



BRIEFING PAPER

Number 07236, 24 February 2017

Careers guidance in schools, colleges and universities

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Introduction

Overview

Schools and further education colleges in England are required to provide impartial careers guidance to their students. The quality of this advice has come in for frequent criticism, and the Coalition Government made several reforms, including the establishment of the [National Careers Service](#) and the [Careers and Enterprise Company](#) (CEC) aimed at improving the quality and range of careers advice on offer.

Higher education institutions are not required to provide careers advice, but nonetheless this service is offered across institutions.

Conservative Government actions and proposals since the General Election

In the [Summer Budget 2015](#), the Government announced the creation of a new Jobcentre plus employment advisor role, working with schools and sixth-form colleges to help improve young people's ability to find work. The programme is beginning in Birmingham before expanding more widely, with full rollout across England by March 2017.

In January 2016, the then Prime Minister, David Cameron, [announced](#) a campaign for business people and professionals to volunteer to act as mentors to young teens at risk of dropping out of education or achieving less than they could, with further funding [announced](#) in March.

Also in January 2016, the then Education Secretary Nicky Morgan [announced](#) that the Government would legislate "at the earliest opportunity" to require schools to ensure non-academic routes received "equal airtime" with academic routes in schools career advice. Schools would be required by law to collaborate with colleges, university technical colleges and other training providers to ensure this was done.

An amendment was tabled to the *Technical and Further Education Bill* in the House of Lords in February 2017 by Lord Baker, to require schools to admit providers of technical education and apprenticeships to contact pupils to promote their courses. The amendment was accepted by the Minister and added to the Bill, although it has not as yet received Royal Assent.

DfE Careers Strategy

The Department for Education has stated that it will publish a careers strategy, [confirmed](#) in January 2016 by the then education minister Sam Gyimah, which will develop the Government's aims for careers guidance to 2020.

The [Industrial Strategy Green Paper](#) published in January 2017 stated that the careers strategy, initially planned to be published in 2016, would be published in 2017.

Commons Sub-Committee report

The Commons Sub-Committee on Education, Skills and the Economy published a [report](#) into careers education in July 2016, which made

recommendations including a specific careers guidance judgment from Ofsted, for all Government-funded careers programmes to be brought into the CEC's remit, and for careers guidance at all levels to be the responsibility of one Minister and one Department.

The Government published its [response](#) in November 2016, and rejected the recommendations relating to Ofsted and the CEC, although careers guidance has now been brought within the remit of one Minister at the Department for Education. The [Sub-Committee's Co-Chairs](#) said the Government were "burying their heads in the sand" about the quality of careers provision.

Extent

This briefing applies to England only.

1. Careers guidance in schools and further education colleges

1.1 Requirements on schools

In September 2012 local authority maintained schools became subject to a statutory duty to provide impartial careers guidance to pupils in years 9 to 11. In September 2013, the statutory duty on schools was expanded to cover pupils in school years 8 (12-13 year olds) to 13 (17-18 year olds). There have been other connected reforms, including the disbanding of the *Connexions* service at the national level, and the establishment of a [National Careers Service \(NCS\)](#) in April 2012.

The Department for Education has published [statutory guidance](#) (most recently updated in March 2015) for maintained schools on their duty to provide careers guidance.¹ Many academies and free schools are subject to the duties relating to careers guidance through their funding agreements, including those which opened from September 2012 onwards and those which have moved to an updated funding agreement. Academies without the requirement are encouraged to follow the guidance as a statement of good practice.² There is also separate [non-statutory 'good practice' DfE guidance](#) on this issue.³

The statutory guidance explains the duty on maintained schools:

16. The statutory duty requires governing bodies to ensure that all registered pupils at the school are provided with independent careers guidance from year 8 (12-13 year olds) to year 13 (17-18 year olds).

17. The governing body must ensure that the independent (6) careers guidance provided:

- Is presented in an impartial (7) manner
- Includes information on the range of education or training options, including apprenticeships and other vocational pathways
- Is guidance that the person giving it considers will promote the best interests of the pupils to whom it is given⁴

Footnote 6: Independent is defined as external to the school. External sources of careers guidance and inspiration could include employer visits, mentoring, website, telephone and helpline access. Taken together, these external sources could include information on the range of education and training options, including apprenticeships.

Footnote 7: Impartial is defined as showing no bias or favouritism towards a particular education or work option.

¹ DfE, [Careers guidance and inspiration in schools. Statutory guidance for governing bodies, school leaders and school staff](#), March 2015

² Ibid., pg 4 (fn)

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., p6

The guidance makes clear the responsibilities of schools in presenting pupils with a range of considerations and possibilities as part of their careers guidance:

19. Good careers guidance is distinctive to the needs of individual pupils so the school's overall strategy should be shaped accordingly. Schools are expected to work in partnership with local employers and other education and training providers like colleges, universities and apprenticeship providers. This will ensure that young people can benefit from direct, motivating and exciting experience of the world of work to inform decisions about future education and training options.

20. In particular schools should make clear to pupils that if they do not achieve a grade C or better in GCSE maths or English by the end of key stage 4 they will be required to carry on studying these – at school, college or as an apprentice – as no institution will receive public funding to teach them up to the age of 19 unless they continue to work towards achieving Level 2 in maths and English. This is because of the vital importance and powerful labour market value of a good GCSE in maths and English.

21. Schools should also ensure that, as early as possible, pupils understand that a wide range of career choices require good knowledge of maths and the sciences. Schools should ensure that pupils are exposed to a diverse selection of professionals from varying occupations which require STEM subjects, and emphasise in particular the opportunities created for girls and boys who choose science subjects at school and college. Schools should be aware of the need to do this for girls, in particular, who are statistically much more likely than boys to risk limiting their careers by dropping STEM subjects at an early age.

