

LGA position paper: principles underpinning good careers advice and guidance

Purpose of the paper

To set out the guiding principles for an effective careers system that is locally commissioned and co-ordinated.

The current careers system

The Department of Education (DfE) is now responsible for all careers education, information, advice and guidance.

Last year, the Parliamentary Sub-Committee Inquiry on Careers Education Information, Advice and Guidance shone a light on the problem with the careers system. Its [report](#) made a number of recommendations and concluded: *inadequate careers guidance in many English schools is exacerbating skills shortages and having a negative impact on the country's productivity*. The Government [responded](#) to the inquiry's recommendations, recognising more needs to be done to support social mobility.

Our discussions with councils also reveal that provision is complex, patchy and fragmented. In any one area, there are numerous providers: schools, colleges and several national agencies, including the National Careers Service, Careers and Enterprise Agency, Jobcentre Plus and Skills Funding Agency, delivering initiatives for different age ranges and groups. This mirrors similar issues with skills and employment support more widely.

We recognise the challenge and want to support the government to ensure that the careers offer match the needs of local residents and employers through devolved employment and skills provision, including careers.

To help remedy this and anticipate the Government's emerging careers policy, the LGA is calling for a locally commissioned and co-ordinated careers service for all with requisite funding; offering a careers system that provides employers with the skills to meet their business needs and to improve inclusive economic growth. This forms part of our [wider work](#) to redesign skills and employment provision.

Based on the analysis of the careers landscape and discussions with councils, this paper sets out below what we would see as the five guiding principles underpinning a good careers system for all ages and the role we would like to see councils play.

A range of case studies are provided in the annex to demonstrate the councils' ambition to undertake this role and responsibility.

Principle 1: Careers advice and guidance should be locally commissioned

A locally commissioned comprehensive careers service for all ages, where everyone has the opportunity to access high quality careers education, information, advice and guidance to make the right decisions leading to education, training, apprenticeship or sustainable employment.

The service to include an entitlement for all young people (aged 11 – 18) to have a personal face-to-face intervention, supplemented by a range of other support. There are some areas where young people already benefit from a high level of service with co-ordinated and timely provision, whilst many other areas require improvement. Councils know their local areas and are best placed to decide how services can be designed and where they should be located, recognising the importance of good transport links for access in coastal and rural areas.

In developing *a coherent local careers system* the role of groups of councils, including combined authorities (where established) should be to commission and co-ordinate, and generally oversee the local careers system. This to include:

Commissioning and co-ordination

Councils are best placed to commission and co-ordinate the local careers offer.

Councils have a better understanding of local needs and providers and can more effectively tailor the commissioning to what is required locally than a national approach. In particular, councils as part of their statutory duties, to protect and promote the life chances of vulnerable young people and adults, would be able to join up and improve local services to deliver a 'person centric approach' and integration with other local services.

Working with their LEPs, groups of councils, including combined authorities (where established) are best placed to ensure that a broad and balanced all age careers offer is delivered by an appropriate range of providers. The providers need to have relevant knowledge of the local economy (employers, sectors, skills) and expertise to provide support for young people and adults. At its heart needs to be a clear public commitment from all careers providers to put the individual and their needs at the centre of service delivery.

Strategic oversight

Councils are in a unique position to have strategic oversight of careers provision.

With a commissioning and co-ordination role, and as conveners of partners in a place to promote economic development and social mobility, groups of councils, including combined authorities (where established) would be in a prime position to have an oversight of local provision.

Performance Management

Councils should undertake a broader performance management, regulatory and audit function with the ability to hold providers to account for performance.

Groups of councils, including combined authorities (where established) working with their LEPs should be responsible for performance management of careers provision, ensuring providers are held to account for their performance locally. As part of this function councils can identify when local providers / partners are not working well

together to fulfil their collective duties and, where appropriate, take remedial action to resolve the issue.

Quality Assurance

Quality assurance to ensure careers service is consistent and of a high standard offer for all.

Councils need to ensure that the local careers provision is consistent and of a high standard, resulting in successful outcomes of well-prepared young people and adults, who are able confidently take the next steps to education, training, apprenticeship and employment.

All schools, colleges and providers should achieve or commit to working towards a recognised quality standard, for instance, Quality in Careers Standard (QICS) Award. The quality in careers provision to be underpinned by sharing resources and best practice within a framework of a planned approach, to enhance the understanding of a diverse post-16 offer.

The [Gatsby Benchmarks](#) which provide a common framework for a range of interventions, to be adopted to improve the careers guidance system. The Benchmarks, ranging from personal guidance to work experience, set out an effective way to capture the important dimensions of careers guidance for young people. They offer clarity on what good careers guidance looks like and the tools to implement it.

Principle 2: Relevant support at key stages

Careers advice and guidance should be embedded and available to support people at pivotal stages of their learning and working lives.

Thriving local economies need a local workforce with high levels of employability – one which is appropriately skilled and motivated. Ensuring the flow of qualified young people is not the only solution to the skills challenge but supporting adults to acquire the right skills and qualification are equally important. Access to appropriate advice and guidance should also be available to those who want to enter, return or progress in the workplace, as individuals tend to take variable pathways for career advancement.

Good quality careers education should be embedded as part of a whole learning approach, along with balanced information and impartial advice and guidance for young people throughout their education; in particular at key transition points of making important decisions, for instance:

- at end of primary school to raise awareness about different job roles
- age 12 - 14 when making GCSE choices or decisions about vocational pathways, including university technical colleges (UTCs)
- at 16 when taking key decision about KS5 routes and subjects, or vocational pathways, including apprenticeships
- age 18 when making decisions about the next stage of education, training, apprenticeships or employment, taking account of the changing labour markets, skills requirements and potential career routes.

