



# Careers Guidance in Schools and Colleges:

**A Guide to Best Practice and Commissioning Independent Career Guidance Services**

**September 2021**





# Foreword

**Chief Executive, Career Development Institute**

September 2021



The Career Development Institute (CDI) is committed to making sure that everyone receives the highest quality career guidance.

The Career Development Institute (CDI) is committed to making sure that everyone receives the highest quality career guidance. That support begins in schools and colleges, ensuring young people are equipped to take successful next steps in education, training or employment.

We first produced this guide to help school and college leaders new to commissioning high quality, independent careers support. This is the second revision of the guide, reflecting the Statutory Guidance for schools and colleges published by the Department for Education (the DfE) in July 2021.

The Statutory Guidance states that “high quality careers education and guidance is critical to young people’s futures” and recognises the value that this commissioning guide offers, confirming that it “provides practical information and advice to help schools and colleges commission independent careers guidance for students”.

This guide provides practical information and advice, including a step-by-step approach and useful templates, to help schools and colleges secure careers services that not only meet the statutory requirements but also the professional standards set by the CDI. The guide also places the provision of individual careers guidance in the wider context of a planned programme of careers education, information, advice and guidance.

This commissioning guide is best used alongside the CDI’s Career Development Framework of recommended outcomes, developed to support schools when planning careers programmes in line with the Gatsby benchmarks. We also strongly endorse the commissioning of services from professionally qualified, independent practitioners, whether through external career guidance providers or employed directly. We recommend using the UK Register of Career Development Professionals, managed by the CDI, to find appropriately qualified providers and practitioners.

With the Covid-19 pandemic adding to the effects of leaving the European Union, climate change and new employment practices, providing high quality careers support has rarely been so critical in helping young people make choices about their future education, training and employment. I hope that this guide, along with our other frameworks and services, enables you to establish the best career arrangements for the young people you work with.

**David Morgan**  
Chief Executive, Career Development Institute

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## Acknowledgement

This guide has been written and edited by David Andrews, formerly CDI Policy Associate and Honorary Life Member of the CDI.

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## Introduction to the Guide

In 2012 provision for the delivery of careers support for young people underwent one of the most profound changes in four decades. For almost forty years schools and colleges had worked in partnership with the local careers guidance service to provide careers education, information, advice and guidance to young people. The service was universally available across England and free of charge to schools and colleges. It was a national service, locally delivered and funded by government.

The Education Act 2011 transferred responsibility for careers guidance from local authorities to schools and colleges. Since September 2012 schools have been required to secure access to independent and impartial careers guidance for their students, and in September 2013 this requirement was extended to colleges.

This guide has been published to assist schools and colleges with meeting their responsibilities to put in place arrangements that will best support students' choices and transitions as they progress through learning and into work.

The guide was first published in July 2014 and subsequently revised in 2018 following the

publication of the DfE's careers strategy, which placed the duty to provide independent careers guidance in the wider context of the Gatsby Benchmarks. Benchmark 8 states that every student should have the opportunity for guidance interviews with a careers adviser, trained to level 6, whenever significant study or career choices are being made.

This third edition has been produced following the publication by the DfE of revised Statutory Guidance<sup>1</sup> in July 2021. The updated guidance replaces, and brings together into a single publication, the formerly separate documents for schools and colleges. The requirements to ensure that pupils and learners are provided with independent careers guidance remain in place and all maintained schools, academies, further education colleges and sixth form colleges must have regard to the Statutory Guidance when carrying out their duty. The guidance sets out both the legal requirements ("musts") and expectations of good practice ("shoulds").

By following the step-by-step approach outlined in this guide, schools and colleges can ensure they meet government requirements and offer careers services that reflect best practice to fully support their students.

1. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1002972/Careers\\_statutory\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1002972/Careers_statutory_guidance.pdf)

Updated to incorporate the Department for Education's Statutory Guidance for schools and colleges published in July 2021.



# The Statutory Duty

## Schools

**Maintained schools and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) have a statutory duty to ensure that all registered pupils, from year 8 to year 13, are provided with independent and impartial careers guidance.**

'Independent' is defined as being from a source external to the school and 'impartial' as showing no bias towards a particular institution, education, training or work option. Governing bodies must also ensure that the guidance provided includes information on the full range of education and training options, including apprenticeships and technical education, and promotes the best interests of the pupils to whom it is given. The DfE's statutory guidance goes on to say that personal careers guidance does not have to be external – it can be delivered by school staff, if trained<sup>2</sup> – but where it is internal it must be supplemented by external sources of support to ensure compliance with the legal duty.

These requirements also apply to academies and free schools, through their funding agreements. The Department for Education encourages academies without the requirement in their agreement to follow the guidance as a statement of good practice. Although independent schools are not subject to the same duty, the Independent Schools Inspectorate has made the provision of impartial careers guidance a factor in determining compliance with regulatory requirements and advises schools in the private sector to follow the Statutory Guidance published by the DfE.

In its *Skills for Jobs* White Paper published in January 2021 the DfE stated its intention to lower the age range for the duty on schools to provide independent careers guidance to Year 7. The CDI understands that, subject to legislation, this is likely to come into effect from September 2022.