22. Schools should offer pupils the opportunity to develop entrepreneurial skills for self-employment – and make it clear to them that working for themselves is a viable option (in fact it will be necessary for many). Pupils should receive the advice and support necessary to build and develop their own jobs, and have a clear understanding of potential barriers – whether real or perceived.

23. Schools should ensure that high attaining pupils are supported to make an informed choice about whether to aim for university, including the very best universities and courses, or an apprenticeship as an equally high calibre and demanding route into employment and higher education. Universities in the UK take students from all backgrounds and locations, based on their ability and potential. Apprenticeships, including higher level apprenticeships, are available in a wide range of industries and locations across the UK.

24. Schools should ensure that all students are aware of out of school opportunities that could help them with their career aspirations, such as the [National Citizen Service](#) and other voluntary and community activities.⁵

The guidance also sets out the following on three aspects of quality assurance that schools should take into consideration in fulfilling their duties:

- The quality of the school careers programme. The Government recommends that all schools should work

⁵ Ibid., p6-7

7 Careers guidance in schools, colleges and universities

towards a quality award for careers education, information, advice and guidance as an effective means of carrying out a self-review and evaluation of the school's programme. The national validation, the [Quality in Careers Standard](#), will assist schools to determine an appropriate quality award to pursue. [There are currently eleven quality awards that are recognised as meeting the Quality in Careers Standard, with another working towards the standard.]⁶

- The quality of independent careers providers. The recognised national quality standard for information, advice and guidance (IAG) services is the matrix Standard. To achieve the Standard, organisations will need to demonstrate that they provide a high quality and impartial service. Schools can access an online register of organisations accredited to the [matrix Standard](#).
- The quality of careers professionals working with the school. The Career Development Institute has developed a set of professional standards for careers advisers, a register of advisers holding postgraduate qualifications and guidelines on how advisers can develop their own skills and gain higher qualifications. The main qualifications for careers professionals are the Qualification in Career Guidance (QCG) (which replaced the earlier Diploma in Careers Guidance) and the Level 6 Diploma in Career Guidance and Development. Schools can view a [register of careers professionals](#) or search for a career development professional who can deliver a particular service or activity.⁷

1.2 Careers guidance in further education colleges

Following a public consultation in 2012 on extending access to careers guidance, all further education (FE) colleges and sixth form colleges have been subject to a new requirement to secure access to independent careers guidance from September 2013. This requirement is part of FE college and sixth form college funding agreements.⁸

The Department for Education has published [guidance](#) for FE and sixth form colleges to draw on in fulfilling this duty. It provides the following overview of the requirements:

Independent careers guidance secured under the new requirement should:

- Inspire young people about the full range of education, training and employment opportunities available to students;
- Be provided in an impartial manner; and
- Promote the best interests of the student to whom it is given.

The new requirement applies to:

⁶ See Quality in Careers website on awards meeting the national validation standard, [England's CEIAG Quality Awards](#) [accessed 25 November 2015]

⁷ Ibid., p16

⁸ DfE, [Securing Independent Careers Guidance: Guidance for General Further Education Colleges and Sixth Form Colleges](#), June 2013

- All students in colleges up to and including the age of 18; and
- 19- to 25-year-olds with a current Learning Difficulty Assessment in place under section 139a of the Learning and Skills Act 2000.⁹

1.3 Jobcentre plus employment advisers: 14-17 year olds

In the [Summer Budget 2015](#), the Government announced the creation of a new Jobcentre plus employment advisor role, working with schools and sixth-form colleges to help improve young people's ability to find work. The new provision, aimed at 14-17 year olds, will start in Birmingham. It is intended to then expand to the wider Greater Birmingham and Solihull area, and subsequently more widely.¹⁰

A measure to provide Jobcentre plus advisor support in schools across England to supplement careers advice, and provide routes into work experience and apprenticeships, had previously been [announced](#) alongside the Queen's Speech in May 2015.¹¹ However, no legislative measure was included in the subsequently published [Welfare Reform and Work Bill](#).

The issue was raised during a [debate](#) on education and employment opportunities in the House of Lords on 22 October 2015.¹² Baroness Evans subsequently [wrote](#) to Lord McKenzie to state that Jobcentre plus support would start in Birmingham in November 2015, and extended to nine further pathfinder projects during this academic year. Full rollout across England would be completed by March 2017.¹³

1.4 DfE Careers Strategy

On 3 December 2015, the then Education and Childcare Minister Sam Gyimah, made a [speech](#) to the Westminster Employment Forum where he set out that the Department for Education would publish a careers strategy "in the coming weeks," and that:

We feel that a period of consistency and stability for this sector will have greater impact than major structural reform.

[...]

By 2020 we want a system where young people (and their parents/carers) have timely access to the information and data they need to make informed decisions on their education, training and employment options, including a clear understanding of routes into technical and professional education and apprenticeships.¹⁴

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ HM Treasury, [Summer Budget 2015](#), p80

¹¹ [The Queen's Speech 2015 Briefing Notes](#), p15

¹² [HL Deb 22 Oct 2015 c815-851](#)

¹³ Letter from Baroness Evans to Lord McKenzie, 2 November 2015. Available as Deposited Paper in House of Lords Library [DEP2015-0833](#)

¹⁴ Department for Education, [Sam Gyimah: where next for careers education and guidance?](#), 3 December 2015

In [response](#) to a Parliamentary Question in January 2016, Sam Gyimah said that the strategy would be published in the spring.¹⁵ The education white paper, *Educational Excellence Everywhere*, published by the Department for Education in March, stated that the strategy would follow later in 2016.¹⁶ The Government was subsequently criticised by the Sub-Committee on Education, Skills and the Economy in November 2016 as the strategy had still not been published (see section 5.2).

