

National Careers Council: Workplan

Role and Remit

To provide advice to government on a strategic vision for the National Careers Service and allied career support services as key economic drivers for business growth and opportunities in learning and work. In doing so, the Council will champion a fresh vision for careers services that draws on leading-edge developments to ensure high-quality provision.

This paper sets out key challenges that need to be addressed to ensure that young people's and adults' progression in learning and work can be achieved in fast-changing global and national economies. Finding local and national solutions in response to youth unemployment, and the need to re-skill and up-skill those entering and currently in employment, are required to keep pace with the changing demands of a labour market in which most adults will have to remain employed beyond the age of 65.

In this context, the National Careers Service and allied career support services act as a crucial 'lubricant' between skills supply and demand. The contents of this paper provide an overview of the National Careers Council's proposed workplan and suggested priorities for 2012-13. This includes immediate and longer-term prioritised activities designed to inform and influence the Government's growth strategy and social mobility agenda.

The Minister has clearly set out his vision in *New Challenges, New Chances* (2010) but further work is urgently required to win the 'hearts and minds' of the Treasury, the Cabinet Office and other Ministerial colleagues for sustained investment in careers services. The National Careers Service document *The Right Advice at the Right Time* (2012) heralds the beginnings of a fully integrated all-age service. But the knowledge gap between business, education and careers provision needs to be strengthened: the National Careers Council will seek to fulfil this role. Three key work strands to be addressed by the Council were presented to the Minister in June 2012. A more detailed workplan is set out below, taking account of current challenges and future strategic possibilities to inform and influence Government in setting a clear strategic vision for the National Careers Service and allied career support services from 2013 onwards. Most of the suggested priority activities in the Council's proposed workplan are 'pro bono'; however, some activities may require additional resources for which support will be necessary in order to achieve the required outputs. Appendix 2 summarises the delivery objectives, timing and cost implications for the recommended activities.

Key challenges

- 1. The need for effective and high-quality careers services will create an increasing demand on resources at a time when there is greater competition for limited Government funding.** This will be driven by:
 - the needs of a dynamic economy as employment sectors are constantly renewed to keep pace with global competition and fast-changing technology, including the development of new growth areas such as the creative technologies and low-carbon industries;
 - changes in education and training, including the changes to academic & vocational curricula pre- and post-16, which will provide new pathways to qualifications and attainment;
 - structural changes in the provision of careers information, advice and guidance heralded by the advent of the National Careers Service and the new statutory duty on schools and academies to ensure learners have access to high-quality and

- the forthcoming ‘Raising of the Participation Age’, requiring careful and thoughtful planning of learning choices at key points of transition 14-19;
 - the need to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of career choices in order to reduce attrition rates for individuals and providers of education, training & employment – failure to complete and succeed in education & training can have profound motivational and financial consequences;
 - the expectation that individuals will increasingly need to view career and learning choices as personal investment strategies as they seek value for money and a return on their choice of degree or additional academic/vocational qualifications through university tuition fees and adult learning loans; and
 - the need to help those who are disadvantaged, or who face additional barriers to achieving social and economic advancement.
2. **The Government’s top priority is to achieve sustainable and balanced growth across the country and between industries.** The [Growth Review](#) and subsequent measures in the [Plan for Growth](#) highlight the necessity for businesses to step up to this challenge. Raising the work-readiness of school leavers and those acquiring tertiary qualifications, as well as encouraging more apprenticeships, are currently being examined by the Heseltine Review¹ and Richards Review². Employers’ added-value contributions to the National Careers Service (NCS) and wider careers market have yet to be fully identified and realised. Also, the Boards of LEPs have much to contribute in relation to finding new ways of connecting enterprise, economic development and employers to a talent pipeline linked to the National Careers Service and Job Centre Plus (JCP). The new ‘Youth Employment’ Launch, led by DWP (July 2012), could potentially promote opportunities for more employers to connect into the NCS and JCP in this regard.
 3. **The head of the CBI is warning that a return to growth will not in itself solve the root causes of youth unemployment, and there are calls for renewed focus on career and work-related learning.** The recent Government and CBI joint initiative ‘Youth Jobs Hotspot Plan’ promotes an extension of the Youth Contract anchored within DWP. Also, the ACEVO Commission on Youth Unemployment³ highlighted cyclical, structural and financial problems associated with addressing a growing NEET challenge. Therefore, access to quality careers services at a local and national level, and the professionalism of those working in the National Careers Service, the wider careers market and Job Centre Plus, have to be profiled strongly for the benefit of individuals, communities and the economy.
 4. **The Milburn Report on ‘Social Mobility’⁴ will be followed by two further reports: one on access to universities; the other on what the Government is doing to tackle child poverty and improve social mobility.** The distinctive contribution of the National Careers Service and wider careers market needs to be made more explicit, underpinned by evidence on impact on entry routes and clear labour market information and intelligence on pathways into professions.
 5. **The Higher Education Minister** reports that over the coming year(s) students will begin to demand clear and accurate information about what they can expect from

