those entering or currently operating in the UK careers support market, particularly those working in the public sector in England, were identified as:

- a perceived lack of stability in existing structures, often characterised as an opportunity and / or a threat;
- a lack of funds available to invest in ICT and workforce development, particularly in the public sector;
- a proliferation of new players creating quality assurance, consumer and data protection concerns within a largely unregulated environment; and
- an expansion of cross-sector partnerships operating at various levels.

Also, the proliferation of new players entering the careers support market, especially those reporting high volumes in end-user engagement, highlighted some concerns about professional and non-professional behaviours. More fundamentally, public sector expenditure restraints were reported as instilling a general lack of corporate ‘risk taking’ to invest in mainframe and new software systems. However, the redirection of scarce resources towards clear priorities is essential. Also, integrating ICT in careers services will require basic design principles such as:

- service delivery standards and quality assurance to safeguard the general public;

⁹⁴ <http://www.mysaymk.com/positiveactivities/>

⁹⁵ <http://www.careersinnovation.net>

- provision of self-managed activities as well as mediated services⁹⁶; and
- investment in the development of a highly trained and competent workforce.

2.3 Implications for the UK careers support market

Changes in consumer behaviour and markets are driving forward new online developments to a greater or lesser extent in each of the four home countries. In addition to public sector funds, new sources of funding to sustain services are required to ensure careers support services are available for the public good. Those who can afford to pay for careers support services are likely to continue to do so. A combination of four factors emerged from this study as key drivers for transformation of careers services; consumers and markets; culture change; funding models; and regulation and quality assurance. Each of these will be discussed further.

2.3.1 Consumers and markets

Consumer needs and the people within companies who deliver careers support services were identified by this research as key priorities to inform strategic investment in ICT and the careers support market. Those who remain in the public sector face new challenges in delivering services in different ways that require additional skill training. At the same time, training and development budgets within these public organisations are under considerable strain, as will be discussed more fully in section 3, below. Also, individuals leaving the public sector may not have the right skills and experience to take up new opportunities in the private sector. This will demand the adaptation to a new market culture and a change in the mindsets and skills for many individuals at all levels.

Whilst there is considerable scope for alternative market approaches to be adopted, developed and delivered, this does come with some identified 'risks' linked to safeguarding individuals, particularly those most vulnerable in society, from 'rogue traders'. Those in lower income groups may not have access to ICT and therefore be further disadvantaged. Also, there are those who do not regularly engage with new technology, so for whom ICT is not a solution. Therefore, these individuals will need to be catered for differently in their locality.

What we do know about markets is that where direct information about product quality is absent and environments are uncertain, consumers turn to *proxies* such as disengagement from the 'purchasing' decision or simply going with the status-quo. Clear branding and raising consumer awareness of kite-marked products and services available will be required in a largely unregulated market. Some form of investment from governments to stimulate interest and raise public awareness of careers support services is likely to improve social mobility and provide added-value returns to the economy.

2.3.2 Culture change

Given the array of new players in the market and expertise in public sector organisations, (albeit the latter having been weakened in England as a result of widespread cuts in Connexions services), there remains a significant opportunity to cross-fertilise ideas and actions to redefine ICT paradigms for the delivery of online careers services. A critical issue

⁹⁶ There is growing evidence of this in each of the four home countries public-sector careers services.

is how best to achieve this and the cultural implications associated with change in behaviours for consumers, practitioners, managers and leaders. Those organisations most likely to succeed will have access to existing and potential consumers, ICT expertise and commercial acumen through effective cross-sector partnerships. Examples cited earlier and later on in the report illustrate this point. However, the concept of ‘a market in careers’ remains contested territory, particularly when it comes to ‘who pays?’

2.3.3 Funding models

It is certain that the impact of ICT will continue to grow and take new forms over the next few years. There is an obvious appetite to think of creative solutions and harness ICT more fully. One conclusion from the six alternative market approaches outlined above (section 2.1.4) is that mediated careers support will require some form of policy leverage to stimulate and attract growth in funding from multiple and new sources. The challenge in monetising social outcomes and in demonstrating ‘cause’ and ‘effect’, for example, through Social Impact Bonds (SIBs) is a new brand option that merits further consideration.

At present, exploiting advantages of ICT is being inhibited in many services by time and resource constraints. The challenge is to build a delivery model around investment and innovation with little direct public money. Solutions must be low cost. Clearly, the relationship between ICT development and careers service development should be seen as a process of ‘joint optimisation’ in which technical possibilities are reviewed taking account of consumer needs and purchaser needs. Undoubtedly, funding will be difficult in the future and a ‘mixed strategy’ of funding is likely to emerge.

2.3.4 Regulation and quality assurance

As already argued⁹⁷, regulation and quality assurance is difficult to implement universally online, given the volume of players operating in the market. A ‘quality kitemark’, endorsed by government, employers and the careers sector, underpinning face-to-face and online services, could be developed. Whilst the concept of ‘community regulation online’ is valuable, this in itself will not fully protect consumers – particularly those most vulnerable in society. The careers profession is moving towards ‘chartered status’, through development work undertaken by the UK Careers Profession Alliance, which should help address regulation and quality assurance issues.

2.4 Overall

Findings from this research indicate how paying greater attention to growth in innovative and co-developer activity beyond the public-private sector - whilst at the same time ensuring a necessary element of regulation - is multifaceted and complex. The redirection of resources that are scarce towards clearly identified priorities is essential. However, this paper has a dual focus. Not only did it set out to identify the benefits and implications of alternative paradigms for careers service delivery, but also to examine the need to integrate ICT more fully in careers practice and consequent workforce development needs. These will be explored next, in section 3.

