



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Future ambitions

Developing careers
services in Wales

www.cymru.gov.uk

PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

Future ambitions

Developing careers services in Wales

- Audience** Welsh Assembly Government, all maintained primary, secondary and special schools in Wales, local authorities, Higher Education Funding Council Wales, Wales Higher Education Careers Advisory Service, higher and further education institutions, work-based learning providers, Careers Wales companies and careers advisors, Jobcentre Plus, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales – Estyn, employers, Wales Trades Union Congress, and other stakeholders involved in providing information, advice and guidance on careers-related issues.
- Overview** This report was commissioned by the Welsh Assembly Government in order to examine the relationships between the wide variety of service providers working to provide careers education, careers information, advice and guidance services and also education business links, and placement services and to identify how these relationships might be improved.
- Further information** Enquiries about this document should be addressed to:
Careers Policy Branch
Further Education and Higher Education Policy Division
Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills
Welsh Assembly Government
Tŷ'r Afon
Bedwas Road
Bedwas
Caerphilly
CF83 8WT

Tel: 01443 663991
Fax: 01443 663762
e-mail: DCELLS-CareersPolicyBranch@wales.gsi.gov.uk
- Additional copies** This document can be accessed from the Welsh Assembly Government website at www.wales.gov.uk/educationandskills
- Related documents** *Careers Wales: A Review in an International Perspective*, Professor A G Watts (Welsh Assembly Government, 2009)



Contents

Foreword	3
Context	5
Our approach	8
Scope and underlying principles	11
Areas for improvement	17
Theme 1: Careers services for young people	18
Fundamental requirements	18
The <i>Careers and the world of work</i> framework	19
Education Business Partnerships	25
Building capacity in careers services for young people	32
Learning Pathways 14–19 Networks and Children and Young People’s Partnerships	35
Theme 2: Developing a differentiated careers service delivery model	36
Face-to-face services	36
Online and telephone resources	38
Theme 3: Priority groups	42
The NEET group	42
Young people with additional learning needs	44
Young offenders	45
Theme 4: Careers services for adults	48
Work-based learning and further education	48
The interface between Careers Wales and the Higher Education Careers Advisory Services (HECAS)	50
Minimum entitlement and priority groups within HECAS	53
Quality management and inspection of HECAS	54
Careers dialogue in the workplace and community learning settings	55
Theme 5: The Welfare Reform Agenda	57
Skills health checks	57
Developing the ‘Careers Ladders’ concept	58
Theme 6: Training and professional development	61
Qualifications for careers services practitioners	61
Developing a centre of excellence	62
Consolidating professional standards	62
Establishing a careers services’ workforce development strategy	63

Theme 7: Labour Market Information and Intelligence (LMI)	64
Theme 8: Careers Services Strategic Forum	68
Theme 9: The Careers Wales organisational structure and brand	70
Restructuring Careers Wales	70
The Careers Wales brand	71
Revitalising the Education Business Partnerships brand	72
Theme 10: The interface with the Welsh Assembly Government	73
The Careers Policy Branch	73
Increasing contact with service providers	74
Supporting the Careers Services Strategic Forum	75
A more prominent role internationally	76
Recommendations	77
Executive summary and concluding comments	86
Appendices	
Appendix 1: Background paper on areas to be covered during the second stage of the review of careers services in Wales	90
Appendix 2: External Reference Group Membership	118
Appendix 3: Programme of Core Group Meetings with Key Partners, Stakeholders and External Reference Group	119
Appendix 4: Papers considered by the Review	121
Appendix 5: Composition of the careers services ‘family’	126
Appendix 6: Careers Wales – Education business activities	128
Appendix 7: Glossary	131
Appendix 8: Brief pen portraits of the Review team	135
Acknowledgements	136

Foreword

The subject of this Review – careers services in Wales – is wide-ranging, covering careers education, careers information, advice and guidance services, education business links, and placement services. These services are delivered by a variety of service providers working together – either through formal partnerships or informal arrangements – in a variety of settings. They cut across the responsibilities of various parts of the Welsh Assembly Government and touch upon some elements of the services delivered by the UK Government’s Department of Work and Pensions and its job placement agency, Jobcentre Plus. Their common aim is to assist individuals at differing points throughout their lives to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers within fast-changing education systems and labour markets. Collectively, they represent a composite system that has evolved from various origins, rather than one that has been established by design. It is a system that has a crucial role to play because it brings together the employability and skills requirements of the ‘demand’ side of the **economy** with the learning and work aspirations of **individuals**, i.e. the ‘supply’ side.

At the centre of the system are the six Careers Wales companies, each serving a separate area of Wales, and their joint subsidiary, the Careers Wales Association. They provide careers information, advice and guidance services on an all-age all-ability basis in schools, colleges, local communities, high street offices and in the workplace. They also facilitate the delivery of work-focused experiences through their support of Education Business Partnerships and play a prominent role in supporting young people with additional learning needs, those at risk of becoming disaffected and young offenders. In Stage 1 of the Review, the Careers Wales companies were benchmarked by Professor A G Watts against their counterpart service providers in other parts of the UK and elsewhere. They were assessed as being strong and highly professional organisations delivering high-quality responsive services and having the potential to develop a model of service provision to which other countries might aspire. However, it was noted that this potential could only be achieved if their interaction could be improved with each other, with other careers-related service providers (such as the schools, colleges, voluntary sector, universities, and job placement agencies) and with the Welsh Assembly Government.

Our purpose in Stage 2 of the review has therefore been to examine these relationships in order to suggest how they might be further improved. We have sought to identify strategies that could contribute to a direction of travel towards a shared vision of a better system. We have been assisted by the decision of the Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning to reconfigure the Careers Wales companies into a unitary organisation, as this is one of the principal elements of change that we would have recommended. This decision has removed a major area of uncertainty regarding future relationships and enabled us to focus on how a unified Careers Wales might interact in a more integrated way with other players within the wider system.

In so doing, we have, over the past four months, gathered evidence from a wide range of stakeholder representatives at a local, regional, national and international level. Where empirical evidence has been readily available we have taken account of it. We have mostly relied on our interviews with expert personnel to determine the scope for improvement. Our analysis is based upon the evidence presented and upon the candid views of people who know and understand these services well. We believe that we have distilled in this report a consensus on what strategic changes need to happen over the next three to five years in order to move the whole system towards one that is widely recognised as being an excellent model, i.e. one that provides a complementary, consistent and coherent range of services for individuals throughout Wales.

The arrangements currently in place have strong foundations and a good deal of admirable functionality; but they are not working as well as they might. The overall goal is to transform them into a more coherent, efficient and effective systems architecture – and one that is more capable of responding to the fast-changing requirements of the twenty-first century.

We have been heartened by the constructive comments that we have received from those we have met. We believe that the recommendations in this report reflect the consensus of opinion on how careers services in Wales can become more closely integrated. We therefore set out a vision and hope that our suggestions will be transformed from words into deeds by all of the members of the ‘family’ of careers service providers, working together to realise these practical ambitions for the future.

Dr Haydn E. Edwards (Chair)
Prof. Danny Saunders OBE
Dr Deirdre Hughes

Context

1. The Review was commissioned as part of the Welsh Assembly Government's *Skills That Work for Wales* strategy and action plan. Its purpose has been to determine:

- how well-placed careers provision in Wales is to respond to dynamic factors arising from consumer demand, demographic changes, economic conditions and policy developments
- whether current arrangements for service delivery are efficient, effective and fit for purpose in meeting the needs of individuals, learning providers, employers, parents, and other stakeholders
- whether there is scope for improvement.

2. The ambit of the Review has encompassed the current range of all-age information, advice and guidance services provided by the Careers Wales companies and their relationship with related service provision in education, the voluntary sector, business, and the benefits system. Stage 1 examined the performance of Careers Wales companies in recent years. It compared the careers companies' information, advice and guidance services with those in other countries (by reference to internationally established criteria of good practice). The background paper at Appendix 1 sets out the broader context for the Review in terms of the existing range of service provision in Wales and the main policy drivers affecting this range of services.

3. Two reports – one by Estyn and another by Professor A G Watts – were produced as a result of this first stage of the Review and these were published in May 2009, along with the prospective Terms of Reference for a more wide-ranging Stage 2:

- *Estyn's submission to the Review of the Careers Services in Wales: A comparative analysis of the performance of Careers Wales 2005–2008* (February 2009)

www.estyn.gov.uk/inspection_reports/rep_careerswales.asp

- *Careers Wales: A Review in an International Perspective* Professor A G Watts (May 2009)

www.wales.gov.uk/educationandskills

(go to the 'Research' area in the 'Research and Evaluation' section of the site)

- *Progress on the Review of Careers Wales* – Written Statement by John Griffiths AM, Deputy Minister for Skills (October 2009)

www.wales.gov.uk (see 'Cabinet Statements 2009' in the 'Cabinet and Ministers' area of the 'About' section of the site).

4. These reports suggested that Wales had the potential for a world-class system of careers service provision, but that various further developments would be needed in order for the system to cope with the many challenges that it faced. A summary of the main findings and recommendations arising from these reports is provided in Appendix 1. This potential was further underlined by a subsequent Estyn inspection report on the Careers Wales company serving Mid Glamorgan and Powys which recorded an unprecedented full set of grade ones (good with outstanding features) in response to each of the seven major assessment areas.

5. The Terms of Reference for Stage 2 of the Review were subsequently revised by the Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning on 28 January 2010 to reflect his decision to reconfigure Careers Wales on the evidence of successive external reports and in the interests of providing greater clarity, consistency and certainty, to reconfigure Careers Wales into a unitary organisation. The Minister's written statement announcing this revision can be found at:

- *Review of Careers Services in Wales* – Written Statement by Leighton Andrews AM, Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning (January 2010)

www.wales.gov.uk (see 'Cabinet Statements 2009' in the 'Cabinet and Ministers' area of the 'About' section of the site).

6. Our revised Terms of Reference have therefore required us to presume that the Careers Wales companies would be brought together into a unitary organisation as soon as possible. We were asked to:

- encompass the broad span of careers education and information, advice and guidance services provided by the Careers Wales companies and other relevant adjacent service provision in education, the voluntary sector, business and the benefits system

- consider Professor Watts' assessment of how provision of careers services in Wales compares with that in other parts of the UK and other leading countries; and how the current arrangements in Wales might be developed into a world-class system
- look at the particular requirements of different client groups and those of employers in helping individuals develop their career aspirations, learning pathways and career self-management and skills
- consider the coherence and cost-effectiveness of delivery of existing careers-related services and how well Careers Wales companies, education providers, employment advisers and other adjacent service providers are able to work in partnership; this should be on the presumption that the Careers Wales companies will be brought together into a unitary organisation as soon as possible
- develop the vision of a world-class, professionally-led, integrated system of careers education, information, advice and guidance, catering for all ages and all abilities
- propose a strategy for realising this vision.

7. The second stage of the Review has therefore entailed consideration of the:

- relationships applying between service providers and service users across the different areas of service delivery that are identified in the background briefing paper at Appendix 1
- way in which these services and relationships are managed, coordinated, quality assured, monitored, inspected and evaluated
- extent to which services are well supported by:
 - professional standards
 - qualified staff
 - capacity building
 - benchmarking arrangements
 - the sharing of information and best practice
 - research and peer review
 - the integration of data collection and analysis
 - the optimum use of technology as means of both service delivery and service administration.

Our approach

8. Careers Wales has been the subject of some fairly extensive examination by various reviews over the past five years. We have therefore sought to avoid duplicating this work by taking it into account and focusing on areas that have not been looked at in detail previously.

9. Over a period of four months, we have undertaken an intensive series of evidence gathering sessions with relevant service users, providers and partner organisations, employer and trades union representatives, inspection agencies, professional associations, government officials and Professor Watts. We have been assisted by a Reference Group of representatives of major stakeholder organisations which has acted both as a channel of communication with the stakeholder communities and as a 'sounding board' for emerging findings. Reference Group participants are listed in Appendix 2, and the full schedule of the 32 meetings that we have undertaken can be found in Appendix 3.

10. The methodology that we have applied has been to circulate the background briefing paper (see Appendix 1), together with bespoke questions, to interviewees in advance of our meetings in order to enable them to take soundings, where appropriate, from within their respective networks. In some cases this has resulted in written papers being produced by the interviewees to supplement their oral evidence. We have also commissioned various papers from government officials. The papers we have received are listed in Appendix 4 and copies can be obtained upon request from the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS) Careers Policy Branch. We have endeavoured to ensure a balanced process of enquiry throughout our proceedings, and we hope that this is also apparent in our recommendations.

11. Our Terms of Reference have required us to approach the Review at a strategic level. We have considered Professor Watts' vision of what a 'world-class' system of careers services would look like by identifying intrinsic features and principles. We have assessed his prescriptions for change by listening to the views of a wide range of stakeholders. We have then sought to determine what were the essential and realisable elements of such a vision, i.e. which developments were critical for progress? In so doing, we have endeavoured to identify:

- existing strengths
- apparent weaknesses

- opportunities for improvement
- risks or impediments that might apply.

12. We have been conscious of the changing nature of consumers' attitudes and behaviours, particularly in relation to accessing face-to-face, telephone and web-based services. In addition, new and challenging economic conditions underline the need to make the most of potential resources and to consider an incremental approach to the design and development of careers services in Wales. In such circumstances, the need for a clear direction of travel and a route map towards an attainable destination is, in our view, critical, so that momentum is not lost.

13. We have appreciated that the prime focus initially is bound to be on the reorganisation of Careers Wales. However, we consider it essential that the prospective functions of the unitary organisation and its relationships with other adjacent service providers are clearly determined from the outset. This should help direct and support its organisational development. Our task has been to consider these functions and relationships in order to determine whether any current 'grey areas' exist and could be removed, and whether any services could be better integrated for the benefit of both service users and service providers.

14. The areas of relationship that have been examined and the particular issues relating to these areas that we have considered are set out in the background paper (see Appendix 1). In all of these areas, the demands for services have been growing and are likely to continue to grow, driven by both consumer and business needs. The resource constraints that have applied in recent years now seem set to become more severe. This necessitates greater targeting and sharing of resources so that individuals across Wales can access high-quality high-impact careers services.

15. In view of this, we have explored the scope for achieving a more needs-sensitive deployment of resources through a more explicit differentiated service model, underpinned by a universal entitlement for all individuals in Wales to access high-quality careers services. We have also looked at the scope for greater integration and use of information and communications technology to deliver interactive services to those clients who have both the access and the skills to use such services. We have been constantly reminded of the increasing numbers of young people and adults with varying needs

who are seeking services and/or are in need of support at a local level. As a result, we have examined the potential for capacity building within and across a wide range of careers services in Wales.

16. With the objective of achieving more efficient and effective integration between services, we have paid particular regard to the scope for practical improvements in the way that various service providers within the broad system are organised and interact with one another. Our aim has been to produce a set of recommendations for improvement which, together, represent a strategy for achieving a world-class, professionally-led, flexible and robust system of careers services capable of handling increasing demands in a rational, responsive and customer-focused way.

Scope and underlying principles

17. Professor Watts' assessment of Careers Wales – by reference to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) benchmarking criteria developed in 2003–04 – is summarised on pages 99–101 of Appendix 1. He viewed Careers Wales as having particular strengths in terms of:

- a clear and coherent mission
- the all-age nature of its services
- its professionalism and the resultant quality of its services
- the extent to which it is embedded in Welsh Assembly Government policies and in local communities.

18. On the whole, the organisation was rated as measuring up well against these criteria, with the potential to become 'world class'. Yet, there were also some questions raised about Careers Wales' ability to fulfil its potential and to cope with current pressures due to a lack of leadership at a national level, strategic capability and funding.

19. He anticipated the need for a substantial remodelling of careers services in favour of adult provision. This would be accompanied by the adoption of more overtly differentiated services for both young people and adults. Watts emphasised that greater attention should be paid to building the capacity of other organisations to deliver some aspects of these services. In order to address the leadership and strategic planning deficit, he envisaged a reconfiguration of Careers Wales. He also suggested:

- a widening of the Careers Wales brand to include other careers service providers
- further development of the award-winning Careers Wales Online (CWO) to become a unifying administrative and lifelong information, advice and guidance (IAG) tool
- the establishment of a Welsh Careers Guidance Forum to review standards, assure quality, oversee integration of service provision, act as an advocate both for the sector and its clientele, and develop productive links with its counterparts elsewhere in the UK, other parts of Europe and the rest of the world.

20. Our interviews with stakeholders have fully confirmed Professor Watts' assessment, and we do not dissent from his description of the strengths, weaknesses and potential of current arrangements in Wales.

We have found Careers Wales to be held in high regard by its local partners and its customers, but with less esteem by some of the organisations which operate predominantly at an all-Wales strategic level. This reflects the relative strength of relationships at a local and regional level within the overall system of careers services and points to areas where improvements in leadership and partnership most need to be made.

21. Leadership should not be confused with governance or management, as all the evidence suggests that Careers Wales companies have been well governed by their Boards of Directors (who are not remunerated for their services) and well managed by their highly professional management teams. This is reflected in the absence of adverse audit reports, the attainment of generally high grades in Estyn inspection reports, and strong approval ratings in independent customer satisfaction surveys. Indeed, the professionalism of Careers Wales staff and their responsiveness to local needs have been consistently emphasised by partner organisations throughout our evidence-gathering sessions. The organisation's capacity for innovation has been ably demonstrated by its pioneering and award-winning CWO website¹ and its own quality award to schools and colleges in respect of careers education. All of these are solid foundations upon which to further develop high-quality high-impact careers services throughout Wales.

22. The criticisms of Careers Wales' internal leadership and strategic capacity have arisen largely, but not exclusively, from its current fragmented structure. This weakness has restricted its ability to:

- represent the sector and its client groups
- influence the Welsh Assembly Government and other major all-Wales players
- undertake research and to plan and manage changes in service delivery on an all-Wales basis
- achieve consistency of service offer and practice where this is desirable.

These four key factors should be addressed as a prime consideration during the prospective reconfiguration of the organisation into a unitary structure.

¹ In March 2005, just four months after its launch, Careers Wales Online won the prestigious BAFTA Award for Technical and Social Innovation.

23. However, this restructuring alone will not necessarily address the general lack of leadership and cohesion across the wider community of careers services that were identified by Professor Watts and which have also been evident during the course of our review.

24. The sector is surprisingly broad with interests in careers education and work-focused experience ranging from primary school to post-graduate level, and with careers information, advice and guidance, skills assessment and job placement covering the age range from early teens to retirement. Lifelong Learning UK (2009)² reports that there are at least three distinct categories of careers service providers, namely:

- those organisations whose primary function is careers guidance
- those for whom careers guidance is an important part of their services
- those organisations with an interest in careers guidance provision.

25. During the review process it became apparent that many differing organisations throughout Wales contribute to the development of individuals' career management and employability experiences. As a collective, these are best described as a 'careers family' with relationships formed as part of, or sometimes separate to, the work of Careers Wales.

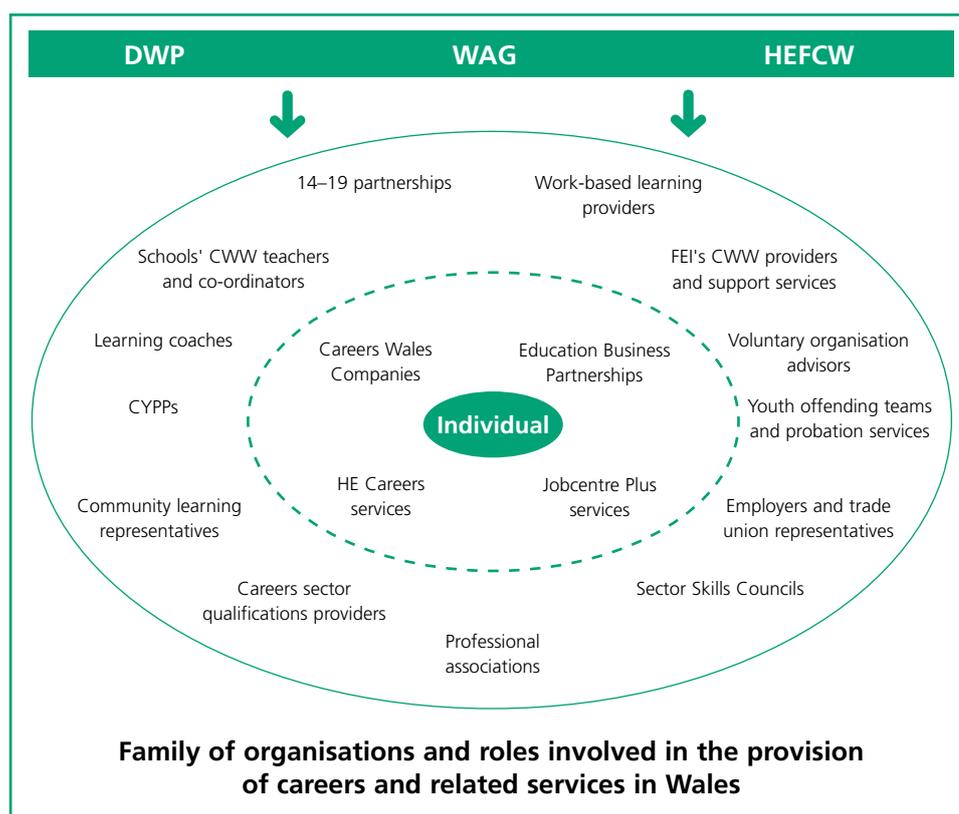
26. We have learned that in addition to the 2,000 or so dedicated staff directly involved in delivery of careers information, advice and guidance and placement services in Wales³, there are several thousand more workers (see Appendix 5) providing careers education, work experience coordination and learner coaching in schools and colleges and in the custodial system. This also includes representatives from trade unions in the workplace, community learning representatives, library staff and volunteer support workers in local communities. Figure 1 (see page 14) illustrates the range of differing organisations within the family of careers service providers.

² *Career Guidance Specialist Employers in the Skills for Business Network* by D Hughes, J Hutchinson and S Neary-Booth (Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby on behalf of LLUK, 2007). Unpublished report.

³ For further details see Appendix 5 which describes the composition and estimates the numbers involved in the careers services 'family'.

27. In making this assessment, we found that current arrangements are falling short of their potential by not bringing these various careers service providers together as closely as they could and should be.

Figure 1



28. We therefore fully endorse Professor Watts’ vision of a more closely collaborative system of careers services delivering high-quality careers education, information, advice, guidance and placement services to clients of all ages and all abilities on the basis of universal access and provision geared to individual needs. Indeed, we agree that the foundations for such a system are strong and that the crucial constraints on realising this vision – particularly in circumstances of sustained pressure on available resources – will be the extent to which economies of scale, greater collaboration and partnership working can be achieved.

29. The formation of a more closely knit family of careers service providers can help identify and reach agreement on key priorities, including the bespoke targeting of services, where appropriate. Much of the strategic change needed to realise the vision involves,

but is not restricted to, Careers Wales. It involves all of the players within the wider system; and it concerns the way these players interact with each other and maximise the impact of available resources.

30. Indeed, it is difficult to see how learning systems such as these can operate successfully in the absence of highly developed integrated systems of careers education, information, advice and guidance. In talking to many of the service providers, we have been heartened by the degree of consensus on the following underlying principles that shape a new infrastructure for careers services in Wales. The principles are drawn from best practice in Wales and international benchmarks. They require careers services in Wales to be:

- client-centred having due regard to duties of care and confidentiality
- accessible to individuals of all ages and all abilities
- locally responsive, but nationally coherent
- capable of offering high-quality and bilingual self-help, brief-assisted and in-depth support services that accord with priority groups' and individuals' needs
- professionally-led and impartial at all times
- committed to combating prejudice, stereotyping, discrimination and other barriers to individuals' personal achievement
- focused on equipping individuals with well-developed career management and employability skills that can be applied throughout life
- able to promote and inspire individuals to make good use of available web-based, telephone and face-to-face services
- capable of offering accurate and accessible labour market information and intelligence that take full account of employers' needs and future skills requirements
- dedicated to continuous improvement, sharing best practice and building capacity among providers in Wales, so that a reputation for excellence in high-impact high-quality services is established.

31. We have conducted our examination of the issues, considered the scope for improvement and framed our recommendations for changes, with these principles in mind.

Our **vision** for careers services in Wales:

To create fully integrated online, telephone and face-to-face services designed to ensure that every individual, regardless of their circumstances, can develop and apply career management and employability skills that will sustain them throughout life.

32. Career decisions are among the most important people make throughout their lives, having significant implications for social and economic well-being. In view of this, the overall goal that unites the family of careers service providers in Wales is to help individuals from all walks of life to build their confidence and resilience and to apply their unique talents and skills within suitable learning and work environments.

Areas for improvement

33. In view of the high level of consensus that exists for careers services in Wales to be further improved and to build on best practice, we have identified ten thematic areas for development.

