



Career Guidance in Colleges

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

A feasibility study

October 2012

Supported by:



CAREER GUIDANCE IN COLLEGES

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1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

1.1 Purpose and outcomes

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

The main reasons for undertaking the study were to:

- determine the feasibility of increasing and extending the co-location of the National Careers Service with Colleges
- explore how increased integration of National Careers Service provision with Colleges 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.

The study covers:

- the wider policy and funding context for career guidance
- current funding and delivery models of career guidance in Colleges
- the range of career guidance activities available through Colleges
- current arrangements for co-location of National Council Service provision in Colleges
- factors influencing the co-location of National Careers Service provision in Colleges
- current relationships between Colleges and schools
- the potential for closer relationships between Colleges and schools in the delivery of career guidance under the new statutory duties
- the development of College-based career hubs.

The recommendations will include:

- the potential for increased co-location of National Careers Service provision with Colleges
- the role of Colleges in the provision of services to schools.

The findings are laid out in this Report which will be distributed to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), the Department for Education (DfE), DWP, the Skills Funding Agency (SFA), LSIS, College principals and senior College managers.

1.2 Context

(a) Increasing co-location

John Hayes (Minister of State for Further Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning) sees increased co-location of the National Careers Service within a range of organisations as an essential part of raising the profile of the service, and ensuring that it has the broadest and longest reach into the community. He sees co-location with Colleges as a major part of that approach and, in his speech to the Institute of Career Guidance (ICG) Annual Conference in November 2011, said he was looking to increase co-location of the National Careers Service with Colleges from 139 to 250 sites by the end of 2012:

The National Careers Service will bring online and helpline services for young people and adults together in one place. It will be required to hold the new, more rigorous matrix Standard which I had the pleasure to launch earlier this month. It will have a redesigned website which makes information about careers and the labour market more accessible. It will provide high quality advice and guidance to adults in community locations. And it will be promoted at a national level, so that its profile and visibility are high.

.....

And in Government, we will not rest on our laurels. On the contrary, we will continue to increase the reach and visibility of career guidance.

We will encourage career guidance providers in the community to establish networks with other public, private and voluntary sector services. Specialist services working in partnership can have a huge impact on outcomes for individual people. So I want to build on the level of co-location which the Next Step service has already developed.

I can confirm today that the number of Further Education Colleges working with Next Step has now reached 139.

.....

Following our launch in the spring, my ambition is for co-location with Jobcentres and Colleges to exceed 250 sites across the UK by the end of the year. I can also announce that from April 2012, we will pilot new forms of co-location for the National Careers Service, including in places of worship, community centres, the charitable and voluntary sectors.

(b) Get Britain Working¹

Given rising economic inactivity, and more than five million people out of work and on benefits, Chris Grayling's ²(Minister for Employment) priority is to *Get Britain Working*. He sees DWP and Work Programme providers as having an important role working with partners in local communities to find new and innovative ways to support people back into work, and supports

¹ Coalition government initiative to 'Get Britain Working', outlining a range of welfare reforms with the aim of getting people back to work (2011)

² This was correct at the time of writing. Recent ministerial changes, however, have resulted in Mark Hoban MP becoming Minister for Employment

the idea of deepening co-location of the National Careers Service within other organisations with the objective of more streamlined support, improved outcomes and more efficient use of the public estate.

(c) Schools and career guidance

The Education Act 2011 requires schools, through a new duty, to secure access to impartial, independent career guidance for pupils in years 9-11. The Statutory Guidance for Schools³ states career guidance must be independent and impartial, promote the best interests of the pupils to whom it is given, and include information on all options available in respect of 16-18 education or training, including apprenticeships and other work-based education and training options.

The new duty comes into force in September 2012.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Approach

The initial research took place between February and April 2012 (with further consultation between April and July 2012) and involved a combination of:

- desk research;
- analysis of an AoC survey of Colleges' information, advice, guidance and careers provision⁴;
- a review of the Careers England co-location survey⁵;
- discussions with a sample of Colleges and key stakeholders through telephone interviews, visits and meetings;
- a half-day workshop with College managers, National Careers Service regional prime contractors, and representatives from AoC and BIS;
- individual College case studies.

2.2 Baseline data

The data that was used for the feasibility study is outlined below. This includes the number and type of responses to AoC's survey; the Colleges visited; the Colleges interviewed over the telephone; workshop participants and Colleges selected for individual case studies:

³ DfE, *Statutory Guidance for Schools – Career Guidance (26 March 2012)*

⁴ AoC *Survey on Information, Advice & Guidance and Careers in Colleges (February 2011)*

⁵ *Careers England, Co-location: The Next Step Careers Service. Experiences so far: preparing for the National Careers Service (February 2012)*

(a) AoC survey on Information, Advice, Guidance and Careers

Type of College	No. of responses	No. of Colleges in England	Percentage within type
General FE Colleges	84	222	38%
Sixth form Colleges	37	94	39%
Specialist Colleges	13	29	45%
Total	134	345	39%

Region	No. of responses	No. of Colleges in England	Percentage within type
East	15	32	47%
East Midlands	10	22	45%
Greater London	11	51	22%
North East	8	20	40%
North West	22	56	39%
South East	26	59	44%
South West	12	28	43%
West Midlands	14	44	32%
Yorkshire and the Humber	16	33	48%
Total	134	345	39%

(b) College visits

- Barnet and Southgate College
- Bridgwater College
- City of Bath College
- City of Bristol College
- College of North West London

(c) In-depth telephone interviews:

- Barking & Dagenham College
- Bishop Auckland College
- City College Norwich
- Cornwall College
- Derby College
- Lewisham College
- Orchard Hill College
- SEEVIC College
- South Devon College
- Tyne Metropolitan College
- Worcester College
- *(West London College, contacted but not interviewed)*

(d) Workshop participants

Participants at a half-day workshop held on 7 March were:

Mark Baxter	Area Manager, National Careers Service regional prime contractor for the London region
Rosie Cantrall	Performance & Compliance Manager, National Careers Service regional prime contractor for the Yorkshire and Humber region
Terry Davy John	Head of Student Support, Tower Hamlets College
Teresa Frith	Senior Skills Policy Manager, AoC
Unus Goga	National Careers Service regional prime contractor for the West Midlands region
Fiona Henman	Admissions Manager, Bridgwater College
Heather Jackson	Project consultant, AoC/LSIS Feasibility Study
Juliet Holloway	Director of Learner Services, East Berkshire College
Mark Jarvis	Adult Careers and Learner Support, BIS
Jo Lawrence	Head of Student Development Services, College of North West London
Fiona McMillan	President, AoC (former)
Fiona Miller	Head of Employment Services, Barnet and Southgate College
Stephanie Natrass	Head of Client Services, Bishop Auckland College
Gary Scott-Mullen	Learner Services Manager, City of Bristol College
Siobhan Scantlebury	Head of Employment Services, Lewisham College
Helen Stevenson	Community Cohesion and Social Action Strategy, Employment World at Derby College
Jonny Wright	National Careers Service regional prime contractor for the North East region

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Louise Proctor, SFA
- Peter Johnson, National Careers Service regional prime contractor, North West Region
- Gemma Knott, Policy and Communications Officer, 157 Group.

(e) Case study Colleges

- Barnet and Southgate College
- Bishop Auckland College
- Bridgwater College
- City of Bristol College
- College of North West London
- Cornwall College
- Derby College

3. TECHNICAL VOCABULARY

For the purpose of this study the following definitions apply:

Next Step/National Careers Service: The National Careers Service replaced the Next Step service in April 2012. The National Careers Service and Next Step service descriptors will both be used throughout the study to refer to current and future arrangements accordingly.

Career guidance: Services that help young people and adults make decisions about future careers, apprenticeships and other programmes, help them to progress to higher education (HE), get jobs and improve employability. This includes activities that are both discretely offered, as well as those embedded within programmes; delivered in one-to-one or in group settings.

Career guidance delivered through Colleges may involve any, or all, of the following:

- full independent, impartial career guidance
- advice on College courses/programmes
- advice on apprenticeships
- HE options and applications
- progression to work
- improving employability
- getting back to work/getting a job/job search
- skills assessment
- specific vocational/labour market advice
- more general labour market information
- improving confidence, supporting motivation and, where necessary, providing advocacy.

Services may be provided through:

- one-to-one interviews
- drop-in/telephone advice
- tutorial-based career guidance activities
- career guidance integrated into courses/programmes.

Co-location: Career guidance delivered under the auspices of the College via either:

- a National Careers Service sub-contract held by the College
- other National Careers Service contractors/sub-contractors delivering on College premises.

Career hubs: The bringing together of a range of careers resources and activities under the auspices of a further education (FE) College, for the purposes of improved access, greater visibility and economies of scale in the delivery of career guidance services for young people and adults in the wider community.

4. CAREER GUIDANCE POLICY AND FUNDING

4.1 Overview

In any discussion about co-location of the National Careers Service with Colleges, and the relationship between schools and Colleges post September 2012, it is appropriate to look at the way in which career guidance policy has been developed and is funded since this influences the

way in which policy is ultimately delivered. It is a complex picture involving not only DfE and BIS directly but also, in the wider policy context of supporting economic growth, DWP.

4.2 Divided responsibilities

Career guidance policy is currently the responsibility of two government departments:

- DfE for young people up to the age of 18
- BIS for adults 19+ (and 18+ seeking work or in custody).

The consequences of this division are that it leads to services being delineated by age, and two separate policies and funding streams.

The issue is complicated even further by the fact that career guidance provision in Colleges is not funded (*directly*) by either DfE or BIS.