The Government's [Industrial Strategy Green Paper](#), published in January 2017, stated that the careers strategy would now be published later in 2017.¹⁷

1.5 Planned legislation on careers advice

In January 2016, the then Education Secretary Nicky Morgan [announced](#) that the Government would legislate to require schools to ensure non-academic routes received "equal airtime" with academic routes in schools career advice. Schools would be required by law to collaborate with colleges, university technical colleges and other training providers to ensure this was done.¹⁸

The announcement indicated that legislation would be brought forward "at the earliest opportunity," with further information to be provided in the careers strategy.

Amendment to the *Technical and Further Education Bill*

In February 2017, Lord Baker tabled an amendment to the [Technical and Further Education Bill](#) during its Committee Stage in the House of Lords. The [amendment](#) would require schools to allow proprietors of other educational bodies to "access registered pupils during the relevant phase of their education for the purpose of informing them about approved technical education qualifications or apprenticeships."¹⁹

Lord Baker stated that if passed the amendment would require significant support from the Government in its implementation:

[E]very word of the clause is needed because the clause is going to be met with great hostility in every school in the country. They are going to be required, by September, to produce a policy for implementing a right for people to come and tell them about other competitive sources of learning and training. It will require all the resources of the department and the powers of the Secretary of State to ensure that this happens, so that in September and October of this year we should have providers going into all the schools.²⁰

The Schools Minister, Lord Nash, welcomed the amendment:

¹⁵ [PQ 23416 \[Vocational Guidance: Standards\]](#), 27 January 2016

¹⁶ Department for Education, [Educational Excellence Everywhere](#), March 2016, p94

¹⁷ HM Government, [Building our Industrial Strategy](#), January 2017, p48

¹⁸ Department for Education, [New law will end 'outdated snobbery' towards apprenticeships](#), 25 January 2016

¹⁹ See [Amendment 11](#) to the Bill in the Lords.

²⁰ [HL Deb 22 Feb 2017 c73 GC](#)

I agree that it would strengthen the Bill by promoting technical education and apprenticeship opportunities more effectively so that young people can make more informed and confident choices at important transition points.²¹

The amendment was agreed without a vote.²² The Bill, however, has not yet finished its progress through Parliament.

1.6 Education Secretary update: September 2016

In September 2016, the newly appointed Education Secretary, Justine Greening, gave evidence to the Education Committee on her Department's plans, including careers advice. Ms Greening told the Committee that the new Skills Minister, Robert Halfon, was considering the careers strategy and was "conscious of the need to reach completion of it soon."²³

1.7 Northern Powerhouse

The [Northern Powerhouse Strategy](#) published in November 2016 included mention of how the Government intended to approach careers guidance in the North of England:

The government will work with the North to ensure that local priorities are fed into the provision of careers advice, so that it is employer led, integrated and meets local needs.

This will involve joint working on the design of careers and enterprise provision for all ages, including collaboration on the work of the Careers and Enterprise Company and the National Careers Service. Where the government is piloting new approaches to careers advice and guidance, we will ensure areas in the North have the opportunity to be part of any trials taking place.²⁴

²¹ [HL Deb 22 Feb 2017 c70 GC](#)

²² [HL Deb 22 Feb 2017 c92 GC](#)

²³ Education Committee, [Oral evidence: Role and Responsibilities of the Secretary of State for Education](#), HC 196, 14 September 2016, Q283

²⁴ HM Treasury, [Northern Powerhouse Strategy](#), November 2016, p14

2. How well are schools and colleges discharging their duties?

There has been a considerable amount of scrutiny of the quality of careers advice available to children and young people. This section provides an overview of reports on this topic and recent changes made by the Government.

2.1 Secretary of State's December 2014 statement and announcement of the Careers and Enterprise Company

On 10 December 2014, the then Education Secretary Nicky Morgan made a [statement](#) on preparing young people for work.²⁵ She said that it was clear schools and colleges needed “additional support” and outlined additional steps the Government was taking in response, including the establishment of new careers and enterprise company for schools:

It is widely acknowledged that careers provision in schools has long been inadequate. To date, we have encouraged schools and colleges to take the lead. We have placed a clear duty on them to provide students with access to impartial advice and guidance. But, though we published an inspiration vision statement in September 2013 and strengthened the statutory guidance to support schools and colleges in making this vision a reality, it is clear that many schools and colleges need additional support if we are to ensure every young person—regardless of background or location—receives the life-changing advice and inspiration that they need to fulfil their potential and succeed in life. That is a view supported by a number of respected contributors in this area, including OFSTED, the National Careers Council, the Sutton Trust, the Gatsby Foundation and the Education Committee, as well as many employers, sector experts, and schools and colleges themselves.

Some schools and colleges are doing great things to ensure that their students access the necessary support, but too often provision is patchy. Already busy schools and teachers do not always have the time to give this the focus they should. Meanwhile, many organisations—including employers—offer excellent programmes for young people. The challenge before us is how to ensure that every young person in every part of the country is given access to them.

I have consistently heard calls from both employers and schools and colleges to help them navigate this complex landscape and to spread the good practice that is happening in some parts of the country to all. Today I am answering those calls. I am pleased to tell the House that Christine Hodgson, chair of Capgemini UK and someone with a strong track record of developing young talent, will chair a new careers and enterprise company for schools. This will transform the provision of careers education and advice for

²⁵ [HC Deb 10 Dec 2014, c 891-893](#)

young people and inspire them to take control of and shape their own futures.

