

Research Report
No 190



Improving Responsiveness to the Labour Market Among Young People

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Executive Summary

Background to the evaluation

This report presents the findings of an evaluation of four pilot projects aimed at improving young people's responsiveness to the labour market. The pilots were part of a wider project initiated by the DfEE in late 1996. They were intended to help young people to make choices on the basis of Labour Market Information (LMI), in order to improve their employment prospects; and to assist providers in tailoring their provision to employers' skill needs. The DfEE funded twenty three pilot projects through nine Government Offices in England. These projects were developed during 1997 and 1998.

The aim of the pilot projects was to undertake development work to make relevant labour market information more accessible by producing customised information to users, particularly young people and those who influence them, for example, teachers, careers advisers and parents. As pilot projects they were expected to be innovative and to produce examples of good practice and products which could have a wider application. A summary of the four projects in the evaluation, including their location, aims, outputs and partners, is presented in Figure i.

The DfEE anticipated four key outcomes from the projects:

1. Increased interest and awareness of LMI and how it can be used
2. Customised materials for the various target groups to improve individuals' choice and decision-making and/or to improve the relevance and responsiveness of provision
3. Improved decision-making
4. Better understanding among providers and influencers of why LMI is important.

The evaluation examined the success of the pilot projects in achieving these outcomes. It consisted of two main stages:

- **Stage 1: the 'process' evaluation'**
to examine processes involved in establishing the pilots
- **Stage 2: the 'impact' evaluation'**
to assess the impact of products on end-users, (mainly young people in schools), including awareness of and attitudes towards labour market opportunities, views on the LMI products and any impact on decisions about post-16 routes and choices

The 'impact' evaluation was delayed until Spring 1999 because the LMI products had not been used extensively in any of the four case study areas during 1997-98.

Figure i. Summary of the four pilot projects

	North West	West Midlands	South West	London
Project aims	To inform the decision-making process for 15-16 year olds by raising aspirations and promoting the importance of qualifications	To help young people to make informed choices and promote skills in the use of LMI to make decisions about post-16 routes	To help young people to make informed choices and promote skills in the use of LMI to make decisions about post-16 routes	To encourage the use and exchange of LMI by training providers
Main partners	East Lancashire Careers Service and East Lancashire TEC	Quality Careers Service (Coventry) and Coventry and Warwickshire TEC	Government Office for the South West, independent education consultants	Government Office for London, independent consultants, TECs
Materials/Product	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leaflets for parents and pupils 2. Pack of teaching resources and supporting materials (including video) for use by careers advisers and teachers 3. Computer database for special needs pupils (under development) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Resource pack of presentation materials for use by careers staff, teachers and governors 2. LMI teaching materials for Year 10 3. Materials for pupils with special needs 4. Curriculum materials 5. Leaflet for parents 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pack of curriculum materials for use in Years 9 and 10 in 12 subjects, including lesson plans, teachers' notes, pupils handouts 2. A Theatre in Education production and video 3. Leaflets for parents and governors 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Two interlinked Internet websites for use by training providers in two TEC areas, including LMI documents and a discussion page for exchange of views and information on the London labour market
Dissemination during The pilot period	<p>Careers advisers used some use of the materials in group work and one-to-one guidance sessions</p> <p>Leaflets have been distributed to pupils in Years 9 and 10</p>	<p>Presentation packs were used in training sessions for teachers and at events including parents evenings</p> <p>Schools have used Year 10 materials</p>	<p>Curriculum materials used in 9 schools across the region, in one or two subject areas to pupils in Years 10 or 11.</p> <p>Theatre in Education production performed to Year 9 pupils at a school in Somerset</p>	<p>27 training providers were trained in the use of the Internet web-sites</p> <p>Other organisations were encouraged to use the sites</p>
Use since the pilot	Careers advisers and teachers are using the LMI pack and video in about eight schools. Further use is planned	<p>Special needs materials and tapes are being used in special needs and mainstream schools. Further use is planned</p> <p>Presentation materials continue to be used</p>	Curriculum materials have been used in a small number of schools, with wider use of the video	Project did not continue beyond the pilot period

The main findings from the research are presented below, followed at the end of the Summary by the recommendations arising from the findings.

The projects and the partnerships

- The four projects have produced a range of high-quality LMI materials for use with a number of target groups. The outputs of the four projects included:
 - teaching resources and supporting materials for use by careers advisers and teachers; presentation materials for careers advisers, teachers and governors;
 - materials for pupils with special needs;
 - teaching materials in curriculum subjects incorporating LMI;
 - leaflets for parents and pupils;
 - a Theatre in Education production;
 - videos and an Internet web-site.
- The projects aimed to use LMI to influence young people in a number of ways: by informing the decision-making process at age 16; by raising aspirations and highlighting the importance of qualifications; and in developing *skills* in the use of LMI.
- The aim of the LMI targeted at professionals, such as teachers and careers advisers, was to increase awareness of key facts and trends.
- There were differences between the four areas in the extent to which work would have taken place without the initiative. While in all cases projects were developed either from existing work or ideas, the initiative generally allowed these to reach fruition earlier and more abundantly than would otherwise have been possible.
- The projects benefited from having strong leadership from one partner and this was particularly apparent where a careers service took the lead.
- In all four projects most of the development and customisation work was carried out by one organisation, not necessarily the lead partner, assisted by partner organisations. This model worked well, allowing other organisations, including the lead partner, to concentrate on the strategic aspects of the project and reduced bureaucracy and its associated costs.

Development of the products

- The pilot projects carried out background research and collected some useful data on the need for LMI by the target groups. Their research found that current provision of LMI to young people, to those who influence them and to opportunity providers, is inadequate and that levels of understanding among teachers and other 'mediators' about LMI and its potential value are low.
- In general, the background research conducted by the projects failed to identify potential problems, particularly with take-up of the customised products. Therefore, although most of the products met the needs of users, they were not adopted as widely as was hoped.
- The formats for the LMI were selected by the projects according to the perceived needs of the target group, along with considerations of the potential *effectiveness* of the format. This included designing the materials for 'off-the-shelf' delivery by non-experts.
- The projects wanted their materials to be adaptable for use with a range of audiences and in varying time slots. For this reason three of the projects produced 'packs' containing a range of local and national LMI, and information about trends in the labour market. This format allowed careers co-ordinators, teachers and other users to select and adapt materials from the packs.

- In designing materials for young people, projects aimed to encourage active involvement. This was pursued through including activities, team work, games, illustrations and diagrams. Projects were also aware of the need to address the ability level(s) of users and encourage the development of key skills and learning.
- The materials developed in the South West are particularly inventive because they were designed to be delivered in the curriculum and therefore combined aspects of the curriculum in the particular subject area, for example, Science, Maths or English with messages about the labour market.

Use of the customised LMI

- The pilot projects did not use systematic methods to select organisations to trial their LMI products. There was a tendency to distribute materials too widely during the pilot. This resulted in lower rather than higher rates of use, because products were often distributed without sufficient back-up and support to potential user organisations. This undoubtedly had a detrimental effect on take-up of the materials and their use in the longer-term. Some potential user organisations were 'put-off' at this stage. This could have been avoided if projects had sufficient time and resources to pilot their products.
- The projects experienced varying degrees of difficulty in encouraging teachers to trial the LMI materials, even in schools which had agreed to use them. Reasons for this include the timing of projects, pressure of work on teachers and 'initiative fatigue'. These had little to do with the LMI materials themselves, which were generally thought to be of high quality and potentially useful by teachers who had looked at them.
- Advance warning can help overcome resistance to new materials. Careers advisers and teachers need to have materials during the late Spring or early Summer term, when they are planning their programmes for the next school year.
- Of the four pilots, the South West project was undoubtedly the most ambitious in terms of scope and distribution. It covered all curriculum areas and was aimed at all schools in the South West of England. It is therefore surprising that the materials have not been widely adopted since completion of the pilot project. The reasons for the low rates of use to date include the need for teacher training in LMI to improve levels of knowledge and confidence in its delivery.

Meeting user organisations' needs for LMI

- The materials met a number of needs for LMI among teachers, careers advisers and other 'mediators' of careers information to young people. In some areas they met an existing demand for information about labour market trends which could be easily presented to pupils. Some materials were seen to be potentially useful in raising young peoples' awareness of changes in the labour market and the 'realities' of working life. These include the demise of 'jobs for life' and the increasing requirement for career change, or 'flexibility'.
- For the organisations who were using the materials, ease of use was an important factor, both in the decision to use them and in their continued use. A key requirement was that materials aimed at young people should be applicable or adaptable to cover a range of ability. This need for 'differentiation' in the materials was recognised by the projects in

the development stage. A second key requirement was that products should be 'off the shelf', ready for use and require little adaptation by teachers. Given many teachers' low levels of confidence in use of LMI this affected take-up and use of the materials.

- Some of the materials met the need for *local* and *national* LMI. Local LMI was useful to convey the extent of careers opportunities available locally. Where these are limited, national LMI can be used to convey the opportunities available outside the locality and to encourage wider horizons. Equally, LMI can be used to raise awareness of opportunities within the local area and to encourage young people to consider returning to the area after completing higher education. LMI was therefore seen to have the potential to address the problem of 'brain drain'.

The impact of LMI products

- There was evidence of an impact on 'mediators' of the materials, such as careers advisers and teachers, who had become more aware of the value of LMI. This is an important achievement of the projects because, for the materials to impact on young people it is important the 'mediators' are confident in its delivery.
- Training is undoubtedly needed by teachers the use of LMI. Materials should therefore include an introduction to the subject for teachers, including some basic facts and concepts to which they can use for reference.
- The materials developed for special needs pupils in the West Midlands, particularly the 'Job Notes' and the audio tapes, were found to be highly successful by schools which had used them. They were particularly welcome because careers materials for this group are in short supply. There is likely to be a strong demand for the West Midlands special needs materials in other areas of the country. Similarly, careers services could usefully draw on some of the excellent activities included in the South West and East Lancashire materials.
- There was some interest in using LMI in curriculum subjects, and this could reinforce any impact made by LMI materials used in careers education lessons.
- Although the main messages of the materials were understood, it was difficult to identify any strong impact on young people's awareness of LMI issues. It was apparent that understanding was greater when they had heard the messages before, including in other curriculum subjects, indicating the potential value of the South West curriculum materials. The research findings suggest a need for delivery in a range of situations and settings, as well as through different formats.
- Equal opportunities messages were among those with the most noticeable impact: pupils often had good recall of sections of a video or exercise which focused on the right of young men or women to make career choices regardless of gender. The reasons for this are likely to include young people's general interest in broad political and moral issues and the clarity of the messages conveyed about equal opportunities in many of the materials developed.
- In assessing the projects' success in achieving the four key outcomes anticipated by the DfEE, it is clear that they made considerable progress in three of these:
 - Customised materials for the various target groups to improve individuals' choice and

decision-making and/or to improve the relevance and responsiveness of provision.

- Better understanding among providers and 'influencers' of why LMI is important
 - Increased interest and awareness of LMI and how it can be used.
- However, the key outcome, 'improved decision-making' which we addressed through the 'impact' stage, was more problematic. This was partly because of limited use of the materials.
 - Young people had generally been taught how to access information, but in some cases had not practiced these skills. Young people appeared to make a distinction between learning about careers in class, including using LMI, and accessing information about jobs and careers. The research suggests that an important link between knowledge and skills is left unmade. This could mean that the impact of LMI materials remains purely academic. Future LMI materials might therefore be linked to the exploration of factual information, for example in project work about careers of particular interest to pupils.

What do young people want?

- The LMI products made extensive use of worksheets as a means of organising pupil activity and learning. Responses from young people suggest that these should include a variety of activities, for example role play and surveys, and not rely on the use of more passive responses, such as ticking boxes. There were also demands for a variety of format for delivery. Future LMI programmes in schools might therefore include a range of format, including worksheets, video, theatre in education, CD Rom and Internet sites.
- Young people were interested in going on visits to workplaces and having the opportunity to talk to people about their jobs. This might be facilitated through greater involvement of employers in providing LMI to schools.
- Young people were interested in many of the issues addressed in the LMI materials. These included the trend away from manufacturing to services and the growing importance of IT. Equal opportunities materials and messages appealed to many young people, who were interested to learn about people who had chosen 'non-traditional' careers.
- Some concepts and messages were not well understood. For example, the demise of 'jobs for life' and the need for flexibility in careers was misunderstood by some young people, who interpreted this trend as resulting from changes in employees' preferences. This suggests the need for careers education to combine discussion of individual preferences with information about opportunities and constraints of the labour market. It also suggests a need for teachers and careers advisers to ensure that young people have fully understood the messages of LMI materials.
- Some young people wanted to know fairly basic information about entry requirements for particular jobs. Key questions for them was 'how did they get that job, what qualifications and training do they have and how did they apply for it'. Other information requirements included benefits, the minimum wage, tax and national insurance.
- The information needs of young people with special needs were varied. Young people with physical disabilities wanted to know about jobs which do not exclude them, and which have wheelchair access and adapted equipment. Young people with learning disabilities wanted clear information about jobs, including tasks, tools, clothing and colleagues.

Future lessons for the introduction of LMI products

- The main limitation of the projects was the extent of use of the materials, which was a result of the short time-scale of the projects. Project managers wanted to produce high quality, innovative materials which could influence the target groups, and gave priority to this task. Some project managers had perhaps been a little over-ambitious and a number of products had not been completed or disseminated. The limitations of the projects could have been overcome if the time-scale had been longer and they had more funding for dissemination.
- The West Midlands and North West projects were easiest to continue beyond the pilot period because the Careers Service was a lead partner. Because of their role in LMI provision and in careers education and guidance, careers services could play an important role in promoting the use of LMI materials in schools. Any additional funding for schools to develop LMI could be channelled through the Careers Service for distribution to schools. The Careers Service could also help to promote wider use of LMI by a range of potential user organisations because of its links with a cross section of partners and clients, including parents, teachers, training providers and employers.
- It is important that careers advisers and teachers, including careers co-ordinators, are convinced of the benefits of LMI if it is to be used in careers education and guidance or elsewhere in the curriculum. The pilot projects show the importance of fully involving these and other 'mediators' of LMI to young people, which can be achieved through training, other forms of preparation, and support in their use. At the same time, there is a need for a continuing policy emphasis at national and regional level of the role of LMI in encouraging young people and providers to be more responsive to the labour market. This message can be mediated through organisations including Government Offices, TECs, careers services and Local Education Authorities.
- In terms of age groups for use of LMI, many teachers and careers advisers identified a need for greater awareness of the labour market at a much earlier stage, including in primary school education. However, this cannot currently be carried out by careers services since they are not funded to work with primary schools and the majority have no involvement with pupils below secondary school age. The DfEE might consider ways of funding careers services to conduct some work on LMI in Key Stage 2 in primary schools.

Key recommendations

Take-up of LMI products

- Future LMI projects should ensure that background research addresses issues of take-up, particularly how products should be introduced to user organisations, and any training needs among 'mediators', such as teachers.
- Issues of dissemination of materials to schools should be addressed by future LMI development projects at an early stage. Dissemination plans should include on-going support in the use of LMI materials, rather than a one-off introduction.
- Future projects should ensure that their time-tables are compatible with those of the user

organisations targeted and that participants are informed about the materials well in advance of their distribution.

- Future projects should be given sufficient time and resources to pilot LMI products, since investment at this stage can result in increased use of products in the long-term.
- The DfEE, careers services and schools should address the need for in-service teacher training in LMI, both in careers education and across the curriculum. There is also a need for literature which explains the basic facts, trends and concepts to teachers.

Key requirements of LMI products

- Future projects should ensure that their materials meet the key requirements of schools for differentiated materials and for 'off the shelf' products.
- LMI materials always should contain messages about equal opportunities, in relation to gender, race and disability, since these are of interest and potential benefit to all pupils.
- Future LMI programmes in schools should ideally include a range of format, including worksheets, video, theatre in education, CD Rom and Internet sites. Materials should also be easy to use by careers advisers, teachers and other 'mediators' if they are to be effective.
- The DfEE and future projects should look more closely at the respective benefits of local and national LMI, including in relation to particular areas of the country.

Future use of materials from the pilot projects

- The DfEE might consider ways of disseminating the materials developed in these projects more widely, particularly those for young people with special needs, since this group are in need of suitable materials.
- The QCA and DfEE might consider ways in which LMI could be more closely integrated into the curriculum as well as in careers education. The South-West materials could be a very useful resource for this work.

Involvement of employers, parents and other partners

- The DfEE and careers services might consider ways in which schools and employers can be encouraged to work together at local level to improve young people's understandings of employment and the wider labour market.
- The DfEE and careers services might consider ways of improving parents' understandings about the labour market, in order to improve the quality of advice they give to their children.
- With additional funding, the Careers Service could promote increased use of LMI materials, particularly in schools, but also by a range of potential user organisations with whom it works. Future LMI projects should seek the full involvement of the Careers Service, particularly in disseminating LMI products to schools.

Improving the link between knowledge and skills

- Future LMI materials might be linked to the exploration of factual information in order to improve skills and strengthen the link between knowledge and decision-making. This might include, for example, project work about careers of particular interest to pupils and use of the Internet.
- In order to lay the foundations for work about LMI at secondary level, The DfEE might consider ways of funding careers services to conduct some work on LMI in Key Stage 2 in primary schools.

Section 1. Background to the evaluation

1.1 Introduction

This report presents the findings of an evaluation of four pilot projects aimed at improving young people's responsiveness to the labour market. The pilots were part of a wider project initiated by the DfEE in late 1996. The pilot projects were intended to promote the aim of helping young people to make choices on the basis of Labour Market Information (LMI), thereby improving their employment prospects; and to assist providers in tailoring their provision to employers' skill needs. Under the initiative the DfEE funded twenty three projects through nine Government Offices in England. These projects were developed during 1997 and 1998.

1.2 Aim of the projects

The aim of the projects was to undertake development work to make relevant labour market information more accessible by producing customised information to users. Users were defined as falling into three groups:

- individual young people making choices about transitions, particularly at age 16 to further education, training or employment
- people who influence young peoples' choices (including teachers, families and careers officers)
- providers of education, training and guidance who decide what opportunities to make available

Projects were expected to develop tangible products, such as written information, leaflets, training materials, videos and computer software. Project managers were encouraged to be innovative in the products they developed and in their application because a central aim of the initiative was to generate ideas for products and processes with potential for wider application.

Four key outcomes anticipated by the DfEE from the projects were as follows:

- increased interest and awareness of LMI and how it can be used
- customised materials for the various target groups to improve individuals' choice and decision-making and/or to improve the relevance and responsiveness of provision
- improved decision-making
- better understanding among providers and influencers of why LMI is important

The research examined the success of the projects in achieving these outcomes.

1.3 Aims of the evaluation

The study was commissioned to evaluate the pilot projects, through case study research into four pilot projects. The aim of the DfEE in commissioning the proposed evaluation was to assess the achievement of the four projects under the initiative against the key outcomes, described above, and to draw some general conclusions on the future direction of LMI customisation projects. The four projects included in the evaluation were selected to provide

a range of type of project and region.

However, four projects cannot represent all of the projects funded under the initiative and the aim here is not to provide a full evaluation of the initiative's achievements and shortcomings. Rather, the emphasis is on identifying what works and what does not, highlighting any examples of good practice. Therefore, through exploring the achievements of four projects in developing and trialing LMI products, the evaluation aimed at drawing some general lessons for future work in this area.

The evaluation consisted of two main stages:

- Stage 1. Examining processes involved in establishing the pilots
- Stage 2. Assessing the impact of products

At the start of the evaluation, these were identified as a 'process' evaluation and an 'impact' evaluation. The purpose of the '**process**' **evaluation** was to examine the processes involved in establishing the pilots together with the relationships and links that have been formed in the development and use of LMI.

The purpose of the '**impact**' **evaluation** was to assess the impact of the local projects on those who participated, including awareness of and attitudes towards labour market opportunities, in appraisal of the value of the services and products and ability to make educational and vocational choices.

It was originally intended that the 'impact' evaluation should follow-on closely from the 'process' evaluation, but this was not possible because, at the time of the evaluation in 1998, the materials had not been used extensively in any of the four case study areas. The 'impact' evaluation was therefore delayed until Spring term 1999 to allow user organisations, principally schools, time to incorporate the LMI materials into their teaching programmes.

1.4 Methods

The 'process' evaluation

The methods used in the process evaluation were qualitative. In each area an initial interview was carried out with a representative of the Government Office to obtain background information on the project and the processes involved in establishing the pilots. Following these initial discussions, interviews were carried out with organisations with main responsibility for developing and implementing the projects. Because of the individual nature of the projects, different organisations were involved in each area, and even similar organisations had different roles according to the project. However, key groups included project managers and consultants, representatives of TECs, Careers Services and LEAs. Interviews with these key individuals were followed with visits to around four 'user' organisations in each area. With the exception of the London project, these were schools where interviews were carried out with careers co-ordinators or subject teachers.

The focus of the case studies was on the individual project and because of variations in the nature of projects, the detail of the case studies and lines of enquiry varied. However, the same issues were addressed across all four case studies. These included:

- the processes used to select and establish the project

- the role of partners and networks
- provision of LMI to the project, its collection, collation and development
 - the design and operational features of the project, including:
 - the targeting of the project;
 - interest, awareness and understanding of the role of labour market information;
 - how the labour market information is used
- views on the projects, including the effectiveness of the project and its impact on user groups

Because of the different roles adopted by Government Offices, participating and user organisations in the projects, it was not appropriate to design separate topic guides for interviews with each type of organisation, since this could fail to record the full range of involvement of some organisations. A 'generic' topic guide was therefore designed which covered all areas of possible involvement and could be customised to the particular project. A copy of the topic guide is attached is included in Appendix 1.