The Technical and Further Education Act 2017 introduced an additional requirement (commonly referred to as 'the Baker Clause') on all schools and academies to ensure that there are opportunities for a range of education and training providers to access all pupils in year 8 to year 13 for the purpose of informing them about T levels and other approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

2. This means that a school could choose to employ their own careers adviser to deliver personal guidance. In such cases the CDI recommends employing only careers advisers who are Registered Career Development Professionals as they work to a Code of Ethics and are qualified to a minimum of Level 6.



## FE and Sixth Form Colleges

All FE and sixth form colleges in England are required, through their funding contracts, to secure access to independent and impartial careers guidance for all learners up to and including the age of 18, and 19-25 year-olds with an Education, Health and Care Plan. Colleges also have a legal requirement to provide all learners with a wide range of up-to-date reference materials relating to careers education and career opportunities. The DfE's guidance goes on to say that personal careers guidance does not have to be external – it can be delivered by college staff, if trained – but where it is internal it must be supplemented by external sources of support to ensure compliance with the requirement in the funding agreements.

Other providers of post-16 education and training, including apprenticeship providers and independent learning providers, are encouraged to follow the guidance as good practice.

## Local authorities

Local authorities continue to have responsibility for providing support for vulnerable and disadvantaged students: this includes students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) up to their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday and those 16-19 year-olds who are not engaged in employment, education or training (NEET) or at risk of becoming NEET.

## National Careers Service

The National Careers Service provides careers information and advice for young people through its website, <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/>, telephone helpline and web chat service.

The Careers & Enterprise Company has published research on what works in the provision of personal guidance in schools and colleges



As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic career guidance has become more important than ever

## The Careers & Enterprise Company

In 2018 the remit of The Careers & Enterprise Company was extended to providing support to schools and colleges for all eight Gatsby Benchmarks. The Company published research on what works in the provision of personal guidance in schools and colleges and followed this up with a personal guidance fund to support the development of different models of delivering personal guidance. Both the 'What works?' document and the evaluation report on the funded projects can be downloaded from the Company's website.

<https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/xuzdf12s/what-works-personal-guidance.pdf>

<https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/research/our-research/personal-guidance-fund-evaluation/>

## The Gatsby benchmarks

International research, funded by The Gatsby Charitable Foundation and led by Professor Sir John Holman, has identified eight benchmarks of good practice for careers guidance in schools:

1. A stable careers programme
2. Learning from career and labour market information
3. Addressing the needs of each student
4. Linking curriculum learning to careers
5. Encounters with employers and employees
6. Experiences of workplaces
7. Encounters with further and higher education
8. Personal guidance.

The original report was published in 2014

<http://www.goodcareerguidance.org.uk/the-benchmarks>. In 2018 a version of the benchmarks for colleges was produced<sup>3</sup>.

With reference to Benchmark 8 the expectation is that every student should have opportunities for guidance interviews with a careers adviser, who could be internal (a member of the school or college staff) or external, provided that they are trained to an appropriate level, whenever study or career choices are being made. The CDI defines the appropriate level of training as being at least the full QCF Level 6, which is the minimum qualification level for admittance to the Institute's Register of Career Development Professionals.

In schools every student should have at least one interview by the age of 16, and the opportunity for a further interview by the age of 18. In colleges every learner should have at least one interview by the end of their study programme.

3. <http://www.gatsby.org.uk/uploads/education/final-0099-gcg-college-booklet-a5-4pp-rgb-aw1.pdf>

## Best Practice

The Statutory Guidance for schools and colleges (July 2021) clarifies the government's requirements and expectations of governors, school and college leaders and careers leaders.

The guidance from the DfE is permissive in that it allows schools and colleges to decide how best to fulfil their responsibilities to ensure access to career guidance. There is, however, a clear message that the school's or college's provision of advice and guidance should comprise a coherent programme of activities that cover all eight Benchmarks and that help young people to choose their pathways, improve their life opportunities and contribute to a productive and successful economy. Access to good quality, independent and impartial personal career guidance is seen as a key component of such support.

Career guidance has become more important than ever as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic which has had an unprecedented impact on the economy, education and the opportunities open to students. Pupils in schools and learners in colleges all need help to make choices and manage transitions: they need good quality careers education, information advice and guidance.

Specifically, students need access to:

- comprehensive and up to date information on the full range of options in education, training and work, accompanied by information on the progression opportunities and possible destinations that follow from each of those options;
- timely and impartial advice and guidance;
- programmes of careers education that equip them to understand their strengths and interests, to make effective use of the information, advice and guidance provided and to develop their career management and employability skills.





**The CDI believes that schools and colleges should have in place a co-ordinated programme of careers support that includes the following elements.**

### Careers information

Information on the full range of options available in education, training and work, and the progression opportunities that follow those options. Careers information can be provided through a range of media including: books, leaflets and posters; software, websites; social media and telephone helplines; information talks from colleges, universities, apprenticeship providers and employers; visits to colleges, universities, training providers and businesses.

[ref. Gatsby benchmarks 2 and 7]

### Career advice and guidance

Advice helps students to interpret information and apply it to their own situation; guidance is the in-depth support provided by qualified careers professionals to help students explore their options and make informed choices that are best for them.