⁹⁷ Hooley et al. (2010b) Op. cit.

3. Use of new technologies in careers practice

As indicated in section 2 above, ICT has played, and will continue to play, a significant role in the transformation of workplaces and working practices. Different explanations exist on the extent to which the organisational outcomes of technological change are chosen and negotiated by individuals or determined by wider market, technical and historical forces, as well as the effects of new computing and information technologies at work (McLoughlin & Clark, 1994)⁹⁸. For example, on the one hand it has been argued that technology drives the need for new skills and knowledge, so organisations and organisational members have to adapt. Technology is regarded to be a determinant. On the other hand, it has been argued that both the development of technical features and the implications of those features arise from active micro-social processes of interaction and negotiation amongst individuals with varied understandings. Technological, social and cultural factors are all elements that have to be considered and negotiated when contemplating change involving ICT (Williams & Edge, 1999)⁹⁹. Irrespective of which explanation of technological change dominates, the process of its integration in careers work and organisations is complex.

3.1 Developing careers workforces for the integration of ICT

A subtle interaction of internal and external factors shapes the implementation of ICT within organisations. Users have assumptions, expectations and beliefs about technology that are both informed by, and inform, ideas and assumptions toward technology found within the organisational culture. This is of particular importance when considering the crucial issue of workforce development in this area. These 'technological frames' are central to an understanding of ICT related behaviour, with incongruent, or inaccurate technological frames associated with problems during the adoption and use of new ICT in organisations (Menold, 2009)¹⁰⁰.

Different careers organisations will, therefore, have varied workforce development needs, depending on a range of factors. These include the:

- emerging and currently diffusing models of careers practice (for example, practitioners required to deliver telephone or e-mail services will have skill development needs that are different from, say, practitioners who are using social networking sites to communicate with clients or those using ICT to mediate labour market information (LMI) to various audiences (Barnes & Bimrose, 2010)¹⁰¹;

⁹⁸ McLoughlin, I., & Clark, J. (1994). *Technological Change at Work* (2nd ed.). Buckingham and Philadelphia: Open University Press.

⁹⁹ Williams, R., & Edge, D. (1999). The Social Shaping of Technology. In W. H. Dutton (Ed.), *Society on the Line, Information Politics in the Digital Age* (pp. 53-67). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

¹⁰⁰ Menold, N. (2009). How to Use Information Technology for Cooperative Work: Development of Shared Technological Frames. *Computer Supported Cooperative Work*, 18(1), 47-81.

¹⁰¹ Bimrose & Barnes (2010) Op. cit.

- changing orientation of various careers sub-sectors (for example, increasing demands on organisations to sell products and services, which could be ICT mediated, etc.);
- shifting nature of the core expertise offered by careers practitioners (for example, from providers of specialist LMI to the personalised interpretation of the meaning of LMI for the individual in a particular context);
- current skill levels (with some practitioners sharing the same office having different needs from others);
- motivation to embrace the potential of the next generation technologies (for example, Web 3.0, portable, personal web); and
- strategic positioning of services within parts of the public/private careers sector (with some parts of the public sector more restricted than others in the use of ICT, because of, for example, child safety issues).

A further consideration for workforce development in this area relates to the value-added dimension. For example, leading edge ICT careers service deliverers, like some higher education careers services, are part of networks or clusters. Organisations in these clusters (or those wishing to diversify into these clusters), will need to possess the skills required to operate in these networks, in the interests of developing their businesses. This is likely to have spill over effects (for example, group training activities with other organisations in the network related to the types of skills required to deliver services may be feasible).

3.2 Current practice

Previous UK Commission research has explored the potential of web 2.0 and web 3.0 technologies for careers work (Hooley et al., 2010a)¹⁰², particularly with regard to the use of labour market information (Bimrose & Barnes, 2010)¹⁰³. The need for workforce development in ICT was highlighted, but not examined in detail, in either of these publications. Understanding the future workforce development needs of the careers workforce for the integration of ICT requires an assessment of the current state of play. For this small-scale study, therefore, research was carried out which focused on the position regarding the integration of ICT in careers practice, existing workforce capacity in this area and likely future developments. Details of the research methodology can be found in Appendix 1.

Information for the study was collected on:

- the levels of integration of ICT in careers practice;
- the timelines for the integration of ICT into careers practice;
- the main drivers for the introduction of ICT across organisations;
- the extent to which the impact of ICT in practice has been evaluated;
- the organisational implications of integrating ICT in practice;
- future plans for the introduction of ICT;
- visions for the future landscape, so far as the integrated use of ICT in practice is concerned; and finally

¹⁰² Hooley et al. (2010a) Op. cit.

¹⁰³ Bimrose & Barnes (2010) Op. cit.

- workforce capacity issues.

3.2.1 Levels of integration of ICT in careers provision

The first point to note is that the interpretation of 'ICT' varied across different organisations. Often, clarification was sought regarding what, exactly, was meant by this term. A broad interpretation was adopted for this study that included: the routine use of information management systems (both government and corporate); emails (for communication with clients and for delivery of guidance); on-line forums; social networking (Facebook, Twitter, Linked In); telephone guidance; the use of a wide range of website software programmes (including diagnostic packages); the use of camcorders, skype and video conferencing; e-portfolios; dissemination of information (especially labour market information); and different approaches to client self-help (e.g. providing direct access to clients to the internet through resource centres).

Given the range of definitions of ICT being operated, it was perhaps unsurprising that the purposes for which ICT are currently integrated across the careers organisations represented in this study were located along a 'high to low' continuum.

