

A Careers Service for Future Success

Excellent careers information, advice and guidance are integral to helping young people achieve their ambitions and enabling businesses to recruit highly skilled and motivated workforces.

A generation of young people have already been let down by patchy careers provision, left to navigate the world of qualifications, providers, further study and work, alone or with minimal support. Those already in work or adults looking for work can access online or precious limited face to face support with help with CV writing and interview skills. This varies greatly depending on where the careers information, advice and guidance is being delivered. Young people should be able to make informed choices before embarking on life changing pathways, which is why the TUC, Unison and NUS are calling for:

- **A universal careers service delivering impartial information, advice and guidance for all students and workers, regardless of age**
- **A properly resourced careers service, with a stable funding system**
- **A service staffed and delivered by qualified careers professionals with the necessary expertise to provide young people with information about a range of different options**
- **Face to face support and guidance for young people. Whilst online support is a useful tool, young people value and prefer face to face interactions as a method for fully exploring a wide range of future career possibilities**
- **A service which helps the individual develop the skills they need to succeed as well as addressing the needs of the labour market**
- **A service which is in tune with local, national and global careers opportunities, delivered in part by developing meaningful relationships with employers and local providers**
- **The statutory duty for schools to provide careers education to be reinstated.**
- **National best practice for developing learners next steps should be included within this to stop the bias of academic routes.**
- **An enhanced role for the NCS making sure that young people are aware of the service and have access to it**
- **Local authorities still retain the duty to provide advice and guidance and funding should be made available for them to discharge this. Early intervention prevents NEETs and widens horizons for young people**

The TUC, UNISON and the NUS have all published research in 2014 highlighting the inadequacies of current careers guidance provision. Some of the key findings highlight that:

- 68 per cent of students think that 16 is too early to be making choices which will define their future career path. (NUS research on A level subject choices, 2014)
- 54 per cent of schools have reduced their careers advice provision. (Unison survey, June 2014)
- **£200M “disappeared” from the careers budget provision estimate (UNISON evidence to Education select Committee 2013)**
- **The TUC questionnaire of young people in November 2014 revealed that half of young people asked are unaware of the national careers service, 75% of young people asked preferred face to face guidance 40% of young people are not receiving IAG relating to apprenticeships**

The recent government announcement to provide an additional £20m to fund a new enterprise to facilitate improved and increased interactions between students and employers is welcomed. To ensure that the new body delivers good quality, impartial, industry wide information to young people it is vital that it must be truly representative of the whole industry, including careers advisers and a range of employers, both large and small. To avoid local bias the company will have to put in measures to help

areas facing severe economic and industrial decline. The development of the new enterprise should be part of a package of reforms to ensure that young people receive good quality careers information, advice and guidance. The new enterprise should not be seen as a substitute for the role that local authorities and qualified professionals have to play. Further improvements, as outlined above, are still needed.

The Role of Careers Advisers and Careers Companies

The fragmented delivery picture is resulting in more people working in isolation. Many careers advisers formally employed by a careers company are now self employed. The biggest growth areas of self-employment since mid-2010 have been people working for themselves (up 232,000), freelancing (up 69,000) or sub-contracting (up 67,000). UNISON is concerned that this growth is at the expense of more secure employee jobs. We have evidence in the growth of casualised and zero hours contracts being offered to careers professionals. It is essential for professionals to consolidate the training with practice provided by the experience of working alongside careers professionals.

Fragmentation of Careers Advice

Organisational boundaries are irrelevant to the recipients of careers services; what should be central is that a tailored, user-centred, consistent, quality service to support them at their point of need should be available. There is a need for the different arms of government with a stake in careers advice, education, services to young people have to work together with clear parameters and objectives. There is money for a comprehensive all age service but unfortunately the money is scattered across different departments funding fragmented, short term and unsustainable initiatives. CBI research in 2012¹ identified 47 different schemes and services which help business take on or train a young person. Similarly, the Local Government Association estimates that, nationally, the support on offer to young people includes 2,800 registered 16-19 providers funded by the Education Funding Agency, 2,900 providers funded by the Skills Funding Agency and 1,200 providers in Work Programme supply chains. This feedback suggests that there are a multitude of organisations in some form of position to help young people and that cohesion between them needs to be improved.

Where else can you get information from?

Many organisations have produced recommendations on Careers Information, Advice and Guidance. Some of them are listed below:

'When IAG Grow up...' (NUS)

<http://www.nusconnect.org.uk/resources/adviceandguidance/When-IAG-Grow-Up/>

<https://www.unionlearn.org.uk/supporting-learners>

'Careers Guidance: Guaranteed' (AoC)

<https://www.aoc.co.uk/news/fresh-look-careers-guidance>

'Taking Action: Achieving a culture change in careers provision' (National Careers Council)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-provision-national-career-councils-second-report>

'A career postcode lottery?' (University of Derby and Unison)

<http://derby.openrepository.com/derby/bitstream/10545/311423/1/postcode%20lottery.pdf>

'Good Career Guidance' (Gatsby)

<http://www.gatsby.org.uk/en/Education/Projects/Good-Career-Guidance.aspx>

'Mid Life Career Review' (NIACE)

<http://www.niace.org.uk/news/vital-for-economy-to-hold-on-to-older-workers>

'Advancing ambitions: The role of career guidance in supporting social mobility' (The Sutton Trust)

<http://www.suttontrust.com/researcharchive/advancing-ambitions/>

For more support

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¹ <http://www.cbi.org.uk/media/2855199/future-possible.pdf>