The company will support much greater engagement between employers on one hand and schools and colleges on the other. It will ensure that young people get the inspiration and guidance they need to leave school or college ready to succeed in working life. It will be employer led, but will work closely with the education and careers sectors. It will also act as an umbrella organisation to help employers, schools and colleges and other organisations navigate their way through the existing landscape. It will provide a vehicle to help other organisations co-ordinate their activities where appropriate.

The company will not itself be a direct delivery organisation, or act in competition with the many existing providers in the market. Instead, it will help schools, colleges, organisations and employers work together in partnership. The company will focus on the offer to young people, initially those aged 12 to 18. It will work closely with the National Careers Service, which will continue to support adults and young people and help the company to bring employers, schools and colleges together.

See section 3 of this note for more information on the Careers and Enterprise Company.

The statement was followed by a wide-ranging debate, during which the then shadow Education Secretary Tristram Hunt strongly criticised the Coalition Government's record on this issue:

Today's announcement is perfectly welcome as far as it goes, but, to be frank, even for this Government it is pretty undercooked. What was the bidding process for the new company receiving £1.6 million of taxpayers' money? What will the company actually do? What are its costs? What is its strategy? How will it stimulate "more and better activity"? What will its relationships with employers be? This is a piecemeal, scattergun approach. Astonishingly—it is very good to see the Business Secretary in his place—the statement does not even mention local enterprise partnerships. If we are to have joined-up government on careers advice, I would have thought that at least the Department for Education and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills could talk to each other.

In short, like the Secretary of State's tenure in office, today's announcement signally fails to rise to the challenge.²⁶

2.2 Education Select Committee report January 2013

The Education Select Committee published a [report](#) on *Careers guidance for young people: The impact of the new duty on schools* in January 2013.²⁷ The Committee concluded that the decision to transfer the statutory duty to schools was "regrettable" and that it had "concerns about the consistency, quality, independence and impartiality of careers guidance now being offered to young people."²⁸

²⁶ HC Deb 10 Dec 2014 c894

²⁷ Education Committee, [Careers guidance for young people: The impact of the new duty on schools](#), HC 632-I, Session 2014-15

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p3

The Committee raised a number of specific concerns and recommendations:

We heard evidence that there is already a worrying deterioration in the overall level of provision for young people. Urgent steps need to be taken by the Government to ensure that young people's needs are met.

[...]

The quality, independence and impartiality of careers guidance offered to young people was a central concern. To help ensure quality, we recommend that schools are required to work towards the Quality in Careers Standard, and to procure guidance services only from qualified providers and individuals.

[...]

There must be accountability measures to ensure that schools provide a good quality careers guidance service for their pupils.

[...] ²⁹

The Government's [response](#) was published on the Committee's website.³⁰

2.3 Education Select Committee: follow-up January 2015

The Committee [announced](#) a follow-up inquiry into careers guidance on 7 July 2014. The DfE submitted [written evidence](#) to the Committee in advance.³¹ The Committee took [oral evidence](#) from the then Secretary of State, Nicky Morgan, on 7 January 2015.

In its [report](#) on the work of the Committee during the 2010-15 Parliament, the Education Committee stated:

39. When we returned to this issue a year after the publication of our report, it was clear to us that careers advice in schools was not improving, so we followed up our inquiry with a one-off session with the Secretary of State in January 2015. Drawing on this session, we recommended in our report on apprenticeships that the Government urgently review the incentives for schools to provide good quality careers advice and recognise that the mantra of "trusting schools" does not work when the interests of schools and young people are not aligned. This remains a work in progress and should be high up the agenda in the next Parliament.³²

²⁹ Ibid., p3-4

³⁰ Education Committee, [Careers guidance for young people: The impact of the new duty on schools: Government Response to the Committee's Seventh Report of Session 2012-13](#), HC 1078

³¹ DfE, [Careers guidance follow-up inquiry. Written evidence submitted by the Department for Education](#), published 3 July 2014

³² Education Committee, [Closing the gap: the work of the Education Committee in the 2010-15 Parliament](#), HC 1120, para 39. Full report on apprenticeships is [Apprenticeships and traineeships for 16 to 19 year-olds](#), HC 597, Session 2014-15

2.4 National Careers Council Report June 2013

As part of the reforms to careers education, the previous Government established the [National Careers Council](#) (NCC) in May 2012 to advise it on careers provision for young people in England. The NCC published their report, [An Aspirational Nation](#), in June 2013.³³ On schools, it said:

2.28 The decision to place a statutory duty on schools and colleges to provide independent and impartial careers advice is significant and will involve a period of transition. [...]

2.29 A key factor in schools and colleges meeting their new statutory duties will be their ability to secure access to independent careers guidance for their pupils. They will also need to build skills and capacity in their workforce, learn from best practice, and access reliable labour market information – in addition to helping broaden young people’s aspirations and help them develop character, career adaptability and resilience. [...] [W]e note current schools policies and practices are patchy and inconsistent.

[...]

2.31 The Council believes that in order to provide young people (and their parents) with effective career support, schools and colleges should:

- Ensure that all students understand the range of career routes open to them and how to access information necessary to underpin informed choices
- Make available face-to-face guidance to all pupils from Year 8 onwards
- Have strong links with employers who are able to contribute to pupils’ education by raising their awareness and giving insights about the range of careers open to them
- Have access to high-quality and up-to-date labour market intelligence (LMI) and information about all education and vocational education training routes pre- and post-16
- Help young people develop competences to be able to transfer their knowledge and skills, be resilient and adaptable within changing sectors and economies
- Work with parents to raise awareness about career routes and to challenge stereotypes
- Have access to quality-assured careers providers and professionally qualified career development professionals to provide face-to-face guidance
- Ensure that all leavers have a planned progression route
- Integrate career management skills into a broad and balanced curriculum.

