

## **Skills and Employment: Careers, advice and guidance policy update**

### **Purpose**

For discussion and direction for lobbying on careers, advice and guidance policy.

### **Summary**

This paper provides a policy update on developments relating to careers, advice and guidance, including the Government's Careers Strategy and the launch of Careers Hubs. It also details LGA activity and proposes next steps on this policy for Members to consider.

Dr Deirdre Hughes OBE, leading careers expert and former chair of National Careers Council, will provide a presentation to the Board on the challenges / issues of the current system.

### **Recommendation**

That the People and Places Board:

1. Note and comment on the challenges and issues of the current system (**paras 15-23**).
2. Provide a steer to officers on whether the presentation, briefing paper and next steps (**paras 24-25**) are moving our policy in the right direction.

### **Action**

Officers to develop our policy position in line with Members' steer.

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## Careers, advice and guidance

### Background

1. In February 2017 the LGA published a [position paper: principles underpinning good careers advice and guidance \(Annex A\)](#). Based on analysis of the careers landscape and discussions with councils, it set out the five guiding principles underpinning a good careers system for all ages and the role we would like to see councils and combined authorities play together with LEPs and other local partners.
2. Since the publication of the paper, the LGA has continued to engage with the sector and stakeholders, including the Department for Education (DfE) Careers Unit, National Careers Service (NCS) and The Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) through officer level meetings, our skills conference (November 2018).
3. Most recently the LGA Skills Taskforce held a roundtable (7 February 2019) which had careers advice as part of its focus. It brought together stakeholders from the skills, education and employment sectors to discuss and build consensus on relevant areas including careers advice and guidance. There was broad consensus on the need for an all age system grounded in local labour market information, with a consistent and coherent offer locally for both young people and adults. Key points made in the careers advice and guidance discussion included:
  - 3.1 Good quality careers advice and guidance is essential to help young people navigate the world of work.
  - 3.2 The ‘marketisation’ of careers advice is a costly experiment, with more and more young people not receiving the level of support they need.
  - 3.3 Careers advice and guidance is essential, but we (councils) do not have the levers to influence that locally – all the secondary schools are now academies.
  - 3.4 Rural areas face challenges in terms of people travelling to learn or to access advice.
4. A precis of the roundtable will be circulated in advance of the meeting

### The Government Careers Strategy and Careers Hubs

5. The Government’s [Careers strategy: making the most of everyone’s skills and talents](#) was published in December 2017. While it is an ambitious plan, much depends on a strong working partnership between the Government, employers, the education sector and the careers community to be successful, and the plan contains little to support that.
6. In response to the Careers Strategy, the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) published its Implementation Plan in April 2018, which outlines milestones, actions and timescales. It focuses on three areas: roll out of employer engagement; scaling up the Gatsby Benchmarks<sup>1</sup> and Careers Leaders; testing and sharing best practice. This is a

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<sup>1</sup> A framework of eight guidelines for careers provision. [More information is available online.](#)

positive approach, as it aims to put in place the principles underpinning good advice and guidance (set out in the LGA position paper). However, there is no one organisation with a commissioning role and oversight on how this is coordinated or planned for all ages either at national or local level. This leaves the system vulnerable to fragmentation and duplication.

- 7 As part of the plan and based on a model piloted by the North East LEP, the CEC is investing £5 million over two years to set up 20 Careers Hubs to improve careers education and guidance. Each Hub comprises a group of between 20 and 40 secondary schools and colleges located within a LEP area with partners in the business, public, education and voluntary sectors to deliver the Gatsby Benchmarks and ensure that careers outcomes are improved for all young people. The first wave of Hubs (**Annex B**) contains a mix of urban and non-metropolitan areas.
- 8 In response to the high levels of interest shown, with LEPs across the country bidding to establish a Hub, the Secretary of State for Education announced a second wave of funding in October 2018. This will be open to new LEPs and existing Hubs who might want to expand their programme. Following a competitive bidding process, it is expected the successful Hubs will be operational from September 2019 and funded to the end of the 2019/2020 academic year. While the investment in this initiative is welcome, many schools and post-16 institutions will not benefit from this new programme.
- 9 The CEC intends to evaluate whether being part of a Careers Hub helps secondary schools and colleges accelerate their progress towards meeting the Gatsby Benchmarks and improve a range of outcomes for young people in the local area.

