



PRESS NOTICE: 18th SEPTEMBER 2013

CAREERS GUIDANCE: the statutory duty of schools must be unambiguous

Further to its press notice of 10th September¹ issued immediately following the publication of the Ofsted Thematic Survey of careers guidance in schools², **Careers England today publishes a detailed Policy Commentary (attached) on both the Ofsted report and the subsequent Government Action Plan³**, – independently prepared by Professor Tony Watts.

The Ofsted report concluded that the new arrangements are not working well in just over three-quarters of the schools surveyed. It made a number of positive recommendations to ameliorate the current deficiencies - these are spelt out in the annex to the newly-published Policy Commentary.

Immediately following the release of the Ofsted report, the Government issued its response both to the Ofsted report itself and to the earlier report of the National Careers Council⁴.

The most **important response from Government is that the current weak Statutory Guidance to schools will be strengthened**. The Government's Action Plan is also critically assessed in the attached Policy Commentary.

Speaking on behalf of Careers England, its Executive Director, Paul Chubb said:

"We are pleased to be able to publish today this succinct Policy Commentary, and we suggest that amongst the matters which need to be addressed in the welcome revision to the Statutory Guidance are:

¹ Copied as an annex to this press notice for ease of reference.

² Ofsted (2013). *Going in the Right Direction? Careers Guidance in Schools from September 2012*.

³ Department for Education and Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2013). *Careers Guidance Action Plan: Government Response to Recommendations from Ofsted's Thematic Review and National Careers Council's Report*.

⁴ National Careers Council (2013). *An Aspirational Nation: Creating a Culture Change in Careers Provision*.



- *Not just what is not sufficient to fulfil the statutory duty (i.e. signposting to a website), but unambiguously what is sufficient. The test of sufficiency must be explicitly made clear to schools.*
- *Since Ofsted found that what parents value most is access for their children to face-to-face professional careers guidance (and work experience), this needs to be assured as an option for all young people.*
- *Achievement needs to be recommended to all schools of a CEIAG Quality Award (validated by the Quality in Careers Standard) which ensures that careers education underpins careers guidance for all young people, with independent careers guidance secured only from **matrix** Standard quality assured providers, and delivered by professionally qualified external careers advisers at QCF level 6 (this is the 3 pronged approach to quality assurance which was recommended by House of Commons Education Select Committee⁵).*
- *Those helpful additions to the current Statutory Guidance which are set out in the current Practical Guide for Schools ⁶ should be incorporated into the revised Statutory Guidance so that schools have a single comprehensive document covering careers guidance - setting out with clarity not only their duty but how to discharge it.*
- *The proposed extension of the role of the National Careers Service (NCS) needs to be clarified quickly so that schools are clear what the NCS at local level will offer them⁷.*
- *Whilst welcoming the plans to improve the NCS website provision for young people, there is an urgent need for specialist web professionals to be commissioned to design afresh a fit-for-purpose website to meet the needs of young people, who themselves should be meaningfully involved in the process of designing and building the new site - and schools should be recommended to include becoming skilled in making effective use of this website and the growing range of on-line and interactive resources in their comprehensive CEIAG programmes.*
- *Whilst we wholeheartedly welcome all moves to encourage more employers to become actively involved with schools, there is a major difference between informing and inspiring young people to consider differing jobs compared with professionally skilled and challenging careers guidance; the former is absolutely where employers have a key contribution to make, the latter requires QCF level 6 careers advisers. Schools need to be*

⁵ House of Commons Education Committee (2013). *Careers Guidance for Young People: the Impact of the New Duty on Schools*. HC 632-1. London: Stationery Office.

⁶ Department for Education (2012). *Securing Independent Careers Guidance: a Practical Guide for Schools*

⁷ *And if there is to be no increase in the NCS budget for this additional work, there needs to be clarity on which elements of the current NCS offer to adults is to be reduced - a matter on which Careers England will have concerns.*



recommended to include well-planned contributions from both in their comprehensive CEIAG offerings.

- *With new developments seeing young people able to consider options to study after Year 9 in University Technical Colleges/Studio Schools and Key Stage 4 in Further Education Colleges, the importance of CEIAG programmes preparing Years 7 & 8 pupils for such decisions needs to feature strongly."*

Careers England is ready to play its part to assist the Government with these important revisions to the Statutory Guidance, and restates that there is also an urgent need to assist schools further by Local Authorities/the Career Development Institute/NCS being jointly commissioned by Government to produce for each LA area in England a directory of providers of face-to-face careers guidance who meet the key quality assurance requirements of being **matrix** accredited with QCF level 6 careers advisers ready to be deployed in schools.

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Notes to Editors

(i) Careers England is the national **Trade Association** for organisations involved in the provision of careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) products and services in England for people of all ages. **Our members provide aspects of some, or all, of the four components of CEIAG:**

- Carers education (that is "career learning")
- Carers information
- Carers advice
- Carers guidance

(ii) Careers England is principally, therefore, an **employer body**. Our full members comprise the majority of prime contractors for the **National Careers Service** along with a significant number of sub-contractors and 'careers providers' delivering publicly-funded careers guidance services for local authorities (LAs), schools and colleges across England.

