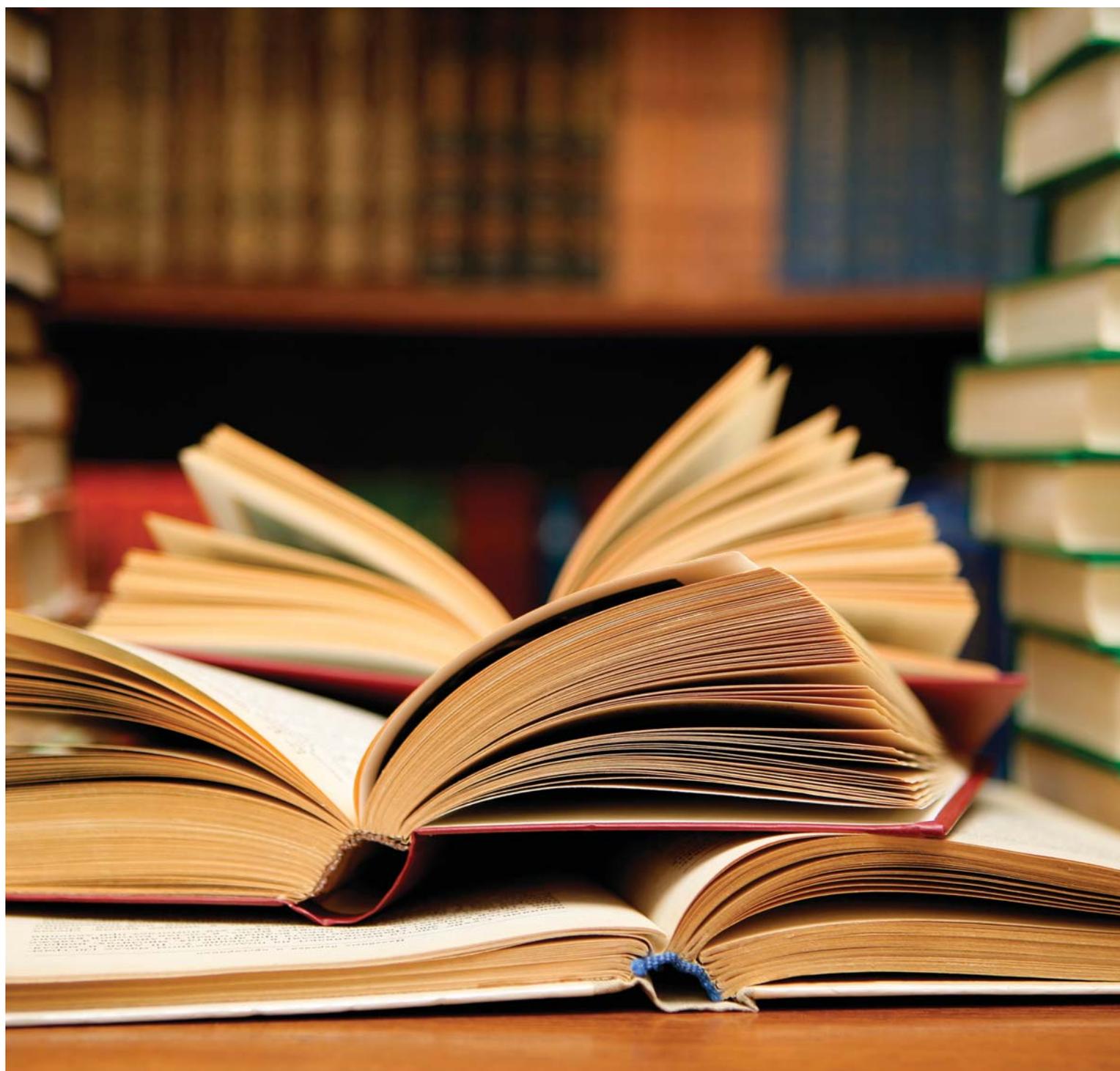# Career learning for the 21st century: a leadership issue for the FE sector

Sources of evidence

Career Development Service

LSIS LEARNING AND SKILLS IMPROVEMENT SERVICE

department for
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Acknowledgements

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- Career learning for the 21st century: a leadership issue for the FE sector. Summary report
- Career learning for the 21st century: effective practice in the FE sector
- Career learning for the 21st century: recommended resources for the FE sector
- Career learning for the 21st century: a toolkit to support co-ordination of careers learning for young people in further education
- Career learning for the 21st century: the career blueprint – a competence approach

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Foreword

In 2008/09 LSIS undertook a number of projects for the DCSF looking at Career Learning, Information, Advice and Guidance (CLIAG) for young people in the further education (FE) sector.

This work involved discussions with a wide range of people from across the FE sector as well as an in depth look at the research that has been conducted into this topic over the last few years. The results have been used to produce a series of reports for the sector and others with an interest in the topic. It became clear that CLIAG is a leadership issue and that leaders in the sector need to address how their organisation can deliver this support effectively to gain maximum benefits for young people and their organisation.

The effective delivery of CLIAG is increasingly being recognised as important in enabling the FE sector to maximise success rates, and address government and sector agendas. This publication explores the evidence from a range of settings that supports this. It also includes discussion of some weaknesses identified through research and some strategies, which have been adopted to address these. Whilst the focus of the study has been primarily on the 14 –19 age group, evidence is taken from across the age range, and many of the findings are also applicable to work with older learners.

Ann Ruthven
Programme Lead, Career Development and Safeguarding

1.   Introduction

The report seeks to:

- identify the contribution effective Career Learning Information, Advice and Guidance (CLIAG) can make to learner success rates, including by improving recruitment, student motivation and retention, engagement in learning and achievement, and progression;

- describe the evidence of the impact of CLIAG on these across a number of settings in the United Kingdom;

- draw out the implications from research about the characteristics of CLIAG which increase or decrease its effectiveness and impact; and

- explore the contribution high quality CLIAG can make to government and provider leadership agendas.

There is a relative paucity of recent research into the impact of CLIAG in the FE sector particularly in offender learning. The report therefore draws on evidence from a range of contexts and sectors including schools, higher education (HE) and work with adults.

It draws upon an extensive literature review undertaken by the International Centre for Guidance Studies (iCeGS) at the University of Derby, additional desk research and interviews with senior managers of the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS).

The report covers the 14-19 age range with a particular focus on the delivery of CLIAG post-16 in the further education sector, so including colleges, work-based learning and, to a more limited extent due the lack of published research, offender learning. The sector is very diverse: providers of work-based learning can encompass very large national private and voluntary sector organisations as well as relatively small, local organisations. Elements of informal and formalised CLIAG are delivered:

- by a range of internal and external staff such as CLIAG specialists, tutors, retention officers, Connexions personal advisers (PAs), personal officers in youth offending institutions, mentors, assessors, support staff, etc;

- through a range of different processes, activities and interventions, including selection and recruitment, initial assessment, post results services, one-to-one interviews, progress reviews, tutorials, enrichment activities and volunteering, the curriculum, mediated and unmediated information and communications technology (ICT), work experience placements and the workplace and mentoring activities; and

- across different stages of the learner or offender pathway.

1.1 What do we mean by Career Learning, Information, Advice and Guidance (CLIAG)?

The Nuffield Review of 14–19 Education and Training in 2005 suggested that in the context of choices and transitions in 14–19 education and training, young people's careers education, information, advice and guidance needs can be defined as follows:

- information on options at key points of transition (e.g. 14+, 16+, 17+ and 18+) and on subsequent progression opportunities;

- access to guidance on their next steps in learning and ultimately into work (i.e. careers guidance), linked to tutoring and mentoring support for their current learning and all brought together through a coherent process of individual learning planning;

- in-depth support and, where necessary, referral to specialist services to resolve issues which present barriers to participation in learning; and

- a programme of careers education that equips them with the knowledge and skills to make effective use of the information and guidance available.

The need to take a holistic view of the learner and account of the barriers which prevent successful entry into further learning and employment has brought about the use of the term 'IAG' to apply to a wider range of issues including health and finance. The focus of this paper is, however, on learning, information, advice and guidance to support decisions about learning and work options.

More recently there has been increased emphasis on the importance of careers education in helping individuals to develop the skills to plan and manage their future careers and increase their employability (Department of Education, Northern Ireland, 2006; CEGNET, 2008 and Andrews, D, 2007). The Skills Commission (2008) also suggested that careers education should

> help individuals develop the knowledge and skills that they need so that they are able to make successful choices and manage learning and career transitions.

The term 'careers education' has long been used to describe the education and training interventions delivered to explore further learning and work opportunities. However, we suggest that the term 'career[1] learning' is more appropriate for the 21st century, in which individuals need to take a more active part in developing their own careers, and learn how to do so. CLIAG needs to help them prepare for a world of more fragmented career paths and patterns.

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1   The term 'career' here is used in the sense of a pathway through life.

Careers practitioners will be undertaking a range of activities to deliver effective CLIAG and help learners manage transitions, including informing, advising, counselling, coaching, mentoring, advocating, enabling, networking, and feeding back. As the further education sector landscape changes, these skills can be harnessed to meet new challenges, such as:

- working effectively in partnerships;

- using more mentoring and coaching techniques to develop career management skills, in addition to giving advice and guidance;

- using enabling skills to support the development of the learner voice; and

- feeding back to increase responsiveness to learner needs.

1.2   The context

Careers education is a statutory part of the secondary curriculum, but the legislation did not specify what should be included. The 1997 Education Act placed a duty on schools to:

- provide comprehensive and accurate information on learning and career opportunities to all students;

- give personal advisers access to students on schools premises for the purposes of providing careers guidance;

- provide personal advisers with information on students so that they can give appropriate advice and guidance; and

- provide a planned programme of careers education in the curriculum to enable students to develop, among other skills, the ability to distinguish between objectivity and bias in careers information (Andrews, A, 2007).

A national framework for careers education and guidance (CEG) in England, covering learning outcomes for the 11-19 age range, was published by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in March 2003 (DfES and Connexions, 2003).

In 2005, the DfES commissioned the *End to End Review of Careers Education and Guidance* for young people 11-19 (DfES, 2005) as a response to concerns that there was a risk that not all young people who would benefit from advice were receiving it.

In relation to CEG in colleges and schools the review indicated that:

- budgets were limited and quality inconsistent; and

- in relation to Connexions, there was little engagement with employers and that partnerships did not have the capacity to deliver both a universal service and targeted support.

The National Audit Office report on Connexions, (NAO, 2004), found that in comparison with the original calculations, the service is significantly under-resourced to deliver a universal service.