¹ <http://www.bis.gov.uk/heseltine-review>

² <http://www.bis.gov.uk/Consultations/richard-review-consultation?cat=open>

³ <http://davidmiliband.net/2012/02/youth-unemployment-a-28-billion-timebomb/>

⁴ http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/IR_FairAccess_acc2.pdf

their higher education experience. Ratings on quality and standards will be an important part of the careers information they seek when choosing an academic/vocational destination.

6. **The Education Select Committee has recently announced a short inquiry into careers guidance for young people⁵, in the light of the new statutory duty on schools to secure access to independent and impartial careers guidance for their pupils in years 9-11 from September 2012.** This aligns with the Minister's strong interest and commitment to drive up the range and quality of careers provision through the National Careers Service and wider careers market.
7. **The DWP and BIS have mandated an increasing number of customers under 'Skills Conditionality'.** A distinction needs to be drawn between 'mandated'⁶ and 'voluntary' customers. Co-location arrangements in Job Centre Plus (JCP) and Further Education colleges have deepened⁷. Recent Job Centre Plus data released from DWP showed that only just above one-third of mandated customers attended Next Step interviews. This has serious implications for Prime Contractors under the Skills Funding Agency's funding model. Clearly, there is a need to review relevant research findings and impact data to fully assess the NCS's main role and route to market through JCP and to assess both organisations' capacity and capability to develop joint-working and co-training.

These **seven key challenges**, notwithstanding other emerging initiatives and reviews, highlight the central requirements for high-quality careers provision. The National Careers Council recognises that the current evidence base needs to be strengthened to make the case for increased investment by Treasury and the Cabinet Office, as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review. There is an urgent need to produce intelligence, not only on the impact and added-value returns of the current NCS and wider careers market, but also to support innovation that can drive forward a high-performing career development system in England, building on home-grown strategic developments as well as those in other EU and international settings.

The Council will act as a cross-departmental influence to inform and influence Government to facilitate alignment and avoid duplication:

- Understand the resources available and provision of support to the careers industry and recipients of career development from the various government departments.
- Analyse and understand where there are gaps and duplications.
- Work with the relevant departments to encourage the resources within their remit to collaborate and maximise value for money.

⁵ Graham Stuart, Chair, Education Select Committee, announced plans for short inquiry in the House of Commons on 26 June 2012.

⁶ In practice, referrals seem frequently to involve requiring NCS to help customers develop a CV (on the basis that they cannot be effective job-seekers without one), rather than provide an assessment of skills and/or help them consider or develop career plans/goals. High levels of mandated referrals of this kind (where the expectation is that customers will be seen in 5 days) puts pressure on the limited number of appointment slots that advisers have available in JCP.

⁷ Research undertaken by CfE in Leicester is under way to assess key issues and progress to date.

Workplan

To achieve impact and influence, the Council will in the first instance concentrate on **three Strands** of work covering **eight key questions**. **These** will form the basis of discussions with key informants.

Strand 1: Secure access to quality careers provision for young people and adults through public-, private- and voluntary-sector services, including strengthening of professionalism within and across career development services.

Q1. What further opportunities are there for improving access and quality in career development services through the promotion of the National Careers Service, particularly to young people, parents, educational institutions, businesses and community services?

Q2. What more needs to be done to accelerate the professional skills and competence of the career development workforce?

