

## Education Select Committee Inquiry into CEIAG

Submission Dated: 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022

### 1. Our organisation: The Quality in Careers Consortium<sup>1</sup>.

- 1.1 The Consortium owns and governs the **Quality in Careers Standard** - the single national quality award for careers education, information, advice and guidance in England's schools and colleges.
- 1.2 As an unincorporated association, the Constitution<sup>2</sup> provides for its corporate governance. The Consortium comprises six member organisations – the Association of Colleges, the Association of School & College Leaders, the Career Development Institute, Careers England, the National Association of Head Teachers, and the Sixth Form Colleges Association. Its Consortium Board<sup>3</sup> is appointed by the members.
- 1.3 The Department for Education and The Careers & Enterprise Company attend the Board as invited participant observers. The Consortium contributes to consultations on DfE strategies and policies. We wish the Committee to be aware that we receive 'grant funding' from the Department. This supports some of our running costs<sup>4</sup> and in 2019-20 also provided funding for three free-to-attend events<sup>5</sup> for schools and colleges not yet engaged with the Standard (these have been replaced in 2021 and 2022 with Virtual Events). This core support from the Department is highly valued.
- 1.4 We welcome this opportunity to contribute to the Education Committee's consultation on CEIAG.
- 1.5 As one of the key organisations in the careers system in England, we wish to draw the Committee's attention to the role and impact of the Quality in Careers Standard in promoting improvement in CEIAG; and to ask the Committee to consider our suggestions for enabling the Licensed Awarding Bodies for the Standard to make an even bigger contribution to the realisation of the careers and skills agenda.

### 2. About the Quality in Careers Standard

- 2.1 The Standard is the single national quality award<sup>6</sup> for careers education and guidance in schools, colleges and work-based learning providers in England. There are currently 12 Licensed Awarding Bodies<sup>7</sup> for the national Standard, operating locally and/or nationally. This provides choice for schools and colleges to achieve the Standard and generates expertise across the careers system. Awarding Bodies are independently assessed every three years by panels drawn from Board members. Each Licensing Panel

---

<sup>1</sup> [www.qualityincareers.org.uk](http://www.qualityincareers.org.uk)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.qualityincareers.org.uk/2019/06/19/revised-constitution-june-2019/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.qualityincareers.org.uk/2019/06/19/members-of-the-consortium-board/>

<sup>4</sup> £36,000 in 2021-22, £31,500 in 2019-20 and 2020-21

<sup>5</sup> £45,000 in 2019-20.

<sup>6</sup> [www.qualityincareers.org](http://www.qualityincareers.org).

<sup>7</sup> [Licensed Awarding Bodies \(qualityincareers.org.uk\)](http://www.qualityincareers.org)

hears testimonies directly from schools and colleges themselves. Many of these are written up as case studies which can be viewed on the Quality in Careers website<sup>8</sup>.

2.2 The DfE “**strongly recommends**” in its July 2021 statutory guidance<sup>9</sup> that all secondary schools and colleges work towards the Standard. As of December 2021, 719 schools and colleges had achieved the Standard<sup>10</sup>. A further 472 were actively working towards the Standard. Whilst the COVID-19 pandemic has adversely affected the number of institutions engaged with the Standard, schools and colleges - supported by our Awarding Bodies - are showing remarkable resilience. Interest in the Standard remains strong – 168 schools and colleges registered for the Consortium’s Virtual Event<sup>11</sup> on the Standard launched on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

### 3. The role and impact of the Quality in Careers Standard

3.1 The Standard is uniquely<sup>12</sup> designed to assure the quality of careers education and guidance in secondary schools and colleges. It is fully aligned with the Gatsby Benchmarks (which schools and colleges are expected by DfE to achieve) and the professional requirements of the Career Development Institute. It goes beyond the Benchmarks by requiring external assessment of the impact of careers provision on students’ career-related learning outcomes.

3.2 It is associated with having a positive impact on:

- the career development of individuals and groups
- school improvement – boosting motivation, attendance and achievement
- the progress of schools towards achieving the Gatsby Benchmarks
- the professional learning of Careers Leaders and all staff
- addressing the needs of employers
- ensuring the requirements of the ‘Baker Clause’ are met.

3.3 The latest impact evidence is compelling, showing that:

- schools and colleges achieving the Quality in Careers Standard have the highest “Compass” scores for their Gatsby Benchmark performance (source: The CEC 13)
- holding the Standard is correlated<sup>14</sup> with improved motivation leading to better exam results, a positive impact on student destinations, and upon reducing absenteeism.