In 2005, the government published proposals for the major reforms to the education and training of the 14–19 age group, which aimed to enable young people to choose a mixture of learning, which they would find motivating, challenging, and interesting. An associated implementation plan focused on raising participation and achievement. A new consultation document was subsequently published in 2008: *Promoting Achievement, Valuing Success: A Strategy for 14–19* (DCSF, 2008c).

In 2007, the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) published new standards to assure quality, effectiveness and impartiality in young people's information, advice and guidance (DCSF, 2007a). These aimed to help local authorities secure high quality IAG provision for young people in their area as part of an integrated youth support service. In 2008, local authorities assumed responsibility for the funding and provision of Connexions IAG services, which cover lifestyle and personal issues, learning and work options and referral on to other specialists as necessary. *Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances* (DfES, 2006a), the government's response to the Foster report, signalled the importance placed on IAG for young people in the implementation of the reform programme.

> Such improvements are essential to effective implementation of our 14–19 curriculum and qualification reforms, so that young people can make the choices at 14 and at 16 about what and where to study which are right for them. This is particularly important as we introduce the new specialised Diplomas as new qualifications with the potential to engage more young people more fully in learning and tackle social and cultural stereotyping of the options available to them.

The national quality improvement strategy for further education, published by the Quality Improvement Agency (QIA) in 2008 included the expectation that:

> All learners are able to access effective information, advice, guidance and pastoral support so that they are directed to the right programme and complete it successfully.

Given the extent of change within the sector and movement towards self-regulation, in December 2008, the LSIS published for consultation a *New National Improvement Strategy* (LSIS, 2008). This is based on six principles, which include support for the focus on personalised learning and employer engagement; and effective partnership working and providers learning from each other.

In November 2008, Ofsted began a consultation on new arrangements for the inspection of the further education and skills system, with a focus on improvement, particularly relating to 'learner outcomes', and enhanced evaluation of the learner's experience of FE. The proposed introduction of 'limiting grades' may result in a grading of 'inadequate' in an area such as equality and diversity, limiting the judgement for overall effectiveness.

1.3   Measuring the impact of Career Learning, Information, Advice and Guidance

The *Report of the End to End Review of Careers Education and Guidance* (DfES, 2005) identified participation and drop-out rates from universities, apprenticeships and colleges as valuable indicators of the impact of CEG, but not fully reflecting the potential impact.

> We see CEG as being about providing a flexible learning framework, within which young people can use their emerging **career development skills** to take informed decisions, while having the confidence that support will be available to help if they want to change direction.

Effective guidance should ensure that learner-centred decisions are reached which reflect the best outcome for the student, be it to stay on the programme, transfer to another or leave. Providers also recognise that it is not in their interest for unmotivated learners to be retained on a programme, since their presence may impact on the retention of others in the group. Thus while a learner's decision to leave a programme may not seem to increase success rates, in the long term it may do so.

A number of differing variables impact on career and learning decisions taken by individuals, not least the influences from informal sources of IAG. Evidence of the value placed by young people on the informal guidance they receive (from peers, parents, the media, etc) is illustrated in the research undertaken by Foskett (2004), who concluded that this is greater than from formal sources. *The Children's Plan* (DCSF, 2007c) also noted that young people particularly value support and advice from other young people.

Bimrose and Barnes (2007) in investigating the impact of CLIAG in HE commented:

> In seeking to assess and measure the effectiveness of career guidance, it is crucial to understand and take account of the complex inter-relationships and variables that exist. These include the way that individuals vary in respect of their personal circumstances such as gender, age, ethnicity and attainment; the contexts in which clients operate vary in relation to their domestic situation, geographical location, mobility and labour market status.

A Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) research report (LSDA, 2002) based on a project undertaken by the West of England Learning and Skills Research network into the models of guidance and support used and staff perceptions of effect on retention concluded that:

> Staff believe that the provision of learner support affects retention rates, but presented little evidence of the impact

and that further research was needed to explore the relationship between learner support and retention.

By 2008, in its annual report Ofsted observed that:

> the best colleges measure the impact of advice and guidance rigorously.
>
> *Talisman, November 2008, Vol. 71*

However, a report from a survey of embedded information, advice and guidance provision for adults in further education, adult and community learning (ACL) and work-based learning (WBL) (LSC, 2006) concluded that:

> The impact of on-programme IAG on learner engagement, retention, achievement and progression is not widely measured by providers. Impact measurement is a complex process and providers can find it difficult to separate the specific role of an IAG intervention on learner success rates and outcomes.

Two DfES research reports (Payne, J, 20003a and Payne, J, 2003b), concluded that there was little research that reviewed the impact of CEG on career decisions. Measurement of CLIAG is not always included in broader studies of the FE sector, or included in published findings. The *Further Education Learners Longitudinal Survey* (Coleman, N, et al, 2007) examined the experiences and destinations of FE learners. Two waves of interviewing were carried out, the first around one year after completion of the course, the second two years after course completion. However, these findings do not specifically report on CLIAG.

1.4   The value placed on Career Learning, Information, Advice and Guidance

There is a wide ranging consensus about the need for high quality IAG for learners, parents and employers to support entry into, and progression through, the further education sector. The impartiality and comprehensiveness of the IAG are frequently cited as important in effective delivery, for example (Ofsted, 2004; Apprenticeships Task Force, 2004; DfES, 2005b; DCSF, 2008b; LSC, 2008; Bowers-Brown, T, et al, 2005). In developing *The Children's Plan* (DCSF, 2007c), the 14-19 Expert Group emphasised the importance of high quality IAG and the need to focus on transition.

- The majority of respondents to the consultation on implementing the proposed reforms to education and training for pre-19 and post-19 learners in *Raising Expectations: Enabling the System to Deliver* (DCSF, 2008b) believed that:

  comprehensive and impartial IAG will be critical for both young people and adults who undertake any form of structured learning. IAG will also be needed for employers who currently work with the LSC so they understand what the reforms mean for them.

- The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) report responding to the government's programme for improving further education (CBI, 2006) commented:

  It is crucial that learners are provided with good quality information, advice and guidance on education and training opportunities.

- The Skills Commission reported in 2008 that:

  There is a large body of evidence showing that when young people are provided with high quality IAG they make better progress through the education system with more successful transitions between Key Stages and levels of qualification.

1.5   Areas for development

However, whilst Ofsted has indicated that the quality of support and guidance in colleges in the FE sector is a strength, (Ofsted, 2005), and (Talisman, November 2008, Vol. 71), it is also clear that the CLIAG provided for young people between 14 and 19 has not always been adequate to help them consider the full range of options and make effective transitions.

- A study into 16-19 Learner Support Arrangements (Morris, M, et al, 2002) reported that:

  The level of pre-16 careers education and guidance provision was insufficient to ensure that all young people were making the most appropriate choices about their post-16 destinations and courses.

- A survey of 1,432 year-12 students in full-time educational provision, (in school sixth forms, sixth form colleges, and further education colleges) in England (Keys, 1998) found that nearly half would have liked more help with making post-16 decisions.

  It was clear that many of those surveyed would have welcomed, and no doubt benefited from a greater knowledge and understanding of the career, education and training options available to them in the immediate and more distant future.

- Foster (2005) commented:

  Consistently, learners report that information advice and guidance is out of date, fragmented and ill informed

  and that

  Government should ensure that the different systems and information sources that exist to help people navigate learner pathways are made more learner-focused, understandable and accessible to improve choice.

  The research suggests that work-based learning options are not fully explored as possible post-16 career paths for all young people within careers education programmes / careers advice and guidance in schools. While basic information on WBL was given out to all students during years 9, 10 or 11, follow-up work on WBL, carried out with small groups by a personal adviser (PA), usually focused on lower-ability learners, or those who want to go straight into work at 16. This helps to create and perpetuate the image that WBL is for the less-academically able – a deficit approach. In the majority of cases, young people chose WBL because they thought that they were unable to take, or had been discouraged from taking, other options.

  Hughes, M and Monteiro, H, 2005b

Employers were not involved routinely in WBL careers advice and guidance, and there was little evidence that any connections were made between WBL and year 10/11 work experience, part-time jobs and other education-business link activities organised by school.

Hughes, M and Monteiro, H, 2005b

Connexions and Careers Service employer vacancy units had reduced in size in recent years as part of the transition from the Careers Service to Connexions, and this was thought to limit the development of sustainable links with employers.

Hughes, M and Monteiro, H, 2005b

- Research into the links between IAG and the decisions made by young people between 14–19 (Foskett, N, 2004), concluded that:

We can identify that IAG is characterised for most young people by complexity, confusion, competition and a distinct lack of credibility. The future development of IAG, therefore, requires both a better understanding of effective information communication approaches towards young people and a review of the nature of the market and of funding models. Without moves on both fronts, formal IAG will be dismissed by many young people as anachronistic in its approaches and manipulative in its aims, and their dependence on informal information and ideas will increase.

- Ofsted's evaluation of progress on the implementation of the 14-19 reforms, reported that:

evidence suggested that a small minority of young people, usually in 11 –18 schools, had not received completely impartial advice about the full range of post-16 options.

Ofsted, 2008b

- (Ofsted, 2004):

When the college operates from several sites, there can be inconsistency in the quality of available advice at enrolment. Part-time students tend to get the worst deal in this respect: At the main site, which offers mainly provision for full-time students, guidance and support services are generally satisfactory, but they are less effective for part-time students, especially at community venues.

- A report based upon the findings of 105 reviews of higher education (HE), delivered in 76 further education colleges in England and undertaken from 2003 to 2005 concluded:

Where a college is in partnership with a validating HEI, communications between the two are generally formalised, with students receiving advice and guidance about progression. For other colleges, the extent of communication with HEIs is variable, as is the provision of advice and guidance given to students [Guildford College: Agriculture, Forestry, Agricultural and Food Sciences, SR76/2004].

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), 2006

A number of these references indicate an inadequacy in the CLIAG received pre-16, preventing effective choices being made in preparation for the post-16 transition. In order to make truly informed decisions, young people need learner-centred CLIAG, which, while taking account of their aspirations and interests, also covers the range of learning pathways, which enable them to reach their potential. Those who have not had the chance to explore an appropriate range of options and thus with a poor level of career awareness, pose a particular challenge for FE sector providers, who may have to 'undo the damage' before the learner can move on. For example, having failed to attain the GCSE grades required to move into an AS/ A level programme, a student may apply or arrive late at the provider without a plan B or unable to find a place on their first choice programme, and potentially be less motivated to complete a course on which they are subsequently placed.