Advice and guidance are closely linked to related activities such as tutoring, progress reviews, academic monitoring and mentoring. Through these activities school and college staff begin to help students look at future options and identify when

students need to be referred to careers advisers for more in-depth guidance. Advisers offering career guidance should be professionally qualified in guidance theory and practice. Guidance from the DfE supports the CDI's view that they should hold a relevant qualification at QCF Level 6 or above and be Registered Careers Professionals. They should also be able to act impartially and this is a key principle in the CDI's Code of Ethics. A later section of this guide provides detailed guidance on commissioning independent career guidance services.

[ref. Gatsby benchmarks 3 and 8]

### Careers education

Planned and progressive programmes of activities in the curriculum which help students to understand themselves, research the opportunities available, make decisions and move successfully on to the next stage. The CDI has published a new Career Development Framework which identifies the skills, knowledge and attitudes that should form the recommended outcomes of an effective careers education programme. The DfE's revised Statutory Guidance refers to the Framework and also recognises that career learning can be provided as a subject in its own right, alongside work embedded in other subjects.

<https://www.thecdi.net/New-Career-Development-Framework>

[ref. Gatsby benchmarks 1 and 4]

Advisers offering career guidance should be professionally qualified in guidance theory and practice.



## Effective engagement with employers

The careers programme should include opportunities to be inspired, informed and advised by employers through talks and workplace visits. Employers can also enhance programmes of careers education through contributing to classroom-based lessons, running CV workshops, conducting mock interviews and supporting enterprise activities, plus offering work experience and work shadowing placements. Such activities should be integrated into the programme of careers support and complemented by access to impartial career guidance.

[ref. Gatsby benchmarks 5 and 6]

Development Professionals held by the CDI and the other services available from the Institute.

## 2. Reviewing and evaluating the CEIAG programme in the school or college

The CDI is a member of the Consortium Board that oversees the national quality award for career guidance in England, the *Quality in Careers Standard*. The award, which is fully aligned to the Gatsby Benchmarks, provides a framework for school or college self-review and evaluation and offers a means of externally assessing and accrediting careers programmes. There are 11 licensed awarding bodies for the standard. Information about the standard and contact details for the 11 awarding bodies can be found at <http://www.qualityincareers.org.uk/>

The DfE strongly recommends that all schools and colleges should work towards achieving the *Quality in Careers Standard*.

## 3. Quality assured providers of career guidance

The quality standard for the guidance sector is *matrix*<sup>4</sup>. The CDI recommends that only organisations with *matrix* accreditation should be used. This is in line with the requirements placed by the DfE on providers of career guidance to adults through the National Careers Service. The Institute does not expect independent careers advisers working as sole traders to gain *matrix* accreditation but instead expects them to be on its Register of Career Development Professionals.

4. <http://matrixstandard.com>

The CDI is a member of the Consortium Board that oversees the national quality award for career guidance in England, the *Quality in Careers Standard*.

## Assuring quality

The CDI supports the three aspects of quality assurance for careers support in schools and colleges.

### 1. Professional qualifications for careers advisers

As the UK-wide professional association for all career development professionals, the CDI believes that all advisers employed or contracted to provide career guidance to young people should hold an appropriate professional qualification in career development and be registered on the UK Register of Career Development Professionals, the public register that can be searched through the home page of the CDI's website <http://www.thecdi.net/Professional-Register->

The pages that follow provide further information on professional qualifications, the UK Register of Career





# The Career Development Institute

If you care about being a careers professional - join the Career Development Institute

The Career Development Institute (CDI) is the UK-wide professional body for the career development sector. We have a key role to play in influencing UK education and skills policy as it affects those with whom career development practitioners work and a clear purpose to improve and assure the quality and availability of career development opportunities for all throughout the UK.

We have a strong and growing membership of individuals, students and affiliate organisations – over 5000 - all of whom subscribe to a Code of Ethics and are committed to the principles of CPD. We manage the UK Register of Career Development Professionals and produced the CDI Blueprint of Learning Outcomes for Professional Roles in the Career Development Sector. <https://www.thecdi.net/CDI-Blueprint-for-Professional-Roles>

[https://www.thecdi.net/write/Documents/2021-Blueprint\\_A4\\_flyer.pdf](https://www.thecdi.net/write/Documents/2021-Blueprint_A4_flyer.pdf)

We provide:

- A powerful brand supported by an comprehensive website [www.thecdi.net](http://www.thecdi.net); social media (Twitter and LinkedIn) presence; monthly News by Email, quarterly magazine *Career Matters* and twice yearly NICEC Journal;
- A schedule of online and face-to-face events and conferences based on the needs of members; free webinars; digital bytes, costed expert training, a CPD resources area and a monthly CPD newsletter;
- Briefings, for example,

