



Nacro submission - Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG), Education Select Committee Inquiry.

Summer 2022

About Nacro:

Nacro is a national service delivery charity and one of the country's largest independent training providers. Working for more than 50 years to change lives, build stronger communities and reduce crime, we house, we educate, we support, and we speak out for and with disadvantaged young people and adults.

Our education delivery includes the running of 14 Education & Skills FE training centres across the country, serving approximately 3,000 of the most disadvantaged 14-19-year-olds, annually. Our main programme is the 16-19 Study Programme.

Most of our learners have had issues at school or a broken or interrupted academic career and work with us to tackle any barriers to learning. Despite these barriers, the majority of our learners make progress from their starting points, achieve their qualifications, and move into work or further training.

We are submitting evidence to this inquiry given our breadth of experience in successfully supporting young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to progress through further education, and directly into employment. We are particularly keen to give the perspective of an independent training provider as to how the current system of CEIAG can be improved.

Submission:

Whether the current system of careers education, information, advice, and guidance (CEIAG) is serving young people, particularly:

- **Those from disadvantaged backgrounds**
- **Those who are known to the care system**
- **Those who are not in mainstream education, including home-educated pupils and those in alternative provision**
- **Those from different ethnic minority backgrounds, and**

- **Those with a special educational need or disability**

Based on our experience as one of the country's largest not-for-profit, independent training providers (ITPs), we believe that the current system is marked by a lottery in the provision of CEIAG. This provision continues to be dependent on how specific institutions value and resource careers guidance, meaning that there can be a significant difference in what young people at different institutions are receiving.

For example, ITPs do not have a statutory requirement for CEIAG, nor do they receive specific funding for CEIAG to enable them to offer this as an additional service, beyond what each provider is already doing. Providers within the post-16 space should therefore be given access to funding to ensure that the current system of CEIAG serves the entire system, no matter the type of provider.

We welcome the Government's supported internships initiative and the additional funding attached to this programme. However, given that 25% of our learners have an EHCP, we would like to ensure there are more opportunities for them to access this funding – which should include the removal of unnecessary bureaucracy and a more joined up approach – so that they can benefit from this initiative. This initiative in general should be geared towards supporting high needs individuals into work placements and work.

There should also be a basic requirement and a set of national resources, funded by central government, enabling every person to access an absolute minimum standard of careers education. Again, this should be available no matter where the person is studying or their background.

Whether and how the Government should bring responsibility for CEIAG under one body, for example a National Skills Service, to take overall responsibility for CEIAG for all ages, and how this might help young people navigate the CEIAG system.

In theory, such a move could be effective, but there would need to be clarity as to how all needs would be met. Otherwise, the risk would be that a skills service would be predominantly focused on those closest to the labour market, missing out the hardest-to-reach young people who would particularly benefit from careers support.

Careers education should be introduced at a young age, in schools, which would mean that the Department for Education would be best placed to support any new skills service. It is a curriculum area that needs to be embedded at all ages, and then supported by agencies such as the Career and Enterprise Company (CEC) and a proposed National Skills Service.

The creation of one body should be with the intention of providing a clearly defined pathway setting out what everyone should be receiving in terms of CEIAG support, depending on their age, the type of institution they are studying at, and where they are based in the country.

Whether such a National Skills Service is best placed in the Department for Education or the Department of Work and Pensions to avoid duplication of work.

As above, we believe that this National Skills Service would be better placed in the Department for Education (DfE) given the importance of embedding guidance at every stage of the educational journey.

Whether organisations like the Careers Enterprise Company and National Careers Service provide value for money to the taxpayer.

We feel that the Careers Enterprise Company (CEC) has made good progress with its work in careers education through its support for schools and colleges, as well as linking them with enterprise advisers and employers via their local careers' hubs.

Yet the support for ITPs within the careers' hubs can be limited as they are funded to work with schools and colleges, so although there is engagement with ITPs, they do not offer the same services or support, such as an enterprise advisor or careers hub coordinator.

