

# Careers Coordinators in Schools

Working Papers

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Counselling



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# *Careers Coordinators in Schools Working Papers*

## *Accredited Continuing Professional Development / Qualifications for Careers Coordinators*

### *1. The Supply Side*

### *2. The Perspective of Connexions, Local Authorities and Careers Companies*

### *3. Recommendations from Current Providers and Information, Advice and Guidance Services*

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# 1. Working Paper 1 - The Supply Side

## 1.1 Introduction

This paper has been written as part of a project, commissioned by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), to inform the development of a national professional qualification for careers co-ordinators in schools. It describes the current provision of qualifications for careers co-ordinators in England and draws on information in the *Directory of Professional Qualifications for Careers Education and Guidance in England*, published jointly by the DCSF's Support Programme for Careers Education and IAG and the Association for Careers Education and Guidance (ACEG) and updated annually.<sup>1</sup> The paper has been updated with further information collected through interviews with each of the providers.

The paper should be read alongside Working Paper 2, which provides a summary of the perspectives from Connexions partnerships, local authorities and careers companies that choose to support, or not to support, careers co-ordinators to participate in the courses and programmes described here.

## 1.2 Providers

There are currently eight awarding bodies providing qualifications for careers co-ordinators in schools: six are higher education institutions (HEIs) and the other two are the National Open College Network (NOCN) and OCR. The universities are located in five of the nine Government Office regions of England.

## 1.3 Awards

The HEIs offer a range of awards from certificates and diplomas to a Masters degree. NOCN offers a Level 3 certificate and OCR offers an NVQ at Level 4. A full list of the awards and course titles can be found in Appendix A of this paper.

Most of the qualifications offered by the HEIs are certificates or diplomas at undergraduate level, some are certificates at postgraduate level and one is a Masters course. The certificates and diplomas are usually taken as free-standing qualifications but those at undergraduate level offer progression to Masters programmes and those at postgraduate level offer part exemption from Masters programmes. The courses were set up originally either following an approach to the HEI by a local careers service, or consortium of careers services, or in response to the publication in 1991, by the then DES, of the open learning pack *Careers Work*. Only one of the HEIs offers a Masters course: a second offered a Masters course until recently but the programme did not recruit sufficient numbers for the university to consider it a viable programme.

The NVQ Level 4 offered by OCR has its origins in the *National Occupational Standards for Careers Education and Guidance in Schools and Colleges*, published by the then DfEE in 1999. OCR was funded to offer a pilot NVQ in co-ordinating CEG, based on these standards. The free standing NVQ did not survive the pilot phase but OCR continues to offer optional modules relating to CEG within its Advice and Guidance NVQ at Level 4, allowing candidates to pursue a specialist CEG route through the qualification. In practice, however, only a small minority of the many NVQ centres for the Advice and Guidance qualifications offer the CEG specialist pathway. The NOCN Level 3 Certificate is a more recent initiative developed by a local authority Connexions service and 14-19 partnership, when the diploma course

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<sup>1</sup> The edition used as a source of information for this paper is the fourth revision, published in September 2008

previously offered in the region was discontinued. The candidates include school careers co-ordinators but the course recruits a wider range of participants involved in IAG for young people.

All the awards listed in this paper are currently available to school careers co-ordinators. In addition there are postgraduate courses in Career Studies offered by several universities but there is no evidence that careers co-ordinators from schools take up places on these Masters and doctorate programmes. In the past year at least two colleges have developed Foundation Degrees in IAG but the courses have not yet started. A further development is a new continuing professional development (CPD) Certificate (equivalent to 15 credits, or one unit, at Masters level) being set up at London South Bank University for teachers and advisers providing IAG on higher education to young people.

## **1.4 Participants**

Most of the qualifications were established originally to meet the needs of qualified teachers who had been appointed to the role of careers co-ordinator. They have been developed over time, in response to demands from participants and course funders, and they all now recruit a range of CEG practitioners. The majority of participants on the certificate and diploma courses offered by the HEIs are still careers co-ordinators but not all are teachers: a growing number of schools are appointing to the role of careers co-ordinator individuals from professional backgrounds other than teaching. In addition to careers co-ordinators the participants now also include other teachers and tutors involved in aspects of careers education and IAG.

Staff from maintained mainstream secondary schools comprise the majority of course participants but each of the courses is open also to staff from special schools, PRUs, independent schools and FE colleges. One university offers a certificate course targeted specifically at careers co-ordinators in special schools and units but this only recruits once every four or five years due to the smaller number of special schools. Other HEIs report that careers co-ordinators working in special schools find that they can benefit from attending courses where staff from mainstream schools form the majority of the group, provided that the tutors provide examples of practice that help them to relate the course content to their particular work context. This is, however, more challenging for careers co-ordinators working in schools for pupils with severe, or profound and multiple, learning difficulties. Two HEIs offer a particular programme for staff from independent schools. Some of the courses also recruit personal advisers, youth workers and staff from work-based training providers, alongside participants from schools and colleges.

Very few school careers co-ordinators apply for places on the one existing Masters course: most of the participants work in further or higher education.

It is difficult to obtain information on participants on the NVQ Level 4 specialist CEG pathway but providers report that it is not a popular qualification for teachers as they already hold a higher level qualification and cannot see the value of the NVQ in relation to their own career advancement. Providers report more interest from 'non-teachers', particularly those who are not graduates.