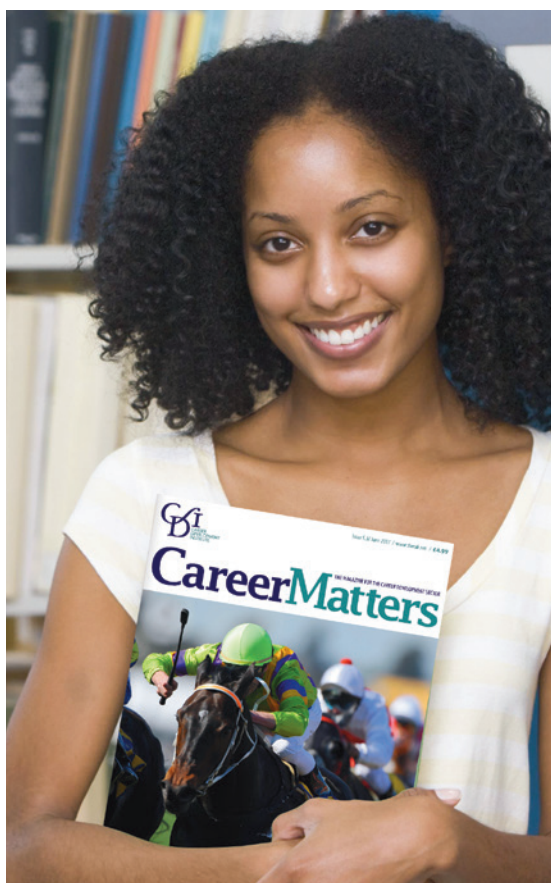
Understanding the role of the Careers Adviser within Personal Guidance - CDI Briefing (July 2021)  
[https://www.thecdi.net/write/Documents/CDI\\_119-Role\\_of\\_a\\_Careers\\_Adviser-2021-FINAL\\_v\\_to\\_use.pdf](https://www.thecdi.net/write/Documents/CDI_119-Role_of_a_Careers_Adviser-2021-FINAL_v_to_use.pdf)

Networking opportunities through our online Communities of Practice:

<https://www.thecdi.net/Community-of-Practice-for-Career-Development-Professionals->

<https://www.thecdi.net/Community-of-Practice-for-Careers-Leaders>

- A strong media presence with the CDI as the *expert voice* in the field; advising politicians, speaking at conferences and commenting on policy;
- The UK Career Development Awards – sponsored awards including *Careers Adviser/Coach of the Year* and *Careers Leader of the Year*;
- 'Careers in Careers' job board, advertising current vacancies in the sector.



For more information visit the website - <http://www.thecdi.net/Join-Us>. You can apply online and receive all the benefits of membership which will support you in your role.

## UK Register of Career Development Professionals

The Register is cited in the Statutory Guidance as a means of assuring the quality of provision of independent career guidance. It is seen as the sector's equivalent of Chartered Status.

Registration requires the individual to hold a qualification in career development at QCF Level 6 or above. Many registrants also hold postgraduate diplomas in career guidance and development and some hold Masters degrees.

The qualifications currently required for the Register are:

- Diploma in Career Guidance
- Post Graduate Diploma in Career Guidance/ Career Development/Career Management/ Career Education and Coaching/Career Development and Coaching Studies
- Post Graduate Diploma in Career Education, Information and Guidance in Higher Education

We have a strong and growing membership of individuals, students and affiliate organisations – over 5000 - all of whom subscribe to a Code of Ethics and are committed to the principles of CPD.



By using Careers Advisers who are on the Register you can be assured of the high quality of the independent career guidance provided.

- QCF Level 6 Diploma in Career Guidance and Development
- S/NVQ Level 4 in Guidance/Advice and Guidance/LDSS completed before 2011 plus the QCF Level 6 Units or HE Modules in Career Guidance Theory; Reflect on and improve professional practice; Use career and labour market information with clients
- Diploma in Career Guidance combined with the NVQ Level 4 in Guidance

All registrants are currently practising and must keep their skills, knowledge and understanding up to date by undertaking a minimum of 25 hours Continuous Professional Development per year. This is planned, recorded and reflected upon in a dedicated part of the CDI website and monitored as part of the CDI's ongoing commitment to maintain professional standards across the sector.

A critical condition of registration is adherence to the CDI Code of Ethics. This Code is detailed and covers for example, adherence to professional standards; impartiality; maintenance of professional boundaries; updating skills and knowledge; accuracy

of information provision; working in an open and transparent manner and in the best interests of the client; promotion of equality and diversity and the need to maintain client confidentiality except where there is clear evidence of risk. As such it is the cornerstone of the practice of a career development professional.