4.3 DfE and career guidance

DfE is responsible for career guidance for young people up to 18; those up to 24 with specific learning difficulties and those that fall into the 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' (NEET) group. As a result of new arrangements set out in the Education Act, DfE has recently implemented a number of policy and funding changes that radically alter the way in which careers services are delivered to young people. Hooley and Watts⁶ identify the key elements of the new arrangements as:

- *...the removal of the requirement to provide careers education and the enactment of a new statutory duty for schools to 'secure that all registered pupils at the school are provided with independent careers guidance during the relevant phase of their education' (though with the clarification that this can be met, minimally, through providing access to web-based or telephone services)⁷.*
- *Guidance from the Department for Education (2011) which indicates that local authorities no longer have a responsibility to provide universal careers services.*
- *The development of a National Careers Service, which is theoretically an all-age service but in practice is to be mainly focused on adult advice and guidance (supported by £84m from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills) with its directly-funded services for young people confined to telephone- and web-based services (supported by funding from the Department for Education of £4.7m (DfE 2011c)).*

As well as the new duties on schools from September 2012, Hooley and Watts⁸ also identify a number of additional challenges facing schools:

⁶ Hooley, T. and Watts A.G. *Careers Work with Young People: Collapse or Transition? An analysis of current developments in careers education and guidance for young people in England.* iCeGS (2011)

⁷ Please note that since this report was written DfE have produced 'Securing Independent Careers Guidance: A Practical Guide for Schools' (July 2012) which emphasises the importance of face-to-face careers guidance, especially for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds or with special educational needs.

⁸ Hooley, T. and Watts A.G. *Careers Work with Young People: Collapse or Transition? An analysis of current developments in careers education and guidance for young people in England.* iCeGS (2011)

- *The situation for schools is challenging: in addition to the erosion of Connexions they have also lost support from Aimhigher and Education-Business Partnerships.*
- *The removal of the statutory duty to provide careers education could result in a focus on 'activities' rather than a developmental curriculum.*
- *Many schools are unclear what their new responsibilities are and how best to discharge them.*
- *Some schools are exploring how best to deliver career support with internal, external and multi-school models being explored.*
- *It is unclear how much resource schools will be able and willing to allocate to career support services, but it seems likely in most cases to be much less than the previous position.*

The Statutory Guidance for Schools⁹ and Practical Guide for Schools¹⁰ both emphasise the importance of independent, impartial career guidance, including the benefits of face-to-face guidance, especially with regard to young people from disadvantaged backgrounds or those who have special educational needs, learning difficulties or disabilities. Aside from this emphasis, there is no direct guidance on the way in which the new duty should be fulfilled, leaving it to individual Head Teachers to make their own decisions. The Statutory Guidance does, however, emphasise the need to establish and maintain links with FE Colleges and other post-16 training providers:

20. [schools]... have a responsibility to act impartially and recognise where it may be in the best interests of some pupils to pursue their education in a further education College or a university technical College, for example. This may include A levels, apprenticeships and vocational options. This will require schools to establish and maintain links with local post-16 education and training providers, including further education Colleges and work-based education and training providers, to ensure that young people are aware of the full range of academic and vocational options.

21. Schools are also encouraged to arrange visits for 14-16 year olds to local College, work-based education and training providers and universities and, where appropriate, to supplement these with local College and work-based education and training provider prospectuses being made available to pupils to assist informed decision making.

4.4 BIS and career guidance

(a) BIS responsibilities

Career guidance for adults – 19+ (18+ if actively seeking work or in custody) - falls within the remit of BIS. It is BIS funding that underpins the new National Careers Service, although there has been a consolidation of the telephone advice line services for young people and adults, and young people also have access to the National Careers Service website.

⁹ DfE, *Statutory Guidance for Schools – Career Guidance* (26 March 2012)

¹⁰ DfE, *Securing Independent Careers Guidance – a Practical Guide for Schools* (July 2012)

(b) National Careers Service

The National Careers Service builds on the work of the Next Step service and was launched on 5 April 2012. It provides independent, professional information and advice on careers, skills and the labour market to:

- adults and young people through access to a national telephone helpline, and a national website and webchat facility
- adults only (i.e. those 19+ or 18+ seeking work or in custody) through a funded network of public, private and voluntary sector organisations providing face-to-face careers and skills advice.

All delivery organisations contracted (or sub-contracted) to the National Careers Service are required to:

- hold the new **matrix** Standard (by April 2013)
- carry the nationally recognisable National Careers Service brand.

National Careers Service contractors can offer their services on the open market to individuals or organisations (including schools) on a costed basis - but are not able to use the National Careers Service brand to do this. Equally, National Careers Service sub-contractors cannot jointly brand their own services with the National Careers Service brand.

A number of pathfinder drop-in/walk-in centres have also been commissioned. These offer an initial assessment of need through a triage system¹¹, their main purpose being to broaden access to provision and signpost people to the most appropriate type, and level, of service. The role and effectiveness of the pathfinder walk-in centres will be reviewed by BIS to inform service development. Some early examples of the kind of approaches to be taken in the pathfinder walk-in centres are:

- developing community-based branded venues – e.g. children’s centres, libraries
- mobile venues at events – e.g. at Jubilee celebrations and the Olympics
- partnership working - e.g. with the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and the mobile library service.

5. WORKING WITH DWP

5.1 Summary of DWP initiatives

There are a range of DWP initiatives targeted at improving employability and reducing unemployment. Examples of key areas where Colleges are involved are:

(a) The Youth Contract

On the 25 November 2011 the Deputy Prime Minister announced a £1 billion Youth Contract to provide nearly half-a-million new opportunities for unemployed young people, including apprenticeships and work experience placements. Among the measures introduced was extra

¹¹ In some cases, Pathfinder Centres may also provide the full National Careers Service offer.

support through the Jobcentres in the form of weekly, rather than fortnightly, signing sessions, providing the young person with more time to talk to a Jobcentre adviser and, where appropriate, including a career guidance session with the National Careers Service.

(b) Sector-based work academies

Sector-based work academies offer pre-employment training, work experience and a guaranteed interview for recipients of Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) or Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) in sectors with high volumes of current local vacancies.

A key feature of sector-based work academies is their ability to award unit-based accreditation.

(c) JSA full-time training flexibility

Claimants who have been on JSA for six months or more can be referred to full-time training and remain on JSA rather than transferring onto a training allowance. This flexibility only applies to training of up to and including 30 hours a week, and which lasts for a maximum of eight weeks.

(d) Skills conditionality

All individuals claiming active benefits have to attend training as a condition of receiving benefits where a Jobcentre adviser considers skills to be the main barrier preventing them from finding employment. Referrals from a Jobcentre adviser to training provision are done on a mandatory basis.

Where a Jobcentre adviser feels that a customer's skill needs in relation to their job goals is unclear the advisor may mandate them to attend a National Careers Service interview for a skills action plan. This is returned to the Jobcentre and is used in deciding whether or not training is needed. Where it is, mandation to the initial provider interview, and to training, follows.

The conditions for receiving benefits mean that many claimants will need part-time courses so they can continue to be available (and look) for work. Colleges that are involved have to determine how they can modify their delivery models to meet the specific needs of Jobcentre skills conditionality customers.

5.2 College involvement in DWP initiatives

In a recent AoC survey¹² 95% of Colleges were identified as offering provision to unemployed people, with the average College providing 1,003 unemployed people with training every year and 12% of respondents helping over 2,000 people a year. Virtually every College (98%) recruits via DWP; 77% of Colleges go out and actively recruit unemployed people to their courses and 89% rated their relationships with Jobcentres as excellent or good.

In some cases Jobcentre staff are based in, or visit, the College on a weekly basis for the purposes of liaison and programme development.

¹² AoC, *Back to Work: Colleges Supporting Sustainable Jobs* (November 2011)

While the picture is varied, particular areas where Colleges are involved are:

- programmes for Jobcentre customers who are mandated on skills conditionality criteria
- delivery of work clubs, pre-employment training and sector-based work academies, self-employment initiatives and other provision covered by the Get Britain Working initiative.

Some examples of the type of work being undertaken are provided in case studies take from AoC's report¹³:

Warwickshire College is working closely with Jobcentre Plus to provide unemployed people with a variety of training opportunities, including the delivery of funded bite-size accredited units to meet skills gaps, pre-employment training (PET), work clubs, literacy, numeracy, ESOL, as well as a wide range of vocational programmes from entry level to level 5.

In recent weeks Warwickshire College has provided flexible PET for a national chain within the locality with good success.

The work clubs, where participants can gain essential IT and job search skills along with CV writing and interview techniques, are proving the most effective way to support unemployed people on their journey back to employment.

In addition, the College's funded programmes, such as the Prince's Trust 12-week programme which includes work experience, are successfully engaging young unemployed people who, through effective information, advice and guidance progress into employment, voluntary work or further College programmes.

Sussex Downs College works with local economic development teams and Jobcentre colleagues to ensure a responsive suite of support services for job seekers. They have established sector-based work academies aimed at local employment sectors where the College provides pre-employment training, and employers provide work experience and job interviews.

Services also include a one-stop-shop in the town centre - 'Eastbourne works', where job seekers can come for free help and support, and most recently a 'Big Week of Work' where work markets (including an Apprentice Market) matched local employer vacancies to job seekers.

Some of the benefits and challenges of the work Colleges undertake with DWP/Jobcentres were identified (through this study) as:

Benefits

- Clear progression pathways for unemployed people who are claiming benefits to move into appropriate education and training.
- College access to Jobcentre Labour Market Information.
- Individuals studying on all courses at the College have access to Jobcentre vacancies.

¹³ AoC, *Back to Work: Colleges Supporting Sustainable Jobs* (November 2011)

- Jobcentre staff are able to provide advice on benefits which helps improve attendance and retention.