1. The interface between careers education, information, advice and guidance for young people in schools, colleges and other learning provision.
2. Developing a differentiated careers service delivery model.
3. Priority groups.
4. Careers services for adults.
5. The Welfare Reform Agenda.
6. Training and professional development.
7. Labour market information and intelligence.
8. Careers Services Strategic Forum.
9. The Careers Wales organisation structure and brand.
10. The interface with the Welsh Assembly Government.

34. These largely reflect the various interfaces identified in the background paper (see Appendix 1) and some broader aspects of service provision which transcend the whole system. In doing so, the primary goal is to ensure young people and adults have access to modern, 'fit for purpose' and relevant careers education, information, advice and guidance throughout Wales. We have noted significant variations in individuals' perceptions of careers services and those who are actually best placed to respond to young people and adults' career management and employability needs. In view of this, our observations and subsequent recommendations aim to identify, where possible, which agencies should have responsibility for driving forward policy objectives and/or delivery plans.

Theme 1: Careers services for young people

Fundamental requirements

35. We begin by exploring current youth policy statutory obligations and frameworks in order to assess the overall impact of current arrangements. We also consider what further requirements should be put in place to significantly improve existing arrangements so that young people's career management and employability skills can become more fully developed. Later on in the report (see Theme 4) we discuss in more detail the specific needs of adults set within the context of an all-age all-ability careers service.

36. There is a statutory obligation upon the Welsh Assembly Government to make available appropriate careers education, information, advice and guidance services to all children and young people up to the age of 19. There are permissive powers in respect of the provision of careers and related information, advice and guidance services for adults, but no statutory duty. This explains why the bulk of Careers Wales provision (80 per cent) is accounted for by services to clients who are below the age of 19. Therefore, if there is to be any material shift of resources into services for adults, there will need to be substantial changes made in providing careers services to young people throughout Wales.

37. Indeed, our evidence highlighted that greater clarity is required in terms of schools, colleges and Careers Wales' respective contributions, roles and responsibilities. There are at least two fundamental requirements.

- To develop personalised services to individuals with different needs and circumstances, while maintaining the principle of providing universal access to careers services in accordance with statutory obligations and non-statutory requirements.
- To ensure that interventions by careers advisers and other key players in the careers family are timely, relevant and delivered to achieve positive impact, so that individuals' talents, aspirations and life chances can be optimised.

38. The evidence we have received also indicates the necessity of retaining current best practice at a local and regional level, while placing greater emphasis on finding new ways of building capacity to deliver the highest quality careers education, information,

advice and guidance in a wide range of organisations and settings. There is a growing need to:

- ensure careers education, information, advice and guidance is relevant and meaningful to individuals, families and local communities
- deliver high-quality labour market information and intelligence on differing learning and career pathways including work-focused experiences
- provide accurate diagnosis, assessment and timely careers interventions for young people (and adults) to enable them to develop effective career management and employability skills
- extend careers activities beyond one-off interventions in the classroom and/or one-to-one interviews, using innovative group work techniques, web-based and telephone helpline services
- invest in well-trained and suitably qualified careers leaders in schools and colleges, careers advisers, mentors and learning coaches to motivate and inspire young people.

The Careers and the world of work framework

39. Schools, colleges and training providers have a statutory duty to provide careers education and work-focused experiences in accordance with the *Careers and the world of work* (CWW) framework⁴. The National Assembly for Wales was the first regulation-making body in the UK to introduce a requirement that schools and colleges should provide programmes of careers education for all students aged 16 to 19 – under the Education (Extension of Careers Education) (Wales) Regulations 2001⁵. The framework brings together previously separate frameworks for careers education and guidance and work-related education. In 2008, the Welsh Assembly Government issued statutory guidance, with effect from the academic year 2008–09, to apply to learners in the age range 11 to 19 in all learning environments.

⁴ *Careers and the world of work: a framework for 11 to 19-year-olds in Wales* (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008)

www.wales.gov.uk/educationandskills (see 'Careers and the world of work' in 'The school curriculum in Wales' area of the 'Curriculum and Assessment' section of the site)

⁵ Op. cit. (see footnote 4)

The CWW framework states that:

Careers and the world of work (CWW) is concerned with the relationships between young people, their learning and the world of work. It should help learners to:

- explore the attitudes and values required for employability and lifelong learning
- plan and manage their pathway through the range of opportunities in learning and work
- make effective career choices
- become entrepreneurial
- flourish in a variety of work settings
- become motivated, set long-term goals and overcome barriers
- see the relevance of their studies to their life and work
- develop Key Skills and other skills required by employers
- prepare for the challenges, choices and responsibilities of work and adult life.

40. The framework is designed to provide young people with insights that generate both realism and aspiration regarding their future working lives. It should link closely with the Welsh Baccalaureate's 'world of work' theme and influence how that theme is delivered at foundation, intermediate and advanced level. However, our findings indicate that the framework has, so far, had limited impact. The policy objective has been well articulated in written guidance; but those who gave evidence on this subject were unable to describe its added value or demonstrate its impact in practice. Given the framework is designed to ensure young people are exposed to the very best preparatory experiences for careers and the world of work, we regard this low impact as a matter for concern.

41. We consider it essential that responsibility for delivery of the CWW framework becomes more firmly anchored within the practice of all schools and colleges. Developing young people's knowledge,

skills and behaviours associated with career management and the world of work must become one of the major objectives of each learning institution. The Welsh Assembly Government's Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS) has issued supplementary guidance⁶ which describes the ways in which schools and colleges should deliver this framework within the curriculum. It also sets out the relationships with partners and stakeholders necessary to deliver these outcomes. However, there is no prescription as to the mode of curriculum delivery to be chosen; in fact, the guidance recognises at least five possible delivery models. These include:

- an integrated element across a wide range of curriculum subject areas
- part of a tutorial programme
- part of personal and social education (PSE)
- a separate lesson or module and/or
- one-off events or projects.

42. These optional delivery arrangements provide significant flexibility for schools and colleges. There appears to be a mix of professionals and allied workers involved in delivering the framework. These include teachers, pastoral staff, administrators, careers advisers, members of the wider youth and student support team such as learning coaches and mentors, as well as employers and training providers. We received feedback from schools, colleges, Careers Wales and 14–19 Partnerships, that all of these various contributors have some form of input to CWW delivery. But skill sets, knowledge and experience vary considerably, as do the perceived leadership responsibilities for the strategic and operational organisation of the framework.

43. The supplementary guidance from DCELLS (2008)⁷ emphasises the need for leadership, management and ownership of CWW policy and delivery to involve senior level staff in schools and colleges. While it also provides a sample job description for a

⁶ *Careers and the world of work: Supplementary guidance* (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008) www.wales.gov.uk/educationandskills (see 'Careers and the world of work' in 'The school curriculum in Wales' area of the 'Curriculum and Assessment' section of the site).

⁷ Op.cit. (see footnote 6)

CWW coordinator, it does not stipulate any skill set, competence or qualification requirements for undertaking these roles within learning institutions; and it lacks direction in terms of responsibilities for professional development of those involved in the planning, design and delivery of CWW. On the basis of evidence received, we question whether everyone delivering CWW is suitably equipped in terms of having up-to-date knowledge and experience of relevant CWW policy and practice.

44. Careers Wales supports careers education developments by providing training and information for teachers and lecturers; and by encouraging schools and colleges to quality assure careers work using its prestigious quality award. They recruit, register and monitor (for health and safety) employers who are willing to offer work-focused activities to schools and colleges; and they provide staffing support to the Education Business Partnerships (EBPs) which we discuss later in the 'Education Business Partnerships' and 'Revitalising the Education Business Partnerships brand' sections.

45. Careers Wales professional advisers also deliver careers information group sessions to cohorts of young people at various ages and stages of progression; and they seek to deliver at least one bespoke advice or guidance interview with each student before the age of 16. These personalised one-to-one interviews – in 2008–09 more than 222,000 – are the most visible and resource-intensive activity currently undertaken by Careers Wales. There is a strong case for reviewing this current approach. The magnitude of such intensive support for young people has to be balanced against their specific needs and the emerging priorities for supporting adults. This necessitates a more strategic differentiated service-delivery approach to ensure the right level of resource is delivered, at the right time and in the right place suited to individuals' needs. We note that at present a blanket interviewing approach prevails which is not sustainable given the increasing demands from adults seeking careers service support.

46. While formal and informal protocols in the planning and delivery of the CWW framework exist between Careers Wales, schools, colleges, training providers and employers, the evidence we have heard indicates that lead responsibilities and levels of input vary significantly from institution to institution. Some schools clearly place a high priority on the framework and the support provided by Careers Wales. However, there is robust evidence that the framework in some schools and colleges is given less priority generally than the

PSE framework. For example, this is illustrated by the removal of careers coordinators posts in some schools and the appointment of school administrators to oversee careers and work experience programmes. No evidence has been presented of deliberate burden shifting to Careers Wales by institutions in respect of careers education and work-focused experience delivery; but institutions do have substantial discretion in the way the CWW framework is delivered.

47. Indeed, we have heard evidence from a number of stakeholders of situations in which inadequate careers education preparation of pupils for their careers interviews has resulted in Careers Wales staff becoming drawn into the partial delivery of careers education programmes. For obvious reasons, this is neither sustainable nor desirable. Although there are generally high levels of client satisfaction reported through surveys of young people in respect of one-to-one and group sessions delivered by careers advisers, it is clear that Careers Wales is over-stretched as a consequence of such failures by schools.

48. We are unable to provide a more detailed assessment of the delivery and effectiveness of the framework in schools, given that there does not appear to be any systematic monitoring by the Welsh Assembly Government, Estyn, Careers Wales or the educational institutions themselves. While the framework content meets the aspirations outlined in the European Union Ministers' Resolution on lifelong guidance (2008)⁸ and, while Estyn school and college inspections sometimes comment on CWW delivery, we note that:

- outcomes are not explicit in the Estyn Common Inspection Framework's 'wellbeing measures' relating to acquisition of employability skills or young peoples' perceptions of their ability to manage future transitions
- neither of the Welsh Assembly Government's recent developments in benchmarking schools' and colleges' performance (the Schools Effectiveness Framework and the post-16 Quality Framework) include any performance measures relating to delivery of the framework.

⁸ *Council Resolution on better integrating learning guidance into lifelong learning strategies* Council of the European Union Brussels (21 November 2008).
www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/104236.pdf

49. These shortcomings need to be tackled by:

- CWW and PSE frameworks being accorded the same status in practice by the Welsh Assembly Government, the Association of Directors of Education in Wales (ADEW) and Estyn
- the Welsh Assembly Government providing greater clarity via guidance in relation to the respective roles and functional boundaries of careers leaders, teachers and personal tutors, careers and work experience coordinators, learning coaches and careers advisers in respect of CWW delivery
- the identification of examples of effective joint working and training which showcase good and interesting practice, including schools, colleges, employers and training providers, Careers Wales, Youth Service and other related support services – these should be disseminated as exemplars that could eventually be adopted across Wales
- the introduction of a more transparent accountability framework for the planning and delivery of CWW including employability and enterprise skills
- Estyn undertaking ‘thematic’ inspections of the implementation of the framework, embracing the contributions and interaction of all of the organisations involved in CWW delivery
- greater recognition (by Welsh schools and colleges and by Estyn) of the ‘Careers Wales Mark’ as the all-Wales benchmark of excellence in the delivery of careers education and work-focused experience, so that its attainment becomes an ambition of all institutions.

50. The Welsh Assembly Government should also assess the cost-effectiveness of introducing more transparent reporting systems by schools and colleges on the outcomes from the delivery of CWW. The report on fair access to the professions (2009)⁹ highlights that:

. . . as demand for unskilled labour falls still more dramatically in the years to come, those without skills will be left stranded economically and divorced from the mainstream socially . . . The risk is that without appropriate action employment segregation will widen rather than narrow in the years to come.

⁹ *Unleashing Aspiration: The Final Report of the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions* (Cabinet Office, 2009) www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/227102/fair-access.pdf

51. The Review Group is mindful of the burdens on schools and colleges to publish outcomes from their work; however, we are clear that more needs to be done to ensure improved access to high-quality CWW provision in order to address social equity issues and skills shortages in Wales. Such approaches might also help to provide evidence of learning outcomes and achievement in areas such as entry to science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects and factors impacting on NEETs, social mobility and gender stereotyping or local restrictions in careers choice.

Education Business Partnerships

52. Education Business Partnerships (EBPs) perform a key role in supporting the design and delivery of high-quality careers education, information, advice and guidance services. They act as a catalyst in bringing together educationalists and employers with a common goal to maximise individuals' talents, knowledge and skills. With this in mind, we examined ways in which EBPs could be further strengthened so that the impact of their work could be highly visible and achievements recognised at a local, regional and national level. The EBPs promote and facilitate better understanding of enterprise and the world of work both generally and in respect of particular sectors of employment – among learners and their teachers. The existing EBP agenda is very much an expanding one, particularly in relation to work-focused experience provision in the context of Learning Pathways 14–19. In addition to the existing generic work-focused agenda, there is an increasing emphasis for employers to deliver accredited learning as part of the new generation of vocational qualifications – notably the principal element of the Welsh Baccalaureate, the Youth Entrepreneurship Strategy and initiatives in respect of promoting science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

53. Evidence presented to the Review Group clearly highlighted the need for good communication and shared understanding of the differing partnerships. The linkages between schools, colleges, training providers and employers are complex given the historical background and competing demands for increased access to work-focused experiences on employers' premises. The latest figures show that during 2008–09:

- more than 178,000 students participated in education business activities facilitated by Careers Wales
- almost 40,000 students spent at least one week on a work experience placement

- Careers Wales conducted health and safety assessments at over 13,000 work experience placements
- more than 112,000 students participated in an employer-supported curriculum-linked activity
- over 13,500 students worked with an employer mentor who helped them with their individual goal setting.

54. No evidence has been presented of dissatisfaction on the part of schools and colleges with the facilitation role provided by Careers Wales in respect of work-focused experiences via the EBPs. Appendix 6 gives the 2008–9 figures for the range of education business activities supported by Careers Wales. However, there remains some lack of clarity about whether the Careers Wales companies have an overall coordinating role in relation to education business links at school/college level, or not. Professor A G Watts reported that:

. . . some schools, colleges and 14–19 consortia go direct to employers, who as a result may have the problem of reconciling demands from different sources¹⁰.

55. We noted that major gaps still exist in the parity of esteem given to vocational and academic routes by young people, parents, teachers, employers and training providers¹¹. Findings from the OECD¹² indicate that across the UK and further afield:

Academically trained teachers have often spent most of their lives in education. Their experience of the wider work environment can be limited and their formal or informal advice to students may be biased towards general education and university pathways. They may be reluctant to recommend vocational courses, particularly to bright students.

¹⁰ *Careers Wales: A Review in an International Perspective, A report by A.G. Watts.* Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS) Cardiff: Research Document No. 033/2009 (May 2009) para.4.11

www.wales.gov.uk/educationandskills (see 'Research' in the 'Research and Evaluation' section of the site)

¹¹ *A Wales that Works: First Annual Report,* Wales Employment and Skills Board, April 2009. www.wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/090429aWalesthatworks.pdf

¹² OECD (2010) *Challenges and Policy Options for More Effective Career Guidance* Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development EDU/EDPC(2010)13 290310

56. The UK Skills Commission Report (2009)¹³ also highlighted that parents, young people and employers all considered apprenticeships as a genuine alternative to academic upper secondary education, whereas few teachers shared this view.

57. Employers, in particular, emphasised to us the negative influence that some schools and families could have on young people's career aspirations in this regard. As a result, significant challenges remain in terms of how employers and educationalists can best communicate labour market trends and opportunities linked to vocational and academic routes.

58. The Review Group learned that further education colleges tend to make their own arrangements in respect of vocational students and these opportunities often result in job placements and eventual employment. Some well established links between employers and colleges have resulted in a range of innovative practices, for example, resource transfer, compact arrangements, bursaries, awards and apprenticeship opportunities. We are concerned that students pursuing more academic courses do not have access to worthwhile career and work-focused experiences (either in real time or through online simulated learning environments). It would be helpful if a more transparent system for accessing careers and education business links could be made available to students on non-vocational courses. This is particularly pertinent given the increased levels of student dropout from higher education¹⁴.

59. Employers reported that there is a degree of dissatisfaction with the 'bureaucratic burdens' associated with work experience placements. While much of the emphasis on health and safety and safeguarding is currently managed by Careers Wales, the Welsh Assembly Government needs to be sensitive to the capacity of employers to respond to the plethora of demands for engagement with young learners and other students. As Webb highlighted:

We must drive excellence within work-based learning just as much as in more traditional education and training settings: employers expect and deserve no less.¹⁵

¹³ UKCES (2009) *Progression Through Apprenticeships*, London: UK Commission for Employment and Skills (p.19).

www.actiononaccess.org/resources/files/resources__Apprenticeship_progression_report_09.pdf

¹⁴ Stats Wales: www.statswales.wales.gov.uk/ReportFolders/reportFolders.aspx

¹⁵ *Promise and Performance: The Report of the Independent Review of the Mission and Purpose of Further Education in Wales in the Context of the Learning Country: Vision into Action* A Webb, S Drury and G Griffiths (Welsh Assembly Government, 2007, page 15).

www.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/wagreviews/webbreview/?lang=en

60. However, an over-dependence on voluntary employer engagement remains a high-risk strategy for the education sector. The recent economic downturn has prompted the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to provide wage subsidies to employers to provide unemployed adults with work experience placements. As yet it is not clear if this has caused a significant displacement effect on employers' capacity to deliver work-focused experiences for young people and other students; but we do know that schools in particular are finding it increasingly difficult to secure work experience opportunities for their learners.

61. The Review Group was particularly concerned about the reported wide variation in the quality and range of work experience placements. There were examples of exceptional activity and support which introduced young people to stimulating and inspiring work-related opportunities. There were also far less impressive instances where work experience was not clearly linked with the course of learning being followed and relevant outcomes associated with effective careers management and employability skills. There is a need for more consistency and clarity in the provision of 'valid' work experience, especially in terms of supporting disadvantaged young people.

62. A further difficulty involves building placement capacity so that more high-quality opportunities are provided by employers. We noted that the current system for organising placements, specifically in the schools sector, puts intense pressure on employers within a relatively narrow timeframe – approximately six weeks out of an available 52 weeks. Our observation is that work placements could be spaced more evenly over the calendar year in order to provide more space and time for all concerned. This accords with earlier findings from the Webb Review (2007)¹⁶ which stated:

The timing of these placements is not always ideal for employers; it is hard to do justice to the demands, needs and expectations of many of the 40,000 learners in a year group across Wales in these two weeks. We were informed that over 50% of learners rely on their parents to find them a placement. As a result, learners are either advantaged or disadvantaged according to the employment status of their parents.

¹⁶ Op.cit. para. 3.4

63. A recent CBI/EDI education and skills survey report (2010)¹⁷ indicates that work experience could be improved and the number of openings increased by making the duration of placements more flexible, i.e. employers want to be able to deliver opportunities outside the traditional two-week block.

64. At the moment, real-life experiences are viewed as the preferred option by both schools and employers. Yet we heard evidence from employers and schools staff of young people's part-time paid employment not being formally recognised as part of the CWW experience. Howieson et al (2006)¹⁸ highlight that the principle of making more use of learners' part-time work in their schooling is generally viewed positively by learners, their parents/carers, teachers and by employers. However, there remains no clear agreement on what approach should be taken to recognise part-time work and schooling.

65. There is a collective requirement for the Welsh Assembly Government, schools, colleges, employers, Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) and EBPs to improve the overall quality of available work experience for young people, both in respect of vocation-specific and more general employment opportunities. It is clear that more innovative approaches are necessary, especially for schools, including online virtual experiences, combined with the accreditation of part-time work and participation in voluntary organisation activities and projects. This will have to be explored more fully, particularly if employer capacity to deliver becomes further limited as a result of the current and future economic situation.

66. We recognise that the SSCs are interested in promoting their own sectors and therefore cannot be expected to provide an impartial careers service to young people and adults. Indeed, we learned of one SSC offering its own careers service at a financial cost to the end user. We do not think this should be encouraged, given the requirements for partnership working and impartial careers service provision. Instead, we suggest that the SSCs should develop models of suitable work-focused experiences to support particular vocational learning pathways in their respective sectors from school through to pre-employment, with EBPs then being charged with facilitating these models locally.

¹⁷ *Ready to Grow: business priorities for education and skills* Education and Skills Survey CBI/EDI (2010) London.
www.cbi.org.uk/pdf/20100501-cbi-education-and-skills-survey-2010.pdf

¹⁸ *The Nature and Implication of The Part-time Employment of Secondary School Pupils* C Howieson, J McKechnie, S Semple (Scottish Executive Research Report No. 47/2006).

67. It is clear that careers professionals and other practitioners must have access to high-quality labour market information and intelligence (LMI). We learned that they need and want different types of LMI for different purposes. As well as LMI for use with their clients, they need it for effective dialogue and credibility with employers and education business partnerships, in addition to their own professional development. Generally, LMI at a regional and national level is currently viewed as broadly inaccessible and unwieldy.

68. We noted a lack of consistency between and across the SSCs in Wales (as in other parts of the UK) in providing up-to-date LMI. A more integrated approach to LMI is essential for Wales' future economic prosperity. We believe that, in the absence of such high quality information, individuals are likely to follow stereotypical trends; make wrong assumptions about industry and available opportunities; and possibly become disengaged from the realities of employment and work-related experiences. Employers need motivated and committed employees in order to contribute to the local and national economy.

69. We are keen to encourage the key players in education, employment and training to develop a more universal approach to the promotion, collection and collation of LMI. This could be achieved through an all-Wales Careers Services Strategic Forum being tasked specifically to produce proposals for improving the supply and distribution of LMI – both in terms of the local picture and the wider all-Wales and UK perspective (see Themes 7 and 8).

70. We recommend that EBPs should be retained as part of the Careers Wales portfolio but relaunched with a separate national brand that promotes excellence in education business relationships. We heard from key informants that there is a need for the EBP network in Wales to be revitalised on the basis of a structure and system that is more relevant to the economic geography of Wales. This would involve re-branding the existing EBPs as a separate high-profile entity. By doing so, this would assist in attracting more employers into work-focused planning activities and help establish a clearer link to the development of career management and employability skills for the people of Wales. Each EBP would still be part of the unitary Careers Wales structure and be supported by Careers Wales staff. This is discussed further in the 'Revitalising the Education Business Partnerships brand' section (see page 72).

71. Each Partnership should be a visible and active local engagement forum embracing employer networks, workforce representatives, local authorities, learning institutions and Welsh Assembly Government officials. Indeed, each Partnership should be obliged to define its role and relationship with local business. The EBP role should be enhanced to include:

- encouraging employer participation and securing the provision of suitable work-focused experiences and placements for all learners at all stages
- facilitating teacher and lecturer ‘shadowing’ placements with local employers and reciprocal placements from local employers into schools and colleges
- ensuring the generation of local and regional LMI for careers service providers and their clients and for this to include the regional employer demand for Welsh language skills
- promoting STEM and other designated Welsh Assembly Government sector priorities
- working with SSCs to develop and implement resources and models for high-quality, sector-specific work-focused experiences and placements
- developing and recognising careers-related learning outcomes for paid part-time employment and volunteering by young people
- developing partnerships with universities through the Graduate Opportunities Wales (GO Wales) programme.

72. Such a development could be complemented by the Welsh Assembly Government in conjunction with Careers Wales, the EBP national forum, ADEW and ColegauCymru working together to produce best practice guidance on work experience delivery in schools and colleges.

73. We have also identified scope for the Wales Employment and Skills Board (WESB) to review the impact of EBP activities and to produce a map of ‘critical success indicators’ matched with ‘employer priorities’ that can feed into schools and colleges at a strategic level.

This would help to inform the better strategic planning of vocational options and work experience by schools and colleges which WESB has advocated in its May 2010 report on Employability Skills. Employer representatives, school and college staff also indicated to us that the Welsh Assembly Government could do more to encourage participation in education business activities through conditions of contract with public sector suppliers; and this approach could then be extended by the Welsh Assembly Government to contracts let by local authorities, NHS organisations and the wider public sector. We firmly endorse this approach.

Building capacity in careers services for young people

74. Here we briefly explore the potential for strengthening existing arrangements for young people through building upon the expert knowledge and support available from a wide range of organisations and roles operating within the family of careers service providers.

75. It was apparent from the evidence reviewed that inputs from schools staff and careers professionals working alongside young people (and their parents/carers) must be more closely aligned within a strong partnership model. From a consumer perspective, the system is not fully understood and more needs to be done to explain the distinctive contribution of careers education and work experience coordinators, 14 to 19 learning coaches and careers advisers and as a result a closer working relationship is required.

