



Department  
for Education

# Securing Independent Careers Guidance

## A Practical Guide for Schools

### Key Content

- Issues to consider when meeting the new duty
- Mythbuster
- Case studies of good practice
- Useful websites

## Introduction

From September 2012, schools will be legally responsible for securing access to independent and impartial careers guidance for all pupils in years 9-11. In the context of this new duty, careers guidance consists of services and programmes intended to assist pupils to make and implement education, training and occupation choices and to learn how to manage their careers.

Careers guidance secured under the duty must include information on all 16-18 education or training options, including Apprenticeships. In March 2012, the Department for Education published '[Statutory Guidance for Schools – Careers Guidance](#)'. Schools must have regard to this in exercising their new responsibilities.

Apart from the elements identified in the statutory guidance, schools are free to decide what careers provision to make available in accordance with the needs of their pupils. The purpose of this document is to offer additional practical information that your school may wish to draw on when interpreting your new responsibilities and deciding on the most appropriate forms of independent careers guidance for your pupils.

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## Issues to consider when developing your careers provision

### The importance of face-to-face careers guidance

Increased complexity and competition in education and labour markets means that most, if not all, young people would benefit from individual, face-to-face careers guidance to enable them to make informed decisions about future options based upon consideration of the wealth of information available from a range of sources and media. As highlighted in the statutory guidance, this is particularly crucial for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds or with special educational needs. Face-to-face guidance with a qualified careers adviser will enable your pupils to review their circumstances, abilities, interests and aspirations as they make decisions about future education, training and work options.

### Planning a programme of career activities

Careers guidance can be more effective when your pupils have access to a programme of activities designed to help them gain the knowledge, skills and understanding to make best use of the information and advice provided. The statutory guidance suggests a number of appropriate activities. Resources and good practice examples are available to help you review and plan your careers programme, including the Association for Careers Education and Guidance (ACEG) framework for careers and work-related education: <http://www.aceg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/The-ACEG-Framework.pdf>.

## The National Careers Service

The National Careers Service offers information and professional advice about education, training and work to people of all ages. Your pupils can access support online, by webchat and over the telephone. The Service can handle 370,000 calls from young people, and 20 million hits on its website. Your school can choose to commission independent careers guidance from providers engaged in delivering the National Careers Service or from other external and expert careers providers, as you see fit.

## Assuring the quality of careers provision

In developing careers provision for your pupils, there are three aspects of quality assurance you may wish to take into consideration:

### - The quality of the school careers programme

If your school is looking to demonstrate the quality of your overall careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) programme to pupils, parents and the wider community, you may wish to consider the various quality awards which exist for CEIAG provision in schools and colleges. The national validation, the Quality in Careers Standard, will assist you to determine an appropriate quality award to pursue:

<http://www.careersengland.org.uk/quality.php?page=introduction>.

### - The quality of the independent careers provider

The matrix Standard is the Government's badge of quality for information and advice about learning and work. To achieve the Standard, organisations will need to demonstrate that they provide a high quality and impartial service. Your school can access an online register of organisations accredited to the matrix Standard at [www.matrixstandard.com](http://www.matrixstandard.com).

### - The quality of careers professionals working with the school

The Careers Profession Alliance, an alliance of professional bodies for the careers sector, has led work to raise the professional status of careers advisers. They have developed a new set of professional standards for careers advisers, a register of advisers holding postgraduate qualifications and guidelines on how advisers can develop their own skills and gain higher qualifications.

The main qualifications for careers professionals are the Qualification in Career Guidance (QCG), which replaced the earlier Diploma in Careers Guidance, NVQ Level 4 in Advice and Guidance and the Level 6 Diploma in Career Guidance and Development. Your school can view registered careers professionals or search for a career development professional who can deliver a particular service or activity at [www.cparegister.org](http://www.cparegister.org).

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## Mythbuster

**Myth:** We will no longer be able to employ our in-house careers adviser because the new duty requires us to secure independent careers guidance.

**Fact:** Your school can retain the careers adviser but, as the statutory guidance makes clear, you will need to supplement this with external sources of careers guidance to meet the new duty. This could include an external careers provider, employer visits, mentoring, website and telephone helpline access. Taken together, the external sources must provide information on the full range of post-16 options and access to face-to-face support where needed.

**Myth:** It will be time consuming for every school to commission specialist careers provision.

**Fact:** As explained in the statutory guidance, you will have access to an online register of all organisations accredited to the matrix Standard. This will reassure you about the quality of support offered by individual providers. You could also consider forming a consortium with other local schools and education and training providers to commission a shared independent, expert resource.

**Myth:** It will be expensive to secure independent, face-to-face careers guidance for all my pupils in years 9-11.

**Fact:** The statutory guidance is clear that qualified careers professionals can play an important role in delivering face-to-face careers guidance, particularly at key transition points when your pupils are faced with post-14 and post-16 choices. At other times, schools may wish to supplement this with different types of face-to-face provision. Careers fairs, events offered by post-16 providers, employer talks and a visit to your local university are all examples of cost-effective activities that can inspire young people and get them thinking about the future.