Researchers also studied the materials developed by each project. In addition, in the South West project we took part in a trial of the materials in one school and attended a Theatre in Education 'show-case'.

The 'impact' evaluation

The impact of the materials was explored in three of the four case study regions: The North West (East Lancashire), the West Midlands (Coventry) and the South West. It was decided not to include the London project in this stage because it did not involve young people and the level of use among the target group, training providers, was minimal because of problems experienced by the project.

Different methods were used in each case study area both to set up the impact evaluation and to carry it out. This was because of the diversity of organisations involved in disseminating the LMI products and variations in the materials themselves. However, the main methods used in each area were group interviews with young people and interviews with teachers.

Interviews with young people addressed the three aims of Stage Two: product assessment, awareness impact and skills impact. A generic topic guide for interviews with young people was designed which was adapted in order to address issues of particular relevance to the materials used and the needs of the young people. a copy of the generic topic guide is presented in Figure 8 in Section 5 ¹. A generic topic guide was also designed for use with teachers (see Figure 9 in Section 5). This was also adopted according to the materials used and pupil needs.

The methods used in each of the three areas are summarised in Figure 1 ²:

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1. Examples of tailored topic guides developed from the generic guide are presented in Appendix 3.
 2. Detail on methods used in establishing contact, the type of school or organisation included and the groups of young people interviewed, are described in detail in Appendix 2 of the report.

Figure 1: Methods in the ‘impact’ evaluation

Case study area	Organisations visited	Interviews with teachers (or similar)	Interviews with young people
The North West (East Lancashire)	4 mainstream schools	Careers co-ordinators and PSE tutors	10 groups (total of 91)
The West Midlands (Coventry)	5 Special schools/colleges or units in mainstream institutions	Careers co-ordinators, tutors and managers	5 groups and some individual interviews (total of 36)
	‘Common Purpose’ (voluntary organisation)		
<i>The South West</i>	2 mainstream schools	Careers co-ordinators, teachers, Careers assistant	5 groups (total of 38)

1.5 Structure of the report

There are six sections to this report. Section 2 explains the background to the projects and the role of participating organisations. Section 3 explains how the LMI products were developed, including background research and product design. Section 4 looks at how they were put to use and what the experiences of organisations who used the products. Section 5 looks at the impact of the LMI materials. In Section 6 some conclusions are drawn, including on the potential for further work, possible barriers and the factors which promote success in LMI customisation projects.

Key points and conclusions

To facilitate access to the main findings of the research, each section includes a summary of key points and conclusions. Policy issues and recommendations arising from the evaluation are presented at the end of Section 6.

Section 2. Background to the projects: the need for LMI

2.1 Introduction

The focus of this section is on the background to the projects, their purpose and main features. The role of partners is explored in some depth because the projects involved a number of organisations and the success of these partnerships was of particular interest to the DfEE in commissioning the evaluation.

2.2 Development of the projects

The four projects covered by the national evaluation were in the Government regions of the North West, West Midlands, South West and London. In these and the other five regions, Government Offices took a leading role in granting funding to projects. In the commissioning stage, each Government Offices drew up a specification for the type of projects it wished to fund. These specifications were fairly prescriptive, referring to the type of LMI to be developed and the target audience for LMI products. Although Government Offices could use the funding to commission a number of projects, only one of the four in the evaluation, the North West, commissioned more than one project. The projects funded in each region are described in Figure 2.

Figure 2: The four projects in the evaluation

- In the North West, a group of nine existing projects aimed at customising LMI for young people, were funded to continue existing work into a second phase. The project included in this evaluation was conducted by East Lancashire Careers Service (ELCS) as the lead partner and East Lancashire Training and Enterprise Council (ELTEC) as the contract holder. The project was co-ordinated by a Careers Officer at ELCS.
- In the West Midlands bids were invited from the ten TECs in the region and six were received. The proposal submitted by Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce and TEC was selected with Quality Careers Service (Coventry) as the lead partner.
- In the South West one project was commissioned and developed by the Educational Adviser at the Government Office for the South West. The project was managed by an independent educational consultant appointed as Research Officer.
- In London one project was commissioned by the Government Office for London with involvement of London TEC Council in the conceptual development of the project through its Training Director Group. The project was managed by a freelance consultant who developed the bid while working for London TEC Council and North West London TEC.

The main reason for allocating the funding to one project was the limited budget and time-

scale in which products could be developed. In two of the areas, the North West and West Midlands, the projects built on existing work. In the North West nine existing LMI customisation projects were given 'continuation funding' under the initiative. In the West Midlands, Coventry and Warwickshire TEC had made good progress with an existing project 'tracking' young people on leaving compulsory education, the results of which could inform the design and content of customised LMI. The TEC was also selected for its strong existing networks on which it could draw to develop and disseminate the LMI materials. In the other two regions, funding was used to develop new work to advance regional strategies. The two approaches are equally appropriate and valid.

With the exception of the South West, where the Government Office had full involvement in the project, the Government Offices generally took a 'back seat' in the projects, which were managed by partner organisations. Each project had a steering group consisting of representatives of participating organisations, including TECs, careers services, Education/Business Partnerships and Local Education Authorities as well as the Government Office. In all four projects these steering groups were developed from existing partnerships and networks established for current or previous projects. All steering groups met regularly and their involvement was seen as important in guiding the direction of projects, particularly in the early stages and in ensuring that projects kept to time-table.

2.3 The main features of the projects and the purpose of LMI

The main features and outputs of the four projects are shown in figure 3. They include teaching resources and supporting materials for use by careers advisers and teachers; presentation materials for careers advisers, teachers and governors; materials for pupils with special needs; curriculum materials incorporating LMI; leaflets for parents and pupils; a Theatre in Education production, videos and an Internet web-site. As we explain in Section 4, these materials were used to varying extents during the course of the pilots in 1998 and since.

The four projects had different target groups. In the North West these were careers advisers and co-ordinators, young people and parents; in the West Midlands they were teachers, young people, parents and governors; in the South West they were teachers and young people and in London they were training providers. Therefore, with the exception of London, the projects aimed to use LMI to influence young people, but within this their aims were varied. In the North West the LMI was intended to inform the decision-making process for young people approaching the age of 16 by raising aspirations and highlighting the importance of qualifications; in the West Midlands the emphasis was also on helping young people to make informed choices. However, this project, and to an even greater extent the South West project aimed to promote *skills* in the use of LMI, in accessing and interpreting it to make decisions about education, training and employment routes.

Even where the main target audience was young people, the projects aimed to influence adults through LMI products, where they were seen as influencing young people, or as responsible for 'mediating' LMI. Two of the projects developed products for parents in the form of leaflets and presentation materials and it was generally felt that parents are in need of LMI in order to advise their children. As a representative of a careers service stated:

'The labour market has changed beyond recognition in the last generation so the views of parents now about work are outdated for today's students. Career paths today are like crazy paving but getting across this message is very difficult. It requires high quality but, most importantly, user friendly, LMI

for young people and their parents to help them tool themselves up in an insecure labour market.'

Figure 3: The main features and outputs of the four projects

<p>North West</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A pack of teaching resources and supporting materials, including a video, for use by careers advisers and teachers. These were initially developed before the project but were revised within the project period.• Leaflets on LMI for parents and pupils• 'Softer' LMI materials, including a computer data-base for use with special needs pupils (under development) <p>West Midlands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A resource pack of presentation materials for careers staff, teachers and governors to deliver to parents, pupils and other audiences at events including careers evenings, parents evenings, industry days, careers lessons and INSET days• LMI teaching materials for year 10 for an existing 'Prospects' resource pack.• Paper-based and audio-taped materials for pupils with special needs, including fact sheets on post-16 decisions, work-based training and 'job notes' for a number of occupations. Taped information covers specific occupations, local options for employment, training and education and interview techniques• Curriculum materials in humanities (under development)• A leaflet on LMI and careers for parents <p>South West</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A pack of curriculum materials for use in 12 subjects: Art, English, Geography, Design and Technology, History, Maths, Languages, Music, PE, RE, Science and PSE. The materials include lesson plans, teachers' notes and handouts for pupils and other material, designed for use in Years 10 and 11• A Theatre in Education production entitled 'Way to Go', by 'Rent a Role', lasting 30 minutes with additional interactive activities for pupils. It has been adapted for video and is included in the pack of curriculum materials with full script and teachers' notes• Leaflets for parents and governors on LMI and career decisions to raise awareness (not disseminated within the pilot project). <p>London</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An Internet website (two linked sites) designed for use by training providers in the AZTEC and Focus Central London areas. The website had two main components:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LMI documents which could be accessed through keyword searches or as whole documents• A discussion page with 'bulletin board' facility for exchange of views and information on local LMI issues
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All of the projects broke new ground, particularly by introducing or promoting the use of LMI in schools. In this regard, some project managers, notably in the South West, referred to the need for a 'culture change' which would make LMI, or work-related issues an accepted part of the school curriculum. As a representative of a Government Office stated:

'LMI is not part of the culture [of schools]. The prevailing view of education is

that it is for the good of mankind and not that education should be related to the economy. Awareness of LMI is practically zilch.'

The intended purpose of LMI in the London project was to help training providers place trainees into jobs and to plan their provision with regard to the needs of the labour market. The wider aim was to encourage organisations, particularly training providers, to meet the need of the London labour market for general up-skilling, including information technology (IT) skills. Partners in the project, particularly the TECS, saw the LMI as helping to improve the quality of bids submitted by training providers so that they responded to the labour market rather than reflect their preferences for training provision because, as one respondent stated,

'Training providers tend to bid for what they do but don't recognise what is happening in the labour market.'

2.4 Links between the projects and Government Office strategy

In all four regions studied the projects built on existing work of the Government Office. The development and dissemination of LMI was part of the regional strategy, alongside other work, for example research on industry sectors of local importance or the analysis of forecast data. In the North West and West Midlands the pilot projects were related closely to other projects, building on existing work in the North West and dovetailing into a project 'tracking' young peoples' transitions in the West Midlands, involving the same organisations in partnership.

The success of the partnership arrangements was of interest to Government Offices. As a representative of one Government Office stated:

'We will be looking to see if the operation of the project can provide a model: did it work? Was the size of the network and mix of organisations right? It could be used as a model to carry out similar projects in the future.'

In addition, one Government Office referred to the work on special needs materials as addressing its own strategy of promoting the interests of this group and complementing the national social exclusion agenda.

There were differences between the four areas in the extent to which work would have taken place without the initiative. While in all cases projects were developed either from existing work or ideas, the initiative generally allowed these to reach fruition earlier and more abundantly than would otherwise have been possible. The South West project would not have taken place without the initiative because a sizeable amount of funding was required to produce a complete pack of curriculum materials. The Government Office therefore described it as a 'value-added' project.

In the other areas it was thought that similar work to that in the projects would have taken place, although at a later date and with a more limited output. The initiative was therefore seen as a 'golden opportunity' to bring forward plans for work on LMI. As a lead partner in one area stated:

'It has allowed for a radical appraisal of what is required and time to develop, more fully, appropriate materials and resources. Without the funding, small improvements would have been made to existing work without covering new

areas or fully testing materials.'

2.5 Partnerships and networks

Lead partners were selected by the Government Offices on the basis of their track record in similar work. Other partner organisations were in turn selected because of their interest in existing projects or for because of their involvement in careers education or transitions. For example, in the West Midlands, partner organisations had been involved in work on the Youth Credits initiative or 'Tracking' projects; in the South West, teachers were selected to design curriculum materials on the basis of earlier work on the design of curriculum materials.

Each project had a steering group of members were selected for their involvement in LMI work. These included staff of careers services, TECS, Education/Business Partnerships and Local Education Authorities (LEAs).

The role of partner organisations

In all four projects most of the development and customisation work was carried out by one organisation, not necessarily the lead partner, assisted by partner organisations. In the North West and the West Midlands careers services developed and customised the LMI using resources provided largely by TECs. In the South West and London the development and customisation work was carried out by consultants with expertise in LMI customisation and the design of materials in the selected format: in London this was a computer software and training consultancy and in the South West an educational materials consultancy. TECs were called upon to provide most of the LMI used to develop the products.

The model adopted by the projects, of allocating responsibility for the development and application of materials to a single organisation, worked well in all four cases. It allowed other organisations, including the lead partner, to concentrate on the strategic aspects of the project and reduced bureaucracy and its associated costs. As a representative of a TEC said of this arrangement:

'I don't want to create bureaucracy for the sake of it. [The TEC] don't need to be actually involved, as long as they are aware of what's going on. But the door is always open if needed.'

In the South West a slightly different model was used than elsewhere, with consultants providing LMI to teachers who were contracted to write the curriculum materials. A initial 'brain-storming' meeting of writers and project co-ordinators was held to discuss ideas for LMI teaching materials. Writers were given a 'companion guide' produced by the consultants, which included ground rules for producing curriculum materials, guidance on key skills to include in the materials and some LMI. The project co-ordinators in the South West edited the materials developed by the writers but felt that a 'corporate editing' meeting of the writers would have been useful, particularly for the writers' own professional development.

In the North West and West Midlands the materials were developed and adapted over a period of some months and a number of organisations gave feedback either before the materials were used or during the trial period. A 'focus group' model was adopted by the North West project which seemed to work particularly well. This involved meetings of

between six and eight careers advisers and careers co-ordinators to discuss aspects of work in progress. The project co-ordinator at the careers service found these meetings to be invaluable in confirming that the materials were appropriate in their content and style. As the project co-ordinator stated:

'I could pick their brains, and make sure the materials were meeting needs. It was a lot of work setting them up, but they've been a big help and had a lot of input. It's good to know you're not working in isolation.'

While the partnership model worked well in three of the regions, it was not successful in London, where training providers felt that the notion of partnership in the context of the project was inappropriate and misconceived. In the project LMI was provided by TECs to a training and software consultancy with the intention that further LMI would be provided by training providers. However, in the event, training providers were not willing to provide LMI to other training providers which could put them at a competitive advantage and did not feel that they could be 'partners' in this respect. As a manager of one training provider stated:

'The TECs assume that it is possible to just become partners on this project with other training providers, but the reality is that we are all in competition. While it might be possible to forge closer links with providers in other sectors, we would be very cagey about divulging information to those in our sectors'.

Similarly, another training provider argued:

'TECs contract with us to deliver outcomes in [Government schemes] so we are in a competitive situation with other suppliers and have no incentive to share our valuable information'.

The experience of this project suggests that issues of competition between organisations should be taken into account, and if possible resolved, at an early stage.

Partners' understandings of project aims

With the exception of the London project, there was general agreement between partners about project aims and definitions of LMI. Where target groups included both young people, professionals and those who advise young people, projects had several aims. In most cases these were to raise the profile of LMI among professionals by increasing their awareness of key facts and trends and to inform, equip and empower young people. Partners tended to have a particular interest in either one of these, according to their organisation's remit. In addition, varying degrees of emphasis were placed on the role of LMI in increasing knowledge and understanding about the labour market and in equipping young people with the skills to access information and to make their own choices. However, these differences had no implications for the projects, which aimed to address both of these needs.

The content and format of LMI was a central remit of project steering groups. No major differences of opinion were reported, although controversial issues were addressed. These include whether the emphasis should be on local or national LMI and the needs of higher and lower achievers. The projects aimed to meet the needs of a cross-section of young people by including national LMI for young people who will probably leave the local area and enter the labour market as graduates, and local LMI for those who will probably enter the local labour market as trainees.

With the exception of the training providers in the London project, the partnerships worked well in all four areas, partly because they were generally well established but also because they involved a clear division of responsibilities and interests. For example, in the North West the careers service was interested in developing LMI as part of its work with clients, while the TEC was keen to have a careers service which is attuned to the needs of the labour market. The projects benefited from strong leadership from one partner and this was particularly apparent in the North West and West Midlands projects. In the South West the project was well managed by project co-ordinators but it was thought it would have benefited from a fuller involvement of the Careers Service to encourage teachers to trial the materials. Similarly, it was argued that the London project would have achieved more success with stronger leadership by the TECS, again in encouraging training providers, to make use of the products. The research suggests that the involvement of TECs and careers services in LMI projects is advantageous for a number of reasons, including to encourage participation of organisations such as schools and training providers and to promote a long-term strategy towards the use of LMI.

Projects in the West Midlands and London intended to retain the partnerships and networks to continue work on LMI projects. In the South West and North West the partnership arrangements would stay in place for the projects but there were no plans for their continuation beyond this time.

Key points and conclusions

- The main outputs of the four projects included teaching resources and supporting materials for use by careers advisers and teachers; presentation materials for careers advisers, teachers and governors; materials for pupils with special needs; curriculum materials incorporating LMI; leaflets for parents and pupils; a Theatre in Education production, videos and an Internet web-site.
- The four projects had different target groups. In the North West these were careers advisers and co-ordinators, young people and parents; in the West Midlands they were teachers, young people, parents and governors; in the South West they were teachers and young people and in London they were training providers.

- With the exception of London, the projects aimed to use LMI to influence young people in a number of ways: by informing the decision-making process at age 16; by raising aspirations and highlighting the importance of qualifications; and in developing *skills* to access and use LMI to make decisions.
- All of the projects broke new ground, particularly by introducing or promoting the use of LMI in schools and all built on existing work of the regional Government Office. The development and dissemination of LMI was part of the regional strategy, alongside other work, for example research on industry sectors of local importance or the analysis of forecast data.
- There were differences between the four areas in the extent to which work would have taken place without the initiative. While in all cases projects were developed either from existing work or ideas, the initiative generally allowed these to reach fruition earlier and more abundantly than would otherwise have been possible.
- Lead partners were selected by the Government Offices on the basis of their track record in similar work. Other partner organisations were in turn selected because of their interest in existing projects or for because of their involvement in careers education or transitions. With the exception of the London project, there was general agreement between partners about project aims and definitions of LMI.
- While the partnership model worked well in three of the regions, it was not successful in London, where training providers felt that the notion of partnership in the context of the project was inappropriate and misconceived. Training providers were not willing to provide LMI to other training providers which could put them at a competitive advantage.
- In all four projects most of the development and customisation work was carried out by one organisation, not necessarily the lead partner, assisted by partner organisations. The model adopted by the projects, of allocating responsibility for the development and application of materials to a single organisation, worked well in all four cases. It allowed other organisations, including the lead partner, to concentrate on the strategic aspects of the project and reduced bureaucracy and its associated costs.
- The projects benefited from having strong leadership from one partner and this was particularly apparent where the careers service took the lead, in the North West and the West Midlands. In the South West the project was well managed by project co-ordinators but it might have benefited from a fuller involvement of careers services in the region to encourage teachers to trial the materials.
- In the North West and West Midlands the materials were developed and adapted by careers services over a period of some months and a number of organisations gave feedback either before the materials were used or during the trial period. A 'focus group' model was adopted by the North West project which seemed to work particularly well. This involved meetings of between six and eight careers advisers and careers co-ordinators.

Section 3. Developing the customised LMI: how was it done?

3.1 Introduction

This section looks at how the LMI products were developed in the four pilot projects, including the background research they conducted, selection of target groups, materials and formats for delivery.

3.2 Background research for the projects

With the exception of the North West, where background research had been carried out as part of an earlier project, the projects included research as an initial phase. The purpose of the research was to identify target groups and, to some extent, appropriate materials.

A number of issues were addressed, including:

- Who needs LMI and what for?
- What use do they currently make of LMI and is provision adequate?
- How could current ways of compiling and disseminating LMI be improved?

In the West Midlands the background research also addressed perceptions of labour market issues of various groups, including young people, opportunity providers, teachers and governors.

Data was collected using a number of methods: in the London project through meetings with representatives of training providers, colleges, TECs and careers services; in the West Midlands project through informal interviews with careers advisers in Coventry and Warwickshire to discuss perceptions of young people and those who influence them; and in the South West through a postal survey of all schools in the seven counties about their use of LMI.

The projects intended their background research to inform the collection and customisation of LMI in the projects. The limited scope of the research was not therefore always a serious shortcoming. Indeed, in the South West, the low response rate to the questionnaire, at less than 20 per cent, as well as the content of the responses received, in itself indicated a low degree of awareness and interest in LMI issues which the project needed to address. In London the limited scope of the research, particularly the involvement of only seven training providers, was problematic. It is possible that potential problems with the project might have been identified earlier had more interviews or consultation been carried out. The approach adopted by the West Midlands project in its background research was useful, although the data it collected was second hand, in the form of careers advisers' *understandings* of the perceptions of teachers, young people, parents and governors. This research also had the advantage of involving careers advisers at an early stage and establishing individual commitment to the project.