76. Differing, but complementary roles, featured in our discussions; these included careers adviser, CWW coordinator, work placement coordinator, community education worker, teacher, youth worker and learning coach. The latter role, in particular, attracted much interest within the evidence-gathering sessions, especially now that the Assembly Measure has confirmed an entitlement to coaching support for all young people¹⁹.

77. We found no evidence to support the view that there was overlap between the learning coach and careers adviser functions. However, significant concern was expressed about the overall diversity of the learning coach role. We are of the view that the learning coach, as a relatively new resource for schools and colleges, offers considerable potential for further system development. We note that the learning coach role must become more transparent

¹⁹ The Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009
www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-legislation/bus-leg-measures/business-legislation-measures-ls.htm

and aligned more closely to the work of teachers and careers advisers in schools and colleges. The reason for this is to ensure more accurate diagnosis of young people's needs takes place at an early stage.

78. At present, there are significant variations in the approach adopted by schools and colleges in respect of learning coaches. While we accept that the system has to be flexible and bespoke, in line with Learning Pathways 14–19, there is significant potential for role enhancement to help further mainstream the learning coach role. Case studies are presented in *The Learning Coaches of Wales* report²⁰.

79. We advocate a much closer working relationship between careers education and work experience coordinators, 14–19 learning coaches, and careers advisers. Such a close working relationship could and should become a crucial nexus in building realistic careers ambitions and employability skills for all young people. This will require strong leadership at a senior level within schools and colleges.

80. The key objective is to deliver personalised and bespoke careers education, information, advice, and guidance services for all young people at a time and place suited to their needs. Learning choices and career choices are inextricably linked. The learning coaches are well placed to motivate young people and to help them make sense of their work-based learning and preparation for careers interviews and/or group work sessions. Given their close involvement in developing the learner's Individual Learning Plan, learning coaches are ideally positioned to help vulnerable young people explore appropriate work placements and to develop employability and enterprise skills as well as personal development goals. It is also essential that work-focused experiences are linked to the emerging learning pathways and career aspirations of each young person. For some young people this will entail vocation-specific experiences from age 14 onwards; and for others it will entail a range of experiences that help to develop personal skills and illustrate options. This, of course, must take place within the nexus of a well-coordinated partnership model. The partnership model is recognised as the most effective approach for delivering careers education, information, advice and guidance to young people²¹.

²⁰ *The Learning Coaches of Wales*, Professor Danny Saunders and Welsh Assembly Government September 2008

www.learningpathways14-19update.org.uk/issue1/index.html#s3

²¹ *Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap* Paris, OECD (2004)

www.oecd.org/LongAbstract/0,3425,en_2649_39263238_34050172_1_1_1_1,00.html

81. In our view, Careers Wales activities in respect of pre-16 support in secondary schools should predominantly focus on:

- building the capacity of CWW coordinators, teachers and learning coaches respectively to deliver high-quality modern careers education, information and advisory support services through shared training and continuing professional development opportunities. This should enable professionally trained careers advisers to focus on enhancing individuals' career management and employability skills, where necessary, and developing mechanisms for quality assurance in impartial careers provision
- developing a more explicit differentiated service delivery model customised and promoted on a pan-Wales basis. This should involve CWO as the major access point for universal careers service delivery, while ensuring localised careers support is made available, where appropriate. It will be essential to fully integrate and promote the three main channels of delivery, i.e. web-based, telephone helpline and face-to-face services. This should include raising the profile of web 2.0 and 3.0 resources and available ICT facilities
- providing one-to-one guidance interviews to all young people who have been identified by the careers leader in the school as in need of 'brief-assisted' or more 'in-depth' careers support. In particular, those proposing to leave full-time education at 16, or individuals who are assessed by learning coaches, careers or work experience coordinators as being in need of in-depth one-to-one guidance should be regarded as the priority groups. This may include those who are 'at risk' of becoming Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), young offenders, young mothers and those with additional learning needs, though not exclusively so, given high academic achievers could also have complex family, social and economic circumstances.

82. From evidence presented, we learned that there is a strong desire for more generic and specialist training for school and college careers leaders, teachers and pastoral support staff, careers and work experience coordinators and learning coaches. We also noted that in order to attract staff into these roles a closer examination is now required of continuing professional development systems for those directly and indirectly involved in the pan-Wales careers family. We return to the subject of training and professional development later in Theme 6.

Learning Pathways 14–19 Networks and Children and Young People’s Partnerships

83. We discovered that both Learning Pathways 14–19 Partnerships and Children and Young Peoples Partnerships (CYPPs) were active across Wales and met regularly; but we found difficulty in assessing the extent to which these are strategically managed. Their common goal is to provide improved resources and access to services for all young people; but on the evidence that we heard there appears to be some overlap between their functions. This results in excessive participation requirements applying to some service providers (such as Careers Wales) and to duplicated input.

84. We are aware that all members of the Gwynedd and Anglesey Learning Pathways 14–19 Partnerships meet together, rather than attend meetings at a local authority level and this has greatly improved efficiency and effectiveness. The Chair of the Review has been part of the process of establishing this unique arrangement in North West Wales; and he has testified to the immediate benefits resulting for all organisations involved in these Partnerships – especially the reduction in the number of meetings for those organisations serving both Partnerships.

85. We therefore suggest that the Welsh Assembly Government should examine the scope for merging these partnership networks or distinguishing and prescribing their respective roles more clearly in order to complement one another and/or avoid duplication. At the same time, the Welsh Assembly Government might usefully review whether these partnerships need to match the number of local authority areas or whether there is scope for rationalisation, bearing in mind that bespoke Learning Pathways 14–19 will increasingly involve more young people in having to travel across local authority boundaries in order to learn and find suitable work.

86. We further suggest that Careers Wales should have a formal leadership role within Learning Pathway 14–19 Partnerships (or wider merged partnerships) in respect of the development of career management and wider employability skills and the development of local strategies to reduce the proportion of young people who are NEET.

87. The unified Careers Wales will also be well-placed to lead on the training and development of all personnel involved in Learning Pathways 14–19 delivery in so far as they support young people (and adults) in careers information gathering, work-focused experience participation and the development of career management and employability skills.

Theme 2: Developing a differentiated careers service delivery model

88. In this section, we focus specifically on exploring the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for the proposed new unitary organisation in developing a more coherent and explicit differentiated careers service delivery model for young people and adults. We assess the balance of current delivery arrangements, taking into account the digital world and consumers' attitudes and behaviours in accessing public sector information, advice and guidance services.

Face-to-face services

89. A client-centred service must be one in which the delivery response is flexible and sensitive to individuals' needs and expectations. As discussed earlier, there is growing recognition throughout Wales to extend the reach and quality of careers services to both young people and adults. Research evidence shows²² that:

Undoubtedly technology has already influenced, and will continue to influence, both the manner in which careers services are accessed by clients and the ways they are utilised . . . Indeed, its increased use by key user groups of careers services – especially young people – is placing new demands both on careers practitioners and the organisations for which they work. One key challenge for the immediate future is to ensure that the careers sector is sufficiently equipped to respond to these demands.

90. The evidence gathered has highlighted a need for careful consideration in terms of rebalancing current levels of face-to-face, web-based and telephone helpline services. There is general consensus for a more fully integrated 'three main channels' delivery system. We have noted that there is a real danger that already disadvantaged individuals, with particular needs for localised and in-depth careers support services, could become further excluded – especially if service delivery becomes dependent on access to ICT. We were made fully aware of the need for improved national policies to address deficiencies in the digital infrastructure across Wales, particularly in rural areas.

²² *Careers Information, Advice and Guidance: the digital revolution and repositioning of labour market information – An Expert Paper for UKCES* by J Bimrose and S A Barnes (Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick, 2010).

91. We do not consider that Careers Wales personnel should become involved in direct delivery of careers work in primary school, apart from supporting EBPs. Their involvement in delivery of careers work pre-14 should be kept to an absolute minimum due to other competing requirements.

92. We fully recognise that there is a strong argument for all young people to be seen at least once by a professional careers adviser (not least as a career decision-making quality-control measure). It is also important to ensure the right level of resource is made available to individuals in the right place and at the right time. Our recommended emphasis for change is to consider diversifying the timing of in-depth face-to-face support in accordance with individuals' needs, i.e. a move away from blanket interviewing.

93. We are not advocating a shift in responsibility from careers advisers to reliance on schools and colleges to provide their own careers information, advice and guidance. In fact, we are of the opposite view having taken account of international research evidence²³ on effective careers work in schools²⁴. From this, it is also clear from experience in the Netherlands²⁵ and Sweden that impartiality can be severely compromised if institutions are given sole responsibility for the development of career aspirations, career management and employability skills by young people. Instead, a better coordinated partnership model is required and more flexible ways of working to include group work and use of information and communications technologies (ICT).

94. We heard how impartial advice can be countered in some schools that are intent on retaining their post-16 cohort, through a range of direct and more subtle influences on the individual. Careers Wales, and other provider organisations in the family of careers service providers, have a clear responsibility to report on unprofessional practices and to ensure that the individual is made fully aware of all the options available.

²³ Sweden has been decentralising its schools system, with much more autonomy both for municipalities and for individual schools. This has resulted in considerable weakening of its career guidance provision.

²⁴ *Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap* (OECD, 2004, page 42).

²⁵ *Review of Career Guidance Policies: Netherlands Country Note* (OECD, 2002).

95. Given that access to an independent adviser is one of the assurances of impartiality, as enshrined in the Education Act 1997, this crucial element must be retained as a minimum entitlement for all young people. Thus, while we fully recognise that a differentiated service model will place a strong emphasis on the development of career management and employability skills, we feel that all young people should be made fully aware of their entitlement to at least one careers guidance interview from a Careers Wales professional adviser, with additional support provided to those most in need. For individuals in learning, work or unemployed it will be essential that they know how to make contact with a careers professional either online, by telephone or face-to-face.

96. We appreciate that career paths develop over time and individuals' career maturation will differ depending on circumstance and experience. The development of impact indicators for CWO usage and group work sessions, as distinct from one-to-one interviewing, would assist in reviewing the balance of interventions. The Careers Wales Guidance Standards tend to be well regarded, though it is timely to review these in the context of rebalancing activities to take account of more group work and online service delivery.

97. We have reached the conclusion that a new all-Wales customised differentiated service delivery model needs to be articulated clearly by Careers Wales, in conjunction with schools, colleges and higher education careers services, to support a move towards the intelligent allocation of increasingly scarce resources.

Online and telephone resources

98. The use of ICT systems to provide more integrated careers services has unfolded at a rapid pace throughout the UK. Digital facilities permeate all aspects of our everyday lives and many young people are growing up with digital literacy skills that many adults do not, as yet, fully possess. The increasing use of technology by key user groups of careers services in Wales – especially young people and graduates – is placing new demands on both careers practitioners and on organisations for which they work. It has profound implications for service design and delivery.

99. A key challenge for the immediate future is to ensure that the careers family in Wales is sufficiently equipped to respond to these new ways of working. In this regard, we have been impressed by the functionality of CWO and its potential for further development. The website offers real scope for individuals to self-help and to attain unmediated access to information and career management tools at their own convenience. Evidence shows this is increasingly appealing to young people, since they are used to and tend to prefer remote access to face-to-face contact. Careers Wales reports that the number of personal accounts on CWO totalled some 126,000 at 31 March 2006; the number had increased to 358,000 at 31 March 2010. CWO therefore does represent a potentially very significant element in the development of a fully integrated differentiated service model, so long as young people have sufficient computer access and ICT skills to use this resource.

100. We have heard that the use of CWO by pre-16 young people in schools has been restricted by limited access to computer facilities and by the geographical limitations of fast-speed broadband infrastructure in parts of Wales. Therefore, the digital divide is also a key factor for consideration in the design and delivery of careers services using internet-based facilities. While there is some evidence that those experiencing social exclusion are less likely to be digitally literate, this is by no means a general rule. Research evidence on socially excluded young people suggests that many of the benefits of internet access are available to this group through mobile technologies²⁶.

101. The usage of CWO has increased significantly; but we also think that more could be done by Careers Wales, in concert with schools, colleges and HEIs, to promote the CWO facilities to young people and adults. We note that the use of both online and telephone services will be very much influenced by spend on marketing; and yet expenditure on marketing by Careers Wales has been modest to date. At the very least, a gearing-up of promotion should require all schools, colleges and HEIs in Wales to create hyperlinks to CWO from their own websites.

²⁶ *Social Inclusion of Young Marginalised People through Online Mobile Communities* by I Marschalek and E Unterfrauner. In IDC 2009: The 8th International Conference on Interaction Design and Children.

102. Increasingly, the telephone helpline service will become more closely interrelated with the CWO portal as more and more young people become accustomed to accessing the internet from their mobile phones and then following-up their initial browsing with a telephone call. To date, promotion of the telephone helpline service has heavily relied on promotion of the 0800 100 900 freephone number by the UK Government, with callers from Wales being routed to a call centre in Cardiff. Where an in-depth requirement for guidance is needed, calls are routed to Careers Wales advisers in the locality of the caller. This arrangement will need to be reviewed taking account of potential changes currently being put in place for England²⁷, Northern Ireland²⁸ and Scotland²⁹.

103. It is essential that the helpline in Wales is retained with its dedicated number hot-linked to local careers advisers as the telephone service seems certain to play an increasingly important role in a differentiated service model involving a greater degree of self-management by clients. It is also essential that the marketing of the helpline in Wales is not reduced as a consequence of developments across the border as this will be counter-productive. There would appear to be substantial potential for joint marketing of CWO and the telephone helpline in Wales. Indeed, we note that the new adult careers service in England is committed to developing a customer-management system which will identify all client contacts whether by web, telephone or in person. We would urge that a similar approach is adopted in Wales as a cornerstone of a seamless bilingual service.

104. For Careers Wales staff and other key players in the careers family there is a need to further develop ICT skills to increase the capacity to deliver careers services online and over the telephone as the demand from young people (and, progressively, from adults) for remote access continues to grow. There will be a need to cascade innovative policies and practices as part of a continuing professional development agenda within and across the family of careers providers in Wales.

105. The Welsh Assembly Government, in partnership with Careers Wales, schools, colleges and the local authorities, must assess and address the extent to which a fully integrated three main channels delivery system can be achieved; and this is something that Estyn should monitor closely through their ongoing work.

²⁷ Note: The transfer of sponsorship from the Learning and Skills Council to the Skills Funding Agency.

²⁸ Note: The planned purchase of services by Northern Ireland from the National Careers Advice Service in England.

²⁹ Note: The formation of Skills Development Scotland.

106. We believe there is considerable scope for interaction between Careers Wales and the Higher Education Careers Advisory Services (HECAS) in the delivery of online IAG services for students and graduates, particularly in off-campus locations and via online advanced interactive ICT services. Where necessary and appropriate, Careers Wales can potentially provide face-to-face services locally in the absence of HECAS expertise; but good communication links will be necessary to build a more comprehensive picture of higher education students' career trajectories.

107. We were particularly impressed by the Open University's online careers support services to students and the extent to which it was already working with Careers Wales to achieve mutual online linkages and cohesion in the delivery of careers information, advice and guidance services for Open University students in Wales.

108. We therefore regard it as unfortunate, though perhaps understandable, that the boundaries of responsibility between Careers Wales and the HECAS of other universities appear to have militated against CWO having a higher profile with higher education students who are domiciled in Wales. The HECAS' representatives have informed us that HEI students are well served by their university bespoke ICT platforms which focus on the undergraduate learning experience and the distinctive graduate jobs market. We therefore suggest that Careers Wales and the HECAS in Wales, in consultation with student representatives, should develop a higher education component within CWO which articulates clearly the boundaries of responsibility between Careers Wales and the HECAS. As a minimum, this component could provide hyperlinks to the respective Welsh HECAS' websites, while offering Wales-domiciled students the opportunity to continue to use CWO.

Theme 3: Priority groups

109. In this section we discuss and make clear that key transition points throughout life are often defined by life experiences rather than chronological age. We have been mindful of trying to find the right balance between universal access and entitlement to careers services for all and targeted services for those most 'in need'.

110. During the evidence-gathering sessions, we identified various specific issues that require attention in respect of the social inclusion agenda for young people 'Not in Education, Employment and Training' (NEET), those with additional learning needs (ALN) or learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) and young offenders. There is a great deal of crossover between these groups and policy objectives for each recognise the need to provide personalised support services. However, we have highlighted the main issues for these client groups separately in respect of the careers services currently available to them.

The NEET group

111. The proportion of young people Not in Education, Employment or Training has hovered at around 10 per cent since the mid-1990s (Nuffield Review/Rathbone 2008)³⁰, despite significant investment in targeted support and other policy measures. Indeed, the figures since the mid-1980s indicate that the overall buoyancy of the economy in terms of general employment rates could be the most significant factor associated with those who are NEET. At present, Careers Wales provides the following services in respect of such young people.

- Pre-16: Education Gateway and other Careers Wales additional support services provide preventative, integrative and recovery support aimed at developing motivation in relation to young people's learning and work goals. This support can be ongoing; and, where additional funding has been available for enhanced support, the outcomes for young people can be excellent. Education Gateway services are part of the partnership arrangements with schools.
- Post-16: Careers Wales supports young people on the 'unemployed register' by providing a referral service that ensures the learning coach function is made available to those young people who are not registered with any learning

³⁰ Rathbone/Nuffield Review *Engaging Youth Enquiry: Final consultation report*. (The Nuffield 14-19 Review, 2008) www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/files/documents196-1.pdf

provider. For those who are not in work but are not ready for further education or work-based training, Youth Gateway provides additional and enhanced guidance, assessment and personal support. Careers Wales' advisers work with the young people to tackle barriers to engagement, arranging support in respect of the development of basic and key skills, personal motivation and a more positive attitude towards work, as well as providing bespoke careers IAG support. Referrals to specialist agencies take place to address identified specific needs such as emotional and mental well-being, substance misuse, homelessness and abuse.

112. Approximately 30 per cent of the Careers Wales budget is currently focused on supporting 16 to 18-year-olds who are NEET. The current economic climate and the huge pressure on public spending strengthen the arguments to build on the skills, experience and knowledge that already exist within the learning coach function and Careers Wales in respect of these young people.

113. The reorganisation of Careers Wales into a unitary structure offers the ideal opportunity to develop the careers companies' current management information systems in order to put in place a national tracking and data management system in respect of NEETs. We learned from policy leads that this data is absent from the current system. Such an approach could build upon the annual destination survey which provides a snapshot of the percentage of young people who are NEET on leaving full-time education; this could be developed into a 'real-time' resource if other agencies were required to report change of status (for example, 'dropping-out' of further education or WBL placements, or entering employment) to Careers Wales as the managing agent.

114. While the majority of unemployed 16 and 17-year-olds use Careers Wales' referral services, there is a significant number who do not register with Careers Wales or any other public agencies. We understand that the Welsh Assembly Government is at present undertaking research to discover the characteristics and motivations of this group in order to identify 'best practice' policy responses – and as noted by the WESB, the role of youth workers is fundamental for the provision of support.

115. Currently the main vehicle for this response is the 'Keeping In Touch' (KIT) strategies operated by each local authority in Wales under the aegis of the CYPPs. We have been told that there are differing approaches to KIT strategies across Wales, but that most of the Careers Wales companies have experience in outreach work and in identifying the type of opportunities and range of support that are most helpful in re-engaging young people. We are therefore hopeful that a unified structure will be in a position to use the emerging evidence base and develop a coherent and consistent service for these young people in conjunction with other major players such as learning providers, the Youth Service, voluntary organisations and Jobcentre Plus. Following on from our Learning Pathways comments in the 'Learning Pathways 14–19 Networks and Children and Young People's Partnerships' section (see page 35), such partnership working around NEET support requires leadership. We urge that this is based on the underlying rationale of employability, and this places the new Careers Wales unified entity as the agency best placed to take charge.

Young people with additional learning needs

116. All of the Careers Wales companies employ careers advisers who specialise in supporting young people with additional learning needs to help them achieve a smooth transition into post-16 education, training or employment. The culmination of this support is participation – along with other relevant professionals – in transition review meetings that are arranged by the schools for young people with Statements of Educational Need or who are identified as having equivalent needs. Careers Wales' advisers produce a Learning and Skills Plan setting out the educational needs of the young person and the provision that is required to meet them.

117. The effectiveness of the process is highly dependent on close inter-agency collaboration and the input of a range of professional assessments and information that then support the recommendations in the Learning and Skills Plan. In complex cases where the Learning and Skills Plan identifies a requirement for specialist further education college provision, Careers Wales currently leads on submitting applications for funding to the Welsh Assembly Government. Around 100 of these applications are completed each year, within a total of just over 5,000 transition reviews attended in 2008–09.

118. We received evidence from Careers Wales and Welsh Assembly Government policy officials about the effectiveness of the current arrangements. Estyn inspection reports are very positive about the day-to-day support that Careers Wales provides to young people and their families. But, in our discussions, concerns were expressed about the quality of existing training provision for this specialism and the fact that different models of service delivery are in operation across the six Careers Wales companies. There were also concerns raised about the effectiveness of school transition planning arrangements and, in particular, some difficulties in securing timely and consistent decisions on post-16 specialist college funding from the educational and social services departments of local authorities and health boards.

119. We heard from Welsh Assembly Government officials about the potential impact on demand for Careers Wales services arising from the Additional Learning Needs Legislative Competency Order³¹. This widens the definition of additional learning needs and is likely to lead to statutory change that will significantly extend the work Careers Wales currently undertakes with this client group. Although this reform is not likely to be fully implemented until at least 2013, the potential for increased pressures on Careers Wales Services – at a time of tight resources – needs to be recognised within the Welsh Assembly Government.

120. The establishment of a unitary structure will provide an opportunity for Careers Wales to review existing training and professional development provision for this service. While there may be sound historical reasons for the differing delivery models – particularly in relation to rurality and the availability of special schools – we would also expect Careers Wales to look to develop a more consistent approach to service delivery in this area.

Young offenders

121. We heard evidence from Welsh Assembly Government policy officials about the important role that careers guidance can play in strategies for tackling youth offending. Inspection reports by Estyn have reported good partnership arrangements between Careers Wales companies and Youth Offending Teams. We note that Careers Wales has allocated a dedicated careers adviser to work in Parc Prison, Bridgend, which houses young offenders from Wales and England.

³¹ The National Assembly for Wales (Legislative Competence) (Education and Training) Order 2008: www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2008/uksi_20081036_en_1

122. There were concerns expressed about the lack of careers guidance support for a small number of young offenders who serve their sentences at young offender institutions in England. As of February 2010, there were 114 young people in custody from Wales aged between 10 and 17. Of these, 51 were spread within 13 institutions in England as follows: 24 in young offender institutions, 22 in secure training centres and 5 in secure children's homes. Of the 63 young offenders in Wales, 50 were in Parc young offenders' institution and 13 in Hillside secure children's home.

123. Although the careers adviser resource at Parc prison is available to young offenders from England as well as Wales, we were given to understand that the Connexions Service in England does not provide a reciprocal arrangement for young offenders from Wales. This has led to some calls for Careers Wales companies to send careers advisers to institutions in England on a regular basis. We were unable to establish the impact of careers guidance interventions with young offenders due to a lack of evaluation strategies and barriers to tracking created by the requirement to preserve offender anonymity once individuals have left the Secure Estate.

124. Another concern is the continuing lack of progress in the development of ICT support services within the secure estate – and in particular, access to CWO, for mediated use with young offenders. The lack of progress in implementing an ICT strategy is a further barrier to effectively supporting offender learning and researching opportunities for future learning and employment. It also prevents the potential for a marked improvement in the flow of information about young offenders from the Secure Estate to support agencies located in the home area.

125. We therefore recommend that Welsh Assembly Government explores the issue of ICT support for young offenders with the Youth Justice Board (which oversees the Youth Justice system in England and Wales) with a view to reaching agreement on the development and implementation of a mediated support service for young offenders to enable them to record their learning progress and research further learning and employment options. This ICT should also be available to facilitate transfer of information on young offenders between the Secure Estate and partner agencies in the home area.

126. In the absence of evidence of the impact of careers guidance on re-offending rates with this group, we are unable to make a decision on the benefits of Careers Wales staff travelling on a regular basis to institutions in England that house young offenders from Wales. We understand that the Youth Justice Board in Wales is currently working with the Welsh Assembly Government and Careers Wales to develop an action plan that seeks to make full use of resources available to all agencies with an interest in young offenders. The stated aim is to provide a more coordinated programme of support for Welsh young offenders based in both Wales and England. This is timely and welcome news; and we would ask that this action plan takes account of the issues that have been raised by this review.

Theme 4: Careers services for adults

127. In the following section, we examine the current arrangements for careers services working with adults within further education and HEIs, WBL provision, communities and in the workplace. We consider the implications of the current careers service delivery system and make recommendations for a more accessible, coherent and visible family of careers service providers to inform and support a wide range of adults from differing backgrounds and in differing settings.

