

Executive Summary:

Career Guidance in Colleges

Increasing National Careers Service co-location with colleges and the role of Colleges in providing a service to schools

Purpose and Scope of the Feasibility Study

The feasibility study was commissioned by Association of Colleges (AoC), with funding from the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS), in February 2012. The purpose of the study was to:

- determine the feasibility of increasing and extending the co-location of the National Careers Service with Colleges
- explore how increased co-location of National Careers Service provision could provide opportunities for closer working between Colleges, schools and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) initiatives
- identify the potential for the development of College-based career hubs.

Findings

The feasibility study found that there is considerable career guidance experience and expertise within Colleges upon which to build increased co-location of the National Careers Service, provide career guidance services to schools, and continue to build partnership work with DWP and other stakeholders. Colleges can (potentially) provide:

- access to face-to-face services for all ages
- access to a range of careers resources
- qualified staff (often in **matrix** Standard-accredited settings)
- familiar, visible, community-based premises
- existing partnership relationships with employers, schools and Jobcentres
- 'all-age' careers hubs.

There are, however, a number of specific challenges:

- while the term 'co-location' has been defined for the purposes of this study, there is no detailed information as to how co-location activities are delivered in different settings and what constitutes good practice
- Colleges are expected to provide careers information and resources for students although there is no ring-fenced funding to support this
- only National Careers Service regional prime contractors can decide when and where National Careers Service provision is co-located with Colleges
- the ability of Colleges to provide career guidance to schools (in the light of the new duty) is constrained by Colleges being seen as potential competitors and a misunderstanding about the impartiality of College-based career guidance
- the arrangements for the provision of career guidance are complex and largely invisible to potential users of services; the issue of who gives what advice to whom is a maze through which it is often difficult for individuals to navigate
- Colleges could develop local careers hubs to provide career guidance to both young people and adults from the wider community as well as services to DWP and local employers; this would mean bringing together resources from different funding streams and having a strong commitment to partnership working.