³³ National Careers Council, [An Aspirational Nation: Creating a culture change in careers provision](#), Pps 21-22

2.32 A major barrier to providing high quality careers guidance to young people has been the absence of direct links between the National Careers Service and schools. [...] ³⁴

The report called for closer links between the National Careers Service, schools, colleges and other providers, and the formation of a strategic body with representation from these providers to guide the work of the NCS.

2.5 Ofsted comment 2013-16 and inspection framework

Ofsted inspection framework

Ofsted carries out routine inspections of maintained and academy schools (and some other providers) in line with the current framework for school inspection.

The most recent [school inspection framework](#), published in August 2016, states that inspectors should assess careers guidance.

Outstanding schools, for example, would provide:

high quality, impartial careers guidance [that] helps pupils to make informed choices about which courses suit their academic needs and aspirations. They are prepared for the next stage of their education, employment, self-employment or training. ³⁵

Thematic review and Government response (2013)

In September 2013 Ofsted published a thematic review, [Going in the right direction? Careers guidance in schools from September 2012](#). ³⁶

This reported that careers guidance in schools was not working well enough, with only one-fifth of the schools visited being “effective in ensuring that all [...] students in Years 9, 10 and 11³⁷ were receiving the level of information, advice and guidance they needed to support decision-making.” ³⁸

The report also raised concerns about the breadth of information and guidance students in the surveyed schools were typically given:

The information students received about careers was too narrow. Too many students were unaware of the wide range of occupations and careers that they might consider. About half the schools used their own staff to inform students about careers but these staff often had insufficient training and did not provide students with up-to-date information.

Schools did not work well enough with employers to provide their students with direct experience of the world of work, which would help to broaden students’ minds about possible future employment. Vocational training and apprenticeships were rarely promoted effectively, especially in schools with sixth forms. The A-

³⁴ National Careers Council, [An Aspirational Nation: Creating a culture change in careers provision](#), Pps 21-22

³⁵ Ofsted, [School Inspection Framework](#), August 2016, p51

³⁶ Ofsted, [Going in the right direction? Careers guidance in schools from September 2012](#), September 2013

³⁷ The thematic review was carried out when the duty only extended to pupils in school years 9-11.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, Pp. 5

level route to universities remained the 'gold standard' for young people, their parents and teachers.³⁹

In September 2013, the Government published its [response](#) to Ofsted's thematic review in the form of an 'action plan' for careers education.⁴⁰ This also incorporated the Government's response to the National Careers Council's earlier report (see previous section).

Sir Michael Wilshaw comment (2015)

In [evidence to the Education Committee](#) in September 2015, HM Chief Inspector Sir Michael Wilshaw described careers guidance as a "disaster area" in schools.⁴¹

Getting Ready for Work report (2016)

A November 2016 Ofsted report on enterprise education and work-related learning, [Getting Ready for Work](#), described "limited" chances for children "to take part in meaningful work-related learning or work experience" at key stage 4. The report also stated that a poorly-coordinated, "chaotic" environment often existed locally, with projects such as those sponsored by local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) in their infancy and business leaders reporting that there was:

little coherence to provision and a lack of strategy by government, business organisations or individual schools. [Business leaders] were largely unaware of the work of the Careers and Enterprise Company. School-business links were most productive when they were official and between organisations, rather than informal and between individuals. Relationships were often hampered by poor communication between school and business staff and a lack of clarity over what was wanted from the partnership.⁴²

2.6 British Chambers of Commerce survey November 2015

In November 2015 the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) published the results of a [survey](#) stating that 69% of businesses did not believe that secondary schools properly prepared children for the world of work.

The announcement stated that there is "a mismatch between education leaders and businesspeople when it comes to careers guidance. Eight out of ten secondary schools believe they are effective at offering all types of careers guidance. However, all businesses surveyed thought careers guidance needs reform."

The survey stated employers had made the following recommendations for reform:

Embed key skills for work in the curriculum. The top five entry level skills that firms value most are communication (88%), literacy (69%), numeracy (64%), computer literacy (56%) and teamwork (53%).

³⁹ *bid.*, Pp. 4

⁴⁰ DfE/ BIS, [Careers Guidance Action Plan](#), September 2013

⁴¹ [Education Committee, The Work of Ofsted, 16 September 2015, HC 400, Session 2015-16, Q26](#)

⁴² Ofsted, [Getting Ready for Work](#), November 2016, p4-5

Hold lessons around recruitment and interview techniques.

Most businesspeople think schools should teach students how to conduct themselves in an interview (78%), demonstrate transferable skills (54%) and communicate lessons learned from work experience (46%).

Put direct contact with local businesses at the heart of careers guidance.

Firms think careers advice should include workplace experiences (64%), encounters with employers and employees (62%), and link curriculum learning to careers (45%).⁴³

2.7 City and Guilds report November 2015

In November 2015, City and Guilds published research on the career aspirations of teenagers and the realities of the job market. The report, [Great Expectations](#), raised concerns of a bias towards university education amongst parents and educators:

Our research indicated that there is a widespread belief that studying for a degree will lead to a well-paid job and fulfilling professional career and whilst in many cases this is true it isn't always the case. This misconception has led to a significant over-supply of graduates in the UK with a recent piece of research by the CIPD stating that 58.5% of graduates end up in non-graduate jobs.⁴⁴

The report also noted low prestige for careers advice amongst young people:

Our research also indicates that careers advice is not seen as important by young people. Just 5% said that a careers advisor would help the most in getting a job they would be satisfied with and when asked why they were thinking of a certain career, only 14% said that a careers advisor had recommended it. Respondents were also unable to recognise that good careers advice can help secure a great job. Only 8% of those surveyed agreed that a lack of good careers advice is a barrier to getting a good job.⁴⁵