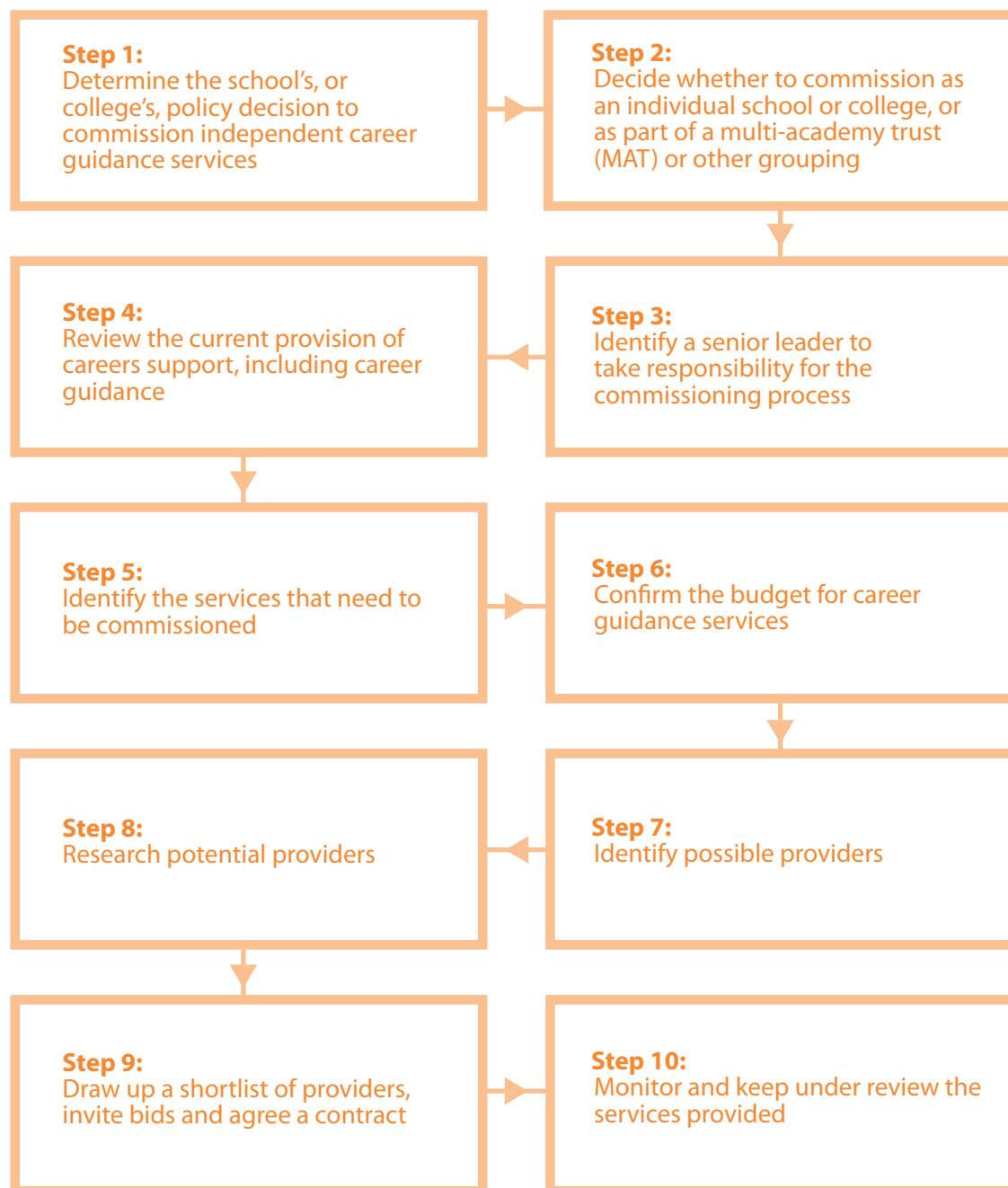
By using careers advisers who are on the Register you can be assured of the high quality of the independent career guidance provided. They are entitled to use the post nominal RCDP and a bespoke logo which can be used to promote the quality of the independent career guidance on offer in the schools and colleges in which they work.

# A Step-by-Step Guide to Commissioning Careers Guidance

This section of the guide offers information and advice to schools and colleges on how to commission career guidance services from external providers.

Schools and colleges are free to decide how best to meet the requirement to secure access for students to independent and impartial career guidance. In the past schools and colleges were used to having available just one service for their locality; now they are free to purchase services from a range of providers operating in a market that includes both established careers organisations and new providers that have emerged since 2012.

Whether schools, or colleges, decide to commission career guidance from a local authority, careers company or individual adviser, the CDI recommends these 10 Steps.



The Statutory Guidance makes it clear that schools and colleges are free to decide how best to meet the requirement to secure access for students to independent and impartial careers guidance.



**Step 1:**  
Determine the policy decision to commission independent career guidance services

The careers leader in the school or college, together with the senior leader with overall responsibility for careers, should study the guidance from the DfE and brief the governing body or corporation. They should then seek formal approval to commission career guidance services. It will be helpful at this stage to determine an indicative budget although the detail of what is needed will come from Steps 4, 5 and 6.

**Step 2:**  
Decide whether to commission as an individual school or college, or as part of a MAT or other grouping

Schools and colleges may choose to make their own arrangements for commissioning career guidance services for students or they may decide to do so in partnership with other establishments. There is a strong tradition of collaborative working among secondary schools, and with colleges, in many areas. Commissioning career guidance services as a member of a MAT, consortium, partnership or federation brings several advantages. Firstly, there are economies of scale; secondly, the commissioning process could be led by one senior leader working on behalf of all the schools and colleges in the group; thirdly, the arrangement enables careers advisers to move across the different establishments at various times during the year to meet particular demands and to cover for any absences.

Schools and colleges may choose to make their own arrangements for commissioning careers guidance services for students or they may decide to do so in partnership with other establishments.