Low ICT integration

At one end of the spectrum were those organisations that did not feel that ICT was integrated all that much in their practice. Specific reasons varied across delivery contexts, though a common thread was identified as the impact of policy. For example, where financial survival depended on achieving certain targets and where these targets could be met without the use of ICT, then its integration in practice more broadly had become a second order priority.

High ICT integration

At the other end of the spectrum were those organisations where ICT is already integrated into practice to a high level. In these cases, its use is built into the very fabric of service delivery through organisational policy that has come from the top down. Because of the degree of senior management commitment, then resources had followed to support this aspect of service delivery. From the user perspective, the on-line environment available to users is engaging and coherent. Services are personalised and responsive to user need, supporting customers/clients to be more self-reliant. It is very easy for users to contact careers specialists and experts in different ways (email, telephone, chat rooms, messaging, etc.).

It is these cases that provide the most innovative, inspiring and forward thinking approaches for delivery of services using ICT. Moreover, it is these organisations that are 'future-proofing' themselves, by steady and incremental investment in relevant continuing professional development for all staff and the upgrading of hardware and software. Their visions of the future have ICT at their heart, with service delivery closely aligned with its current and future potential. In one part of the higher education sector, for example, the overarching institutional policy of delivering courses more flexibly, efficiently and effectively

through the use of ICT has ensured that technology is centrally embedded in careers services as part of its core business.

Notwithstanding the considerable variation in practice indicated above, particular trends can be identified that relate to the integration of ICT in the delivery of careers services. It should be noted that although the number of participants in the study is relatively small, there was a representation of both public and private sector organisations, with no discernible differences aligning with these differences. Trends identified from this study follow:

- Despite a steady increase in the integration of ICT in careers practice, its most common usage relates to the dissemination of information (e.g. Labour Market Information) and various administrative tasks (e.g. client tracking through Management Information Systems).
- Where ICT has been integrated into guidance practice, strands of delivery are kept more-or-less separate (i.e. telephone guidance, email guidance, web-based, etc.). Full integration seems some distance away.
- Innovative use of particular Web 2.0 functionalities are evident (e.g. social networking and discussion forums) and there were examples of creative forward-thinking regarding the potential of Web 3.0 for the delivery of enhanced services to clients. These represent beacons of good practice.
- Integration of different methods of ICT delivery in practice have tended to develop in something of an *ad hoc* manner – typically initiated by a single individual (not necessarily at management level) who was highly motivated, passionate, had a personal interest and was also proactive in taking their ideas forward.
- Fundamental issues, however, remain unresolved. Safety, security and privacy for the users of many internet services are subjects of national debates. For careers services (especially for young people), these combine with issues related to data protection and confidentiality. Organisational firewalls, consequently, are erected for safeguarding and security, but prevent the use of certain ICT features (like particular social networking sites) by practitioners delivering services. These types of restrictions represent a barrier to ICT integration and inhibit creativity and innovation.

3.2.2. Timelines for implementation

In planning workforce development for ICT integration, it is necessary to have a sense of the timescales required for the introduction of ICT within organisations. For most that participated in this study, a timescale of between 5 to 10 years was identified. However, it became clear that the integration of ICT for different purposes had been incremental, with answers about timelines qualified in the following ways:

- The most significant phases of development had occurred over the past five to ten years, though ICT had been used in a marginal way for certain purposes over a longer period.
- Different timelines were clearly discernable for different strands of ICT integration.
- Definitive milestone for some organisations dated from the award of particular contracts (e.g. August, 2010 for Next Step).

3.2.3 Drivers

An understanding of the drivers that stimulated the organisations that have already gone some distance down the road of ICT integration is likely to be a key factor in incentivising

others in the future. Exactly what motivational influences triggered some organisations to embrace ICT much more fully than others?

- *Improving quality*: the most frequently identified driver was the desire to improve the quality of services to clients. ICT was seen as having the potential to do this in a number of ways – like providing a greater range of services, more flexibility and being able to serve geographically dispersed populations more effectively.
- *Cost effectiveness*: improving the cost effectiveness of services came a close second. Whilst many recorded their concern about the limitations of using ICT to deliver careers guidance services, financial constraints meant that more flexible (and cheaper) methods of delivery were becoming an imperative: ‘*We have to deliver a service that makes sense financially*’.
- *Policy trends*: these were also indicated as significant – organisations had picked up that there was a clear steer towards the greater use of ICT in public service delivery.
- *Evidence-based practice*: ICT was seen as a mechanism for developing an evidence-base that could be used to argue the case for continued financial support: ‘*Got to meet targets and increase impact.*’ In these cases, ICT was seen as a mechanism to gather evidence of impact, rather than being a feature of service delivery about which evidence needed to be gathered.

3.2.4 Evaluation

Little evidence exists that provides insights to the precise ways in which ICT enhances services to clients. In particular, how the costs of services delivered on a face-to-face basis compare with remote methods. Given the stage of ICT integration into careers practice, one area of exploration was the extent to which organisations were evaluating its integration on a routine basis. In what ways was ICT improving services to clients and at what cost? Clearly, a good deal of thought and resources are being committed to the evaluation of different aspects of ICT by some organisations, with approaches to evaluating the impact of ICT on service delivery falling into two broad categories: generic and specific.