**Myth:** The requirement to provide information on the full range of 16-18 education and training options is difficult to fulfil because my staff have limited experience of Apprenticeships.

**Fact:** The new duty sets no expectation that teachers need to become experts in Apprenticeships but there is a range of resources available for teachers at <http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/Partners/IAG.aspx>. To ensure your pupils get a real insight into Apprenticeships and other vocational routes, you may wish to also want to signpost the National Apprenticeship Service (<http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk>) to pupils and parents or invite employers and other local education and training providers to input to your school's careers programme.

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## Case Studies

Schools around the country are preparing for their new responsibilities. Here are some examples of how schools are ensuring that their pupils will have access to independent and impartial careers guidance.

### Local authority support for commissioning: Blackburn with Darwen

Blackburn with Darwen Education Improvement Partnership (EIP) comprises all secondary schools in the Blackburn with Darwen area including special schools and two Academies. The EIP worked with a specialist provider, the Via Partnership, to develop a delivery model for ensuring access to independent and impartial careers guidance as part of the new statutory requirements.

*“We are confident that working with the Via Partnership will not only fulfil our statutory duties, but enable us to continue to adapt as new guidance emerges. Blackburn with Darwen schools and local authority have an excellent reputation of ensuring access to careers guidance; we will ensure this continues to develop and grow through this new approach.”*  
**Sharon Roscoe, Chief Executive, Blackburn with Darwen EIP Ltd**

The EIP investigated the statutory requirements and considered how they wanted to work together as a collection of schools to ensure these were met. They wanted to commission as a group, achieve a cost effective and quality service and retain the ability to adapt the offer based on the requirements of each school.

Individual schools provided details on cohort numbers, preferences in terms of interviews, group work and other interventions which were then worked through with the careers provider to ensure the service was tailored to the needs of the individual schools.

The specialist provider has developed a ‘wrap around’ offer for schools, the ‘Careers Inspired Learning Programme’, which includes careers education, information, advice and guidance, work-related learning, work tasters and workforce development for teachers engaged in careers provision. This offer enables schools to choose customised packages from a menu of provision designed to meet their assessment of pupil needs.

The schools work alongside the specialist provider to assure the quality of independent careers provision by utilising the matrix Standard and ensuring that professionals delivering the service are appropriately qualified to QCF level 6. The partnership also ensures that the programme operates in tandem with the targeted service commissioned by the local authority in a way which complements and supports individual schools.

Further information: Janet Jackson, Blackburn with Darwen Local Authority [Janet.Jackson@blackburn.gov.uk](mailto:Janet.Jackson@blackburn.gov.uk); Sharon Roscoe, Blackburn with Darwen EIP [sroscoe888@stbedes.learningfutures.org.uk](mailto:sroscoe888@stbedes.learningfutures.org.uk).

## An opportunity to develop a bespoke package of support: The Sutton Partnership

A partnership of 14 schools in Sutton saw the changes to careers guidance as an opportunity to commission a service better tailored to the needs of pupils. As part of the commissioning process, each school described the service they required and only providers able to meet those requirements were considered.

After research and investigation, the schools identified potential providers and commissioned the service following a best value tendering and interview process. The research involved identifying a provider with the flexibility to meet the needs of a diverse range of schools whilst continuing to provide outstanding levels of service and value for money. Individual schools in the partnership are now able to tailor a service to their needs, selecting from a range of options:

- Support for years 9-13
- Drop-in careers advice sessions
- Careers IAG for small groups
- Parents evenings and option events
- Careers lessons
- Maintenance of a careers library
- GCSE/A level results day support
- UCAS advice
- Oxbridge/medicine support
- Mock interviews
- Development of careers education
- Occupational talks to small groups

Further information: Will Smith, Chair of Partnership of Sutton Secondary Schools, [wsmith@suttonmail.org](mailto:wsmith@suttonmail.org).

*“To ensure a high quality service, make sure you have direct input into the appointment of individual careers advisers from your chosen provider who will work with your pupils.”*

**Damien Charnock, Chair,  
Partnership of Sutton  
Secondary Schools**

## Consulting with parents to shape provision: Buckinghamshire

One Buckinghamshire school reviewed the statutory guidance carefully and took on board the views of parents to inform their future careers offer. Many parents confirmed that their child would benefit from one-to-one support for their choices. The school has therefore purchased careers guidance to support all year 11 students to receive at least one face-to-face careers interview. Parents are invited to attend the interviews. The careers provider is continuing to work closely with the school to develop their careers education offer and to support other age groups. Significant additional time has been purchased to work across years 7-13, supporting the decision making for all students within the school's care.