Although the methods used in all three projects had their limitations, some valuable data was collected, particularly on the need for LMI by the target groups. The South West project included the following findings:

- LMI is generally not used by teachers
- There is a low level of awareness of potential use of LMI
- Careers teachers wait to be asked for LMI by colleagues
- Careers teachers and some subject teachers are in favour of receiving LMI

The West Midlands project reported a number of findings about the perceptions of different groups, shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4 Findings from background research in the West Midlands project on the perceptions of target groups for LMI

<p><i>Young people and parents:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 'status hierarchy' with school and sixth form college on top, followed by further education and with employment on the lowest rung • Low aspirations among working class boys and high drop-out rates • Negative images of engineering – still an important industry in the region • Low awareness of the need for flexibility in careers • Studying and training may not be worthwhile if a job is available now <p><i>Opportunity providers</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short-termism, with a focus on labour requirements for the next year or so • Low levels of understanding about qualifications <p><i>Teachers</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little awareness of trends in the labour market, particularly of temporary and flexible working • Over-emphasis on academic achievements • Higher education is seen as the end result, not as a stage in the process of entering the labour market • Careers education and LMI are mainly of use to less able students <p><i>Governors</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • League tables encourage governors to regard exam attainments as of over-riding importance • Financial considerations make staying-on rates important and discourage the promotion of alternatives
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Conclusions drawn from the background research

One of the main conclusions from the projects' own background research was that current provision of LMI to young people, to those who influence them and to training providers, is inadequate and that levels of understanding about LMI and its potential value among teachers and other 'mediators' are low. As a representative of the West Midlands project stated:

'The survey we did shows the desperate need to improve the understanding of people who are supposed to know about these things. If people are

discussing the labour marketing using inappropriate or just plain wrong information, what chance do the kids have of getting a realistic picture?’

However, only the background research conducted by the consultants to the South West project identified what was to be a key issue for all four, that of indifference or resistance to LMI products by target groups. From the low response rate and content of responses to the survey of schools, the project co-ordinators concluded that involving teachers in the use of the materials would be ‘an up-hill task’ and would be a major challenge for the project. The issue of resistance was also identified by consultants in the London project, but it was thought that the issue would be ‘cultural acceptance’ of the chosen delivery method, an Internet web-site, rather than LMI itself. As a report on the first phase of the project concludes:

‘The interviews showed a very low level of Internet, or even E-mail use, among training providers. They also elicited considerable anxiety about the use of these technologies. The successful development of an electronic labour market information system means developing a culture of acceptability and use among the staff of training providers’.

The background research in the London and West Midlands projects informed the design of materials and the selection of a format for the LMI. In the other two projects these decisions were not affected by the research. In the London project the Internet was chosen, in what was described as a ‘leap of faith’ for reasons including the following:

- it offered the possibility of disseminating both hard and soft LMI
- ‘hard’ LMI could be presented in an accessible format
- ‘soft’ LMI would be generated through exchange of documents, information and views among training providers

The background research informed decisions about target groups to some extent (see below), particularly in the West Midlands where young people, parents and teachers were seen to have particular needs for LMI. The materials developed in the project were therefore intended to meet the needs of three main groups as follows:

- Young people: factual information about the labour market and encourage the use of skills to apply this information in their own decision-making
- Parents: an updated view of the current labour market and projected trends
- Teachers: an appreciation of the significance of LMI to long term goals of all students and materials in a ready-to-use format to deliver awareness-raising activities’

The project also drew on a local evaluation of the Youth Credits initiative which identified a need for careers education materials by special needs pupils.

3.3 Selection of target groups and user organisations

The four projects selected a range of target groups for LMI. These were young people in years 9, 10 and 11, young people with special needs, careers advisers, teachers, parents governors and training providers.

Pupils in years 9, 10 and 11 were the target group for three of the projects. The materials were targeted mainly at Years 9 and 10 because Year 9 is when GCSE choices are made

and, in many schools, it is the first year in which careers education makes a real appearance on the curriculum. The Year 9 curriculum is also less 'crowded' than in years 10 and 11. However, LMI materials were seen as very useful for Year 10 as part of preparation for work experience and for decisions in Year 11.

Young people with special needs were targeted by two of the projects because there are few materials available for this group of young people. The benefits of careers education and guidance for pupils with special needs and the demand for materials and have been increasingly recognised and projects were concerned to address this need.

School governors were selected as target groups for two projects, although materials specifically targeted at school governors were not distributed in one project (South West). Governors were regarded as an important group because they often lack suitable information on non-curriculum areas, including careers education to make a useful input. More 'passive' forms of delivery such as leaflets and presentations was considered to be useful for this group.

Parents were a target group in three of the projects in recognition of their role in influencing young peoples' career decisions and their need for up to date information about the labour market to fulfil this role. Materials had been disseminated to parents in two projects (North West and West Midlands).

In two of the areas (North West and West Midlands) some materials were targeted at **careers advisers** working in schools. The emphasis here was on ensuring that the messenger understood the message, particularly in delivering local LMI to young people. **Teachers** were also a target group for LMI in all areas except London, largely because of their role in conveying LMI to young people. However, project leaders also recognised the importance of promoting understanding of LMI among teachers more generally. For example, the North West project produced written materials in the form of a resource pack and the West Midlands project included presentation materials for audiences including teachers.

Each project selected user organisations to trial the materials (see Figure 5). Methods of selection were not systematic in the pilot period because projects had a short space of available in which to trial the materials and therefore made use of existing contacts or recommendations. While this is understandable given the time constraints, absence of a systematic approach in the pilot stage undoubtedly had a detrimental effect on take-up of the materials and their use in the longer-term.

Figure 5: Selection of user organisations

In the **North West** all secondary schools, Further Education colleges and careers offices in East Lancashire were seen as user organisations and the materials were widely disseminated. About eight schools made use of the LMI teaching materials during 1998 and 1999.

In the **West Midlands** user organisations were selected from schools with an involvement in existing projects on the basis that they would be willing to participate in a further initiative. A number of special schools and colleges were also involved as users.

In the **South West** schools involved in piloting the materials were selected from schools volunteering to take part. Following publication of the LMI curriculum pack, it was distributed to all schools in the South West in Autumn 1998.

In **London**, where user organisations were training providers, they were selected by the two TECs involved in the project. The main criteria for selection was familiarity with IT.

3.4 Selection of formats for the customised LMI

The formats chosen by the projects described earlier, were selected according to the perceived needs of the target group, along with considerations of the potential *effectiveness* of the format. Leaflets were seen as a means of relaying fairly simple messages about LMI. However, to relay more complex information project organisers felt that materials should be adaptable so that they could be used with a range of audiences and in varying time slots. For this reason three of the projects produced 'packs' containing a range of LMI, local and national, showing the current picture and trends in the labour market. This format allowed careers co-ordinators, teachers and other users to select parts of the package and adapt materials.

In the South West the format of curriculum materials was selected because these could facilitate a change in culture of schools in their relationship to the labour market. The project also selected theatre in education as a high impact format for delivering messages about entry to the labour market and a video production to allow for wider distribution of this product.

A number of projects had considered developing products using IT. CD Rom was explored but found to be expensive for the projects. In addition to the cost, it was felt that LMI quickly dates and that graphics as well as content have a short shelf-life. Young people are easily distracted by outdated images such as young people in outdated clothes or hair-styles. The London project was keen to use the new medium of the Internet, developing two linked web-sites for use by training providers. This format was chosen because of its potential to combine LMI from official sources with less formal LMI obtained through exchange of documents and of information and views through discussion pages and E-mail.

3.5 Development of the customised LMI

The projects used a combination of local and national LMI sources to develop the LMI products including national documents from the DfEE, bulletins from Government Offices and projection data from sources including the Institute of Employment Research (IER). In most of the projects TECs had lead responsibility for providing the LMI and generally provided a surfeit of LMI materials. The exception to this was the London project where one of the TECs provided only one document for the web-site, its 'Fact File'. A respondent of the other TEC, which also provided insubstantial material, explained that the documents provided 'were just what I could get hold of when [the consultants] asked for information'. This was again a consequence of the short time-span of the project and the limited commitment of time that the TECs could give to it. This would not have been a problem had training providers supplied additional material for posting onto the site, as it was intended they should.

The most usual practice was for the LMI to be collected and collated by the lead partner who then either gave this to consultants or writers (London and South West) or used the materials to develop the product (West Midlands and North West). The LMI was found to be of good quality, although there was some feeling that there is an excess of LMI which makes selection difficult. One project manager had experienced problems with objectivity, or the expression of vested interests, for example the promotion of particular industries or occupations, in some LMI materials and had taken a decision to restrict sources to 'mainstream' ones from Government departments.

One problem identified with available materials are that categories used in official LMI statistics are neither meaningful to young people nor to adults wishing to use LMI for career planning. For this reason, intervention to interpret and customise LMI is crucial. Another problem was identified in the availability of current local LMI, including on job vacancies and training provision. This gap was identified in the earlier project conducted in the North West and had been addressed in the current project so that local LMI could be accessed in careers libraries. In London it was precisely this gap that the project aimed to fill. There was however, some feeling that local LMI is a particularly unreliable basis on which young people should make decisions about education or training routes. As one project manager stated:

'LMI is always out of date and can never embrace Toyota building a factory outside [the city] next week which would change everything overnight'.

The real challenge for the projects was to make LMI accessible and understandable to the target groups. Each project had its own priorities for this which included the following:

- to give easy access to LMI and to *encourage participation*, particularly among training providers, in providing LMI (London)
- to meet the particular needs of target groups for LMI, at the *appropriate ability level* (West Midlands and North West)
- to integrate LMI within the curriculum subject and to design *engaging activities which develop key skills* and learning (South West)

LMI was tailored within the selected formats with these considerations in mind. For example, the web-site in the London project incorporated a number of features to encourage use and active participation as shown in Figure 6.

In the West Midlands and North West, careers services saw the priority as to simplify the available LMI into clear messages for the target groups. This was a particularly strong consideration in tailoring LMI for pupils with special needs. The West Midlands project took particular care in the development of these materials to ensure that they were appropriate. For example, a pupil from a special needs school looked through the draft materials as part of a work experience placement at the careers service. In the same project a tape for use by special needs pupils was designed to be of appropriate pace and level. As a representative of the careers service explained:

'This was identified by schools as very important. An experienced teacher was timed delivering the material and this was given to the production team as the optimum pace of delivery. The tape also includes a range of voices from men and women and different ethnic groups.'

Figure 6. Features of the London Internet web-sites

- free text search allowing users to search documents under any word or combination of words
- category search, allowing users to click on an item in a list of categories and to identify relevant texts on the site
- facility to add documents in an electronic format, checked by the consultants and then released on to the site
- ability to print documents or copy and paste sections of documents
- open discussion facility – including public or private correspondence, starting or continuing a discussion on an LMI topic

In all three projects where young people were involved, the emphasis in the design of the materials was on how they could encourage active involvement. This was pursued through including activities, team work, games, illustrations and diagrams. The materials developed in the South West are particularly inventive because they were required to deliver aspects of the curriculum in the particular subject area, for example Science, Maths, or English as well as delivering messages about the labour market. In the London project the leading partners felt that the web-sites were insufficiently attractive or 'user friendly' to stimulate use by training providers. Potential for this was identified in the addition of 'hot-links' to related sites. Therefore if the material on the main site was insufficient, users could be directed to information elsewhere. Equally, users of other sites could be directed to the LMI site.

Key points and conclusions

- The projects included research as an initial phase and, although the methods used had their limitations, some useful data was collected, particularly on the need for LMI by the target groups.
- In London the limited scope of the research, particularly the involvement of only seven training providers, was problematic. It is possible that potential problems with the project might have been identified earlier had more interviews or consultation been carried out.
- One of the main conclusions from the projects' own research was that current provision of LMI to young people, to those who influence them and to training providers, is inadequate and that levels of understanding about LMI and its potential value among teachers and other 'mediators' are low.
- The background research conducted by the consultants to the South West project identified what was to be a key issue for all four, that of indifference or resistance to LMI products by target groups. From the low response rate and content of responses to the survey of schools, the project co-ordinators concluded that involving teachers in the use

of the materials would be 'an up-hill task' and would be a major challenge for the project.

- Each project selected user organisations to trial the materials. They did not use systematic methods of selection because projects had a short space of available in which to trial the materials and therefore made use of existing contacts or recommendations. While this is understandable given the time constraints, absence of a systematic approach in the pilot stage undoubtedly had a detrimental effect on take-up of the materials and their use in the longer-term.
- The formats for the LMI were selected according to the perceived needs of the target group, along with considerations of the potential *effectiveness* of the format. In designing the materials, it was thought that they should be adaptable for use with a range of audiences and in varying time slots. For this reason three of the projects produced 'packs' containing a range of LMI, local and national, showing the current picture and trends in the labour market. This format allowed careers co-ordinators, teachers and other users to select parts of the package and adapt materials.
- A number of projects had considered developing products using IT. CD Rom was explored but found to be expensive for the projects. The London project was keen to use the new medium of the Internet and, while it was sceptical about users' IT literacy levels, took what it described as a 'leap of faith' with this format.
- Partners in the projects had little difficulty obtaining LMI, but the real challenge to them was to make LMI accessible to its target groups. Each project had its own priorities for this which included encouraging participation, addressing the appropriate ability level and designing engaging activities which develop key skills and learning.
- In all three projects where young people were involved, the emphasis in the design of the materials was on how they could encourage active involvement. This was pursued through including activities, team work, games, illustrations and diagrams. The materials developed in the South West are particularly inventive because they were required to deliver aspects of the curriculum in the particular subject area, for example, Science, Maths or English, as well as delivering messages about the labour market.

Section 4. Use of the customised LMI

4.1 Introduction

This section looks at how the LMI products were used, both within the pilot period and since. The evaluation looked at their use in the pilot period, focusing largely on how organisations were selected by the projects and at issues involved in their adoption. In the post-pilot we looked at use of the materials in order to assess their impact. The section explores user organisations' views on the products, particularly whether they met a need for LMI. The views of users, particularly young people, are discussed in Section 5.

4.2 Use of the materials in the pilot period

Trialing of the materials was an important part of the pilot projects and was carried out in 1997 and 1998 in order to assist development of the content of the LMI products. Different methods were used by each project, summarised in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Use of the LMI products in the pilot period

<p>North West</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Careers advisers used the LMI pack as a general resource for both group work and one-to-one sessions with young people aged 14-18.• LMI Leaflets were been distributed to pupils in years 9 and 10 (In some cases through an introductory session with a careers adviser) and mailed to parents. <p>West Midlands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Materials from the presentation packs were used in training sessions for teachers. The careers service and LEA have selected materials from the packs for presentations to groups of deputy heads, careers co-ordinators, senior teachers and GNVQ co-ordinators. Some of the materials were trialed at parents evenings, or similar events, in five schools in a short presentation.• Five schools in North Coventry and a few in Warwickshire used materials from the 'Prospects' pack with pupils, usually in sessions with a careers adviser.• The special needs materials were trialed in a number of schools. <p>London</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 27 training providers were trained in the use of the Internet web-sites, including how to access LMI and use the sites interactively. A small number of other organisations were also given access to the site and encouraged to participate in the pilot. Few training providers made use of the sites during the pilot period. <p>South West</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Curriculum materials were used in nine schools across the region, generally in one or two subject areas to pupils in Years 10 or 11.• The Theatre in Education production was performed at a school in Somerset to a pupils in Year 9.

In the **North West**, leaflets for pupils and teaching resources for careers co-ordinators were distributed to all secondary schools in East Lancashire. Careers advisers were involved in using the resources in around eight schools. In the **West Midlands** the presentation

materials were used in a variety of settings in the pilot period, including training sessions and at parents' evenings, led principally by the careers service, LEA and TEC. Participating schools were selected from networks of schools established for earlier projects in the region.

The **London** and the **South West** projects piloted the materials on small groups of users. In the London project around 30 training providers were involved in the trial of the web-site, which was recognised to be limited at the time. As a TEC representative explained:

'There were lots of grand ideas, but we had to say, hold on, this is silly, we haven't had time to involve schools, friendly employers and the others we wanted to involve. Ideally, we would have involved these and a larger number of training providers, but time was tight so we had to go with a smaller group of training providers.'

The trial took the form of participation in a one day briefing session about the websites. A small number of other training providers who could not attend the session and a small number of other organisations, for example careers services, were sent information about the web-site and encouraged to use it. Few organisations made use of the web-sites after attending the introductory session, despite the efforts of project staff to encourage its use. There are a number of reasons for this, including technical difficulties during the briefing session which prevented full demonstration of the site; disappointment among training providers with the limited number of documents and range of data which could be accessed through the site; and scepticism about the interactive aspect of the site. As one training provider stated:

'The idea of the web-site as a forum for exchange between providers and [the TEC] went out of the window very early on. Although people did soften towards the end of the day, the general impression was that the session wasn't much use'.

As another training provider explained:

'The advice given was to use [the site] a couple of times a week, but that was like looking at the TEC labour market assessment twice a week - what is the point?'

Further documents were added but this did not stimulate use of the sites.

In the **South West** area the materials were trailed within the pilot period in order to evaluate their effectiveness. Schools were selected by project co-ordinators and by members of the steering group. A list of 12 schools was drawn up across the region which covered a range of locality and age range (11-16, 11-18). Some schools who were approached to take part in the evaluation declined to take part because of time constraints and the pressure to improve GCSE results. As a representative of the careers service who had encountered this problem stated:

'Their view was that it was alright to have a work-related curriculum, but the Government can't have its cake and eat it. Schools are under too much pressure to get the results'.

Schools participating in the internal evaluation were asked to trial all or parts of the materials in the Autumn Term and to record their views on the materials in a questionnaire. Participating schools were offered £50 to cover the costs of photocopying materials and could retain the full pack of curriculum materials.

We visited a number of organisations during the pilot period to discuss issues relating to the use of LMI and involvement in the project. The overall impression gained from these visits was that use of materials had been piecemeal. The projects did not achieve widespread use of their products among target organisations during the pilot period. One of the reasons for this was that dissemination was not treated as a discrete stage in the projects and was not always adequately resourced. Funding and other resources were centred on the development of the customised materials. The projects therefore involved only small numbers of user organisations in trials of the materials, as these were being developed.

The projects experienced varying degrees of difficulty in encouraging teachers to trial the LMI materials. Reasons for this include the timing of projects, pressure of work on teachers and 'initiative fatigue'. These had little to do with the LMI materials themselves, which were generally thought to be of high quality and potentially useful by teachers who had looked at them. The time of year that materials arrived in schools was an important issue, because teachers generally plan their teaching programmes in the Summer term for the following year and in many cases the materials arrived too late.

A number of respondents who were asked to trial the materials reported being poorly prepared for their use. Some did not have the information they felt they needed. As one careers adviser reported:

'[LMI leaflets] usually come in a pile on your desk with a little yellow sticky thing on saying 'year 9', and you just take them, and you're going out of the door with two carrier bags full ...'

'There was some talk of having some lesson plans to go with it, but I never saw any of that.'

Training providers in London who were sent an invitation to attend a training session were confused about the aim of the training, understanding it to be about the use of the Internet rather than the LMI web-site. As a representative of one of the TECs who issued the invitations acknowledged:

'The letter was perhaps not as detailed as it could have been and some of those who turned up for the training had little idea what it was all about.'

This irritated some training providers and made them less inclined to play a full part in the project. In other areas, schools explained the limited use of materials with reference to the timing of the project. Because materials were not seen until the Autumn Term it was too late to incorporate them into the year's programme of work. These plans are drawn up in the previous Summer term. Materials had been used where a 'space' could be found, usually where they fitted easily into existing programmes.

Some project managers had not originally anticipated problems of resistance to using the products, believing that user groups were in desperate need of useable LMI and would welcome it with open arms. Had project managers realised at the outset that take-up would be a problem they might have explored appropriate dissemination methods in their background research. As it was, background research focused on the needs of target groups, for example young people, parents and teachers, for LMI rather than the crucial issue of take-up. The South West project identified resistance as a problem within its background research and developed a dissemination strategy as a result.

4.3 Did the materials meet the need for LMI?

The projects met the needs of some user organisations in the pilot stage, including the needs of schools for LMI for use in careers education and in curriculum subjects. In the North West and West Midlands the materials were enthusiastically welcomed by careers advisers working with schools. In the South West, some teachers had contacted careers services to request LMI for use in careers education and subject areas before knowing about the project, which suggests some demand for LMI. In some cases the materials generated a new need by users who had not been aware of the potential use of LMI before their involvement in the project. A number of teachers expressed enthusiasm for the materials, for example, a teacher in the North West stated:

‘I really felt that there was a need for this ... This was the most useful thing we've ever been involved with from [the careers service]. It actually met our needs. Sometimes the Careers Service forgets that brighter kids actually have more choices, and therefore need more looking after.’

In the West Midlands, the special needs materials were particularly welcomed, as one teacher explained:

‘We were crying out for suitable material. What was on offer before was very turgid, far too wordy and completely inaccessible’.

Where the materials were adopted by user organisations, they met a number of needs for LMI. In the North West, careers advisers and teachers had felt inadequately informed about trends in the labour market and in need of LMI materials which could be easily presented to pupils. The materials addressed this need. In the South West the materials were seen to have the potential to raise awareness of trends in the labour market, including the demise of ‘jobs for life’ and the growth of flexible working. The curriculum materials developed by this project were generally thought to have the potential to meet these needs more effectively than bespoke careers education materials. As one teacher explained:

‘They have got to be educated for change, there’s no career for life any more. It’s all about renewing skills and changing direction. They need awareness of what the culture and climate is out there. It would be tedious and boring to do within careers education. You can do it more subtly in other subjects, using examples to help them practice their skills’.

Teachers in the depressed areas of Cornwall also felt that their schools had a particular responsibility to improve young people’s understandings of the labour market because of high levels of unemployment in the region and a culture of seasonal work and employment through the black market. In these circumstances it is difficult for some parents to offer guidance and advice on employment because they often lack sufficient information or experience. It was also seen as important to deliver accurate and realistic information about certain forms of employment on which many local people are reliant, including low paid work in the tourism and leisure industry. Again, information about the labour market was seen to be more effectively delivered outside of devoted careers education slots. As one Careers Co-ordinator stated:

‘ They think that because they live in a holiday area they will always get a job, but what you have to put across to them is that those jobs are insecure, low paid and boring. It is difficult to do that within careers education, which tends to be seen just as something that Mrs A teaches and which is not related to

the real world . Putting it elsewhere, within humanities like history and geography gets it across much more subtly and effectively’.