Work-based learning and further education

128. Students in further education colleges can take advantage of the student services and support facilities of their respective institutions. These services are extensive and deal with travel arrangements, financial matters (grants, bursaries and allowances), advice on a personal level, internal information and course progression options, identifying additional support in basic skills (for example, assessing students for the support facilities required) and many other specialist services. They have, in recent years, been supplemented by the presence of the learning coach and the professional careers adviser. Colleges have greatly valued their relationship with the Careers Wales companies and all of the institutions have integrated this IAG role into their total service offer to students. Some colleges have also developed their own careers staff in addition to direct placements from Careers Wales as an integral part of the overall student support arrangements.

129. Unlike other sectors, further education colleges deal with a vast range of different students and trainees at different levels. Young people 16 to 19 on vocational and academic courses constitute the majority of the full-time students and colleges also carry out most of the work-based learning contracts for the Welsh Assembly Government. Some of these trainees attend colleges on day release provision or on block-release arrangements; and staff have an important role regarding the assessment of progress in the workplace in partnership with employers. Some of the non-FE WBL providers also have contractual relationship with colleges to deliver part of the provision and enable their trainees to have access to specialist facilities. Since this latter cohort are not considered to be trainees of the college, the contract between a WBL provider and the college might not always cover the additional support services that further education can provide to the individual.

130. Further education colleges also have contractual arrangements to deliver vocational provision to their local 14 to 16 cohort. They have a major involvement with employers to provide specialist courses for their staff. They deliver a range of higher education provision directly funded or with franchise arrangements with universities; and they are also attracting a growing number of students from outside the European Union. Some colleges have developed specialist provision for those with basic skills, physical disabilities and other needs. Many colleges are now located on several sites and have developed outreach centres to respond to the needs of adult learners. These sites, and others in the community and the workplace, are critical to meet the needs of adult learners; and the further education sector has endeavoured to ensure that the wider support in terms of careers and other services can be made available to all these students. However, as the major providers of community learning, the colleges and their partners need to make sure that the service offer in terms of careers IAG is articulated to all community providers. While we are not aware of major shortcomings in this area regarding colleges, Estyn has a key role in assessing whether all students in further education – regardless of background or funding stream – have equal access to resources and services.

131. In contrast to further education, we noted considerable variation in the partnership arrangements between private training providers and careers services for IAG provision to WBL trainees and to apprentices over the age of 19. We believe that a greater role for further education on this respect could have an impact on the overall quality and availability of careers advice and guidance made available to work-based learners; and the unified Careers Wales will have a responsibility to ensure consistency and equality of access to these services for both WBL trainees who are recruited by private training providers and non-FE funded students in community settings.

132. For those students in further education colleges who are following higher education courses a range of potential issues emerge. As regards those who are directly funded through HEFCW or through non-public sources, we are confident that the respective further education colleges will provide the necessary careers IAG services, as required, as part of the whole package of student support services that are available. However, for higher education students on courses in further education that are franchised from the universities the picture could be quite different. Where such franchise

arrangements apply between institutions that are in reasonably close geographical proximity, we are confident that access to support services is not an issue. But, for those higher education students that are some distance from the home institution, we are less assured that they are not disadvantaged as a result of lack of access either to the HECAS of the franchising higher education institution or to the support services of their host further education college. There needs to be clarity about this in the contractual arrangement between the respective institutions involved.

133. With the growing number of students taking foundation degrees and other higher education courses in further education institutions, significant numbers of students dropping out of courses in both higher education and further education institutions, and with more mergers proposed in both sectors, any lack of clarity about relevant careers service providers and service boundaries is unsatisfactory. This could, at best, result in the development of a multi-tier service for students in further education colleges; and, at worst, result in confusion for such students as to where to go for assistance. Neither the Welsh Assembly Government, nor HEFCW, have issued any guidance on this; and yet the evidence we have heard suggests that such guidance is needed and would be welcomed by all of the careers service providers involved.

The interface between Careers Wales and the Higher Education Careers Advisory Services (HECAS)

134. All HEIs have their own careers advisory services; and, while these vary considerably in scale and in function, they usually provide careers guidance as well as other services (though the extent of access to careers interviews is very limited in some institutions)³². It is widely acknowledged that HECAS across the UK predominantly operate a needs-based differentiated delivery system.

135. We had therefore hoped to learn significantly from the higher education careers services' experience. However, consideration of this interface has been somewhat hampered by a general lack of available basic information about resourcing, activity levels and assessment of impact of their services. We found difficulty in obtaining an accurate overview of the extent to which HECAS are

³² The nature of these services was analysed in detail in *A Survey of Careers Service Provision in Welsh Institutions in Higher Education*, prepared by ASW Consulting and Minds at Work for the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales and for ELWa in 2002. The report has not, however, been placed in the public domain.

externally inspected, beyond their voluntary commitment to matrix assessment. While they have a very strong network, the HECAS presented their services and products as part of the student support entitlement offer in their home institution.

136. Given each institution has to compete for students, the main determinant of their careers service offer is a focus on the particular needs of their own students, rather than the role they play within the wider system of careers service provision. As a consequence, it has not been possible to draw direct comparisons with the services delivered by the Careers Wales companies. Indeed, the HECAS reported that they are providing a different kind of service to a 'distinctly different clientele'. They described their work as being focused exclusively on students taking first degree or postgraduate courses and graduates during the initial period of job-seeking after leaving university as far as their first employment destination. We were informed by the HECAS' representatives that 58 per cent of the students studying in Welsh HEIs are from Wales, 26 per cent are from other parts of the UK and 16 per cent are from overseas³³.

137. The HECAS did not perceive the provision of separate careers services to university students as a disjuncture from the all-age and all-abilities careers services provided by Careers Wales. They regarded university years as 'a distinct episode' outside the process of progression from education to employment experienced by non-graduates. In essence, they perceived graduates to be on a separate track into employment and the professions which is by no means geographically restricted to Wales.

138. While HECAS endeavour to monitor first destination data via their own bespoke follow-up surveys, they are not required or specifically funded to monitor second and third destinations; and so their impact measurement is correspondingly limited. It was reported that data protection considerations and limited resources appear to inhibit longer-term monitoring of graduate career progression via other potential sources of tracking information such as Careers Wales and Jobcentre Plus databases. The fact that graduates are much more mobile and therefore more widely dispersed than many others in the labour market dissuades most HECAS from attempting longitudinal profiling beyond first destination, even though substantial numbers of graduates re-enter the labour market subsequently and many of these in Wales re-engage with the Careers Wales in these circumstances.

³³ Stats Wales – www.statswales.wales.gov.uk/ReportFolders/reportFolders.aspx

139. While we appreciate the strength of the HECAS' argument regarding students temporarily resident in Wales from elsewhere in the UK and overseas, we do not consider this fragmentation of the all-age approach to careers service provision in Wales to be in the best interests of Wales-domiciled students attending Welsh higher education institutions or others who, following graduation, are aiming to live and work here. As student dropout figures continue to rise and graduate unemployment and under-employment continue to increase in tight labour markets, it is essential that HECAS, Careers Wales and Jobcentre Plus work more closely in partnership to deliver more integrated support to those students entering and leaving higher education who experience difficulty in determining their career paths or in subsequently securing appropriate employment in Wales.

140. At present, there is a variety of service level agreements and memoranda of understanding in place between the individual higher education institutions and the individual Careers Wales companies. We see substantial potential for moving towards more standardised joint working arrangements across Wales, as a consequence of the prospective unification of the Careers Wales organisation, particularly with regards to the:

- preparation of individuals for university
- support of higher education students in further education colleges, higher education course dropouts and students with additional learning needs
- sharing of LMI data and administration in respect of employer engagement, work experience and job-placement opportunities
- development of appropriate interactive careers IAG services for students and graduates including the bespoke Graduate Opportunities (GO Wales) programme
- tracking of the careers progression of Wales-domiciled graduates beyond first destination
- joint training and professional development of careers professionals and other members of the family of careers service across Wales.

141. Indeed, we see the prospective reorganisation of Careers Wales into a unitary organisation as presenting a golden opportunity for a step change in such joint working. This will first entail the production of some clear policy guidance from the Welsh Assembly Government, in conjunction with HEFCW, on what is to be achieved in these respective areas and over what timescale. This will require a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to be drawn up between Higher Education Wales (on behalf of the constituent higher education careers services) and the unified Careers Wales organisation regarding future joint working; and the determination of a jointly-owned action plan, in accordance with the provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding, for fulfilling the policy objectives. The existing MoU and Joint Action plan between the Open University Careers Services and Careers Wales is an exemplar of good practice in this regard.

Minimum entitlement and priority groups within HECAS

142. There is no minimum careers service entitlement prescribed by the Welsh Assembly Government or the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW); and, although there is a shared protocol between HECAS regarding service provision, the range of service provision on offer at different HEIs is effectively at the discretion of the respective institutions. The amount of support provided depends very much upon the needs and demands of individual students accessing services, rather than on any priority groups identified linked to core funding.

143. Furthermore, in the absence of external inspection, quality management appears to be demonstrable only via voluntary self-assessment against the matrix standard and within the QAA for higher education institutional reviews of HEIs. Higher education careers advisory services indicated that they would welcome some central guidance on minimum student entitlement; and we would see that as an essential first step towards achieving increased consistency of provision between HEIs. However, we would also like to see such guidance designating priority groups to be actively engaged by the HECAS and specifying requirements for reporting on impact at an institutional and local level.

Quality management and inspection of HECAS

144. In its review of HEIs in Wales the QAA³⁴ found that careers education and employability themes were being strongly pursued by the HECAS. However, while progress had been made in the implementation of personal development planning in most institutions, variations were found in its use. We note the Tri-partite Memorandum of Understanding between the QAA, HEFCW and Estyn (which was signed in January 2010)³⁵ aims to ensure that the three organisations share expertise to develop and support improvement in the management of the quality of higher education in Wales.

145. We also note with interest that the revised QAA Code of Practice³⁶ states that:

Students pursue a wide range of subjects in higher education at different points in their life and take up an increasingly diverse range of post-study destinations. Consequently, the CEIAG needs of students are diverse and require staff with high-level skills in career advice and guidance, and an increasingly sophisticated knowledge and understanding of the graduate labour market. Linked to this, students in higher education are exposed to highly complex messages about their career development and benefit from CEIAG to help them analyse, evaluate and articulate their responses. In addition, CEIAG takes place within the formal and informal curriculum, and this demands high-level pedagogical skills and knowledge, including the ability to link this to career information resources and liaison activity with employers and other opportunity providers.

146. To reinforce this and to underpin the development of consistent quality standards across all of HEIs in Wales, we strongly recommend the introduction of joint external inspection of individual HECAS in Wales by the QAA and Estyn, subject to the necessary statutory powers being in place to discharge this function. This should extend

³⁴ Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education – www.qaa.ac.uk/wales/default.asp

³⁵ www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/memoranda/HEFCW_ESTYN.pdf

³⁶ *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (Section 8, Career education, information, advice and guidance) www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeOfPractice/default.asp

to the interface with Careers Wales, the EBPs, further education colleges and other related service providers within the ambit of the Welsh Assembly Government's sponsorship.

Careers dialogue in the workplace and community learning settings

147. The Independent Inquiry into the Future for Lifelong Learning (IFLL)³⁷, sponsored by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) in 2009, gathered evidence from a wide range of experts, and learners, and identified a broad consensus for the future for lifelong learning in the UK. The findings set out a clear vision on the role and added-value contribution of older learners to the UK economy; and they promoted the need for rebalancing support across a far broader age range as compared with the current dominant focus on young people.

148. We noted that there was limited strategy, uniformity or coherence apparent in respect of the provision of careers support to adult learners. This is to some extent less urgent for those part-time students studying on short courses in colleges or universities, although even here we note a need for enhanced careers information, advice and guidance regarding subsequent learning. We also noted that a substantial number of part-time learners – as evidenced by the Open University – are outside employment, often with other significant responsibilities such as caring for others. Careers advice and guidance is a crucial life-changing service for these adult students; and, at present, there is a danger that they may be slipping through the net of careers service support.

149. The picture is more blurred for the provision of careers support to those adults who participate on short courses elsewhere – often in community and outreach centres. These services are currently being inspected by Estyn through the Adult and Community Learning (ACL) consortia. We note that the variability of support is linked with the plethora of ACL initiatives and projects which are funded from a variety of sources (such as the European Social Fund, FEI franchises with local authorities, and HEFCW grants to universities for widening access).

³⁷ www.lifelonglearninginquiry.org.uk

150. Careers support within ACL settings and other venues for part-time learning provision should be more clearly defined. There is an urgent need to define minimum standards for 'employability signposting and support' within the ACL arena and to provide more consistency of service provision. Recent research³⁸ has demonstrated that engagement in ACL is often the first step towards re-entry into employment by adults who have been dependent on welfare and income support.

151. We heard from both the Wales TUC and employer representatives that adult learning in the workplace had been very successfully championed by Union Learning Representatives (ULRs), particularly within the public sector where they are more widely established. NIACE also saw ULRs and Community Learning Representatives (CLRs) as having important proselytising, signposting and support roles to play. We share these views and urge the Welsh Assembly Government to support the recruitment of more of these representatives, particularly greater numbers of ULRs in the private sector where they can have a crucial catalytic influence in encouraging other employees to update and enhance their skills.

152. We think that there is considerable scope for both ULRs and CLRs to extend their signposting and support roles into the field of careers planning. They could also assist employers in the development of appropriate work experience tasters for both young people and adult learners seeking employment. This would entail an appropriate accredited training programme being put in place on a dispersed or remote access basis in order to attract take-up. Such a programme might usefully include familiarisation with online and telephone access to Careers Wales, as many young adult learners have become accustomed to using ICT media and prefer them to face-to-face contacts; and as many older adults with work and family responsibilities find it difficult to travel to face-to-face meetings with careers advisers.

153. It is in the interests of the Welsh Assembly Government, employers, Careers Wales Jobcentre Plus, and, of course, the learning providers to develop these valuable field forces as both ULRs and CLRs are well-placed to make initial contacts and to counter stereotypical and social mobility constraints which influence on learning and career ambitions.

³⁸ Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning: A sample of research reports
www.learningbenefits.net/Publications/ResReplntros/ResRep11intro.htm

Theme 5: The Welfare Reform Agenda

154. In this section, we briefly examine the potential impact of the UK Government's Welfare Reform Agenda and implications for careers service design and delivery. We also reflect upon the career management and employability skills agenda likely to impact on adults both within and outside the workplace, specifically in response to increased redundancies and skills shortages across Wales. The Review Group set out to achieve greater clarity in understanding the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) plans for an Integrated Employment Service, with particular attention given to the potential role of careers service providers.

Skills health checks

155. The Welfare Reform Act (2009) paved the way for major reform of the benefits system, skills assessments, job seeking strategies and work-related activities. Given the economy now faces new and demanding challenges, the growing imperative is to improve individuals' state of readiness to respond positively to fluid and unpredictable job markets. Leitch (2006)³⁹ and the *Skills That Work for Wales* report (2008)⁴⁰ identified careers information, advice and guidance as a crucial element in improving the UK's skills base. Three years on it has become clear that there still remains a necessity to bring together more holistic support services for adults, especially those unemployed and in need of additional support. Closer alignment between careers service providers and Jobcentre Plus is now a reality in Wales with examples of cooperation, communication and collaboration apparent at a local level.

156. Employer representatives provided evidence to us indicating that the proposed formation of improved careers service for adults – with greater alignment to Jobcentre Plus – is a welcome development in Wales. We considered progress made in relation to the implementation of a new 'Skills Health Check' and we understand the range of potential clients for whom the new 'Skills Health Check' may be relevant include those:

- in work seeking to 'get on'

³⁹ Leitch Review of Skills: Prosperity for All in the Global Economy – World Class Skills (December 2006).
www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/other/0118404792/0118404792.pdf

⁴⁰ *Skills That Work for Wales: A Skills and Employment Strategy* (Welsh Assembly Government, January 2008).
www.wales.gov.uk/educationandskills (see the 'Skills That Work for Wales' section in the 'Policies and Strategies' area of the site)

- needing to up-skill in order to remain in work
- unemployed but seeking work or economically inactive.

Developing the 'Careers Ladders' concept

157. We learned that the relationship between Jobcentre Plus services and careers services throughout the UK is gradually unfolding. At present, Jobcentre Plus and careers services for adults remain quite separate though closer working links are being established throughout the UK. In Wales, an Integrated Employment and Skills model outlined in *Skills That Work for Wales*⁴¹ was proposed and this is now underpinned by a 'careers ladders' concept.

Careers Ladders Wales

- Step 1: Contact/Engagement with unemployed and economically inactive people.
- Step 2: Stepping On: employment coaching service.
- Step 3: Stepping Up: integrated offer in support of skills and employment in Wales (employment programmes, skills development programmes, local approaches).
- Step 4: Stepping Out: access to job vacancies.
- Step 5: Moving Forward: in-work support.

158. We heard evidence that, while local arrangements between Jobcentre Plus and Careers Wales were often effective, there remains a strategic challenge to influence policy decisions at the DWP at a national level. A related issue concerns the regulations supporting the Welfare Reform Agenda, and the influence or discretion that Wales will have in their development and implementation. We therefore believe that the Welsh Assembly Government needs to further develop its capacity to influence policymaking within the DWP at a senior official level, to ensure that the unique circumstances, needs and arrangements in Wales are fully taken into account. The establishment of the Joint Employment Delivery Board for Wales offers a potentially positive way forward.

⁴¹ *Skills That Work for Wales: A Skills and Employment Strategy and Action Plan* (Welsh Assembly Government, January 2008).

www.wales.gov.uk/educationandskills (see the 'Skills That Work for Wales' section in the 'Policies and Strategies' area of the site)

159. Progress towards realising the Integrated Employment and Skills (IES) service in Wales has been complicated by the demands on the welfare system as a result of the economic downturn. We noted that referrals to Careers Wales to support the unemployed and those under notice of redundancy have increased significantly – from an average of 2,800 interviews per month between April and September 2008 to an average of almost 4,800 interviews per month between October 2008 and December 2009. We acknowledge that Careers Wales has received additional time-limited funding from the Welsh Assembly Government to help manage the increase in demand; but we heard no evidence to suggest that the potential future additional demand on IAG services from public employment service referrals had yet been quantified; nor that checks had been made on Careers Wales’ capacity to manage further additional demand. We believe that policymakers and delivery organisations in Wales require a clearer articulation of anticipated additional demand from the UK Government.

160. Irrespective of the availability of such estimates, there is growing recognition in Wales that all-age all-ability careers services can perform a major role in helping to motivate and up-skill the workforce, as well as providing new services for those unemployed and economically inactive. Undoubtedly, the impact of the new UK Government’s Welfare Reform agenda is likely to place new and increasing demands on careers service provision for adults. This further strengthens the case in Wales for a more fully integrated ‘three main channels’ delivery system that complements Jobcentre Plus provision.

161. The Welsh Assembly Government, DWP, Careers Wales and Jobcentre Plus Wales are currently engaged in a number of small-scale trials to test methods of closer working. These trials are scheduled to last until March 2011. In view of this, we recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government leads a feasibility study – in conjunction with Careers Wales and Jobcentre Plus – for differentiating services to adults, utilising face-to-face, telephone, e-mail and web-based services (including ICT developments such as social networking sites). Aligned with this, we suggest that the Welsh Assembly Government should review the existing adult priority groups and their service entitlement, taking account of developments within the Welfare to Work agenda and recent social, economic and labour market trends.

162. In addition to increased levels of demand for service, closer prospective alignment with public employment services poses new challenges for Jobcentre Plus staff, learning coaches and careers advisers working with adults. Professionally trained careers advisers and learning coaches tend to describe themselves as being ‘client-centred’ and their respective roles fit uneasily with certain aspects of the jobs and benefits system where some actions are ‘mandated’ as a condition of receiving benefit payments. We heard no strong evidence to support or challenge the view that aligning careers services more closely with welfare benefits entitlements may have an adverse effect on client perception of IAG services; but those we talked to recognised that the prime ‘selling point’ for Careers Wales services is the impartiality, independence, and professional quality of the services offered.

163. At this stage, the Welsh Assembly Government and DWP policymakers have yet to determine requirements for careers service involvement in the IES beyond existing ad hoc localised arrangements. This needs to be addressed as a strategic priority so that the proposed unitary careers service for Wales can identify and allocate suitable resources, as well as determining the extent to which existing staff expertise can be readily applied, as and when necessary. Should careers IAG become an integral part of referrals linked to benefit payment entitlement, meeting this demand will necessitate a cultural shift and major induction and continuous professional development programmes for staff working in both organisations

164. For the IES services to be truly ‘integrated’, systems to track customers through training and into employment will need to be developed to evidence the value and impact of a range of interventions and support services. The decision to deliver Careers Wales services through a unitary structure provides a clear opportunity to develop a common Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system for Careers Wales to include online, telephone and web support for all clients in Wales. This is something for which CWO and the well-developed Open University online customer management system may already provide a good foundation; but it is another area where some up-front investment by the Welsh Assembly Government will be needed in order to deliver a more efficient and effective administrative and tracking system for the future.

Theme 6: Training and professional development

165. In this section, we build upon our earlier observations that the sector is surprisingly broad with interests in careers education and work-focused experience ranging from primary school to post graduate level, and with careers information, advice and guidance, skills assessment and job placement covering all-ages. We consider possibilities for improving qualifications, establishing a centre for excellence in careers research, policy and practice, driving up professional standards and developing a new workforce development strategy.

Qualifications for careers services' practitioners

166. We learned that Lifelong Learning UK has published a new qualifications credit framework, competencies and career progression framework, each designed to strengthen the capacity and quality of delivery for those entering or working within the family of careers service providers. There is significant scope for employers and HEIs to focus on how best these new frameworks can be applied in Wales, specifically linked to widening access, promoting diversity in the workforce and capacity building.

167. At present it is our impression that there is no coherent progression pathway or continuity plan for the professional development of the careers family. There is currently only one Qualification in Career Guidance course in Wales; and there appears to be an issue with this programme not meeting the needs of the North Wales careers companies, both because of geographical distance and non-availability of teaching in the Welsh language. The sheer breadth and depth of careers activities demands professional development and training provision by a variety of further and higher education providers, as well as private training organisations. We learned that Careers Wales companies have started to explore with local HEIs the possibility of developing joint training programmes, though this is now dependent on the outcomes from the proposed new unitary organisation.

Developing a centre of excellence

168. We suggest the HEIs and Careers Wales should extend their dialogue to explore the feasibility of creating a 'centre for excellence' in careers research, policy and practice. There are two models in England⁴² and one in Finland⁴³ which could be helpful in this regard. The creation of a 'centre for excellence in Wales' would be instrumental in raising the profile of careers services and helping ensure coherence and consistency of service delivery and standards. This could also help create a strong evidence-base for careers services applied research and practice that could be showcased on an international stage.

Consolidating professional standards

169. The breadth and depth of activity demands professional development and training by further and higher education providers. At present, it is our impression that there is little coherent progression or continuity for the professional development of the careers family.

170. We were reminded that those working in the family of careers service providers have separate professional codes of ethical standards; for example, higher education careers services and the Association of Careers Education and Guidance for Teachers (ACEG) have differing professional codes. We consider there are merits in aligning existing systems so that a universal code of ethical standards for careers services can be introduced throughout Wales. Lessons for this could be learned from a similar experience in Australia⁴⁴; and, if successfully implemented, could be a major achievement for Wales in its pursuit of becoming internationally recognised for excellence in its work.

171. We have explored ways in which the individual users' interests can be best protected and poor-quality careers interventions eliminated. The introduction of a common code of ethical standards will go some way towards this. However, we suggest a more serious dialogue needs to take place between members of the family of careers service providers to consider introducing either an approved

⁴² The International Centre for Guidance Studies (iCeGS), University of Derby and Canterbury Christ Church University, Salomons Campus, Kent.

⁴³ The Finnish Institute for Educational Research, University of Jyväskylä, Finland.

⁴⁴ *Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners – Briefing 8: Implementation of Professional Standards* (Career Industry Council of Australia Paper, August 2007).

licence to practise arrangement, similar to that which operates in the Institute for Learning (IfL) in England⁴⁵, or a register which records the qualifications and continuing professional development profile of careers practitioners. It is worth noting that an approved licence to practise arrangement would necessitate new legislation to specify minimum professional requirements. These two options should be seen as priorities for future consideration by a Careers Services Strategic Forum.

172. We recommend that Careers Wales and its partners review the existing Guidance Standards and consider the extent to which further training and development is required across Wales, particularly in relation to the use of online and telephone services for information, advice and guidance delivery.