Challenges

- Job opportunities are difficult to find (with some people being recruited onto zero hours contracts which puts the individual's wider package of benefits at risk).
- Recruitment of Jobcentre customers onto courses can be time consuming as the conversion rate from referral to assessment can be as low as 30%.
- Keeping track of Jobcentre customers after they have left the College can be difficult.
- There can be a disjuncture between the College and Jobcentres on what can be achieved in terms of flexibility of provision.
- The (often low) knowledge level of Jobcentre staff about College provision can be a barrier.

5.3 Co-location of National Careers Service within Jobcentres

A survey¹⁴ undertaken in November 2011 indicated that the Next Step/National Careers Service had a presence in 85% of Jobcentres in England¹⁵. Trials on the deepening of co-location in 22 Jobcentres were launched in September 2011, with all trial sites expected to meet five minimum requirements¹⁶:

- a discretely branded National Careers Service area within a Jobcentre
- full-time access to all National Careers Service channels within the Jobcentre
- access to broadband and IT systems, e.g. email, Skills Health Check tool and the CRM to enhance the service offer to customers
- access to private interview facilities to enable interviews to take place without being disturbed
- closer working between Jobcentre and careers advisers including, but not limited to, joint case working, training and sharing of information, such as on the local labour market.

The purpose of the trials was to test different ways in which services may be delivered within Jobcentres, for example:

- the delivery of National Careers Service services from a 'pod' – a branded private interview space
- using TV screens to display National Careers Service information and, potentially, information on Jobcentre services
- IT kiosks for unsupervised customer access to the National Careers Service web channel
- customer access to the National Careers Service helpline
- in some locations, the provision of Information Advisers 'walking the floor'.

¹⁴ Referenced: *Co-location of National Careers Service, Paper for National Careers Service Advisory Group (November 2011)*

¹⁵ At the time of writing there was no data available on how many of the colleges already working with the National Careers Service are involved in co-location activities within Jobcentres.

¹⁶ *Co-location of National Careers Service, Paper for National Careers Service Advisory Group (November 2011)*

Following the trials, DWP and SFA will be working together to further roll out co-location of the National Careers Service with Jobcentres.

6. COLLEGES AND CAREER GUIDANCE

6.1 Current arrangements

(a) Entitlement

Entitlement to career guidance as part of the core College offer to the 16-19 cohort is fairly clear cut. All Colleges spoken to demonstrated – in a variety of ways – commitment to pre-, on-course and progression career guidance for young people. The situation with regard to the provision of career guidance for adults through Colleges is less clear. Adults may be eligible for career guidance:

- as a result of being a student of the College
- through the College receiving external funding for the delivery of career guidance to adults
- through their participation in a Jobcentre programme or initiative
- through a College 'open door/all comers' policy.

[We have an] all comers policy – offering a general guidance interview. We get a relatively good conversion rate from these sessions but, equally, a lot of people come to the College initially and then get signposted somewhere else.

Worcester College, AoC/LSIS Co-location Feasibility Study, March 2012

(b) Funding for career guidance

While Colleges have a statutory duty under the Education Act 1997 to 'provide persons attending the College with access to both guidance materials and reference materials relating to careers education and career opportunities'¹⁷, there is no ring-fenced funding for the delivery of career guidance in Colleges.

Funding for the provision of career guidance services for young people comes out of main college budgets. Provision of career guidance for adults is more likely to be provided through external funding such as:

- European Social Fund (ESF) programme funding which has a career guidance element, and/or
- DWP (through programmes for the unemployed).

Many Colleges are also sub-contracted to deliver National Careers Service provision (see Section 7 of this report for more information on arrangements for adults).

¹⁷ John Hayes, Minister for FE, Skills and Lifelong Learning in response to a parliamentary question (National Careers Service, 24 April 2012)

(c) OFSTED Common Inspection Framework

There is no specific grade for career guidance as part of the current OFSTED Common Inspection Framework for Colleges (nor is it proposed in the Common Inspection Framework for Colleges from September 2012), although OFSTED will specifically comment on the progress that students make into employment or HE.

(d) Range of activities

One of the key strengths of Colleges with regard to career guidance is the range of activities that they undertake – some discrete and some embedded. While the formal arrangements for both planning and delivery of career guidance will vary from College to College, the following list illustrates the type of services that may be available:

- guidance on current and future careers and progression opportunities
- skills assessment
- advice about training and qualifications
- progressing and applying to HE
- employability skills
- links with local employers/local labour markets
- careers fairs and events
- school liaison
- school visits
- improving confidence, supporting motivation (through tutorial and counselling services)
- job search.

In response to the question ‘Please indicate the availability of careers resources at your College (tick all that apply)’ in the recent AoC survey¹⁸, the following information was provided:

Facilities for access to web-based career tools	90%
College-based careers hub/information resource	93%
Open access careers centre ¹⁹	64%
One-stop-shop facility (offering careers and employability advice)	64%
Other	16%

The following tables taken from two of the Colleges who provided case studies for the study illustrate both the range and style of career guidance delivery and target audiences²⁰.

(i) Bishop Auckland College - range of career guidance activities

Career guidance activity	1:1/ Group	Delivery	Target and priority audience
<i>Full independent, impartial career</i>	<i>1:1</i>	<i>Daily drop-in service – main site only</i>	<i>Priority is College students</i>

¹⁸ AoC survey on Information, Advice & Guidance and Careers in colleges (February 2012)

¹⁹ Including face-to-face services

²⁰ While there is some reference to work with schools in these tables, the colleges were not requested (at this stage) to include examples of work with schools.

<i>guidance</i>		<i>Appointments - main site and community</i>	<i>but available for anyone in the community</i>
<i>Course/programme advice</i>	<i>1:1 Group</i>	<i>Daily drop-in service – main site only</i> <i>Appointments - main site and community</i> <i>Pre-entry IAG</i>	<i>Priority is College students but available for anyone in the community</i> <i>New applicants/potential students</i>
<i>HE options</i>	<i>1:1 Group</i>	<i>Daily drop-in service – main site only</i> <i>Appointments - main site and community</i>	<i>Priority is College students but available for anyone in the community</i>
<i>Progression to work</i>	<i>1:1 Group</i>	<i>Daily drop-in service – main site only</i> <i>Appointments - main site and community</i> <i>Included within progression presentations for full- (careers education programme) and part-time groups – main site but with referral from community courses for progression presentations as appropriate to need</i>	<i>Priority is College students but available for anyone in the community on a 1:1 basis</i> <i>College students</i>
<i>Employability</i>	<i>1:1</i>	<i>Daily drop-in service – main site only</i> <i>Appointments - main site and community</i> <i>Colleges careers education programme</i> <i>Employability Skills programmes - also delivered as part of community curriculum offer</i>	<i>Priority is College students but available for anyone in the community</i> <i>Full-time students</i> <i>Available for anyone in the community but majority JCP referral</i>
<i>Apprenticeship advice</i>	<i>1:1 Group</i>	<i>Daily drop-in service – main site only</i> <i>Appointments - main site and community</i>	<i>Priority is College students but available for anyone in the community</i>

		<p><i>Direct advice on College apprenticeship available from College Apprenticeship team</i></p>	<p><i>Potential apprenticeships</i></p>
<p><i>Getting back to work/getting a job/job search</i></p>	<p><i>1:1 Group</i></p>	<p><i>Daily drop-in service – main site only</i></p> <p><i>Appointments - main site and community</i></p> <p><i>Colleges careers education programme</i></p> <p><i>Employability Skills programmes - also delivered as part of community curriculum offer</i></p> <p><i>College Employment Unit</i></p>	<p><i>Priority is College students but available for anyone in the community</i></p> <p><i>Full-time students</i></p> <p><i>Available for anyone in the community but majority JCP referral</i></p> <p><i>Available for anyone in the community but majority JCP referral</i></p>
<p><i>Specific vocational /labour market advice</i></p>	<p><i>1:1 Group</i></p>	<p><i>Daily drop-in service – main site only</i></p> <p><i>Appointments - main site and community</i></p> <p><i>College’s careers education programme</i></p> <p><i>Employability Skills programmes - also delivered as part of community curriculum offer</i></p> <p><i>College Employment Unit</i></p>	<p><i>Priority is College students but available for anyone in the community</i></p> <p><i>Full-time students</i></p> <p><i>Available for anyone in the community but majority JCP referral</i></p> <p><i>Available for anyone in the community but majority JCP referral</i></p>
<p><i>General labour market advice</i></p>	<p><i>1:1 Group</i></p>	<p><i>Daily drop-in service – main site only</i></p> <p><i>Appointments - main site and community</i></p> <p><i>College’s careers education programme</i></p> <p><i>Employability Skills programmes - also delivered as part of community curriculum offer</i></p>	<p><i>Priority is College students but available for anyone in the community</i></p> <p><i>Full-time students</i></p> <p><i>Available for anyone in the community but majority JCP referral</i></p>

		College Employment Unit	Available for anyone in the community but majority JCP referral
Tutorial-based career guidance activities	Group	College's careers education programmes	Full-time students
Career guidance integrated into courses/programmes	Group	Exit guidance integrated into course programmes	Full-time students

(ii) City of Bristol College - range of career guidance activities

Career guidance activity	1:1/ group	Delivery	Target
Full independent, impartial career guidance	Both	Bookable appointments across all College centres Careers fairs	Universal 16-18s 19+ Next Step Unemployed
Course/programme advice	Both	Advice evenings/Open days Website Course information sheets Frontline Learner Services teams Tutors and faculty staff	Universal
HE options	Both	Tasters Visits to local universities Advice evenings/Open days Website Course information sheets Frontline Learner Services teams Tutors and faculty staff	Level 3 students Access to HE Mature students
Progression to work	Both	Work Skills Faculty embedded in course programmes - Employability courses and Work Clubs throughout the city. [You can use our computers, search for jobs, and improve your CV.	Adults Unemployed

		<i>You can also get help with completing job applications and interview preparation].</i>	
<i>Employability</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>NCFE Employability Skills qualification</i>	<i>Full-time 16-18s</i>
<i>Apprenticeship advice</i>	<i>Both</i>	<i>College arranges a range of open days and advice sessions; outreach with schools and employers</i>	<i>16-18s Adults Employers</i>
<i>Getting back to work/getting a job/job search</i>	<i>Both</i>	<i>Work Skills Faculty embedded in course programmes - Employability courses and Work Clubs throughout the city. [You can use our computers, search for jobs, and improve your CV. You can also get help with completing job applications and interview preparation.]</i>	<i>Adults Unemployed</i>
<i>Specific vocational /labour market advice</i>	<i>Both</i>	<i>Sharing information Referencing sources of information from all sectors – websites etc</i>	<i>All ages</i>
<i>General labour market advice</i>	<i>Both</i>	<i>Sharing information Referencing sources of information from all sectors – websites etc</i>	<i>All</i>
<i>Tutorial-based career guidance activities</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Targeted workshops/tutorials</i>	<i>16-18s Unemployed adults Access to HE ESOL</i>
<i>Career guidance integrated into courses/programmes</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Vocational links, progression discussions</i>	<i>All ages, mainly 16-18 Access Work skills</i>

(e) Employability and progression

Employability and progression are a key feature of College-based career guidance activities, and become especially important in the light of the reduction of careers education activities in schools.

