

# Campaign Briefing:

## Careers information, advice and guidance

### What's the campaign about?

NUS believes that excellent careers information, advice and guidance is vital for young people to be able to make informed choices about their future. We want the next government to invest in a truly national careers system that delivers impartial careers information, advice and guidance from school age to retirement, focusing on skills not just careers.

### What do you need to know?

Many young people are left to navigate the complicated world of qualifications, providers, further study and work either alone or with minimal support. Face to face information, advice and guidance (IAG) is disparate and patchy from town to town since the winding down of Connexions and the introduction of the 19+ focused National Careers Service.

- 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
- Parents and teachers are the key influencers on their career choices; 70 per cent turn to parents and 57 per cent ask teachers. Survey of 11 -16 year olds in Careers Guidance: Guaranteed, AoC Report
- 54 per cent of schools have reduced their careers advice provision. Unison survey, June 2013

### How does this affect your students

*"At the time, I thought the IAG I was getting was fine, but in hindsight I realized it was just a waste of time and wasn't remotely helpful to get me to where I wanted to go."*

Katie Rowe, MidKent College

Fundamentally, giving young people the right careers information, advice and guidance that looks at their own skills, interests and competencies means they are much more informed to be able to make decisions about their options and next steps. It also means that they are more likely to stay on the course they have chosen because it is the right one for them.

Less people are learning a single trade or profession over the course of a working life, and are now likely to change job or career multiple times. For this reason it is vital we move towards careers IAG and careers education that looks at both skills and options.

## What are we calling for?

**We want the next government to invest in and deliver a universal careers service which focuses on delivering tailored careers IAG at key intervention points during a person's education and working life. This should be coupled with substantive careers education linked to the National Curriculum and the focus of all new provision should address skills, not just careers.**

## Who holds the power?

Right across the board organisations are making recommendations as to how careers IAG should look and be delivered.

Organisations who are campaigning or who have interesting things to say are:

- AoC
- Unison
- TUC
- NIACE
- Careers Sector Stakeholder Alliance

If we want truly universal careers IAG provision then the Department for Education (DfE), Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) need to collaborate together.

In the run up to the election, getting the support of your local parliamentary candidates will be key, as they can represent your views to their party.

## How can we win the arguments?

### **Q: Connexions wasn't very good anyway, was it?**

Although views on Connexions as a service were mixed, students still strongly prefer an element of IAG to be delivered face to face. The National Careers Service which is currently delivering careers provision in England is broken up into a number of regions and the service itself is delivered by contractors who bid to deliver the service in the region. This means that provision can differ from region to region,

and that service delivery can be affected by the market as contractors will need to be seen as value for money.

### **Q: Don't employers already come into colleges to speak to students?**

Employers often come into schools, colleges and universities to talk about different jobs that exist. Although in many circumstances this is useful way to learn about a role or industry, often the engagement isn't meaningful or its happening too late when decisions about further study or training have already been made. In the case of FE colleges, students are concerned that employers are starting to have too much influence over some areas of their course content.

### **Q: Why can't teachers provide careers advice?**

Careers advisors and careers professions are highly skilled, trained in universally recognised qualifications and operate within a set of competencies in the same way as any other profession. Teachers are already over stretched and overburdened, plus often their experiences more often than not come from a very specific route into their chosen profession.

## How does this apply across the nations?

### England

In England this policy is controlled by the UK government.

### Northern Ireland

This policy area is fully devolved, and so this briefing is largely non applicable to Northern Ireland. A review of careers education and guidance has been commenced in Northern Ireland.

### Scotland

This policy area is fully devolved, and so this briefing is largely non applicable to Scotland. An independent commission in Scotland has made a number of wide ranging recommendations for IAG, for example statutory minimum standards.

### Wales

This policy area is fully devolved. However NUS Wales want the next UK Government to develop and fund independent statutory careers information, advice and guidance system that is integrated across schools, colleges, training providers and universities. We want the Welsh

## Where can I get further info?

### NUS: When IAG grow up...

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[www.nusconnect.org.uk/resources/adviceandguidance/When-IAG-Grow-Up/](http://www.nusconnect.org.uk/resources/adviceandguidance/When-IAG-Grow-Up/)

### Unison: A careers postcode lottery?

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[www.derby.openrepository.com/derby/handle/10545/311423](http://www.derby.openrepository.com/derby/handle/10545/311423)

### Association of Colleges: Careers Guidance Guaranteed

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[www.aoc.co.uk/sites/default/files/Freshminds%20Summary%20Report.pdf](http://www.aoc.co.uk/sites/default/files/Freshminds%20Summary%20Report.pdf)

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