The managing director of City and Guilds, Kirstie Donnelly, discussed the report in a [TES article](#).⁴⁶

2.8 Westminster Hall debate on careers advice for 14-19 year olds

On 25 February 2015, a Westminster Hall [debate](#) was held on careers advice, with the Liberal Democrat Stephen Lloyd arguing that:

[...] more needs to be done for children aged 14 to 19 so that they are better aware of the choices available after secondary school and, subsequently, sixth form or college. At the moment, according to recent research compiled by the Association of Colleges, 63% of young people can name A-levels as a post-GCSE qualification; but few could name the other choices. I find it profoundly frustrating—as I have spent the past four and three-quarter years going on about it—that, for example, only 7% of

⁴³ British Chambers of Commerce, [BCC: Businesses and schools 'still worlds apart' on readiness for work](#), 11 November 2015

⁴⁴ City and Guilds, [Great Expectations](#), 30 November 2015, p10

⁴⁵ Ibid., p11

⁴⁶ TES, [Opinion: Why young people need alternatives to university](#), 30 November 2015

pupils could name apprenticeships as such an alternative qualification to A-levels.⁴⁷

The skills Minister, Nick Boles, set out information in his closing remarks on how the new Careers and Enterprise Company would operate:

The key point about the new careers company is that we observed that there is no shortage of organisations offering high-quality activity. [...] Of course, the National Careers Service provides high-quality advice to lots of young people as well as to adults. There is no shortage of provision, but schools face great difficulty understanding what is available, what is high quality and what would really meet the identified needs of their young people.

The point of the careers company, under Christine Hodgson, is to create a structure whereby every school has somebody it can ask to help it through this forest and identify the resources and the providers who will help provide a much better range of experiences and inspiration to young people. It will focus initially on mapping what is out there, because people have to know that before they can start offering guidance. It will then focus on Lord Young's excellent idea, in his report to the Prime Minister, of appointing an enterprise adviser. That person will be a current or recently retired local executive from the public or private sector, who will be attached to a school and whose role will be to help it identify local businesses and employers that can come in to the school and provide work experience, and resources relating to programmes relevant for the school. A school will identify that local enterprise adviser with the help of their local economic partnership.⁴⁸

2.9 Careers England: best practice case studies

The organisation Careers England has published a series of what it sees as examples of [best practice](#) in careers advice in schools and colleges on its website.

2.10 DfE research brief: mapping careers provision in England

In July 2015 the DfE published a research brief [Mapping careers provision in schools and colleges in England](#), which provides information from a survey on the type of careers guidance they provide.⁴⁹

2.11 All-Party Parliamentary Group report (January 2017)

In January 2017, the [All-Party Parliamentary Group on Social Mobility](#) published its report [The class ceiling: Increasing access to the leading professions](#), which raised concerns about careers advice at school and university. The report described the quality of careers advice as "too

⁴⁷ [HC Deb 25 Feb 2015 c102WH](#)

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, c124-125WH

⁴⁹ Department for Education, [Mapping careers provision in schools and colleges in England](#), July 2015

varied, leaving young people unaware about steps to build a career especially in the most selective professions.”⁵⁰

2.12 Gatsby Foundation report: international comparisons

Some comparative information is available through a 2014 report published by the Gatsby Foundation, [Good Career Guidance](#), which discussed best practice in careers guidance and included visits to six foreign states or countries – Netherlands, Germany, Hong Kong, Ontario, Finland, and Ireland.

[Appendix 1](#) (pages 3-44) to the report sets out the results of these visits, and the relevant systems in place.

⁵⁰ All-Party Parliamentary Group on Social Mobility, [The class ceiling: Increasing access to the leading professions](#), January 2017, p9

3. Careers guidance in higher education

There are no statutory requirements around the provision of careers advice in higher education institutions (HEIs). Regardless of this careers advice and guidance is an important student service offered by all higher education institutions (HEIs). HEIs are autonomous bodies and all HEIs have their own careers service staffed by professionals who are trained in this area. The [Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services](#) (AGCAS) is a professional association for HE careers practitioners, it provides advice to members and aims to develop best practice across the sector.

University careers offices offer a wide range of services such as: careers advice, help with writing CVs and application forms, interview skills and networking/mentoring opportunities. HEIs careers offices may also arrange campus career fairs where employers can meet graduates. Many university careers centres continue to provide support to their graduates years after graduating.

A significant number of university degree courses now include employability skills and some include compulsory careers sessions. Many institutions also offer extra-curricular schemes to help students to develop the 'soft skills' which are valued by employers – some of these schemes lead to awards which students can include in their CVs.

Since autumn 2012 universities have had to supply information on destinations and salaries of their recent graduates as part of their [Key Information Set](#) – this information allows prospective students to compare institutions by employability rates of graduates. Also the annual survey of [Destination of Leavers from Higher Education](#) (DLHE) collects data on employment of graduates and university league tables use employability rates in their rankings. The availability of data on employability and graduate destinations makes the provision of good careers advice beneficial for both students and universities.

In November 2015 a Green Paper, [Fulfilling Our Potential](#)⁵¹ was published. This paper set out proposals to create a new system for measuring teaching quality in HEIs – the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). The paper outlines how the TEF will develop over time and in the second year of the TEF, HEIs will be awarded a quality assessment based on common metrics, which it is expected will include employment data on graduates. HEIs assessed as providing excellent teaching will be entitled to raise their tuition fees on line with inflation for new students from 2017/18.