- *Generic*: the most common response related to generic evaluations of services being routinely undertaken with clients – these evaluations collected details of whether services were satisfactory to clients and in what ways. These types of evaluations were regarded as covering ICT, by implication, with some aspects of its integration (e.g. the extensive use of websites) commonly probed. Particular mention was made of the evaluations of national management information systems, which were required for the delivery of some contracts.
- *Specific*: for those organisations with high levels of ICT integration, it was notable that systematic and focused pilots were carried out of every initiative before their rollout. This could involve results from pilots being presented to Management Boards, so that organisational policy could be developed or amended where necessary. It was not clear, however, the extent to which these evaluations focused on cost-effectiveness as well as service improvement.

3.2.5 Organisational implications

- *Workforce capacity*: the need to develop the skills and competences of careers practitioners to deliver IT based services were the main concerns of organisations probed about the implications of greater levels of ICT integration in service delivery. This was highlighted as an on-going and urgent concern, partially because the rate at

which technology was developing exerted a particular pressure for staff to be kept up-to-date with the latest trends and innovations and partly because it was recognised that a significant proportion of the workforce required remediation in this area.

- *Organisational infrastructure*: multiple problems were identified. At a national level, bandwidth was deemed insufficient in many areas to run the types of ICT services required (for example, it inhibited the offer a virtual online careers service in one area). Additionally, management information systems that had been imposed through particular contracts were placing significant constraints on the ability of services to innovate as they were regarded as '*not fit for purpose*', with the consequence that '*too much time was being spent on a system that wasn't working!*'
- *Policy*: two layers of political implications were identified. One was at the level of organisational policy, where restrictions were common, relating to firewalls and forbidden key words, for websites that could not be accessed by careers practitioners and/or used. This had particular implications for harnessing the potential of social media. The other was at the level of local government policy. Typically, this related to ICT policies in place designed to safeguard young people and vulnerable adults.
- *Cost*: services delivered in either the public or private sectors are fragile and vulnerable to market forces and policy change. Consequently, they had developed an intolerance of any 'risky' innovations that are an inevitable feature of any type of ICT-related innovation, because of the lack of any margin for error with the 'payment by results' system imposed by some contracts. Even where a payment by result system was not directly implemented, the cost of updating the technical infrastructure to support ICT innovations and associated workforce development activities were regarded as risky investments.

3.2.6 Future Plans

Without exception, ICT featured in the future plans of all organisations in the study. For some, the ambition and reach of these plans were contingent on contracts. Not only whether they would be awarded continuation funding, but also whether the potential existed within the budgets for innovation. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the scale of future plans for greater integration of ICT related to the size of the organisation and the level of management commitment. More than one had already convened working groups with briefs ranging from shifting more services on-line, to updating and upgrading websites or developing ICT based products for commercial gain. In summary, a continuum was evident from:

- highly strategic [with groups already convened to direct direction/vision]; to
- highly problematic [resource constraints/contract driven].

3.2.7. Future landscape

ICT figured prominently in all future visions of careers provision. It fitted within the political vision of a 'Big Society' with dramatically reduced support for public services, with ICT 'filling the gap'. It was also seen as a central feature of the more personalised, responsive services demanded by new generations of clients who could be supported to become more self-reliant. One view expressed indicated how ICT development would be 'led by the private sector', with excellence eventually 'leaking' into the public sector. Another view related to the pressing need to re-brand and re-market careers services, with ICT a central feature.

Hovering over all future visions, however, was the spectre of financial constraints. For some, uncertainty regarding funding regimes was so overwhelming that it was difficult to provide any concrete substance even to short term implementation plans. Those feeling less threatened saw a future where there would be a shift away from ICT used primarily to deliver information – to a range of services that not only expanded and complemented information-giving, but offered added value in terms of the guidance process overall.

Another significant thread of thinking related to the aspiration to develop a fully integrated use of mobile technologies in service delivery – whilst recognising the considerable resource implications.

3.2.8 Workforce capacity

Training policies to support the integration of ICT appear to remain largely at the level of aspiration, with longer-term strategies largely absent. The identification of training needs for specialist ICT support tended to be largely reactive: *'We know this is a gap and we're not attending to it routinely'*. Ad hoc requests for support (sometimes identified through appraisal, sometimes as a practitioner highlighted a specific need) were typically dealt with on a case-by-case basis, rather than through a systematic, proactive and developmental approach. This can be explained, partly at least, by the lack of dedicated budgets for the purpose: *'We do not have an ICT training budget'*. Particular training needs were highlighted. Technical competence was one area that was accepted as a pressing training issue for some: *'Some require basic training'*. Overcoming attitudinal barriers to the potential of ICT to deliver in-depth guidance remotely were another training need: *'There is a practitioner reluctance to accept that it is possible to deal with complex issues remotely'*.

Three other relevant issues emerged as significant for publically funded organisations and those within the community sector: the consequences of the contracting process for training investment, the impact of targets on upskilling and reskilling; and the backlash that occurred where practitioners had been forcibly exposed to inadequate ICT systems for managing client information:

- Contracting arrangements: Organisations were reluctant to invest resources in training where contracts remained uncertain. Indeed, the development of workforce competence in this area was regarded as problematic: *'With the uncertainty around contracts, we're not going to train over 1,000 people in ICT if they're going to disappear!'*
- Even where a budget for continuing professional development (CPD) existed, there was a danger it was not being used for the purpose it was intended because target requirements took priority over all needs: *'We can only release practitioners for CPD when targets are being met.'*
- Problems created by information systems that were deemed *'not fit for purpose'* were making it even more difficult to persuade practitioners whose confidence or motivation was low to engage with ICT: *'The more negative experiences CAs [careers advisers] have of technology based systems, the more difficult it is to persuade them to embrace its usage more widely in practice. Total frustration with this system!' and 'Every time one of these systems fails, resistance increases'.*