Infrequent start dates also exacerbate this problem. Staff from colleges and other providers are often better placed to advise pupils on vocational and work-based learning routes, but difficulties in accessing them have been frequently cited as a concern, (Sadler, J, 2002a) and (Sadler, J, 2002b). Functions placed on the new National Apprenticeship Service include a provision to ensure that young people in schools are fully informed about high-quality vocational training opportunities (DCSF and DIUS, 2008).

The development of online IAG, including the provision of materials on virtual learning environments (VLEs) which support career decision-making, is enabling providers to enhance the quality of IAG provided to those not attending the main site, including encompassing part-time learners and those on work placements. It also offers the potential to support students after they have left the organisation, for example, returning to seek work or further learning after a gap year.

1.6   Improving success rates and learner performance

The 1990s witnessed a growing interest in the causes of withdrawal from programmes and non-achievement, and possible solutions, which spawned a number of research projects. The Responsive College Unit longitudinal study into drop-out (Aitken, G, 1998), based on a sample of almost 6,000 students, had concluded that learners who felt that they had been well-informed about their course were less likely to withdraw. In 1998, the LSDA undertook the largest study of persistence and drop-out which has ever been completed in the UK, consisting of a survey of the views of some 9,000 students and staff in 31 colleges, (Martinez, P and Munday, F,1998). In relation to CEG, it confirmed the results of studies from individual colleges to the effect that students are more likely to drop out if they:

● do not feel they have been placed on the most appropriate course; or

● are less satisfied with help either to get a job or to go to university.

In 2001, Paul Martinez reviewed the messages from this literature, including the above studies, which equated to a substantial body of research, mainly from colleges, (Martinez P, 2001) and concluded that with regard to CEG, the smaller scale, often qualitative research, which provided detailed findings indicated that:

> for younger, full-time students, the issue does not appear to be the access to advice, but rather its quality.

Whilst the research concluded that learners often have multiple and complex reasons for dropping out from programmes, studies of withdrawn students found evidence of:

- poor, inadequate or inappropriate advice and guidance (7 sources);

- problems encountered by students who apply late or who join courses after their commencement (3 sources);

- poor (not to say hazardous and occasionally negligent) course choice decisions on the part of some students (1 source);

- indiscriminate recruitment (1 source); and

- insufficient understanding by some students of the demands of their course (e.g. the balance of practical and classroom work, assessment requirements and the balance of different requirements of their course) (2 sources)

The National Audit Office investigation into improving retention and achievement (NAO, 2001) identified the wrong choice of course as a key factor in non-completion:

> Students often decide not to complete their studies because the courses are not what they expected, or because they only wish to acquire certain skills or knowledge rather than a qualification.

The findings indicated that improving the quality of the information, advice and guidance given to learners would increase retention and completion rates.

From 1999 to 2005, the Further Education Development Agency (FEDA) and subsequently the LSDA supported over 500 small scale action research projects, which focused on developing strategies to improve learner retention and achievement, and were written up as case studies. Initially these were within colleges, but from 2002, the scope was extended to include work-based learning. Providers were required to assess the impact of the interventions using a range of quantitative and qualitative data; given the short-timescale and number of variables, the findings were taken as indicative rather than conclusive. A number of these projects encompassed CLIAG-related interventions, some of the earlier of which were synthesised in (Maynard, J and Smith, V, 2004; Sadler, J, 2002a; Sadler, J, 2002b; and Sadler, J and Smith, V, 2004).

Over the last decade, a specific focus throughout the sector on increasing learner retention and achievement has resulted in improvements across all parts of the sector – and particularly in work-based learning. In 2002, only 40 per cent of work-based learning providers inspected were deemed adequate by the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) (Sadler, J and Smith, V, 2004).

By November 2008, Ofsted reported that of the 257 inspections of WBL carried out in 2007/08:

the proportion of good or outstanding provision has risen from 48 % to 58 %.

However, learners on Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes may not complete due to

insufficient access to timely assessment, poor progress reviews and target-setting, and failures to identify and meet learners' needs in literacy and numeracy.

Talisman, Issue 71, November 2008

More recent research for the DfES, (Simm, C et al, 2007), suggests that inadequate or inappropriate pre-entry IAG, which is not detailed enough, is still a significant cause of non-completion.

2.   How Career Learning, Information, Advice and Guidance impacts on success rates

2.1   Retention

2.1.1   Evidence of impact from other settings

A literature review undertaken by the Centre for Guidance Studies (CeGS) (Boseley et al, 2002) into the level of available evidence in relation to the economic benefits of guidance found a number of studies over the past 15 years that reported an association between advice or guidance and retention:

- based on a qualitative study of over 5,000 adults aged 17 or more, Sargant (2000) reported that both the data and respondents' comments suggested that learning information and advice is lacking and better provision might aid retention, especially of educationally disadvantaged groups;

- a study undertaken by McGivney (1996), including a literature review, qualitative data from representatives of adult, FE and HE institutions and data from a postal survey of 15 tertiary and FE colleges, 13 HE institutions, 10 access validating agencies and 2 local education authorities, suggested that a lack of pre-entry or on-course information and advice is associated with increased drop-out rates amongst mature students on further and higher education courses. **A particular issue highlighted concerned the availability of guidance for all students, not only those studying full-time;**

- Morris et al (1999b) produced similar findings to McGivney's in relation to young people's experiences in further education. The research suggests that some young people lack sufficient knowledge about content and workload of courses, and that students withdraw from further education, mainly because of concerns about course content and timing, teaching quality and social relationships. **Access to 'good quality' careers guidance was one of the key factors in raising levels of awareness and positive attitudes towards vocational training;** and

- a small scale study by SWA Consulting (1999) reported **an association between low drop-out rates for those who had received specialist mandatory career advice before taking out an Individual Learning Account (ILA).** Drop-out amongst adults in West Wales, where mandatory advice about choice of course and learning provider was provided by the careers service, was very low (5 %), once learning had started. Low drop-out rates have also been associated with other schemes such as Career Development Loans, where guidance prior to take-up was mandatory.

2.1.2 Recruitment

While it is not possible to establish a direct correlation, those colleges with improving patterns of retention and achievement were able to highlight particular features of their sixth form centre provision which they saw as important elements contributing to improving achievement. These included: the significant emphasis given to student support and in particular tutorial provision within the centres; extended mentoring arrangements; a core of staff teaching 16 – to 19-year-old students; a focus on improving teaching and learning; and, **most importantly, the emphasis given to careful and thorough pre-entry advice and guidance**.

Ofsted, 2004c

It is clear that **threshold activities make an important impact on achievement and retention**, and that their success depends on an effective relationship and partnership between central special staff and curriculum teams.

Martinez, P, 2000

In its analysis of the characteristics of successful colleges, based on inspections of 307 further education colleges and 42 independent specialist colleges for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, carried out between 2001 and 2004, Ofsted reported that:

In all these colleges support and guidance for students are at least good, often outstanding. Whatever the size of the college, students are treated as individuals and can expect effective support throughout their studies. **A major strength is the rigour of initial guidance**: the college goes to great lengths to ensure that students enrol on appropriate courses and the proportion of students who change their courses after enrolling is small.

Ofsted, 2004b

Recognising the links between the quality of the recruitment, selection and admissions processes, and learner retention and achievement, colleges and work-based learning providers have implemented a range of strategies to improve IAG prior to entry on to programmes to:

● better integrate the work of the range of staff involved in these activities; and

● introduce greater consistency.

Some of these are summarised by Sadler (2002a and 2002b), the latter also drawing on the findings from FEFC reports, and Sadler and Smith (2004). Key strategies from these and Martinez (1997 and 2000), Maynard and Martinez (2002) and the LSDA (2004) include:

● ensuring that entry criteria cover all provision and are clear, appropriate and applied consistently;

● taking steps to curtail or reduce late application and entry, and where this occurs, targeting support to reduce any negative impact;

- providing opportunities for taster activities, introductory or trial programmes for the applicant before final commitment, together with comprehensive, accessible and timely information for all parties (parent or guardian, learner, employer) to enable all to reach a realistic understanding of what a programme involves; the demands it is going to make; how it will support the applicant's career progression and their suitability for it;

- designing programme and course information from the point of view of the intended recipient (learner/ parent/ employer);

- working with Connexions and local schools to clarify the nature and extent of career education and guidance received by pupils, and tailor the CLIAG provision available accordingly;

- using feedback about recruitment, selection and admissions processes from applicants (and, as appropriate, their parents or guardians) and learners who withdraw, to identify and address any weaknesses;

- ensuring that effective screening processes are in place to check the appropriateness of programme choice against career goals;

- enhancing staff training in selection and using standardised documentation to increase quality and consistency;

- monitoring recruitment and selection processes to ensure that policies, systems and procedures are followed consistently by staff;

- planning the availability of pre-entry IAG on the basis of greatest need, so that there is adequate provision after GCSE results are announced; and

- undertaking comprehensive screening and initial assessment, as appropriate, using information provided by Connexions at referral, to ensure that applicants are placed on the right programme and given any additional support early enough to prevent withdrawal.

There were some specific issues in relation to the adequacy and quality of the CLIAG provided for young people in relation to work-based learning.

- Of particular concern to the ALI in the early 2000s was the quality of initial assessment processes in work-based learning, which, based on inspection reports, were in 2002 five times more likely to be cited as a weakness than as a strength.

An individual learning plan cannot be prepared, with any hope of its being pertinent, without the most careful interview and, probably, well chosen formal testing. This is the fourth consecutive year in which this point has been made in my annual report. Initial assessment nevertheless remains inadequate.

ALI, 2002

- In 2004, the Apprenticeships Task Force commented in its final report that:

  For Apprenticeships to acquire the status they deserve, we feel there has to be a significant improvement in the rate of completion. We have suggested a medium term target of approximately 65 %. This would be assisted by the removal of one obstacle to completion, which is the lack of adequate advice … Careers advice and guidance should be assigned higher weighting in schools and colleges inspections.

- Three of the four areas of critical concern to improved take-up and achievement levels on work-based learning programmes, identified by a study into effective entry into work-based learning, (Hughes, M and Monteiro, H, 2005b), linked in some way to improvements in careers advice and guidance. These covered:

  - improving the availability, impartiality and quality of careers advice and guidance about work-based learning options, and the marketing information to support this;
  - increasing employer participation in giving advice and guidance about WBL; and
  - increasing opportunities to access broader life chances.

  The marketing and promotional information that is in use for WBL varies in its quality, availability, distribution and occupational sector coverage. … This patchy and sometimes incomplete information cannot compete with the information on full-time FE courses provided to schools, or with the day-to-day influence from the school to stay on post-16.