---

<sup>8</sup> [Case Studies of Best Practice Around The Country \(qualityincareers.org.uk\)](https://qualityincareers.org.uk)

<sup>9</sup> [Careers guidance and access for education and training providers - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk): see page 12 of the Statutory Guidance

<sup>10</sup> [Quality in Careers – Award Holders](#)

<sup>11</sup> [Quality in Careers Standard Virtual Event Registration](#)

<sup>12</sup> It should not be confused with the generic matrix Standard which is used to assure the quality of careers guidance services. Colleges are required to hold the matrix Standard as a condition of ESFA funding - some also choose to gain the Quality in Careers Standard as well because it is specifically tailored to improve the quality of their career learning curriculum provision.

<sup>13</sup> [January 2022 News: Compass results – analysis shows added value of achieving the Quality in Careers Standard and joining a Careers Hub](#)

<sup>14</sup> ‘Advancing Ambitions: the role of career guidance in supporting social mobility’, *The Sutton Trust*, T. Hooley, J. Matheson and A.G. Watts (2014)

- 3.4 Careers education and guidance is a ‘public good’ as well as beneficial to individuals. Within the framework of the Benchmarks and the Standard’s national assessment criteria, assessors seek evidence that schools and colleges have effective arrangements in place to ensure that careers advisers - skilled in offering impartial and independent support - are signposting to other support agencies, ensuring that mental health support is provided where needed, as well as promoting hope and inspiration that there is a positive future for every young person.
- 3.5 Effective, quality-assured careers education and guidance is a tool to motivate and inspire young people. This will be especially important when considering the engagement of young people during the (hopefully) final stages of the COVID-19 pandemic and in its aftermath. We urge the Committee to ensure the removal of the postcode ‘lottery’ factor – by doing everything possible to engage every school and college with the Standard, not just those who choose to do so or can afford to do so. Every student wherever they live<sup>15</sup> and whatever their background or circumstances deserves access to careers education and guidance of the quality of the best.
- 3.6 Enabling every young person to make a successful transition into further learning and then into work means they all become **assets to the country’s economy**. Arguably more than ever, the country needs a confident and skilled workforce as the country moves into the post-COVID-19 era. The Standard can be an important contributor to the Government’s strategies in respect of education and training to secure this.
- 3.7 Since the Standard requires evidence of impact and outcomes for students, its assessors look at how overall pastoral support promotes students’ well-being and resilience. They seek confirmation that schools and colleges work with other key agencies to provide support and advocacy for young people to promote their development of career management skills. Assessors evaluate the impact of school/college provision on improving students’ plans and positive destinations.
- 3.8 Gaining the Standard externally quality assures a school or college’s careers education and guidance provision, ensuring that it continues to evolve. A quality assured careers programme can lead to increased social mobility, increased aspirations, greater ability to make positive informed choices, increased understanding of the world of work - enabling students to gain the range of employability/life skills and an understanding of the economic landscape required to make successful transitions through learning into productive work in our economy.
- 3.9 Maintaining students’ motivation - during COVID-19 and in its aftermath - to engage in learning and to feel that there is a hopeful future is an ongoing challenge that universal access to quality-assured careers education and guidance can help to mitigate. Increased labour market uncertainty may well have a negative impact on the choices young people make, and transitions may be ever more challenging.

---

<sup>15</sup> [Levelling Up the United Kingdom: Executive Summary \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk) High quality careers education and guidance has an important role to play in the ‘Levelling Up Mission’ to ‘spread opportunities and improve public services, especially in those places where they are weakest’.

3.10 We are committed to the promotion of the Standard as bringing benefits to all pupils and students, whatever their circumstances. Our 2022 Virtual Event<sup>16</sup> includes three testimonies from very different schools – each of which achieved the Standard in the autumn of 2021 (during COVID-19 times). The schools have also provided written case studies demonstrating the value and impact of the Standard on the quality of careers education and guidance for young people in a special school<sup>17</sup>, a mainstream secondary school<sup>18</sup>, and an independent school<sup>19</sup>.

#### **4. The Consortium’s recommendations:**

##### **4.1 To call for dedicated financial support (a ‘careers premium grant’) to enable all secondary schools and colleges in England to improve and quality assure their careers provision.**

4.1.1 The Licensed Awarding Bodies for the Standard have to convince schools and colleges to buy in their support. They have to charge schools and colleges for the external assessment and for the accreditation. None of the Awarding Bodies receives any direct funding from the DfE. Their income is determined by what schools and colleges decide to buy. Awarding Bodies repeatedly tell us that the reasons why more schools and colleges do not register for the Standard is the time commitment and over-stretched school and college budgets.