⁵¹ Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, [Fulfilling Our Potential Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice](#), November 2015

4. Key organisations

4.1 National Careers Service

The [National Careers Service](#) (NCS), [launched in April 2012](#),⁵² provides people over 13 years old with information, advice and guidance on learning, training and work opportunities. The service offers confidential and impartial advice, supported by qualified careers advisers. NCS services may be provided face-to-face, via telephone or online.

The [NCS website](#) states that it aims to:

- help people with careers decisions and planning
- support people in reviewing their skills and abilities and develop new goals
- motivate people to implement their plan of action
- enable people to make the best use of high quality career related tools.

In December 2014, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills published its third [National Careers Service Satisfaction and Progression Surveys Annual Report](#). This includes the following overview of customer satisfaction with the service:

Customers continue to rate the service very highly. Overall 94% of face-to-face and telephone customers agreed that the service was good; and 85% were satisfied overall, with 41% very satisfied. While high, these figures have not changed significantly compared with results in Year 1 and Year 2. Face-to-face customers, those in learning at the time of their adviser sessions and those aged under 25 continue to be more satisfied than average.

Overall 78% of website users in Year 3 were satisfied with the website overall, with 41% very satisfied, and 6% dissatisfied. Satisfaction has increased from Year 2 when 76% were satisfied and 39% very satisfied. Women and under 25s were more satisfied than average.⁵³

4.2 Careers and Enterprise Company

A Department for Education [press notice](#) published on 10 December 2014 provided details on the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) announced in Nicky Morgan's statement of that date (see section 1.2). To summarise, the CEC is designed to broker partnerships between schools, Further Education colleges and employers in order to give pupils aged 12 to 18 better access to advice and inspiration in finding a career. The company will run a £5m investment fund.

The [CEC's website](#) provides further information on its work.

⁵² Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, [New National Careers Service launched](#), 5 April 2012

⁵³ BIS, [National Careers Service Satisfaction and Progression Surveys Annual Report](#), December 2014, p5

On 16 September 2015, in response to a Written Parliamentary Question, Lord Nash provided an [update](#) on the CEC's progress to date and its accountability:

The Careers & Enterprise Company has made good progress with its set up and its delivery plans. The company will commence its services in the coming months, including publishing research on 'what works' in school-work engagement; launching its £5 million investment fund; and development of a digital 'Enterprise Passport' to help young people broaden and showcase their experience. The company has been engaging Local Enterprise Partnerships recently and the enterprise advisers in the network will support schools to improve their careers and enterprise offer, in particular by brokering links with employers and local careers and enterprise providers.

To date the company has received £10.95 million from government for its activities leading to delivery of the objectives set out by my Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State in December. As an independent company, it is for The Careers & Enterprise Company to publish its accounts in accordance with The Companies Act 2006.

My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State is accountable to Parliament in the usual way for progress on improving careers advice and guidance for young people, including the contribution that the company makes to this.⁵⁴

Enterprise Advisers

The CEC website provides information on its network of '[Enterprise Advisers](#)', developed with [Local Enterprise Partnerships](#):

We are building a network of Enterprise Advisers to work directly with the leadership of individual schools and colleges. These volunteers, drawn from business and other employers, large and small will help to develop effective employer engagement plans.

Clusters of schools and colleges and Enterprise Advisers will be supported by a full time Enterprise Coordinator.

Investment Fund for careers guidance 'cold spots'

In October 2015 the CEC [announced](#) that a £5m Investment Fund, drawn from the £20m provided for the initial start-up of the CEC, would be used to improve careers guidance in areas where CEC research had identified 'cold spots' where careers and enterprise provision is weakest.⁵⁵ The CEC [website](#) provides further information.

Parliamentary debate and Education Committee session

In an [evidence session](#) with the Commons Education Select Committee in January 2015, the then Education Secretary provided information on the funding of the CEC, and its relationship with the National Careers Service:

[In response to Q33]

Nicky Morgan: The Chancellor has set aside £20 million for the first two years, to get things up and running [for the new Careers and Enterprise Company]. As employers are involved, my intention

⁵⁴ [HL1966 \[Careers and Enterprise Company\]](#), 16 September 2015

⁵⁵ [Careers and Enterprise Company, Multi-million pound fund to transform careers prospects of young people most in need](#), 28 October 2015

is that eventually it will be self-sustaining. Costs will be relatively limited on the basis that advisors will be approached, but a lot of companies and organisations do that anyway, particularly larger employers.

[...]

[In response to Q46, on difference between the new company and NCS]

Nicky Morgan: First, I do not think [schools and employers] are confused [about the respective functions of the two NCS and CEC]. Secondly, I think the NCS and the new company are doing different things. The company, as we have discussed, is very much employer-led, and I think that is not the case with the NCS. The NCS also focuses particularly on a number of priority groups. I want the new company to be very much about going into schools, with a particular focus on 12 to 18-year-olds. The NCS is an all-age service, although of course they will particularly focus on some younger people and lowskilled adults without a level 3 qualification, as well as NEETs, as we have already discussed, and adults facing redundancy.⁵⁶

A short debate on the CEC was held in the Commons chamber at Education questions on [19 January 2015](#).⁵⁷ The Education Secretary emphasised the difference between the new body and the NCS:

Nicky Morgan: [...] [The CEC] is an employer-led body involving businesses... The National Careers Service will work closely with the new body, but they are different things that serve different age groups. They will achieve different outcomes, because of the involvement of businesses and employers in the new body and the talented leadership of Christine Hodgson.⁵⁸

A May 2016 [speech](#) by Nicky Morgan at the Careers & Enterprise Company conference discussed the CEC's role further.⁵⁹

Mentoring programmes and CEC funding

In January 2016, the Prime Minister [announced](#) a campaign for business people and professionals to volunteer to act as mentors to young teens at risk of dropping out of education or achieving less than they could.⁶⁰

