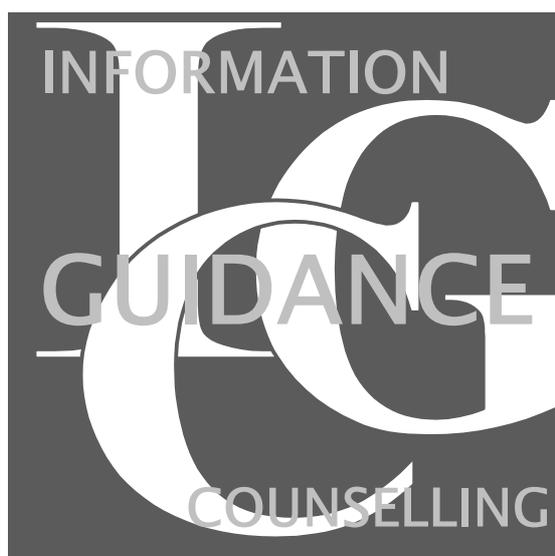


# OECD REVIEW OF CAREER GUIDANCE POLICIES



## UNITED KINGDOM

### OVERVIEW

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## OECD Review of ICG: UK Summary Paper

### **Introduction**

In the UK, careers support is more frequently termed “information, advice and guidance” (IAG) rather than “information, guidance and counselling” and is, therefore, frequently used within this report. IAG is, however, wider than careers support.

The United Kingdom is governed by a Parliament that resides in London. The UK Parliament includes elected Members from all four parts of the United Kingdom, namely *England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales*. However, during 1999/2000 certain powers - including those covering education and training - were devolved to Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales who now have their own administrations. These are the Northern Ireland Assembly, the Scottish Executive and the National Assembly for Wales.

Differences in approach to IAG partly reflect geography, culture, complexity and size of population. For example, England has a population of nearly 50 million compared with 5 million, 3 million and 1.5 million in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland respectively.

There are, however, two threads that run through all current UK public policy on learning - *social inclusion* and *lifelong learning*. In the main, career guidance is recognised in policy documents as an essential underpinning to learning and there is much emphasis on links between economic performance and the UK-wide skills base<sup>1</sup>

This paper sets out the legal and constitutional responsibilities for IAG across the four administrations. It then draws out similarities and differences across a series of broad headings.

### **Legal and constitutional responsibilities across administrations**

#### *England*

Up to the year 2000, career guidance for **young people** was provided by 66 Careers Service companies. The Careers Service in England, Scotland and Wales was privatised between 1991-1995, with core contracts being awarded by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) on the basis of a competitive tendering exercise.

A new support service for young people in England was phased in from April 2001, called '**Connexions**'. This service brings together a range of existing public, private and voluntary and community sector organizations including the work of the Careers Service, Youth Service, Education Welfare Service, and some aspects of health through 47 local Connexions Partnerships.

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<sup>1</sup> Skills for all: Research Report from the National Skills Task Force, DfEE 2000  
Report of the Wales Skills Taskforce, National Assembly for Wales, October 2000

The Learning and Skills Act 2000 (Chapter 21 part V) created a framework to allow the establishment of the Connexions service to support and encourage young people to continue, return to and participate effectively in education and training. It gave the Secretary of State for Education and Skills powers to secure the provision of support for all 13-19 year olds and stated that the Secretary of State for Education and Skills must ensure that there is no reduction in the quality or quantity of existing information, advice or guidance services for young people.

A new role has been developed within the Connexions Service - that of the Personal Adviser (PA). The PA will act as a single contact point for young people with multiple difficulties who may require support from a range of agencies such as those dealing with substance/drug abuse, teenage pregnancy and youth justice, as well as support to help them to negotiate an appropriate career pathway. Some Personal Advisers will continue to work within their practitioner base and specialism such as career guidance. Within Connexions, the Careers Service will continue to ensure the provision of high quality, professional and impartial guidance for young people as required, and especially at key points in their school career.

**Careers education and guidance** is covered in sections 43-45 of the Education Act 1997, which states that all publicly funded secondary schools are required to:

- provide a programme of careers education to all pupils in Years 9-11;
- provide access to careers services to enable them to fulfil their contracted duties on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, including facilities necessary for them to carry out their functions effectively;
- work with careers services to ensure that pupils have access to materials providing careers guidance and to a wide range of up-to-date reference materials.

However, the legislation does not specify the content of careers education and guidance programmes, how they should be provided nor the amount of time and other resources that schools should allocate to them.

**Services for adults** have attracted increasing priority and funding since 1999 and this pattern is set to continue. During this time, the DfEE set up a framework of local **IAG Partnerships** across England to provide free, accessible and coherent services to those who needed them. These local 'face to face' services are complemented by the national **learnirect** telephone helpline and website managed by the University for Industry (Ufi).