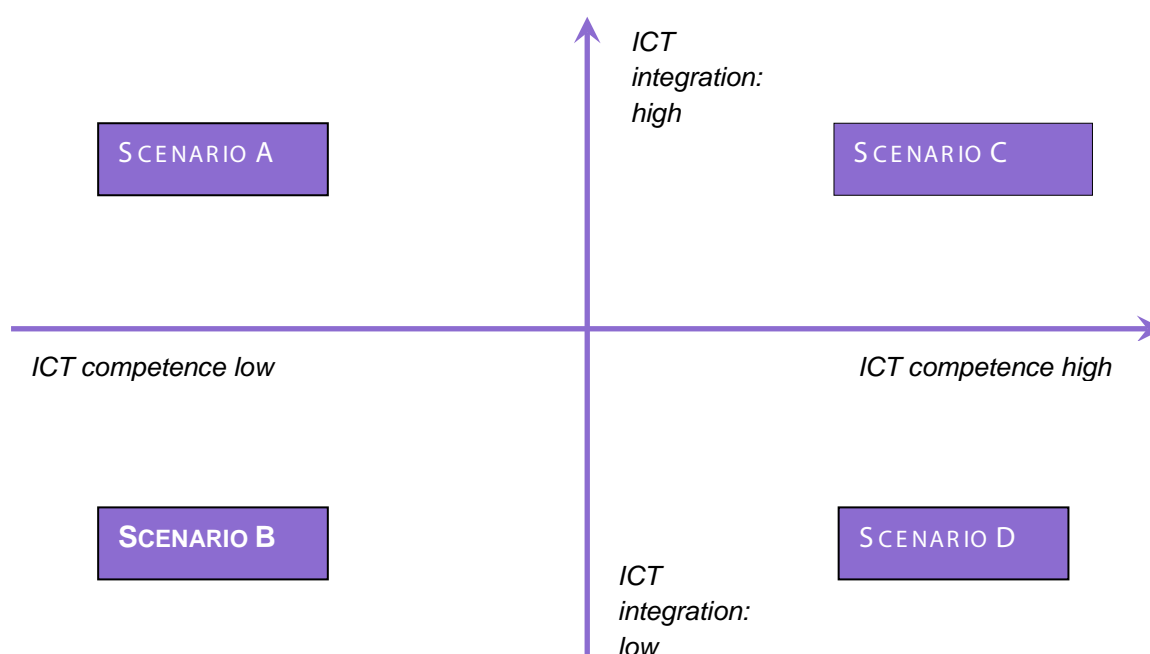
Whilst these were particular issues for the public and community sectors, within a free market system, they may still represent problems for service delivery.

3.3 Modelling workforce capacity development through scenario analysis

Scenario analysis is a process of exploring possible events by considering alternative outcomes. In so doing, it has the ability to simplify that which is complex, for the purpose of understanding underlying trends and possible futures. In applying this approach to the integration of ICT into careers organisations, two pivotal dimensions have been selected, namely, the levels of ICT integration within organisations and the levels of ICT competency of the workforce. These dimensions are, of course, not the only ones that are important in thinking about future scenarios for careers organisations. Client/customer needs and expectations are also crucial (see section 1.3, above), as are technical, economic, social and political parameters for delivery (see section 2, above). Here, however, the purpose is to focus on possible scenarios of ICT integration in careers, with workforce development a key issue in planning future delivery that is desirable and achievable.

Four scenarios will be discussed, below, that focus on skills supply and demand within the careers sector, with special reference to ICT. Figure 2 provides a diagrammatic representation of the four scenarios, or models relating to the potential levels of ICT integration within an organisation, in parallel with the ICT skill levels and needs of the workforce.

Figure 2 Modelling workforce capacity development: scenario analysis



3.3.1 Scenario A: ICT integration high, competence low

The first scenario relates to cases where employees across organisations are required to use technology routinely, for very specific purposes. Standardised labour market information (LMI), for example, could be made available mainly through a branded portal, which (by

default) becomes the main mechanism for practitioners to access and disseminate specialist information for clients. However, creative use of LMI sources is restricted and practitioners are discouraged (or prevented) from producing highly personalised information in response to particular client need. Other examples of this type of routine use of ICT would be for the management of client data through a centralised system, and/or basic levels of communication with clients through the use of emails and telephone. The management of data is routine administration and the nature of the communication typically tends to be one way – by practitioners to follow-up clients or remind them of pending appointments, etc.

Consequently, whilst the level of ICT integration appears to be relatively high, the way it is used makes low-level demands on the skills of practitioners. Moreover, ICT usage is neither systematically, nor consistently, reflected in the policy or practice of staff development. There is no long term strategy in place to increase the levels of integration that already exist, in response to developing markets for services or to develop workforce capacity in this area in anticipation of technological development. The use of ICT remains at a fairly basic level, so that the ICT competence of the workforce correspondingly low.

The overall prospect of these types of organisations embracing future technologies is poor, with the risk of consumers of services increasingly regarding the service offer as irrelevant to their needs. In a highly competitive market, this type of organisational scenario is likely to risk failure, in the medium to longer term.

3.3.2 Scenario B: ICT integration low, competence low

Organisations here are at the greatest risk. They either lack the interest in ICT or, indeed, are deeply sceptical that ICT can be used to deliver high quality guidance services effectively and efficiently. Consequently, the use of ICT required by practitioners is limited to a minimal level – perhaps to recording client details in a central Management Information System (MIS) and using email for communication purposes. The integration of ICT into all aspects of service delivery is regarded as a low priority, because of economic pressures. The lack of interest and/or scepticism is reflected in the lack of any strategic organisational policy for either its integration in practice beyond that required for statutory administrative purposes, or in the routine assessment of continuing professional development (CPD) needs.

