

# Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG)

## Education Select Committee

March 2022

**Written submission by Dr Lisa Wardle and Dr Ricky Gee with support from Nottingham Civic Exchange**

### Executive Summary

This written submission will address key areas identified by the Education Committee and outline how the addition of a sociological approach can be utilised to enhance the practice of CEIAG, by positioning students as 'critical career researchers' (McCash, 2006).

This approach compliments the Gatsby Benchmarks to ensure a bespoke CEIAG is delivered regardless of social position and circumstance. Whilst there is much merit to the Gatsby Benchmarks to influence individual aspiration, wider sociological factors that influence career trajectory should be considered.

It is important that CEIAG plays a significant role in enabling students/service users to read the labour market critically. In addition, there needs to be mechanisms to monitor and report where systems are creating modes of inequality, e.g. it is good for students to have visits from employers, however are employers recruiting from underrepresented groups? A sociological focus has benefit to CEIAG, this moves the policy paradigm from a conservative/liberal stance (Watts, 1996; Mignot 2001) to a more critical one to fully address social justice (Hooley et al 2018).

To be able to address the inequalities in social structures it is imperative that resources are allocated due to need, for example at present schools in more deprived areas are less likely to have access to a specialist Careers Adviser, with 21% of teachers in the most deprived areas reporting non-specialists delivered personal guidance, compared to 14% in more affluent areas (Holt-White, Montacute and Tibbs 2022).

Disadvantaged young people are more likely to experience 'career confusion' due to low career self-efficacy; limited social capital; a preference for informal advice and a tendency to select technical, rather than academic pathways. This often leads to a misalignment of career plans and a higher risk of becoming NEET. Students in alternative provision or home-educated are less likely to receive sufficient careers support and more at risk of becoming NEET. Some

ethnic minority groups who do well at school and follow an academic pathway, may not be prioritised for CEIAG support, but then face barriers in achieving positive employment outcomes. Whereas white males from low socio-economic background are more likely to underachieve educationally, which may restrict future career options (Hunt et al, 2021). Whether it is those that have been 'left behind', care-experienced young people or those with additional needs, having limited resources to cope with prominent transitions in their lives is a significant factor which may affect successful career planning.

### **Recommendations**

1. Additional funding for qualified youth workers, to build relationships with the groups identified above and work with career professionals to offer CEIAG.
2. Specialist, targeted and longer ongoing support for young people with SEN Disabilities e.g. job coaches and employment mentors.
3. Additional work to engage parents of SEN in CEIAG, beyond transition points, to raise aspirations.
4. To reflect the lower / later engagement in higher education and extended transitions to employment, those that are known to the care system are offered additional support for longer.
5. Consider community-based (rather than education based) Career advisors for those who are not in mainstream education, including home-educated pupils and those in alternative provision.
6. Consideration of how CEIAG is offered to young offenders
7. Use data to track CEIAG engagement of students more at risk of becoming NEET

### **Responsibility for CEIAG**

An all-age service would be supported as this would help to consolidate the fragmented nature of current practice. Responsibility for CEIAG and any National Skills Service, would be best placed in the Department for Education. The rationale for this sits with the policy landscape of life-long learning (National Skills Fund) and personal & career development from primary education through the precarity of the employment market and subsequently the necessity to retrain throughout working career (Holt-White, Montacute and Tibbs 2022).

### **Recommendation**

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## **NCS / CEC Value for money**

As an organisation contracted by the Careers and Enterprise company (CEC) it would be unethical to comment on whether they provide value for money, but it is encouraging to see the progress made so far. The Sutton Trust, Paving the Way report states that almost all state schools now have a Careers Leader (Holt-White, Montacute and Tibbs 2022).

## **Embedding CEIAG in the Curriculum**

The focal point of CEIAG is the notion and concept of 'career'. It is difficult in everyday discourse to contemplate career without thinking about paid work and such work following a neat linear form of progress, very much in line with middleclass notions of what is often termed the 'traditional career'. Such a concept is exclusive and privileges certain groups over others, e.g. white able-bodied heterosexual males (Gee, 2016). There needs to be space in the curriculum to explore inclusive definitions of career that will fit with social position and circumstances. Engagement with employers should highlight that career encompasses many strands in a person's life and will not necessarily follow a neat linear path for all. Employers should offer inclusive and equitable opportunities across genders, class, ethnicities, and (dis)abled dimensions.

Even with the Gatsby benchmarks in place, standards of careers provision is varied. 88% of state schoolteachers, felt that their teacher training didn't prepare them to deliver careers information and guidance to students. Around a third (36%) of secondary school students do not feel confident in their next steps in education and training, with only just over half (56%) feeling confident. (Holt-White, Montacute and Tibbs 2022).