In the South West, but also in other areas, some LMI materials met the need for *local* and *national* LMI. Local LMI was useful to convey the extent of careers opportunities available locally. Where these are limited, national LMI can be used to convey the opportunities available outside the locality and to encourage wider horizons. Equally, LMI can be used to raise awareness of opportunities within the local area and to encourage young people to consider returning to the area after completing higher education. LMI was therefore seen to have the potential to address the problem of ‘brain drain’.

Finally, in the London project, training providers agreed that the web-sites allowed better access to current LMI than other sources and that it *could* help improve the quality of proposals to TECs, improve guidance to trainees and the ability to place trainees in jobs. The emphasis of this project was, however, as much on generating a new need for LMI as on meeting current needs. One aim of the project was to generate use of local and ‘soft’ LMI in the form of communication between training providers. There was resistance to this idea from training providers, who were reluctant to share information with competitors. Project managers were fully aware of this issue and were exploring ways of involving organisations in the exchange of LMI which did not involve this problem. The other projects also aimed to generate a need for LMI, or awareness of its benefits. There is some evidence that teachers who had not previously used LMI were made aware of its potential through involvement in the projects. This was particularly true of teachers who had used materials for pupils with special needs in the West Midlands and the curriculum materials in the South West.

Did user organisations find the materials appropriate for the target group?

Representatives of user organisations were asked about how appropriate they found the LMI materials to the target group. Their responses referred to the **format** of the LMI, the LMI **content** and its **ease of use**. This last concern included the relevance of the product to ability groups and whether it was an off-the-shelf product or required adapting.

Most of the formats developed by the projects were found to be useful by mediators of LMI, mainly teachers and careers advisers. The leaflets produced in the North West project were thought to successfully present LMI to young people in an accessible format. There was, however, some feeling that leaflets are unlikely to have a significant impact on young people. As a careers adviser pointed out:

‘They get so much, they get bombarded with leaflets, they probably just think
‘Oh it’s another of those leaflets from Careers’”

The West Midlands project had developed a number of products using various formats, all of which were found to be useful to the groups who were intended to use them. The main product, the presentation pack, was widely reported to be useful and appropriate. The overhead slides were copyright free and could be photocopied to use as audience hand-outs, which was considered to be very useful, particularly for training sessions. Feedback from teachers who used the presentation pack commented favourably on its:

- flexibility, ease of use
- ease of access to information
- useful combination of national and local material
- potential for use with a variety of audiences

The formats used for special needs materials in the West Midlands project had been found appropriate by teachers and careers advisers. The audio tape was seen as particularly useful because pupils could take it home and listen to it with their parents. As a specialist Careers Adviser for a careers service remarked:

‘Any parents of special needs students have difficulties of their own and it allows them to participate more fully in the decision-making process and helps inform them of what is on offer.’

The format of the curriculum materials developed in the South West project were reported by teachers to be useful and appropriate. There was some suggestion that young people prefer glossy and colourful materials, but it was agreed that this would be expensive and therefore impractical. In relation to this project and to the presentation pack developed in the West Midlands, a main requirement was that the materials should be easily photocopied to maximise their use. The South West Theatre in Education production was well received by the audience to which it was performed. The play concerned the work experience and post-16 decisions and routes of a group of young people, and included messages about equal opportunities. The language, themes and delivery all appealed to the group of Year 9 pupils in the school where it was performed.

The main issue for the London project was the format of the materials, the Internet web-sites. The low rates of use of the web-site suggest that the format of the materials was not appropriate for training providers, the intended user group. Unfortunately, a number of participants in the project did not have access to the Internet and did not have computing equipment of sufficient capacity for access to be set up. However, it is not clear that the main barrier to use was technical, in ability or willingness to use the Internet. Other barriers to use included the limited number of documents which could be accessed through the web-sites and resistance to participate by exchanging LMI with other training providers. The issue of competition between training providers was raised by all organisations involved in the project. It was clearly a major factor in training providers’ reluctance to use the site and therefore to gain the benefits of the technology. As a TEC representative stated:

‘Competition between training providers means that they will always hold on to information rather than share it. The idea was that, for example if they had problems getting trainees into work in a particular occupational area, they could share this information with other training providers and get advice, but this didn’t happen, they were not willing to share.’

While the format of the LMI was a major issue for the London project, the *content* of the LMI was the main interest of users in the South West during the pilot. Teachers felt that the writers had successfully identified issues in which young people were interested and could be engaged. As one teacher said of the history materials:

‘It’s all such good stuff and so relevant to them, like the material on part-time work in the history project. Many of them have part-time jobs and they can identify with the issues. They can compare their lot with the life of a Victorian child in a cotton mill’.

A number of teachers referred to the importance of detail in materials for young people. Seemingly less relevant detail, for example ‘naff’ clothes worn by individuals in illustrations and factual inaccuracies in information on sporting events can become talking points rather

than the central issues relating to the labour market. This was not generally found to be a problem with the materials but was an issue which teachers raised as important.

Ease of use of the materials was frequently raised by user organisations. One of the main requirements was that materials aimed at young people, or for use with young people, should be applicable or adaptable to cover a range of ability. Two problems were identified: that materials were too broadly-based in trying to meet the needs of all pupils simultaneously; or that materials were suitable for either a higher or lower ability group than the pupils the school wished to use LMI materials with. This was identified as an issue by schools in the North West and South West projects both in trialing the materials and in deciding to continue their use.

In the South West the materials had been used with a range of ability groups, although because different materials had been used in the schools visited, we could not judge how adaptable each set of subject materials is across the ability range. The ability level of the group of pupils was clearly an important criteria for teachers in deciding to use the materials and some had rejected materials in the pack because the ability level was too high or too low. The reading level was a particularly important consideration because the materials include pupil work sheets. As a result of the pilot, project managers identified a need for differentiation in the materials and 'extension activities' to allow for their use across the ability range, particularly in view of the direction of Government policy towards 'sets' or streaming within the classroom.

In the North West the materials for careers lessons were found to be rather broad-based and some concern was expressed about the amount of time and work it might take to adapt the materials to the level of the class. However, one teacher who had made some adaptations reported,

'The materials have been very useful, when adapted to suit our own students. It's a very useful resource, this kind of information just wasn't accessible before ... it's saved a lot of time and trouble finding it out for myself.'

The process of adapting LMI can therefore be a useful exercise for teachers who undertake this work. However, many teachers do not have the time to make major adaptations to teaching materials. In the South West this was a key consideration in the design of the curriculum materials. It is confirmed by feedback from teachers, such as the following:

'Teachers love good materials that are off the shelf and that are copyright free and they love things that have proper learning outcomes, so the materials appeal to them'.

4.4 Use of the materials since the pilot period

Each of the four projects intended their products to be used in the longer term and not solely during the period of the pilot. However, the extent of continuation beyond the pilot varied across the four projects. The London project was discontinued because of the problems experienced in the course of the pilot, although participating organisations planned to develop a similar resource. In the other areas, use of the materials has continued, although not in all cases as extensively as was hoped.

In the West Midlands the special needs materials have been widely adopted by special schools and special needs teachers within mainstream schools. The materials have been updated by Quality Careers (Coventry) who see the production of LMI materials as a permanent and core part of their work. In the North West the teaching materials and video are in use in about eight schools. Again, the careers service (East Lancashire) sees the production and dissemination of LMI to schools as a core part of its work and sees the project as a long-term exercise. Of the four pilots, the South West project was undoubtedly the most ambitious in terms of scope and distribution. It is therefore surprising that the materials have not been widely adopted since completion of the pilot project. It may also be useful to discuss some of the reasons for this, because lessons may be drawn for similar work in the future.

Use of South West materials following the pilot

The materials developed in the South West were distributed to all schools in the counties of Cornwall and Devon, Avon, Somerset, Wiltshire, Dorset and Gloucestershire. Their distribution was therefore wider than the materials produced in the other two case study areas. However, considerable difficulty was experienced identifying schools who were using the materials to participate in the evaluation of impact in Spring 1999. This was surprising because the materials were well-received by the five careers service companies in the region and were being used by a number of schools in the pilot period.

Letters requesting help with the evaluation were sent to a total of thirty schools, identified by careers service Companies as likely to be using materials from the LMI pack ³. Telephone contact was made with Careers co-ordinators in eighteen of these schools, of which two were using selected materials and a further two had used the video in one-off sessions. Arrangements were made to visit the two schools which were using the materials.

Discussions were held with all schools with whom telephone contact was made, which included their reasons for not using the materials, and any plans for future use. The arrival of

³ These were generally schools where the Careers Co-ordinator had expressed interest in using the pack or had attended careers service events on LMI or the South West pack.

the materials in the autumn term was an issue raised by most Careers co-ordinators contacted, and it was universally agreed that this discouraged use, since schemes of work are planned in the Spring and Summer terms. Materials arriving in schools in the autumn term are more likely to be lost or discarded than if they are issued at a time when teachers are looking out for ideas for lessons and projects. Similarly, Careers Co-ordinators felt unable to promote use of the LMI materials during the autumn term when the materials arrived and had appeared to have lost some of their initial interest by the Spring term. A number of other Careers Co-ordinators saw potential for the materials to be used in their school but, with the exception of the PSE section, they were reliant on subject teachers for wider adoption. Some Careers Co-ordinators planned to promote the materials through either an In-Service Training (INSET) slot or redistribution and approaches to heads of department

The four schools visited for Stage One of the research were invited to take part in Stage Two. None could participate, mainly because they were not using the materials. They intended to use the materials in the future, where subject teachers could incorporate them into their teaching programmes.

Because the materials had not been examined in any detail by subject teachers, and often by the Careers co-ordinators themselves, many Careers co-ordinators were uncertain about whether the materials would be used in the future. A number planned to use the video in careers education lessons and to select materials and activities from the pack for these lessons.

The low take-up of the materials was not, in most cases, because of any perceived short-comings of the LMI pack. Where Careers co-ordinators had examined the materials, their views were generally positive. A few criticisms were voiced: that the materials include insufficient *local* LMI; and that they should not include detailed destinations statistics because of the risk of perpetuating current patterns of entry into higher education. The first of these perceived short-comings could be easily resolved through the addition of local LMI by the school; the second is an issue of delivery since teachers should focus on the diversity of destinations and use the materials to broaden decision-making and choice. These, and some questionable criticisms, for example that the materials contain too few 'facts', could be addressed through training of teachers in LMI by the careers service.

Key points and conclusions

- The projects did not achieve widespread use of their products among target organisations during the pilot period. One of the reasons for this was that dissemination was not treated as a discrete stage in the projects and was not always adequately resourced. Funding and other resources were centred on the development of the customised materials. The projects therefore involved only small numbers of user organisations in trials of the materials, as these were being developed.
- The projects experienced varying degrees of difficulty in encouraging teachers to trial the LMI materials. Reasons for this include the timing of projects, pressure of work on teachers and 'initiative fatigue'. These had little to do with the LMI materials themselves, which were generally thought to be of high quality and potentially useful by teachers who had looked at them. The time of year that materials arrived in schools was an important issue, because teachers generally plan their teaching programmes in the Summer term for the following year and in many cases the materials arrived too late.

- The problem of indifference or resistance to LMI products was not fully anticipated by project managers who believed that user groups were in desperate need of LMI. The logistical problems of introducing LMI into schools, including who to approach, were not always anticipated. The experience of the projects suggests that issues of dissemination of materials to schools should be addressed by future LMI development projects at an early stage.
- Where the materials were adopted by user organisations, they met a number of needs for LMI. In some areas careers advisers and teachers had felt inadequately informed about trends in the labour market and in need of LMI materials which could be easily presented to pupils. The materials addressed this need. Some materials were seen to have the potential to raise awareness of trends in the labour market and the 'realities' of working life, including the demise of 'jobs for life' and the growth of flexible working. Most of the formats developed by the projects were found to be useful (see Section 5).
- Some of the materials met the need for *local* and *national* LMI. Local LMI was useful to convey the extent of careers opportunities available locally. Where these are limited, national LMI can be used to convey the opportunities available outside the locality and to encourage wider horizons. Equally, LMI can be used to raise awareness of opportunities within the local area and to encourage young people to consider returning to the area after completing higher education. LMI was therefore seen to have the potential to address the problem of 'brain drain'.
- For the organisations who were using the materials, ease of use was an important factor, both in the decision to use them and in their continued use. A key requirement was that materials aimed at young people should be applicable or adaptable to cover a range of ability. This need for 'differentiation' in the materials was recognised by the projects in the development stage. A second key requirement was that products should be 'off the shelf', ready for use and require little adaptation by teachers. Given many teachers low levels of confidence in use of LMI this affected take-up and use of the materials.
- The projects intended their products to be used in the longer term and not solely during the period of the pilot. However, the extent of continuation beyond the pilot varied across the four projects. The London project was discontinued because of the problems experienced in the course of the pilot, although participating organisations planned to develop a similar resource. In the other areas, use of the materials has continued, although not in all cases as extensively as was hoped.
- In the West Midlands the special needs materials have been widely adopted by special schools and special needs teachers within mainstream schools. The materials have been updated by Quality Careers (Coventry) who see the production of LMI materials as a permanent and core part of their work. In the North West the teaching materials and video are in use in schools and the careers service sees the project as a long-term exercise.
- Of the four pilots, the South West project was undoubtedly the most ambitious in terms of scope and distribution. It is therefore surprising that the materials have not been widely adopted since completion of the pilot project. The reasons for the low rates of use to date include the need for teacher training in LMI to improve levels of knowledge and confidence in its delivery.

Section 5: The Impact of LMI in schools: evidence from case studies in three regions

5.1 Introduction

This section of the report addresses issues relating to the impact of the materials, principally on young people and to some extent on teachers and others who delivered the LMI products. The main evidence of impact was obtained from the second stage of the research in 1999. Although we looked for evidence of impact in the 'process' stage of the research in 1998, the materials were at that time being piloted and the impact of materials was weak. This was to be expected given the relatively short time that the materials had been in use and the fact that they included new and innovatory products. In the pilot period any impact was largely on 'mediators' of the materials such as careers advisers and teachers and was principally in awareness of the projects and their products⁴. Project managers did not expect the materials to make an impact on end-users, and young people in particular, within the period of the pilot, but that this would be achieved once the materials had been used over a longer period. In some cases this involved developing and refining the products and redistributing them to user organisations.

In presenting the findings on the impact of the LMI materials we first summarise the methods used. We then present the findings from each of the case study areas, describing the materials used and some details of their delivery, in addition to an examination of their impact. We present the views of both teachers and pupils, on the impact of the materials on knowledge, awareness and skills. Many of these findings are general to the projects as a whole, or have implications for the development and use of LMI materials in the future. Therefore, after presenting findings from the three case study areas, the section looks more generally at issues of LMI, its impact, and what information and products young people need and want.

5.2 Methods

As we explained in Section 1, different methods were used in each case study area both to set up the impact evaluation and to carry it out. This was because of the diversity of organisations involved in disseminating the LMI products and variations in the materials themselves. However, the main method used in each area was group interviews with young people (and some individual interviews) and interviews with teachers and other 'mediators' of LMI.

Interviews with young people addressed the three aims of Stage Two: product assessment, awareness impact and skills impact. A generic topic guide for interviews with young people was designed which was adapted in order to address issues of particular relevance to the materials used and the information needs of the young people. A copy of the generic topic guide is presented in Figure 8. Examples of tailored topic guides developed from the generic guide are presented in Appendix 3. A generic topic guide was also designed for use with teachers (see Figure 9). This was also adapted according to the materials used and pupil needs.

⁴ Evidence of any impact of the materials on young people during the pilot phase is also presented in this section.

Figure 8: Generic topic guide for group interviews with pupils

Evaluation of LMI materials

Generic Topic Guide – pupils

1. Recollection of the delivery of the materials
 - Leaflet
 - Careers education lesson
 - Subject lesson
 - Video
2. Main message received (what did they think the materials were trying to say)
Questions asked should relate to the main messages of the materials/product delivered – e.g. What do they know about:
 - Expanding and declining sectors and occupations
 - Skills required by employers
 - Flexibility in careers
3. Did the materials/products deliver these messages
4. How well did the materials/products put across their messages
5. Have they heard any of these messages before (did hearing them again make them more or less effective)
6. Were any important messages or information left out or not delivered
7. Did they enjoy using the materials/product – why
8. Do they know what they want to do at the end of Year 11
If yes, how have they made their choice
9. How will they make their choice about what to do at the end of Year 11 (or post 18)
10. What sources of information, advice or guidance will they use
(probe for self-motivation Vs reliance on advice from family and friends)

**Figure 9: Generic topic guide for interviews with
Careers Co-ordinators/teachers**

Evaluation of LMI materials

Generic Topic Guide – Teachers

1. Information about the school: size, age and ability range, pupil destinations
2. Background to involvement in the project

3. How materials have been used

- Year group
- What parts of the pack
- What products
- When used

- Who delivered it
How confident teacher felt in delivery

Skills of delivery/ease of delivery

4. General assessment of the materials/product

- Were the messages the right/most appropriate ones
- Were they suitable for the ability level/range
- Did the materials need adapting

5. Impact on pupils

- Engaged and interested
- Surprised – anything new to them
- Did the materials improve pupils' knowledge
- Did they improve awareness and confidence about LMI
- Any impact on skills
- Search skills
- Decision-making skills
- Has their use result in any changes in choices made or routes taken?

6. Views on quality and content of the materials

- Views on format
- Could the materials/product be improved? How?

7. Would they use the materials/product again? Why/not?

- What kind of LMI would they like?

5.3 The North West project (East Lancashire): impact evaluation

As we explained in Section 2, The North West project, under direction from East Lancashire Careers Service, developed two main products⁵:

- A pack of teaching resources and supporting materials 'New Ways of Working' (handouts and a video) for use by careers advisers and careers co-ordinators in schools⁶.
- leaflets on LMI for parents and pupils

The schools contacted for the evaluation were all using the teaching resources, which had been delivered either by teaching staff or a careers adviser from East Lancashire Careers Service. Schools had also used the video to varying extents. The careers service had sent the leaflet to the homes of all pupils currently in Year 10, when they were in Year 9.

The pack of teaching resources includes 23 tasks, or lessons, in six sections. It also includes a video which covers a range of LMI issues. The sections of the report, with some examples of their content are as follows:

- 1: What's happening in the Labour Market
(provides an overview of industrial sectors, occupations and trends)
- 2: Who does which Jobs?
(includes gender divisions and job qualities)
- 3: A Job for Life?
(includes career planning and flexibility)
- 4: What are Employers looking for?
(includes skill requirements)
- 5: What Challenges may face you at work?
(includes obtaining advice and support from family, friends and at work)
- 6: What are your expectations of work?
(includes key skills and job satisfaction).

The schools visited had mainly selected activities from Section 1 of the pack, because this includes general material on trends in the labour market, aimed at raising awareness of these and the implications for young peoples' future. In each school the evaluation focused on the use of materials with one year group, either Year 9 or 10, according to how the materials had been used. Two of the schools incorporated the materials into their own 'pack' of careers education materials, designed as a programme for use by form tutors responsible for delivering careers lessons in PSE. The use of materials from the pack by schools visited

5 In addition, some 'softer' LMI materials, including a computer data-base for use with special needs pupils were under development, but had not to our knowledge been used.

6 These were initially developed before the project but were revised within the project period.

for the evaluation is summarised below:

Beardwood School

The LMI resource materials were used in Year 9 as part of the careers education programme in PSE which is delivered in the school in tutor groups. The activities used in the programme were taken largely from Section 1 (*What's happening in the Labour Market*)⁷. The video was shown to all groups, although it was shown to some in its entirety and in parts to others. The materials from the East Lancashire pack were interspersed with exercises on 'unrealistic ambitions' produced by Chalkface publications⁸. These were included to strengthen the input which supported pupils' choices of GCSE options.

Fearns School

The Careers Co-ordinator had incorporated the first section of the LMI pack, and half of the second section (see above) into the school's own careers education package for Year 9. Pupils had therefore carried out activities on broad industrial sectors, changes in industrial employment and patterns of employment, including gender, self-employment, flexibility and explored aspects of particular jobs. These activities had included a survey of relatives and carers on their working lives and skills.

Haslingden High School

The materials were delivered to Year 10 pupils in four 50 minute lessons in the Spring term. This included many of the activities in Section 1 (*What's happening in the Labour Market*), particularly activities in broad industrial sectors and the *Labour Market Quiz*, about trends in industry and employment. The video was not shown, because of practical problems.

St Bedes School

The video and all of the activities in Section 1 (*What's happening in the Labour Market*) were used with Year 10 pupils. Lessons were delivered in PSE, in tutor groups, over six weeks in the Spring term 1999.

Teachers' assessment

The materials had been warmly welcomed by teachers in the schools visited, particularly by the careers co-ordinators, one of whom described them as 'like manna from heaven'. Some careers co-ordinators had felt in need of LMI which was accessible to both teachers and pupils and focused directly on the issues of labour market trends, employment and skill requirements. The materials were seen as far more 'concrete' than the LMI the schools had access to in the past. They were also found to be less dense and statistical. This was seen as important for pupils, but equally for form teachers who deliver careers education within PSE, whose confidence was a key issue for this project. Schools had not organised more than introductory training for teachers, which made ease of use particularly important. The

⁷ Two activities were excluded because they were thought to be too difficult, or because they did not fit easily into the 30 minute slot allocated to PSE.

