

Written evidence submitted by the National Institute for Career  
Education and Counselling (NICEC)

### **Summary and recommendations**

#### **What is working well**

- There are examples of excellent practice in Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) in schools, colleges and universities
- The Gatsby Benchmarks and the Career Development Framework have attracted widespread support
- There is effective professional training of Careers Advisers and there has been good progress in Career Leader training
- There is targeted funding and research through the Careers and Enterprise Company
- Career Hubs have created or added to effective networks at local level

#### **What would help it work better**

- A national lifelong learning (all age) strategy for CEIAG that acknowledges career development as a lifelong process that spans primary, secondary, further/higher education as well as learning in the workplace
- A national careers guidance guarantee for all citizens
- A review of funding for CEIAG in schools and colleges including the exploration of ring-fenced funding and linked targets
- Requirements to use of quality assurance frameworks for all careers work.
- Giving the National Careers Service an explicit remit to work young people who are not in attendance at school or college, including access to professionally qualified careers advisers
- The establishment of an innovation fund to extend and disseminate good practice in the embedding of the Gatsby Benchmarks in the curriculum
- Ensuring that career education has a place in the curriculum in secondary schools and at other stages of education
- The use of ambitious approaches (e.g. information via virtual reality) to support learning about less familiar technical and skills-based pathways and occupations

#### **What would not work**

- Failure to acknowledge prevalent socio-economic conditions at local level
- Lack of clarity about duties, responsibilities and what constitutes good practice.
- Making the assumption that there is no need to increase resources for CEIAG
- Failure to recognise that provision of CEIAG is analogous to teaching as its goal is career learning and development

### **About NICEC**

NICEC is committed to serious thinking and innovation in career development work. Founded in 1975, NICEC is a learned society for reflective practitioners in career education, career guidance/counselling, and career development. This includes those working in research, policy, consultancy, scholarship, service delivery and management, within education, the workplace, or the wider community. We foster dialogue and innovation between these areas through events, networking, publications and projects. Although based in the UK, there is a strong international dimension. NICEC is managed by its 33 Fellows who maintain it as a company and provide the programme of events and publications for its wider membership in the career development community in the UK and overseas.

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## **Whether the current system of careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) is serving young people**

The Call for Evidence seeks comments upon whether the current system of CEIAG is serving young people, particularly those with a relative disadvantage.

The current system of CEIAG in England is based almost exclusively on students' attendance at educational institutions (school or college) and is defined as a range of activities delivered by institutions within the framework of eight Gatsby Benchmarks. CEIAG is supported by legislation and statutory guidance<sup>1</sup> that requires institutions to secure independent and impartial career guidance for students and seeks to ensure that the full range of post-school routes are considered including those in technical/vocational education and training (referred to as the Baker Clause). A Private Member's Bill<sup>2</sup> currently in passage through parliament would extend responsibility for providing CEIAG to all state-funded secondary schools, revoke regulations that it should be provided between years 8 and 13 thus enabling CEIAG to be provided for students in year 7, and strengthen the duty on schools to fulfil the Baker Clause<sup>3</sup> for those of statutory school age.

However, the current system of CEIAG has attracted criticism that it is significantly under-funded in comparison with the former Connexions and earlier local authority services; that institutions do not achieve sufficient coverage of the Gatsby Benchmarks particularly in relation to provision of personal guidance; that there are inconsistencies in delivery across locations; that it is failing to address issues of social mobility and equity; and importantly for those groups of interest to this Select Committee that it is not being accessed by disadvantaged students who are unable or unwilling to attend institutions. Despite examples of excellent practice in schools and colleges, good progress in Career Leader training, the provision of targeted funding and research through the Careers and Enterprise Company, work towards the achievement of the Quality in Careers Standard, and the establishment of Career Hubs for example, many institutions are not able to prioritise the provision of CEIAG in practice.

It is suggested that there are a range of inter-related factors that are contributing to this, which shed light on why the current system of CEIAG is not serving the needs of disadvantaged young people.