Establishing a careers services' workforce development strategy

173. As noted earlier (see the 'Building capacity in careers services for young people' section, page 32) capacity building in the family of careers service providers is a key ingredient to achieving a strong and confident workforce. We believe there would be significant benefit in establishing a workforce development strategy that is aspirational, realistic and deliverable in driving up the capacity and capability within and across organisations to deliver high-quality careers provision. There appears to be a market opportunity for higher and further education institutions as well as private sector providers to work in partnership with Careers Wales to develop and strengthen careers services across Wales. We also recognise that this may require some strengthened formal guidance to institutions and agencies regarding workforce development and some pump-priming investment in programme development from the Welsh Assembly Government and HEFCW. This could form part of a wider workforce development strategy to be developed by the proposed Careers Service Strategic Forum, following an initial more in-depth workforce mapping exercise of the family of careers service providers.

⁴⁵ Note: The Institute for Learning (IfL) 'licence to practise' requires 30 hours of continuing professional development per annum.

Theme 7: Labour Market Information and Intelligence (LMI)

174. In this section, we examine the interplay between labour market information and the accumulation of intelligence that needs to be accessible to help individuals make well-informed decisions about suitable career pathways. The fragmentation of accessible and accurate LMI is discussed with suggested strategies for building a more coherent approach across Wales.

175. There are many sources of Labour Market Information, although the robustness and accuracy of these data leave much to be desired. The Review recognises a need to convert usable labour market information into labour market intelligence. This point is also emphasised by the WESB, particularly for LMI at a regional and local level⁴⁶.

176. Accurate, comprehensive, up-to-date, accessible and relevant LMI must form the basis of properly informed career pathway decisions for clients and those responsible for advising individuals and/or formulating policies on LMI trends. While the longer-term national picture may be more relevant for some occupations, the more immediate outlook at a regional and local level may be of more interest to people who are less mobile. It is therefore important to attempt to provide an informed view of both future trends and existing conditions by reference to the scale of the market relevant to different occupations. In the wake of the recent economic downturn, the need for such LMI cannot be overstated. It must be sensitive to changing circumstances and skills requirements in the post-recession economy.

177. Successful LMI also depends on organisations communicating readily and easily with one another in order to make best use of the information they gather and analyse. The Review received evidence pointing to the need for improved data sharing, including the possibility of modifying the existing Data Protection Act – something being considered currently by the DWP. There is a pressing need for more information about the destinations of individuals as they move from one education or training provider to another, as well as into eventual employment or unemployment. An emerging agenda is that of tracking beyond the first destinations of clients through the development of

⁴⁶ *Moving Forward: Foundations for Growth Volume 1: Economic Renewal and the Skills Agenda* (Welsh Assembly Government, 2010).
www.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/foremployers/employmentskillsboard/paperspublications/movingforward/?lang=en

simple and universal information systems which allow for the improved continuity of careers support and guidance. The incoming Unique Learner Number system within the new Qualifications and Credit Framework offers much potential in this respect.

178. We note that the Welsh Assembly Government's *Skills That Work for Wales* strategy (2008)⁴⁷ made some very explicit statements about its commitment to developing LMI.

Skills That Work for Wales

9.15 The Assembly Government will continue to play the lead role in co-ordinating and disseminating labour market intelligence (LMI) in Wales, working closely with Sector Skills Councils, Jobcentre Plus and Spatial Plan Area Groups. We have created the Learning and Skills Observatory (www.learningobservatory.com/) as a single gateway to research and analysis of education, learning, skills and labour market information in Wales.

9.16 The Observatory will be a platform for sharing knowledge and disseminating LMI across Wales, and a forum for policy analysis, discussion and debate informing the work of the Assembly Government and the Wales Employment and Skills Board. Spatial Plan Area Groups will direct information and evidence on skills needs, sector potential or information gaps at a regional level to the Learning and Skills Observatory.

9.17 The Observatory is managed by the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills within the Welsh Assembly Government but is accountable to a strategic group drawn from key education, economic and training organisations across Wales.

⁴⁷ *Skills That Work for Wales strategy* (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008)
www.wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/081217stwwstrategyandactionen.pdf

These intentions emerged from the *One Wales* ambitions for creating a better evidence-base around the development of the skills agenda. We therefore emphasise the need to recognise more clearly LMI as a resource to assist people in Wales with their developing career ideas and plans. But, at this point in time, we note with disappointment that these policy statements do not seem to have been followed by significant action.

179. In view of this commitment, the decision not to update Future Skills Wales surveys appears regrettable in a time of economic change and uncertainty. To that end, we recommend that comprehensive, up-to-date LMI across the range of occupations is gathered regularly at national and regional levels. Such data should thereafter be translated into accessible formats for all-age and all-ability audiences in order to allow individuals to make well-informed decisions. These points have been emphasised by WESB; and the Review Group welcomes further consideration of their crucial recommendations.

- Ensure that UKCES national skills audits adequately cover Wales and its regions and that results are made available as early as possible to Wales' employers, providers, guidance services, and other stakeholders.
- Ensure that there is the accurate and up-to-date intelligence and information gathered on employment and skills demands for all sectors and sub-regions in Wales.
- Secures positive outcomes for Wales from the performance management, and any future reform, of SSCs.

(WESB second annual report, Volume 1, page 34)

180. We would therefore urge that the Welsh Assembly Government's commitment to developing LMI is strengthened by:

- encouraging partnerships to develop in-depth, regional occupation-level LMI for use by careers services
- expanding the Skills Observatory's Steering Group to include the representatives of the proposed Careers Services Strategic Forum.

181. The establishment of a unitary Careers Wales will also provide an opportunity for a concerted effort by the Education and Business Partnerships to bring this data together. This should then be translated into accessible formats at regional levels hosted on Careers Wales Online and HECAS websites. Over time this could be further supplemented by the integration of destinations data analyses undertaken by Careers Wales, the further education student support services and the HECAS to help clarify the links between qualification choice and occupational outcome. The recent CBI Education and Skills Survey 2010 reiterated this requirement.

Theme 8: Careers Services Strategic Forum

182. In this section, we consider the possibility of establishing a Careers Service Strategic Forum to facilitate greater coherence and cohesion within and across the family of careers service.

183. There does appear to be a widely-held desire to establish a Careers Services Forum to help provide strategic focus for the family of the careers service providers in Wales. Its goal would be to foster cross-sector collaboration and coordination in respect of both policy and service delivery. Such a collaborative arrangement would require all participating members to have a sense of co-ownership and involvement from the outset. It follows from this that coordination should be provided by a strong but independent, Chair who should have some familiarity with the careers sector in Wales. The appointment of a Chair should be undertaken by the Welsh Assembly Government in accordance with the normal procedures for public appointments.

184. We view such a Careers Service Strategic Forum acting as a:

- platform for multilateral discussion between the various service provider organisations and other stakeholder interests involved, countering the tendency towards silo-thinking that arises from restricted bilateral dialogue
- sounding board for informal consultation on policy developments and new initiatives
- catalyst for increased cooperation between lead government agencies and other stakeholder organisations in respect of professional standards, continuing professional development and quality-assurance delivery issues.

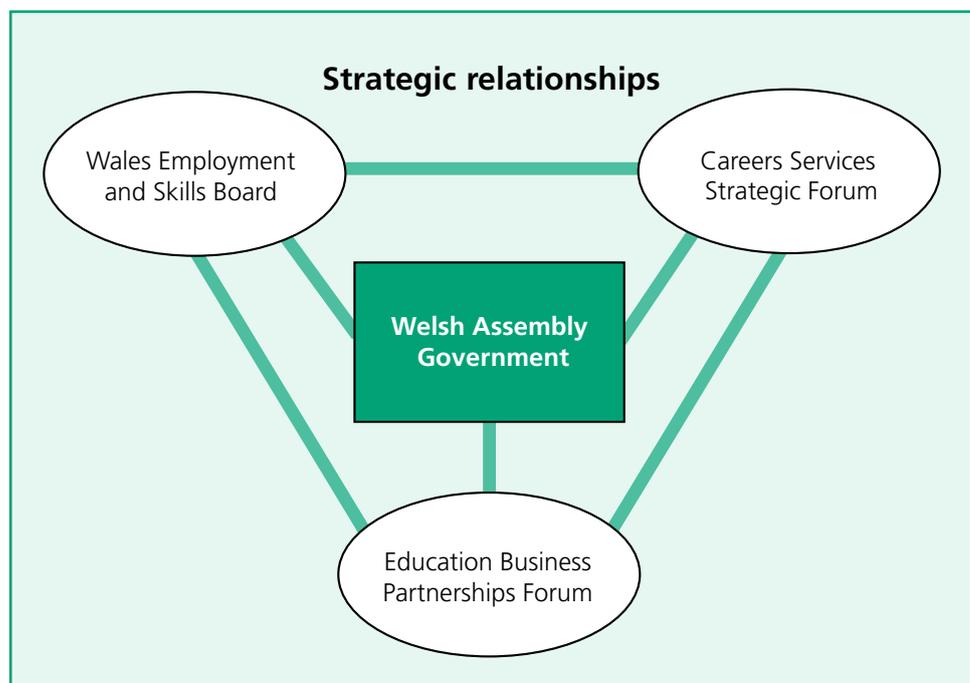
185. Its prime focus should be in:

- identifying citizens' needs, i.e. mapping existing services and gaps in provision; informing consumer and operational research; and developing proposals for service responses
- improving service quality, i.e. developing quality standards and a common code of professional ethics; embedding a career progression framework for practitioners; and advising on qualifications and training requirements for those entering, or working within, the family of careers service providers in Wales.

186. The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP)⁴⁸, has identified some useful issues in respect of the establishment and development of national lifelong guidance forums. This could assist the Welsh Assembly Government in determining the remit, membership, and draft constitution of the Welsh Careers Service Forum. Once established, the Forum could usefully form links to the new UK Careers Sector Strategic Forum and to the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network.

187. We would also suggest that the Forum should have a formal link with the WESB, having an independent status rather than a subsidiary role. The Careers Services Forum should also have a similar formal link with the existing all-Wales EBP Forum which would continue to bring together the interests represented on the regional EBP network (as represented in Figure 2). However, this will require some drive and financial assistance from the Welsh Assembly Government, local government, the DWP and the Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) sector skills council, for the concept to become a reality.

Figure 2



⁴⁸ *Improving lifelong guidance policies and systems: Using common European reference tools*: Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities (CEDEFOP, 2005). www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Upload/Information_resources/.../4045_en.pdf

Theme 9: The Careers Wales organisational structure and brand

188. In this section we discuss how the prospective unification of Careers Wales presents a great opportunity to fulfil the potential of making the whole system of careers services in Wales a benchmark of quality, coherence and value for money to which other countries refer and aspire. Careers Wales is a major player within the system and its fragmentation has held it back from exercising the leadership that the sector requires in order to realise this ambition.

Restructuring Careers Wales

189. The evidence we have received from a wide range of stakeholders and other commentators confirms that the Careers Wales companies have been playing a very active and constructive role in local service delivery partnerships which is highly valued by their local partners. Many have expressed concern that this capacity for local responsiveness needs to be protected when Careers Wales is reorganised into a unitary organisation. Simultaneously, it is apparent that Careers Wales companies, by virtue of their local orientation and autonomy, have not been able to offer a national perspective with strategic leadership and influence. This has restricted its capability to act as an effective advocate for enhanced and innovative careers service provision and to develop an appropriate research, benchmarking and service-planning capacity at an all-Wales level.

190. Indeed, although well-placed to act as local leaders in respect of 14 to 19 partnerships and action regarding NEETs, this potential has not been realised because of an inability to act effectively as their own advocates in dealings with various all-Wales players and some parts of the Welsh Assembly Government. Unification should ensure that these shortcomings are addressed by creating an organisation that is able to operate at a strategic level both nationally and locally in concert with other all-Wales players. Consolidation of hitherto fragmented service planning resources should result in the creation of a much more effective operational research, development and planning capability that is able to set parameters for local variation within the framework of national strategic aims and objectives and performance targets, i.e. the ability to think nationally and act locally.

191. There is, however, a risk that current capacity for local responsiveness and potential capacity for local leadership in relevant fields – such as in response to the NEETs agenda or in respect of local consortia bids for European funding – could be lost if some element of regional structure is not retained. We think this is a real risk and therefore strongly recommend that care is taken to avoid Careers Wales becoming an over-centralised organisation when its internal structure is determined. Modern communications networks enable the staff of consolidated units to remain physically dispersed; and we regard the preservation of a regional infrastructure within Careers Wales as essential if the organisation is to build on its reputation as an effective local player.

The Careers Wales brand

192. There was a substantial consensus among the stakeholder community that 'Careers Wales' is a strong brand name that is widely recognised. This degree of brand recognition represents a highly valuable asset and symbol of continuity during a period of rapid change; and it should become even more marketable once the unitary organisation is established.

193. We therefore recommend that all organisations offering careers signposting functions in Wales should carry a logo which declares them to be part of a wider family of careers service providers. This would indicate to citizens that careers services in Wales operate within a fully integrated system of careers service provision, with a common code of ethics and consistent quality standards underpinned by well-trained staff. Such a development would give added significance to the Careers Wales brand and overall profile nationally and internationally. However, it would first require the establishment of a system-wide Careers Services Strategic Forum for Wales to be put in place before extension of the brand would be meaningful. This arrangement needs to be also underpinned by memoranda of understanding between all careers service provider family members in order to ensure clarity, coherence and assurance of high-quality provision for the individual consumer.

Revitalising the Education Business Partnerships brand

194. We believe that it is important for EBPs to be configured on a regional basis in order to provide close connections between local employers and local educational institutions. Leadership would continue to be provided by the existing all-Wales EBP Forum. We believe that a revitalised regionally-based EBP network – operating in concert with a unified, but regionally-sensitive Careers Wales organisation – offers the best prospect of achieving the combination of local responsiveness and consistent service offer that most of the commentators that we have met have stressed as being desirable.

195. We would also like to see greater involvement of public sector employers in EBPs with a view to substantially greater numbers of public service work experience opportunities being made available. Also, as noted earlier, our key informants indicated that the Welsh Assembly Government should embed this requirement as part of contractual conditions, with companies which act as their suppliers. The public sector is a much more significant employer in Wales than in many other parts of the UK and, as many of the people that we have spoken to have stressed, this needs to be fully reflected in the range, quality and volume of work experience opportunities that are made available to young people and adults.

196. As discussed earlier (in the ‘Education Business Partnerships’ section, page 25), we also see potential benefit in separating the EBP brand from the Careers Wales brand, as recommended by the Employer Engagement Task Force⁴⁹. This would involve retaining the management of EBPs within the unified Careers Wales organisation. As such, it would remove much of the current confusion regarding the status and locus of EBPs and give a new image and platform for marketing EBPs’ activities. It is widely recognised that they perform a very significant role in introducing young people to the world of work and in offering work-focused experiences.

⁴⁹ The report of the 14–19 Employer Engagement Task Force was an internal report and was not formally published.

Theme 10: The interface with the Welsh Assembly Government

197. In this section we explore the current arrangements and some of the difficulties arising from the present limited locus of the Careers Policy Branch within the Welsh Assembly Government⁵⁰. We also briefly explore the relationships between and across departments which have some form of responsibility for careers service provision. The existing structures could be developed to improve the added value and impact of key policy objectives.

The Careers Policy Branch

198. Unification of the Careers Wales organisation may relieve some of the current loading on the Careers Policy Branch as it will remove the duplication inherent in sponsoring six separate companies. However, it will not, of itself, address the issues of ambit, leadership and communication that have affected the branch's effectiveness as a policy lead (as distinct from its role as sponsor for the services delivered by Careers Wales). Indeed, it is our impression that the Branch sits uneasily in a Division otherwise exclusively concerned with post-16 learning delivery (i.e. 'supply side' provision), when the services which it sponsors are currently predominantly focused on pre-16 school children and when much of its policy interest is in respect of the demand side of the labour market.

199. In addition, it has no locus in respect of careers or enterprise education in schools or for higher education careers advisory services or further education student support services; and it is quite clear from the evidence that we have received that many other parts of the Welsh Assembly Government have developed policies which impact upon the Careers Wales organisation without, in all cases, having involved the Careers Policy Branch in the process. It is also evident from our discussions with representatives of Careers Wales, the higher education careers services and other stakeholders, as well as with the staff of the Careers Policy Branch, that these arrangements are widely perceived as less than satisfactory. We are convinced that, if greater coherence in the wider system of careers services is to be brought about, there needs to be greater coherence in this field within the Welsh Assembly Government as a prerequisite.

⁵⁰ Note: These are briefly outlined in paragraphs 60 and 61 of the background paper in Appendix 1 (see page 118).

200. There are no easy structural solutions and we do not see it as within our remit to prescribe structural changes within the Welsh Assembly Government. However, we do think that a reconfigured Careers Policy Branch, wherever it sits within DCELLS, should be given lead responsibility for the coordination of all policy relating to careers education, work-focused experience and careers IAG for all age groups, including students in higher education; and that it should have a much closer direct relationship with the DCELLS Business and Skills Division, the Department for the Economy and Transport (DE&T) Enterprise Division and with DWP/Jobcentre Plus in respect of the development of labour market intelligence, job placement and the delivery of the 'youth guarantee', NEETs, the skills and enterprise agendas and welfare-to-work programmes.

201. The important role played by careers services in bringing together the demand and supply sides of the labour market must be more widely recognised; and the Welsh Assembly Government must take the lead in promoting this recognition among educational institutions, the business community, the voluntary sector, public sector bodies and agencies, and society more generally. The prospective unification of Careers Wales will not be sufficient to bring about a shared appreciation of the sort of integrated careers and employment system that Wales requires. The drive towards such a system will necessarily have to come from, and be sustained by, a bespoke 'Careers Services Policy Branch' within the Welsh Assembly Government, with an enhanced locus and revised designation to reflect its central role and wider interests.

Increasing contact with service providers

202. This extended locus should be designed to ensure that all initiatives impacting on Careers Wales and other careers-related provision within the wider system and all communications with those service providers would be made either through or with the knowledge and support of the reconfigured Careers Policy Branch. Clearly, the identification of a single senior management team within a unified Careers Wales organisation should make this task easier than hitherto, since it will reduce the numbers of channels of communication.

203. We would expect there to be both formal and informal contact between the reconfigured Careers Policy Branch and representatives of Careers Wales and, where appropriate, other relevant

careers-related service providers on a day-to-day basis. We would also anticipate that the Minister (supported by senior DCELLS and Careers Policy Branch officials) would want to hold less frequent, but equally regular, meetings with the Chair, Chief Executive and other senior representatives of the unified organisation in order to discuss policy objectives and delivery. Such a comprehensive regime of contact would represent a step-change improvement on practice in recent years.

204. Careers Policy Branch contacts with representatives of service providers other than Careers Wales would, of course, reciprocally need to be sensitive to and compliant with normal channels of communication between other lead Divisions within the Welsh Assembly Government and those service providers. An annual high-level Ministerial or official meeting with representatives of the Welsh higher education careers services would also seem to be desirable in the interests of greater consistency and coherence in service delivery and development. The aim must be to ensure coordination, consistency and clarity of messages across the Department, thereby avoiding the risks of compartmentalisation and contradiction which can arise from the inadvertent development of 'silo' relationships.

Supporting the Careers Services Strategic Forum

205. When a Welsh Careers Service Strategic Forum is established, as we are recommending, its sponsor and point of contact with the Welsh Assembly Government should be the Careers Policy Branch who should regularly field an official to attend Forum meetings and relay matters arising to relevant Welsh Assembly Government colleagues. The Branch will probably also need to assist in developing a constitution for the Forum, in providing some initial pump-priming staff resources to establish a secretariat (at least until a programme of activity is in place), and in ensuring access to any Welsh Assembly Government budgets available for such common purposes as research, systems development and staff capacity building, subject to normal business case requirements. The creation of such a Forum should generally assist the Branch in its task of bringing about greater coherence between policymakers and between careers-related service providers by acting as a 'sounding board' for new policy initiatives and as a common channel of communication to and from constituent organisations.

A more prominent role internationally

206. Indeed, the establishment of such a Forum could also potentially link into parallel developments in England, Northern Ireland and Scotland and support a greater future level of involvement by Welsh Assembly Government officials and service practitioners in the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN).

207. The ELGPN offers a potentially very valuable means of ensuring that careers services in Wales remain able to benchmark their progress against other leading European countries and to identify and import innovative practices, while acting also as a 'shop window' for service developments in Wales. This process of 'valorisation' of good practice has been strongly promoted by the European Union in recent years as an essential means of progressing the Lisbon agenda; and it is a prime objective of the European Association of Regional and Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning (EARLALL) of which the Welsh Assembly Government is a founder member.

208. The Welsh Assembly Government might consider bringing its participation in the ELGPN into line with its strong commitment to and participation in EARLALL. The scope for contact and common purpose between the two networks – for example, in respect of guidance policy and systems, learning pathways, the development of careers management and employability skills, countering gender stereotyping, service provision for NEETs and other priority groups, encouraging entrepreneurship, redundancy counselling, and organising reciprocal work experience opportunities in other countries for vocational students – would seem to be something in which the Welsh Assembly Government could usefully play a central role. The ELGPN also provides a platform for European involvement in the wider world community of leading careers service providers via the OECD.

Recommendations

209. In this section we set out the recommendations arising from our consideration of the 'areas for improvement' identified in the preceding sections of this report. These recommendations together represent the essential elements of the strategy for careers services in Wales which we believe should be implemented within the next three to five years for the 'leading edge' potential of current arrangements to be fully realised. Some of these recommendations can be implemented in parallel with the unification of the Careers Wales organisation; others will more naturally follow on from this process with the unified careers Wales organisation providing a good deal of the leadership and drive necessary to make these changes happen.

Careers and the world of work: a framework for 11 to 19-year-olds in Wales

- 1. The Welsh Assembly Government to clarify the respective roles and functional boundaries of teachers and personal tutors, careers and work experience coordinators, learning coaches and careers advisers in respect of CWW delivery.**
- 2. The Welsh Assembly Government should put in place a more transparent accountability framework for the planning, delivery and reporting of CWW learning outcomes, including employability and enterprise skills.**
- 3. The implementation of CWW framework should be inspected on a thematic basis by Estyn.**
- 4. Schools, colleges and training providers in Wales should work towards attaining the Careers Wales Mark as the recognised benchmark of excellence in delivering careers education and work-focused experiences.**

Education Business Partnerships (EBPs) and Sector Skills Councils (SSCs)

- 5. EBPs should be retained as part of the Careers Wales portfolio but re-launched with a separate national brand that promotes excellence in education business links activities.**

6. Within a new unitary Careers Wales, EBPs should be reorganised at a regional level to accord more closely with recognised economic subdivisions of Wales; and their work should be coordinated at an all-Wales level by the existing EBP Forum.
7. Each regional EBP should comprise the widest possible representation from businesses, schools, colleges, training providers and universities as well as Welsh Assembly Government field officers.
8. The EBP network should have a clear remit to secure links with employers in industry, commerce and the public sector to ensure universal access to appropriate, high-quality, work-focused experiences and work placement opportunities.
9. EBPs should give particular attention to the Welsh Assembly Government's designated sector priorities, its enterprise and self-employment agenda and the development of STEM-related skills.
10. The Welsh Assembly Government, and other public sector procurement agents, should use their purchasing power with suppliers via conditions of contract to encourage participation in education business link activities.
11. SSCs should develop models of suitable work-focused experiences to support particular vocational learning pathways in their respective sectors from school through to pre-employment, with EBPs then being charged with facilitating these models locally.
12. EBPs should work with SSCs to feed in local labour market information (LMI) that can be used to complement regional and national employment trends and for this to be made accessible to careers service providers and their clients, as appropriate.
13. Wales Employment and Skills Board (WESB) should assess the impact of education business partnerships activities and produce a map of 'critical success indicators' matched with 'employer priorities' that can feed into schools, colleges and training providers at a strategic level.

14. EBPs Forum to provide a strategy to feed into local EBPs in order to ensure careers education, information, advice and guidance is informed by regional employer demand for Welsh language skills.
15. WESB should be invited to review the current effectiveness of work placement opportunities, with particular reference to widening participation, in order to ensure quality and comprehensive provision.

Building capacity in careers services

16. The learning coach function must be transparent and aligned closely to the work of teachers and careers advisers in schools and colleges to ensure more accurate diagnosis of young people's needs takes place at an early stage.
17. Careers Wales should have a clear remit to perform a leading role in building the capacity of CWW coordinators, teachers, careers advisers and learning coaches to deliver high-quality modern careers education, information and advisory support services through shared training and continuing professional development opportunities.
18. A new careers services workforce development strategy should be put in place with new modular accredited and non-accredited courses developed and made available to those involved in careers education, information, advice and guidance and work-focused experience delivery across Wales. This should be a priority for the Careers Service Strategic Forum.
19. Higher education and Careers Wales should create a 'centre for excellence' in Wales for careers research, policy and practice.
20. Lifelong Learning UK and HEIs should bring together leaders from the careers family, including careers professional associations, to develop a plan for strengthening the capacity and diversity of the workforce in Wales.