⁸ This includes information on GCSE and other qualification requirements for certain jobs and careers, sources of advice on careers and 'myths and legends' about jobs. The materials were designed for Year 11 pupils choosing 'A' level subjects, but the school adapted them for Year 9.

need was identified for more training of teachers in LMI, since in addition to lacking knowledge and confidence, some are resistant to using it. As one careers co-ordinator reported:

‘Some teachers have the attitude of ‘I came into teaching to teach science, not this’, and because of that not everyone will do a professional job on it.’

Training might help to convince sceptical teachers of the importance of LMI to pupils’ education and to their career decisions. The main difficulty in relation to delivery, however, was teachers’ own lack of knowledge about the labour market. Some teachers interviewed felt that more detailed teachers notes with answers, explanations and more information, for example about the companies listed under industry sectors, would be useful. It was also suggested that teachers might find the materials more accessible if they included more local LMI, since this would be familiar to them.

The issue of acceptance and understanding of LMI was of fundamental importance to the project managers. They felt that the project had made a ‘huge difference’ to understandings of LMI among careers advisers and co-ordinators, an assessment which our findings confirm. The project managers at East Lancashire Careers Service felt that the project was making important progress in raising awareness of the importance of ‘soft’ LMI, in the form of trends and broad skill requirements and ‘hard’, statistical LMI, which presents a challenge to many teachers.

As with careers education in general, the issue of time for delivery was raised. It was particularly important to some schools that the materials could be delivered in 30 minute slots, the time period for PSE. In some cases activities in the pack, for example a survey conducted by pupils, had not been used for this reason alone.

The video, distributed with the pack, had a mixed reception from teachers. It was intended to be shown in ‘short bursts’, linked in with use of the materials, but some did not like this arrangement, because of practical problems of having regular access to a video player and television and because pupils wanted to see the whole production. Some had therefore shown it in larger sections.

Finally, some teachers felt the need for ‘review’ materials in the pack, to restate the main points and messages of the materials. This was particularly necessary given teachers’ own unfamiliarity with the issues involved.

Teachers’ views on the impact of the materials: awareness and skills

Teachers felt that the materials were ‘tangible’, referring to issues, occupations and industries with which they had some familiarity and that pupils could therefore relate to them. Pupils were reported to enjoy using the materials and to pick up the main messages, for example about sectors undergoing decline or growth, or about the demise of the ‘job for life’ and the need for flexibility in careers.

A number of teachers referred to the ability level appropriate to the materials, finding them to appeal to average or higher ability pupils, but not to low achievers or to those with special needs. This was partly because the materials are less ‘factual’ than those which pupils often use and require a higher level of pupil involvement. At the same time the subject matter was found to appeal to many pupils, particularly those in Year 10 with an interest in entering employment or training on leaving school. It was thought nonetheless that the materials

could include some differentiation in the activities for pupils of varying abilities.

The content of the video was reported to have made some impact on pupils, particularly the equal opportunities material, where men and women are shown in 'non-traditional' roles. This material was described by one teacher as 'a bit of an eye-opener'. As we explained earlier, there was some feeling that the video could be improved by being shorter, for a single showing rather than in short bursts as originally designed.

Teachers were not able to identify a strong impact on pupil skills. It was felt that the materials had some impact on pupils' perceptions about their future and the pattern and content of their working lives, but that this would not affect their decisions in the short term. A particular concern of one school was that pupils rejected the work-based training route in favour of further education, because they want to take the most usual route, by 'following the crowd'. Teachers also felt that the skills of careers information search and decision-making were addressed more directly in other parts of careers education and that the materials should not be expected to serve that particular role. However, it was felt that the materials might encourage the more motivated pupils to find out more about industries and careers covered by the materials.

Pupils' assessment

Product assessment and awareness impact

Discussions with pupils focused on the LMI teaching materials which, as we explained earlier, were drawn largely from the first section of the LMI pack, 'What's happening in the Labour Market', providing an overview of industrial sectors, occupations and trends. Pupils had clearly assimilated the main messages of the pack, including the decline of manufacturing and growth of service industries, information technology, the growth in female employment, flexible working and the importance of qualifications. Some examples of the messages understood by pupils are as follows:

'Its all being taken over by computers, more women in the workforce and more firms, but smaller ones'

'There's going to be more jobs in tourism, retail and that, more self-employed jobs and more women getting jobs nowadays than there was in the past'.

Some messages had been understood better than others. For example some young people appeared to believe that flexibility was driven by employees' desire for variety, rather than by changes in the labour market and skill requirements. As two pupils at different schools stated:

'People will change two or three times in a lifetime because they might fancy a change and think 'well, I could do that and go and try it' instead of playing safe in one job.'

'I would prefer to change, because if you've been working as a lawyer all your life you'd get blinded. I'd like to be a lawyer until I'm about 30 and then go and do something else, like a paramedic'.

The basis of this misconception possibly lies in the traditional emphasis in careers education on personal decision-making rather than on labour market requirements. It suggests a need

for careers education to help young people to make the all-important connection between their own interests and the opportunities and constraints of the labour market.

The importance of qualifications was widely recognised and understood, partly because the materials from the project had been supplemented in one school with additional materials on this issue, largely to assist pupils in Year 9 with their choice of GCSE subjects.

Messages on equal opportunities were well-understood, and these were generally gained from the video, which places some emphasis on these issues. These clearly had an impact on the young people, partly because they convey the message of freedom of choice, which has a strong appeal. These messages can encourage young people to pursue career options other than those expected by their parents and other key influencers. Young people enjoyed this aspect of the video production. More generally, feedback on the video found a preference for a one-off showing rather than in short bursts, as intended. In terms of factual information, some pupils felt that the video contained insufficient information about entry requirements. As one young man stated:

'They showed us about the job of hairdressing, but not about the qualifications you need to get to do it and how you do the training for it. We wanted to know more about how you end up in that job'.

Formats for LMI

There were mixed responses to the main format used, the pack of materials and worksheets. A number of young people, in different schools said they preferred activities other than using worksheets and suggested some, including 'acting things out' through role play. Some said they wanted more information, rather than 'exercises'. As one pupil explained:

'One of the things we had to do was to put industries into sectors and I didn't know what half of them were, and the teacher didn't say. If I'm told things I take it in easier. From all those exercises you could look back and all your answers could be wrong, you'd be none the wiser, would you?'

This suggests a need for review work by teachers, who themselves need to be sure of the 'facts' to relay to pupils.

Some pupils expressed a preference for a variety of activities. This applied particularly to those who had not done the survey, who thought it sounded interesting. Some expressed their need for personal involvement, for the work to relate to them somehow. As one pupil said of a survey 'it would be good, because if you are *in it*, then you take more notice of it and what you're doing'. Theatre in Education productions had been well-received by pupils in two schools, one about drugs and HIV, the other about vocational training. One of the reasons given for the appeal of this format was its entertainment value. As one young woman explained:

'It made you think, when you see things like that it makes you more aware. You take more notice of it when you're enjoying it and it made us laugh. It was entertaining'.

As a pupil in another school observed, effectiveness of a format like theatre in education can also result from its repetition of a simple message, which could be tedious in a different format.:

'They kept repeating the message, which if they'd said it once it would have gone in one ear and out the other. The message was – do well at school and don't mess about, and if you want help you know where to come.'

Finally, on the issue of formats for LMI, some reference was made to the LMI leaflet by pupils currently in Year 10, who had seen the leaflet when In Year 9. A careers teacher interviewed in the process stage of the evaluation reported a strong impact from the leaflet:

'[The pupils] were impressed by the style ... and there were some young people in the photographs that the young people recognised, they were more concerned with, 'We know that girl!' than the content, but at least they could identify with it ... they knew that they weren't models, they were real people doing real jobs'.

Pupils interviewed in the impact stage had little recollection of the leaflet, and it is therefore possible that the effect of such a format is short-term.

Information needs

We have referred to the demand from some young people for factual information. Some had quite specific requests. One school had supplemented the East Lancashire pack with statistics on leavers' destinations. The objections of one Year 10 pupil that, to be of help to them, this should show the figures for the year 2000 could clearly not be addressed, at least not without the aid of a crystal ball, but indicate the interest in data which could inform their own decisions about post-16 routes.

Young people's information needs covered a range of issues, some of them only broadly related to LMI. These included benefits and entitlements for 16 -18 year olds, the minimum wage, tax and national insurance. Many also wanted information about jobs they could do before age 16 and how jobs can be found through informal contacts rather than by formal routes. On this last point, some young people said they were aware that to get a job 'its often not *what* you know, but *who* you know'. Much of this information could not reasonably be incorporated into LMI, but it does gave an indication of young peoples' interests, which could usefully inform the development of materials.

Despite the absence of some information of interest to them, the LMI materials were found to be useful by young people, and broadly helpful in considering their own futures. Many said they had heard the messages before, particularly about the growth of information technology and related employment, in subjects such as geography, but they did not object to hearing them again.

Skills impact

There was little evidence of a strong impact on skills among young people who had used the materials. Few said they had searched for information on particular occupations or career routes as a result of the sessions. This may partly be because schools deliver information search as a separate activity. There may therefore be scope for the materials to link more closely with information search, which pupils might welcome as a practical activity, particularly more able pupils.

Pupils appeared to be knowledgeable about sources of information, although in one school there were indications that they were over-reliant on their careers adviser. As one pupil explained, 'We don't pick the careers leaflets out. It's usually Mr A who does it for us. We tell him what we're looking for'. In general, however, most young people interviewed seemed to know how to access information, both at school and outside, including from the careers service.

5.4 The West Midlands project (Coventry): impact evaluation

As we explained in Section 2, the West Midlands project built on earlier work carried out by Quality Careers Service (Coventry) and partners in the West Midlands. A wide range of materials were produced, which included:

- Paper-based and audio-taped materials for pupils with special needs, including fact sheets on post-16 decisions, work-based training and 'Job Notes' for a number of occupations. Taped information covers specific occupations, local options for employment, training and education and interview techniques
- A resource pack of presentation materials for careers staff, teachers and governors to deliver to parents, pupils and other audiences at events including careers evenings, parents evenings, industry days, careers lessons and INSET days
- LMI teaching materials for year 10 for an existing 'Prospects' resource pack
- Curriculum materials in humanities (under development)
- A leaflet on LMI and careers for parents

The schools visited for the evaluation had used the materials for pupils with special needs, produced in a pack entitled 'The Changing Labour Market'. This is a sizeable pack of materials with three main sections:

1. Old jobs – new jobs (including key skills)
2. Qualifications for everyone (including NVQs and GNVQs)
3. Jobs today (covers the top ten jobs most likely to be entered by young people with learning difficulties)

Materials from the presentation pack, which focuses on labour market trends and the implications for young people, had also been used. The use made by the schools and other organisations visited is summarised below:

Alderman Callow Speech and Language Unit

The speech and language support teacher had used materials from 'The Changing Labour Market' pack with Year 10 pupils with special needs. The materials included Old Jobs, New Jobs, Key Skills and Qualifications, focusing on NVQs and GNVQs. They had used the final section of the pack, 'Jobs Today', extensively, discussing the entry requirements and skills of jobs of interest to the pupils. These materials had been used alongside the audio tapes. After listening to the tapes, pupils interviewed each other and also completed worksheets on the relevant occupations.

Sherbourne Fields School (Special school for pupils with physical disabilities and other

special needs)

The Careers Co-ordinator at the school had compiled folders of information about particular occupations which included written information (the 'Job Notes'), worksheets and tapes. These were used as a focus for careers education in Year 12, but had been used in earlier years to a limited extent.

The Meadows School (Special school for boys with emotional and behavioural difficulties)

The Careers Teacher at the school had developed a comprehensive programme of careers education for pupils from Year 7 to Year 11. The materials from the Changing Labour Market pack had been used with pupils in Years 10 and 11, particularly 'Old Jobs, New Jobs' and the Job Notes on particular occupations of interest to the pupils. Some pupils had also listened to the audio tapes.

Tile Hill Further Education College 'Further On' course for young people with special needs

The 'Further On' course is a 'bridging' course, aimed at giving young people with special needs⁹ additional help with English and Maths to enable them to enter vocational education, training or employment when they reach 18. The tutor on the course had used materials from the *Changing Labour Market* pack, including 'Old jobs, new jobs', 'Key skills', and skills for particular jobs from the *Jobs Today* section.

Baginton Fields (Special school for pupils with Severe Learning Difficulties)

The school had used the 'Job Notes' from the *Changing Labour Market* pack in its reading scheme, which it has developed in-house. The scheme consists of books about a character with a particular occupation, for example 'Idadora Bun', who runs a tea shop, and 'Basil Green', a gardener. Books are accompanied by packs of materials which include props and work clothing which enable pupils to 'enter' the role and gain greater understanding of work, employment and social life generally. The tapes have also been used.

Common Purpose

A Careers Adviser from Quality Careers was invited to deliver the keynote speech at a course on education and employment for 24 young people aged 13 and 14 drawn from schools across the city. The presentation and following session focused on trends in the labour market, using materials from the presentation pack. The main activity was a quiz which covered issues including the growth of part-time working, decline of manufacturing industry, youth unemployment, self-employment and deregulation.

Teachers' assessment

As with all LMI products, a key issue for teachers in assessing the materials for pupils with special needs was whether they met pupils' needs. However, careers education is somewhat different for many pupils with special needs, particularly for those with moderate and severe learning difficulties. Many of these young people can benefit from the broader view of society which LMI materials can convey to them, particularly in explaining how social and economic life depends on individual work roles and responsibilities. Therefore, in this context, the special needs 'Job Notes' were found to be useful for a special school's project on 'people who help us'. Equally, for pupils with severe learning difficulties, LMI performs less of a function in assisting with career decisions or in preparation for work, since many will not enter independent employment. LMI is important nonetheless for focusing on pupils' aspirations and addressing pupils' needs for skills and experiences to help them to realise

⁹ Mainly low school attainment and Moderate Learning Difficulties.

these. This is particularly important as the 'day care' model for people with learning difficulties has undergone a decline, and as new opportunities, which emphasise self-determination and independence have opened up. Therefore, as a senior teacher explained:

'We are seeking to analyse pupils' aspirations, where they see themselves when they leave school and what skills and experiences the school needs to help them to develop to move towards their aspirations. 'Job Notes' are good prompts towards identifying and analysing aspirations'

It was suggested that employers might work more closely with special schools in order to provide young people with tailored vocational education and training, leading to employment. This would undoubtedly increase the currently low rates of labour market participation by disabled people. LMI could play an important role in such a scheme.

Most of the feedback from teachers related to the materials themselves, and this was very positive. Teachers emphasised the need for attractive products with uncomplicated content and messages. The 'Job Notes' were singled out for praise in this regard because, in the words of one teacher 'they are clear-cut, split into small steps and nice and slow in progression.' They contain information of interest to less-able pupils, for example about clothes required to do the job and about tools and equipment. These materials were found to be useful for pupils with special needs in mainstream schools. Teachers emphasised the need for brevity, because pupils with weak literacy skills cannot cope with the 'dense' materials which more able pupils may enjoy using. Some of the materials in the presentation pack and the 'Prospects' materials, designed for mainstream pupils, had been used with pupils with special needs, including moderate learning difficulties and had been found to contain too many messages for them to cope with. One teacher therefore suggested, in relation to the presentation pack, that the materials could be more finely 'broken down' for delivery at a slower pace.

The audio tapes developed in the project were found to be particularly useful by a number of teachers, again because they present information about jobs in a clear and uncomplicated way. For this reason and because the information is delivered on the tape by a young person (drama students) teachers reported a good response from pupils. The tapes had the added advantage of being inexpensive and portable, enabling young people to take them home and to listen with their parents. Schools had also used them for group listening which they found improved concentration. To allow a school to use them in this way, Quality Careers Service (Coventry) had given funding for a 'listening station' for multiple-use.

No video was produced for this project, and some teachers felt that this would be useful for pupils with special needs. Video was thought to engage some pupils with moderate learning difficulties or emotional and behavioural difficulties who have difficulties concentrating for long periods. Video has the potential to put across uncomplicated messages to these young people in an interesting way. There was also seen to be scope for LMI in CD Rom format, so that pupils could progress through LMI at their own pace.

Schools found the materials developed in this project particularly useful because young people with special needs and learning difficulties previously had little LMI appropriate to their needs. A number of Special schools had therefore made considerable use of the new materials. Although teachers found it difficult to talk in terms of 'impact', they reported some improvement in decision-making with 'objective' rather than 'personal' reasons assuming more importance. A Post-16 co-ordinator in a special school said that, as a result of the material,

‘.....their choice is based less on ‘my friend went there’ and more on objective information, even if they still make the same choice.’

A Careers Adviser in a special school reported an improvement in knowledge and awareness which made careers visits to workplaces and training schemes more useful. As she explained:

‘You can see them asking more informed questions at the visit and taking more interest in their surroundings because it is partly familiar to them from the pictures in the pack.’

The special needs materials were also seen as useful in improving pupils’ skills more generally. For example, the audio tape was found to help to improve active listening techniques, a key goal of special needs education.

Finally, some interesting observations were made by a representative of ‘Common Purpose’ where LMI from the presentation pack had been used with young people of average and above-average ability. It was felt that young people had difficulty grasping the idea of ‘trends’ and change in the labour market because they frequently lack knowledge and understanding of the labour market of the recent past, the 1960s and 1970s. It is therefore important to ensure that young people fully understand how the labour market and wider society have changed, before they can appreciate how it will change in the near future. Partly for this reason, a representative of the organisation said of the effect on young people:

‘I wouldn’t really describe it in terms of impact, but there were lots of little lights going on’.

Pupils’ assessment

Product assessment

The young people interviewed were generally positive about the products they had used, particularly the audio tapes which had given clear information to users in an assessable format. It was universally believed that the tapes were made by young people who were doing the jobs they spoke about, and not that they were actors, which they were. As a pupil in a speech and language unit explained:

‘You want to know what you need to get the job, what you do when you’re doing the job and how you do it. The tapes were good because it was someone doing the job, saying what you needed to do, what you needed to wear’

A number of pupils said they preferred to listen to tapes rather than to fill in work-sheets, which they often found too ‘wordy’ and difficult to follow. As one pupil with special needs explained, ‘there is sometimes too much there and you get stressed out’. Some pupils said they would prefer to watch videos rather than listen to tapes about careers, and some said they would prefer to use a computer programme or CD Rom, believing that these would hold more information. However, the tapes had a wide appeal partly because they were clearly focused on what pupils need to know, and were generally well-liked and well-used.

The tapes were found to cover the occupational areas of most interest to pupils, with the exception of sport and leisure, a popular choice for pupils with special needs, although not one with many openings. The content was found to be useful and appropriate, covering the

issues of interest to young people with special needs. The main concern of young people with physical disabilities was whether the work was suitable for them, for example whether there was wheelchair access and adapted equipment. Here it was apparent that the use of the tapes, within careers education, was all important. As one pupil explained:

'We took the tape at face value, building work, can't do it, end of story, but Mrs B explained to us about what else we could do in the industry, and that made us think about what we could do which we hadn't realised was there at all'.

The Job Notes and other materials for special needs were felt by pupils to provide a clear indication of the physical abilities required for the work, and this was found to be helpful.

Awareness impact

Young people reported that the materials, particularly the Job Notes and tapes had told them what they wanted to know about jobs of interest to them, including the qualification and skill requirements. Many young valued quite basic information, for example that working in a shop would mean working with people, while working with cars would involve working with tools. After using the materials a young man with moderate learning difficulties was able to make a decision about his preferred type of work, according to his own fears and interests:

'I wouldn't want to work by myself because people gang up on you and batter the hell out of you. I'd like a job where you have friends, you work with them, you speak to a load of people and help them'.

Some young people had accepted messages about the importance of qualifications, particularly vocational qualifications and were therefore interested in gaining these through training on leaving school. As one young man stated, 'You can't really get a job these days without qualifications, well not a half-decent job anyway'.

Young people with physical disabilities felt they had learned a considerable amount from the materials. In particular, understanding the distinction between industries and occupations had made them realise that jobs in particular industries, for example building as described above, were open to them. This had increased the demand from these pupils for more information about other options for wheelchair users.

Skills impact

To assess the impact of the materials on skills of information search, young people were asked questions about how they would find out more about a particular job of interest to them. Some pupils said they would use the careers library, to look at college prospectuses and to use computer programmes. However, few had actually used a computer programme to access information. Many said that they would ask their careers teacher, who would then find the information for them. As one young man in a school for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties explained:

'Computers? I don't really like them. I had a bit of a fight with one down here.... I haven't really sussed the one up in the careers room yet, I'll let Mr C (careers teacher) do that'.

As this quotation suggests, it was apparent that many young people with special needs lack the confidence and skills to access information. It would be unrealistic to expect the project to achieve the increase in confidence and self-reliance which could benefit young people with special needs and learning difficulties. Indeed, deciding on a future path and discussing it with a careers teacher would be a considerable achievement for many of these young people.

Some young people said they would find out information from their parents or from friends of the family and some had misguided ideas about where they might access information about careers. For example, a number of young people talked about 'getting leaflets' from workplaces. As one young man explained:

'My sister does catering in the pub just down the road from us and I'd probably go to the pub and get some leaflets and look up more about it.'

It was not unusual for young people interviewed to cite workplaces as a source of information on careers, including obtaining leaflets about jobs and 'phoning the boss'. Future work on careers information for less-able pupils might address misunderstandings of this nature.