The following narrative extracts taken from the AoC survey²¹ (in response to the question 'Please indicate briefly any specific careers or employability based initiatives that you run or are planning') give a sense of the type and level of activities that are being undertaken:

<i>Barking and Dagenham College</i>	<i>GFEC</i>	<i>The College is currently running an employability initiative called GOAL designed to support learners who are at risk of becoming NEET.</i>
<i>Brooklands College</i>	<i>GFEC</i>	<i>We offer an extremely wide range of work experience for learners. This provision links to their programme of study and supports their employability skills.</i>
<i>City and Islington College</i>	<i>GFEC</i>	<i>We are currently in the process of setting up a Job Search service for 19+ learners to access part-time, full-time and volunteering opportunities to increase their employability skills and move them closer to the labour market.</i>
<i>City College Plymouth</i>	<i>GFEC</i>	<i>The Work Space: a dedicated employability centre through which careers workshops are delivered, including talks from local employers. Workshops offered as part of tutorial programme.</i>
<i>City Lit</i>	<i>S.D.I. College</i>	<i>We offer on-course IAG group sessions with particular groups of students, such as sessions on writing an effective CV, completing forms, using the internet to apply for jobs, web-based careers resources, understanding the English education system (all for Skills for Life students), and student finance eligibility and how to apply (for Access to HE students).</i>
<i>Yeovil College</i>	<i>GFEC</i>	<i>We are starting to work with local companies on offering one-day-a-week internships to students who are on full-time courses. This project is in its infancy at the moment, but we hope to have something in place by September.</i>

(f) Labour Market Information (LMI)

Providing access to up-to-date labour market information, and the ability to interpret LMI to meet individual needs, has always been a major challenge for career guidance practitioners. Some National Careers Service regional prime contractors have dedicated staff working on LMI data and it is a regular feature of prime contractor training and development activities.

Colleges provide labour market information about their specialist vocational areas and have links to local employers through their own curriculum areas, as well as through other work-related training that they do. In some cases business development teams work closely with local employers on training needs, and increasingly Colleges are working with Jobcentres (see Section 5) linking labour market information and job vacancies held within the Jobcentre.

Colleges also work to ensure that careers staff have access to up-to-date generic LMI, for example:

²¹ Question 20, AoC survey on Information, Advice & Guidance and Careers in colleges (February 2012)

LMI data is received and disseminated to guidance staff on a regular basis. This information informs professional practice and is embedded in the IAG provided to customers. LMI is also used to plan group sessions and external visits, and is part of the curriculum review process.

The College uses a range of LMI sources including: regular monthly updates from DWP on labour market trends and live vacancy information; Prospects services updates and LMI training opportunities; information provided by the local authority on planning development and business movement. NOMIS data and LMI drawn from specific employer engagement activities.

Barnet and Southgate College, AoC/LSIS Co-location Feasibility Study, March 2012

The College careers team has a remit to ensure that all information in relation to LMI is up-to-date and there is a lead person within the service to ensure that information is current and valid. Within the College LMI is an integral part of curriculum planning, and increasingly helping to shape the curriculum to meet the needs of employers and the skill sets required today.

Bishop Auckland College, AoC/LSIS Co-location Feasibility Study, March 2012

The College provides funded and commercial training to over 2000 companies.... The College arranges over a thousand work experience placements for its own students each year. In addition, the [proposed] school CEIAG service is likely to lead to the development of work experience co-ordination for some of the schools. Again, the employers who host the placements will provide a rich source of LMI

Bridgwater College, AoC/LSIS Co-location Feasibility Study, March 2012

LMI is central to the careers offering. Much care is taken to ensure that the information provided is current and accurate. For those reasons we tend to rely on the sector skills councils, the Next Step website, and local contacts. Vocational skills tutors have good local trade contacts and local job advertisements are also useful. Vacancy lists are provided by the Jobcentre. Colleges are excellent sources of localised [labour market] knowledge by virtue of their staff.

Cornwall College, AoC/LSIS Co-location Feasibility Study, March 2012

All of the work that we do at Employment World at the present time is employer-led and linked to real labour market vacancies. To date these vacancies have been sourced by working in highly effective partnership arrangements with the Jobcentre and our employer base.

Derby College, AoC/LSIS Co-location Feasibility Study, March 2012

The potential for Colleges to become 'specialist hubs' for LMI around particular vocational areas was raised during the research. All those spoken to recognised the potential of this but expressed concern as to how it might be delivered and resourced:

This would be feasible through a web portal and possible e-learning modules. Telephone advice services would need to be funded as would general staff advice services to individuals and NCS providers. Barnet and Southgate already utilise an interactive recruitment portal where employers are able to upload video material on careers within their sector which could be developed to provide specialist labour market information.

Barnet and Southgate College, AoC/LSIS Co-location Feasibility Study, March 2012

6.2 Delivery models of College-based career guidance

As Colleges are independent business units there are as many different models of career guidance delivery as there are Colleges, each one reflecting the College student intake, the vocational curriculum, the community in which the College is based and the local economy. While the commitment to careers guidance appears to be consistent across Colleges, the way it is funded, the range of models adopted, and the position with regard to adults varies from College to College.

The main differences lie in the approach and the range of services available, and to whom. Some Colleges provide visible, branded front-end advice services with an 'open-door' policy; others are less visible with more of a focus on work with existing students and links to schools. Colleges that have premises in town centres have better visibility and access.

From data obtained through the feasibility study it was evident that most Colleges take an integrated approach to the planning of careers provision. The example below is taken from the City of Bristol College case study:

Learner Services takes the lead role in ensuring high quality information, advice and guidance services across the College. Faculties and 'e' Learning and Innovation (eLI) play a significant role in delivering a wide range of IAG services, and the role of tutors cannot be underplayed in ensuring learners are given the appropriate support to succeed and progress.

A number of key priorities have been highlighted in the Learner Services Development Plan for 2011-12:

- Develop a clear and consistent offer of entitlement to all learners*
- Personalisation of services*
- Innovation - Harnessing new technologies*
- Developing resources - self help, flexible*
- Embedding IAG in all areas of the College*
- Promoting progression and working towards positive outcomes*
- Strengthening core and specialist services*
- Building and developing partnerships*
- Preparing for new National Careers Service*
- Listening and responding to our customers*
- Continuous improvement and staff development*

City of Bristol College, AoC/LSIS co-location Feasibility Study, March 2012

With regard to adults, while very few Colleges fund career guidance for adults from the wider community from their own budgets, evidence from the study indicates that very few actively turn adults away. If they are prospective students they will be entitled to the College pre-entry guidance offer; if the College has a National Careers Service contract it will provide access to the full National Careers Service offer. If neither of those conditions apply, and the enquiry is more complex than just an information request, they will probably be forwarded to either the National Careers Service telephone service or the local National Careers Service face-to-face provider (who may spend some time on College premises).

The following are summaries of the different delivery models developed by the Colleges selected as studies for the feasibility study. They illustrate the range of approaches taken:

Cornwall College (College has a National Careers Service contract):

Guidance is offered in a variety of ways. Full independent, impartial careers advice is offered to absolutely anyone who requests such a service, be they a current student or a member of the community.

A full pre-course entry service is available to anyone who is unsure about which course is best suited to their individual aspirations. All on-course students receive an hour long induction into the careers service, where they are introduced to the careers staff on their site and are made aware of the available resources. During this induction process students are informed how to book 1:1 appointments at any time in the future. Tutors are made aware of how to book further group sessions in a range of topics including CV writing, UCAS applications, employability skills, identification of potential careers opportunities and many others.

Tutors often refer students for 1:1 appointments. Some students self-refer after being made aware of the service during induction, seeing it advertised in the Student Bulletin or on the posters spread around the College sites.

All students are offered the opportunity to receive pre-course, on-course and exit guidance. Any adult presenting themselves at Reception to enquire about enrolling will automatically be offered an appointment with an adult guidance team member. [We are] anxious that prospective students are successfully matched to the right provision for them. Appointments can be offered at any time of the day or evening, or at the weekend. Much of this work is funded under our [Next Step] sub-contract... and is delivered in association with various partners and usually on their premises. We deliver all the IAG for the Cornwall Probation Service (800 per interventions year), Cornwall Council Adult Education Department (500 interventions per year) and numerous voluntary sector groups (500 interventions per year). The offices and basis of these organisations are spread throughout Cornwall and we go to them.

Course progression is addressed during the on-course careers offering. Level 3 students are constantly encouraged and supported to consider their next steps, so enabling them to make informed choices as to whether Higher Education or a working route may be the best way to get to their goals.