14–19 Learning Pathways Partnerships and Children and Young People’s Partnerships

- 21. Children and Young People’s Partnerships and Learning Pathways 14–19 networks should be merged into single local partnerships. Their numbers and functions should then be reviewed by the Welsh Assembly Government, with a view to further rationalisation in order to provide a more cohesive strategic service.**
- 22. Careers Wales should have a leadership role regarding the national agenda for 14 to 19 employability skills and this should include overseeing the training and professional development of learning coaches and careers advisers throughout Wales.**

A fully integrated differentiated service delivery model

- 23. Careers Wales should move towards rebalancing careers information, advice and guidance activities through a fully integrated three main channel delivery system, i.e. web, telephone and face-to-face services.**
- 24. There should be greater flexibility in the timing of in-depth one-to-one careers guidance interviews in accordance with individuals’ needs, including group sessions and online support.**
- 25. Careers Wales personnel should not become involved in direct delivery of careers work in primary school, apart from supporting EBP activities.**
- 26. Careers Wales support to other service providers should be based on capacity building, greater use of ICT and targeted delivery at key transition points.**
- 27. The careers telephone helpline in Wales should be retained with its dedicated number hot-linked into local careers centres and careers advisers with local expertise and knowledge.**

28. The Welsh Assembly Government and Careers Wales must continue to develop and prioritise investment in CWO in order to promote its universal usage – via guidance standards, tackling the digital divide, staff training and marketing – within schools, colleges, community and employment settings.
29. Careers Wales should monitor and report any potential digital exclusion and provide alternative support where appropriate.
30. Schools, colleges and higher education institutions should create hyperlinks to CWO in order to promote access to careers services.
31. Careers Wales and other key players in the careers family must further develop their ICT skills to increase the capacity to deliver careers services online and over the telephone.
32. Upon unification, Careers Wales should seek to develop a common Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system – to include web, telephone and face-to-face support for all clients in Wales. This might then be extended within the wider family of careers service providers.

Priority groups

33. Careers Wales should be given a leadership role in devising and coordinating local partnership strategies to reduce the number of young people who are NEET.
34. Following the reorganisation of Careers Wales into a unitary structure a national tracking and data management system should be put in place in respect of NEETs.
35. Careers Wales should review the existing delivery models, training and professional development in respect of careers support services provided to people with learning difficulties and disabilities with a view to promoting greater consistency across Wales.

36. The Welsh Assembly Government should explore the issue of ICT support for young offenders with the Youth Justice Board as part of a more coordinated suite of support for Welsh young offenders based in both Wales and England.
37. The key strands emerging from widening access and participation strategies should be used by the new unitary organisation to inform and influence a new careers management and employability skills agenda for Wales.

Careers services for adults

38. The Welsh Assembly Government, in conjunction with HEFCW, should clarify its expectations regarding higher education careers services in Wales. This should cover minimum service entitlement, eligibility (with particular reference to higher education students in further education colleges, course dropouts and graduates beyond first destination), and priority groups.
39. Subject to the necessary powers being available, the Welsh Assembly Government should invite Estyn and the QAA to undertake joint inspections of individual higher education careers services in Wales. This should extend to the interface with Careers Wales, the EBPs, further education colleges and other related service providers within the ambit of the Welsh Assembly Government's sponsorship.
40. All universities should, with particular reference to GO Wales, become actively involved in the revitalised EBP network with a view to assisting in the design and delivery of appropriate work-focused experiences for learners as they progress along their learning pathways towards employment.
41. Insofar as the development of differentiated service provision permits, there should be a progressive adjustment of the deployment of professional careers adviser support towards adults in the workforce and in the labour market to assist in furthering the skills agenda.

42. The Welsh Assembly Government should continue to support the Wales Union Learning Fund in order to provide initial careers support in the workplace. This model of employer and employee engagement in learning should be promoted more widely – especially in the private sector.
43. Careers support within adult community learning settings and other venues for part-time learning provision should be more clearly defined.

Welfare Reform agenda

44. The Welsh Assembly Government needs to further develop its capacity to influence policymaking within the DWP at a senior official level, to ensure that the circumstances, needs and arrangements in Wales are fully taken into account.
45. The Welsh Assembly Government should lead a feasibility study – in conjunction with Careers Wales and Jobcentre Plus – to explore the potential for differentiating services to adults, utilising web-based, telephone and face-to-face services.
46. The Welsh Assembly Government and DWP should come to an early decision on the use of a common Skills Health Check facility or the development of separate arrangements for Wales.
47. DWP should involve the Welsh Assembly Government and Careers Wales in the modelling of additional careers IAG services for benefit claimants, taking account of all other current and prospective adult service resource requirements.

Careers Services Strategic Forum for Wales

48. A strategic Careers Services Forum should be established to help provide strategic focus for the family of the careers service providers in Wales, in particular to foster cross-sector collaboration and coordination in respect of both policy and service delivery. Once established, the Forum could usefully form links to the new UK-wide Careers Sector Strategic Forum.

49. The Forum should have a formal link with the WESB and with the all-Wales EBP Forum.
50. The Welsh Assembly Government should establish a clear lead within DCELLS for the coordination of all policy and sponsorship relating to the whole system of careers services in Wales, for support of the Forum and for active participation in the ELGPN.
51. A universal code of ethical standards for careers services should be introduced throughout Wales.
52. A licence to practise arrangement or an approved register which records the qualifications and continuing professional development profile of careers practitioners in Wales should be introduced so that citizens can be assured of quality services.

Careers Wales Organisation and Brand

53. The unified Careers Wales should retain a regional infrastructure capable of relating to local stakeholders in order to build upon current strengths and best practice.
54. The Careers Wales brand needs to be promoted and adopted by the new entity and used by all within the family of careers service providers.
55. A common memorandum of understanding regarding the planning and delivery of services needs to be agreed between all members of the careers family in Wales.

DCELLS: Careers Service Policy Branch

56. The role and responsibilities of the Careers Service Policy Branch should be formally reviewed and strengthened to ensure all policy development affecting careers service provision is fully coherent.
57. The Welsh Assembly Government should hold regular meetings with the Chair, Chief Executive and other senior representatives of the unified organisation in order to discuss policy objectives and delivery.

- 58. The Welsh Assembly Government should provide some initial pump-priming and staff resources to establish a secretariat for the Careers Service Strategic Forum.**
- 59. There should be greater involvement by Welsh Assembly Government officials in the ELGPN linking into parallel developments in England, Northern Ireland and Scotland.**
- 60. The Careers Service Policy Branch should have a much closer direct relationship with the DCELLS Business and Skills Division, the DE&T Enterprise Division and with DWP/Jobcentre Plus in respect of the development of labour market intelligence, job placement and the delivery of the 'youth guarantee', NEETs, the skills and enterprise agendas and welfare-to-work programmes.**

Executive summary and concluding comments

210. The family of careers services in Wales have a crucial role to play in bringing together the 'demand' and 'supply' sides of the labour market and in helping to realise the full potential of everyone who aspires to a fulfilling working life. They collect and disseminate information and intelligence about learning and opportunities for work experience and job placement; and they help service users to articulate their ambitions, plan their learning pathways, develop their skills and find suitable employment or self-employment.

211. They involve a wide range of service providers, client groups and other stakeholders. Collectively, the service providers currently constitute a fairly loose 'system'; and, although this system has some strong features, the current degree of fragmentation and lack of leadership limits its efficacy, efficiency and coherence.

212. The prospective unification of Careers Wales companies therefore represents an important first step in removing these limitations by removing internal boundaries and creating the capacity for strategic leadership within the organisation. It will also enhance the prospects of establishing greater coherence and consistency in relations between Careers Wales and other providers of careers services in Wales.

213. However, clarification of the roles, responsibilities and boundaries between Careers Wales and the various other service providers within the wider system is also a prerequisite for closer working. There is a need to establish who is best placed to do what and how the respective organisations should interact with each other in order to deliver a comprehensive and seamless overall set of services to the service users. Our review has found that clarity in this regard is currently lacking in some of the identified policy and service interfaces – such as delivery of the CWW framework, the role of learning coaches, the management of NEETs, the ambit of higher education careers services, the generation of labour market intelligence, and the implementation of welfare reform – and that this must be addressed as a matter of urgency by the Welsh Assembly Government.

214. Definition of roles is the essential starting point, but this must also be followed-up by monitoring of how those prescriptions are bedding down. In the case of the CWW framework and the interface between Careers Wales and the higher education careers services in Wales we see scope for greater involvement by Estyn; and we think WESB could usefully assess the relevance, quality and impact of work-focused experience activities with a view to determining a clearer set of requirements to assist EBPs.

215. We think that EBPs, in concert with the SSCs, could potentially play a much bigger role in orientating young people and young adults towards employment and enterprise. We see their re-invigoration by the Welsh Assembly Government as a crucial development towards improving the quality of work-focused experiences for all learners and workforce returners and improving the quality of labour market intelligence at the regional and local levels within Wales. This will entail relaunching EBPs as a separate brand if they are to attract wider support and involvement from employers and learning providers and fulfil their potential both regionally and nationally. However, more generally, we favour building on the success of the Careers Wales brand by introducing a common logo to be used by all within the family of careers service providers, where possible, in order to underline their affinity.

216. There is also a need to build the careers education and signposting capacity of personnel in many of the service providers within the wider careers services family – such as careers teachers and careers and work experience coordinators and learning coaches in schools and colleges; youth support workers in social services, young offender teams, and voluntary organisations; trades union and community learning representatives; and Jobcentre Plus staff – so that professionally trained careers advisers can focus their attention on clients requiring advice and guidance. This capacity building will entail investment in training by the Welsh Assembly Government, not least in pump-priming the development of suitable accredited course provision in HEIs and FEIs in Wales. However, such a development represents one of the keys to freeing-up more careers adviser time for transfer to adult guidance provision in support of the welfare reform and up-skilling agendas.

217. We consider that the establishment of a Careers Services Strategic Forum would help greatly in bringing the family of careers services together in order to give leadership and impetus to practical improvements in service planning and delivery arrangements, staff development, the promotion of good practice and common quality standards and sector advocacy. While we expect the Welsh Assembly Government to establish such a forum, the onus will then be on Careers Wales and the higher education careers services to remedy the dearth of professional leadership of the sector that is currently apparent.

218. Of course, not all service users will require the same amount of support. Service interventions must be sensitively tailored to the needs of the individual, once these needs have been identified. Indeed, for many people, the encouragement and facilitation of self-help may be all the assistance that is required, while others may require more active support at key transition points or over an extended period. A bespoke client-centred service is inevitably a differentiated service. It should therefore be no surprise that this review has pointed strongly in the direction of developing a differentiated service model for both young people and adults. It represents the second precondition for a modest strategic shift in the deployment of careers adviser resources into services for adults without detriment to services for young people.

219. The CWO and the Careers Wales telephone helpline service already provide excellent platforms for increasing the proportion of service users who do not require face-to-face interviews; but there needs to be further transformational investment by the Welsh Assembly Government in order to develop and to integrate these services (with each other and with other service providers' online portals) and to maximise the potential usage. Service providers in schools, colleges, work-based learning providers and other client support teams need to be trained in CWO use and computer availability and broadband access must be improved if online provision is to become the prime means of delivering a universal careers IAG service. Widespread use of CWO will then enhance the prospects of creating an online Customer Relationship Management system which could represent a step-change in administrative arrangements and the generation of management information; and it could pave the way for extension to or integration with the customer management systems used by other members of the careers services 'family.'

220. Links between Careers Wales and the higher education careers services are, at present, limited and inconsistent; and the higher education careers services themselves vary substantially in terms of their service 'offer' to aspirant, current and former students. This is another area where a unified Careers Wales organisation could help to make a substantial difference in determining boundaries and developing joint working arrangements. We think the higher education sector should work with Careers Wales to create a 'centre of excellence' which would act as the focus for careers research, policy development and service improvement.

221. Together, our recommendations represent a clear vision and strategy for the medium term, though it should be possible for some of them to be progressed more immediately in parallel with the unification of Careers Wales. Others will need to proceed as resources permit. The pace of change along this 'direction of travel' will be for the Welsh Assembly Government to determine in consultation with the service providers. The Welsh Assembly Government must itself give increased attention to these related services and must promote coherence through the ways in which it relates to them, if it is to enable them to fulfil their crucial role in matching labour market supply to demand. It must also enable and encourage them to look outwards and learn from developments in other parts of the UK, elsewhere in Europe and in the wider world.

222. The future ambitions for the development of careers services in Wales should be to realise their own potential as well as that of their clients. Indeed, these ambitions converge as the quality of service that they provide to the client very much depends on the extent to which they work efficiently and effectively together in the client's best interests. At present, they are falling short of that potential because of poorly defined and poorly developed relationships and a consequent lack of coherent direction and leadership. To this end we have promoted the theme of 'leadership within effective partnerships' based on a shared commitment to furthering the client's aspirations. We trust that the analysis and recommendations in this report will go some way towards remedying those shortcomings and thereby enable the vision of a world-class, professionally-led, integrated system of careers service provision, to be fully realised.

Appendix 1: Background paper on areas to be covered during the second stage of the review of careers services in Wales

Purpose of the paper

- 1.** The Review has been commissioned as part of the Welsh Assembly Government's *Skills That Work for Wales* strategy and action plan. Its purpose is to determine how well-placed careers provision in Wales is to respond to dynamic factors arising from policy developments, demographic changes and economic conditions; whether current arrangements for service delivery are efficient, effective and fit for purpose in meeting the needs of individuals, learning providers, parents, employers and other stakeholders; and whether there is scope for improvement.
- 2.** The ambit of the Review encompasses the current range of all-age information, advice and guidance services provided by the Careers Wales companies and their relationship with other careers-related provision in education, the voluntary sector, business and the benefits system. It has already examined the performance of Careers Wales companies in recent years and how the services that those companies deliver compare with those in other parts of the UK and other leading countries (by reference to internationally established criteria of good practice), taking account of the increasing demands that are being placed upon those services as a result of demographic, economic and policy drivers. Two reports – one by Estyn and another by Professor A G Watts – have been produced as a result of this first stage of the Review and these were published by the Welsh Assembly Government on 18 May 2009:

www.wales.gov.uk/about/cabinet/cabinetstatements/2009/careers/?lang=en

www.estyn.gov.uk/inspection_reports/rep_careerswales.asp

www.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/policy_strategy_and_planning/skillsthatforwales/reviewcareersterms/?lang=en

- 3.** These reports have suggested that Wales has the potential for a world-class system of careers-related service provision, but that various further developments are likely to be needed if the system is to cope with the many challenges that it faces.

4. The Terms of Reference for the second stage of the Review (as revised in January 2010) are to:

- encompass the broad span of careers education and information, advice and guidance services provided by the Careers Wales companies and other relevant adjacent service provision in education, the voluntary sector, business and the benefits system
- consider Professor Watts' assessment of how provision of careers services in Wales compares with that in other parts of the UK and other leading countries; and how the current arrangements in Wales might be developed into a world-class system
- look at the particular requirements of different client groups and those of employers in helping individuals develop their career aspirations, learning pathways and career self-management and skills
- consider the coherence and cost-effectiveness of delivery of existing careers-related services and how well Careers Wales companies, education providers, employment advisers and other adjacent service providers are able to work in partnership; this should be on the presumption that the Careers Wales companies will be brought together into a unitary organisation as soon as possible
- develop the vision of a world-class, professionally-led, integrated system of careers education, information, advice and guidance, catering for all ages and all abilities
- propose a strategy for realising this vision.

5. The next stage of the Review therefore is to consider the issues affecting different areas of service delivery in some more detail. It is being led by a Core Group of external reviewers supported by a Reference Group of representatives of major stakeholder organisations which will act both as a channel of communication with the stakeholder communities and as a 'sounding board' for emerging findings. It will pay particular regard to the scope for practical improvements in the way that various service providers within the broad system are organised and interact with one another, with the objective of achieving more efficient and effective integration between them. The aim will be to produce a set of recommendations for improvement which, together, represent a strategy for achieving a world class, professionally-led, flexible and robust system of careers-related services capable of handling increasing demands in a rational, responsive and customer-focused way.

6. The purpose of this paper is to indicate the main issues to be examined in fulfilling this remit. It will serve as an agenda for the Core Group in its discussions with individual stakeholder organisations and in its subsequent deliberations with the Reference Group regarding its findings and proposals for improvement.

Background

The broader context

7. The European Union sees lifelong careers guidance as a key contributing factor to the achievement of the three priorities of the Lisbon strategy: economic competitiveness, combating social exclusion and the efficiency of employment and labour market policies. EU Ministers have identified guidance as one of four key actions to create open, attractive and accessible learning environments in order to support learning at all ages and in a range of settings and empower citizens to manage their learning and work, in particular by making it easier for them to access and progress through diverse learning opportunities and career pathways. They have therefore committed Member States to the development of high-quality guidance provision for all European citizens, accessible at all stages of their lives to enable them to manage their learning and work pathways and the transitions therein.

8. The Fifth International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy held in Wellington, New Zealand (November 2009) identified four major themes for consideration in the design and development of twenty-first century career services, namely, (i) Transformational Technology, i.e. using web-based and telephone helpline facilities to deliver personalised services; (ii) Prove it Works, i.e. using performance management, customer satisfaction and destination data to demonstrate efficiency and effectiveness; (iii) Creative Collaboration, i.e. using legislation, policy guidance and inspection/accountability frameworks to foster cooperation between agencies; and (iv) Culture Counts, i.e. placing an increasing emphasis on community learning and development. These broad themes provide an overarching framework to help inform the second stage review of Career Services in Wales.

Careers education, information and guidance provision in Wales

9. Awareness of career possibilities begins in primary schools as part of the personal and social education (PSE) framework when concepts such as job roles and earning money through work are introduced. In secondary schooling, careers education and work-related learning form a discrete component in the curriculum under the CWW framework, but there is a degree of flexibility in how it is delivered. This learning entitlement applies between the ages 11–19 in all learning environments, including sixth forms, further education colleges and work-based learning settings. The six Careers Wales companies facilitate access by the schools to Work-focused Experience (WFE) via their education business links activities.

10. However the main focus of the Careers Wales companies' input to the development of young people's career aspirations and pathways is via the delivery of impartial careers information, advice and guidance (IAG) services in schools and colleges, in the community via their network of high street offices, and via the CWO website. They also offer labour market information and job placement services to young people entering the labour market who are below the age threshold for support by the DWP Job Centre Plus network. Careers Wales provides a universal service to young people in education and 16 and 17-year-olds in the labour market, but the companies deliver services in accordance with priorities set by the Welsh Assembly Government via annually agreed Business Plans. Current requirements focus delivery on clients with additional learning needs and disabilities, those at risk of becoming NEET (i.e. Not in Employment, Education or Training) and other vulnerable and 'at risk' groups. Services to young people absorb approximately 80 per cent of the Welsh Assembly Government's funding.

11. The balance of Welsh Assembly Government funding of Careers Wales companies is directed towards the provision of careers IAG services to adults. Again, such services are universally available and accessible, but priority is given to those adults who are least able – by virtue of educational or social background, special needs or economic circumstances – to be able to undertake their own research and to formulate career plans. The recession has in recent years underlined the need for careers IAG provision for those adults who are already employed but who are facing redundancy.

12. Careers Wales companies have also generated additional income from the European Social Fund, Cymorth and Learning Pathways 14–19 Networks for the delivery of additional ‘Youth Gateway’ personal development provision for young people who are most at risk of becoming disaffected; and from contracts with the DWP for the delivery of some IAG services to clients of the ‘Flexible New Deal’ programmes for the unemployed. A few of the companies have also delivered some IAG services to students in higher education under contracts with HEIs. However, IAG services for students and graduates within the immediate post-graduation period are, in the main, delivered by the HEIs’ own in-house careers services which are remitted – via guidance from the HEFCW – to prepare learners for future employment and entrepreneurial opportunities.

13. Various voluntary organisations also provide a range of lifelong guidance services. Such provision will usually be directed towards specific client groups – for example those with specified disabilities – or will be restricted to defined geographical areas. Similarly, the Wales Union Learning Fund (WULF) exists to help Trade Union members engage in lifelong learning in the workplace and has resulted in projects where unions and employers cooperate in raising skill levels. A specific objective of WULF is to provide additional advice, guidance and support for learners. These services may often be supported by Welsh Assembly Government or European funding.

14. Private sector delivery of IAG services in Wales is less extensive than in England and in some other countries, but there are various private sector agencies offering job placement services and others offering support services for adults on ‘New Deal’ programmes under contract to the DWP.

15. The CLIC online website, which is sponsored by the Welsh Assembly Government offers more general information and advice to young people aged 11 to 25 in Wales that is comparable to some of the non-careers IAG services of the Connexions network in England. People in Wales can also access various remote employment-orientated IAG delivery services via internet websites serving the whole of the UK.

Main policy drivers in Wales affecting careers-related service provision

(a) Preparing young people for learning and work

16. The Welsh Assembly Government's policy framework for young people is set out in *Extending Entitlement* which seeks to provide effective support services for young people aged 11 to 25, both in terms of universal and additional targeted support. Its Learning Pathways 14–19 policy (which has been underpinned by the *Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009*) supplements *Extending Entitlement* by seeking to extend choice and flexibility in learning, secure individual learning pathways that meet learners needs, and provide richer opportunities and experiences to help learners develop the wider skills needed for life and work. Coupled with this is the need for a bespoke blend of learner coaching and access to specialist, individualised, impartial careers IAG services in order to help young people make good choices and to overcome barriers to learning.

17. Effective implementation of the CWW curriculum framework in schools and colleges is essential if careers-orientation and the development of career-planning skills are to develop alongside other learning; and both vocational and careers education need to be supported by relevant work-focused experience opportunities and other contacts with enterprise and the world of work. In this regard, prospective policy actions flowing from the recommendations of the *Report of 14–19 Employer Engagement Task Force on Work Focused Experience* and from the *Youth Enterprise Strategy* are particularly germane.

18. The Welsh Assembly Government has also made commitments to provide stronger support for young people with disabilities and additional learning needs; those who are at risk of becoming disaffected; and other vulnerable and 'at risk' groups. Its *NEETs Action Plan 2009* notes that Youth Gateway and Education Gateway provision delivered by Careers Wales are two of the main programmes aimed at supporting young people who are at risk of becoming NEET. Even so, significant regional variations have arisen in the delivery of these programmes across Wales (as a result of differing local needs and approaches) which may need to be moderated. It also suggests a need for clearer links and distinctions to be developed between the post-16 Youth Gateway and work-based learning programmes such as *Skill Build*.

(b) The Skills That Work for Wales agenda

19. The Welsh Assembly Government's overall skills and employment is set out in *Skills That Work for Wales* (STWFW) strategy and action plan which was developed during 2007. In part, STWFW was a response to the Leitch report on skills in the UK and the Webb Review of Further Education in Wales, *Promise and Performance*. The strategy set out a range of actions to respond to the relatively low skills and employment levels in Wales. Careers IAG services were viewed as having an important role to play in many of the key themes of the strategy:

- preparing young people for the future
- reducing the numbers of young people who are 'NEET'
- helping adults to assess and reassess their learning and career paths via adult guidance and redundancy counselling provision
- getting the basics right in terms of literacy and numeracy, including expanding the Basic Skills Employer Pledge and wider use of basic skills assessment
- the establishment of an integrated employment and skills 'careers ladders' model which entails an expansion of adult IAG provision to help more people get into work and get on in work
- delivering the One Wales commitment to increase the number of Modern Apprenticeships
- workforce development – simplifying support for business, increasing the Workforce Development Programme and enhancing the Wales Union Learning Fund
- transfer of responsibility for learning provision in respect of adult prisoners from the Justice Department to the Welsh Assembly Government.

(c) Developments in respect of benefits system and adult guidance services in the UK more generally

20. There are also wider policy developments emanating from the UK Government which may have implications for some aspects of IAG provision in Wales.

21. Changes to the benefits system – in respect of helping the long-term economically inactive and benefits claimants more generally into sustainable employment – are not a devolved matter.

The Welfare Reform Act, which received Royal Assent in November 2009, includes a number of provisions aimed at greater flexibility and personalised targeting of support and others regarding preparedness for work which will impact on the conditions for benefit claims. The latter will include a requirement that benefits claimants should undergo skills assessments (which could, in Wales, involve Careers Wales staff in undertaking such assessments). In addition, a range of policy initiatives have emerged from the Department of Work and Pensions to meet the needs of different parts of the population such as *Backing Young Britain* to encourage employers to provide opportunities to young people; and *School Gate* to provide employment support for parents who may have lost part-time work due to the recession.

22. In England, the Departments for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and Work and Pensions (DWP) are trialling a number of approaches to integrating employment and skills (IES) support, including careers IAG services, as set out in the Command Paper *Work Skills* (June 2008). In Wales, these issues have been identified in Skills that Work for Wales through the proposed 'careers ladders' model. A number of small IES pilots are due to commence early in 2010 in Wales.