  Learner recruitment into WBL was characterised as a complex and confusing process that could lead to frustration and ultimately rejection of the route. The potential learners underwent a plethora of interviews and assessments, completed different application forms for different providers and employers, and experienced periods when they were not informed of the progress of their application. When this lengthy process was added to the difficulties of getting placements/jobs, or being put on a waiting list, it is perhaps inevitable that many young people opt for a different route.

- The action research projects in work-based learning also recognised that:

  Many young people leave school with little or no understanding of the world of work or opportunities available for WBL.

  Maynard, J and Smith, V, 2004

Research with practitioners was undertaken by the LSDA in 2002 to identify the characteristics and activities of work-based learning associated with good learner performance, based on the following question: "Why do some learners achieve while others with similar backgrounds and similar circumstances do not?" Providers with similar characteristics were selected to minimise the effect of external factors on their performance. The findings (Smith, V and Hughes, M, 2003) identified a number of effective recruitment and assessment strategies. Giving good advice to help learners make informed decisions about the occupation, sector, level and programme, as well as work and study locations, the type of employer and support required was identified as a characteristic of good learner performance.

Faced with a number of choices of programme, level and job, it is important that the prospective learner is offered information and advice to support their decision-making. Thorough recruitment includes a discussion of the options and the advantages and disadvantages of each. This process includes provision of full information about the proposed jobs and learning programmes. Providers stress the importance of ensuring that both learners and employers understand the nature of the commitment that they are undertaking. They do this by explaining in detail their expectations of the learner.

In 2005, findings from a survey of 33 employers delivering apprenticeships across six vocational areas found that improvements in processes linked to IAG had contributed to higher success rates, particularly linking processes which deepened applicants' understanding of the employment for which they were aiming within recruitment to improvements in retention.

Many of the employers linked high retention rates to effective selection: 'taster' or probationary periods were seen as being particularly valuable in the selection process.

Hughes, M and Monteiro, H, 2005a

The Children's Plan (DCSF, 2007c) also highlights the value placed by young people on being able to 'taste' before commitment:

Young people particularly value … opportunities to experience the options available to them – including 'taster' provision, which enables young people to experience the sorts of activity they would do on different learning programmes. We will expect these forms of guidance – peer advice and mentoring, and opportunities for tasters and other 'experiential learning' to be available to young people across the country.

Information on progression pathways and from learner destinations needs to inform providers' marketing and admissions.

2.1.3 Confirming choices and providing support

Of particular relevance to improved retention are: ensuring placement on to appropriate courses; processes to confirm course choices; and support provided to learners at the early stages of the learning programme. Key strategies to support retention in work-based learning (Sadler, J and Smith, V, 2004) and in colleges (Martinez, P, 1997) include processes that link to CLIAG, and for which specific IAG interventions or individual referral to it may be required, encompassing college tutors, specialist staff and Connexions PAs. These include the following:

- right course reviews during or at the end of induction; treating the initial phase of the programme as a diagnostic phase;

- facilitating course change at the beginning of programmes;

- the early identification of learners at risk of dropping out and targeting support or monitoring them more intensively, sometimes through referral to more senior staff;

- providing more support at transition points, for example, entry into work placements, including helping young people to understand employer expectations;

- developing support at college or in the workplace through the use of mentors and buddies, some of whom are peers, others older or previous learners, or workplace colleagues. Some will provide informal IAG on learning routes and career progression.

A study into college teachers' views on course performance (Maynard, J, and Martinez, P, 2002) found that on programmes with high retention and achievement that were still improving:

> Once students were enrolled, there was a willingness to provide them with a high level of personal support and to refer them on to specialists when it was more appropriate to do so. This was done through early identification of 'at risk' students and referrals to student services at an early stage of the course.

2.2   Achievement

Student Services functions often play a **key role in the design, development and implementation of strategies aimed at improving student achievement**'.

Martinez, P, 2000

Processes that support achievement include those that

help to place and support students on programmes of study: information, advice, guidance, recruitment and selection, careers education, initial screening and testing, induction, arrangements for course transfer and student support'

Martinez, P, 2000

Evidence from evaluations of the impact of CLIAG from community settings would support its contribution to achievement.

- A national telephone survey of 1,823 randomly selected adults of working age, who received information and advice (IA) from nextstep services between August and November 2005 (Milburn, Trinnaman and LaCourt, 2005) found that:

  Overall, 30 % of respondents had either achieved or were working towards an NVQ or equivalent or some other kind of recognised qualification since they received advice and information services, and an additional 7 % had decided to start working towards an NVQ or equivalent but had yet to do so at the time of the survey. Advice and information services appear to have had a significant impact on sub-Level 2 achievement and increasing Level 2-4 attainment'.

- A study consisting of two surveys of **learndirect** users conducted during the winter of 2003 involving 1,567 individuals, of whom 787 had been taking **learndirect** courses in November and December 2001, and 780 had used the **learndirect** helpline in February and March 2002, reported that:

  learndirect was felt to be particularly useful in gaining promotions, with 60 per cent of those who had gained a promotion stating that their **learndirect** learning had helped.

  Tyers, C and Sinclair, A, 2004

- A study into the impact of careers guidance on the adult employed (Killeen, J and White M, 2000), based on the perceptions of 1,612 respondents, reported that:

  Over the two-year follow-up period, about eight per cent of the guidance sample entered full-time education or training. This was more than four times the proportion in the comparison sample.

The guidance sample were more than twice as likely to get a qualification from a course which they had initiated, than the comparison sample. They also had a higher overall rate of qualification, even after taking account of employer-provided training in which the comparison sample did better.

There is also evidence that the intermediate outcomes for recipients of advice and guidance (A/G) are greater than those for individuals receiving Information only (I-only). A large-scale longitudinal study of over 4,000 adult users of **learndirect**, Jobcentre Plus and **nexstep**, carried out by the Institute of Employment Studies in association with MORI (Tyers, C and Sinclair, A, 2005), found that the A/G users were more positive than the I-only group about their current or previous work and learning achievements and their current labour market position.

There are clear differences in the work and learning outcomes and in changes to the levels of confidence, motivation and opportunity awareness between the two groups. In all cases, the A/G group is significantly more likely to report having undergone changes since their intervention as a result of the help they have received.

2.2.1   Impact on subject and education choices

Literature reviews offer evidence of the positive impact of effective CLIAG on making appropriate subject and education choices. Reviewing the effects of CEG on attainment and associated benefits, Killeen et al (1999) concluded that:

There is vast amount of evidence that CEG does **have an impact upon young people's 'decidedness' about educational options**.

However, there is inadequate UK-based research to evidence this.

A lack of quality published research into the impact of CEG delivered at KS3 and KS4 was also identified as an issue during a systematic review of recent research for the Institute of Education (IoE) by Moon et al. (2004), which could identify only two studies with a high weight of evidence, (out of an initial 6,766). However, the evidence clearly suggested that CEG interventions can improve students' learning and help them to prepare for the transitional phase. Students can gain clearer insights into the choices available to them and CEG interventions can equip them with 'knowledge and skills' to prepare for decision-making and the implications of the choices they make. Similarly, a literature review into student choices at KS3 undertaken by McCrone et al, (2006), concluded that:

The research evidence suggests that where it is available, careers education and guidance support **can help to equip young people with the skills and knowledge necessary to make informed subject choices.**

A summary of earlier literature reviews investigating the impact of CEG on transitions from KS3 to KS4 and KS4 into post-16 opportunities, and the factors affecting these, (Bowes et al 2005), found that the research evidence, which included large scale surveys in 40 schools, suggests that young people with **a high level of career-related skills** are more likely to make satisfactory subject choices at year 9 **and less likely to change their choices or switch courses post-16. The career-related skills include career exploration, self awareness and self-confidence (**Morris et al, 1998) and (Morris et al,1999).

Similarly, the evidence from the IoE literature review (Moon et al, 2004) suggests that one of the benefits of CEG is to **help students develop 'knowledge and skills' to enable them to make educational and career choices**.

2.3   Motivation and engagement

Martinez highlighted the impact of improved student motivation in raising learner achievement, and acknowledged the contribution effective CEG could make to the development of intrinsic motivation[2] (Martinez, P, 2000), in particular citing:

- careers guidance;

- empowering career choice; and

- career relevance, which involves

  encouraging students to be clearer in their career objectives and to foster a realistic belief in the achievability of these objectives.

A number of colleges had developed innovative approaches to CLIAG, such as: the use of successful students as role models; developing CEG programmes with a specific focus on addressing lack of motivation and poor self esteem; and using individual career action plans and activities to broaden career ideas. Providers of work-based learning have also used similar strategies including:

- using the experience of former learners who have progressed;

- inviting the Army to deliver a session on the range of career options open to those who had achieved a Foundation Modern Apprenticeship (FMA) or an Advanced Modern Apprenticeship (AMA)[3]; and

- using Connexions or a theatre group to stimulate debate on progression (Sadler, J and Smith, V, 2004).

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2   "Intrinsic motivation : where the factors that inspire motivation have been internalised in the form of self-belief, confidence, self-awareness and so on" (Crowder and Pupynin, Kember, 1993).

3   Modern Apprenticeships were re-branded in 2004 to Apprenticeships and Advanced Apprenticeships

The use of mentoring is now fairly widespread. This has included HE students supporting progression in schools by mentoring learners who might not have considered HE and senior staff mentoring learners at risk of becoming disengaged (Andrews, D, 2007).

2.3.1   Evidence of impact from other settings

A number of studies from other settings provide evidence of the role of CLIAG, particularly advice and guidance, in increasing confidence and motivation, and prompting clients and learners to take action.

- An assessment for the DfES, into the net added value of adult advice and guidance, (Pollard, M et al, 2007), based on interviews with an initial cohort of 4,000 adults and with 1,300 in the second wave, produced, over time, a longitudinal data-set measuring outcomes from more in-depth careers support – advice and guidance (AG) – over that of information provision (I). By the second wave of interviews, the proportion of those reporting **improved self-confidence** as a result of the help they received had increased. Within this, the percentage of respondents who received more in-depth support initially was considerably higher than those receiving just information – 68 % compared with 59 % – and this difference is statistically significant.

- Over 4,000 recipients of IAG were tracked by the Institute of Employment Studies in association with MORI for a large-scale longitudinal study into the intermediate impacts of advice and guidance (A/G). The findings also indicated that A/G has a more positive impact on motivation, confidence and opportunity awareness on adults than just information (I).