General issues

Young people were also asked more generally about where they find out about careers and jobs, who they discuss these issues with and what influences them most. It was apparent that, in contrast to more able young people, those with special needs or learning difficulties have a closer circle of advisers or advice sources. The close contact with other young people with similar needs means that these issues are often discussed informally, particularly in terms of 'what will we do when we leave here'. As a young man at the school for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties explained:

'We talk about it when we're together. At break times we sit and have a chat and a laugh and that with the lads and we ask each other what we're going to do when we're older, things like working on bikes, cars and that.'

As with all young people, many discussed their futures with their parents, who were reported to have the same attitude as parents generally, one of 'it's your decision'. Where these young people differed from others, was the absence of any overt influence from the media, particularly television, which appears to be so strong on young people in general. Young people with physical disabilities explained this with reference to the absence of any role models for them on television. It is possible that this also applies to the young people with learning difficulties and other special needs, who saw the lives portrayed by television actors as a world apart from their own and irrelevant to the options open to them.

5.5 The South West project: impact evaluation

The LMI products

As we explained in Section 2, the South West project developed three main products, as follows:

- A pack of curriculum materials 'Knowing Where the Jobs are' for use in 12 subjects: Art, English, Geography, Design and Technology, History, Maths, Languages, Music, PE, RE, Science and PSE. The materials include lesson plans, teachers' notes and handouts for pupils and other material, designed for use in Years 10 and 11
- A Theatre in Education production entitled 'Way to Go', performed by Rent a Role', lasting 30 minutes with additional interactive activities for pupils. It has been produced on video and is included in the pack of curriculum materials with full script and teacher's notes.
- Leaflets for parents and governors on LMI and career decisions to raise awareness. (These were not disseminated within the pilot project).

As we explained in Section 4, only two schools were found to be using the materials, although a small number of others had shown the video which accompanied the pack. The schools visited for Stage Two were St Augustines in Trowbridge, Wiltshire and Chosen Hill in Gloucestershire. Both are medium sized comprehensive schools. The reasons for using the materials were different in the two schools. At Chosen Hill the Careers co-ordinator was recently appointed to the position and was interested in using new materials. At St Augustines, which has *Technology College* status, careers education has a high profile. It begins in Year 7 where the focus is 'In the future', looking at labour market trends and on key skills; in Year 8 pupils form mini businesses where they develop an idea for a product or service, its development and marketing; in Year 9 they research jobs through contacting firms, and in Years 10 and 11 careers education takes place within technology. LMI is used throughout and some subject teachers are interested in including LMI in their lessons.

Use of the LMI pack

The schools visited for the evaluation had used materials from the LMI pack and had not used the video. Chosen Hill had used the PSE materials '*Knowing Where the Jobs are in Personal Development*' with pupils in Year 10.

At St Augustines the Careers Co-ordinator took a different approach, circulating the curriculum materials around the school departments asking for teachers' comments. As a result of this, three departments used the materials: Technology, Religious Education (RE) and German. The technology materials were used to enhance planned activities and extend tasks to relate them to careers, the labour market and the needs of employers and the RE materials were used for non-GCSE pupils in Years 10 and 11. Teachers said they would use the materials again, although probably only to a limited extent. It was the German curriculum materials which had been used most extensively in the school and this was because they met a need for materials for a new GCSE curriculum topic on Future, Education and Work.

Knowing Where the Jobs are in Personal Development

This activity was designed for use in PSE lessons, rather than in a curriculum subject like the rest of the South West LMI pack. Chosen Hill had used most of the materials in the Personal Development section of the pack, which involved pupils in conducting their own survey as the core activity. This activity was designed to raise young people's awareness of job options and to begin to think of their own employment.

Pupils were given an introduction to the activity in a Year 10 assembly. They were each asked to interview ten different people in employment and record some details of their work, for example job title, company location and size, journey time to work, qualifications and responsibilities. This activity was followed up in tutor groups, through collation of data, grouping of occupations and industries and construction of charts. In this process some general patterns were identified, such as distances travelled and skill requirements. The South West LMI pack included a number of detailed activities to assist more complex group analysis of the survey data and to incorporate LMI and data on skill trends. The pack also included an individual activity involving individual research into a particular career or job. However, at Chosen Hill, only the core activity, the survey, and follow-up were used. The main reason for this was shortage of time in PSE tutor groups.

Knowing Where the Jobs Are in German

St Augustines used most of the lessons in the German section of the LMI pack. Activities were taken from three 'lessons' in the pack:

Lesson 1: Strengths and weaknesses

Lesson 2: Jobs in Britain and Germany, by industry and region

Lesson 3: Which qualities are needed in employment

The pack includes a wide variety of activities in these broad areas, and a further section on working in Germany. Particular activities used by St Augustines included writing a school report and a CV in German. This included translating a school report from German to English and answering questions on its content. Other activities included giving job titles to illustrations of people at work and translating newspaper text about employment issues. The materials were used over a period of three to four weeks in the Spring term 1999.

Teachers' assessment of the materials

Our findings in relation to this project are unavoidably partial and impressionistic, particularly with regard to the materials used in the post-pilot period, where we have feedback on only two parts of the LMI pack. Teachers' responses to the materials during the pilot were discussed in Section 4, including whether they met the need for LMI and the appropriateness of the materials.

Although take-up of the materials was low, the two schools who had used them had found teachers to be enthusiastic about the work they were asked to do. Tutors at Chosen Hill, where the PSE materials were used, were reported to be enthusiastic about assisting pupils to carry out their LMI surveys and analysing the results. The exercise was felt to be useful as an introduction to LMI for pupils, and for teachers too. There was, however, felt to be the need for 'plenary' materials to draw general conclusions from the exercise.

At St Augustines the German materials were found to be very useful for delivering part of the core curriculum relating to careers and employment. The head of careers considered the materials to be useful in broadening pupils' understanding of the labour market, particularly by giving them a more international, or European, perspective on employment. The subject teacher who delivered the materials found them to be beneficial for language development, although they contained many spelling mistakes which needed correcting. As the Head of German reported '[They were] at the right level, required previous language and built up new language and structures'. This demonstrates one of the key strengths of LMI curriculum

materials: they can assist learning in the subject area at the same time as advancing understanding of the labour market and assisting career decisions.

Pupils' assessment of the materials

Pupils at Chosen Hill reported mixed reactions to their initial introduction to the survey exercise they were asked to carry out. Some pupils had thought it sounded interesting:

'I thought it would be good to ask people I knew about their jobs'.

While others were sceptical:

'What's the point in doing that? I would prefer going out and seeing people working'.

Many pupils enjoyed the activity itself, although some had difficulty finding ten people to interview. Experiences of the follow-up work were mixed, partly reflecting different methods used by form tutors. Some compiled graphs from the materials and others made more use of art and poster work, which pupils generally found more enjoyable. Some pupils felt that the follow-up work was time-consuming and repetitive, and would have preferred the work to have reached a conclusion, in terms of overall findings, more swiftly.

Pupils at St Augustines, who had used the German materials, took a different view, because they had used them in the context of their language lessons, rather than as homework for PSE. They therefore accepted the LMI activities as part of the course. Their views were generally positive, finding the subject matter interesting and relevant to them. As one pupil remarked:

'You had to write down your qualities, what you are good at and then think of what job it might lead you to. It was good that it applied to you, made it interesting to do'.

Pupils had found the work on LMI of use in their oral exam and course work, which included questions about further education and careers, and this undoubtedly enhanced their views on the materials' value. They also welcomed the opportunity to consider careers involving languages, and the materials served a dual purpose in this respect. As one pupil stated:

'It was like doing two things at once. You were thinking about what you wanted to do and learning the language at the same time, but you were also preparing yourself if you wanted to go to a foreign country and work.'

At Chosen Hill some pupils expressed a strong preference for 'practical' exercises, rather than classroom-based for careers education, believing that they could learn more by visits to workplaces. The survey met the need for practical activity to some extent, and made a welcome change from worksheets, which some pupils expressed a dislike for. Similarly, at St Augustines, some pupils felt the need for variety. As one pupil explained:

'There were a lot of sheets in that topic and I don't particularly enjoy filling in sheets. It was a bit tiresome by the end of it. It will be useful, but it wasn't that enjoyable.'

This suggests a need for a range of methods of delivery for LMI. Schools did have the video produced by the project available in the pack of materials, but had not used it. Although we were unable to evaluate its impact, the trial performance of the theatre in education production, from which the video was adapted, had a strong initial impact on young people,

initiating discussion about career decisions, the importance of qualifications and equal opportunities issues. The video has the same potential, particularly with planned and structured follow-up discussion and activities.

Awareness impact

Despite some scepticism about the value of the exercise at Chosen Hill, almost all pupils felt that they had learned something from it. They were surprised by some of the findings from their interviews, particularly at the importance of qualifications. As two pupils stated:

‘One of the questions is what courses did you have to take or what did you have to learn, and you have to be good at sciences for some of the jobs and that put me off.’

‘I was surprised at some of the qualifications you had to have. You don’t realise how many qualifications you *need* to get a certain job..... And they say you need three or four GCSEs, but that isn’t *it*. If you want to go into something like catering, you need GNVQs as well.’

Young people were also surprised about the hours worked by some people and the distances to work they travel. The exercise has also de-mystified some aspects of work, for example job titles. As one pupil remarked:

‘Often when you asked someone, the title of the job sounded really confusing, but when you asked them what they did, it sounded quite simple and easy to understand.’

The follow-up session had also had some impact on awareness of LMI issues. This included such areas as key skills and the wide choice of occupations open to them. Many were impressed at the similarities in skills required by different occupations, and the importance of skills such as communication. This was reassuring to some pupils who had felt that careers education tends to emphasise qualifications over broader skills and abilities. A number of pupils said that, as a result of the activity, they had considered a broader range of jobs as career possibilities. As one pupil explained:

‘When you’re little you think of the obvious jobs – fireman, nurse, hairdressing, and then as you get a bit older, when you come into Year 9, 10 and 11, and you do an exercise like that and people say ‘I’m a programme editor, I’m a programme manager, you get a different outlook on careers and think about the less obvious choices’.

There was some evidence on an impact on awareness among the pupils who had used the German materials at St Augustines, for example, some pupils were considering working abroad temporarily. However, it would be difficult to isolate the effect of these materials given the high level of careers education in the school. As one pupil responded, when asked whether the work had made them think about what they want to do in the future, or discuss it together:

‘ Not really, we’ve done so much about work and the future in other lessons as well, that we probably talk about it generally, not about what we’ve been doing in German.’

Skills impact

The young people interviewed in both schools were aware of the sources of careers information, referring to the careers library where they could look at information packs on particular careers. Many referred to computer programmes, which they had used to search for information on jobs of particular interest to them, such as holiday rep, actor, work with children and graphic design. A number were also aware of the Internet as a source of information about careers. Traditional sources, such as talking to the careers teacher, the careers adviser from the careers service, leaflets and sending away for leaflets were also mentioned. There was no evidence that the LMI materials had improved these skills of information search, although it is certainly possible that they increased young people's interest in putting these skills to use.

Key points and conclusions

Product assessment

- The teachers interviewed in the 'impact' stage of the research welcomed the LMI materials, with the most enthusiastic describing them as 'manna from heaven'. However, users are certainly a biased sample, and one of the main issues arising from the projects is how to promote wider use of LMI in schools.
- The materials developed for special needs pupils in the West Midlands, particularly the 'Job Notes' and the audio tapes, were found to be highly successful by schools which had used them. They were particularly welcome because careers materials for this group are in short supply. There is scope for these materials to be adopted in other areas of the country.
- The issue of teachers' confidence in delivering the materials was important, particularly where careers education is delivered in PSE by form tutors who are not experts in careers or the labour market. This suggests a need for training in the use of LMI. Materials should therefore include an introduction to the subject for teachers, including some basic facts and concepts.
- There was some evidence of an interest in using LMI in curriculum subjects, and this could reinforce any impact made in careers education lessons. The DfEE might consider ways in which schools could be encouraged to use LMI in careers education and elsewhere in the curriculum.
- The LMI products made extensive use of worksheets as a means of organising pupil activity and learning. Worksheets are a very useful way of organising teaching, particularly where teachers are unfamiliar with the issues and unable to devise their own structured activities. However, worksheets should include a variety of activities, for example role play and surveys, and not rely on the use of more passive responses, such as ticking boxes. There are a multitude of ideas for such activities in the South West LMI pack.
- While many pupils liked using the worksheets, some were weary of this format, and wanted some variety. Some pupils were interested in going on visits to workplaces and having the opportunity to talk to people about their jobs. This might be made possible if employers were involved in providing LMI to schools. The DfEE and careers services might consider ways in which schools and employers can be encouraged to work together at local level to improve young people's understandings of employment and the

wider labour market.

- Some teachers were of the view that LMI lacks intrinsic interest and therefore needs to be made exciting. Ideally, this included using a range of format, including video and role play. The funding of the pilot projects meant that each project could not meet this need. A number aimed to produce a range of products but, constrained by their budgets and time-scales, most achieved only one or two main products. Future LMI programmes in schools might therefore include a range of format, including worksheets, video, theatre in education, CD Rom and Internet sites.
- Some young people wanted to know fairly basic information about entry requirements for particular jobs. Key questions for them was 'how did they get that job, what qualifications and training do they have and how did they apply for it'. Other information requirements included benefits, the minimum wage, tax and national insurance.
- The information needs of young people with special needs were varied. Young people with physical disabilities wanted to know about jobs which do not exclude them, and which have wheelchair access and adapted equipment. Young people with learning disabilities wanted clear information about jobs, including tasks, tools, clothing and colleagues.
- Pupils of average ability and above could be encouraged to access information themselves, and LMI can clearly be used to develop skills of information search. However, the link between LMI and information search needs to be clarified for some pupils. Information search activities, for example using CD Rom or the Internet could be included within LMI programmes to enable young people to use knowledge about LMI to access more information.
- The national LMI included in the products was seen as comprehensive and, where gaps were identified, they concerned local rather than national LMI. This included 'hard' sector or trade specific LMI which has immediacy and relevance to young people. The West Midlands project aimed to address this need by including data on young peoples' destinations, which participants in other projects also felt would be useful. Local LMI was also seen to be more accessible to teachers and parents, even if the aim of LMI is to present wider opportunities and to encourage a degree of mobility out of the local area.

Awareness impact

- It was difficult to identify any strong impact of the materials on young people's awareness of LMI issues. The main messages of the materials were understood, particularly the increasing demand for qualifications.
- Some of the materials contained a number of messages, which were conveyed to pupils with varying degrees of success. For example, the demise of 'jobs for life' and the need for flexibility in careers was misunderstood by some pupils, who interpreted this trend as resulting from changes in employees' preferences. This suggests the need for careers education to combine discussion of individual preferences with information about opportunities and constraints of the labour market.
- Some teachers felt the need for materials which could summarise the main messages and emphasise the key concepts or facts which pupils should retain. While this can be

somewhat repetitive, it can increase the impact of some quite difficult concepts.

- Equal opportunities materials and messages were found to have some impact on awareness, particularly in the LMI materials and video in the North West. These issues often appeal to young people, particularly if they convey the message of 'freedom of choice'. Equal opportunities materials can encourage young people to consider career options other than those expected by parents and other key influencers. LMI materials always should contain messages about equal opportunities, in relation to gender, race and disability, since these are of interest and potential benefit to all pupils. They can also convey important messages about skill requirements, employment rights and social roles.
- Although some young people expressed an interest in factual information they found many of the concepts and categories presented in the LMI materials interesting. There was some evidence that they might even be useful for future decision-making. For example the distinction between industries and occupations had widened the horizons of young people with physical disabilities in the West Midlands project, because they saw opportunities in industries, such as building, which they had previously ruled out. Other young people said they had thought of other, less obvious, career choices, as a result of using the materials.

Skills impact

- Young people were asked about how they would find out more about a particular job of interest to them. Some said they would use the careers library, to look at college prospectuses and to use computer programmes. However, while many had knowledge about how to access information, they may not have practised these skills outside of familiarisation sessions.
- In some schools there was evidence of strong reliance from pupils on a careers adviser for information needs. When asked about how they would find out about a particular job, course or other careers information, pupils in a number of schools said they would ask the careers adviser, who would find the information for them. This was found in special schools, where pupils were less able to access information for themselves, but it was also found in mainstream schools. While one would not wish to discourage schools and careers services from assisting young people, in some cases careers advisers appeared to be overly helpful, which fostered a dependent relationship. Young people should be encouraged, where possible, to develop their own skills of information search.
- Young people appeared to make a distinction between learning about careers in class, including using LMI, and accessing information about jobs and careers. The research suggests that an important link is therefore left unmade and that this might weaken the impact of LMI on skills of further enquiry and search. Future LMI materials might therefore be linked to the exploration of factual information, for example in project work about careers of particular interest to pupils. In view of pupils' requests for activity, rather than continual worksheets, this type of work might be of interest to them.
- In terms of any impact on decisions, it was generally thought by teachers that, although the materials might have an impact on pupils' perceptions about their futures and the pattern and content of their working lives, they would not affect their decisions in the short term. However, they would help to promote active and independent decision-

making in the future.

Additional issues

- It is known that parents have a strong influence on young people's career decisions and we asked pupils about the advice their parents gave. Young people frequently characterised their parents' views as, 'It's up to you, but we'll support you in whatever you decide to do', but parents were also reported to promote some of the key messages of the LMI materials, for example, 'They say, concentrate on your studies and get some qualifications behind you'. Some of the projects aimed to involve parents, but this was achieved only to a limited extent. It is likely that the impact of messages delivered in LMI could be reinforced through involvement of parents who might also benefit from the information themselves.
- For many young people the media, particularly television, is a strong influence on career preferences, which can be a useful starting point for discussions about careers. In contrast, young people with special needs obtain few ideas from the media. Young people with physical disabilities explained this with reference to the absence of any role models for them on television. It is possible that this also applies to the young people with learning difficulties and other special needs, who saw the lives portrayed by television actors as a world apart from their own and irrelevant to the options open to them.
- Although employers are involved in careers education programmes, through providing work experience placements and in careers fairs and industry days, they were not involved in the LMI projects. Some schools were keen to involve employers, particularly special needs schools, where there was seen to be scope to identify jobs for which pupils might receive vocational training, and perhaps employment on leaving school.
- There is scope for employers to be involved, particularly in work on the local labour market, and Careers Service and schools might investigate ways in which this can be achieved. Because their use has been limited to date, much will depend on the use that schools and careers services make of the materials in the future. It is important that work continues to promote the use of the materials, including by keeping the materials up to date.

Section 6. Conclusions and lessons for the future

6.1 Introduction

In this final section of the report we ask what lessons can be learned from the pilot projects for future work on LMI. We examine the achievements of the four pilot projects and their plans for development, focusing on the factors which promote success and the barriers to use of LMI. Our analysis makes particular reference to success in achieving the four key outcomes anticipated by the DfEE from the projects, which were as follows:

- increased interest and awareness of LMI and how it can be used
- customised materials for the various target groups to improve individuals' choice and decision-making and/or to improve the relevance and responsiveness of provision
- improved decision-making
- better understanding among providers and 'influencers' of why LMI is important

6.2 The projects' own evaluations

Each project was required to undertake its own evaluation to assess the success of the processes and products, including through reporting experiences of their use and feedback from users. Two of the projects (London and the South West) completed an evaluation as a separate exercise during the pilot stage.

In the North West, Manchester Metropolitan University had carried out an evaluation of the nine pilot projects commissioned by the Government Office. This informed the development of the materials in the pilot period. However, in this project and in the West Midlands, evaluation was viewed as a continual process rather than as a one-off exercise. Therefore project managers in the two areas had carried out continual evaluation of the materials based on monitoring of their use and feedback from users and had adapted and updated materials as a result.

Local evaluation of the London project

The progress of the London project was monitored and evaluated both in the course of the pilot and on its completion. During the project period this involved feedback from the consultants managing the web-site about low rates of use of the product. Project managers accepted the consultants' recommendation to encourage greater use of the websites, but not their recommendation to allow a four month extension to the pilot period to provide more time for users to participate. Project managers felt that the project had achieved all it could and that the websites needed to be redesigned, redeveloped and relaunched.

The project as a whole was evaluated by the project manager in a final report which concluded that the project achieved two of its three aims: it demonstrated the feasibility of setting up a web-site for LMI; and showed the speed of search and analysis possible with hypertext. What it did not achieve was interactive use of LMI. The evaluation put forward three main reasons for this:

- unfamiliarity of TECS and training providers with Internet use and variability of IT skills

- the need for a 'critical mass' of users to make any bulletin board work. At least 200 were needed rather than the maximum of 50 who were allowed access to the site.
- the timing of the pilot in late Summer/Autumn when the main requirement for LMI is in the Spring, in the lead up to re-contracting.

The report concluded that there is potential for wider application of the product across London, beyond the two TEC areas in the pilot. A number of options were outlined, including the involvement of employers and providers in targeted sectors such as construction, hospitality, manufacturing and IT and the involvement of NTOs.

Local evaluation of the South West project

Evaluation of the South West project was built into dissemination of the materials during the pilot period. The purpose was to obtain teachers' views on the usability and quality of the materials and to further refine the materials before wider distribution. Schools participating in the internal evaluation were asked to trial all or parts of the materials in the Autumn Term 1997 and to complete two questionnaires: a materials questionnaire to report on trials of materials, particularly with regard to their effectiveness; and a questionnaire to report more general comments on the use of LMI in the project.