Appropriate career advice and guidance should also be available for adults to support them into training, employment or an apprenticeship (including progression whilst in work), for instance, following:

- a period of long-term sickness or disability
- unemployment, including redundancy
- a period of child/adult care responsibilities

Principle 3: Access to personal guidance

Access to personal guidance and support which takes account of individual needs.

Young people and adult have diverse needs which require a different level or type of guidance and support. It is important that everyone should have access to the appropriate personal advice and guidance which addresses their individual needs. Councils currently have responsibility for the disadvantaged or those at risk and those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND); learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD); looked after children (LAC) and therefore, have a better understanding of their specific needs to inform provision.

Principle 4: Work Experience opportunities

Encounters with the world of work to raise awareness of opportunities available in the local and national labour markets to be the norm for young people.

All young people to have an opportunity to develop a greater awareness of the skills and qualifications required for specific job roles, particularly in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and local growth sectors. This could include: work experience or shadowing, coaching, mentoring, volunteering, enterprise activities or attending careers/information events. Young people who gain a strong awareness of labour market requirements and experience, and a clear line of sight to jobs are less likely to become NEET and potentially enhance their chances of sustained employment.

Work experience opportunities for young people need to be better co-ordinated. Appropriate support should be available to employers to offer relevant opportunities and for individuals to access those opportunities.

Principle 5: Careers advice and guidance should be based on local labour market intelligence

A local offer based on local labour market intelligence will be more effective than the current national approach.

As labour markets are constantly changing, schools, colleges and providers, should have access to up-to-date labour market intelligence (LMI) that provides relevant information for teachers, parents, young people and adults. This information should be available at key points and in the most appropriate format to enhance their knowledge and understanding of the opportunities available both locally and nationally. The intelligence should draw upon Local Enterprise Partnership's (LEP) Strategic Economic Plans (SEP), Skill Strategies and Department of Education's (DfE) national Employer Skills Survey (formerly managed by UKCES). The Skill Strategies are an important pillar of SEPs, outlining intelligence on the key / growth sectors in the LEP areas.

Councils work closely with LEPs and partners to ensure that local employers have the skills to meet their business needs; focussing on bringing the supply and demand sides of the labour market more closely together to improve productivity and inclusive economic growth. Employer engagement is fundamental to providing an effective service. They need to be actively engaged in the process of informing the careers strategy and delivery.

Annex

Birmingham City Council established a careers strategy group and extended an invitation to all careers managers and coordinators in Birmingham schools to attend a careers education, information, advice and guidance network meetings in July and November 2016. The meetings provided an opportunity to share good practice, structured as a workshop/information exchange. Approximately one third of Birmingham schools were represented at both meetings, which will now be scheduled termly.

Cornwall Council as part of its Raising Aspiration and Achievement Strategy has endorsed the Gatsby model as a framework for developing work in this area and is currently pursuing the creation of a [Careers Offer](#) for Cornwall using [London Ambition](#) as a model.

Essex County Council's Education and Industry Programme works with 30 secondary schools and has developed a range of programmes aligned to the growth sectors. The programmes are reviewed annually and as a result for 2016/17 have introduced a number of new programmes and these include construction, health and care and logistics. [What's Your Thing?](#) is a brand aimed at secondary schools to provide young people with careers information specifically on the growth sectors.

London Councils looked at the participation of 17-year-olds across the city and identified a number of issues linked to the provision of advice; in particular it found that a staggering 25 per cent of Year 12 Level 3 starters dropped out of their sixth form, suggesting poor post-16 choices. In response London Councils is developing [Skills Match](#) an ambitious new tool to ensure all institutions can access high quality information on jobs markets, learning pathways and support options.

Manchester City Council has established a careers leads network to enable peer support, drive up standards and provide quality assurance. The careers education, information, advice and guidance network brings together the career leads from both schools and colleges to support each other and share good practice.

Nottingham City Council has set up a partnership with [Futures](#) to deliver employment and skills services across the city. As part of this the Council funds Futures to support those who are at risk of or who are NEET. Nottingham, as a result of this intervention, continues to have low NEET levels amongst all 16-18 year olds and at 4.4 per cent it is significantly below the national England average of 7.1 per cent.

Somerset Council's Employment and Skills Strategy, sets out the priorities together with the key interventions, including improving provision of careers to ensure that diverse routes into employment are fully promoted. This has resulted in a number of interventions: Somerset [Employment & Skills Education Group](#); Somerset Area Prospectus; and Teachers in Industry (Yeo Valley) pilot.

Southwark Council offers a wide range of services for young people, including [Southwark Choices](#). The team track all 16-19 year olds and deliver all the statutory data returns and statutory NEET services. They are currently working with around 100 NEETS (16-19) as well as offering support to a number of schools in the borough, focussing on those young people at risk of NEET. Around 500 young people use the drop in centre each year. The team also provides the [CALM](#) (Careers and Learning Mentoring programme), offering 1-2-1 mentoring support to young people aged 16 to 24, who are NEET to support them to re-engage.

Staffordshire County Council has produced a compendium of local initiatives detailing the type of employment opportunities available in the various sectors, in particular highlighting growth sectors.

Suffolk County Council's [MyGo](#) provides a one stop employment service for 16-24 year olds, ensuring that every young person has the right tools and support to start and progress in their careers. This includes 1-2-1 careers coaching, employment support and training courses.

West Yorkshire Combined Authority in collaboration with the LEP shapes provision in the region through their work directly with the majority of secondary schools in the area. The LEP publishes Labour Market Analysis on an annual basis, which aims to influence curriculum planning, careers advice and business investment in skills and training. It also publishes its Better Informed Choices, a child-friendly version of the labour market analysis for teachers, careers advisers, pupils and parents to help young people and their parents make informed choices about their future.