23. Alongside this, the Department for Business Innovation and Skills plans to bring together the Careers Advice telephone and web information and advice services currently provided by the Learning and Skills Council with the face-to-face IAG services to be provided by the Next Steps organisations in England. The new service, provisionally branded the adult advancement and careers service (aacs) is scheduled to take effect on 1 August 2010. The telephone helpline (formerly branded learndirect) has been hosted in Wales by Careers Wales and the future relationship of this service to the aacs will therefore need to be determined.

Summary of the main findings from Stage 1 of the Review

Estyn Report: *A comparative analysis of the performance of Careers Wales 2005–2008*

24. While the Estyn Report noted some variations in performance between the Careers Wales companies which had been inspected since 2005, it did, at the same time, indicate that performance was generally good or very good and there were some outstanding

features in some of the companies. The Report, however, identified some shortcomings that needed to be addressed; and, to this end, it made the following recommendations:

(i) that the Careers Wales companies should:

- agree a national strategy and implementation plan to raise quality standards further and improve the outcomes of guidance activities
- improve the focus of performance indicators so that they might better inform planning for the improvement of service impact
- improve mechanisms to share good practice and enhance staff skills and empowerment across Wales
- enhance the preparation of young people for the guidance process by raising their awareness (via education business links and online activities) and developing their careers planning skills
- build on good partnership working practice with Learning Pathways 14–19 to further improve the influence that Careers Wales has on key partners in preparing young people to make effective career decisions
- build on good practice to provide effective support for clients from minority ethnic and vulnerable groups, and for those whose first language is other than English and/or Welsh
- establish a national strategy to ensure that services reduce the impact of gender and other aspects of stereotyping in the way that clients make and implement career plans
- improve the focus of strategic planning to ensure that all plans:
 - make good use of data
 - are monitored efficiently
 - make good use of improvement targets
 - clearly show, through evaluation, the impact that plans have on clients' progress
- achieve wider staff understanding of business planning, performance monitoring and quality management for service improvement

(ii) that the Welsh Assembly Government should:

- develop contract specifications and delivery targets that focus more on service impact and client outcomes

- encourage, within contract specifications, local services to benchmark performance against agreed national levels of service.

Watts Report: *Careers Wales: A review in an International Perspective*

25. Where valid comparisons could be made, Professor Watts drew some illuminating contrasts with the careers information, advice and guidance services in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and New Zealand. However, substantial differences in the range of services provided in the respective countries, together with difficulties in obtaining comparable data, largely precluded direct value for money comparisons. Professor Watts therefore relied more heavily on benchmarking the arrangements in Wales against the all-age guidance systems imperatives which he and other leading commentators developed to frame an OECD benchmarking study of 14 countries in 2003–04 and which he has used subsequently in reviewing services in Scotland and New Zealand. These are:

- transparency and ease of access over the lifespan, including a capacity to meet the needs of a diverse range of clients
- particular attention to key transition points over the lifespan
- flexibility and innovation in service delivery to reflect the differing needs and circumstances of diverse client groups
- processes to stimulate regular review and planning
- access to individual guidance by appropriately qualified practitioners for those who need such help, at times when they need it
- programmes to develop career-management skills
- opportunities to investigate and experience learning and work options before choosing them
- assured access to service delivery that is independent of the interests of particular institutions or enterprises
- access to comprehensive and integrated educational, occupational and labour market information
- involvement of relevant stakeholders.

26. He also reviewed the degree of success achieved by Careers Wales in meeting the six challenges to policymakers which the OECD review indicated had received minimal attention in most OECD countries. These were:

- ensuring that resource allocation decisions give the first priority to systems that develop career self-management skills and career information, and that delivery systems match levels of personal help, from brief to extensive, to personal needs and circumstances, rather than assuming that everybody needs intensive personal career guidance
- ensuring greater diversity in the types of services that are available and in the ways that they are delivered, including greater diversity in staffing structures, wider use of self-help techniques, and a more integrated approach to the use of ICT
- working more closely with career guidance practitioners to shape the nature of initial and further education and training qualifications in support of the development of career self-management skills, better career information, and more diverse service delivery
- improving the information base for public policymaking, including gathering improved data on the financial and human resources devoted to career guidance, on client need and demand, on the characteristics of clients, on client satisfaction, and on the outcomes and cost-effectiveness of career guidance
- developing better quality-assurance mechanisms and linking these to the funding of services
- developing stronger structures for strategic leadership.

27. On the whole, he rated Careers Wales as measuring up well against these OECD criteria, with the potential to become a world-class service; but with question marks about its ability to fulfil its potential and to cope with current pressures for change due to a lack of leadership, strategic capability and funding. The Welsh Assembly Government was complimented for establishing Careers Wales and fostering its development; but the Welsh Assembly Government also received some criticism in respect of insufficient policy coordination, priority setting, and resource provision.

28. Professor Watts saw Careers Wales as having particular strengths in terms of:

- a clear and coherent mission
- the all-age nature of its services
- its professionalism and the resultant quality of its services
- the extent to which it is embedded in Welsh Assembly Government policies
- the extent to which it is embedded in local communities.

29. At the same time he discerned some major challenges in respect of the:

- rapidly growing demand for increasing the levels of service to adults in response to the STFWF and welfare reform agendas as well as the sharp rise in redundancies and unemployment
- need to determine whether it was really intended that Careers Wales should be an all-age, all-ability service provider or whether it should be allowed to restrict access and differentiate in the service response to some categories of client in the interests of focusing available resources on those most in need of assistance
- partnership agenda in which Careers Wales was already heavily engaged at a local level through Children and Young People's Partnerships and 14 to 19 networks and which was making heavy demands on Careers Wales management time.

30. Appreciating that a substantial increase in resources was unlikely in the aftermath of the recession, Professor Watts anticipated the need for a significant remodelling of careers services in favour of adult provision at the expense of provision for young people via the adoption of more overt differentiated provision for young people and a greater focus on building the capacity of other organisations to deliver services. At the same time, he suggested that there was scope for improving the seamlessness of Careers Wales provision by extending the Careers Wales brand to higher education careers services (but without changing their ownership by the respective HEIs) so as to bring about an integration of systems and support – i.e. establishing Careers Wales Online as the unifying administrative and lifelong information, advice and guidance tool – as clients move into and out from a higher education environment.

31. Professor Watts perceived the need for improved leadership and strategic capacity within Careers Wales and a strengthened interface with the Welsh Assembly Government. He endorsed the case for structural change identified in the 2004 review of Careers Wales by Moulson and Prail and suggested that this might take the form of the Careers Wales Association company being transformed into the prime contractor or Careers Wales as a whole being reconfigured either into a lesser number of companies or a unitary organisation (a single company, ASPB or an integral part of the Welsh Assembly Government) – though he recognised that the unitary options would present significant problems in terms of harmonising grading and terms and conditions. Looking beyond Wales, he also suggested that the Welsh Assembly Government should champion the idea of a UK Careers Guidance Forum being established to enable UK-wide issues (for example, in respect of professional standards, sector skills and welfare reform) to be discussed by service leaders, supported in Wales by a Welsh Careers Guidance Forum, possibly linked to the WESB; and he urged more active engagement by the Welsh Assembly Government in the recently established European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network in order to keep the leadership in Wales plugged in to developments across Europe in the guidance field.

32. Professor Watts concluded that Careers Wales was a strong and professional organisation which delivered high-quality services. However, he felt it was becoming subject to pressures and challenges which threatened to undermine its performance and which demanded some radical changes in its models of service delivery, its leadership, its structure and its relationship with the Assembly Government, if its capacity to deliver its all-age remit was not to be compromised.

The principal areas for attention in Stage 2 of the Review

33. Both the Estyn and Watts Reports indicated that the Careers Wales companies were capable of achieving some outstanding results, but saw a need for further improvements, particularly in respect of strategic planning, capacity-building, sharing of relevant data and good practice, and working with partners. Professor Watts identified a need for a remodelling of service provision in order to deliver improved leadership and integration of service provision both within Careers Wales and between Careers Wales and other

careers-related service providers. And both Reports suggested there was a need for some development in the relationship between Careers Wales and the Welsh Assembly Government.

34. The second stage of the Review will therefore need to focus on these general areas for improvement, to consider what specific improvements should be made, and what action should be taken by the various organisations with an interest to bringing this about.

35. Indeed, the analysis will need to be sensitive to the various challenges identified earlier in this paper and in the Watts Report and therefore have particular regard to the following service and organisational relationships.

- The interface between careers education and careers information, advice and guidance (IAG) for young people in schools and colleges with particular reference to the requirements of the work-related curriculum, the provision of education business links, the role of 14–19 learning coaches, and action to cater for clients with additional needs and to combat disaffection.
- The interface between Careers Wales IAG provision for young people and adults in further education, in the labour market and in employment and the services provided by HEIs' careers IAG services for undergraduates and recent graduates.
- The welfare reform agenda of the UK Government which could result in Careers Wales being placed in the position of gatekeeper for welfare benefits as skills assessments become mandatory for benefits claimants and which could widen the role of other agencies (such as Working Links and the voluntary organisations) in careers-related fields such as individualised personal planning, mentoring support and job brokering.
- The 'careers ladders' integrated employment and skills agenda which also has implications for Careers Wales services, particularly as regards its relationship with Job Centre plus in respect of labour market intelligence, skills assessment and placement services and its relationship with employers and adults in the workforce (as has been underlined during the course of the recession).

- The Careers Wales organisational structure and brand, taking account of what Professor Watts had to say about the need for prioritisation and service differentiation to cope with rising service demands and static resourcing and the need for greater coherence and strategic/professional leadership.
- The interface with the Welsh Assembly Government regarding both the determination of policy in respect of careers-related services and the sponsorship of such services.

Issues for consideration in respect of each of these service and organisational relationships

The interface between careers education and careers IAG for young people in schools and colleges

36. Careers education is designed to help young people to develop the knowledge, confidence and skills that they need to make well-informed, thought-through choices and plans that enable them to progress smoothly into further learning and work subsequently. In most schools, at Key Stage 3 and in some at Key Stage 4, careers education is delivered within programmes of PSE education. At Key Stage 4, it is most commonly delivered as part of a carousel arrangement with other subjects including PSE. Whether delivered separately or linked with PSE, it contributes to Key Skills, especially the Wider Key Skills, including the achievement of qualifications in those skills. It is also embedded within the wider curriculum and is closely connected to the delivery of the statutory requirement for work-related learning at Key Stage 4.

37. Careers IAG, by contrast, is the personalised support for individuals in respect of learning and work pathways and on other key issues that impact on young people's ability to make choices and to develop and progress along a chosen path. Effective, personalised IAG – which may be delivered by a range of people either within a learning setting or externally – enhances and complements careers education. Conversely, effective careers education – in combination with some direct experience of the world of work – gives young people the grounding they need for bespoke IAG discussions regarding their future learning and career options. Personalised IAG is necessarily a more resource-intensive exercise than whole-class learning as it is traditionally based upon one-to-one interviews.

38. Work-focused experience (WFE) is a term covering experiential learning intended to reinforce careers education and help young people to develop an appreciation of employability skills such as creativity, team-working, entrepreneurship. WFE is a key component of CWW – a framework for 11 to 19-year-olds and is also integral to the learning core element of Learning Pathways 14–19. As such, WFE has never been considered as an extra subject in the curriculum; rather its purpose has been to use employer support to improve students' learning and make such learning more relevant to future working needs.

39. Traditionally, careers education and WFE have been seen as complementary; but, with the intention of making this interlinkage more explicit, the two were brought together in Wales as a single CWW framework for schools and colleges from September 2008.

40. The aim of CWW is to help learners:

- explore the attitudes and values required for employability and lifelong learning
- plan and manage their pathway through the range of opportunities in learning and work
- make effective career choices
- develop an appreciation of enterprise and a variety of work settings
- become motivated, set long-term goals and overcome barriers
- see the relevance of their studies to their life and work
- develop Key Skills and other skills required by employers
- prepare for the challenges, choices and responsibilities of work and adult life.

41. CWW applies to all learners between the ages 11 to 19 and in all learning settings, including schools' sixth forms, further education colleges, and work-based learning. The role of learning providers in delivering CWW is set out in the supplementary guidance. This broadly states that each learning provider must have a policy in place that identifies:

- who manages what
- how staffing is deployed

- how and where the work happens
- how resources are allocated and used
- how staff development is managed
- when and how monitoring, evaluation and review occur.

42. The supplementary guidance includes a grid analysing five approaches that learning providers might take in delivering CWW. Learning providers are encouraged to consider the strengths and weaknesses inherent in such approaches as they consider what best fits their particular needs.

43. It is within this context of differentiated delivery models at the school and college level that Careers Wales IAG delivery and education business links facilitation services are negotiated with the individual learning providers. The relationship inevitably varies from institution to institution and, not least, because the development of Learning Pathways 14–19, is proceeding at varying pace across Wales. However, a number of broad strategic issues can be identified relating to the general relationship between careers education and careers IAG services.

- At what age should careers education for young people begin?
- What should the balance be between career education lessons, personal interviews, and opportunities to explore and experience the world of work? Who should receive personal interviews, and when should these be held?
- How should careers education delivered by schools and colleges be quality assured and whether enough attention has been accorded to it in the statutory inspection framework?
- Whether there is sufficient clarity about and understanding of the boundaries between careers education/WFE as set out in the CWW framework and careers IAG provision – and, in particular, whether the roles of careers coordinators, careers advisers and other personal support workers (especially learning coaches) are sufficiently well defined.
- Whether the Careers Wales advisers are delivering too many interviews in schools and colleges in an insufficiently differentiated approach (as Professor Watts has suggested);

and whether any of this resource could be more beneficially targeted on those young people who have additional needs or who are at risk of becoming NEET or used to enhance IAG service provision for adults?

- Whether there is any evidence of careers IAG staff being drawn into careers education provision in order to make up deficiencies with resulting 'burden shifting' of resource costs?
- Whether the future role of Careers Wales in respect of careers education/WFE should be focused on capacity building in schools and colleges?
- Whether Careers Wales companies are succeeding in facilitating a sufficiently wide range of WFE experiences in order to support Learning Pathway 14–19 developments and related initiatives such as the Principal Element in the Welsh Baccalaureate?
- Whether Careers Wales education business links activities should be separately branded as part of a new national employer engagement system as recommended by the Employer Engagement Task Force in the interests of attracting more employers into offering WFE opportunities?
- Whether work experience should be linked more closely with part-time employment as well as volunteering by 16 to 18-year-olds?
- What training is required for those that work with career guidance practitioners to provide services? For example education and training providers, teachers, school principals? How can such training complement the training of career guidance practitioners?
- What career guidance should be provided to potential early school-leavers, and how? Should it be delivered as part of the curriculum or in addition to it? Should it be delivered by internal or external personnel or both? Should it include out-of-school experiential placements?
- When public funding is channelled towards institutions to cover a package of services, including career guidance, what measures can be taken to ensure that these institutions allocate this funding to career guidance provision? Is earmarked funding preferable to block funding in facilitating the attainment of policy targets?

The interface between Careers Wales IAG provision and the careers services provided by HEIs

44. An OECD comparative study in 2003 saw merit in the all-age service; and the subsequent Welsh Assembly Government sponsored Review of Careers Wales in 2004 noted that Welsh IAG arrangements were 'at the forefront of international best practice'. Since the OECD study reported, Careers Wales has developed an online resource, careerswales.com, that provides clients of all ages with access to a range of careers self-management resources and an e-portfolio that is capable of being a lifelong record of learning and careers aspirations, goals and achievement. However, as the Watts report notes, there is a discontinuity of Careers Wales IAG service provision when clients enter higher education and become the clients of the respective HEIs own careers services. This impacts on the capacity of Careers Wales to keep in touch with clients' progress unless or until they return to Careers Wales after graduation (or after dropping out of their higher education courses) and possibly after some years subsequently in work or in the labour market. Moreover, increasing numbers of young people and adults are now pursuing franchised higher education courses in FEIs which creates a 'grey area' regarding IAG provision.

45. Professor Watts has suggested that there may be scope for extending the Careers Wales brand to the higher education careers services (and perhaps to some other careers-related service providers) in the interests of closer working, seamless continuity of client support and monitoring, the promotion of common professional standards and quality systems, and wider career opportunities within the IAG sector.

46. The main issues that arise in respect of this interface are therefore:

- whether there is any lack of clarity about IAG service delivery responsibility for students in FEIs who are pursuing franchised higher education courses?
- whether any material improvements in service for the client, in the efficiency of service delivery, in determining (through longitudinal monitoring) the efficacy of careers IAG interventions or in the development of the profession could result from closer working between Careers Wales and the higher education careers services?

- whether individual local bilateral agreements, a general agreement between Careers Wales as a whole and Higher Education Wales, or a widening of the Careers Wales brand to include higher education careers services would be most conducive to effective integrated working?
- where initial training programmes for career guidance practitioners are developed autonomously by HEIs, how can a standard approach be developed nationally to minimise the differences in outcomes for users of career guidance services that arise from differences in the training of guidance practitioners?
- whether links should be made between Careers Wales and GO Wales placement schemes, and whether Careers Wales should be involved in higher education employability strategies?
- whether the emerging Foundation Degree strategy should develop careers education via work-based learning applications?
- whether there is a need for improved undergraduate and postgraduate training programmes for a variety of professions associated with the provision of careers education, advice and guidance, including Continuing Professional Development for Careers Wales staff?
- whether there should be more of an interface between Careers Wales Online and higher education eLearning applications?
- what evidence about outcomes (for example on graduate destinations, non-completion rates and destinations of non-completers, annual costs of non-completion) should be collected? How can this information be used to improve career services for current students and to improve the enrolment decisions of prospective students?
- how should students, employers, and other stakeholders be involved in the development and delivery of more effective career services?

The Welfare Reform agenda of the UK Government

47. Priority for adult clients in Wales during the last 18 months has focussed on the unemployed and those under notice of redundancy due to the economic downturn. In 2008–09, Careers Wales

companies collectively delivered almost 68,000 interviews to adults, compared with fewer than 51,000 interviews in 2007–08. This has been managed by companies reallocating staff resources from other delivery areas to adults. The Welsh Assembly Government recognised these additional demands in the 5th Economic Summit, by providing an additional £800,000 to Careers Wales in 2009–10 and 2010–11; and Ministerial agreement to fast-tracking a £2.4m project under European Structural Funds to boost Careers Wales capacity by employing 30 additional careers advisers.

48. However, this focus on the recently unemployed and redundant has had a displacement effect on planning for the welfare reforms outlined in the White Paper 'Raising expectations and increasing support: reforming welfare for the future' and subsequent Welfare Reform Act 2009. The format and expectations of the services linked to welfare reforms are still yet to be finalised, but issues include:

- whether the Welsh Assembly Government has any discretion about the supporting Regulations?
- whether the Welsh Assembly Government has a role in respect of the relationship between mandated clients within the welfare system and careers IAG provision for those same clients?
- what are the distinctive career guidance needs of different groups of unemployed adults? To what extent are these needs being met by current provision? How can services be organised so that such a range of needs is more effectively catered for?
- how can career guidance for unemployed adults provided by the public employment services (PES) be complemented by services provided by voluntary and community-based organisations, by the social partners, and private, for profit services?
- whether Careers Wales has capacity to manage the additional referrals from Jobcentre Plus for skills assessment checks?
- whether the client-centred, impartial role that Careers Wales currently prides itself on might be compromised by perceived 'gatekeeping' of benefit entitlement via skills assessment checks?
- how can wider access to adult IAG provision be achieved? Do ICT and telephone delivery meet the needs of the wider populace? Does the balance of ICT, telephone and face-to-face

provision need rebalancing in order to cope with increased demand arising from benefit claimants?

- how can careers self-management skills be promoted among adults generally?
- whether existing Client Record Management systems in Careers Wales and Jobcentre Plus are sufficiently flexible and well-integrated to be able to track individuals through personalised programmes of preparation for return to work?
- is the PES a market leader for employment services (including career information services) on the internet?
- how can ICT be harnessed to improve service delivery in cost-effective ways, and to encourage self-service access to information? What type of assistance is required by which type of user of the information systems provided?
- how can the PES guarantee the quality, content and relevance of the career information provided through its services?
- what investments in training, support, and communications infrastructure need to be made in order to develop ICT-based service delivery?
- what steps are being taken to ensure that the career guidance approaches used with at-risk groups are not culturally biased?

The 'careers ladders' integrated employment and skills agenda

49. The 'careers ladders' model, outlined in *Skills That Work for Wales* sets out five phases of information, advice, guidance and support:

- Contact/Engagement.
- Stepping On: employment coaching service.
- Stepping Up: integrated offer in support of skills and employment.
- Stepping Out: access to job vacancies.
- Moving Forward: in-work support.

50. The Welsh Assembly Government, Careers Wales and Jobcentre Plus Wales will begin piloting integrated employment and skills (IES) approaches early in 2010. Trials have been running in England since September 2008. Key learning points from the initial evaluation of the trials include:

- the need for joint training of Jobcentre Plus and IAG staff
- clear guidelines on referral for 'skills assessment checks'
- data-sharing processes and informed consent are essential.

51. The model includes support for those in work as well as those looking for employment. Careers Wales offers workforce development support to employers, with the principal aim of helping employees with their learning and career planning, but this work has been accorded a lower priority by CW companies during the recession.

52. The proposed adult advancement and careers service (aacs), which will bring together the face-to-face Next Steps service and the telephone and web-based Careers Advice service in England, is due to be launched in August 2010. The specification for the aacs has not been finalised, but it is likely that more people will be directed to 'self-serve' via the website or telephone; new technologies such as texts, webchats, podcasts and facebook/twitter; and the service will include information and advice on broader issues such as debt counselling, childcare, housing, and substance misuse.

53. These developments raise some of the same issues as the welfare reform agenda discussed above, for example:

- whether Careers Wales has capacity to manage the additional referrals from Jobcentre Plus for 'skills assessment checks'?
- how can wider access be achieved? Do ICT and telephone delivery meet the needs of the wider populace? Does the balance of ICT, telephone and face-to-face provision need rebalancing?
- how can careers self-management skills be promoted among the workforce generally?
- whether existing Client Record Management systems in Careers Wales and Jobcentre Plus are sufficiently well-integrated to track individuals through training?

- does the career guidance provided by the PES have the capacity and flexibility to reach and remotivate unemployed individuals to re-engage with learning and work? To what extent is career guidance provided by the PES capable of outreach to geographically and economically disadvantaged communities? Is a different but related careers service required?
- to what extent is the PES networking and in partnership with the relevant actors in the field of guidance so that they can widen their range of services to the unemployed, and permit localised and decentralised delivery of careers guidance?

54. However, consideration also needs to be given to:

- whether a remodelling of services would make it possible to transfer some Careers Wales IAG resources currently devoted to young people to adults to meet the extra demand?
- whether greater differentiation of service delivery, including systematic approaches to customer segmentation and proactive marketing, is desirable?
- whether closer working and data sharing between Careers Wales and Job Centre Plus would contribute to better aggregate labour market intelligence and job placement services?
- whether Careers Wales should aim to become a more diversified IAG provider to match the broader (non-careers) information and advice services proposed for the aacs in England or improve referral mechanisms to other advice services in order to ensure that adult clients get a reasonably comprehensive information and advice service?
- whether there is any confusion between the Employment Coaching Service and the learning coach support as deployed in 14–19 pathways?

The Careers Wales organisational structure and brand

55. As noted earlier, Professor Watts endorsed the case for structural change identified in the 2004 review of Careers Wales by Moulson and Prail and suggested that this might take the form of the Careers Wales Association company being transformed into the prime contractor or Careers Wales as a whole being reconfigured either into a lesser number of companies or a unitary organisation.

He noted that there were two main arguments for supporting the present six company regional structure of Careers Wales: the first is that it enhances local and regional partnership working and accountability; and the second is that decentralisation supports innovation and enables cross-company benchmarking. He accepted that a country with distinct rural/urban and linguistic characteristics such as Wales has a strong case for such a locally based model. However, he was less convinced of the second argument, noting that, while innovation benefits from diversity, benchmarking tends inevitably to encourage conformity.

56. He recognised that there was a great deal of consistency in Careers Wales' service delivery across the whole country, supported by common standards and national working groups, on guidance activity for the statutory groups. He identified differences in approach in areas such as the NEETs agenda, the education business links delivery models, relationships with higher education Careers Services and adult guidance networks; and he attributed these differences to the availability of geographically distinct sources of funding – particularly European Social Funds – and to the remnants of previous local authority and Training and Enterprise Council structures, rather than from diverse innovative practice.

57. However, he also noted that in respect of the 14 to 19 agenda the Welsh Assembly Government had specified a 'national policy, locally delivered' which indicated an expectation that Careers Wales companies should work closely with local delivery partners. In this regard, he commented on the lack of coterminosity with other delivery agents and partners – particularly the local authorities (LA) – in the present geographical alignment of Careers Wales companies; and he suggested that the existing company structure might be reduced to three or four companies to more effectively reflect the LA boundaries.

