

“A careers strategy that works for everyone”

Position Statement from the Career Management Quality Alliance

August 2017

The Career Management Quality Alliance represents four key organisations that share a commitment to the provision of high quality career management support services for young people and adults in England. Those organisations are: Assessment Services Ltd; the Career Development Institute (CDI); Careers England; and the Quality in Careers Consortium. Brief details of each organisation are provided at the bottom on this statement.

The provision of support for career management in England remains patchy, poorly funded and weakly regulated. We are particularly concerned about the lack of focus on ensuring quality. Back in December 2015 the Government acknowledged the current weaknesses in the provision of support for young people by announcing its intention to publish a strategy for improving careers guidance in schools. Although this was expected in 2016, it has yet to appear.

In January 2017, the Government stated that it planned to publish a comprehensive strategy for careers “later this year”. In a speech at the time the Minister then responsible for careers, Robert Halfon MP, spoke about the need for lifelong career guidance and its important contribution to not only economic competitiveness but also social justice. He emphasised the need to improve the prestige, quantity and quality of careers guidance.

We welcome the Government’s commitment to improving support for everyone but further uncertainty has returned, following the General Election on 8 June and the subsequent change of Minister in charge. None of the political parties’ manifestos included concrete proposals for improving career guidance. Both the new Minister, Anne Milton MP, and the Secretary for Education have confirmed that the Department for Education (DfE) is still committed to publishing the strategy this year. We urge the Government to do so as soon as possible, to prevent further erosion of services and to enable us to work together to build a system that enables every citizen to contribute effectively to the economy and to have a successful and fulfilling career.

The four organisations that constitute the Alliance share a commitment to high quality, lifelong support for career management. We intend, therefore, to continue to work together, and with Government, to achieve the step change that is required.

Whatever form Brexit takes, it is likely to bring both opportunities and challenges. For the UK to remain competitive and for the economy to grow in a global market, the nation will need to be more self-sufficient in developing the skills of its workforce. Successful implementation of the new T-levels will require sound programmes of careers education and personal guidance in schools, to enable young people to make informed choices. We will need to ensure a good match between the skills that individuals develop and the demands of the labour market. For the economic and social health of the nation and the well-being of its citizens, we need lifelong access to quality assured support for developing individuals’ career management skills and career guidance.

This statement sets out the key elements that we propose should be included in a strategy to achieve this overall aim. We are ready to work with the Government to agree the final strategy and to support its effective implementation.

1. The strategy must set out a vision that support for career management should be available to everyone throughout life, and it should pay equal attention to services for young people and for adults.
2. The focus should be on both enabling individuals to develop the skills and qualities needed to plan and manage their own careers (commonly referred to as ‘career management and employability skills’) and providing access to personal career guidance at times when it is needed.
3. Schools and colleges should be encouraged to adopt the eight Gatsby benchmarks of good careers practice and to appoint a careers leader with responsibility for the provision of careers support.
4. The statutory duty to provide careers education in the curriculum should be reinstated and raised to age 18. It should be supported by a recommended national framework of career management and employability skills.
5. All schools and colleges should be strongly recommended to achieve the Quality in Careers Standard and incentivised to do so through development funding linked to a commitment to achieving the Standard.
6. To meet the statutory duty to secure access to impartial careers guidance, schools and colleges should be required to use the services only of careers advisers with a professional qualification in career guidance and, where they commission services from an external organisation, they should ensure that the organisation is accredited to the matrix Standard.
7. A network of Career Development Co-ordinators should be established across the country, to work with the Enterprise Co-ordinators in the LEPs (whose work focuses on the two Gatsby benchmarks that relate to engaging with employers), to support schools and college with their careers programmes.
8. The specification for the National Careers Service should be revised to ensure that its services reach all adults and that it provides support for developing career management and employability skills as well as information, advice and guidance. Its services should also be extended to young people who are NEET, home educated or not in school or college for any other reason.
9. All careers advisers working in the National Careers Service must hold, or be working towards, an appropriate professional qualification.
10. All organisations providing career management and employability services, through the National Careers Service and other publicly funded support, must be accredited to the matrix Standard.
11. Private sector organisations and traders providing career management services that are not publicly-funded, should be encouraged to use professionally qualified staff and to work towards the matrix Standard.

12. The Government should investigate how changes to the tax system and development loans could encourage both individuals and employers to invest in career management support.

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

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

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

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