- The introduction of the Pupil Premium funding in schools and Disadvantaged block funding in colleges has resulted in significant differentials in funding allocations. Some institutions now receive lower capitation than previously and

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-provision-for-young-people-in-schools>

<sup>2</sup> <https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/44716/documents/1255>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/19/section/2>  
<https://www.ippr.org/files/2019-01/the-baker-clause-one-year-on-january19.pdf#page=12>

there is some evidence<sup>4</sup> of this funding being used to plug funding gaps. Schools under financial pressure may need to prioritise other statutory aspects of learning and teaching, such as safeguarding arrangements, over spending on CEIAG

- The pandemic has required the diversion of resources in unplanned-for ways and institutions' focus may necessarily have shifted
- There is no specific funding for CEIAG in schools and colleges. Funding for CEIAG is not ring-fenced or subject to advisory or inspection mechanisms
- Targeted or project-based funding for CEIAG may be small-scale, time-limited or tied to priorities that do not concur with colleges/schools' local needs or prior achievements
- The local labour market (and economic environment) of the school impacts the range and type of career-related activities available within and around school
- Socio-economic conditions prevalent in the school's catchment area may also impact students' engagement with CEIAG, including for example students' ability to access CEIAG materials on the internet at home or to learn from occupational role models
- Bursary funding arrangements in colleges may not provide the breadth of support to students that the former Education Maintenance grant provided and the cost of travel may inhibit consideration of the full range of post-16 opportunities
- The distribution of students with Education Health and Care Plans is not uniform; some schools and colleges have high proportions of students with extensive and/or additional needs. Schools and colleges are also responding to the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) of students where no Education Health and Care Plans are in place
- Students who are unable to attend school/college cannot access CEIAG with the support of an appropriately qualified professional. Even for students able access to web-borne material in the home there is a paucity of support to enable them to distinguish reliable sources of information with which to make informed choices
- The reach of the National Careers Service to young people over 13 years of age who do not attend school or college is insufficient, and despite practice modelled through the inspiration agenda<sup>5</sup> and the National First Contact web and telephone service, the National Careers Service's work with young people remains under-developed
- It is difficult for young people, in disadvantaged groups, to find reliable, accurate information on occupations, education and training, routes/pathways etc., and good sources are not widely promoted

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<sup>4</sup> <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmeduc/969/96908.htm>

<sup>5</sup> <https://derby.openrepository.com/handle/10545/621815>

## **Whether and how the Government should bring responsibility for CEIAG under one body**

The term 'careers education, information, advice and guidance' belies the provision of a complex series of activities that result in career learning and ultimately career development in individuals. Much has been written about career learning and development as a lifelong process (not a single decision-making event) with characteristic moments in a student's journey towards the world of work requiring support and personal guidance based on sound learning experiences and reliable information. Like other forms of learning, career learning is experienced by individuals often within a group setting, and needs to be facilitated by a people qualified to teach and guide that learning.

The need for CEIAG does not end at statutory school age. Notions of lifelong learning are deeply embedded in the broader skills strategy and education and training system. However, the existing careers landscape is highly fragmented with many gaps and overlaps. There would be a clear value in developing an overarching strategy to manage all of the different programmes and activities in this area. In the long run there may be value in exploring how different government programmes and projects could be merged to simplify the landscape.

We suggest that Government should bring full responsibility for developing a coherent strategy for CEIAG into the work of a lead Department who could coordinate and direct the CEIAG contributions of the Department for Education, the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy,.

## **How careers and skills guidance could be better embedded in the curriculum across primary, secondary, further, higher and adult education, to ensure all learners are properly prepared for the world of work.**

CEIAG is not a subject in the traditional sense; there are no public examinations for children of statutory school age, although students in some universities are able to gain academic credit for participation in employability programmes. Typically CEIAG is provided as an adjunct to the curriculum; whether this is an appropriate approach should be the subject of continued debate and strategic development.

At the time of the design of the National Curriculum careers education was supported as one of several cross-curricular themes delivered through traditional

subjects. More recently CEIAG within the curriculum has been marginalised, perhaps as a consequence of emphasis on performance and attainment targets and opportunities may have been missed to relate the traditional curriculum to the world of work.

The Gatsby Benchmarks provide a robust framework for the development of CEIAG in the curriculum and have received widespread support. Moves have been made to adapt the Benchmarks to fit primary and further education, and to design appropriate indicative content at different ages/stages. Institutions may need continuing support to innovate their practice around the Benchmarks and develop curricular and extra-curricular experiences that promote career learning in students<sup>6</sup>.

We support the notion of a substantial and long-term innovation fund to support schools and colleges to embed the Gatsby Benchmarks into the curriculum and to promote examples of good practice. We welcome attempts to broaden the reach of the Gatsby Benchmarks in primary and further education. Further, we support the notion that schools and colleges should have a duty to provide CEIAG within the curriculum, whilst working to an ethical framework that places impartiality at its centre.