Most of the participating schools had carried out limited trials of materials, usually in one or two curriculum subjects. Of the 12 schools agreeing to take part in the evaluation, a total of 31 teachers in 9 schools gave feedback for the evaluation, which included all subjects except PSE. A key finding of the internal evaluation was that schools had carried out only limited trials of the materials, mainly because of the difficulty of incorporating new material into existing programmes of work at short notice, particularly in GCSE programmes. However, the materials were found to be useful and effective and teachers' views on specific materials were found to be useful in refining the LMI pack. The evaluation also obtained some valuable feedback from teachers on the use of LMI in the curriculum, including suggestions about removing barriers to the use of LMI and ways to encourage take-up of the materials by teachers (see Section 4). These include the following points:

Design of the materials

- The materials need to be refined and the LMI pack slimmed down
- Materials need to be 'ready to go' to ensure that teachers are not required to undertake time-consuming adaptations

Targeting

- Materials need to be aimed precisely at Key Stage 3, 4 or post-16.
- Greater attention should be paid to the accessibility of the materials for students with special needs
- The materials might be more effectively used in Year 9, before GCSE options are chosen

Introduction of the materials

- Curriculum materials need a long lead-time than the project allowed for if they are to be incorporated into Key Stage 4 programmes of work
- The introduction of the curriculum materials needs to be supported by whole school INSET, linked to the work of careers co-ordinators.

Following the evaluation, project managers 'refined' and condensed the materials to make them more 'user-friendly' and easier to distribute to schools. They also designed an introductory pack, as a guide to the materials, explaining their use. At the same time the steering group devised a strategy for introducing the materials into schools. This consisted of distributing of the pack to head teachers of all schools in the South West region.

6.3 General conclusions of the internal evaluations

Although very different in their design, and unavoidably brief, the evaluations identified similar issues concerning the adoption and use of their projects. Principally these were the tailoring of LMI to target groups, and promoting take up by user organisations. With the exception of the London project, the ability level of young people using the materials was a key issue, and each project concluded that careful tailoring and targeting or differentiation of the materials was a key requirement of LMI materials in the future. Other issues identified by the internal evaluations included the amount of LMI material acceptable to user organisations and whether they required local or national information. The evaluations did not reach clear conclusions on these issues, partly because they were not able to explore users needs in any depth.

Take-up was of particular concern to the South West and London projects. This was partly because their products were unfamiliar to potential user organisations, and take-up was recognised to be more problematic, but also because they were seen more as 'stand-alone' projects than the other two, and were therefore under more pressure to achieve results in the short-term. The other two projects were linked with careers services' strategy towards LMI and could therefore take a longer-term view on take-up by user organisations.

6.4 Achievements of the pilot projects: conclusions of the national evaluation

The achievements of the pilot projects are assessed here in terms of what they produced, what they disseminated, and the limitations of the projects.

The four projects have produced a range of high-quality LMI materials for use with a number of target groups. The projects were innovatory, either because they tested a new format for LMI, for example an Internet web-site; because they promoted the use of LMI in new settings, for example within curriculum subjects or at parents' evenings; or developed materials for new target groups, for example young people with special needs. By producing LMI for young people, the projects were successful in achieving the second key outcome:

'Customised materials for the various target groups to improve individuals' choice and decision-making and/or to improve the relevance and responsiveness of provision'

While the London project aimed to achieve the second part of this outcome, by improving responsiveness of training providers, it did not succeed because of resistance to the project by training providers. The Internet format was a barrier for some potential users, but is one which is likely to be overcome as use of the Internet becomes more universal. As a representative of a TEC stated:

'[the project] has placed the Internet firmly on the agenda and started a cultural shift which is necessary for it to be a success'.

The achievements of the London project were curbed by the reluctance of participating organisations to make use of the web-site and to share and use LMI *interactively*. This problem could have been overcome by involving a wider range of organisations, who were not directly in competition, although this might have been difficult within the time-scale of the pilot. Some of the difficulties encountered in this project might have been avoided if a controlled pilot had been conducted, involving a few selected user organisations. This was the approach adopted by the West Midlands project where feedback from users informed adaptations to the materials, which were then re-trialed. The danger of general or blanket dissemination, without piloting or as a pilot in itself, is that user organisations and target groups find fault with the materials and become resistant to further exposure to LMI products. A limited and controlled pilot can also be less costly than blanket distribution and reduces the amount of outdated LMI in circulation once the pilot materials are superseded.

The projects had a main target group, either young people or, in the London project, training providers, but they also produced materials for people who influence young peoples' decisions. These included materials for parents who constitute a key group. The materials from some of the projects were widely disseminated to 'influencers' of young people and this raised awareness of the projects and interest in LMI. For example, the presentation pack of LMI materials in the West Midlands has been used at events including parents' evenings and teacher training sessions. The projects therefore started to address the need for improved levels of knowledge and confidence among mediators of LMI, particularly teachers, parents and careers advisers.

The careers service played a major role in the North West and West Midlands and was key in promoting the use of the materials in schools. The projects promoted the use of LMI by the Service, informed advisers on the role of LMI in career decisions and, perhaps more importantly, increased careers advisers' confidence in using LMI. As a result of the work of careers advisers there was also some evidence of an increase in knowledge, awareness and confidence in the use of LMI among teachers who used the materials. The projects therefore took important steps towards achieving a change in culture which accepts the use of LMI in careers education and guidance and equips mediators to use it.

The projects were therefore successful in achieving first and fourth key outcomes of the pilots:

- better understanding among providers and 'influencers' of why LMI is important
- increased interest and awareness of LMI and how it can be used

However, there is evidence that the projects might have raised more awareness of LMI, and have been more widely used if materials had been more carefully and purposefully introduced to user organisations. In the South West it was thought that INSET or introductory meetings might have stimulated take-up by teachers; in London, a more comprehensive introduction to the project by TECs might have resulted in a more positive attitude from training providers. Again, the projects were constrained by their budgets; preparatory work of this kind is time-consuming and would have reduced the budget for development of the materials. Future work should have sufficient funding for this problem to be overcome.

The third key outcome of the projects was 'Improved decision-making', which we aimed to measure through the evaluation of the materials' impact on young people. The main findings from this stage of the research are that young people are interested in some of the main issues, concepts and facts and they like to learn about LMI through a range of formats. In particular, many pupils did not like an excess of 'passive' activities such as ticking boxes on worksheets.

Although the main messages of the materials were understood, it was difficult to identify any strong impact on young people's awareness of LMI issues. It was apparent that understanding was greater when they had heard the messages before, including in other curriculum subjects. This suggests the need for delivery in a range of situations and settings, as well as through different formats. Equal opportunities materials and messages were among those with the most noticeable impact.

Young people said they used a range of methods to obtain information for career decisions, including the careers library and computer programmes. However, while many had knowledge about how to access information, they may not have practiced these skills outside of familiarisation sessions. Young people appeared to make a distinction between learning about careers in class, including using LMI, and accessing information about jobs and careers. The research suggests that an important link is therefore left unmade and that this might weaken the impact of LMI on skills of further enquiry and search. Future LMI materials might therefore be linked to the exploration of factual information, for example in project work about careers of particular interest to pupils. In view of pupils' requests for activity, rather than continual worksheets, this type of work might be of interest to them.

The view of teachers on the impact of the materials was that, although the materials might have an impact on pupils' perceptions about their futures and the pattern and content of their working lives, they would not affect their decisions in the short term. However, they would help to promote active and independent decision-making in the future.

The main limitation of the projects was the extent of use of the materials, which was a result of the short time-scale of the projects and the emphasis they gave to the development of the materials. Project managers wanted to produce high quality, innovative materials that were accessible and could influence the target groups. This stage of the project therefore involved considerable time and effort. Some project managers had perhaps been a little over-ambitious in what could be achieved within the time-span of the projects, and a number of products had not been completed or disseminated. The limitations of the projects could have been overcome if the time-scale had been longer and they had been funded to introduce LMI into schools and other user organisations.

It was not just the length of time that the projects had at their disposal, but the time of year that work began which proved problematic. There are indications, particularly in the South West, that more use of the materials would have been made in the pilot period had they been ready for distribution to schools in the Summer term of 1997 for use in the Autumn term. Equally, more schools might have used materials from the revised pack in the following year if they had received them in earlier than the Autumn term of 1998.

6.6 Further development of the projects

In all cases the funding had allowed work to get off the ground or, in the North West, to be built upon and were linked to other work of the Government Office. The funding for the projects was adequate, although not abundant, they represent good value for money and provide a sound basis for future work in this field. All four pilot projects continued beyond the end of the pilot period, although it was not certain for how long further development work and dissemination would continue.

In the North West, South West, West Midlands work following completion of the pilot focused on dissemination and fuller use of the materials than had been possible at that stage. In the

South West the materials were refined and issued to all schools in the South West in Autumn 1998.. Similarly, project managers in the West Midlands distributed LMI packs and teachers' notes to schools for use in 1998/99 as well as full presentation packs.

The West Midlands and North West projects offered most scope for work to continue because of the role of the careers service as a lead partner. Services are required to develop LMI and, of course, play a key role in careers education and guidance for young people. The requirement on careers services to provide LMI is summarised in Figure 10. Careers services often allocate responsibility for LMI to an experienced member of staff. In the North West the project manager at East Lancashire Careers Service has been given the title of 'LMI co-ordinator' and plans to update and extend the LMI materials every two years. Project co-ordinators in the West Midlands plan similar work because, as a representative of the careers service stated:

'In terms of the more specific opportunity information, one year is the maximum. On the trend data perhaps two years is OK before it all needs updating.'

Figure 10. Requirements on careers services to provide LMI

CAREERS AND LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION

THE REQUIREMENT

1. Careers services must ensure the provision of readily accessible, well organised, accurate, unbiased, comprehensive and up to date careers and labour market information. Services must ensure that personal help is available, to those clients who need it, to interpret and use the information
2. Services must:
 - Provide information for young people and their parents/guardians at key decision points
 - Seek out information on the specific educational, training and employment opportunities that their clients require, including (where appropriate) special provision for clients with special needs and support for those groups who may face stereotyping or barriers in the labour market

(from *Requirements and Guidance for careers services*, DfEE, 1998, p14)

Involvement in the projects had encouraged careers services to make more use of LMI in their materials and in their work with schools and young clients. There were reports of increased confidence among careers advisers in the use of LMI and Services were keen to continue their work on the issue. As a representative of one careers service stated, using an analogy not recommended for use with young people:

'We have started on a drug now and it feels good, so we're going to have to feed this habit. The materials have been so well received that there is no way we can stop producing them. We'll have to find the resources to update and improve them. It will become one of our core products.'

Government Offices were also committed to developing further work on LMI. This was particularly evident where the Government Office had taken a leading role in the project, in the South West and in London. In these areas the Government Office was fully involved in plans for further dissemination or development. In London the Government Office provided additional funding to the project to allow potential options for the development of an LMI web-site to be investigated ¹⁰⁰.

6.6 Potential for a wider application or new products

Discussions with young people suggest a need for LMI in a range of formats, with simple messages. We have also identified a need to link LMI use with information search, to strengthen skills of decision-making. Materials should also be easy to use by careers advisers, teachers and other 'mediators' if they are to be effective. Plans for further development of the projects generally concerned wider application of the materials and more intensive use. In the North West, West Midlands and South West there is scope for developing LMI into a planned programme in schools, but this is dependent upon schools accepting that it is important in careers education or more generally. We have therefore identified a need for In Service Teacher Training (INSET) in LMI and for literature which explains the basic facts, trends and concepts to teachers. Careers services could play an important role in promoting the use of LMI in schools.

In London, there were plans to involve a larger number of organisations in the operation of a web-site. The basic idea of this project also had strong potential as a format for LMI for use by young people. This would essentially be a new project, since the pilot web-sites were designed for use by training organisations and other opportunity providers. There were also plans in the North West and West Midlands to adapt the materials for other target groups: in the North West for careers advisers working in Further Education; and in the West Midlands for using the special needs materials in mainstream schools.

Considerable interest has been expressed in the curriculum materials developed in the South West and there is scope for these materials to be adapted and used in other regions. Interest has also been expressed from other regions in the special needs materials developed in the West Midlands and the Internet web-site developed in London. Further dissemination of the products of all 23 pilot projects is likely to boost demand for the development of similar products from organisations including Government Offices, TECs, careers services and schools in other areas of the country.

6.7 The need for LMI

The central aim of the projects was to make relevant LMI more accessible by producing customised materials for users. What LMI was most useful therefore depended on the target

10. A number of options were drawn up, including:

- limited continued piloting in 3/4 TEC areas
- a modular development based on a London TEC Council site linked to TEC sites
- a pan London site offering varied services and involving key organisations such as London TEC Council, GOL, the Employment Service, NTOs and careers services

There was also interest in making the site useful to young people, possibly through links to careers services' sites and by including information on training and employment opportunities.

groups of the project and the context in which the materials the materials were to be used. Some examples of useful LMI are presented in Figure 11.

The balance between national and local LMI is an issue raised in all four projects, especially in relation to LMI for young people. Project co-ordinators and user organisations thought that both were important, to help young people to understand what opportunities are opened up or closed to them by remaining in the local area. They felt that local LMI was sometimes more easily understood by young people, because they could relate to the industries and jobs more easily. However, they also felt that local LMI was particularly unreliable and subject to sudden and major change, for example as a result of industry closure or relocation into the area.

The young people interviewed had various requests for information. These were often specific, concerning certain jobs, rates of pay, contributions and benefits and could be met by information search rather than through LMI. Some issues had clearly been of more influence than others and equal opportunities was among these. Materials should include such issues because, as well as being useful in their own right, they can convey other messages about LMI.

Some teachers in the South West felt that the benefits of the materials lie in the understanding they could promote of the world of work more generally, rather than conveying factual information about the labour market and employers' requirements. They felt that this understanding could assist young people in making their decisions, encourage an easier transition out of full-time compulsory education and lay the foundations for a healthy, economically active working life. Similarly, special needs teachers felt that the materials could promote understanding of social and economic life for young people who have limited experience of the world outside their school and home. LMI was therefore perceived as having a much wider use and potentially a social benefit, which it is not generally recognised to have.

6.8 Preferred formats for LMI

As we explained in Sections 4 and 5, the formats used in the projects were found to be useful, although some were found to work better and to offer most potential for future products. The limitations of leaflets as a format for presenting LMI were frequently stated; particularly if content is general, aimed at all young people in a particular year group or age range. As a careers adviser said of this format:

'It goes over the heads of young people. It's not something they're interested in. They're not motivated to sit down and take all this in ... they'd far rather sit down at a computer, and tap in, and get a visual impression'.

Figure 11. What kind of LMI is most useful?

North West:

- 'Hard' local LMI for giving one-to-one guidance to young people, including information on specific sectors, careers or trades (general LMI is of limited value in this context)
- Detailed local LMI for young people intending to seek training or employment locally

- Information on destinations at 16 to show young people the range of options
- Materials which support simple messages for use in classroom careers education sessions: in Year 9 to emphasise the importance of qualifications (to get better jobs) and in Year 11 to highlight key skills that employers look for

West Midlands:

- Local and national LMI combining general information about employment, training and education opportunities with information about specific careers and jobs
- Job information for young people with special needs to promote understanding of work and social roles

London:

- Pan-London LMI because London lacks discrete local labour markets.
- On-line information on job vacancies could help training providers find jobs for trainees and obtain a perspective on employers' current requirements

South West:

LMI relevant to:

- the subject being taught
- the ability level of pupils and their likely destinations
- the opportunities offered in the local area
- the message(s) that schools wish to get across

The LMI products made extensive use of worksheets as a means of organising pupil activity and learning. While many pupils liked using the worksheets, some were weary of this format, and wanted some variety. Where they are used, worksheets should include a variety of activities, for example role play and surveys. There are a multitude of ideas for such activities in the South West LMI pack. Some pupils were interested in going on visits to workplaces and having the opportunity to talk to people about their jobs. This might be made possible if employers were involved in providing LMI to schools. As we have suggested in Section 5, The DfEE and careers services might consider ways in which schools and employers can be encouraged to work together at local level to improve young people's understandings of employment and the wider labour market.

CD-Rom was seen to have strong potential as a format for LMI because of its interactive nature and the ability of users to work at their own pace and access information of most interest to them. In the South West some teachers felt that the curriculum materials could be supported by additional material in a CD-Rom. The main draw-back to the format is the cost of production and the short shelf-life of LMI products. There was considerable interest in other IT products, including Internet web-sites. In the London project the Internet format was seen as having potential for further development because LMI can be updated quickly and accessed easily through key-word searches. The London pilot suggests that acceptance and familiarisation of the Internet is an issue and its feasibility is dependent on organisations such as careers services and schools having access to the Internet. This issue has undoubtedly declined in importance since completion of the pilot projects in 1998 through unprecedented escalation in Internet subscriptions and usage. Future projects are unlikely to experience difficulties in persuading young people to use the Internet, the challenge will be to engage them in the use of LMI.

Video was used by The North West and South West projects, and although not extensively used by schools, was seen to have potential for wider use. This included for relaying messages about LMI to special needs pupils who benefit from a strong and direct medium of delivery. Many pupils said they liked to watch videos about careers. They had also enjoyed Theatre in Education productions, particularly for their entertainment value and clear messages.

6.9 Barriers to the use of LMI

Few barriers could be identified to the future *development* of LMI products because this part of the project had worked well. Participating organisations demonstrated considerable ability and imagination in the development of LMI products. The main requirement for the work of partnerships to continue was funding, either from external or internal sources. However, considerable barriers were experienced to the *use* of LMI. The projects operated with a limited budget and the bulk of funding was used in the development of the customised materials. Background research, conducted by project managers established the need for LMI among the target group, but did not adequately address the complex issues surrounding barriers to the acceptance and use of LMI. Indeed, the barriers were not realised until trials of the materials took place. Our report suggests that this is a significant problem which can be resolved gradually as the value of LMI to young people and their advisers is recognised.

With regard to the future use of LMI, the three projects with schools as user groups identified similar problems and barriers to the use of LMI. The London project experienced quite specific barriers which other projects aiming to make use of the Internet might wish to address at the outset. The main barriers were identified in lack of confidence in Internet use and 'cultural inertia' among training providers which rendered them reluctant to make use of LMI in an unfamiliar format. Most of the barriers identified to the use of LMI products referred to their acceptance by schools. The barriers identified by partners in the projects and by teachers in the three areas which developed schools' materials are presented in Figure 12. These barriers can be broken down by a gradual introduction of teachers and other mediators of LMI to the products through training and support in their use. Some barriers will be more difficult to break down and may only be overcome through a continuing policy emphasis at national level on the importance of LMI and of encouraging young people to be more responsive to the labour market.

Figure 12. Barriers to the use of LMI products in schools

- Resistance from teachers:

‘Teachers are reluctant to use new things unless they see the benefits of it and they don’t always look to see the benefits. These need to be made clear to them’.
- Understandings of LMI. The term itself is unfamiliar and is off-putting. It is sometimes better to talk about work and industry rather than to use the term ‘LMI’.
- Some selective schools believe that LMI is not relevant to higher ability pupils in the mistaken understanding that it is about jobs and training post-16.
- Schools have traditionally been reluctant to engage with the labour market, regarding education as separate from it. This is modifying, particularly with the development of vocational education and training programmes, including GNVQs, in schools.

- Teachers feel over-worked and need to be encouraged:

‘We’re talking about all of us having to do much more work and people feeling very pressed. The materials need to be sold in a way that says, here are some super materials which you could use without much extra work’ (teacher)

‘Teachers are required to do so much that they are sometimes unwilling to do things that they aren’t required to do’ (Government Office)
- Curriculum managers are concerned not to over-pressurise course staff and may act as ‘gatekeepers’ so that LMI material sent to schools does not get through to teachers.
- Limited space in the curriculum results in competition for ‘space’ between curriculum subjects and non-curriculum subjects, with the result that non –curriculum areas get ‘squeezed out’.
- Competition between departments for resources and space in the curriculum makes teachers reluctant to become involved in outside initiatives or to co-operate with colleagues in other departments. The move towards ‘faculties’ in schools (humanities, sciences), might stimulate interdepartmental collaboration in the use of LMI.
- Schools are reluctant to provide a budget for LMI work, which is necessary to give teachers additional time to study and adapt materials. Financial support might encourage schools to use LMI materials.
- The relationship between the Careers Service and schools does not always allow the Service an input into the curriculum, so that careers education may be largely confined to careers education ‘slots’.

6.10 The distribution of LMI

As we have explained, the timing of the projects was not ideal, in that the materials were completed too late for sufficient use to be made during 1997 and early 1998, the life-span of the projects. The main reason for this is that teachers plan their teaching programmes in the preceding Summer term. A similar problem was experienced in London, because training providers draw up their main bids for funding in the Spring. With regard to schools, the importance of timing was raised in the context of working effectively in partnership with teachers. As one project co-ordinator advised:

‘Don’t drop things on teachers, they need to plan a term in advance. Also it’s better to get things to them at the beginning of term rather than the end of the previous one, as it’ll just get lost over the holiday’.

Advance warning and planning time are also needed by careers advisers if they are to be involved in the distribution of materials to pupils:

‘It’s best to get [leaflets] to us earlier in the year, so you can plan them in ... if they come just as add-ons it’s a matter of luck whether they land on your desk in a week when you are going to be doing group work.’

Careers advisers suggested that the best time to get materials to careers advisers and co-

ordinators is during the summer term, when following year's school timetables are available, and planning ahead with schools takes place.