Responsibility for planning and funding Adult Partnerships switched from the DfES to the new Learning and Skills Council (LSC) established in April 2001. The LSC has been asked to bring forward proposals for contracting adult IAG services on a geographical basis that is co-terminus with Connexions Partnerships and for further development of adult IAG services based on stronger links with those provided by Connexions partnerships for young people whilst still maintaining the focus on each age group.

The Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Act 1993 (TURER) placed a duty on the Secretary of State for Education and Skills to secure the provision of careers guidance and placing services for **people attending and leaving schools and colleges**. The

Education Act 1997 set out new requirements for careers education and guidance in colleges. These requirements stated that colleges must provide:

- students with access to a wide range of careers information;
- careers services with access to premises and relevant students;
- careers services with information about relevant students in order for them to provide careers guidance.

Additional initiatives that support provision of IAG include **learnirect** managed by Ufi, **ILAs** and the **Union Learning Fund**.

### *Wales*

In Wales, adult guidance networks have been in place for some years - funded to provide free access to information and advice, and free career guidance for those not in work: for New Deal clients guidance services are provided by Employment Services; for those economically inactive groups outside New Deal, guidance is delivered by **Careers Wales**.

Careers Wales was established in April 2001, based on proposals in the Education and Training Action Plan<sup>2</sup> for Wales. Staffing and structure of Careers Wales is based around the seven Careers Service companies. The companies are required to operate under the Careers Wales brand with directors drawn from the local authorities, and the business, voluntary, education and training sectors. The role of Careers Wales is to help young people make a successful transition from education to employment, re-engage young people, foster a positive approach to learning throughout life, and encourage more people at all stages of their lives to enhance their skills and knowledge.

The principal legislation with relevance to Careers Education and Guidance in schools is contained within Sections 43-45 of the Education Act 1997. This is common across the UK, although, in Wales, the Assembly used powers in the Education Act 1997 to introduce the Education (Extension of Careers Education) (Wales) Regulations with effect from 1 August 2001 requiring maintained schools (including FE Colleges) and pupil referral units to provide a programme of careers education for all pupils aged 16-19. However, the legislation does not specify the content of careers education and guidance programmes, how they should be provided nor the amount of time and other resources that schools should allocate to them.

The Employment and Training Act 1973 (as amended by the Trades Union Reform and Employment Rights Act 1993), placed a duty on the Assembly to secure the provision of careers guidance and placing services for people attending and leaving schools and colleges.

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<sup>2</sup> An Education and Training Action Plan for Wales, The Welsh Office, March 1999

During the period 2001/02, the transfer of former TEC responsibilities for **adult guidance and Education Business Links** was made to Careers Wales.

The **learnirect** helpline, has close links with the Ufl managed service in England in terms of operating standards and sharing of data on learning opportunities. The Welsh Assembly Government funds Careers Wales for the staffing and operational costs of the four local centres within Wales. In addition a Wales-specific approach has been taken to the operation of **ILAs** and the **Welsh Union Learning Fund**.

### *Northern Ireland*

In Northern Ireland the Department of Education (DE) has responsibility for early years and for primary and secondary level education including careers education. The remit of the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) includes responsibility for careers and educational guidance through the Training and Employment Agency (T&EA). The Education & Training Inspectorate covers both Departments.

The **Careers Service**, an integral part of the T&EA, operates through a network of Jobcentres throughout Northern Ireland. The Service, which covers young people and adults, has led many important initiatives which have strengthened links with industry and commerce. Recent reports on the economic development and potential of Northern Ireland have led to a review of careers guidance, the report on which will shortly be available.

The other major provider of guidance is the **Educational Guidance Service for Adults** (EGSA), an independent, voluntary organisation which has received government funding since 1970. EGSA provides an impartial guidance service for adults wishing to access or progress through learning.

Although Northern Ireland's formal education system has traditionally held a reputation for excellence, the region also has high levels of young people leaving school with no qualifications and with basic literacy problems similar to the rest of the UK.

A range of additional funding became available in the latter part of the 1990s and encouraged the spread and growth of community based learning. The EU Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation, in particular, provided an opportunity for new initiatives to demonstrate the role of learning in leading people away from the conflict to participate in building a new Northern Ireland. Greater availability of accreditation for this new learning gave many adults their first certificate and the confidence to progress.

Other national initiatives that operate in Northern Ireland include **learnirect** (managed by EGSA staff through a contract with BSS and **Individual Learning Accounts**).

Legislation is broadly in line with that issued across the UK in recent years, accepting some specific differences to account for the local context. The key areas of legislation include:

- the Education Act 1997 requires schools to provide careers education to all pupils in years 9 to 11 (age 13-16);
- the T&EA has a statutory obligation to provide careers guidance under Article 3 of the Employment and Training (amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 1988.

However, the legislation does not specify the content of careers education and guidance programmes, how they should be provided nor the amount of time and other resources that schools should allocate to them.

The Assembly is bound by the provisions of Sections 8 to 10 of the Employment and Training Act 1973 (as amended by Sections 45 and 46 of the Trades Union Reform and Employment Rights Act 1993). This means that everyone in schools, and within at least two years of leaving full-time education, is entitled to careers education and guidance. People with disabilities (including learning difficulties) remain in the statutory group until they are settled in their chosen destination.

