

# What do we mean by evidence?

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# NICEC National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling

to consider:

- ❑ some sources of data about career development work in the UK
- ❑ some of the purposes data collection
- ❑ whether an absence of evidence is a good thing
- ❑ considered whether to use or create evidence



# Sources of data about careers work

## Good features

- Rationale is clear
- Methodology is robust
- Local, national, international
- Longitudinal or cross-sectional
- Adds to knowledge

e.g. Labour Force Surveys, action research, PhDs, project evaluations...

## Not so good features

- Anecdotal or biased
- Inappropriate methodology
- Research questions are unclear
- Working to a hidden agenda
- Findings communicated poorly

e.g. not publishable in peer-reviewed journals but may appear online or in the popular press

**More of this...**



**...less of this!**



# Purposes of data collection

- Demonstrate trends and patterns
- Evaluate or justify a proposed, new or existing practice
- Improve practice
- Gather information on the impact of practice
- Shed light on causes, correlations and associations
- Provide management information
- Refute myths and false assumptions
- Extend and update the knowledge base on 'what works'
- Establish basis for new theories

# Absence of evidence can be a good thing

In a world of too much information, there is still a lack of evidence, so:

- Find a gap
- Explore something new
- Develop skills of reading and critiquing others' evidence
- Use technology to do secondary research
- Consider undertaking primary research

## ... turning data collection into evidence

- What is the purpose, aims & objectives?
- Are the research questions clear ?
- Can you sense underlying values or agendas?
- Who will benefit?
- What will the results be used for?
- Do you have the skills?

# Using and creating evidence

- ❑ Trying to improve (or fix something) may not take enough account of complexity
- ❑ Outcome measures for careers work can be difficult to pin down
- ❑ Evidence need to be clearly communicated to practitioners and policy makers
- ❑ Acting on evidence is a political process
- ❑ Context affects the application (use) of evidence



# Key questions

- Is there already a source to draw upon?
- What do you want to know?
- What values drive your (and others') interest?
- Who will benefit?
- How to focus in a world of complexity?
- What will make evidence meaningful to you?
- Can you talk about your ideas to someone?
- Do you reflect on your own and others' career development work?



# USING EVIDENCE

## What works?

A discussion paper

Jonathan Breckon and Jane Dodson

April 2016



# Resources

- Careers and Enterprise Company <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/our-research>
- CDI research conferences <https://www.thecdi.net/National-Research-Conference-2021>
- Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development <https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge#gref>
- Education & Employers <https://www.educationandemployers.org/research-main/>
- EThOS (PhD theses) <https://ethos.bl.uk/SearchResults.do>
- iCeGS, (Derby) <https://www.derby.ac.uk/research/centres-groups/icegs/publications/>
- Institute for Employment Research (Warwick) <https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/publications/>
- Institute for Employment Studies <https://www.employment-studies.co.uk/publications>
- More or Less on Radio 4 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02nrss1/episodes/downloads>
- NICEC Journal <https://www.nicec.org/pages/24-nicec-journal>
- Office for National Statistics <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork>
- Robertson, P. J. (in press). Evidence-Based Practice for Career Development. In P. J. Robertson, T. Hooley, & P. McCash (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Career Development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (OUP).
- UK Data Archive <https://www.data-archive.ac.uk/find/>