There is often a disconnect between senior leaders strategic plans for CEIAG and how this is implemented at curriculum level. This may be due to the position that the Career Leader holds in the school. CEIAG is more likely to be effectively operationalised if the designated Career Leader is a senior school leader with strategic overview. Colleges report that even with the Baker Clause access to school students is problematic. (Gibson, Tanner and Webster, 2021)

## **Recommendations**

1. Training (and qualifying) Ofsted inspectors on the statutory requirements for good quality CEIAG, including Gatsby Benchmarks and enforcement of the Baker Clause.
2. Ofsted to conduct an in depth thematic review of CEIAG, across a variety of contexts

3. To improve synergy across key stages mandate 'Quality in Careers Standard' as a statutory requirement for primary and secondary schools and colleges.
4. Designated senior leader and governor for CEIAG in all schools
5. Structured CPD opportunities for teachers to include CEIAG
6. Secondary schools and FE colleges to appoint Career champions in each curriculum area.
7. Dedicated curriculum time for CEIAG.
8. Build communities of practice for Career Leaders, to share good practice.

**How the Government can ensure more young people have access to a professional and independent careers advisor and increase the take-up of the Lifetime Skills initiative.**

### **Proposals for CEIAG in the Government's Skills for Jobs White Paper / Investment in CEIAG**

We support the call for '*impartial, lifelong careers advice and guidance available to people when they need it, regardless of age, circumstance, or background*', but acknowledge that this is fragmented and unregulated. As careers advice and guidance was most commonly provided by internal school staff, the impartiality of this is questionable (Gibson, Oliver and Dennison 2015). The National Careers Service website is a useful resource, particularly for adults / professionals, but needs updating to appeal to young people. However, this does not replace 121 support and guidance that many young people need.

Increased use of the Gatsby Benchmarks, and more collaboration between schools and employers is encouraging. Evidence suggests that CEIAG in schools is more effective if linked to a Careers Hub. The sector is currently unregulated, which affects the quality of CEIAG available. Career leaders in schools, could be anything from teaching assistants to senior leaders. They may have completed a 30 credit L6 or L7 module, but may not have been assessed against this. Other qualifications available are Level 4 Diploma's; Level 4 or Level 6 higher apprenticeships and level 7 PGCert, PGDiploma or Masters degree.

### **Recommendations**

1. Maintain and update the National Careers website but divert funding for online AIG back to localised in person professionals.
2. Regulate the profession – recognise the value of qualified professionals
3. Bursaries to fund level 7 qualifications to increase the (aging) workforce of Career Guidance professionals. This will raise the profession to be on par with teachers.

4. All schools & FE Colleges are linked to a regional CEC Careers Hub and have access to Cornerstone Employers and Enterprise Advisers.
5. Further work required to embed CEIAG in the curriculum, rather than be seen as additional activities or standalone provision.
6. In addition to transforming adult education, Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) should be used to inform CEIAG in schools.
7. Incentivise organisations to work with the Social Mobility Commission to increase socio-economic diversity and inclusion in the workforce.

### **Nottingham Trent University**

Nottingham Trent University (NTU), through our commitment to excellence in teaching and research, innovation, employability, sustainability, and student experience has been awarded several prestigious accolades, including the Queen's Anniversary Prize for research activities, Outstanding Contribution to the Local Community THE awards 2021, Guardian University of the year 2019, Times and Sunday Times Modern University of the Year 2018, Times Higher Education University of the Year 2017. We've also been listed as one of the world's top five universities for sustainability.

NTU's School of Social Sciences is recognised nationally and internationally for our theoretically informed and applied research. In addition, we established the Nottingham Civic Exchange to maximise research, policy, and practical impact by bringing together university expertise with partners seeking to address the needs of local communities.

Our Sociology and Career Development courses sit within the School of Social Sciences. NTU has been designing and teaching professional development courses for practitioners in the career development field since 1973. Key achievements include contracts awarded by government education departments to design and deliver NVO4 Career Guidance (1999); postgraduate Qualification in Career Guidance (2000); Diploma for Connexions Personal Advisers (2000); Guidance Model for Careers Scotland (2002) and more recently DfE funded Career Leadership training and qualifications (2019-ongoing). We maintain a close relationship with the Career Development Institute, who professionally validate our current courses.

### **Author Biographies**

**Lisa Wardle** is a Principal Lecturer in the Department of Social Work, Care and Community at Nottingham Trent University. Her portfolio includes a suite of courses in Career Development, Guidance and Leadership, Youth Work and Youth Justice. For the past three years her team were awarded contracts from the Career and Enterprise Company (CEC) and has successfully trained over 200 DfE funded career leaders in schools. Prior to joining NTU, and as a qualified Career Guidance professional and Connexions Personal Adviser, Lisa

has worked as a practitioner, manager, and consultant across a range of informal, statutory, further education settings. [Lisa.wardle@ntu.ac.uk](mailto:Lisa.wardle@ntu.ac.uk)

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