**Step 3:**  
Identify a senior leader to take responsibility for the commissioning process

If the school, or college, is planning to commission services on its own, it will be important to identify who will lead the commissioning process, taking advice from the careers leader. Where schools and colleges decide to collaborate to commission services, the individual establishments will need to agree on a senior leader who will lead the process on their behalf and a mechanism for consulting with each of the partners.

**Step 4:**  
Review current provision

Before starting the process of identifying needs and selecting an appropriate provider, schools and colleges will need to take stock of their current arrangements. This requires a review of what is provided and some evaluation of how effectively it is meeting the needs of all students.

The statutory arrangements place schools and colleges at the centre of the process, proactively determining what is needed, from whom, rather than responding to a menu of pre-determined services. The commissioning process, therefore, presents an opportunity to look afresh at the existing support offered to students and to take greater control over the provision. Schools and colleges should identify the strengths of their current provision and any improvements they wish to make, taking account of feedback from the young people themselves.

**Step 5:**  
Identify the services that need to be commissioned

This stage involves looking at the total provision of careers education, information, advice and guidance that the school or college considers students should have access to and determining which elements the school or college itself will provide, what the local authority continues to provide in terms of more targeted support for vulnerable or disadvantaged students, before then identifying what services the school or college needs to purchase. Schools and colleges should decide what advice and guidance they could provide in-house. They should also clarify what support they will continue to receive from the local authority, for certain groups of young people.

Over the time that the new arrangements have been in place, it has become apparent that local authorities differ in how they interpret the requirement to support the most vulnerable young people. Schools and colleges should ask their local authority to confirm which groups of students will receive support, and what services they can expect.



Individual institutions are expected to find the money to purchase careers guidance services from within their existing budgets.



Once schools and colleges have identified what provision of advice and guidance they can make available internally, and what access to targeted support they will continue to have, they can then determine what additional career guidance they need to commission.

When schools and colleges begin to think about what to include in a specification for an external service, the starting point is often one-to-one careers guidance interviews. This is understandable as this is the aspect of careers support that schools and colleges often have neither the time nor the professional expertise to provide. Individual guidance sessions will form the largest part of the specification although schools and colleges can also think differently or more widely about the services needed.

Thinking differently about face-to-face guidance interviews means looking afresh at who needs guidance and when. Under the statutory duty, the only priority groups are those that the school or college decides.

Thinking more widely about the services needed means looking at other activities for students additional to careers interviews: these could include groupwork sessions, drop-in surgeries and support on results days, mentoring, coaching and support in liaising with employers. It also means considering what services should be provided for parents and for the staff involved in careers education, information, advice and guidance. For parents or carers, activities could include information talks at options meetings and access to careers advisers at consultation evenings; for staff, services might include in-service training for tutor teams and access to network meetings for careers leaders.

A template for identifying the services that the school or college wishes to commission and preparing a specification can be found as Annex A to this guide.



### **Step 6:** Confirm the budget for career guidance services

Schools and colleges have not been given any additional funding to meet the new requirement. Individual institutions are expected to find the money to purchase career guidance services from within their existing budgets including, in the case of schools, the pupil premium funding. Clearly, however, any school or college will need to identify a budget for services before entering into negotiations with providers and the economies of scale that follow when working in a group may help to secure better value.

### **Step 7:** Identify possible providers

For the four decades prior to September 2012 the external career guidance service for state schools was free of charge, but schools and colleges were limited to using their local, monopoly provider. Now schools and colleges are free to use a provider of their choosing. This is an evolving market and includes a range of providers of careers guidance services, including:



Many careers advisers who worked with schools as part of local authorities or large companies are now offering services to schools and colleges as sole traders.

#### **Local Authorities**

All local authorities in England are required to continue to provide targeted support and several have also continued to offer a universal career guidance service, on a traded basis. Some of the latter local authorities offer services only to schools and colleges within their area, while others may sell services to institutions in neighbouring areas.

#### **Careers companies**

Most of the careers companies that previously provided services under commission to local authorities are offering services to schools and colleges. At the same time, new organisations, including social enterprises established by groups of careers advisers, have entered the marketplace. Many of the careers companies are members of the trade body for career guidance organisations, Careers England <https://www.careersengland.org.uk>

#### **Individual careers advisers**

Many careers advisers who worked with schools as part of local authorities or large companies are now offering services to schools and colleges as sole traders.

#### **Education - Business Partnerships (EBPs)**

Some EBPs, which have traditionally worked with schools and colleges on work experience and enterprise activities, have recruited careers advisers to offer schools and colleges integrated services for career guidance and work-related learning.

#### **FE and sixth form colleges and universities**

Colleges have within their student services departments qualified careers advisers and all universities have their own careers advisory services. A few offer career guidance services to schools.

The Career Development Institute (CDI) holds a register of career guidance professionals which can be accessed and searched via its website, <https://www.thecdi.net/Professional-Register->. These qualified practitioners may be self-employed; work as part of partnerships, social enterprises or for small or large organisations.

### **Step 8:** Research potential providers

Commissioning career guidance services is still relatively new territory for most schools and colleges. There are several options available and the market for providers working with young people is unregulated. In researching the possibilities schools and colleges are advised to ask about the following issues:

#### **Range of services**

This is the obvious place to start: to clarify the range of services that the provider can offer and to check the list against the services that the school or college wishes to commission.





