



CDI briefing on amendments to the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill

14 July 2021

The Career Development Institute (CDI) welcomes the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill, in particular its aim to improve skills through local development plans, its proposal to recognise modules of higher education courses and its support of lifelong learning.

In support of the aims of the Bill, the CDI wishes to stress the contribution professionally qualified Careers Advisers can make to ensuring the alignment between provision and local labour market needs and facilitating the government's core mission of helping people to gain economically valuable skills throughout their lives wherever they live. Central to the Careers Adviser's role is ensuring people are well-informed about what is on offer, can access training and learn flexibly throughout their lives. They enable people to understand alternative career pathways and to recognise the value of high-level technical qualifications. By facilitating meaningful relationships between employers and education and training providers they support the supply of skilled workers and give individuals opportunities to progress in their careers.

The provision of high-quality career guidance by qualified professionals is a vital means of supporting the implementation of the skills improvement plan by advising people of training and employment opportunities and enabling them to make informed choices. Remaining impartial, Careers Advisers are careful not to offer a narrow definition of vocation, thereby limiting opportunities or aspirations. Moreover, they have valuable experience and a successful track record of working with people whom schooling has failed in the past, offering support to identify the right kind of courses, develop their skills, gain useful and rewarding qualifications and improve their lives. Through careers education and guidance, career professionals seek to improve work readiness and to give individuals the attributes and skills to identify and pursue their career aspirations and personal fulfilment.

While the CDI recognises the valuable role DWP Work Coaches play in enabling people to move into employment, these roles are typically not recruited with a requirement for professional career development qualifications and experience. So the role of Work Coaches should focus on employability and directing individuals to all-age career support services where needed. This includes referring those who meet the eligibility criteria to the National Careers Service; that is, adults aged 19 and over or 18-year-olds who are not in education employment or training.

The CDI is supportive of Amendments 18, 26, 78, 83, 84, 91 and 95. In particular the CDI would endorse the words of Lord Aberdare:

“High-quality careers advice and guidance, available to all who need it, is fundamental to the success of any skills plan so that young people especially have a clear idea of what opportunities, meeting their own abilities and interests, are realistically available to them and what pathways they can follow to pursue those opportunities”. (Hansard 06 July 2021).

In relation to amendment 30, we ask that all providers of careers information, advice and guidance receive a copy of the local skills improvement plan for the relevant specified area, although we also recognise the importance of people retaining access to training and employment opportunities that may fall outside the specified area. In a global economy and unpredictable and ever-changing labour market, it would be wrong to confine people to the jobs where they live. At the heart of addressing the skills gap lies the development of people's career management and transferable skills.

The CDI welcomed the recent Government investment in the National Careers Service, although serious concerns remain at the funding arrangements which restrict access for young people and those at risk of becoming unemployed. It is also supportive of the Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) and has worked with them to enable the development and implementation of Careers Leader training in education. Recent research¹ by the CEC highlights the additional benefits to schools and colleges qualified career professionals bring to the provision of good careers information, advice and guidance to ensure that individuals can make informed choices. This endorses the Government's Careers Guidance for further education colleges and sixth form colleges, relating to Gatsby Benchmark 8 Personal Guidance:

“Every learner should have the opportunity for guidance interviews with a qualified careers adviser whenever significant study or career choices are being made. Careers advisers can help learners to locate ambitious education and career options, by identifying opportunities and assessing learner’s abilities, interests and achievements.” (paragraph 42).

The college should use qualified careers professionals, who could be appropriately trained members of careers services staff, to offer advice and guidance to learners (paragraph 44).

This entitlement extends to those students with special needs and disabilities.

Personal careers guidance – one-to-one in-depth career counselling - should only be provided by a career development professional who is qualified to at least level 6 in career guidance², and ideally listed on the professional register administered by the CDI. The CDI recommends that every personal guidance interview should be a minimum of 45 minutes³.

We are surprised that the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education and Department for International Trade (Baroness Berridge) made no mention of the Career Development Institute when referring to the scope given to the employer representative body and their need to engage with providers (Hansard 06 July).

The CDI and its members are well placed to ‘support a lifetime skills guarantee to enable flexible access to high quality education and training throughout people’s lives’ (Hansard 11 May 2021 col.2). We have the knowledge, including labour market intelligence, and experience to contribute to the development and successful implementation of local skills improvement plans. Career professionals have the skills, capabilities and expertise to support, enable and empower young people to secure good skilled jobs in their local area.

Career education and guidance delivered by career professionals offers a framework that can support the improvement of skills, provide opportunities for young people and embrace those that need a helping-hand or are hesitant about approaching employers. It enables students to know that when they get that qualification it gives them that competency, that they can walk into an interview

¹ Hanson, J. Neary, S. and Blake, H. (2021) *Personal Guidance Fund Evaluation Personal Report*, London: The Careers and Enterprise Company - <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/our-research/personal-guidance-fund-evaluation-report>

² DoE (2018) *Careers guidance: Guidance for further education colleges and sixth form colleges* - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/749151/Careers_guidance-Guide_for_colleges.pdf

³ Julia Everitt, Neary, S. Delgado Fuentes., M. and Clark, L. (2018) *Personal Guidance. What works?* London: The Careers and Enterprise Company https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/sites/default/files/uploaded/1146_what_works_-_personal_guidance_digital_15-11-2018.pdf

with confidence. We concur with Baroness Garden of Frognal’s insightful comment that “there should be constant dialogue with careers advisers” – who very often get left out and you end up trying to solve the problem of having excluded them later on. For LSIPs to be successful, there has to be a joined-up employment, skills and careers system.

We look forward to contributing to the provision of evidence and good practice from the trail blazers (running 2021-22) and the subsequent statutory guidance setting out the clear expectations of stakeholder engagement with careers.

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