## **Similarities and differences across administrations**

### *Policy Models*

New models have developed as a result of recent reviews of career development policy. It is expected that further developments will take place over the next few years as policy makers and practitioners in each of the four countries review their own arrangements and evaluate the impact of different arrangements in other parts of the UK.

Overall there has been a move to decentralise many aspects of IAG. Many areas of delivery are no longer under the direct control of single Government departments, such as IAG partnerships in England, Careers Wales and EGSA in Northern Ireland.

### *Young People*

The delivery vehicles for IAG services to Young people are varied. In England a single service, Connexions is dedicated to young people. However in the other administrations services are developed as part of wider organisations e.g. Careers Wales and the Careers Service in Northern Ireland.

However the policies being employed towards young people have strong similarities, such as:

- a universal approach;
- focus on those requiring additional support (extending entitlement).

The Employment Service (known as Jobcentre Plus in some areas) operates across all administrations with the New Deal 18-24 as a standard programme.

### *Adults*

A wide variety of approaches are being employed for the delivery of IAG services to adults across the administrations. The common theme is the development of IAG partnerships (IAGP) involving all those organisations that provide such support. In England this is formalised in the development of the IAGPs managed by the LSC, in Northern Ireland EGSA support similar activity in Northern Ireland. Careers Wales now has responsibility for managing the delivery of services to adults as well as young people.

The Employment Service delivers information and advice directly to unemployed adults, and guidance via external providers, through the work of Personal Advisors, across a range of New Deal programmes.

The **learndirect** service is common to all countries across the UK, although it is managed and presented in different ways in each country.

### *Higher Education*

Career guidance provided for students within Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) does not come within the remit of either the Careers Service or provision for adults. HEIs across the UK have no statutory responsibility to provide careers advice and guidance. However, such provision is seen as ‘an increasingly important role for a contemporary university or college. Almost all HEIs have established their own dedicated Careers Service, and the new Quality Framework of the Higher Education Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) has a separate Code of Practice covering this area of work.

### *Quality*

The Guidance Council, a body representing organisations within the Guidance Sector or with an interest in Guidance, developed with funding from the DfES a set of National Quality Standards for providers of IAG Accreditation against these Standards by the Guidance Accreditation Board (GAB) is a contractual requirement for organisations who access funding through the IAG Programme in England. National Quality Standards for Learning and Work<sup>3</sup> are essentially a set of practical guidelines covering all aspects of service delivery from a client’s perspective. They are drawn from ‘best practice’ experienced in all sectors including community and voluntary organisations. The Connexions Service will be inspected by OFSTED, which is responsible for the inspection of schools in England at present, and will shortly also take on the responsibility of inspecting Further Education Colleges together with a new Adult Learning Inspectorate.

Careers Wales will operate to national standards. The Welsh ETAG Group has recommended that the services provided by Careers Wales be subject to inspection by the independent Inspectorate for Wales. Estyn covers all school related inspection activities.

The Northern Ireland Careers Service and EGSA are working towards accreditation by the Guidance Accreditation Board. Activities with young people at school are subject to inspection by the Education and Training Inspectorate.

### *Professional Training*

In 1997 DfEE reviewed the content of the Diploma in Careers Guidance (DCG) in the light of the introduction in 1995 of an alternative work-based qualification route - the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) or Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) in

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<sup>3</sup> The Quality Standards have recently been revised and renamed the **matrix quality standard for information, advice and guidance services**. The **matrix** Standard is generic and relevant to a range of sectors and settings in both the public and private sectors.

Guidance at level 4 (graduate level). This review resulted in the new Qualification in Careers Guidance (QCG).

The Institute of Career Guidance has worked closely with DfES to ensure that the QCG meets the needs of guidance practitioners and their employers across the UK. This portability is important in a group of countries that experience significant movement of labour across country boundaries. The Institute is now focusing on ensuring accessibility by potential students in the more remote areas of the UK via a distance learning model. Accessibility by a broader spread of students is also being addressed - there remains in all parts of the UK a typical student profile that is white and from the higher socioeconomic groups.

There is a clear contractual requirement by governments for Careers Service companies to ensure that careers guidance for young people is delivered by professionals who have undergone recognised training.

The Harris review, 'Developing Modern Higher Education Careers Services', is also clear about the need for professional training and qualification. The review recommends that *'All Careers Service staff in advice and guidance roles should have, or be working towards, a relevant professional qualification or have relevant experience and training.'*

The Institute of Career Guidance, the UK's largest professional association for people working in all parts of the sector, restricts full membership to those with a recognised qualification - the Diploma in Careers Guidance and National/Scottish Vocational Qualification in Guidance level 4 (graduate level). The Institute is currently examining the case for admitting into full membership people who have completed the new pilot Qualification in Careers Guidance (QCG).