### Quality standards

Schools and colleges will want to be assured that the individual or organisation is a reputable provider of career guidance services. The recognised UK quality standard for the guidance sector is the *matrix* standard, <http://matrixstandard.com>.

If the provider is not *matrix* accredited, the school or college should ask what alternative quality assurance arrangements the provider uses. The *matrix* quality standards can be downloaded as a pdf file from the website and provide a useful checklist to assess potential providers.

### Professional qualifications of careers advisers and CPD

Another important question is whether the individuals who would be providing career guidance to students are appropriately qualified and work to a recognised Code of Ethics.

The professional qualifications required for admission to the CDI's UK Register of Career Development Professionals are listed in an earlier section of this guide. To join the Register individuals are required to hold a relevant careers guidance qualification at QCF Level 6 or above.

Some practitioners may hold a pre-2011 NVQ 4 in

Advice and Guidance, which is a generic qualification that is not recognised by the Register without three additional QCF Level 6 units or HE modules:

- Reflect on and improve professional practice
- Career guidance theory
- Use of career and labour market information with clients.

The CDI advises schools and colleges to check that a deliverer holding the NVQ 4 Advice and Guidance can demonstrate that they have achieved the three additional units or HE modules above.

In addition to holding an appropriate initial qualification, careers advisers must participate in regular continuing professional development to update their knowledge and skills. Careers advisers on the Register must complete and record at least 25 hours of CPD annually. The worlds of education, training and employment are constantly changing and guidance practice is continually developing. Schools and colleges should ask how the provider intends to keep up to date, so that the career guidance offered to students remains relevant and reflects best professional practice.

### Impartiality

The Statutory Guidance states that the careers guidance provided to students must be impartial. This means that the guidance offered is in the best

If the provider is not *matrix* accredited, the school or college should ask what alternative quality assurance arrangements the provider uses.



Even experienced careers advisers can be presented with questions from students, or their parents, that they have not encountered before and require ongoing supervision and support.

interests of the young person and does not favour any particular option. Schools and colleges are advised to ask how the provider ensures impartiality. Being a member of CDI requires the practitioner to work towards an agreed Code of Ethics which includes impartiality as a key requirement.

#### ***Experience of working with schools and colleges, and with young people***

Schools and colleges will want to be assured that the provider has experience of working not only with schools and colleges but also with students of different ages and across the whole ability range.

#### ***Local knowledge***

Although students today choose to pursue opportunities in education, training in work further from home than previous generations, initial destinations are usually within the local area. It is important for careers advisers working with the school or college to have up to date knowledge of the local labour market and the education and training opportunities available in the local area. Schools and colleges should ask providers how they will ensure that careers advisers have access to this information. This will be particularly important if the school or college is considering commissioning services from an organisation that has not previously operated locally.

#### ***Referral and support***

Even experienced careers advisers can be presented with questions from students, or their parents, that they have not encountered before and require ongoing supervision and support. Schools and colleges should ask what arrangements the provider has for supporting advisers in these situations, particularly when considering working with a sole trader.

#### ***Cover for absence***

There will, inevitably, be occasions when careers advisers are not available for work, including illness or maternity/paternity leave. Schools and colleges should ask the provider what cover will be available in such circumstances.

#### ***DBS checks***

Careers advisers working in schools and colleges are usually in situations where they are with young people, often one-to-one, without an adult present. It follows that schools and colleges should ask to see documentary evidence that any careers adviser who will be working in the school or college has a valid and recent Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. Ideally they should have also completed Safeguarding and Prevent training

#### ***Public liability and professional indemnity insurance***

In the context of career guidance given to young people by external providers, public liability insurance provides cover for claims for damage or injury caused by a careers adviser while working in the school or college, and professional indemnity insurance provides cover for claims for losses caused as a result of the information or advice provided to the young person. Sometimes the two types of insurance are combined into a single policy for professional liability. Schools and colleges should ask for evidence that the provider has adequate insurance cover.<sup>5</sup>

5. The CDI provides information on insurance for careers professionals - <http://www.thecdi.net/New-CDI-Insurance-Scheme>.

#### ***Costs***

Of course, having determined whether or not the provider can supply the services needed, to the quality required, the school or college needs to decide whether it can afford them. Each provider will have its own tariff of charges: schools and colleges will need to negotiate the costs of what they wish to commission.

Costs might be per interview or group session, or for batches of time. Some may quote "all inclusive" others might breakdown delivery from preparation time. Always be clear as well if the price includes any follow up and agree what format and timescale any reports will be provided in.



**Step 9:**  
Draw up a shortlist of providers, invite bids and agree a contract

Having researched potential providers, schools and colleges should follow their usual procedures for obtaining quotations, seeking tenders and awarding contracts.

A template for researching providers can be found as Annex B to this guide.

**Step 10:**  
Monitor and keep under review the services provided

Prior to the change in careers policy in 2012 only a few schools evaluated their careers provision with any degree of rigour. Gatsby Benchmark 1 highlights the need for regular evaluation and collecting feedback from students and parents. Any evaluation should pay particular attention to elements

commissioned from external providers. Schools and colleges are advised to monitor the contract they agree with a provider, review it at least once a term and evaluate the impact annually, before making decisions about re-commissioning for the following year.