This school and others in Buckinghamshire are working closely with the local

authority to implement the best possible package of support for young people with additional needs. Schools which have a significant number of vulnerable young people receive information, advice and guidance support of between 25 and 70 days per year funded by the local authority. All young people with a statement of special educational need (and those from various other vulnerable categories) do not just receive the statutory minimum intervention but also have good access to careers guidance. Time is also commissioned to ensure the tracking and destination of young people is appropriate to allow schools to teach and support and the local authority to deliver accurate data. Investment in this preventative approach will support preparations for the raising of the participation age and help reduce the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training.

Further information: Stephen Box, Head teacher, Sir Henry Floyd Grammar School, Aylesbury [sbox@bucksqfl.org.uk](mailto:sbox@bucksqfl.org.uk)

## Developing a consortium-led flexible approach: Slough

Eleven schools in Slough formed a consortium in March 2011 and together created a model of careers delivery, commissioning support from a specialist provider.

One school took the lead on contracting and payment issues and each school was allocated a number of days dependent on their cohort. Careers advisers were assigned to each school and worked with them to create a plan of delivery for the year. A flexible approach has been adopted to allow advisers to resource any specific activities or events that individual schools want to put on.

The first year of delivery has gone extremely well and schools appear to be far more engaged in careers provision than they were previously. Two schools bought a substantial number of additional days to supplement what they were allocated by the consortium purchase. One school in Slough who originally decided not to be part of the consortium has now opted to join for the new academic year, having seen how effective the new arrangements have been. The ongoing contract management has now been passed to the Slough Learning Partnership which Slough Heads have set up to manage a range of educational functions.

Further information: Bill Alexander, Slough Learning Partnership  
[billalexander@lgs.slough.sch.uk](mailto:billalexander@lgs.slough.sch.uk)

*“We find the service they offer our students is invaluable, as the awareness and information about outside agencies, colleges and training providers exceeds what we could ever have internally, and enables our students to make the best informed decisions about their next steps.”*  
Head Teacher, Slough School

*“The service that we receive is consistently professional, student centred and efficient. Best of all it is flexible to our needs. I would highly recommend it.”*  
PSHE Co-ordinator, Slough School

## Related websites you might find useful

- Association for Careers Education and Guidance - <http://www.aceg.org.uk/>
- ACEG Framework for Careers and Work-Related Education - <http://www.aceg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/The-ACEG-Framework.pdf>
- Bestcourse4me – <http://www.bestcourse4me.com> Provides information for pupils on wage returns to particular degrees and universities.
- Careers Profession Alliance – <https://www.cparegister.org/>
- Education and Employers Task Force - <http://www.educationandemployers.org/>
- Growing Ambitions – <http://growingambitions.tes.co.uk/>
- Horsemouth - <http://www.horsemouth.co.uk/> Social network for informal mentoring.
- Icould - <http://icould.com/> Careers information website.
- Inspiring the Future – <http://www.inspiringthefuture.org/> and [http://www.educationandemployers.org/media/16409/itf\\_guide.pdf](http://www.educationandemployers.org/media/16409/itf_guide.pdf). Bringing inspiring speakers into schools.
- Institute for Education Business Excellence - <http://www.iebe.org.uk/>
- Institute of Career Guidance - <http://www.icg-uk.org/>
- Local Government Association Knowledge Hub - [https://knowledgehub.local.gov.uk/signin?p\\_p\\_id=58&p\\_p\\_lifecycle=0&\\_58\\_redirect=%2Fgroup%2Fkhub](https://knowledgehub.local.gov.uk/signin?p_p_id=58&p_p_lifecycle=0&_58_redirect=%2Fgroup%2Fkhub). A set of case studies highlighting good practice in the area of careers information, advice and guidance is available on this site and more will be added as new examples are identified.
- Learning and Skills Improvement Service - <http://www.lsis.org.uk/>
- Matrix – <http://www.matrixstandard.com>
- National Apprenticeship Service - <http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/>
- National Careers Service – 0800 100 900 or <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk>
- National Citizen Service – <https://nationalcitizenservice.direct.gov.uk/>
- Plotr – <http://www.plotr.co.uk/>. Inspiring young people about careers – will go live later in 2012.
- Quality in Careers Standard – <http://www.careersengland.org.uk/quality.php?page=introduction>
- Science and Engineering Ambassadors [www.stemnet.org.uk/content/stem-ambassadors](http://www.stemnet.org.uk/content/stem-ambassadors)
- Supporting career teachers and advisers – <http://www.cegnet.co.uk>
- The Big Bang Fair - <http://www.thebigbangfair.co.uk>
- Tomorrow's Engineers - <http://www.tomorrowsengineers.org.uk>
- 5th Matrix - <http://www.youngchamber.com/5th-matrix>  
A careers and networking platform which encourages young people to investigate and share careers ideas.





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