Respondents were also asked when it is best to provide LMI to pupils, in terms of their year group or key stage. There was a consensus that pupils should be at least introduced to LMI in Year 9 or before, but opinions were divided on the appropriate level of exposure. In the North West project where Year 9 pupils had been targeted, some teachers believed that pupils in Year 10 or 11 might be more receptive to the messages conveyed by the project. In this project the optimum time was considered to be late in Year 10 or early in Year 11; early in Year 10 pupils are less likely to be interested and by the second term of Year 11, most would have made their post-16 choices. A different view was expressed in the South West, partly because the materials are aimed less at assisting decision-making than at promoting understanding of the labour market and the world or work more generally. Therefore, although the materials were designed principally for use in Years 10 and 11, many participants in the project felt that there was greater scope for the use of LMI in Year 9. This was partly because the curriculum is less constrained, making it easier for new materials to be fitted in rather than forced in. As one teacher stated:

'In Year 10 it's bang bang module test, bang bang module test, and there's very little time for anything else. You can't risk not covering the syllabus'.

However, it was also thought that pupils might be particularly receptive at this stage because GCSE subject choices are made in Year 9.

The best time to introduce LMI has therefore to include pragmatic as well as strategic considerations. Moreover, although respondents could identify stages in which LMI materials would be particularly helpful, many identified a need for greater awareness of the labour market at a much earlier stage, including in primary school education. However, this cannot currently be carried out by careers services since they are not funded to work with primary schools and the majority therefore have no involvement with pupils before they start secondary school. It was also agreed that, whatever the age of pupils who use the LMI, materials need to be tailored carefully to the level and interests of the age group with which they are used.

6.11 Promoting wider use of LMI

The experience of the four studies shows that user organisations need to be convinced of the benefits of LMI before they can be expected to use materials with target groups. Training sessions, which could include whole school INSET, linked to the work of careers co-ordinators, were suggested as an appropriate introduction to LMI materials in schools which might reduce resistance. Respondents in all areas identified a need for careful management of the materials in order to ensure that they are used. In the case of schools, it was generally agreed that careers education materials should be sent to the head of careers. However, where materials are intended for use in the curriculum, opinion was divided on the appropriate recipient of materials. Some respondents thought the curriculum co-ordinator was thought to be the appropriate person to introduce the materials, while others thought that careers co-ordinators would be more likely to ensure their distribution and promote their use.

A number of respondents saw a role for the Careers Service in promoting use of LMI materials. With regard to materials for schools, a careers service representative suggested that the Service could be allocated LMI dissemination funding which it could devolve to

schools. It was also felt that the Careers Service could help to promote wider use of LMI by a range of potential user organisations because of its links with a cross section of partners and clients, including young people, parents, teachers, training providers and employers. Careers services were included as members, usually lead partners, in the projects and were therefore in a good position to take the projects forward, but much was dependent on other participating organisations, particularly schools. In addition, although structures and systems are essential, it was felt that one cannot under-estimate the influence of hard-working and committed individuals in the promotion of LMI products. There was general agreement that however the LMI materials were introduced, it was important to have an 'enthusiast' to spearhead their use, either in the careers service, schools, Local Education Authority or elsewhere. The role of individuals was key to the success of the projects, as is often the case in small-scale pilot work. It is through a combination of the efforts of organisations, partnerships, networks and key individuals that the projects are likely to progress and promote wider use of their products.

Policy issues and recommendations

Development and use of customised LMI

- The pilot projects carried out background research and collected some useful data on the need for LMI by the target groups. However, in general, this research failed to identify potential problems, particularly with take-up of the customised products. Therefore, although most of the products met the needs of users, they were not adopted as widely as was hoped. ***Future LMI projects should ensure that background research addresses issues of take-up, particularly how products should be introduced to user organisations, and any training needs among 'mediators', such as teachers.***
- The problem of indifference or resistance to LMI products was not fully anticipated by project managers who believed that user groups were in desperate need of LMI. The logistical problems of introducing LMI into schools, including who to approach, were not always anticipated. ***The experience of the projects suggests that issues of dissemination of materials to schools should be addressed by future LMI development projects at an early stage.***
- The pilot projects did not use systematic methods to select organisations to trial their LMI products. There was a tendency to distribute materials too widely during the pilot. This resulted in lower rather than higher rates of use, because products were often distributed without sufficient back-up and support to potential user organisations. This undoubtedly had a detrimental effect on take-up of the materials and their use in the longer-term. Some potential user organisations were 'put-off' at this stage. ***Future projects should be given sufficient time and resources to pilot LMI products, since investment at this stage can result in increased use of products in the long-term. Their proposals should include adequate costings for this important stage.***
- The projects experienced varying degrees of difficulty in encouraging teachers to trial the LMI materials, even in schools which had agreed to use them. Reasons for this include the timing of projects, pressure of work on teachers and 'initiative fatigue'. These had little to do with the LMI materials themselves, which were generally thought to be of high quality and potentially useful by teachers who had looked at them. Teachers and careers advisers need time to plan the use of LMI materials with pupils. Careers advisers and

teachers need to have materials during the late Spring or early Summer term, when they are planning their programmes for the next school year. ***Future projects should ensure that their time-tables are compatible with those of the user organisations targeted and that participants are informed about the materials well in advance of their distribution.***

- For the organisations who were using the materials, ease of use was an important factor, both in the decision to use them and in their continued use. A key requirement was that materials aimed at young people should be applicable or adaptable to cover a range of ability. This need for 'differentiation' in the materials was recognised by the projects in the development stage. A second key requirement was that products should be 'off the shelf', ready for use and require little adaptation by teachers. ***Future projects should ensure that their materials meet the key requirements of schools for differentiated materials and for 'off the shelf' products.***
- Of the four pilots, the South West project was undoubtedly the most ambitious in terms of scope and distribution. It is therefore surprising that the materials have not been widely adopted since completion of the pilot project. The reasons for the low rates of use to date include the need for teacher training in LMI to improve levels of knowledge and confidence in its delivery. ***The DfEE, careers services and schools should address the need for in-service teacher training in LMI, both in careers education and across the curriculum. There is also a need for literature which explains the basic facts, trends and concepts to teachers.***
- Some of the materials met the need for *local* and *national* LMI. Local LMI was useful to convey the extent of careers opportunities available locally. Where these are limited, national LMI can be used to convey the opportunities available outside the locality and to encourage wider horizons. Equally, LMI can be used to raise awareness of opportunities within the local area and to encourage young people to consider returning to the area after completing higher education. LMI was therefore seen to have the potential to address the problem of 'brain drain'. ***The DfEE and future projects should look more closely at the respective benefits of local and national LMI, including in relation to particular areas of the country.***

Impact of LMI products in schools

- The materials developed for special needs pupils in the West Midlands, particularly the 'Job Notes' and the audio tapes, were found to be highly successful by schools which had used them. They were particularly welcome because careers materials for this group are in short supply. There is likely to be a strong demand for the West Midlands special needs materials in other areas of the country. Similarly, careers services could usefully draw on some of the excellent activities included in the South West and East Lancashire materials. ***The DfEE might consider ways of disseminating the materials developed in these projects more widely.***
- The research findings indicate a need for LMI in a range of formats, with simple messages. Ideally, this could include video, role play and use of IT as well as traditional methods such as worksheets. The funding of the pilot projects meant that each project could not meet this need. A number aimed to produce a range of products but, constrained by their budgets and time-scales, most achieved only one or two main products. ***Future LMI programmes in schools might therefore include a range of***

format, including worksheets, video, theatre in education, CD Rom and Internet sites. Materials should also be easy to use by careers advisers, teachers and other 'mediators' if they are to be effective.

- Equal opportunities materials and messages were found to have some impact on awareness, particularly in the LMI materials and video in the North West. These issues often appeal to young people, particularly if they convey the message of 'freedom of choice'. Equal opportunities materials can encourage young people to consider career options other than those expected by parents and other key influencers. **LMI materials always should contain messages about equal opportunities, in relation to gender, race and disability, since these are of interest and potential benefit to all pupils.**
- In terms of the impact on skills, the research suggests that the link between delivery of LMI and information search is left unmade and that this might weaken the impact of LMI on skills of further enquiry and search. **Future LMI materials might therefore be linked to the exploration of factual information, for example in project work about careers of particular interest to pupils.**
- there was some interest in using LMI in curriculum subjects, and this could reinforce any impact made by LMI materials used in careers education lessons. **The QCA and DfEE might consider ways in which LMI could be more closely integrated into the curriculum as well as in careers education. The South-West materials could be a very useful resource for this work.**
- In terms of age groups for use of LMI, although teachers and careers advisers could identify stages in which LMI materials would be particularly helpful for example in choosing post-16 routes, many identified a need for greater awareness of the labour market at a much earlier stage, including in primary school education. However, this cannot currently be carried out by careers services since they are not funded to work with primary schools and the majority therefore have no involvement with pupils before Key Stage 3. **The DfEE might consider ways of funding careers services to conduct some work on LMI in Key Stage 2 in primary schools.**

Involvement of employers, parents and other partners

- While many pupils liked using the worksheets, some were weary of this format, and wanted some variety. Some pupils were interested in going on visits to workplaces and having the opportunity to talk to people about their jobs. This might be made possible if employers were involved in providing LMI to schools. **The DfEE and careers services might consider ways in which schools and employers can be encouraged to work together at local level to improve young people's understandings of employment and the wider labour market.**
- Parents are known to have a strong influence on young people's career decisions and this was confirmed by the evaluation. Parents were reported to promote some of the key messages of the LMI materials, for example, to gain qualifications before seeking employment. Some of the projects aimed to involve parents, but this was achieved only to a limited extent. It is likely that the impact of messages delivered in LMI could be reinforced through involvement of parents who might also benefit from the information themselves. **The DfEE and careers services might consider ways of improving parents' understandings about the labour market, in order to improve the quality**

of advice they give to their children.

- The West Midlands and North West projects offered most scope for work to continue beyond the pilot period because of the role of the careers service as a lead partner. Services are required to develop LMI and, of course, play a key role in careers education and guidance for young people. There is a case for a stronger role for the Careers Service in promoting use of LMI materials. With regard to materials for schools, a careers service representative suggested that the Service could be allocated LMI dissemination funding which it could devolve to schools. It was also felt that the Careers Service could help to promote wider use of LMI by a range of potential user organisations because of its links with a cross section of partners and clients, including young people, parents, teachers, training providers and employers. ***Future LMI projects should seek the full involvement of the Careers Service, particularly in disseminating LMI products to schools.***
- It is important that careers advisers and teachers, including careers co-ordinators, are convinced of the need for LMI materials to ensure their use in careers education and guidance and in the curriculum. The pilot projects show the importance of fully involving these and other ‘mediators’ of LMI to young people, which can be achieved through preparation, training, and support. ***There is also a need for a continuing policy emphasis at national and regional level about the role of LMI in encouraging young people and providers to be more responsive to the labour market. This message can be mediated through organisations including Government Offices, TECs, careers services and Local Education Authorities.***

Appendix 1: topic guides for process evaluation

Responsiveness to the labour market

Questions for topic guides

Key:
Government Offices (GO)
Contract holders and partners (C&HP)
User organisations (UO)

Section 1: How the projects were developed

GO/CH&P How were the projects developed? Roles of GO, contract holder, partner organisations and user organisations

GO/CH&P/ What are the main features of the projects?

GO/CH&P/
UO What is the intended purpose of LMI in the projects?

GO/CH&P How was it decided which projects should be developed?
was a rational needs assessment made?
Were any evaluations made on which projects to take forward?

GO Is there any relationship between the strategy of the GO and the
pilot projects?

IF YES: How do the projects fit in with the regional strategy?

Probe for: Relationships to work on NETTs, NRA etc.

Existing work on which the project were built

GO Would the projects have been undertaken in the absence of the
responsiveness initiative?
IF YES: How would the timetable of the projects have been affected?

GO/CH&P How were the following selected:
participating organisations?
user organisations?
target groups for the customised information?
formats for the customised information?

GO/CH&P What has been the timescale of the projects?
completion of material
trials of product
evaluation of project(s)

**Section 2: Involvement of organisations in the development and customising
Of the LMI**

GO/CH&P Which organisations were involved as partners in the development of
UO the LMI?
what were their individual roles?

GO/CH&P How would you define LMI?
UO

GO/CH&P How do other partners in the project define LMI?
UO

GO/CH&P How do you account for these differences
UO

GO/CH&P Have these differences had any implications for the project(s)?
UO

GO/CH&P/ Which organisations were involved as partners in the customisation of
UO the LMI?
what were their individual roles?

GO/CH&P Were any partnerships or networks developed to assist the collection
UO and use of LMI?
were these based on existing networks or were they entirely new?

GO/CH&P Did the partners have a shared understanding of the project aims?
UO Did the partners have a shared understanding of the term LMI?

GO/CH&P How could the partnerships or networks be improved?
UO

GO/CH&P Will any new networks be continued when the projects have finished?
UO What role will they play?
How will they be overseen/managed?

GO/CH&P Has local collaboration between those who support young people in
UO their learning or employment choices improved?

Section 3: Sources of the LMI used in the project

- GO/CH&P What sources of information were used to develop the customised LMI?
Were these existing sources or new sources of information?
- GO/CH&P How was the LMI collected and collated?
Probe for role of participating organisations and methods of collection
- GO/CH&P Assessment of the information:
how useful were the sources of information?
did the provider understand why the information was needed?
was the information easy to interpret? was the information up to date?
was it robust?
Would it have been useful to have had additional information (what)?
Were there any barriers to the provision of the information?

Section 4: The customised LMI materials

- GO/CH&P/ Who are the materials aimed at?
UO
- GO/CH&P/ How was it decided who the information should be aimed at?
UO (Probe schools about suitability across ability groups)
On what grounds were groups excluded?
- GO/CH&P How was the LMI tailored for the client groups)
UO
- GO/CH&P/ In what ways have the materials been used by user
UO organisations?
Probe for: settings
'one off' or continual use
dedicated sessions or integrated
- CH&P/UO How long will user organisations continue to use the materials (or updated materials)?

Section 5: user organisations' views on the LMI products

- CH&P/VO In general, did the user organisations find the products useful?
- GO/CH&P/ Did the projects provide useful information to people providing careers
VO education, guidance and support to young people?
Did they feel better equipped as a result of the LMI products?
- GO/CH&P/ How appropriate were the materials?
VO How useful was the format of the LMI?
- CH&P/VO Did the materials meet a need already identified by user organisations?
VO What has been the impact of products on user organisations' work
with individuals?
Impact on services/training provided by user organisations?
Did the material aid or change their decisions about what courses to
provide?
- CH&P/VO Do user organisations feel more confident about using LMI?
Do they feel more able to offer careers education and guidance or
learning based on LMI?

Section 6: Impact on young people

- GO/CH&P/ Did the materials have a direct impact on young people?
VO
- GO/CH&P/ Will the materials have a long-term impact on young people?
VO
- CH&P/VO Did the materials increase young people's knowledge?
Did the materials increase young people's awareness?
- CH&P/VO Did the materials improve choices and decisions made by young people?
- CH&P/VO Did the materials help young people to develop skills necessary to
research and use information?
- CH&P/VO Did young people feel encouraged to obtain and use information in the
future?
- CH&P/VO Are there still any gaps in the provision of LMI?

Probe for nature and extent of gaps

Section 7: Evaluation/future plans

- GO/CH&P What local evaluation of customised information has been carried out?
 have any findings been implemented?
- GO/CH&P In general, how effective has the project been in:
 Improving understanding of LMI? Encouraging use of LMI?
 Promoting decision-making based on LMI?
- GO/CH&P/
UO Did the projects have a beneficial or negative effect on other
 areas of work?
- GO/CH&P/
UO Have there been any other materials and/or influences that have
 contributed to the end result?
- GO/CH&P/
UO Do any of the products have potential for a wider application or to
 result in a new product?
- GO/CH&P/
UO Are there any barriers to the future use of LMI products?
- CH&P/UO Which formats would be best for products aimed at the user group?
 Probe: work packs, leaflets, theatre in education, Internet
- CH&P/UO Through which channels (networks and organisations) would it be best to
 promote wider use of the customised LMI?
- CH&P/UO What sort of LMI would be most useful?
- CH&P/UO When would it be best to provide the LMI (eg. age group, time of year)?
- GO/CH&P/
UO How could the current project be enhanced?

Survey of users of LMI products

Please note: Methods to be designed according to project details

- GO/CH&P/
UO How can we organise a survey of users of the customised LMI?
 Will it be possible to construct a control group? Will schools distribute the
 questionnaires to pupils and parents?

Appendix 2: Methods used in the 'impact evaluation' in the three case study areas

North West (East Lancashire)

East Lancashire Careers Service (ELCs) compiled a list of six schools where the materials had been recently used, or where their use was planned. NIESR contacted four of these schools and all agreed to take part in the evaluation.

The schools were visited in February and March 1999. All were mainstream state schools with a mixed ability intake. Only one of the schools had a sixth form. Two of the schools were in a rural area, with a very low ethnic minority intake. The other two were in the town of Blackburn; one with over 90 per cent of pupils from ethnic minority groups, largely Asian heritage; the other a Roman Catholic school with over 90 per cent white intake.

A total of ten groups of pupils were interviewed across the four schools, with between six and 12 pupils in each group, amounting to a total of 91 pupils. Pupils in two of the schools were in Year 9 (Fearn and Beardwood), and in Year 10 in the other two. Interviews were also carried out with the careers co-ordinator in each school and, in one school with form tutors who had delivered the LMI materials.

The West Midlands (Coventry)

Quality Careers Service (fn the Careers Service company for Coventry) organised a meeting in January 1999 of project managers, careers advisers and teachers to discuss the purpose of Stage Two of the evaluation and to facilitate arrangements with schools. Following this meeting, NIESR contacted five schools and colleges and a voluntary organisation *Common Purpose*. The schools visited were:

Alderman Callow Speech and Language Unit – a centre in a mainstream comprehensive school providing support for pupils with difficulty with speech and language

Sherbourne Fields School – a special school largely for pupils with physical disabilities aged 2 – 19

The Meadows School – a special school for boys aged 11 – 16 with emotional and behavioural difficulties

Tile Hill College – a Further Education College which runs a *Further On* course for young people with special needs (low school attainment and Moderate Learning Difficulties)

Bagington Fields – a special school for young people with Severe Learning Difficulties aged 11 – 19

Common Purpose is an organisation which runs short courses for young people 'Your Turn' to promote 'active citizenship'. This includes gaining a deeper understanding of how their community works and the decision-making process. (fn its main activity is running short courses for decision-makers from different backgrounds, including business, education, health and the voluntary sector). Pupils in Year 9 are nominated by schools across the city to attend a series of days with a central theme, one of which is education and employment.

In each Coventry school in-depth interviews were carried out with the teacher responsible for careers or transitions. Interviews were held with pupils either individually or in groups. The total number of young people interviewed was small, at 36, because some of the units were small in size. (Fn It was not considered appropriate to interview pupils in one school, where pupils had severe learning difficulties, because many would find the experience disturbing. It

was also not possible to interview young people involved in the *Common Purpose* initiative). However, the discussions were wide-ranging and highly informative.

The South West

Considerable difficulty was experienced identifying schools where the pack of LMI curriculum materials had been used. In order to find out where materials had been used, enquiries were made of the project managers, the five Careers Service Companies in the region and the four schools visited in Stage One of the study. After some months of enquiry, visits were made to two schools in the South West region instead of the target number of four. Both schools were identified by Careers advisers. One school had used some of the PSE materials, the other had used the German curriculum materials.

A total of 38 pupils were interviewed in five groups across the two schools. Interviews were also carried out with the careers co-ordinator in one school and in the other with the Head of Pastoral Care, the Careers Assistant, the Deputy Head and Careers Adviser (from Lifetime Careers) from the Careers Service Company for Wiltshire.

Appendix 3: Tailored Topic Guides for interviews with young people

Coventry

Young people

Discussion prompts

Assessment of product

Enjoy using the materials?

Like the leaflets?

Like the tapes?

Use in school?

Take home?

Like the pictures?

Why like/not like?

Awareness impact

What was learned?

Anything new ?

Heard it before?

Surprised by anything?

Worried by anything?

Any help in decisions about leaving school?

Any new ideas?

Thought about the materials after using?

Where else have ideas come from?

Skills impact

Knowledge on how to find information

Discuss with parents?

Take any action on search?

If had idea about a course/job, who would discuss it with or how would find out more?

**South West LMI pack
Chosen Hill pupils**

About the whole year assembly when project was explained

What was said in the assembly
Were they interested?
Were they given new information?
Did they want to find out more?

The survey activity
Were they interested?
What did they do?
How was the activity introduced by the teacher?
What was the purpose of it?
What did they find out?
Did they find out anything new?
Did it make them think? About what?

The follow-up
What did it involve?
What was discussed?
Understanding of gender divisions
Understanding of issues about company size, location, distance travelled to work,
skill requirements
What did they learn? Anything new/reinforced/new links made?
Were they interested?
Did they want to find out more?

General questions on careers
What do they want to do when leave school
Where do they get ideas from
How would they go about finding information on a career

East Lancashire materials
Fearns School

The Survey – summarise what they did
Watching the video – summarise what they saw
What did they learn from the survey and video

What were the main messages (materials/video)
What changes are taking place in the world of work
What types of jobs are there more or fewer of than in the past
What kinds of workers do employers want
What kinds of skills are in most demand

How well were the messages put across (video and materials)
Had they heard these messages before
Reactions – confident or worried about the future
Did they enjoy the work on LMI
Was it of any help in GCSE option choices

Where do pupils go on leaving the school
Where will they go
How will they make their own choice
What sources of information, advice and guidance do they access
How would they find out about a job or course of interest to them