City of Bristol College (College has a National Careers Service contract)

Information, advice and guidance (IAG) services are key in underpinning successful outcomes for learners. Providing access to a range of services plays a key role in enabling individuals to make the right decision on the type of learning and training they require, with a focus on positive outcomes as highlighted in the Wolf Report.

The College Development Plan outlines the key themes and priorities over the next three years. The Plan identifies the key actions the College will take to ensure all learners are provided with high quality training and education. One of the key components of this plan is the Gateway Programme which is focused on the quality of customer care and the way individuals and organisations interact with the College.

The Gateway Programme brings together a number of projects aimed at transforming the customer experience by delivering:

- *a new website*
- *a new customer relationship management system*
- *a new student portal called 'My College'*
- *improved admission and enrolment system*
- *consistent information, advice and guidance services*
- *a new College alumni*

The Programme brings together staff from all parts of the College to devise solutions which will improve the customer experience and enable the College to be more responsive to individual need and local/national labour market developments.

The Next Step contract is used to enable adults to be seen on all College sites, and to undertake outreach to specific groups²².

Derby College (College has a National Careers Service contract)

In response to the economic climate and consequential labour market situation, Derby College launched 'Employment World' in 2009, equipping Jobcentre Plus claimants with the skills required to re-join the workforce. Employment World @ Derby College is an adult only city centre venue where employability skills, specifically tailored to sector/employer requirements, are delivered.

Over the first two years the focus was delivery of the 6-month offer together with the Economic Challenge Investment Fund Programme funded through HEFC. Employment World was successful during that period in both re-skilling and up-skilling participants with 80% retention and achievement.

Integral to the offer has been the Next Step service providing impartial advice and supporting for exploring options and progression routes in learning and work. Over the past 11 months they have provided Next Step interventions to 781 new customers, 458 subsequent sessions, evidencing 318 learning impacts, 149 progressions into work and 7 career progressions in work.

²² For example, working with single parents

With the introduction of Skills Conditionality the College decided it was important that customers referred from the Jobcentre had the opportunity to explore their options as accepting a place on a programme and then failing to attend could compromise their benefits. Derby College have therefore used the National Careers Service contract to run special 'Selection days' for Jobcentre customers coming through on skills conditionality. This is delivered in partnership with the Jobcentre and is recognised as a model of good practice.

Barnet and Southgate College (College has a National Careers Service contract)

The Employment and Enterprise Zone is a purpose built centre that brings together a range of complementary service providers to offer advice, information, skills training and recruitment services for learners and employers. From National Careers Service provision through to enterprise support and job brokerage activities, the centre offers an innovative model of delivery that meets the needs of both unemployed learners seeking work and employers seeking the best candidates for their business.

The shape of the front-line services was informed by three key drivers:

- *the requirement for Colleges to better address the needs of unemployed customers, particularly the growing number of College learners moving through the skills conditionality process*
- *to put learners at the heart of the skills and employment system*
- *a need for the College to build a strong profile amongst employers as the preferred provider of suitably qualified and prepared candidates in an increasingly competitive job market.*

The College has developed an integrated model of service delivery that enables customers to benefit from the joining up of professional practice across the employment enterprise and training sector. A customer may enter the service at any stage in their career path and immediately be linked to wide-ranging support that might otherwise have been difficult to identify and usually situated in multiple locations.

The exchange of knowledge and expertise between service providers also supports integrated practice and enables individual providers to widen their understanding and skills across disciplines whilst maintaining professional specialisms.

The following service model was agreed in November 2011:

The National Careers Service offer comprises a comprehensive careers guidance and information service delivered by qualified and experienced staff... the service includes:

- *careers advice*
- *skills health checks*
- *information and advice on education, training and volunteering opportunities*
- *CV development and support with job applications*
- *interview skills coaching*
- *referral services.*

North London Business is the prime contractor for the Enterprise Allowance scheme in North London, and provides Enterprise and Business start-up advice. The core offer includes:

- *start-up advice*
- *writing a business plan*

- cash flow forecasting
- marketing and e-commerce
- access to finance and loans
- tax, VAT and NI
- networking and exporting.

DWP is a key stakeholder in the Employment and Enterprise Zone, and provides a range of employment-related services, including:

- job matching and brokerage
- employment engagement
- provision of current local LMI
- referral to skills training.

The College is also in discussion with REED and NCFE to take forward proposals for recruitment services to be located at the centre. The inclusion of a high profile recruitment arm will further improve employment outcomes for customers and raise the profile of College learners amongst local employers.

Although the centre is still in development, the model of integrated service delivery does align well with the current employment and skills agenda, and provides an enhanced service for customers who can often find the service landscape difficult to navigate. Areas of best practice are particularly evident in the design of the co-located activities and customer journey. Good outcomes are also being achieved through the joint working with the Jobcentre around employer engagement and job brokerage. There is some recognition that the direct brokering model does help to overcome some of the negative perceptions held by customers and employers, and overall raises engagement with skills providers.

College of North West London (College had a Next Step contract until April this year)

The College has a top down commitment to career guidance in all forms, and has invested heavily in staff and resources to deliver a quality service, including the services provided by the Student Development Services Division (SDS).

The SDS Division brings together all of the information, advice and guidance services for the College, including the following teams:

- Careers and guidance (until recently including Connexions)²³
- Course Information Centre
- Admissions
- Pathway to Employment (including work experience and employability)
- Finance and welfare
- Student liaison (including enrichment and student support)
- Learner voice.

The College has Course Information Centres at the Wembley and Willesden campuses, and prospective and existing students are able to walk into either of these centres to receive impartial information and advice on the courses available at the College and other organisations.

²³ Recent follow-up with the College of North West London indicates that work is underway to replace the services provided by Connexions by reallocating resources to a team of Careers Advisers who will extend their [current] duties and carry out careers and guidance interviews for 16-18 year olds [work which was previously undertaken by Connexions advisers]. They have also put in place a tutorial programme so that all 16-18 year olds have a weekly group tutorial on careers and employability-related topics delivered by a member of the Student Services division.

There is a dedicated telephone line and email address for the Course Information Centres. These are manned by qualified IAG staff. The College has also set up touch screens onsite so that existing and prospective students can gain information on courses and support services at the College when the Course Information Centre is closed.

The College took the decision to embed the Next Step contract into its core careers guidance provision. Due to changes in priorities the National Careers Service regional prime contractor for London did not renew its contract with the College for this year – the reasons being a need to reduce the number of sub-contractors.

Bishop Auckland College (College had a Next Step contract until April this year)

Bishop Auckland College is a medium-sized general FE College serving the local, urban, semi-rural and rural areas of south west Durham. The College sits in an area of high deprivation with high levels of worklessness and low levels of literacy. Just over 50% of the College's students are from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The College has 1,000 full-time 16-18 learners and 4,500 adult learners studying a mix of full- and part-time provision; just over 350 apprentices and 400 adults on informal adult learning programmes.

The careers team (2.8 careers staff) each have responsibility for several curriculum areas, and work closely with the manager and tutors for the provision of careers guidance and swift referral of students at risk of leaving. Each student in the College is now case loaded and all interventions in relation to the student are recorded onto the College's centralised 'e' ILP. This is a focussed approach and one that is designed to support students into further study, employment or training.

Careers guidance is located within front-line services at the College main site but permeates all aspects of the curriculum at the main site and community learning centres.

A careers education programme is delivered through the College's group tutorial programme for full-time students. This is high level activity work as all full-time students receive careers education/employability skills sessions. The programme does not operate as a 'blanket' approach across the College. The careers education programme is mapped against the National Guidelines for CEIAG 13-19, Common Inspection Framework, and the Every Child Matters agenda. Each curriculum course is 'audited' against the learning outcomes within the national guidelines and sessions are agreed through negotiation with College tutors to enhance curriculum delivery rather than duplicate. This amounts to 300+ group sessions per annum. Sessions are differentiated by level and ability which enables students progressing through levels to build upon, and enhance, their knowledge and skills.

Work is also being undertaken on a partnership model with local schools for the funding of a programme of activities for one year to support schools in the transition period.

The College has a history of providing an 'open door' policy for careers guidance, providing the opportunity for any member of the community to access careers advice and guidance. The main priority of the careers team is, however, to support all College students both pre-entry, on-course and with progression into further study, HE or employment.

The Next Step contract has reduced year on year to a relatively small contract of approximately 280 sessions a year, which has not been renewed this year. There have been some issues about the potential conflict between the College's 'open door' policy and the

receipt of Next Step funding to see adults.

The Next Step funding supported the open door policy and, as such, flexibility will be required to maintain the same level of open offer. What is interesting to note, however, is that the College has not received a direct referral from the local Next Step for careers advice, i.e. to discuss College courses. All Next Step provision has been as a result of the College's own activities and client self-referral. As self-referral is high there remains an expectation within the community, and this is reinforced time and time again, that a College is perceived as a place to go to receive careers advice and guidance.

With all government-funded provision, inevitably, there is now a greater emphasis on accountability, and this also now applies to the careers service in the College. The service is continuing to develop its impact measurement mechanisms to demonstrate the high impact on outcomes following interventions. It is also essential that alongside measurable outcomes, the improvement of 'soft' skills, i.e. improving self-esteem, are also recorded and reported upon, demonstrating the wider impact of careers advice and guidance.

Bridgwater College (no National Careers Service contract)

Bridgwater College is a tertiary College to four local Bridgwater secondary schools and a general FE provider to a wide catchment area, including approximately 80 schools in Somerset and Devon.

Until recently there was a distinction by age in terms of the type of careers guidance service available through the College. The Connexions service was offered only to 16-18 year old students, although the agreement between Connexions and the College included Connexions support at Open and Parents evenings to all age groups. Generally, however, Connexions referred any adult students back to the College, where they were able to access support through the College's own Admissions and Course Enquiries team.