  There are very clear patterns to show that A/G recipients are more likely to feel that they have made changes to their work and/or learning situation in greater numbers than those receiving information (I) only. The provision of the higher level interventions is also more likely to allow individuals to make changes that they would not have been able to do without such a service. The same patterns hold for **gains in confidence, motivation** and opportunity awareness.

  Tyers, C and Sinclair, A, 2005

- 48 % of the 1,823 adult users of public guidance services contacted in the 2005 national telephone survey, (Milburn, 2005), reported that information or advice had **increased their self-confidence.**

- 1,000 adults who received guidance from Careers Wales during 2004 were contacted, by telephone, at three and six months following the intervention.

  Many clients made comments that showed that the guidance interview had led to an increase in client confidence, or that it had given clients the **encouragement and impetus needed to make changes**, or that it had provided clients more focus or a **better sense of purpose**. These results indicate the 'softer' outcomes of career guidance, demonstrating the added value it can bring in providing an empowering and positive experience with an overall benefit for many individuals.

  Clients were asked at stage 1 how clear they were about their future plans. 37.6% of clients said they were either "clear" or "very clear" about their future plans before their career guidance interview, whereas 82% of clients said that they were either **clear** or **very clear** about their future plans after their career guidance interview. These results indicated:

  that the interview had a significant positive impact on clients' action planning
  Reed, K, et al, 2005

- An evaluation of the impact of the University for Industry (UfI) consisting of two surveys of 1,567 **learndirect** users was carried during the winter of 2003. 780 had used the **learndirect** helpline in February and March 2002.

  Almost all learners (98 per cent) felt that they had gained something from their learning by the time of the second survey (Table 6.11). The most common skills gained were IT skills, followed by **self confidence/ motivation** and personal/social skills.
  Tyers, C and Sinclair, A, 2004

A small longitudinal study was undertaken to evaluate the effectiveness of guidance in HE by tracking the career trajectories of 50 participants through in-depth interviews over a five-year period from 2002, and to establish the role of guidance in this process. The third year of investigation built on findings from the initial case study interview and the first phase of follow-up by continuing to focus on the career progression of clients, their perceptions of guidance received and its role in their career development.

  It was found that guidance had acted as **a catalyst for positive change**, even where agreed action had not been implemented or advice followed. Seventy-eight per cent (n=35) of clients who were followed up felt that guidance had resulted in direct and positive change (such as: a change in their situation, thinking, and/or future plans; being pointed in the right direction; given alternative options/ideas to consider; or had ideas affirmed). Thirty-one per cent (n=14) of clients felt guidance had resulted in indirect positive change (such as: **increased confidence or motivation**).
  Bimrose, J, Barnes, S-A and Hughes, D, 2006

Five strong themes emerged from the data indicating how clients found their guidance useful when it: gave access to specialist information; reduced confusion; **motivated** or provided new insights; confirmed ideas and **built confidence**.

Bimrose, J, Barnes, S-A and Hughes, D, 2006 p.4

The fourth report (Bimrose and Barnes, 2007) found that:

career management competences play an important role for many clients in exploring employment and learning opportunities, finding employment, **increasing their self-confidence** and making career-related decisions.

2.3.2 Engagement in learning

The 2005 national telephone survey of 1,823 adult users of guidance services (Milburn, 2005) reported that:

Information and advice appears to be a **key stimulant for people to re-engage** in learning: 36 % of respondents had engaged in some kind of learning activity in the 8 months or so between receiving advice and the survey, the majority of it work-related. **Those who were the least qualified [sub-Level 2], were also the most likely to subsequently engage in learning.** As a consequence, the overall qualifications profile of the sample improved after receiving advice and information given its influence on learning behaviour and activity levels, although of course, other factors will also have been influential.

2.4   Progression

The Ofsted consultation on new proposals for the further education and skills system inspections (Ofsted, 2008a) reflects the increased importance accorded by policy to progression over recent years:

the critical importance of employability skills and progression on to sustainable and further learning as outcomes from many government-funded programmes, and the need to judge this alongside learner achievements'.

A study into providers involved in Aimhigher in 2005 (Bowers-Brown, T, McCaig, C, Stevens, A and Harvey, L, 2006), reported that 73% of the 155 work-based learning providers sampled indicated that:

the best way to encourage progression into higher education was by providing clearer progression routes and improved information, advice and guidance.

However, the Ofsted inspection of 16 local authorities' progress in implementing the 14-19 reform programme (Ofsted, 2008b) reported that:

progression routes on vocational programmes from age 14 through 19 were often insufficiently clear.

A synthesis of the learning from action research projects in work-based learning of the factors supporting success in Modern Apprenticeships (Maynard, J, and Smith, V, 2004) found a lack of consistency in the use of advice and guidance to facilitate progression, and that this may not be specific enough. The conclusion illustrates the important role that timely and tailored CLIAG in all its guises can play in supporting progression:

progression most often leads to achievement and further development where learners:

- progress on to the right programme at the right level;

- have the necessary skills, abilities and aptitudes to be retained on a programme at the right level;

- experience a training programme where skills and abilities are not simply developed to meet certification requirements, but also meet the needs of employers in the workplace;

- have their progress regularly reviewed against targets and the outcomes recorded and celebrated – both in terms of unit progression and 'value-added';

- have progression opportunities integrated into the existing programme, so that progression is seen as the natural outcome, rather than an afterthought; and

- have their destinations recorded and followed up a few months after leaving the course either to confirm the destination or to offer further training opportunities.

An early focus on progression and preparation for entry into work placements is of particular importance on shorter programmes and those where young people are less work-ready, facilitated through access to effective CLIAG. This also enables the early identification of barriers to progression, and allows time to work with learners to overcome these. Some target-setting and review processes may not adequately reflect the need to facilitate learner progression (Davies, P, Maynard, J, and Webster, T, 2006). A guide for staff delivering E2E programmes (LSDA, 2004) noted that:

> For many learners, the most significant barriers to making a positive progression to apprenticeship training or employment are related to their personal and social skills. These are sometimes referred to as employability skills.

> For many learners, the initial assessment phase is as much about accessing careers advice and guidance as it is about identifying training and support needs. **Learners who were able to identify a clear and realistic positive progression route out of E2E were most likely to take responsibility for their own learning**.

A key feature of the E2E programmes in a company achieving progression rates at 10% above local and national levels was the 'moving on' plan, which is followed up after eight weeks to check on their circumstances. (Davies, P, Maynard, J, and Webster, T, 2006).

Inadequate focus on longer term career goals at an early stage may also impede progression.

- Research undertaken by Perez-del-Aguila et al (2006) into the career paths taken by apprentices identified the importance of high quality IAG before entry on to a programme to develop a longer-term perspective and career plan.

> Employers, providers and apprentices were keen to stress **the importance of gaining information about the apprenticeship, what it would involve, and potential progression paths, before starting the programme.** This could enable a long-term view to be developed and a further personal and company investment in the process as seeing long term gains and setting career goals'.

- A small study on offenders and IAG (Christian, S, 2006), which included a consultation to explore their experience of CEG, found that the guidance given tended to be limited to the time spent in prison, and recommended that there should be more 'lifelong career planning'.

- Whilst it should be noted that the more seamlessly CLIAG is delivered, the less likely individuals are to identify they have received it, research into participation from disadvantaged communities in higher education undertaken for the National Council for Educational Excellence (NCEE) (Sutton Trust, 2008) found that:

- – 58 % of young people surveyed would have liked more support in making career decisions; and
- – 73 % of 16 and 17-year-olds reported that they had received no advice on how subject choices affected future career options.

- A study encompassing year 12 students in Wales into how best to develop CEG (Webb, 2006) found that some students needed more information to support progression.

  I think that for A-levels they should have made a connection between which A-levels can get you which course. There wasn't much of that.

  Little information seemed to be available about destinations of students from vocational courses in college, and the information available on the websites of learning providers about progression at 17 or 18 seemed too general to allow meaningful comparison.

The LSC's recent review of research into apprenticeships (LSC, 2008) highlighted the need for "a holistic multi-agency approach" to ensure that the IAG delivered is "consistent and comprehensive", and facilitates successful transition from an apprenticeship to higher-level qualifications.

The range of staff involved in the delivery of CLIAG in the FE sector poses challenges to ensure that they are all adequately trained to deliver CLIAG effectively and work within the boundaries of their roles. Changes in the HE system and admissions processes require regular updating. Principle 4 in the *New National Improvement Strategy* (LSIS, 2008) requires "programmes to support the professional development of all individual staff at all levels". An investigation into factors impacting on the progression of the 16-19 age range into HE (McGrath, S and Millen, P, 2004) revealed the heavy responsibility on tutors for supporting progression into HE.

  In effect, the typical student rarely or (depending on the institution) never goes beyond the form tutor in drawing up his or her HE plans … Whether the form or personal tutor has the necessary training or time to properly fulfil the obligations that come with their pre-eminence is an important matter.

- Similarly, in considering key elements in the development of the 14-19 phase of education, Thomson et al (2006) commented that schools and colleges needed to ensure teaching staff had training to support students' transition.

  It is very important that teachers receive appropriate training and support for planning and delivering those aspects of IAG for which they are responsible, whether lessons in the curriculum, running a resource centre, providing advice and guidance, or managing work experience.

- The recent investigation into IAG carried out by the Skills Commission (2008) recommended:

  a review of the initial training and continuing professional development for those involved in delivery of IAG and careers education.

Raising the participation age may require more robust post-exit services. The LSC study into embedded IAG for adults (LSC, 2006) found that:

- only approximately 40% of FE providers were offering a next step or progression review to adult learners immediately prior to exit; and

- only a quarter of FE providers offered a post-exit 'results service' and 30% ongoing ICT-based guidance.

This gives cause for concern, given the frequent need for in-depth guidance for those whose progression plans do not work out, and suggests that action is taken to ascertain whether young people leaving colleges are being adequately assisted.

2.4.1 Evidence of impact from other settings

Evidence for the impact of CLIAG on progression is found within practice in schools and community settings. SWA Consulting (1998) reported

  that high quality IAG can have a positive impact on transitions between key stages 3 and 4 (at age 14) and from compulsory to further education and a particularly beneficial effect on pupils of moderate to higher ability in schools with lower or average achievement.

- A study in 2006 into the ways in which year 9 and year 11 young people in schools make decisions at 14 and 16, and the outcomes of those decisions, (Blenkinsop et al, 2006) found **a link between:**

  – **the effectiveness of the career decisions made by young people; and**
  – **the effectiveness of the support mechanisms in place**,

  When support was available, young people made considered and rational decisions, and were still happy when reviewing them six months later. There was

  evidence of an association between schools in which young people felt supported through the careers education and guidance they received and schools in which young people appeared to have the most 'positive' mindsets and who made the most 'effective' decisions and were less likely to change their mind.