(iii) We also provide the project leadership, administration and management for the **Quality in Careers Standard** (the national validation for England's 13 specialist Quality Awards - for Schools, Colleges & Work-Based Learning Providers - covering all four components of CEIAG).



(iv) Full details of all Careers England’s members, our activities, our publications (including Key Policy Summaries on the Coalition Government’s policies for careers guidance), links to the CEIAG Quality Award providers and the Quality in Careers Standard can be found at www.careersengland.org.uk

Further Details are available from

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ANNEX: 10th September 2013 PRESS NOTICE

THE OFSTED THEMATIC REVIEW OF CAREERS ADVICE & GUIDANCE

“Careers England calls upon the Government to take a decisive lead - and to act”

Careers England, the trade association for businesses providing careers services in England, today provides a response to the report from OFSTED⁸ which concludes that:

“From the evidence gathered by this survey, too few schools are providing careers guidance that meets the needs of all their students.”

Paul Chubb, Executive Director for Careers England, said:

“This is a highly significant report from OFSTED.

It reinforces the overwhelming tide of views that what has been established is not working well enough everywhere in the country. Yes there are some good examples of school leaders making a really good job of the new duty to secure access to independent careers guidance for their students – but not enough, and that is not good enough. The Government has taken a far too laissez-faire attitude to this new duty. Good intentions are not enough – tighter statutory guidance and regulation of the duty is evidently required.

⁸Going in the right direction? Careers guidance in schools from September 2012
<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/going-right-direction-careers-guidance-schools-september-2012>



The OFSTED survey demonstrates beyond question that the 2013 House of Commons Education Select Committee report⁹ was right – the decision to place this duty on schools without robust accountability and quality assurance measures is ‘regrettable’ at best.

On 5th June the National Careers Council produced its first report¹⁰ to the Minister. We said then that it was an important report, and that we looked forward to working with the National Careers Council in supporting all efforts to ensure that every young person and adult seeking assistance in their choices of learning and work can access careers services of the highest quality.

This was swiftly followed by a most telling moment on 19th June this year when the voice on the nation’s employers, the CBI, added its weight to the calls for the Government to act to redress the problems caused by legislation which is not supported by sufficient statutory guidance to schools, with inadequate accountability measures, and far too lax an approach to quality assurance.

*We believe that the OFSTED survey reinforces the need for Government now to act decisively. The HOC Education Select Committee Report and the NCC report have together provided a solid base upon which to seek to build a truly world class careers service for people of all ages across every part of England, and urgent action is required to redress the failings in services for young people today; and **that can only happen if the Government takes a decisive lead**. Hence we call for the following actions to be implemented by the Government in the next 100 days.....and by the end of March 2014.”*

In the next 100 days, the following needs to happen:

1. Government should ensure that:

- the delayed re-tendering process for the National Careers Service contains the recommendations of the OFSTED review and the National Careers Council relating to the expansion of the National Careers Service’s role in supporting and working with schools, parents and young people.
- the National Careers Service is able to extend and develop its on-line services to both clarify and simplify access for young people and their parents to the range of services delivered on-line

⁹ House of Commons Education Committee (2013). *Careers Guidance for Young People: the Impact of the New Duty on Schools*. HC 632-1. London: Stationery Office.



2. We continue to advocate the ‘three-pronged’ approach to quality standards, and on the basis that OFSTED clearly states that schools are often failing to quality assure careers provision (**page 6: “About four out of five schools visited did not evaluate the quality of their careers guidance effectively”**), we urge the Government to make it mandatory. This would require the Government urgently to revise the current Statutory Guidance on the duty to secure access to independent careers guidance by the end of October 2013 so that all schools would be required to work towards a Careers Education, Information, Advice & Guidance (CEIAG) Quality Award which is nationally validated by the Quality in Careers Standard, and to procure services only from quality assured (the **matrix** Standard) providers and qualified individuals (QCF Level 6 careers professionals).

3. Local Authorities, the National Careers Service and the Career Development Institute should now be commissioned by the Government to produce for each Local Authority area in England a directory of quality assured providers of face-to-face careers information, advice and guidance which would meet the key quality assurance requirements i.e. accredited to the **matrix Standard** and employing professionally qualified careers professionals to QCF Level 6. This Directory should be made available to all schools and colleges to ensure they meet their new statutory duties.

And, by the 31 March 2014 the Government should have commissioned OFSTED to conduct a further themed inspection of both the range and depth of engagement of employers, universities, colleges of further education and training providers that are contributing to the delivery of the School Curriculum and careers- related activities at Key Stage 4. This further themed inspection would provide an additional benchmark and highlight further good practice for the Government relating to the fundamental culture change which is required to ensure that all students in England are provided with access to high quality CEIAG.”

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