Strand 2: Strengthen the connectivity of the National Careers Service to business and the wider careers market.

Q3. What wider objectives should be pursued in relation to the Service's links with business and use of labour market intelligence and information?

Q4. What wider objectives should be pursued in relation to the Service's influence as a force to champion improvements in other careers provision in England?

Q5. What more can be done to promote and market careers services?

Strand 3: Support better use of intelligence, innovation and impact assessment for the National Careers Service and allied careers provision, so that individuals, employers, institutions and Government are co-investors in guidance for learning and work.

Q6. What more needs to be done to articulate the 'added-value returns' on career investments for individuals, employers and government?

Q7. What more needs to be done to achieve an intelligent, innovative and effective National Careers Service, impacting on other careers provision?

Q8. Where are the key gaps in research and intelligence that can feed into cross-departmental and business investments in career development services?

Aims, Objectives and Outputs

Aim 1

Secure a strong National Careers Service (NCS) that is what customers want, can find and will use.

Objective

The Council members and associates will champion the NCS through existing and new networks to help improve the profile and marketing of the service at local, regional and

national levels. Steps will be taken to ensure that employers are actively involved and supportive at all levels, working closely with the UKCES, CBI and other leading employer-led organisations.

Outputs

1. A series of high-profile meetings and communications activities to promote the National Careers Service throughout England.
2. Advice to the NCS on possible ways of strengthening its existing offer by utilising more quality-assured careers resources that are available in the wider careers market.

Timescale

July 2012 – March 2013

Aim 2

The Service needs to be able to prove its worth and relevance through its strong customer research and impact measures, based on accurate and relevant data.

Objective

The Council will work with the Skills Funding Agency, relevant government departments, NDPBs, universities and impact measurement specialists to collate and analyse meaningful data.

Outputs

3. Produce intelligence and an independent impact assessment that feeds into formal Inquiries and Reviews, including the Heseltine Review, Richards Review, Milburn Review and Stuart Review, highlighting strengths and areas for improvement in the current system, and evidence of economic and social benefits of careers work to inform future co-commissioners and co-funders.

4. A NCC Briefing series to showcase intelligence, innovation and impact, including:

social return on investment frameworks, e.g. social impact bonds, mutuals, HE and FE spin-out entrepreneurial careers products and services;

client outcomes through tracking to show destinations and other social and economic outcomes; and

EU and international exemplars of high-performing systems.

Timescale

July 2012 – March 2013

Aim 3

Secure greater employer and labour market specialists' engagement with the National Careers Service through the identification of more joined-up activities including industry-awareness and work-readiness.

Objective

Promote joined-up activities that relate to career resilience, industry-awareness and work-readiness in the context of lifelong learning involving government departments, NDPBs, businesses, leading universities and charitable bodies such as the Education & Employers Taskforce.

Outputs

5. Work with careers sector bodies, UKCES, CBI, Education and Employers Taskforce and ASCL to promote co-developers and co-delivers in careers resources and services to young people and adults.
6. Co-host a workshop aimed at business and education leaders to identify new forms of improving the careers offer to individuals and employers.

Timescale

September 2012 – March 2013

Aim 4

Make recommendations on the implementation of the National Register of Career Development Practitioners and the forthcoming Career Development Institute, the Quality in Careers standard for schools and the relevance of Matrix for schools/colleges.

Objective

Track career practitioner developments alongside the emerging new professional Institute for Employability Practitioners (IEP) and Institute for Education Business Partnerships (IEBE).

Output

7. Consultations with both professional associations to identify areas of complementarity and avoid duplication of resources.

Timescale

August 2012 – March 2013

Aim 5

Promote and support the development of quality-assured and affordable systems for careers provision.

Objective

Work across sectors using NCC networks and contacts to identify service improvement and demonstrate returns on investment for Government, commissioners, business investors and the wider society.

Output

8. Short reports feeding to the Annual Report for presentation to the Minister in March 2013.

Timescale

Present – March 2013

Aim 6

Formally endorse the DfE practical information for schools to supplement the Statutory Guidance to schools on their new duty to secure independent careers guidance (from 1 September 2012), if appropriate.