The announcement stated that the CEC would run the campaign, and that the Government would spend £70 million on its strategy to improve careers education and guidance in this Parliament, including continued funding for the CEC.⁶¹

In March 2016, the then Prime Minister, David Cameron, [announced](#) a further £14 million of funding, comprised of £12 million over the course of this Parliament for a new investment fund "to build capacity in the system", managed by The Careers & Enterprise Company, and £2

⁵⁶ Education Committee, [Oral evidence: Careers guidance for young people: follow-up, HC 333](#), 7 January 2015

⁵⁷ [HC Deb 19 Jan 2015 c1-3](#)

⁵⁸ Ibid. c3

⁵⁹ Department for Education, [Nicky Morgan at the Careers & Enterprise Company Conference](#), 11 May 2016

⁶⁰ Prime Minister's Office and Department for Education, [Prime minister to announce new generation of mentors to help struggling teens](#), 11 January 2016

⁶¹ Ibid.

million for an advertising campaign to encourage business people and professionals to volunteer to act as mentors.⁶²

Sutton Trust report recommendation

In February 2016, the Sutton Trust published its most recent [update](#) on the educational background of people at the top of professions in the UK, which as in previous years highlighted that the UK's top professions remain disproportionately populated by alumni of private schools and Oxbridge, despite these educating only a small minority of the population.

In its recommendations on social mobility, the Trust suggested the CEC might be given a broader remit and further resources to conduct trials into effective careers advice for disadvantaged children:

Good careers education is essential for young people from all backgrounds. We welcome the establishment of the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) and its development of Careers and Enterprise Coordinators to join-up careers education between schools and businesses in local areas. The CEC should also be resourced and encouraged to trial and identify what works in careers advice for disadvantaged pupils.⁶³

⁶² Prime Minister's Office, HM Treasury, Department for Education et al, [PM announces new support to improve the life chances of millions](#), 14 March 2016

⁶³ Sutton Trust, [Leading People 2016: The educational backgrounds of the UK professional elite](#), February 2016, p5

5. Sub-Committee on Education, Skills and the Economy inquiry

The Sub-Committee on Education, Skills and the Economy, formed by members of the Education Committee and the Business, Innovation and Skills Committee, [announced](#) an inquiry into careers advice, information and guidance on 8 December 2015.

The sub-committee asked for submissions on:

- The quality and impartiality of current provision
- How careers advice in schools and colleges can help to match skills with labour market needs
- The role of the new Careers and Enterprise Company and its relationship with other bodies such as the National Careers Service
- The balance between national and local approaches to careers advice
- Careers advice and apprenticeships
- The potential for employers to play a greater role in careers advice⁶⁴

5.1 Report

The Sub-Committee published its [report](#) on 5 July 2016. The Sub-Committee stated that it was “very disappointed that careers advice and guidance is still poor in so many schools”⁶⁵ and set out several recommendations for its improvement, including:

- Support for the Government’s intention to legislate to require schools to collaborate with training providers
- That Ofsted introduce a specific careers guidance judgment, with schools unable to be rated ‘Outstanding’ overall if they had careers guidance that was rated ‘Inadequate’ or ‘Requires Improvement’, and unable to be rated ‘Good’ if their careers guidance was ‘Inadequate’
- The simplification of careers policy delivery at the national level, with a single Minister and a single Department in charge of co-ordinating careers provision for all ages
- That all Government-funded careers initiatives, including the Jobcentre Plus support for schools scheme, be brought under the umbrella of the Careers and Enterprise Company, and that that the Government consult on transferring responsibility for the National Careers Service from the Skills Funding Agency to the Careers & Enterprise Company
- That the Government work with employers and schools to produce a plan to ensure that all students at Key Stage 4 have the opportunity to take part in meaningful work experience.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Sub-Committee on Education, Skills and the Economy, [Careers advice, information and guidance inquiry launched](#), 8 December 2015

⁶⁵ Sub-Committee on Education, Skills and the Economy, [Careers education, information and guidance](#), 5 July 2016, HC 205 2016-17, p29

⁶⁶ Ibid., p29-32

5.2 Government response

The [Government response to the Sub-Committee's report](#) was published on 1 November 2016.

In its response, the Government stated:

- That it would not introduce a separate Ofsted judgment for careers guidance, or to attach careers guidance to ratings as the Committee had recommended;
- Careers guidance had come within the remit of a single Minister at the Department for Education, which offered new opportunities for a coherent approach (this followed changes to the structure of government following Theresa May's appointment as Prime Minister, shortly after the Committee's report was published);
- That the Government would not bring all of its careers initiatives within the remit of the Careers and Enterprise Company, and would retain the distinct status of other careers bodies;
- That while a traditional 'work experience' placement may be of greatest benefit to many pupils at Key Stage 4, it may not be appropriate for meeting the individual needs of all pupils, and that schools choose what is most appropriate.⁶⁷

The Committee Co-Chairs, Neil Carmichael and Iain Wright, [expressed their disappointment at the report](#), and said Ministers were "burying their heads in the sand" about the quality of careers provision.⁶⁸

The Sub-Committee expressed particular concern about the Government's decisions not to adopt their recommendations about Ofsted judgments and bringing all careers provision within the remit of the Careers and Enterprise Company, and also "that the careers strategy long-promised by Government has still not been produced."⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Sub-Committee on Education, Skills and the Economy, [Careers education, information, advice and guidance: Government Response to the First Joint Report of the Business, Innovation and Skills and Education Committees of Session 2016–17](#), 1 November 2016, HC 757 2016-17

⁶⁸ Sub-Committee on Education, Skills and the Economy, [Government inaction on careers provision failings is unacceptable](#), 1 November 2016

⁶⁹ Ibid.

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