Risk of failure is high in the short term, in a competitive market. Organisations do not position themselves for the adoption of technological innovation, so services are likely to become uncompetitive. Employees who have the capacity and interest in the integration of ICT to make services more efficient and higher quality to clients are likely to seek out alternative employment contexts that permit the development of these skill sets.

3.3.3 Scenario C: ICT integration high, competence high

In this ‘brave new world’ scenario, the use of ICT is integral to all aspects of service delivery. There is a genuine conviction that the full integration of ICT in practice is both possible and desirable. ICT is embedded in the organisational strategic policy and will have been for some time. This will be evident both in the resources available for ICT infrastructure support and for related workforce development. Equally, there will be an expectation within the organisation that practitioners will become competent in the use of ICT at least to a level

necessary to deliver the services dependant on this method of delivery. Training support for up-skilling and re-skilling will be available to employees, who will be expected to take full advantage of opportunities available. This culture of expectation is likely to attract applicants to these types of organisation who are already familiar and competent with ICT – keen to expand their skill sets by applying them within their workplaces.

There will be an interest in participating in research and development activities, with an acceptance of the risk involved in experimenting with new approaches and products. Organisations want to position themselves at the cutting edge of developments and will be seen by consumers and competitors as market leaders and trendsetters.

3.3.4 Scenario D: ICT integration low, competence high

The final scenario relates to organisations that employ individuals with a high level of competence and motivation to use ICT. They also have a clear vision of what services the market demands and how these could be delivered. However, higher levels of ICT integration into practice remain somewhat restricted in these cases, mainly because of economic and/or technological constraints. It may be difficult to find the financial investment necessary to upgrade or expand the technical capacity of the organisation. Or there may be a problem of incompatibility of ICT systems between the supplying careers organisation and potential consumer organisations (like an educational institution, for example). There may even be problems with the digital infrastructure, which may be inadequate to support the ICT-based practises required (for example, within a remote geographical area where broadband width is insufficient to deliver services required).

The motivation to integrate ICT is high, as well as the competence of the workforce. A future vision can also be articulated. Survival prospects are fair, depending on the resolution of the economic and/or technical constraints.

3.4 Overall

The adoption of technology within organisations is a complex, inherently social, developmental process. Individuals construct unique, yet malleable perceptions of technology within their organisational contexts, which influence their adoption decisions (Straub, 2009)¹⁰⁴. It follows that successfully facilitating the integration of technology must address cognitive, emotional and contextual concerns.

Within all of the scenarios explored above, a continuum will exist regarding workforce development needs for ICT integration. There will be careers practitioners positioned at the high skills end of the spectrum, with highly developed levels of competence, compared with those at the lower skills end of the continuum. It follows that workforce development needs to be conceptualised at three different levels:

- the individual employee (where particular skill gaps exist or where an employee has demonstrated the ability to receive specialist training to lead on a particular development – like use of social networking);

¹⁰⁴ Straub, E. T. (2009). Understanding Technology Adoption: Theory and Future Directions for Informal Learning. *Review of Educational Research*, 79(2), 625-649.

- the nature of ICT services the organisation wishes to offer (where an organisation decides to develop into particular markets, like on-line guidance); and
- the broad level of organisations (where there is a need to up-skill and/or re-orientate the current workforce for a shift towards delivery of services with fully integrated ICT).

Recruitment policies should also be within scope. Job descriptions that reflect the organisational policy regarding ICT integration are indicated, with skills and/or experience of particular ICT functionalities specified as desirable, or in some cases, essential.

From both the discussions of alternative structures for delivery and the potential impact of higher levels of ICT integration on delivery, suggestions for policy-makers have emerged and are presented in section 4.

4. Suggestions for Policy-Makers

This study has been undertaken in the context of ICT developments significantly transforming the way organisations and individuals interact. Governments across the four home countries in the UK are under pressure to ‘achieve more for less’ as a result of austerity measures and public spending restraint. All are looking for answers to how best to integrate ICT more fully to increase the impact of services and are considering possible workforce development issues.

The conceptual model for public sector intervention in the careers support market, developed by OECD (2004)¹⁰⁵, Hughes & Gray (2004)¹⁰⁶ and Watts, Hughes & Wood (2005)¹⁰⁷, as reported by Hooley et.al. (2010b)¹⁰⁸, remains both robust and valid. The distinction made in governments’ roles to stimulate and quality-assure the market, and/or compensate for market failure provides a useful lens by which future policy can be developed, particularly with regard to the integration of ICT into careers practice.

There is a strong desire to learn lessons from the evolving integration of ICT and careers policies, operating in different markets, across all four home countries. Efficient and cost-effective practice needs to be shared and further developed for the common good. At present, there is no clear formal mechanism in place that focuses specifically on cross-fertilisation of ICT integration and careers practice, alongside implications for workforce development. Policy-makers and senior executives responsible for ICT strategies in public sector careers services should come together to do so.

In the absence of a more coherent careers support market in the UK, there is likely to be consequences of ‘market confusion’ and ‘market failure’. What we do know about markets is that where direct information about product quality is absent and environments are uncertain, consumers turn to proxies such as disengagement from the ‘purchasing’ decision or simply retaining the status-quo. Clear branding and raising consumer awareness of kite-marked products and services available is required in a largely unregulated careers support market. Some form of investment from governments to stimulate interest and raise public awareness of careers support services is likely to improve social mobility and provide added-value returns to the UK economy.