4.1.2 Currently, the typical cost of gaining the Standard is £1500-£1700 for a secondary school or college (for an award which, depending on the policy of the Awarding Body, has a lifespan of 2 or 3 years before requiring reaccreditation). **Establishing a fund for schools and colleges to apply for dedicated financial support to gain and maintain the Standard** would help to overcome any barriers to engagement with the Standard and therefore benefit more students.

4.1.3 Lack of access to, or provision of, quality assured careers education and guidance in years 10/11 may mean that some young people may choose wrong options in year 12, and some may drop out or fail and have to restart year 12. In such a scenario the Government needs to pay a learning provider a minimum extra £4500 per year (the base amount for a 19- year-old in "year 14")<sup>20</sup>.

4.1.4 In our response to the Education Committee’s consultation on the impact of COVID-19 on education and children’s services (June 2020), we estimated that such a scheme applied to secondary and special schools would cost an estimated £3 million annually; and that this scheme would pay for itself by reducing the expenditure consequent on students dropping out of their courses or becoming unemployed because the careers education and guidance provision in their schools was inadequate.

---

<sup>16</sup> See paragraph 2.2 and footnote 11

<sup>17</sup> [Hednesford-Valley-High-School-Case-Study-6-January-2022-.pdf \(qualityincareers.org.uk\)](https://qualityincareers.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Hednesford-Valley-High-School-Case-Study-6-January-2022-.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> [Case-Study-The-Deepings-School.-Jan-2022.pdf \(qualityincareers.org.uk\)](https://qualityincareers.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Case-Study-The-Deepings-School.-Jan-2022.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> [Case-Study-City-of-London-Girls-School-February-2022.pdf \(qualityincareers.org.uk\)](https://qualityincareers.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Case-Study-City-of-London-Girls-School-February-2022.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> The Committee will be aware that many students may choose a pathway involving a three year programme post-16 as they may need to start at Level 2 and below. Should any of these need to restart, drop-out or fail, the cost to the Treasury of repeat years also might apply. Hence top quality careers education and guidance needs to be available for these students too.

4.1.5 We would propose that such a premium grant would only be accessed on the evidence from the Consortium that a school is working towards the Standard or already holds it and is preparing for reassessment (holders of the Standard are annually reviewed and reassessed after either two or three years). This provides the Treasury with a meaningful accountability mechanism.

4.1.6 We propose the establishment of a dedicated careers premium grant in order to improve standards in careers education and guidance in secondary schools and in colleges. Whilst the details of how such a scheme would be funded and administered would be a decision for the DfE in consultation with relevant departments, the Consortium is ready to play its part in shaping this cost-effectively with minimal bureaucracy.

## **4.2 To update the Committee on the Consortium’s pioneering work in promoting quality in early career-related learning in primary schools and to draw the Committee’s attention to the need for further support to develop this provision.**

4.2.1 Developing careers education in primary schools has been an aspiration since *Working Together for a Better Future* (DfE/ED/Welsh Office 1987) but subsequent policy support has been intermittent. The creation of a £2 million fund in 2019 for primary projects has created the beginnings of a new momentum.

4.2.2 There is a substantial and growing body of evidence rooted in research, theory and practice to demonstrate that early career-related learning raises aspirations, broadens children’s horizons, challenges stereotyping and boosts transition confidence (*Kashefpakdel, et al., 2018*)<sup>21</sup>. There is increasing evidence of the desire by primary schools (including but not exclusively those in Multi-Academy Trusts) to be assured that their preparation of pupils for transition to secondary, and their understanding of the world of work and opportunities, is of the highest quality.

4.2.3 Therefore, in 2021, the Consortium initiated its contribution to the primary school work of The CEC and several MATs and Local Enterprise Partnerships (e.g. North East Ambition) by establishing a rigorous scheme to offer national endorsement<sup>22</sup> for those Awarding Bodies which also offer primary school quality awards for careers education.

4.2.4 The ‘C+K Careers Quality Award (primary)’ recently became the first to be nationally endorsed by the Consortium<sup>23</sup>. More Awarding Bodies are preparing applications for endorsement.