Objective

Promote the DfE practical information to schools and, if appropriate (subject to agreement), oversee research into current careers provision in schools to complement Ofsted thematic review of CEIAG for young people, in order to strengthen the baseline for future development.

Output

9. Make a public NCC statement

Timescale: July 2012 – September 2012

Aim 7

Feed into government departmental research plans for 2012-13 to identify key gaps that need to be addressed to ensure targeted and high-impact investment.

Objectives

Research and evidence-based expert approach designed to lead to outcomes that can inform the design and future development of the National Careers Service and wider careers market.

Output

10. Informed meetings with senior officials responsible for research investments.

Timescale

September 2012 – March 2013

Future possibilities

The Council has some ideas of future possibilities which include a 'National Strategy for Career Development Services'. At this stage, the Council would wish to delay building this into the Workplan until further discussions takes place.

Appendix 1

What will success look like?

1. A confident sector able to recruit high-quality people who are motivated, committed to their own training and development and supported by first-class resources.
2. At least 50% of careers advisors qualified to level 6 (by 2014).
3. A majority of careers advisors belonging to the CDI (by 2014).
4. Employer feedback that they are getting high-quality advice and better-quality recruits (people who want to work for them and have the necessary skills, motivation and experience).
5. Employers (within the careers sector) satisfied that they can rely on their contracts being delivered by high-quality professional staff who value their reputation and their careers, and know how to deliver value for money.
6. Headteachers giving status and support to careers advisors in schools because they recognise careers advice as a vital function which complements and contributes to achieving examination results. The skills prospectus will refer to careers advice which meets acknowledged international standards.
7. Parents and governors of schools fully aware of the importance of first-class careers advice.
8. Government departments, and their contractors and providers, delivering a consistent message about the value of the careers profession.
9. Students and adults giving consistent feedback about the quality of the service they receive and taking its support seriously.
10. UK employers engaged and supportive of the careers sector at all stages and feeling the benefit of that sector.

Appendix 2

WORK STRAND	OUTPUTS	TIMESCALE
3	<p>Produce intelligence and an independent impact assessment that feeds into formal Inquiries and Reviews, including the Heseltine Review, Richards Review, Milburn Review and Stuart Review, highlighting strengths and areas for improvement in the current system, and evidence of economic and social benefits of careers work, to inform future co-commissioners. This will involve a NCC Briefing series to showcase intelligence and impact, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social return on investment frameworks; • client outcomes through tracking to show destinations and other social outcomes; • EU and international exemplars. 	July 2012 – March 2013
1,2 &3	<p>Feed into formal Inquiries and Reviews, including the Heseltine Review, Richards Review, Milburn Review and Stuart Review, highlighting strengths and areas for improvement and investment in current arrangements.</p>	September 2012 – March 2013
2	<p>Secure greater employer and labour market specialists' engagement with the National Careers Service through the identification of more joined-up activities including industry-awareness and work-readiness, involving government departments, NDPBs, businesses, leading universities and charitable bodies such as the Education & Employers Taskforce.</p>	September 2012 – March 2013
1	<p>Make recommendations on the implementation of the national register of career development practitioners and the forthcoming Career Development Institute, the Quality in Careers standard for schools and the relevance of Matrix for schools/colleges; track these developments alongside the emerging new professional Institute for Employability Practitioners (IEP) and Institute for Education Business Partnerships (IEBE).</p>	2012 – March 2013
1	<p>Promote and support the development of quality-assured and affordable systems working across sectors which contribute to service improvement and demonstrate return on investment for government, commissioners,</p>	September 2012 – February 2013

business investors and the wider society.

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|--------|--|--------------------------------|
| 2 | Formally endorse and promote the DfE practical information for schools to supplement the Statutory Guidance to schools on their new duty to secure independent careers guidance (from 1 September 2012) and, if appropriate (subject to agreement), oversee research into current careers provision in schools to complement Ofsted thematic review of CEIAG for young people, in order to strengthen the baseline for future development. | July 2012 |
| 1,2 &3 | Review government departmental research plans for 2012-13 to identify key gaps that need to be addressed to ensure targeted and high-impact investment which will lead to outcomes that can inform the design and future development of the National Careers Service and wider careers market. | November 2012 – February 2013. |

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