58. The Careers Wales Association (CWA) is, at present, the wholly owned subsidiary of the six regional companies. Professor Watts characterised its present status as:

. . . a common resource, rather than a planning organisation; as a servant of the companies rather than their co-ordinator. This results in a number of negative effects: there is no clear leadership; action on a national level is on the basis of cross-company consensus. No spokesman can speak authoritatively for the whole organisation.

Professor Watts also questions whether there is an opportunity loss in developing a critical mass at CWA level that would be able to fund a research capacity which is missing in Wales.

59. Many of these issues were raised in the 2003–04 review by Moulson and Prail. Since then the number of regional companies has reduced from seven to the present six; but Professor Watts viewed the lack of progress in re-engineering the role of the CWA into a strategic umbrella body providing leadership as indicating that it was unlikely to change in the future, without direction from the Welsh Assembly Government. As noted earlier, he saw potential scope for extending the Careers Wales brand to other careers-related service providers (such as the higher education careers services) in the interests of promoting more seamless service provision, common quality standards and other benefits of close association. Such a widening of constituent membership of the brand could possibly make the transformation of the CWA into an umbrella body providing strategic leadership and advocacy for the sector even more relevant; and this could, in turn, also provide a foundation for the development of a Welsh Careers Guidance Forum to provide professional leadership across the sector as Professor Watts also proposed.

60. The main issues arising are therefore:

- considerations involved in moving to a unitary organisation, taking into account the need for local partnerships and responsiveness
- how best to provide strategic leadership, service planning capability, research and benchmarking and advocacy functions?
- whether Careers Wales and the Welsh Assembly Government should seek to promote the extension of the brand to other careers-related service providers?
- whether there is any agreement between careers-related providers about the need for and potential to create a Welsh Careers Guidance Forum – possibly including stakeholder representation – as advocated by Professor Watts?
- whether there is a need to clarify Careers Wales relationships and structures concerning EBPs?
- whether there is a need to simplify, merge or integrate the wide range of careers-related initiatives and programmes, in order to reduce confusion among stakeholders such as employers?
- what resources are involved in providing careers services, and how can management information data be improved?

- how can existing investment be used more efficiently?
- what data-gathering strategies are in place to signal needs for new, different or expanded services and target groups?

The interface with the Welsh Assembly Government

61. Finally, Professor Watts noted that a wide range of policy drivers (outlined in Appendix 1 paragraphs 16–23) impact upon Careers Wales and that the companies' main relationship with the Welsh Assembly Government was with the Careers Policy Branch. The branch is located in the mainly post-16 orientated Skills, Higher Education and Lifelong Learning Group of DCELLS, notwithstanding that some 80 per cent of Careers Wales services are currently devoted to fulfilling statutory requirements in respect of young people below the age of 18. The main role of this branch is 'sponsorship' (i.e. budgetary and contractual responsibility) in respect of the core of IAG and education business links services delivered by the six regional companies. However, many of the policy drivers emanate from other policy branches and divisions. While Professor Watts recognised that Careers Policy Branch had endeavoured to mediate demands arising from these other sources, he observed that the companies felt that the branch, as presently resourced, lacked sufficient profile and influence within the Welsh Assembly Government's structures to coordinate all policy affecting Careers Wales effectively. He also noted that the lack of a single identifiable representative voice for the six companies resulted in ad hoc approaches between Careers Wales and Ministers and civil servants within the Welsh Assembly Government.

62. As a consequence, difficulties are experienced both by the sponsorship branch and the companies in identifying a hierarchy of service priorities within the Careers Wales portfolio; and established priorities can be compromised during the course of the contractual year by additional requirements. This situation may also indicate that there is an insufficiently wide appreciation of the extent of the work that Careers Wales already undertakes and the extent therefore to which its finite resources are already fully committed.

63. The main issues arising are:

- whether, in the interests of promoting a more integrated system of careers education, WFE, careers IAG and job placement, an enhanced Careers Policy Branch should be established with a policy coordination remit encompassing the whole span of careers-related services?

- how a unified Careers Wales might establish improved channels of communication with the Welsh Assembly Government?
- how the Welsh Assembly Government might establish methods and policies for improved labour market intelligence, to include more accurate high-quality all-age employment destination data?
- how should government and agencies cooperate in the development and supply of educational and occupational information?
- how can cross-sectoral collaboration between the different government departments responsible for careers education, careers IAG, skills development and job placement be promoted and enhanced?
- which policy levers are available to steer career guidance provision across the life span? How can they be improved?

Next steps

64. The Core Group will now, during the course of the first quarter of 2010, receive, discuss and consider evidence relating to these issues from service providers and other major stakeholders. It will discuss the issues, emerging findings and proposals with the Reference Group and finalise its conclusions and recommendations. These will then be presented to the Minister in the early spring. If significant changes are recommended, public consultation on those recommendations and debate in the National Assembly could follow before the summer, prior to the determination and publication of an action plan by the Welsh Assembly Government later in the year.

January 2010

Appendix 2: External Reference Group Membership

Phil Westwood – Careers Wales Association (CWA)

Joyce M’Caw – Careers Wales (CW)

Judith Evans – Further Education (FE) Colleges Wales

David Schofield – Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA)

David Eynon – Association of Directors of Education in Wales (ADEW)

Emma Harrison – Welsh Higher Education Careers Services (WHECS)

Chris Llewellyn – Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA)

Mark Heydon – National Training Federation for Wales (NTFW)

June Price – Jobcentre Plus (JCP)

Appendix 3: Programme of Core Group Meetings with Key Partners, Stakeholders and External Reference Group

Organisation	Representative	Date
Independent academic researcher	Professor A G Watts	11/01/2010 19/04/2010
Estyn	Alun Connick, Catherine Evans, Eleanor Davies	11/01/2010
Careers Wales (CW)	Joyce M'Caw, Ann Evans, Ray Collier	12/01/2010
External Reference Group	See Appendix 2	12/01/2010 15/02/2010 13/05/2010
Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) to discuss CWW framework and YES Strategy	John Pugsley, Sue Morgan, Lindsay Harvey, Bethan Webb	19/01/2010
Careers Wales to discuss Education Business Partnerships (EBP)	Trina Neilsen, Joyce M'Caw, Ffiona Williams	19/01/2010
CollegesWales	David Brookes, Coleg Morgannwg	19/01/2010
Welsh Assembly Government	Minister of Children, Education and Lifelong Learning, Leighton Andrews AM	27/01/2010
Welsh Assembly Government to discuss young offenders, ALN and NEETS	Nick Keating, Bethan Cowan, Heather Davidson	27/01/2010
Wales Trades Union Congress	Deri Bevan	27/01/2010
Workers' Educational Association (WEA)	Annie Williams, Principal, Coleg Harlech/WEA North	03/02/2010
Careers Wales to discuss Careers Wales Online (CWO)	Mark Freeman, Sarah Finnegan-Dehn, Joyce M'Caw	03/02/2010
Denbighshire Unitary Authority 14–19 Network Coordinator	John Gambles	03/02/2010
Welsh Assembly Government and Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW)	WAG – Ruth Hayton. HEFCW – Roger Carter, Jackie Cresswell Griffiths	11/02/2010
Wales Higher Education Careers Service (WHECS)	Karen Lennox, Alyson Twyman, Emma Harrison	11/02/2010

The Association for Careers Education and Guidance (ACEG)	June Jenson, Mary Jeans	11/02/2010
Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK)	Mark Isherwood	11/02/2010
Welsh Assembly Government Careers Policy Branch	Mike Moss, Mike Barry, Paul Watts, Jeremy Howells, Caroline Wong, Kirsteen Reed (on secondment from CWA)	15/02/2010
Welsh Assembly Government and Jobcentre Plus (JCP)	WAG – Sam Huckle, Ella Davidoff JCP – Huw Thomas	01/03/2010
The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) Dysgu Cymru	Richard Spear, Cerys Furlong	01/03/2010
Children and Young People's Partnerships (CYPPs)	Angela Davies, Bridgend; Mark Davies, Vale of Glamorgan; Simon Morris, Cardiff	01/03/2010
Employers and Sector Skills Councils (SSC)	Jan Holdaway, Asset Skills and SSC Alliance; Owain Davies, CBI; Owen Evans, Business In The Community	25/03/2010
National Training Federation for Wales (NTFW)	Mark Heydon, Andrew Cooksley, Arwyn Watkins	25/03/2010
Headteachers	Brian Lightman, St Cyres Secondary School; Huw Cripps, Pontypridd High School	26/03/2010
Open University	Bea Brown, Ellen Cocking, Ruth Brooks	26/03/2010
Wales Employment and Skills Board (WESB)	Sir Adrian Webb, Charles Middleton	26/03/2010
Northern Ireland Careers Service and Scotland Careers Service	Judith Shaw (Northern Ireland) and Vivienne Brown (Scotland)	04/05/2010
Careers Wales (Chief Executives and Chairs)	Hywel Jones, Ann Evans, Sarah Finnegan-Dehn, Trina Neilsen, Mark Freeman, Ray Collier, Joyce M'Caw	13/05/2010
Welsh Assembly Government	Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning, Leighton Andrews AM	19/05/2010

Appendix 4: Papers considered by the Review

Papers from the Welsh Assembly Government

DCELLS Careers Policy Branch and Review secretariat

1. Careers Wales: Corporate Governance – K Reed
2. Careers Wales, Education Business Links and Employer Engagement
3. Careers Wales, Overview Of Geography, Demography, Staffing, Out-Turns and Funding – K Reed
4. Data on Higher Education Careers Services – K Reed
5. Talking to young people and adults May 10 – K Reed
6. The Careers Team Role – for Core Group discussion
7. MTC (Making The Connections) activity summary paper
8. *Issues To Be Considered During The Second Stage Of The Review Of Careers Services In Wales*, Careers Branch (included as Appendix 1 to Report)
9. Briefing note for Core Group meeting with Sir Adrian Webb on 26 March 2010
10. Jobcentre District Boundaries with Jobcentre Plus Sites
11. Careers Wales Centres by Careers Wales Region

Papers from other DCELLS Policy Divisions

12. Careers Wales Review: Additional Learning Needs – ALN Branch, DCELLS
13. Careers Services within Higher Education Institutions and links to Careers Wales – HE Policy, DCELLS
14. Progress Report on Integrated Employment and Skills, Employability Branch, DCELLS
15. Careers Wales Review – Careers Ladders, Employability Branch, DCELLS

Papers from Careers Wales

16. Paper 1 – *Careers Information, Advice and Guidance landscape in Wales*

17. Paper 2 – *A Summary of careers information, advice and guidance services provided by Careers Wales*
18. Paper 3 – *Careers Wales' services for young people*
19. Paper 4 – *Careers Wales' services in the context of Skills that Work for Wales*
20. Paper 5 – *Careers Wales Online and the Learning and Careers Advice Helpline: key channels supporting a cost effective Careers Wales guidance model*
21. Paper 5b – *Careers Wales Online Vision Paper*
22. Paper 6 – *Resource Management*
23. Paper 7 – *A Way Forward*
24. Paper 8 – *The case for co-ordinating support for young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)*
25. Paper 9 – *A Strategic Lead for Learner Support Services, Learning Pathways 14-19*
26. Paper 10 – *Vision Paper*
27. Paper 11 – *Key Messages on Guidance, all age, all ability and linking people to the labour market*
28. *Some Thoughts on Learning Coaching*
29. *A Welsh Guidance Strategic Forum paper*
30. Briefing Paper – *A differentiated service*
31. *Careers Wales and Employer Engagement*
32. *Criminal Justice System*
33. *Employer Engagement and Education Business Partnership*
34. *Careers Wales: presentation to Core group, IAG Review 19 January 2010*
35. *Careers Wales: Online Learning And Careers Advice Helpline Presentation*
36. *Careers Wales: Online Usage Overview*

Papers from Stakeholder Groups

37. SSC Asset Skills written responses for the Review
38. LLUK written evidence to the Review
39. Written response for the Review from CYPP coordinators
40. Written response for the Review from the Chair of Young Enterprise
41. CASCAiD – Careers Guidance Software Provision in Wales Paper
42. *Employer Engagement Task Force Report March 2007* – S Drury
43. Pre 16 Student Supervised Work Experience Meeting Notes
44. Review of Careers Provision in Wales – V Brown, ICG
45. Career Services in Scotland – V Brown presentation
46. Career Services in Northern Ireland – J Shaw presentation
47. *An Examination of the Current Challenges facing Links between Education and Business – an Employer’s Perspective* April 2010 – Business In The Community
48. HE Careers Services – work with Careers Wales – WHECS

Key reference documents

49. Estyn Careers Wales Review
50. *Careers Wales: A Review in an International Perspective* May 2009 – Professor A G Watts. ISBN 978 0 7504 5176 5
51. OECD *Policy Makers Handbook*
52. WDA – Youth Entrepreneurship Strategy paper
53. The *Learning Coaches of Wales* Summary Document August 2008 – Professor D M Saunders. ISBN 978 0 7504 4754 6
54. *Careers and the world of work: A framework for 11 to 19-year-olds in Wales* – Curriculum and Assessment 3–14 Division, DCELLS

Other reference documents

55. DCFS Statutory Guidance Oct 2009

56. DCFS – Careers Co-ordinators Research paper October 2009
ISBN 978 1 84775 556 8
57. *Supporting learners through trade unions* – L Haughton, NICEC Fellow
58. Unionlearn Report on Research and Consultation Findings – L Haughton and S Hughes, NICEC
59. Working together to support union learners – L Haughton and S Hughes, NICEC
60. *The Careers Profession in the UK: a Preliminary Mapping Exercise* – Professor A G Watts
61. YES Focus Groups Final Report April 2009
62. A Perfect Careers Profession – Dr D M Hughes
63. *Fuelling Potential - a Blueprint for Skills Accounts and the Adult Advancement and Careers Services* – BIS (Department for Business Innovation and Skills)
64. Careers England Policy Commentary on Fuelling Potential – Professor A G Watts
65. Promise and Performance Review December 2007 – Webb, Drury and Griffiths. ISBN 978 0 7504 4482 8
66. Briefing Paper – Differentiated Service Delivery Model – Dr D M Hughes
67. Additional issues/themes for discussion within the Core Group
68. Fifth International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy, New Zealand: November 2009 – Dr D M Hughes on behalf of the UK Country Team
69. Wales Employment and Skills Board – *A Wales that Works*. April 2009. ISBN 978 0 7504 5153 6
70. Wales Employment and Skills Board – *Moving Forward: Foundations for Growth Volume 1: Economic Renewal and the Skills Agenda*. May 2010. ISBN 978 0 7504 5595 4
71. Wales Employment and Skills Board – *Moving Forward: Foundations for Growth Volume 3: Employability Skills*. May 2010. ISBN 978 0 7504 5597 8

72. Wales Employment and Skills Board – *Moving Forward: Foundations for Growth Volume 4: Youth Unemployment*. May 2010. ISBN 978 0 7504 5598 5
73. CBI – *Ready to Grow: Business priorities for education and skills*. Education and Skills survey 2010. ISBN 978 0 8520 1724 1

Appendix 5: Composition of the careers services 'family'

There are two publicly funded services in Wales whose primary function is to deliver careers information, advice and guidance services:

- **Careers Wales** – the staff complement for the six Careers Wales companies amounted to some 1,035 for business year 2009–10, some 72 per cent being involved in direct delivery of services.
- **Welsh Higher Education Careers Advisory Services** – the 12 universities in Wales employ 154 full and associate members registered with AGCAS (the professional association for higher education careers professionals).

In addition to these two discrete careers services, a number of institutions and voluntary organisations employ staff where the provision of careers education, information, advice and guidance (in varying mixtures and degrees of expertise) is a material component of their overall service provision.

These include:

Secondary schools. There are around 220 maintained secondary schools in Wales. Each school will need to perform the functions of: careers coordination; work experience coordination; delivery of the Careers and World of Work curriculum framework. No data are collected centrally on these roles; but it is probable that each school would have at least two staff members, but possibly several more, involved for at least part of their time in these functions.

Further education colleges. The number of further education colleges in Wales is currently being reduced in number through mergers. Careers support services are normally part of the Student Support Team, and may employ qualified careers specialists. Again there is no centrally collected data available; but it is probable that around 100 staff members are involved in careers-related work.

Learning Coaches may be employed by any learning provider. The latest data held by the Welsh Assembly Government identifies over 1,200 registered learning coaches, over 785 of whom have been fully trained. Around 500 of the registered coaches state that their background is in teaching or lecturing.

Jobcentre Plus employs some 719 personal advisors who, as part of their work-search and benefit advice, may deliver careers-related information.

Probation and Youth Offending Team workers recognise that progression into learning and sustainable employment is a fundamental part of the rehabilitation process – awareness of careers guidance issues is therefore a requirement of the service. As at July 2009, there were almost 1,500 Youth Offending Team workers.

NIACE has identified over 1,000 Community Learning Representatives who may provide some basic careers information or sign-posting for those wishing to re-enter learning. Similarly, the Wales TUC has identified around 1,200 Union Learning Representatives.

Other public-facing roles may also have such elements of careers information and signposting within their overall service delivery model. Examples might include Citizens Advice Bureau staff; librarians; and a range of roles such as debt advisors or social services workers.

Given the mixed nature of their roles, it would be difficult to claim a definitive figure for the careers 'family' in Wales. However, it would perhaps not be unreasonable to suggest that the 'family' exceeds 5,000 individuals in total. This figure represents a broad estimate of the overall number of individuals involved rather than full-time equivalents.

Appendix 6: Careers Wales – Education business activities

The strategic role of such activities is to:

- facilitate learning institutions' delivery of the curriculum
- encourage the engagement of pupils with the curriculum
- bring in real-world examples to learning experiences and
- provide experience of the world of work.

Work by Careers Wales companies to prepare and retain employers' for engagement with education involves:

- the recruitment of employers who are willing to take part in links with schools
- initial advice on insurance, child protection and Health and Safety issues, initial training and the matching of potential opportunities
- a formal Health and Safety check of the work placement
- thereafter the ongoing 'customer relationship management' (CRM) issues involved in maintaining and developing the relationship and perhaps expanding involvement. The impact of recruiting additional or replacement employers and ongoing CRM on CW resources should not be underestimated.

Education business activities have traditionally been focused on five key strands.

- Work experience for young people in schools and colleges.
- Business Awareness and Enterprise.
- Employer Mentoring.
- Teacher Placements into industry and business/commerce.
- Employer support for Curriculum Enrichment and Development.

The change from the careers education and guidance (CEG) and the work-related education (WRE) curriculum frameworks to CWW framework in September 2008 broadened the definition of experience of the world of work through 'work experience' quite dramatically. It now became 'work-focused experience' and includes:

- short blocks of work experience
- visits to industry
- masterclasses with employers and trainers

- business simulations
- work-related community participation
- enterprise activities
- industry days
- experience of a place of work
- experience of the world for those unlikely to be in paid employment
- work-related problem solving activities
- extended work experience
- weekly timetabled work placements
- part-time employment
- work shadowing.

At present CW companies and the EBPs which they support will recruit suitable employers, vet them for Health and Safety where appropriate (for short blocks of work experience for instance) or where necessary recommend CRB checks.

For 2008–09 (the last year for which we have full figures at present) Careers Wales facilitated the following education business activities for learning institutions or with employers:

Work with employers	Plan	Achieved
Number of existing employers Supporting E-B activities	21825	20072
Number of new employers supporting E-B activities	2700	5775
Number of health and safety assessments	10201	13484

Work with Learning Institutions	Key Stage 3	Key Stage 4	16–19	FE	Total achieved
Work experience – number of clients placed	0	33445	4219	1416	39080
Number of employers providing placements					16051
Enterprise/Business awareness					
Number of institutions with business awareness/enterprise support (including Key Stages 1 and 2)	88	220	39	18	365
Number participating in business awareness/enterprise	13270	20980	5903	2162	42315
Number involved in setting up small business projects with employer support	4175	12734	4264	1262	22435
Employer support/mentoring					
Number of schools with employer support for mentoring/individual goal setting	4	147	6	3	160
Number of students receiving employer support for mentoring/individual goal setting	658	12347	481	149	13635
Number of employers providing mentoring support					435
Number of business employee mentors					864
Curriculum support activities					
Number of institutions with employer support in delivering/developing the curriculum (including Key Stages 1 and 2)	1259	166	55	3	1483
Number participating in employer supported curriculum	90059	19437	2663	337	112496

It should also be noted that some schools encourage pupils to source their own work experience placements. However, these placements still need to be health and safety checked; and Careers Wales makes every effort to recruit the employers concerned for future placements.

Appendix 7: Glossary

A

ACEG Association for Careers Education and Guidance

ACL Adult and Community Learning

ADEW Association of Directors of Education in Wales

ALN Additional learning needs

B

BIS Department for Business Innovation and Skills,
UK Government

BITC Business In The Community

C

CBI Confederation of British Industry

CEDEFOP European Centre for the Development of Vocational
Training

CLR Community Learning Representatives

CPD Continuing Professional Development

CRM Customer Relationship Management

CW Careers Wales

CWA Careers Wales Association

CWO Careers Wales Online

CWW Careers and the world of work

CYPP Children and Young People's Partnership

D

DCELLS Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning
and Skills, Welsh Assembly Government

DE&T Department for the Economy and Transport, Welsh
Assembly Government

DCSF Department for Children, Schools and Families,
UK Government

DWP	Department for Work and Pensions, UK Government
E	
EARLALL	European Association of Regional and Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning
EBP	Education Business Partnerships
EDI	Education Development International
ELGPN	European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network
F	
FEI	Further education institution
G	
GO Wales	Graduate Opportunities Wales
H	
HECAS	Higher Education Careers Advisory Services
HEI	Higher education institution
HEFCW	Higher Education Funding Council for Wales
I	
IAG	Information, Advice and Guidance
ICT	Information and Communications Technologies
IES	Integrated Employment and Skills
IfL	Institute for Learning
IFLL	The Independent Inquiry into the Future for Lifelong Learning
J	
JCP	Jobcentre Plus
K	
KIT	Keeping In Touch

L

LLUK	Lifelong Learning UK
LMI	Labour Market Information/Intelligence

M

MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
-----	-----------------------------

N

NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NIACE	National Institute of Adult Continuing Education
NICEC	National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling
NTFW	National Training Federation for Wales

O

OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
------	--

P

PSE	Personal and social education
-----	-------------------------------

Q

QAA	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
-----	---

S

SSC	Sector Skills Councils
STEM	Science, technology, engineering and mathematics

T

TUC	Trades Union Congress
-----	-----------------------

U

ULR	Union Learning Representatives
UKCES	UK Commission for Employment and Skills

W

WAG	Welsh Assembly Government
WBL	Work-based learning
WCVA	Wales Council for Voluntary Action
WEA	Workers' Educational Association
WESB	Wales Employment and Skills Board
WHECS	Welsh Higher Education Careers Services
WLGA	Welsh Local Government Association

Y

YES	Youth Entrepreneurship Strategy
-----	---------------------------------

Appendix 8: Brief pen portraits of the Review team

Dr Haydn E Edwards

Dr Haydn E Edwards has managed further education colleges since 1985 and recently retired as the Principal and Chief Executive of Coleg Menai. He has served on the boards of several public bodies and is currently a non-executive Director with Estyn, chairs the Welsh Assembly Government's Food and Drink Advisory Partnership and is a trustee of the National Museum of Wales.

Professor Danny Saunders OBE

Professor Danny Saunders is the Head of Lifelong Learning and Further Education College Partnerships at the University of Glamorgan. He is a member of the Ministerial Advisory Group within DCELLS, and also a member of the Wales Employment and Skills Board.

Dr Deirdre Hughes

Dr Deirdre Hughes specialises in assessing the UK and international evidence-base for careers work. She is President of the Institute of Career Guidance, Founding Director of the International Centre for Guidance Studies at Derby University (1998–2008) and an Associate Fellow at the Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick. She advises various government departments on education and employment policies both within and outside the UK.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Dr Deirdre Hughes and Professor Danny Saunders for their valuable work as part of this Review. Their individual insight, perspective, commitment to standards and overall contribution has been critical to the success of this Review, its recommendations and future implications for the careers services. As a team, the three of us have greatly valued, throughout the whole process, the guidance, counsel and support provided by Neil Thomas from the Welsh Assembly Government, the service knowledge and experience of Kirsteen Reed, who has been on secondment from Careers Wales, our discussions with the Reference Group members, as well as the contributions made so willingly by over fifty individuals from a wide range of organisations and institutions during our evidence-gathering sessions. Finally the Review team are grateful to Mike Moss of the Welsh Assembly Government's Careers Policy Branch and to his staff – Mike Barry, Jeremy Howells, Paul Watts, Andrew Bishop, Sylvia Bull and Caroline Wong – for all of their input and organisational assistance.

Dr Haydn E Edwards
Chair