Arrangements for career guidance in the College have been:

- via the Connexions service operating on four days a week in the College (while, in theory, advice was provided on a wide variety of progression routes, in practice the majority of users of the Connexions service were A level learners seeking support through the UCAS process)*
- via the Admissions and Course Enquiries team*
- as part of the tutorial programme - 1:1 tutorials have focused on specific progression themes whereas Common Tutorials have covered such themes as the UCAS process, progression and employability*
- as part of the curriculum, especially in vocational course areas, often involving work experience opportunities and contact with local employers*
- via some specific progression events such as trips to HE fairs or visits to, or from, major employers.*

DWP does not provide services from College premises, but does provide referrals to the College. A number of innovative programmes have been developed jointly with DWP such as training for the unemployed for DHL/Morrisons, with short programmes in College leading to a guaranteed interview for newly-created roles at the new Morrisons distribution centre.

A recent review of CEIAG provision in the College has led to the decision to offer an enhanced careers service for College students and a CEIAG offer to schools. In terms of affordability, the College made an offer which covered College costs, but was substantially less expensive than the

commercial offers for careers advice offered to schools²⁴. As a result of these changes, the College is now considering:

- rebranding the CEIAG service internally so that College students and young people dropping in are attracted to advice and guidance services rather than 'Course enquiries'
- offering 19+ guidance from a retail shop front the College has in the town centre, targeting the unemployed, including worker and migrant workers attracted to the area because of the employment opportunities described above
- providing better support for academic high flyers making applications via UCAS to Russell Group universities, conservatoires and Oxbridge (the College's high A level success rates suggest that more students could succeed in such environments, but perhaps are inhibited by local conditions and a lack of specialist support and encouragement).

The College recognises it is in a fortunate tertiary position in relation to local schools and has been able to build up a strong foundation of secure relationships with those schools.

6.3 Perceptions and reality – College-based careers guidance provision

It became apparent through the work of the study that perceptions of College-based career guidance are mixed. While there was no hard evidence to support them, three particular issues were identified:

(a) Colleges only provide 'partial' advice about College provision

There is a perception amongst schools (and some National Careers Service regional prime contractors and sub-contractors) that Colleges offer only 'partial' careers advice linked to the College offer. This study has found no hard evidence to support this view. On the contrary, all the Colleges spoken to during the study were very specific about the importance of impartial, student-centred careers guidance, seeing it as being in the interests of both the individual and the College to have the right person on the right course. As far as the College is concerned, any other approach could have serious consequences on both College performance and funding.

The availability of impartial career guidance through Colleges is reflected in responses to the question 'Please indicate the type of career guidance your College provides (tick all that apply)' in the AoC survey²⁵:

Advice on College provision to students/prospective students only	72%
Impartial career guidance to students/prospective students only	77%
Exit guidance and employability/labour market advice for students	92%
Links to local labour markets/employers	80%
Outreach/community-based careers/employability advice initiatives	51%
Impartial career guidance for all young people and adults ²⁶	59%
Other	16%

²⁴ No further information was available on these plans at the time this report was being finalised.

²⁵ AoC survey on Information, Advice & Guidance and Careers in colleges, February 2012

²⁶ This was a response to a specific question – i.e. 'Do you provide impartial career guidance for all young people and adults'. It does not mean that the other 41% of colleges do not provide impartial career guidance, just that they do not provide it to 'young people and adults'.

(b) Colleges only provide courses for the less able

Feedback from those spoken to, and from the AoC survey, indicate concern that there is a perception in schools that the most able pupils should stay in school and those who would not be able to meet school 'academic' expectations should be referred to Colleges.

School teachers' knowledge of FE is clouded by their own limited experience and understanding of it. They may be well meaning and well-disposed towards the College but frequently make the assumption that our offer is for the less able whilst the more academically gifted are assumed to be automatically progressing to the local sixth form College. This immediately prejudices the IAG they give.

Blackpool and the Fylde College, AoC survey on Information, Advice & Guidance, February 2012

This view becomes a matter of particular concern in the context of the new responsibility on schools to ensure the provision of career guidance to their own pupils.

Further investigation of this issue was outside of the remit of this study, although more evidence of the changing relationship between schools and Colleges can be found in Section 8 of this report.

(c) National Careers Service funding supporting existing activities

Findings from the work of the study illustrate the flexible ways in which Colleges use their National Careers Service funding, reflecting individual College arrangements, student intake and their overarching career guidance policy. In some instances, however, there appear to be differing views between Colleges and regional prime contractors on the location and purpose of the National Careers Service funding and the way in which it is used.

The Next Step contract has reduced year on year to a relatively small contract of approximately 280 sessions a year, which has not been renewed this year. There have been some issues about the potential conflict between the College's 'open door' policy and the receipt of Next Step funding to see adults [i.e. whether the Next Step funding actually brings added value to existing College provision]. At one point we had to see all Next Step clients off College premises, although this has been resolved in the last year.

Bishop Auckland College, AoC/LSIS Feasibility Study, March 2012

It is difficult to assess (from the work of this study) how widespread this concern is, and how much it impacts on the potential for co-location between the National Careers Service and Colleges, especially as there is already considerable co-location being undertaken. To ensure that this is not a factor that may inhibit future progress, however, it is recommended that this be one of the issues for further discussion and clarification between Colleges and National Careers Service regional prime contractors.

7. COLLEGES AND THE NATIONAL CAREERS SERVICE

7.1 Co-location data

In his speech to the ICG Conference in November 2011²⁷ the Minister referred to the National Careers Service working in co-location with 139 Colleges.

In response to a parliamentary question on 23 April 2012²⁸ the co-location figure provided was 198 - i.e. 59 Colleges acting as National Careers Service sub-contractors, plus National Careers Service presence (through other contractors) in a further 139 Colleges with the proviso that the numbers vary over time as *'local contractors regularly review the position, and to ensure the service is accessible to all potential customers the National Careers Service may seek additional or better locations'*.

In early May, as a result of conversations with the SFA, the figures provided showed that the National Careers Service had a presence in 208 Colleges, of which 59 were sub-contracted arrangements²⁹.

7.2 Overview of current arrangements

The way in which National Careers Service regional prime contractors deliver services varies across the country, particularly with regard to how much is delivered directly through the prime contractor and how much is sub-contracted out. For example:

- in the North East 85% of the National Careers Service contract is delivered by the prime contractor
- in the West Midlands 35-40% is delivered by the prime contractor, with 16 sub-contractors delivering the remainder
- in London the National Careers Service contract is sub-contracted out to 55 sub-contractors (although at the time this study was being undertaken this number was being reduced)
- in Yorkshire and the Humber there are five career companies within the 22 sub-contractors, with the area divided into sub-regions according to density of population.

The National Careers Service regional prime contractors determine the nature of College involvement in the delivery of National Careers Service provision. In some cases they will sub-contract directly with FE Colleges; in others co-location may be delivered through on-site presence in Colleges by other contractors or by the prime contractors themselves. The decision as to where services are located is based on the regional prime contractor's analysis of how they can best reach the identified priority target groups in their regions.

At the time of writing no detailed data was available about the specific nature of the current co-location arrangements with FE Colleges, although from the desk research and discussions through the field work, the following appear to be the most common:

- Colleges holding sub-contracts with the National Careers Service

²⁷ John Hayes, Minister for FE, Skills and Lifelong Learning, speech to Institute of Career Guidance Conference, November 2011

²⁸ John Hayes, Minister for FE, Skills and Lifelong Learning in response to parliamentary question (National Careers Service, 23 April 2012)

²⁹ All the co-location numbers quoted are based on data that was available at the time of writing.

- Colleges that are not formally sub-contracted to the National Careers Service but have agreement for regular site visits from either the prime contractor or other National Careers Service sub-contractors
- Colleges that have previously held 'Next Step' sub-contracts but have either not re-applied to be sub-contractors or their contracts have not been renewed due to a change in regional prime contractor priorities
- Colleges working in partnership with the National Careers Service through a range of local activities and initiatives
- Colleges that use the National Careers Service for referral purposes only.

If Colleges are National Careers Service sub-contractors they will agree with the regional prime contractor the number of first, and subsequent, interventions that they will be funded for over the year, and can exercise their own discretion as to whether they provide these as one-to-one or group sessions, or a mixture of both. Evidence shows that funding is used in a number of different ways. For example, to:

- fund discrete services for adults (either individually or in groups) – either on site or in outreach settings
- fund embedded career guidance in other programmes for adults (e.g. programmes for the unemployed)
- provide additional funding for College front-end advice services so that adults can be offered career guidance as part of that service;
- work in partnership with other agencies to provide specific outreach activities for adults in the community
- support an integrated approach to career guidance throughout the College so that adults can be included in the services offered.

If Colleges are not sub-contractors the relationship is more likely to be one or all of the following:

- a National Careers Service adviser attending the College site to see adults, either on a drop-in or an appointment basis
- Colleges referring to the national telephone or web service, or local National Careers Service provider
- Colleges working with National Careers Service regional prime contractors on specific local initiatives.

7.3 Colleges and National Careers Service regional prime contractors

Feedback on relationships between Colleges and National Careers Service regional prime contractors was mixed. Some of the challenges identified by regional prime contractors were:

- College restructuring can lead to changes in staffing responsibilities and impact on the delivery of services
- College cut backs can impact on a college's ability to delivery community outreach activities
- Colleges do not have the flexibility of smaller organisations to undertake work in, say, rural areas, or at evenings and weekends
- National Careers Service regional prime contractors and Colleges can have unaligned priorities and targets
- in some cases it is difficult to identify the added value the National Careers Service funding brings to careers advice delivered through a College.