In contrast, young people without access to CEG provision or support strategies were:

more likely to have varied approaches to decision-making, to change their minds about their decisions over time, and to have mindsets that reflected a 'comfort-seeking' or 'defeatist' approach to decision-making.

Comprehensiveness, impartiality and delivery by trained staff were identified as characteristic of effective provision.

- A large scale study into the impact of CEG on transition at 16, (Morris, M and Golden, S, 1999a), with a focus on the relationship between career-related skills and

  – satisfactory transitions; and
  – positive attitudes to lifelong learning and guidance

  was conducted between 1995/06 and 1998 with a cohort of young people completing year 9 course in 40 schools and with follow-up surveys with 1,624 and 938 pupils. The findings highlighted the importance of developing **young people's career-related skills**, **particularly career-exploration** in making the effective transitions, which support progression.

- The literature review summary of 2005 (Bowes et al, 2005) found evidence that:

  good-quality CEG interventions can have a positive effect on young people and contribute towards the success of subsequent transitions made at KS3 and KS4.

  However, a number of variables affect the strength of the impact, including:

  – the nature and type of the CEG provided;
  – the extent of customisation of the CEG to meet individual need; and
  – the timing of interventions.

  IAG is having a positive impact on the education, training and career progression of adults.

- The 2005 national telephone survey of 1,823 adult users of guidance services reported that:

  76% of those who moved into learning following advice believe that service to have been 'crucial/ important' in making this decision and transition. Similarly, 50 % of people who moved into work-related learning and 36 % of those who moved into other learning rated the impact of the advice and information received at this high level.

  Milburn, 2005

- The evaluation of **learndirect** users (Tyers, C and Sinclair, A, 2004) found a strong association between IAG and progression within learning.

  The influence of IAG sources is very apparent here, as the most effective predictor of whether a learndirect repeat learner had progressed within their learning was whether they had used some form of IAG support. This is true not only in relation to whether they had progressed in learning, but also whether they intended to continue to learn in the future. There is, therefore, something about individuals who seek out information and advice, or about the service they receive, that encourages a greater interest in learning progression and continuation. If it is the latter, then the importance of IAG for those without a recent working knowledge of the learning system is clear yet again.

3.   Career Learning, Information, Advice and Guidance: meeting government and provider agendas

3.1   The 14–19 reform programme

Reforms to the 14–19 curriculum, such as the introduction of the new 14-19 diplomas; the introduction of greater flexibility at key stages 3 and 4; and the increase in partnership working between schools and colleges, should open up a much broader range of options for 14-19 learners. The benefits of the diplomas and the opportunities they offer will need to be made clear to all concerned, including employers and parents as well as those delivering CLIAG and the learners themselves, so that they take up this provision. Some practical issues, such as transporting learners to different sites, also need to be resolved.

The Green Paper, *Promoting Achievement, Valuing Success: A Strategy for 14–19 Qualifications* (DCFS, 2008c), which sets out proposals for the new diplomas, apprenticeships and the Foundation Learning Tier, underlined that as the range of opportunities increases, high quality IAG will need to be available to young people and their parents to support them in making informed choices. Research suggests that, if the quality of the CLIAG is poor, this is likely to impact disproportionately negatively on young people from less prosperous backgrounds (SWA Consulting,1998).

The DfES vision for personalising further education (DfES, 2006b) to raise the ambitions of all learners includes:

> having access to comprehensive Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) services alongside teaching and pastoral support from pre-entry to post-exit.

Further Education Colleges – Models for Success (DIUS, 2008a) defines the role of Diploma consortia, which includes to provide:

> IAG through peer advice and mentoring, opportunities for 'tasters' and other experiential learning, building on commitments in *The Children's Plan*.

3.1.1   Impact on Career Learning, Information, Advice and Guidance

Personalising learning means ensuring that all learners are on a learning pathway, which meets their aspirations and needs. Choices at 14 become even more critical as the Diplomas are established, and it is important that these do not lock young people irrevocably into one route. Anecdotal evidence suggests that inappropriate subject choices at this age, which impact on the subsequent range of career choices, result in the need for remedial advice at 16.

As learning pathways become more personalised and the range of choices widens, the complexity of the decisions also increases. Once the entitlement is fully established, these will need to include:

- the most appropriate sector (Line of Learning) – reflecting possible career choices – if known;

- the most appropriate level (this will be most important pre-16 in relation to decisions regarding level 1 and level 2);

- selections of additional/specialist learning that may broaden the scope of study, increase flexibility and opportunities to change direction'.

Harkin, J, 2007

When planning their learning, young people are going to need more careers support, including challenging their ideas and broadening these out (for example, from a narrow focus on one specific occupation such as hairdresser or motor mechanic), to ensure that the decisions taken meet the career goals to which they aspire, and that they understand the consequences of those choices. They will also need more customised careers support and, therefore, more likely, referral to specialists for 'deep support'. Career planning needs to leave behind outdated theories of career matching, and help young people understand that skills development throughout their lives will open up a broader range of options.

There also needs to be integration between guidance on current learning choices, next steps and longer-term career goals. Whilst this will be particularly important at the key decision points, given that young people's career ideas change and develop, there is also an argument for regular career 'health' checks and linking individual learning plans to career and progression plans. Developing young people as competent career planners and managers is an important element in helping them negotiate their way around this complexity. It also mirrors the concept of personalised learning as a process, which stimulates learners to take responsibility for extending their own knowledge and skills.

Particularly in times of recession, the economy requires workers who have good employability skills and can understand how their skills profile is transferable to other occupational sectors, for example, the applicability of engineering skills to construction. We need to build 'career resilience' within the population as a whole. Whilst curriculum-based CEG can be more acceptable to learners who see the relevance in this, it may reinforce silo-thinking in relation to career options. Inter-disciplinary career-related learning may encourage a broader awareness of the applicability of an individual's skills.

3.1.2   Working in consortia and partnerships

The recent Education and Skills Act 2008 (DCSF, 2008d) included the duty to cooperate in the planning of provision. The effectiveness of partnership working in delivering comprehensive IAG is key to the successful delivery of the 14-19 entitlement for all young people in an area. The LSC's recent review of research into apprenticeships (LSC, 2008) highlighted the need for "a holistic multi-agency approach" to ensure that the IAG delivered is "consistent and comprehensive", and facilitates successful transition from an apprenticeship to higher-level qualifications. Collaboration offers the opportunity for providers to learn from one another: principle 5 – the *New National Improvement Strategy* (LSIS, 2008). Anecdotal evidence would suggest that 14-19 providers do not always collaborate as effectively as they might, and that competition for learners is an underlying cause. One approach may be to offer support to schools in meeting government's agendas such as addressing gender stereotyping.

In addition to the development of the online prospectus and common application process, requested by DCSF, effective partnership working is likely to require:

- a more co-ordinated approach to delivering CLIAG;

- understanding of each partner's recording and monitoring systems, for example, to authorised absences for Educational Maintenance Awards (EMAs) and potential integration of these, particularly where students are taught in more then one institution;

- the development of common policies or protocols (for example, on access and impartiality; referral, information-sharing and confidentiality);

- clarity on the learner entitlement to IAG, and

- common documentation (e.g. career plans etc).

Online systems need to be compatible to avoid unnecessary duplication.

The 2007 Ofsted report on centres of vocational excellence noted the value of staff from CoVEs working in schools to raise pupils' awareness of vocational pathways, including a beneficial impact on increasing pupils' "motivation, attendance and career aspirations". Working in partnership should enable providers to benefit from economies of scale. Creative thought needs to be given to how resources and staff can be allocated across the partnership to make the most effective use of these in the delivery of CLIAG, including:

- reviewing the roles of staff both specialists and generalists, including Connexions PAs in relation to the new agenda, and identifying and addressing gaps;

- identifying the development needs in relation to CLIAG, particularly amongst teaching and tutorial assessment staff in 14-19 providers;

- agreeing new roles and boundaries, and how staff are to be developed and deployed;

- greater use of labour market intelligence (LMI) in decision-making;

- effective use of technologies in CLIAG delivery including e-portfolios, VLEs, etc; and

- harnessing the power of informal guidance (e.g. through peer mentoring, etc.)

to ensure that the CLIAG delivered is current, comprehensive, informed, impartial and supports progression.

To make the best use of resources and facilitate personalisation, career learning needs to be delivered in differentiated ways (e.g. large groups, small groups, supported web-based research, one-to-one, career projects and assignments, etc) and produce 'blended career learning'. Effective partnership working should also allow for more 'joined-up thinking' in relation to progression in career learning pre and post-16, so building on previous career-related activities, e.g. CV writing, not just duplicating these, as perceived in the past by some learners. All providers working to the National Framework for CEG (DfES and Connexions, 2003) would bring greater coherence into the provision.

3.2   Every Child Matters (ECM)

CLIAG helps providers meet the ECM agenda by contributing significantly to at least three of the outcomes, for example, by challenging aspirations and helping young people achieve economic well-being. The Ofsted consultation (Ofsted, 2008a) proposes that an assessment of the extent to which providers of 16-19 education are meeting the *Every Child Matters* (ECM) agenda is included in future inspections. Of particular relevance in the new inspection framework would be an evaluation of the extent to which learners "increase their employability and economic well-being through learning and development" and "how well the provision enables learners to contribute to the wider society", so encompassing volunteering and some enrichment activity.

3.3   Raising the Participation Age (RPA)

The recent Education and Skills Bill, which became law on 27 November 2008, stipulates that pupils beginning their secondary education in 2008 will be obliged to continue at school, college or in work-based training until the age of at least 17; this will be extended to 18 for the 2010 intake. The new National Apprenticeship Service has been tasked to ensure sufficient places are available in WBL by 2013, and there will need to be a co-ordinated approach to employer engagement at local level, to ensure that businesses are not overwhelmed by requests for work-based placements.

The government anticipates that this will require a suitable route to be found for every young person, underpinned by advice and guidance, which is identified as a prerequisite for such a change to be successful. Whilst a survey of 859 adults (Homeyard, 2007) indicated that 90 % were in favour of young people remaining in education or WBL until 18, a Learning and Skills Network (LSN) poll found that only 51 % of teenagers supported the change.

Feedback from young people in transition (Bloomer, B and Hodkinson, P, 1997; Ball et al, 1999 and Moore, D, 2008) suggests that:

● they do not necessarily have clear goals; and

● career plans can change for a variety of reasons.