### **Career Learning Pilots**

- 10 The Government has funded a series of career learning pilots to test approaches to lifelong learning and inform the National Retraining Scheme (NRS). It has set aside £40 million divided equally between Wave 1 pilots in 17/18 and 18/19 and later Wave 2 pilots. Wave 1 pilots are underway in a number of LEP areas: Greater Lincolnshire; Heart of the South West; Leeds City Region; Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire; and West Midlands.
- 11 The programme aims to connect people with information, advice and guidance and the opportunity to learn a new skill to progress with their next career move. It also aims to test the best way to reach out to lower skilled working adults and the effect different levels of fee subsidy has on the demand for courses that are valuable to adults and vital to the economy in the area.
- 12 The West Midlands pilot focuses on digital and IT, construction, business and professional services, and engineering while Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire focuses on cost and outreach. The learning from these pilots will be vital to identify the most effective interventions that provides individuals with both the opportunity and skills to pursue rewarding career.
- 13 Feedback from some pilot areas is demonstrating councils and combined authorities are a 'trusted messenger' to engage local residents who use council services, to talk to them about skills and jobs. The LGA is working with DfE to ensure that this critical community

leadership role to stimulate and meet demand for skills development through targeted engagement and a relevant flexible offer is a critical feature in the design of the NRS.

### **Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools**

- 14 In November 2016, the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme rolled out nationally. The aims of the programme is to replicate its pathfinder – to support effective transitions from school into work, training or further study, by providing students with information on vocational routes into employment, including traineeships and apprenticeships, accessing work experience, the local labour market and soft skills that employers demand. Evaluation of the pilot concluded that the programme demonstrated good engagement and tailored support for those at risk of becoming NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training).

### **Challenges and issues since 2017**

#### *Fragmented system with no national or local oversight*

- 15 The introduction of new initiatives, including those cited above, risks making the careers system in England even more complicated and fragmented. This is particularly the case for young people. Recent evidence from local areas show concerns about vulnerable young people and specific groups lacking access to the appropriate careers advice and guidance. Meanwhile provision for adults is extremely limited. In addition, there is still no single organisation with a commissioning role and oversight on how careers activity is coordinated or planned for all ages either at national or local level.
- 16 The fragmented and patchy nature of the system, and lack of oversight at national and local level remains a significant challenge for councils. At our recent Skills Taskforce roundtable, it was clear that this was also a problem for a wide range of industry experts and stakeholders, and an area the LGA will explore further.

#### *Decline in advice and guidance*

- 17 The Sutton Trust commissioned Durham University to undertake an annual survey of 15 and 16 year olds. The survey indicates a significant decline in advice and guidance in schools over the last 12 years. This is despite the fact that students, particularly the disadvantaged or those with special educational needs, require advice and guidance to make informed choices in an increasing complex and confusing post-16 options landscape.

#### *Compliance with the Baker clause*

- 18 The 'Baker clause' within the Technical and Further Education Act came into effect at the beginning of 2018. It aims to ensure a range of education and training providers have access to students in secondary schools to inform them of the options available. A recent IPPR report [The Baker clause: One year on](#) shows since its introduction, compliance with the Baker clause remains very poor with only two in five schools complying with the requirements of the legislation. This may be an issue we would like to discuss with

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college representatives (Association of Colleges).

### *Funding*

19 The Careers and Enterprise Fund is funded by DfE and administered by the CEC to scale up existing, effective careers and enterprise programmes, and test and evaluate best practice in careers activity provision for young people in disadvantaged groups. The fund's value has been progressively increasing: from £5.7 million 2015/16 to £16 million 2016/17 and £18.8 million in 2017/18. While this funding is welcome, there is no accountability or transparency of how it is allocated compared to other public sector services, for instance the National Careers Service (NCS), schools, colleges, and training providers. Conversely, the NCS budget has been steadily decreasing: from £75 million in 2017/18; £64 million in 2018-19; and £57 million in 2019-20, which DfE states reflects the fact that this is becoming a 'digital first' service.

### *Local places to access careers information, advice and guidance*

20 Young people's access to careers advice and guidance in town centre or high street locations is declining, while one-stop shops in other parts of the UK continue. There may be scope to maximise 'pop up' shops in local communities, towns and city centres.

### *CEC and Careers Hubs*

21 The CEC relies heavily on employers and volunteers going into schools to support the delivery of careers activity. Some councils have incorporated CEC work into their economic development teams, but Enterprise Co-ordinators do not have any responsibility for the direct delivery of careers guidance. Many schools have yet to engage fully with the CEC. In many areas councils/Combined Authorities and LEPs are match funding CEC activity. **Members are asked to comment on the impact of Careers Hubs where they exist in their local areas.**

22 In the North East Careers Hub pilot direct funding was given by the Gatsby Foundation to schools and colleges, £9000 per institution and access to a £250,000 Innovation Fund. This funding model has not been replicated across England with the Careers Hub programme as schools and colleges are only offered £1000 per institution. It remains to be seen whether the same level of achievement can be reached on this much smaller budget.

**23 Members are asked to consider and comment on the challenges and issues of the current system outlined above and in Dr Hughes' presentation, and suggest issues for inclusion in a refreshed position paper to guide our work in this area.**

### **Next steps**

**24 A targeted roundtable is proposed with the sector and stakeholders, including CEC and NCS, to discuss this policy work in greater depth and identify areas where we might work with other partners.**

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- 25 Following the Board's considerations on Dr Deirdre Hughes's section and the contents of this paper, officers will produce an updated policy position and programme of further activity.**