4.1 Stimulating growth in funding from multiple sources

Funding is problematic in the current fiscal climate and alternative approaches and models are now necessary. Consumers and people within companies who deliver careers support services were identified within this study as key to informing strategic investment in ICT and the careers support market. The six alternative approaches and funding models outlined in section 2, above, demonstrate the potential for innovation in ICT developments within the careers sector, by drawing upon lessons learned from other sectors. Some form of policy

¹⁰⁵ OECD (2004), Op. cit.

¹⁰⁶ Hughes & Gray (2004), Op. cit.

¹⁰⁷ Watts, Hughes & Wood (2005), Op. cit.

¹⁰⁸ Hooley et al. (2010b), Op. cit.

leverage is required to stimulate and attract growth in funding from multiple and new sources. This could be achieved by:

- embedding ICT and innovation objectives linked to cross-sector partnerships within formal delivery contracts with clear deliverables; and
- examining the six alternative approaches and funding models in more detail for optimum solutions to yield more ICT innovation across the careers sector. This could involve one or a combination of approaches. The critical importance of engaging employers, further and higher education ‘spin out’ units and technology solutions experts working with careers practitioners to expand and develop online services and products is essential.

The challenge is to build investment and innovation with little direct public money. Solutions must be low cost. Governments could also stimulate cross-fertilisation of innovatory ICT policies and practices from within and outside of the careers sector. This could occur at three levels by policy makers in the four home countries, as follows:

- sharing digitisation strategies and working more closely within cross-sector partnerships, involving public-private and community sector organisations, to achieve greater efficiency gains;
- creating opportunities for these cross-sector partnerships to focus on ICT and careers support and lessons learned from DWP could be helpful in this regard; and
- developing a preferred supplier arrangement linked to a kitemark quality standard that assures quality provision and helps eliminate ‘rogue traders’.

4.2 Supporting innovatory careers initiatives through the use of ICT

At present careers innovation activities are based mainly on goodwill, self-funding initiatives and volunteer activities that pose threats to their medium to long-term sustainability. The role of UK Governments in encouraging growth of innovative and co-developer activity, whilst at the same time ensuring a necessary element of regulation, is complex but essential. Acknowledging the contribution made by currently existing examples may be all that is required to support and encourage further such developments.

4.3 Stimulating employer interest in the career support market

There is a need to re-engage employers’¹⁰⁹ interest in the career support market to enhance service design and product development. There is an appetite to develop new services and products and to harness enthusiasm (especially young people’s) in using social media. With the next generation technology on the horizon, a digital strategy that supports and encourages the provision of mobile devices to deliver personalised services to clients/customers is needed. There is an important role for government in addressing the need to keep recipients of services safe and respecting their confidentiality, whilst at the same time loosening restrictions that result in organisations and local government organisations being obligated to impose restrictions on the use of some types of

¹⁰⁹ The term ‘employers’ is used in a broad sense to convey the critical importance of employers from within and outside the careers support market coming together to share relevant ICT and business development expertise.

technologies (for example, banning the use of social networking sites) because of fears related to safeguarding users of services.

Careers support services may feature within Lifelong Learning Accounts in England (2011), though this yet to be fully determined. Policymakers may find it helpful to examine in more detail the relationship between 'pay at the point of entry' through a new voucher arrangement, drawing upon lessons learned from previous research findings. It would seem this area merits more in-depth consideration between the careers profession, employers and government policymakers.

4.4 Self-regulation of the profession

Clearly, it is critical that the client/consumer is protected. In particular, those most vulnerable in society and in low income categories where access to ICT may be limited. Government cannot merely allow 'market forces' or 'online community generated' regulation since these alone are insufficient to provide overarching consumer protection. The careers profession can provide self-regulation through 'registered' or 'chartered' membership to which policy makers can lend weight, as well as introducing regulatory support through the endorsement of 'kitemarking' for online and face-to-face careers support services, as mentioned above. Branding and advertising careers support services will help raise consumer awareness and protection which could be achieved in line with a new chartered status for the careers profession and 'kitemarking'. In this context, there is scope to consider with careers professionals what other strategies could be adopted to eliminate 'rogue traders'.

4.5 Supporting workforce development for the sector in ICT

The model for scenario analysis outlined in section 3, above, provides a framework that could be extended beyond individual organisations as a benchmarking tool for UK careers provision as a whole. The long-term objective is for a future model in which scenario C is the end-goal. Clearly, a significant gap exists between the current status and future vision, with the implications for policy-making being considerable in terms of meeting the needs and expectations of the current and future workforces. There is potential for governments in the four home countries to:

- bring together leading experts in developing and implementing ICT systems and those involved in public-private-third sector alliances to help address the skills gaps that exists within the current careers sector. In particular, it will be important to include ICT developers with a proven track record of 'end-user' design
- provide a clear steer on the content of both initial training and continuing professional development (CPD), that profiles the importance of ICT as a mechanism for delivering careers guidance;
- lend support to the urgent need to open up LMI data sources for careers guidance. At the moment, there are restrictions placed on both the access to some forms of LMI data and the form that allows use for careers guidance purposes¹¹⁰.

¹¹⁰ For example, the availability of course data is patchy and inconsistent, not being provided in the standard XCRI (eXchange of Course-Related Information) format.