Finally, we should not lose sight of the fact that the main reason for commissioning career guidance services is to ensure that young people receive the best possible support for progression and the transitions they face. Except in cases where the school or college commissions career guidance services from the local authority that is also providing the targeted service, schools or colleges will be working with at least two providers: the local authority, for young people considered vulnerable, and another provider, for the universal career guidance service. It will be important for the school or college to establish a means of monitoring which students have been provided with guidance, by whom, so that young people do not slip through the net and so that individuals can be cross-referred where necessary.



Finally, we should not lose sight of the fact that the main reason for commissioning career guidance services is to ensure that young people receive the best possible support for progression and the transitions they face.



# Annex A:

This section of the guide provides a template for schools and colleges on how to commission careers guidance services from external providers

Services for students	Notes
One-to-one guidance interviews	Which year groups? Numbers? When?
Groupwork sessions	Which year groups? On what topics?
Drop-in surgeries	When?
Support on results days	Dates
Other	

Services for parents	Notes
Presentations at information evenings	Which year groups? Dates
Availability at consultation evenings	Which year groups? Dates
Other	
Services for staff	Notes
Careers information support	Publications. Advice on library
Support for careers education	Resources. Curriculum advice. Training. Co-ordination
Professional development	CPD. Network meetings

# Annex B:

## Template for researching potential providers

Name of provider:	
Contact person:	
Address:	
	Postcode:
Email:	Tel:
Website:	

Services available	Costs	Notes
<b>Quality standards</b> e.g. matrix		
<b>Professional qualifications of careers advisers and professional development</b> eg		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Diploma in Career Guidance</li><li>• Post Graduate Diploma in Career Guidance/Career Development/Career Management/ Career Education and Coaching/Career Development and Coaching Studies</li><li>• Post Graduate Diploma in Career Education, Information and Guidance in Higher Education</li><li>• Qualification in Career Development/Career Guidance/Career Guidance and Development</li><li>• QCF Level 6 Diploma in Career Guidance and Development</li><li>• S/NVQ Level 4 in Guidance/Advice and Guidance/LDSS plus the QCF Level 6 Units or HE Modules in Career Guidance Theory; Reflect on and improve professional practice; Use career and labour market information with clients</li><li>• Diploma in Career Guidance combined with the NVQ Level 4 in Guidance</li></ul>		



**Membership of the Career Development Institute (CDI) and Registration on the UK Register of Career Development Professionals**

**Impartiality**

**Experience of working with schools, colleges and young people**

**Local knowledge**

**Referral and support**

**Cover for absence**

**DBS checks**

**Public liability and professional indemnity insurance**

**Other notes**



Now is a key time to be part of your professional membership organisation – the Career Development Institute.

## Annex C

### Join Us!

If you work in the field of careers education, information, advice and guidance and are passionate about providing high quality services to your students and want to network with like-minded people, now is a key time to be part of your professional membership organisation – the Career Development Institute.

### Types of Membership and Prices

The membership fee is £105 for individuals and school affiliates; £55 for students; and £190 for other affiliate organisations. New members are also asked to pay a one-off admin fee of £25.

If you would like to join the UK Register of Career Development Professionals as a Registered Professional Member this costs £160 and includes your register fee of £55.

Details of the full range of member benefits for each type of membership are on the website. Joining is easy, you can:

- Complete the online membership form on the website <http://www.thecdi.net/Join-Us>
- Download a membership form from the website <http://www.thecdi.net/Join-Us>
- Complete a membership form at any CDI event

### Bulk Membership

We offer a Bulk Membership Scheme for organisations and groups wishing to enrol 10 or more members. This method of payment is particularly popular with employers and groups of practitioners because it means that employers and members can benefit from a discounted subscription rate where the memberships are purchased through a single invoice.

Number of Members	Bulk Membership Discount
10-100	10%
101 +	25%

### Methods of Payment

- Credit/debit card: we take card payments over the telephone - please call: 01384 376464.
- Direct debit - see website for details - <http://www.thecdi.net/Join-Us/-How-you-can-pay>
- Cheque: made payable to the Career Development Institute. Please write the name of the member that the cheque covers on the reverse side, eg Membership for Ms J Smith, and post with your application form to - Career Development Institute, Ground Floor, Cophthall House, 1 New Road, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY8 1PH
- BACS transfer: to the Career Development Institute at Lloyds Bank; Sort Code 30-98-21; Account 25337168. Please make the name of the new member clear as the reference.



# Join Us

**The Career Development Institute (CDI) is the UK-wide professional membership body for the career development sector. Our members are careers advisers, careers leaders, career coaches, career managers and other professionals working in the public, private, voluntary and community sectors.**

We have a key role to play in influencing UK careers and skills policy and a clear purpose to improve and assure the quality and availability of career development opportunities for all throughout the UK.

## **Joining is easy**

For full details of the member benefits, including joining the UK Register of Career Development Professionals, visit [www.thecdi.net](http://www.thecdi.net)

Apply online: [www.thecdi.net/apply](http://www.thecdi.net/apply)







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