Within higher education there is no statutory duty or guidance in respect of CEIAG, nonetheless most universities provide a wide range of activities, including information, curricular programmes, supported work placements and access to professionally qualified careers advisers, and these services are frequently available to graduates after they complete their courses. The progress of students into employment and training is tracked via the Graduate Outcomes survey<sup>7</sup>.

### **How schools could be supported to better fulfil their duties to provide careers advice and inform students of technical, as well as academic pathways.**

Schools could be supported to better fulfil their duties via a combination of overarching strategic approaches and specific school-level initiatives.

There seems to be consensus around the need for a coherent strategic approach to the funding and delivery of CEIAG that recognises career learning begins in primary school and extends through secondary, further and higher education, and into training and development in working life. This 'big picture' thinking could be led by Government in collaboration with a range of bodies, including the Career Development Institute who have recently launched the Career Development

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gatsby.org.uk/education/programmes/embedding-the-benchmarks-in-school-and-college-practice>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/graduates>

Framework<sup>8</sup> and who currently manage the professional development and training of career practitioners.

At school-level there is scope to continue to promote the embedding of the Gatsby Benchmarks, the extension of participation in Career Hubs and to establishment of a duty on schools to not only commission independent careers guidance but to include careers education as part of the curriculum. Significant progress has been made in the development of the role of Career Leader at institutional level. The training and funding support for Career Leaders should be maintained and schools provided with resources for updating and continual professional development for staff with responsibility for CEIAG.

Further, schools should be encouraged and incentivised to continue to work towards Quality in Careers accreditation<sup>9</sup>, work with external providers who have achieved the Matrix standard<sup>10</sup>, and employ careers advisers trained to a minimum of Level 6 and work to the occupational standards<sup>11</sup> devised by the Career Development Institute and operating within its Code of Ethics<sup>12</sup> and who are registered in the UK Register of Career Development Professionals, in order to ensure that CEIAG is delivered to the highest standard of professional competence.

There needs to be acknowledgement that delivery of the curriculum is demanding; curricular time is finite. Imaginative ways need to be sought to introduce career learning about less familiar pathways, such as the use of virtual reality technologies.

### **Whether proposals in the Government's Skills for Jobs White Paper will effectively address the challenges in the CEIAG system.**

The White paper addresses some challenges in the CEIAG system in relation to its profile in schools and colleges but does not address sufficiently the lifelong learning nature of career development, career development in adult and higher education, nor specifically address the issue of an entitlement to personal guidance<sup>13</sup> despite its ambitions for a lifetime skills guarantee. The White Paper falls short of making a

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.thecdi.net/New-Career-Development-Framework>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.qualityincareers.org.uk/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://matrixstandard.com/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.thecdi.net/National-Occupational-Standards>

National Occupational Standards only now apply to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and are looked after by CLD Scotland.

The CDI has the CDI Blueprint of Learning Outcomes for Professional Roles in the Career Development Sector. [https://www.thecdi.net/write/Documents/2021\\_CDI\\_Blueprint\\_of\\_Learning\\_Outcomes\\_for\\_Professional\\_Roles\\_in\\_the\\_Career\\_Development\\_Sector.pdf](https://www.thecdi.net/write/Documents/2021_CDI_Blueprint_of_Learning_Outcomes_for_Professional_Roles_in_the_Career_Development_Sector.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> [https://www.thecdi.net/write/Documents/Code\\_of\\_Ethics\\_update\\_2018-web.pdf](https://www.thecdi.net/write/Documents/Code_of_Ethics_update_2018-web.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> [https://www.thecdi.net/write/CDI\\_Briefing-Skills\\_for\\_Jobs\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.thecdi.net/write/CDI_Briefing-Skills_for_Jobs_FINAL.pdf)

commitment to develop a careers strategy or require dedicated curriculum time for CEIAG.

In order to make progress on the goals of the White Paper in relation to the system of CEIAG we propose that there should be:

- A national careers guidance guarantee for all citizens
- A national lifelong learning (all age) strategy for CEIAG
- Review of funding for CEIAG in schools and colleges including the exploration of ring-fenced funding and linked targets (e.g. the achievement of Quality in Careers Standard)
- Promotion of the use of quality assurance frameworks for careers work
- Strengthening of the reach and appropriateness of the National Careers Service in respect of young people and students who are not in attendance at school or college, including students' access to professionally qualified careers advisers