4.6 Modelling good practice by the use of on-line training

It has been found that misconceptions and misunderstandings on the part of individuals relating to the introduction of ICT into workplaces ('incongruent technological frames') are associated with problems during the application and use of ICT in organisations. One way of challenging these types of misconceptions is through the use of ICT for online training. Currently, there is little online provision, which is impartial (that is, not designed to sell products) and of a high quality (for example, accredited to some recognisable standard), that can be accessed by careers practitioners. If this were available, it would address two key objectives for workforce development: a) it could address the knowledge and understanding needs of careers practitioners around particular skill gaps; b) it familiarises learners with ICT functionalities and by so doing, increases confidence and stimulates interest in the use of this media.

4.7 Supporting the adopting of ICT within careers services

This study has illustrated the complex interaction and relationships of internal and external factors in shaping approaches to ICT implementation by careers organisations. In addition to the capacity of the workforce to deliver on this important agenda, factors such as size, strategy and business age are relevant in this process. Additionally, cultural influences, like involvement in professional networks (e.g. higher education careers services) are important. In encouraging a more universal adoption and implementation of ICT for purposes other than disseminating information, business support (for example, in the form of access to an EBusiness adviser, and/or a Solution Provider) made a difference¹¹¹. Here, there is an important role for policy makers in facilitating links with employers and ICT specialist services.

¹¹¹ Beckinsale, M., Ram, M., & Theodorakopoulos, N. (2010). ICT adoption and ebusiness development: Understanding ICT adoption amongst ethnic minority businesses. *International Small Business Journal*, (Published online before print, 15 November 2010).

Appendix 1 – Methodology

The methodology for data collection consisted of:

- Interviews with key stakeholders within the policy development and management of IAG services focusing on the emergent types of private sector delivery arrangements within a public sector context, specifically linked to the new political landscape in the UK.
- Interviews with key stakeholders within the workforce development area (including practitioners), focusing on skills demand and skill supply, with particular reference to ICT and LMI.

The names of participants in this research study are listed in the Acknowledgement section of this report.

Telephone interviews were carried out at a time convenient to the interviewee. The interview proforma was sent to the interviewee in advance of the interview and the principle of informed consent was central to the process of data collection. Confidentiality was guaranteed, with no individual attributions. In all cases, interviewees gave their consent to be acknowledged in the report.

In addition to interviews, a consultation workshop was carried out, for the purposes of data verification - from which participants contributed to findings.

Proforma for the interviews focusing on ICT integration

The current and likely future position of different parts of the sector with respect to value-added, growth and skills needs:

Broad areas for exploration:

- For what purpose(s) are ICT-based technologies used to deliver services in your organisation?
Prompts: information (LMI – researching, gathering, dissemination, etc.); advice (for example?), guidance (specify what this means to the participant), education (part of a structured programme?), vacancy information (source of this information), other (specify)?
- Over what time period (roughly) were they introduced? (stages of implementation)
- What are the future plans of the organisation with regard to IT integrated service delivery? (short term compared with longer term)
- What were the drivers of these innovations?
Prompts: increase efficiency, cost effectiveness, enhancing services (greater reach, widening access, etc.),

exploiting the potential of ICT (rapid market entry),
enabling the development of new paradigms,
anticipated policy trends,
workforce capacity, etc.

- What were/are the main implications (may be similar to the challenges/barriers) for the organisation?
Prompts: skills gaps - workforce development (skills, knowledge, understanding, confidence, etc.)
financial investment required
availability of material/data (LMI)
technological support and/or infrastructure to support delivery
organisational policy on the use of ICT.
- Does your organisation carry out any form of evaluation of the added-value to the organisation of the use of ICT for service delivery?
Prompts: quality assurance,
routine, embedded processes,
one-off, ad hoc
- Please comment on the capacity of your current workforce to deliver ICT-based services (with particular reference to LMI)
Where it is indicated that there is under-capacity – how might capacity be best increased?
- What might the future landscape look like in 2-3 years regarding UK careers services, with special regard to ICT & LMI?

Proforma for the interviews focusing on the differing types of private sector and social enterprise arrangements within a public sector context specifically linked to the new political landscape

Changing characteristics of the various sub-sectors of information, advice and guidance (IAG) services: for example, the proportion of services delivered by the public versus private sectors and new emerging social enterprise arrangements. How might this influence the future shape of careers service provision for young people and adults?

- 1a. How would you best describe the current changing environment between public, private and voluntary/community sector arrangements?
- 1b. How is your organisation responding to this?
2. Can you provide any examples of how public sector and private/charitable trusts are working together effectively using technology to provide universal or targeted services to young people and/or adults?
3. What are the 'enablers' and 'barriers' to implementation of effective public and private sector alliances, in particular developing online services?
4. Are there any new arrangements being established at a central and/or local level to secure the provision of online information, advice and guidance (IAG) services for young people and adults?

5. What changes, if any, are required to ensure that the private and/or charitable trusts can function effectively within or alongside a public sector delivery arrangement?
6. Can the quality of careers services be improved by applying market or quasi-market principles to their delivery? If so, in what way?
7. How can high integrity and impartial services be guaranteed for consumers' protection?
8. To what extent can technological developments help create 'pay-at-the-point-of-use' in relation to accessing careers services?
9. What might the future landscape look like in 2-3 years regarding UK online and face-to-face careers services?
10. Any other comments or observations?

The UK Commission aims to raise UK prosperity and opportunity by improving employment and skills. Our ambition is to benefit employers, individuals and government by advising how improved employment and skills systems can help the UK become a world-class leader in productivity, in employment and in having a fair and inclusive society: all this in the context of a fast-changing global economy.

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