Young people may not have acquired adequate career management skills or understanding of other options to be able to move forward quickly if their initial career aim does not work out. In some cases their perceptions may be based on inaccurate information (for example from the views of family or peers), or they may have a poor recollection of career information and discussions from months earlier.

The challenges RPA is likely to pose, which impact on CLIAG delivered by 14-19 partners, include:

● how to help learners navigate around the additional work-based learning options available, assuming these can be developed;

● how to engage unmotivated young people who do not want to be in learning and mitigate any negative impact on the retention and achievement of others;

● how to work effectively with partners, including providers, local authorities and Connexions, to identify responsibilities for following up and tracking young people who change their minds and do not enrol or withdraw; and

- developing ways of engaging learners more quickly in learning: for example,

  - enabling participation in a number of more in-depth and realistic taster experiences to help them reach informed decisions about their next steps;
  - considering how the curriculum can be made more flexible and attractive with more frequent course start dates so that young people do not have long waits before beginning a programme;
  - helping them manage career exploration more effectively and become better career planners and developers; and
  - providing adequate post-exit CLIAG and results services, an example of which would be the Guidance Until You No Longer require Us (GURU) service provided by Lewisham College, (LSC, 2006) needed in this context to support those under 19 who withdraw, or leave after AS level or one-year FE courses, whose plans or anticipated destinations change.

Young people under 19 and their parents will need to know what their responsibilities are in relation to proactive involvement in seeking other learning options, who can assist in this and where to go for help.

As young people move towards adulthood, they face a range of challenges which require them to make difficult life and learning choices. They need help to understand their options and to make informed decisions, especially as we increase the range of learning options available to young people. It will be even more important after we have raised the participation age as we know that learners who receive good quality IAG are less likely to drop out of learning or change course after they turn 16.

The Children's Plan (DCSF, 2007c)

3.4   Equality and diversity

The work of colleges is fundamental to many of our ambitions across Government. You will be an important part of our agenda to make Britain a fairer and better society. Improving social mobility is a key ambition for us.

John Denham, address to the Association of Colleges (AoC), November 2008

The Ofsted consultation on new proposals for the further education and skills system inspections (Ofsted, 2008a) indicates that it intends to:

ensure that the colleges and providers which we inspect meet the needs of all learners through effective promotion of equality, diversity and social inclusion.

It is intended to have a

focus on whether particular groups of learners are achieving as well as they should, including the most able and those, whose circumstances make them vulnerable. We will specifically judge how well a college or provider fulfils its duties in terms of equality and diversity and the impact on learner achievements.

Within leadership and management, it is proposed that the effectiveness of the provider in "promoting equality and diversity", in tackling "unlawful and unfair discrimination" and in "closing the achievement gap" are evaluated.

3.4.1 Raising aspirations

How much talent that could flourish is lost through a poverty of aspiration: wasted not because young talents fail to reach the stars but because they grow up with no stars to reach for?

Gordon Brown, speech to the Labour Party Conference 2007

High expectations and aspirations are a common feature of outstanding colleges.

Ofsted Annual Report 2008. Talisman, November 2008, Vol. 71

A range of government policy for example set out in *Youth Matters* (DfES, 2005a), *The Children's Plan* (DCSF, 2007c) and elsewhere is concerned with ensuring that young people become active citizens and have high aspirations. In order for the UK to remain competitive, two-thirds of the workforce will need to be qualified at higher education level by 2020 (Leitch, 2006). Increasing participation in higher education towards 50 % of those aged 18 to 30 by 2010 is a government public service target, and includes to "make significant progress year-on-year towards fair access". Participation in higher education from the bottom social classes has risen to only 19 % compared with 43 % from higher social classes.

A study into the *Influence of CEG upon pupils in year 11* (SWA Consulting, 1998) found that when the quality of careers advice is poor it has a particularly negative impact on students from less prosperous backgrounds. They will also be less likely to access informed IAG from within their communities, including their peers or families.

The research into participation from disadvantaged communities in higher education, (Sutton Trust, 2008) concluded that:

Young people have high aspirations towards higher education, but these are not always realised. There are variations by social class, with students from poorer backgrounds being less likely to think of higher education as a natural next step, particularly certain selective courses and universities, even when they have high enough exam grades. Attitudes are affected by parents and peer groups, with poorer students less likely to access the personal and social networks that can offer support and advice on university progression.

A major difference revealed is that the average number of applications to Russell Group universities from further education colleges is significantly lower than for other types of schools and colleges, given similar average attainment of pupils.

Good quality advice and guidance are particularly important in supporting the higher education aspirations of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. However, at least half (and some times more) of the support currently given is judged inadequate, and can be poorly timed and partial. There is a need for particular support at certain key points, such as age 14 and 16, so that young people can realise the implications of certain choices on their subsequent higher education prospects. There is also a lack of specialist guidance to help youngsters negotiate the very many – and increasingly complex – pathways open to them.

Decisions made at 14 and 16 are clearly critical in determining future HE choices and career paths. The evidence would suggest that learners and their parents or guardians, whose family members have not been to HE, are likely to need good quality, motivational and personalised CLIAG and support to navigate complicated HE admissions processes, as well as a flexible curriculum, to reach their potential. There is an increasing expectation of the support that parents should provide, as indicated in *The Children's Plan* (DCSF, 2007c).

The Government needs to help parents to understand the new options becoming available, including new entitlements to Diplomas and Apprenticeships, and make sure that they are able to offer advice in a system that will have changed considerably since they were at school and college. As we raise the participation age, young people themselves will be responsible for participating, but parents will be expected to provide support and assistance.

(It should also be noted that unrealistic expectations, particularly on the part of parents and extended families, where a student's attainment is not going to suffice to meet the anticipated career goal, may also damage their career prospects where there is a refusal to consider any other options, and there is no plan B. Such situations require careful and skilled handling by careers professionals.)

Government focus on disadvantaged groups such as 'looked after' young people and teenage parents has been encouraging greater access to FE for these groups and impacting on the learner profile, requiring partnership working to support them. *Care Matters; Time for Change* (DfES, 2007) encouraged local authorities to develop both:

● employment opportunities with training for young people in care; and

● targeted assistance to help them make a successful transition, including for those in education, or wishing to return to it, enabling them to access the support offered by a personal adviser until the age of 25.

> However, some children in care will require extra guidance and support …
> High quality information, advice and guidance (IAG) forms an important part of this support, enabling children in care to decide what to study and understand what impact different choices might have on their future. This will include helping young people to experience the range of options before they have to make a choice.

Teenage Parents: next steps (DCSF, 2007b) contained a number of measures to be taken by learning providers to ensure teenage parents return to, and succeed in, learning. For example, these included the development of a range of appropriate courses including tasters, which would also allow them to try out the childcare provision on site.

3.4.2 Challenging preconceptions and stereotyping

The *Report of the End to End Review of Careers Education and Guidance* (DfES, 2005) reported that the findings from research were reinforced by young people during the review process.

> Some students, especially those aged 16 and over, reported that the advice they had been given was sometimes stereotyped and not always impartial.

Modern Apprenticeships, a formal investigation undertaken for the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) in 2004/05 revealed the continued extent of gender segregation (EOC, 2005). It also identified a number of features of CLIAG delivery, which tended to reinforce traditional choices, including:

● the tendency of advisers to have arts backgrounds, so less familiarity with science subjects;

● software programmes that reinforce gender stereotypes; and

- the 'freedom of choice' practice model, which may not sufficiently challenge chosen career goals.

The *Jobs for the Girls* report (House of Commons Trade and Industry Committee, 2005) focused on four elements that contribute to occupational segregation: lack of knowledge about career options; difficulties in accessing training; hostile business cultures; and the lack of availability of part-time or flexible working in high-paid occupations.

There is an expectation that CLIAG provision will address social and cultural stereotyping, discussed in Youth Matters (DfES, 2005a) and the 2006 and 2007 reports produced by the DfES and the Women and Work Commission. It is also specified within the new IAG standards (DCSF, 2007) that:

Information, advice and guidance services will promote equality of opportunity, celebrate diversity and challenge stereotypes.

The Women and Work Commission report, *Shaping a Fairer Future,* noted:

Girls need a better understanding of the world of work, to experience working in jobs traditionally done by men, and more and better careers information, advice and guidance. Education and training, particularly in those vocational subjects mainly taken up by boys, should be made more accessible and appealing to girls. We believe that if girls are made more aware of the consequences of their choices for their future pay and career progression they might make different choices.

Women and Work Commission, 2006

The *Government Action Plan to implement the Women in Work Commission Recommendations* (DCLG, 2006) stated that improvements to CLIAG were key to "breaking down gender stereotypes and changing the gender make-up and culture of workplaces in the longer term". It identified a number of actions to take relating to CLIAG, including:

- the development of case studies to encourage young people "to consider, and raise their aspirations in pursuing, non-stereotypical Pathways", and a planned programme of CEG from year 7 to year 11.

Towards a Fairer Future, a review of the progress made on the action plan, concluded:

Careers advisers, parents and educational practitioners have a key role in shaping the perceptions of young people. Challenging gender-stereotypes in careers advice and guidance is crucial in giving girls and boys an informed choice.

Women and Work Commission, 2007

The 2006 progress report of the original *Free to Choose* report identified a number of actions the DfES was piloting in schools to address the concerns cited, which were:

- developing "non-traditional tasters for young people to try out different vocational options before making choices at 14, with equality guidance for delivery of Young Apprenticeships that open up choices", and "models of careers advice, information and guidance on wider choices that best deliver for girls and boys"; and

- "reviewing work experience placements and guidance";

Using new LSC data, *Free to Choose* reported that the number of women entering non-traditional apprenticeships was increasing. However, the report published by the educational charity, Edge, in July 2008, indicated a low take up of apprenticeships by black and minority ethnic learners and that women still continue to make up less than 3% of those achieving apprenticeships in construction and engineering.

A study for the EOC into the ways in which advice and guidance could open up opportunities (Rolfe, H and Nadeem, S, 2007) noted the lack of research into how CLIAG services are expanding opportunities for young people, particularly in FE and WBL. Clearly the challenging of stereotypes and encouraging exploration of non-traditional careers need to be begin before learners reach 16 – and arguably in primary education. However, given the frequently crucial nature of decisions on vocational options on entry to the FE sector, it behoves providers to review with 14-19 partners whether sufficient is being done to ensure this is so, and:

- if more programme and work experience placements need to be provided to enable young people to taste atypical subject areas;

- whether information or advice provided by staff, including support staff, for example by telephone, is reinforcing gender stereotyping;

- the impact of self-directed and self-managed IAG, for example using web-based services or informal sources of guidance on decisions; and

- whether CLIAG processes needs to be reviewed, particularly the content of the career learning delivered and materials used to deliver it; and

how opportunities can be opened up through one-to-one guidance, particularly how it can build on ideas raised by the client and introduces non-traditional options with sensitivity.