Therefore, a more all-encompassing offer – covering all types of provider – would be better value for money, as it would ensure that certain groups of people are not being excluded from this support.

How careers and skills guidance could be better embedded in the curriculum across primary, secondary, further, higher, and adult education to ensure all learners are properly prepared for the world of work.

We believe guidance could be better embedded in the curriculum across FE specifically by implementing a requirement on the number of careers and employability hours delivered as part of employability, enrichment, and pastoral (EEP) hours, in addition to including an expected number of employer encounters within the curriculum to help prepare learners for the world of work.

How schools could be supported to better fulfil their duties to provide careers advice and inform students of technical, as well as academic, pathways.

Schools could be better supported by ensuring that all learners are given access to all local providers, including ITPs and colleges, through the enforcement of the Baker Clause.

Even more importantly, after careers advice has been given and young people have chosen their destination, there should be a national tool for tracking all young people throughout their entire post-16 journey. This would ensure that those who are then diverted from their pathway can be supported by the relevant body to re-evaluate their careers and learning options.

This duty should be on the provider to update their records regularly so that those identified as NEET can be identified quickly, and the necessary support put in place. Without this intervention, we find that there are a significant number of people who reach the age of 19 without basic qualifications – almost one in five reach 19 with the equivalent of five good GCSEs. These young people then find themselves far off having the necessary skills and

qualifications to enter the world of work, having missed valuable skills and learning whilst being NEET.

How the Baker Clause could be more effectively enforced.

The clause could be more effectively enforced through Ofsted monitoring and the aforementioned national mechanism – which would show destinations and the percentage of different provider type destinations. This could then show whether students have been given access to all available information and pathways.

How the Government can ensure that more young people have access to a professional and independent careers advisor and increase the take-up of the Lifetime Skills initiative.

The Government can ensure this by funding providers to ensure the provision of a careers adviser who can facilitate access for everyone. Alternatively, focus could be concentrated on upskilling staff at education providers so that more can become qualified careers advisors.

We also believe that increased funding for the most disadvantaged learners would be beneficial given that many of these types of learner will need more support to achieve their career goals.

Whether the proposals for CEIAG in the Govt's Skills for Jobs White Paper effectively address current challenges in the CEIAG system.

There are several proposals for CEIAG in the Skills for Jobs White Paper that we would like to comment on. We agree with the Government's proposal to update the National Careers Service website so that it becomes a "single source of government-assured careers information" but urge the Government to ensure that the website is updated regularly, and complemented by the necessary resources, funding and support for providers, that we have spoken about throughout this submission.

We also agree with the concept of a three-point plan to enforce the Baker Clause, and have set out our stance above, focusing on ensuring that learners are given access to all local providers.

We are also supportive of the Government making wage returns data available for apprenticeships, as recommended by the Augar Report. It is important that people are able to access as much information as possible relating to the choices being made about their future pathways, with wage returns an important part of that process.

Forging strengthened links – through the Enterprise Adviser Network – connecting senior business volunteers with secondary schools and colleges is an important and welcome ambition. This could further be improved through ensuring that the CEC's Enterprise Adviser Network and careers hub is also made available to ITPs so that all young people can have equal access to these opportunities.

As we have suggested earlier on in this submission, we are also supportive of careers

guidance being embedded in the curriculum from an early age. We urge greater clarity as to how this will be funded given that the more careers advice expected to be provided by institutions, the more resources providers will need to ensure this is the case. We would therefore recommend that funding is made available to ensure that careers guidance can be resourced appropriately at all schools, colleges and ITPs.

Finally, we agree with the Government asking Ofsted providing an up-to-date assessment of careers guidance in schools and colleges (and ITPs), as well as providing recommendations to improve practice.

Whether greater investment to create a robust system of CEIAG is needed, and how this could be targeted, to create a stronger CEIAG.

We believe that the answer to this question is a strong “yes”, with additional investment concentrated on ensuring that: national careers education resources are available to all; there is funding available for careers advisers, no matter the type of institution; funding is fairly allocated across all providers who work young people; a destination tracking tool is funded, similar to the learning record service.