Colleges in turn expressed concern over:

- the ‘fluidity’ of the arrangements around decisions made by National Careers Service regional prime contractors
- the challenges sometimes presented by other providers attending on College premises without any clear guidelines about expectations and practice
- the bureaucracy involved in the delivery of National Careers Service contracts
- the fitness for purpose of the Customer Relationship Management system when working directly with customers.

There was, however, positive feedback from Colleges on involvement with the National Careers Service around:

- the benefits of being able to use the funding to support adult career guidance activities in Colleges
- the feedback arrangements that some regional prime contractors give on action plans
- recognition of the wider benefits of a common CRM system
- the availability of marketing and promotional materials
- regular updates from the regional prime contractor
- joint training and networking events with other National Careers Service sub-contractors
- work undertaken by regional prime contractors around LMI
- the benefits of wider networking activities.

7.4 Colleges and effective partnerships

Careers England commissioned a paper³⁰ on its members’ experiences thus far on establishing co-location of Next Step services with other agencies, including DWP, FE Colleges and other community organisations. While the resulting paper did not provide detailed information on the nature of co-location arrangements, Careers England members identified areas where, in their view, co-location works best:

- where there are strong partnerships
- when delivery arrangements are consistent – so everyone knows what to expect
- where there is a recognition of the benefits of being able to share resources when co-locating with other services, especially when working in an outreach context:

For co-location to work under the new Next Step operating instructions, the host organisation also needs to provide good internet access with printers etc. Laptops fill a gap but they are not really effective due to relying on remote ‘dongle’ internet access, and even if there is access to secure Wi-Fi/plug-in internet, portable printers are unreliable and expensive to run and, due to data security, if the action plan is not issued to the client immediately the provider incurs unaffordable postage expenses (recorded delivery etc.).³¹

The report also commented on the wide variety of co-location arrangements that exist within FE Colleges:

³⁰ Co-location: The Next Step Careers Service. Experiences so far: Preparing for the National Careers Service

³¹ The quotes here are taken from the Careers England report. They were not referenced in the original report.

We work directly with the majority of FE Colleges [in our region], either through sub-contracting arrangements or through negotiating delivery onsite by one of our own advisers. The offer is tailored around the individual needs of the clients and includes 1:1 interviews and group workshops.

We do not have a one-model-fits-all approach. Some Colleges do not want to be sub-contractors of Next Step so we, as the regional prime contractor, would offer a service to all of their eligible students. Other Colleges are sub-contractors, but we also work in partnership with them due to the demand for the service, and then there are Colleges who are sub-contractors and who do all of the delivery.

Several members reported that delivery on employers' premises featured prominently in their delivery. While this does not necessarily involve FE Colleges, it does imply the kind of conditions that lead to successful co-location:

From our experience, and reflecting the majority of our Next Step interactions with customers, employers' premises work best since usually clients are motivated to attend and we have negotiated directly with the employer for use of facilities. They 'buy into' this because we are supporting their employee, often at a time when they are keen to show their employees that they are doing all they can to support them, e.g. during redundancy and transition periods such as succession planning and talent pool development. We have also developed strong links with the Jobcentre with regard to outplacement support (rapid response) for organisations and individual unemployment support.

8. COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS

At the time of writing, responsibility for the provision of career guidance for young people (up to the age of 18) was transferring from a national Connexions service to individual schools and local authorities. While there will be no common, identifiable approach or brand under the new arrangements, the responsibility for schools to secure access to independent, impartial career guidance for all pupils, and for local authorities with regard to those young people with disabilities or who fall into the NEET category, are clear. As a consequence, provision for young people between March and September was entering a major transitional phase and it was not possible to be precise about what the new arrangements would look like in September 2012.

David Andrews, in a paper written in early 2012³², identified a range of emerging delivery models:

³² Andrews, D., *Schools taking on responsibility for careers guidance: emerging models. Occasional Paper, Association for Careers Education and Guidance (ACEG) (January 2012)*

- Individual careers advisers: Careers advisers, working as self-employed sole traders offering their services to schools, particularly to those in which they have worked previously.
- Social enterprise: Careers advisers coming together in social enterprises to sell their services to schools
- Careers organisations: The main organisations providing career guidance services to schools include former Connexions partnerships, career guidance companies and, in some areas, local authorities.
- Education Business Partnerships: Some EBPs are exploring the possibility of entering the career guidance market. They already have experience of selling work-related learning and work experience services direct to schools and, if they were to recruit some qualified careers advisers, they would be in a position to offer schools an integrated career education, guidance and work-related support service.
- FE Colleges and universities: Most FE Colleges employ, within their students services departments, qualified careers advisers; some are offering to provide career guidance services to schools in their locality but [I have yet to hear] of a school that has decided to take this route³³. Similarly, almost every university has a career guidance service and [I have come across] at least one school that has approached the service at its local university to ask if they would be able to provide career guidance to pupils in schools.

The statutory guidance³⁴ states that schools can choose to commission support from providers engaged in the delivery of the National Careers Service or other external and expert careers providers. National Careers Service providers selling their services to schools will not be able to use the National Careers Service brand when doing so however.

The statutory guidance also emphasises the importance of ensuring that the full range of options are made available to school pupils, including all vocational and FE options. While this is reassuring, the feedback from the recent AoC survey of Colleges³⁵ was not so positive with regard to the changing nature of the relationship between schools and Colleges, identifying in particular the disparity between the results from 11-16 and 11-18 schools:

	11-16 schools	11-18 schools
Providing pupils with significant access to information about the College offer	55%	18%
Providing pupils with some access to information about the College offer, but could do more	31%	31%
Providing pupils with poor, limited or no access to information about the College offer	14%	51%

The follow-up question of 'For those schools providing pupils with poor, limited or no access to information about College, please tick which issues you have experienced within the past year', the following results were recorded³⁶:

³³ This study found at least one example where a college was forming a 'careers hub' for the purposes of providing careers services to local schools. It should be noted that this was a college working in a tertiary setting.

³⁴ DfE, Statutory Guidance for Schools – Career Guidance (26 March 2012)

³⁵ AoC survey on Information, Advice & Guidance and Careers in colleges (February 2012)

³⁶ Respondents were asked to tick as many boxes as appropriate.

<i>Preventing pupils from attending College open days</i>	<i>34%</i>
<i>Refusing to display College information within careers units or other outlets</i>	<i>58%</i>
<i>Not distributing prospectuses to pupils</i>	<i>74%</i>
<i>Non-participation in taster days</i>	<i>71%</i>
<i>Declining offers for College liaison officers to speak to all pupils</i>	<i>89%</i>
<i>Only allowing College liaison officers to speak to certain pupils</i>	<i>69%</i>
<i>Low/no take up of College provision at 14 (part-time)</i>	<i>55%</i>
<i>Other (including: making it difficult for students to attend College interviews; delaying references; pupils arriving in September in a panic because school has not let them into the sixth form; not sharing information about open evenings; actively marketing against Colleges)</i>	<i>37%</i>

A sample of other narrative extracts in response to the question ‘Please add any further information that clarifies the quality of your engagement with schools (including academies) etc³⁷’ is provided below:

<i>Kingston College</i>	<i>GFEC</i>	<i>We have excellent relationships with many schools across south west London and Surrey, and work collaboratively to embellish success and progression rates through a wide range of initiatives. However, many of these schools are now developing new sixth forms and we are finding that our established contacts are apologising to us and stating that our relationship with them will be coming to an end as the school sixth form needs to recruit to target and FE Colleges are now seen as a threat. We find this very frustrating as we have tried to complement local provision, have always championed impartiality and excellence regarding our IAG services, and do not wish to compete with local schools. This approach has built mutual trust and respect between organisations and has enabled strong relationships to develop which put individual student needs before institution’s recruitment needs and funding targets.</i>
<i>Grimsby Institute</i>	<i>GFEC</i>	<i>All secondary schools in North East Lincolnshire are now academies and therefore access to provide advice and guidance can be difficult. We are in the process of working with partners on developing a Progression and Transition Board for the Borough which we hope will go some way to addressing this.</i>
<i>A College in the south west</i>	<i>GFEC</i>	<i>11-16 schools, both within and outside our tertiary area, are easy to work with. Our own qualified team of College advisers have ready access to these schools. Almost all 11-18 schools offer no access whatsoever, or very limited access, to a small range of vocational and/or SLDD provision. Interestingly our academic and vocational results are the best in the county on several measures.</i>
<i>Truro and Penwith College</i>	<i>Tertiary</i>	<i>I have written to all 14 (11-18) schools in Cornwall referring them to the recently published DfE statutory guidance and asking them if we could visit to talk to their students. All bar one have said no.</i>
<i>King Edward VI College, Nuneaton</i>	<i>SixthForm</i>	<i>Schools with sixth forms are in direct competition, and access to pupils is getting more difficult.</i>

³⁷ Question 8, AoC survey on Information, Advice & Guidance and Careers in Colleges (February 2012)

	<i>College (SFC)</i>	
<i>Bilborough College, East Midlands</i>	<i>SFC</i>	<i>Many schools with sixth forms are in direct competition and access to pupils is getting more difficult.</i>
<i>Plymouth College of Art</i>	<i>Art, Design and Perf. Arts</i>	<i>We are based in Plymouth and take students from Plymouth, Devon and Cornwall. Others come from further afield and are able to live in Plymouth through the residential bursary scheme. In Plymouth all secondary schools have a sixth form -students may not be aware of all their options and see the sixth form as their only choice. In Devon and Cornwall things are a little different due to less sixth forms.</i>

The AoC will be following up this survey later in the year. In the meantime, there is very real concern that access to schools, and the provision of information about the FE offer, is decreasing in many areas as a result of the policy changes.

Evidence from the study illustrates the range of skills and knowledge that Colleges can offer schools – particularly with regard to career guidance, employability skills and labour market

knowledge. The apparent anxieties in schools about allowing a ‘competitor’ to provide career guidance to pupils who they would like to encourage to stay on in their own sixth form are, up to a point, understandable but do not reflect an independent or impartial approach to career guidance.