Rolfe, H and Nadeem, S, 2007

Services could benefit from a stronger recognition of the role that CEG might play in reducing occupational segregation by gender. Equality objectives could be made more central to the work of careers guidance practitioners, so that they inform the service in general and the day-to-day practice.

Rolfe, H and Nadeem, S, 2007

Careers education at all levels should contain clear messages about challenging stereotypes and changing working lives through use of accurate and up to date LMI.

Rolfe, H and Nadeem, S, 2007

A brief overview of gender stereotyping and implications for CLIAG can be found in *Challenging Stereotyping*. (Barnes, A, 2008).

There is some evidence to support a more personalised and differentiated approach to CLIAG, which takes greater account of individual preferences in ways of engaging in career learning.

● The Institute of Education (IOE) review (Moon et al, 2004) identified that gender may be an important issue in career-decision making in two respects:

  – evidence from the US that students' aspirations may be based on gender stereotyping; and
  – the possibility that boys and girls make different use of careers resources.

Further research is needed to explore students' gender-based perceptions of particular careers.

● Based on case study visits to 14 schools, five FE colleges and three sixth-form colleges in England, which included interviews with 165 students and 47 parents, Blenkinsop et al (2006) found that young people have different mindsets, and need to be supported by impartial CEG in a variety of ways.

● In a study into the influence of CEG on year 11 pupils, SWA Consulting, (1998), reported that progress towards decision-making and decidedness on post-16 options was greater among female than male pupils.

According to Lloyd (2002), this presents guidance practitioners in general and those working with underachieving males in particular with a challenge. Lloyd suggests that a gendered set of attitudes towards masculinity could make it harder for young men to admit that they do not know what they want to do. These attitudes could also mediate young men's experiences of CEIAG and the perceived benefits, which in turn will impact upon the effectiveness of CEIAG for these groups if it is not taken into account.

3.5   Developing the learner voice

The learner voice is central to the government's reform of the public services, requiring them to become more responsive to stakeholders' and users' views and needs, and empowering them to co-design services. This will demand more attention to be paid to the interaction between users and services to promote improvement. There is an expectation that providers will take account of, and act on, users' views. New guidance was issued to the sector in September 2008 by DIUS, (2008b) – *Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances: Giving Learners and Employers a Say* – which requires providers to be proactive in seeking the views of learners, potential learners and employers in relation to decisions affecting them. This also states that:

> FEIs will want to consider consultation with communities in their area which are under-represented within the college or who fail to thrive and succeed at the level of their peers, to explore the real or perceived barriers to engaging successfully in learning.

The collection and use of client and stakeholder perspectives for service improvement has always been a core part of the **matrix** IAG award, launched in 2002, which many staff delivering CLIAG in the sector have embedded into their systems. Many will also have been involved in the development and implementation of the organisation's learner involvement strategy. Impartiality and client-centredness should be at the heart of good CLIAG, and this places those advising learners in a central position to collect valuable feedback from them about the services they are using. As members of an agency, independent from the provider, Connexions PAs are also well placed to collect accurate and considered perspectives, and the agency also has experience in co-designing services.

In *Work-related learning: hearing students' voices* (Educational Action Research, 2008) Hopkins argues that through accessing the voice of disaffected and marginalised students, insight can be gained into what these students see as being the benefits of WRL programmes, and the features that act as key levers and barriers to successful WRL. In addition to involving learners in the design of the CLIAG services, IAG staff can support the development of the learner voice by:

- feeding back the views and issues from learners and potential learners at all stages of the learner pathway, including from:

    - outreach activities with communities which are under-represented or from young people not in education, employment or training (Neet);
    - applicants, and those considering becoming students, and their parents;
    - learners on programme who are referred or refer themselves because they are considering withdrawal;
    - student liaison officers capturing feedback from individuals and at the classroom level; and

- learners who have left, such as at a results service interview, on their experience of the learning received, and the extent to which the provider has prepared them for further learning and enhanced their employability and career opportunities

which will require a systematic approach to the collection, recording and feeding back of intelligence;

- linking into a range of community groups to ensure that consultations are representative and inclusive, as required by the guidance from DIUS (2006b); and

- gathering intelligence about the appropriateness of the curriculum offer and about barriers which prevent participation, and which can thus make a valuable contribution to curriculum development. They will also hold information about what learners are planning to study next, which can inform the curriculum, and is particularly pertinent for curriculum planning across 14-19 partnerships.

Skilled staff will have developed competencies in enabling and advocacy, which can be harnessed to develop a learner voice culture across the organisation, and empower learners to offer their views. This might include:

- activities to develop learners to contribute to service improvement;

- Connexions PAs supporting individuals in giving their views at learners' fora and similar; and

- supporting learners to feed back on specific issues by increasing their confidence, or advocating on their behalf. Stanton (2008) argues the need for those responsible for information, advice and guidance to be empowered to speak on behalf of the learner as part of a more learner-centred approach; and

- drawing on their expertise to develop new structures and systems to empower learners to initiate discussions.

4.   Conclusion

Whilst there is a paucity of recent published research in the FE sector into the impact of CLIAG, there are indicative findings of the benefits of effective CLIAG in supporting recruitment, retention, engagement, motivation, achievement and progression. Evidence from other settings where CLIAG is delivered supports these findings. There is a larger body of evidence indicating an association between effective CLIAG and retention, and the contribution of realistic taster experiences to making informed decisions is recognised by providers, learners and the government.

The research would suggest that:

- many individual providers in the FE sector, recognising an association between the quality of the CLIAG and learner success rates, have taken steps to enhance the quality of the CLIAG;

- however, deficiencies in the scope, breadth, impartiality and coherence of this for young people undertaking transitions between 14-19 persist.

In particular some young people have not been accessing CLIAG early enough, nor is it broad enough to cover the full range of learning pathways open to them.

The association between the effective delivery of CLIAG and:

- its impact on success factors; and

- centrality to meeting provider and government agendas;

indicates that **Career Learning, Information, Advice and Guidance is a significant leadership issue.**

There is a danger that marking out curriculum paths at an earlier age will reduce the breadth of career options available to individuals. Young people's career awareness and understanding develops over a period of time – some may still not have clear career goals in higher education.

Whilst effective work and career-related learning at an early enough stage is important to develop these, so is a process which does not assume that early choices are final, but that challenges and confirms these, or not, and ensures that alternative routes can be taken. Learners need opportunities to broaden out and explore a range of options before narrowing these prior to entry on to vocational programmes, be these in the FE sector or in higher education.

Findings from research into the impact of CLIAG have identified the importance of developing career-related skills. The complexity of choice is also reinforcing the need for young people to become effective career planners and developers. In particular, they need to become discerning and effective users of the plethora of unmediated career-related information and services available through the internet, and have the skills to make judgements about quality, currency, comprehensiveness and bias. Learners need to be supported through a career learning process, which will develop these skills. The importance accorded by learners to the informal IAG they receive from peers also supports the argument for developing an individual's career competencies.

A 'one size' approach to CLIAG does not fit with the needs of learners in an era of personalised learning, and does not reflect the principles being considered in the new refreshed improvement strategy. Providers need to review the existing CLIAG provision and consider how this can be harnessed and enhanced to:

● ensure that the delivery of CLIAG is informed by the National 11-19 Careers Framework;

● review, and, where needed, introduce processes to check for inconsistencies in subject or programme choices against stated career goals;

● where necessary, map the provision of CLIAG to ensure that all groups are covered;

● move from a potentially passive model of delivering information, advice and guidance to a more pro-active model of career coaching and mentoring to develop career competencies and enhance learners' capacity to manage their own careers;

● use CLIAG activities to develop intrinsic motivation and raise aspirations;

● harness the influence of informal guidance provided by peers and others;

● link career checks and reviews to individual progression reviews, and ensure that longer term career goals are checked in subject choice discussions;

● provide more personalised career learning and advice to learners based on a blended process combining a range of activities, including learner research; and

● help them reach really well-informed decisions, which include consideration of a broader range of career possibilities;

● understand the links between skills development and career opportunities and how their skills are transferable to other contexts – so not just a plan A – but a plan B, C and D!

This requires schools, colleges and work-based learning providers to work effectively in partnership to:

- review the provision of CLIAG and effectiveness for the new 14-19 arrangements, including CLIAG provision to support young people in transition and arrangements to ensure staff are trained for the roles they are expected to fulfil;

- ensure that young people and their parents or guardians are enabled to access sufficiently detailed information about the range of subjects and options available at an early enough stage to allow them time to explore these – and so reduce those arriving late or having to accept second or third choices;

- introduce interventions to broaden career choices and challenge those already made, through realistic experiences of the world of work, including taster days, trial programmes, etc; and

- provide support if young people want to change direction.

In conclusion, the evidence supports the place effective CLIAG has in supporting young people. In particular, it can help them choose the right course, support and motivate them to complete and achieve, and help them to progress. It can also help those in danger of dropping out or who have chosen the wrong course or programme. In addition, it can contribute to a range of other issues that concern leaders in the sector such as equality and diversity and Ofsted inspections. However, to be effective it needs to be planned, reviewed and developed, adequately resourced and delivered by staff who are suitably trained and supported.

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Learning and Skills Improvement Service

The Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) came into operation on 1 October 2008.

Combining the best aspects of two different and highly successful sector bodies – the Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL) and the Quality Improvement Agency (QIA) – LSIS works closely with the sector, as its key partner, to focus on learners and on supporting excellence, sustainable provision and self-regulation in the further education and skills sector. Leadership development underpins and forms an important part of the organisation's strategic role in the sector.

LSIS was established after consultations with sector leaders identified a strong desire for an organisation that would be sector-led. As a sector-owned public body, LSIS is owned, directed and governed by further education and skills colleges and providers – the first time that this vibrant sector's talent is being harnessed to participate in this way.

LSIS continues to consult with the sector about its priorities and remit. While this is taking place, the activities and services of the former CEL and QIA organisations continue under LSIS branding; more information about the range of activities is available on their websites at www.centreforexcellence.org.uk and www.qia.org.uk.

Disability equality policy

LSIS is committed to promoting equality for disabled people and we strive to ensure that all our communication and learning materials are available in various formats, including large font, audio or braille. Please let us know if you consider yourself disabled and require reasonable adjustments made to support you.

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