4.2.5 The primary school quality award offered by *Complete Careers* (which is also seeking national endorsement for its award by the Consortium) has demonstrably added value to the North East Ambition Primary Careers Project<sup>24</sup>.

4.2.5 Currently, the typical cost for a primary school of gaining a quality award for its careers education provision is £850 (for an award which has a lifespan of 2 or 3 years before

---

<sup>21</sup> Kashefpakdel E., Redhill, J. & Hughes, D. (2018). *What works? Career-related learning in primary schools*. London: Education and Employers Research and The Careers & Enterprise Company. <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/m42pwir3/what-works-in-primary.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> [Careers Education in primary schools \(qualityincareers.org.uk\)](https://www.qualityincareers.org.uk)

<sup>23</sup> February 2022: [Latest News: Primary Schools and ‘careers education quality awards’ \(updated 11th February 2022\) \(qualityincareers.org.uk\)](https://www.qualityincareers.org.uk)

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.northeastambition.co.uk/news/primary/five-north-east-primary-schools-recognised-for-outstanding-careers-guidance>

requiring reaccreditation). Establishing a fund for primary schools to apply for dedicated financial support to gain and maintain a nationally-endorsed quality award would help to overcome any barriers to engagement by more primary schools.

4.2.6 The Consortium wishes to establish the principle of a dedicated careers premium grant in order to improve standards of careers education in primary schools. Whilst the details of how such a scheme would be funded and administered would be a decision for the DfE in consultation with relevant departments, the Consortium is ready to play its part in shaping this cost-effectively with minimal bureaucracy.

#### **4.3 To emphasise the need for the next revision of the national careers strategy to be ambitious in its scope and purpose.**

4.3.1 The experience of the Consortium and its Licensed Awarding Bodies of monitoring and evaluating careers provision in schools and colleges provides a unique insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the present careers education and guidance system.

4.3.2 We believe that it would be beneficial for the Committee to recommend that:

- CEIAG is an unsuitable acronym which creates a barrier to public understanding. The public will understand terms such as *'careers education'*, *'careers guidance'*, *'careers education and guidance'* and *'career-related learning'* much more clearly<sup>25</sup>.
- Personal, Social and Health Education should be made statutory from ages 3-16. Enabling personal career development is an integral part of personal and social education and allows schools to focus on the health and wellbeing aspects of career fulfilment and success<sup>26</sup>.
- Programmes of study for National Curriculum subjects should be revised so that the links between curriculum learning, careers and skills are made more explicit. Embedding career learning in the curriculum is a powerful way of improving the life- and work-relevance of school learning, providing relevant contexts and resources for academic and technical learning.

#### **4.4 To support a unified approach to careers guidance through a more 'joined up' system.**

4.4.1 We believe that it would be beneficial for the Committee to recommend that:

- Careers education is the foundation upon which overall careers provision and services related to the lifelong learning and development of children, young people and adults are built, therefore careers education and guidance should remain the responsibility of the Department for Education. The Department for Work and Pensions has a complementary role to play in getting people into work and in administering benefits and pensions, but its main role is quite distinct from the aims and purposes of careers education and guidance.
- Careers guidance services are a 'public good' for their contribution to personal, social and economic wellbeing. Whilst we would support the idea of a national provider to co-ordinate the careers system, the naming of a national service is an important decision. We would suggest that for it to be badged as a 'national skills service' is too narrow and that omitting 'careers' in the title would demean the contribution that careers guidance makes to people's wellbeing and the development of skills for working and adult life.

---

<sup>25</sup> Gatsby uses the term 'careers guidance' to encompass all aspects of careers education, information and guidance.

<sup>26</sup> Arguably, learning for careers and skills needs to be a better defined learning outcome in the curriculum.

- A national service should be framed as a universal and not as a targeted provision. England's publicly-funded careers services have not had a universal remit since that commitment began to be eroded - with the introduction of the so-called 're-focusing agenda' in the late 1990s - culminating in its demise under the Education and Skills Act 2012. The restitution of a universal national service would enable all individuals to be supported according to their needs.
5. **Conclusion:** We commend these proposals to the Committee; and confirm that we are ready to work with the DfE and other relevant organisations on the details of how to implement them effectively and efficiently.

*Paul Anthony Chubb MBE, Quality in Careers Director*  
[pac@qualityincareers.org.uk](mailto:pac@qualityincareers.org.uk)

*The Quality in Careers Consortium*  
[www.qualityincareers.org.uk](http://www.qualityincareers.org.uk)

2998 words