9. COLLEGE-BASED CAREERS HUBS

9.1 Meeting a range of needs

Detailed data on the nature of current co-location arrangements was not available at the time of this study, although we understand that this is work that the SFA is planning to undertake.

In the meantime, findings from the feasibility study indicate a strong commitment (and presence of) face-to-face career guidance in Colleges and the potential to expand this and make it more accessible. This section outlines a more holistic approach to the delivery of career guidance through the development of College-based careers hubs.

9.2 College-based careers hubs

A College-based careers hub is:

- an identifiable, visible focal point for career guidance for both young people and adults from the wider community
- delivered through the auspices of a College in partnership with the National Careers Service and other local stakeholders (e.g. schools, local authorities, libraries, Jobcentres, employers) .

A College-based careers hub could:

- provide impartial and independent careers advice for young people and adults (bringing together resources from a range of partners and stakeholders, including the National Careers Service)
- offer access to a menu of careers resources which may include access to initial advice and signposting, specialist labour market advice, regular CV or job search workshops, as well as the opportunity to make an appointment with a careers adviser
- offer access to up-to-date information about courses, qualifications, vocational training, apprenticeships and the full range of other work-preparation programmes
- be used by schools and local authorities as a resource, a referral point for young people, or as a paid-for service
- be used by Jobcentres as an initial referral point
- be a general source of local labour market information.

The potential strengths of the College-based careers hub model are that it could:

- provide young people, and their parents, with access to impartial face-to-face career guidance
- provide a service that is genuinely accessible to all ages
- promote the College's ability to provide both impartial career guidance, as well as specific 'partial' advice about occupational sectors
- provide links to wider College resources and expertise
- increase the visibility and accessibility of the National Careers Service brand
- achieve economies of scale and improved visibility by bringing together services for young people and adults in one identifiable, visible location
- involve a range of local partners and stakeholders – including employers
- work closely with all local partners to share local labour market intelligence and resources.

Some of the challenges are:

- bringing together a range of partners and stakeholders who have different funding arrangements
- joint branding for a College-based careers hub would be appropriate but joint branding is not currently permitted with the National Careers Service brand
- National Careers Service regional prime contractors make decisions about the location of National Careers Service provision which sometimes excludes Colleges; equally, some Colleges are cautious about their involvement with the current requirements of the National Careers Service.

10. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

10.1 Access and eligibility

The provision of career guidance for both young people and adults is a maze of different access and eligibility arrangements, not generally visible or well-articulated. It is often difficult to understand and navigate as far as young people and adults from the wider community are concerned.

10.2 The commitment of Colleges to career guidance

All those Colleges contacted as part of the Feasibility Study placed a high priority on the provision of career guidance for their core 16-19 year old cohort, and expressed a commitment to the provision of impartial, student-centred career guidance with a strong emphasis on employability and progression.

10.3 Range of models

Models and delivery arrangements for College-based career guidance vary from College to College, but all those contacted through the study have invested in both resources and staff to support the provision of career guidance.

While the commitment to career guidance appears to be consistent across Colleges, the way it is funded and the range of models vary from College to College³⁸. Some Colleges provide highly-visible, branded front-end advice services with an 'open-door' policy; others are less visible with more of a focus on work with existing students and links to schools. Some Colleges locate themselves in town centre premises for increased visibility and access.

The upside of this situation is the variety of different approaches taken to the delivery of career guidance in Colleges. The downside is that there is no one model that is easily recognisable and identifiable.

10.4 Colleges and adults

While very few Colleges fund career guidance for adults from their own budgets, equally it appears that few will actively turn adults away if they present for learning or career guidance. If they are prospective students they will be entitled to the College pre-entry guidance offer. Career guidance for adults who are not College students may be provided through an 'open access' approach to the provision of career guidance; the College being sub-contracted to deliver the National Careers Service offer; specific external funding or work with Jobcentres.

10.5 Benefits of College-based career guidance

College-based career guidance is underpinned by a commitment to 'getting the right person on the right course', ensuring learners complete their courses and achieve qualifications, improving employability, and enabling progression as part of the wider College offer. This is motivated by both College funding and inspection regimes which concentrate on retention and success.

The key benefits of College-based careers provision are:

- familiar, recognisable community facilities
- access to qualified careers staff (often in matrix-accredited settings)
- access to a range of careers resources and activities
- access to specialist advice around specific sectors
- access to vocational programmes
- access to the broader FE curriculum
- links to local employers
- emphasis on employability and progression

³⁸ While colleges have a statutory duty to 'provide persons attending the college with access to both guidance materials and reference materials relating to careers education and career opportunities' [ref John Hayes, Minister for FE, Skills and Lifelong Learning in response to a parliamentary question on 24 April 2012] there is no ring-fenced funding for the delivery of career guidance to colleges.

- understanding of qualifications and the funding of learning.

The commitment of Colleges to career guidance appears to be neither well known nor well understood outside of Colleges however. Because access to career guidance has traditionally been for College students and, as such, an integral part of the College offer it rarely seems to have been advertised or promoted separately as one of the benefits of College provision.

10.6 Colleges and DWP

Colleges are involved in a wide range of DWP provision, including:

- work clubs
- sector-based work academies
- pre-employment training initiatives
- JSA
- skills conditionality referrals
- the Youth Contract.

In a recent AoC survey³⁹ 95% of Colleges were identified as offering provision to unemployed people, with virtually every College (98%) recruiting via Jobcentres.

10.7 Co-location and delivery of services

There are 208⁴⁰ Colleges identified as being involved in co-location activities with the National Careers Service in some way. Of these, 59 have formal sub-contractor arrangements and the remaining 139 involve the presence of other providers on College premises. No detailed information on the nature of the co-location arrangements was available at the time of the study.

Only National Careers Service regional prime contractors can make decisions as to the nature of co-location arrangements with local colleges. The relationship between Colleges and National Careers Service regional prime contractors appears to be mixed, however, and requires further development. Some of the key issues are:

- maximising the strengths and resources that the College can contribute to the National Career Service, identifying where Colleges can provide services that cannot be provided elsewhere
- resolving potential differences in priorities, expectations, and delivery arrangements between Colleges and regional prime contractors
- joint planning and development in the context of meeting the Minister's aspirations of increasing the co-location of the National Careers Service with Colleges.

10.8 Colleges and schools

While it is dangerous to generalise, there is undoubtedly a misconception by some schools that having Colleges provide career guidance on post-16 options (especially where there is a sixth form or a move to academy status) is not appropriate because they believe:

- career guidance delivered by Colleges is only about promoting College provision – it is not impartial

³⁹ Association of Colleges, *Back to work: Colleges Supporting Sustainable Jobs* (November 2011)

⁴⁰ The co-location numbers quoted are based on the data that was available at the time of writing

- Colleges are places for the less able
- Colleges and schools are competitors.

The potential for schools and Colleges to be competitors would not be an issue where there was a total commitment by all parties to the delivery of independent, impartial, pupil-centred advice and guidance. This study has found, however, that:

- new responsibilities on schools to ensure the provision of career guidance to their own pupils
- concern about numbers in sixth forms
- squeezed school budgets
- the growth of academies, and
- misconceptions about the College offer and College-based career guidance provision are all contributing to a reluctance by schools to provide access to Colleges for the purposes of either promotion of College-based provision or the delivery of career guidance.

10.9 College-based careers hubs

College-based careers hubs have the potential to provide visible, accessible focal points in local communities where young people and adults can obtain careers advice.

11. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 Conclusions

The main reasons for undertaking the Feasibility Study were to:

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

The conclusion is that the commitment, experience and range of College-based career guidance demonstrated through this study provide a sound basis on which to increase the co-location of the National Careers Service with Colleges, 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
- access to a wider FE curriculum
- qualified staff (often in matrix-accredited settings)
- familiar, visible, community-based premises
- existing partnership relationships with employers, schools and Jobcentres
- the basis for the development of 'all-age' careers hubs.

There are, however, a number of specific challenges:

- while the term ‘co-location’ has been defined for the purposes of the 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 careers guidance
- the arrangements for the provision of career guidance are complex and largely invisible for 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 a strong commitment to partnership working.

11.2 Recommendations

The recommendations from the Feasibility Study are as follows:

Short term

- (a) A detailed mapping of the current co-location arrangements of the National Careers Service with Colleges to be undertaken with a view to establishing:
 - the different types of co-location activities currently in place and lessons learned to date
 - the resource and funding implications of co-location activities
 - the nature of best practice
 - the potential for the development of College-based careers hubs.
- (b) A workshop to be held involving representatives from AoC, LSIS, the SFA, Colleges and National Careers Service regional prime contractors to:
 - agree a code of practice/set of good practice guidelines for the co-location of the National Careers Service provision with Colleges
 - consider the longer-term potential of the development of College-based careers hubs.

Medium term

- (c) AoC/LSIS to develop a detailed specification (with costings) for College-based careers hubs.
- (d) DfE and/or BIS to be involved with AoC/LSIS in the piloting of careers hubs in 12 Colleges (one in each National Careers Service regional prime contractor area).
- (e) The careers hubs pilots to be evaluated to:
 - identify benefits, risks, economies of scale and best practice models
 - establish resource and funding implications
 - explore the potential for wider roll out of College-based careers hubs.

Long term

- (f) The SFA, with AoC, to identify how it can:
- capitalise on the range and breadth of College-based careers guidance provision through the National Careers Service offer
 - develop and raise the profile of College-based careers provision through improved relations and understanding between Colleges and National Careers Service regional prime contractors.
- (g) The potential of College-based careers hubs to be developed so as to improve the visibility and accessibility of career guidance for young people and adults, as well as local partners and stakeholders.

October 2012