## **1.5 Models of delivery**

The qualifications currently offered by HEIs differ quite significantly in terms of how they are delivered. Some are taught courses, with sessions provided at the university and at regional centres convenient to the course participants, delivered by the university's tutors, local Connexions advisers or a partnership of the two. Others can be delivered entirely through e-learning, or distance-learning, or by e-learning and distance learning supported by group

tutorials at regional venues. The NVQ Level 4 is a work-based qualification but the programme can include workshop sessions. The NOCN Level 3 Certificate is a five-day taught course.

Some HEIs have developed more IT-based approaches in recent years but acknowledge that participants need help with managing distance learning.

Providers employ a variety of methods to identify participants' training needs, including: pre-course discussions; induction interviews; completing a training needs analysis proforma; end of module reviews. All the qualifications are designed as part-time courses but the length of time normally taken to complete the certificates and diplomas varies from a few months to two years, and the Masters programme can take up to six years to complete.

## **1.6 Content**

Although each of the qualifications has been developed separately, over different periods of time, and each has evolved further in response to participants' CPD needs and funders' demands, the content of the different programmes is very similar. The elements covered tend to include:

- scope, nature and purpose of CEG
- managing careers information
- introduction to careers guidance
- planning careers education in the curriculum
- work-related learning
- CEG and SEN / LDD
- leading and managing CEG.

Providers report several examples of how the course content has changed in recent years. For example, one HEI has introduced a new session on the basic principles of lesson planning, to meet the needs of the increasing number of participants who are not qualified teachers. Another has replaced previous modules on links with work-related learning and with PSHE, with a more generic module on curriculum integration in the hope that it will not date so quickly. This same HEI has also introduced an independent study module.

In 2004 all of the providers of qualifications for CEG worked together, under the leadership of the then DfES's Careers Education Support Programme, to develop a voluntary National Framework for Professional Qualifications in Careers Education and Guidance in England. Each provider was then encouraged to review their qualifications against the framework. When asked, most providers said either that they had not reviewed their programmes against the framework or that they had, but had then made few changes. One provider reported that it had made some minor changes as a result of the review, but acknowledged that the course still had some gaps in relation to the recommended content. The framework was updated in October 2008, principally to reflect changes in the policy context for IAG and careers education.

Providers identified gaps in the current courses in relation to how well they meet, or do not meet, the training needs of careers co-ordinators in schools. Several mentioned that only a small amount of course time is devoted to guidance skills, but school staff are taking on more individual guidance work with young people. One HEI said that it offered nothing on classroom management skills, yet many of the participants were in roles where they were expected to teach careers education lessons even though they had no teacher training. The Connexions service offering the NOCN certificate in IAG said that the course included nothing on the skills of leading and managing IAG and careers education in schools.

## **1.7 Assessment**

The certificate and diploma qualifications offered by HEIs are assessed through the completion of written assignments, where candidates are required to relate their studies to practice. The number and length of assignments varies depending on the requirements of the individual universities. Some qualifications require just one assignment for the whole course, while others require one for each module and the length varies from 2,000 to 4,000 words. The Masters qualification requires an independent study of 15,000 words, plus a 2,500 - 3,000 word essay or reflective practice journal for each module.

The NVQ 4 offered by OCR requires candidates to assemble portfolios of evidence of competence in the workplace.

Interviewees reported that the majority of participants complete the qualification. The most common reasons given for not completing are said to be personal problems or pressure of time due to the demands of their job. A few candidates in HEIs were thought not to be up to the demands of the academic work required while those candidates following a course assessed through work-based assessment were said sometimes to lack opportunities to demonstrate the necessary competencies. Furthermore, course participants often reported finding e-learning more demanding on their time than they thought initially.

## **1.8 Entry requirements**

For some of the certificate and diploma qualifications, no entry requirements are specified, while others require candidates to present evidence of their ability to study at undergraduate level. The Masters course requires candidates to be graduates. The NVQ 4 and the NOCN certificate have no entry requirements.

## **1.9 Access**

With one exception identified earlier, all the courses are offered annually. Several of the qualifications, particularly those provided through e-learning, distance learning, and work-based assessment, are open to individuals from across England. Others, which require attendance at taught sessions, are limited to individuals who can travel to the university or regional centre. Therefore, in theory at least, all careers co-ordinators have access to qualifications provided through e-learning, distance learning or work-based assessment, but qualifications delivered as taught programmes are only available to careers co-ordinators in localities where a university provides such a course or where their local authority, Connexions service or careers company has worked with a university from another region to deliver the course locally (examples of the latter arrangement include Nottingham Trent University providing courses in partnership with several Connexions services in the North West and Canterbury Christ Church University offering programmes in parts of the West Midlands). At present, taught courses are available in the following regions: North East; North West; East Midlands; East of England; West Midlands; South East. There is no equivalent provision in Yorkshire & Humber, London or South West.



## 1.10 Funding

When the courses described in this paper were first established, they were often funded centrally by the organisation that initiated the development of the course, namely the local authority, careers service or, in a couple of more recent examples, the local LSC. In relation to possible developments in the future, it is worth noting that none of the existing courses was set up on the initiative of the HEI or other awarding body, and from within its own resources: all were initiated by an approach, accompanied by financial support, from another organisation. Today, many Connexions services and local authorities continue to fund participants on the courses but only a minority extend this financial support to include the full course fees and supply cover. The most common arrangement is that the Connexions service or local authority pays all, or some, of the course fees and the school pays for the cover and, possibly, part of the fees. There are some courses where the schools, or the individuals themselves, pay the full course fees.

## 1.11 Course numbers

Data provided by HEIs, with a couple of exceptions that both offer taught courses, indicate that numbers of participants are falling. Reduced budgets for in-service training in Connexions services are given as one possible reason. Providers also refer to schools being less willing to release individuals to attend courses. This is undoubtedly a problem across all in-service training for teachers, but the figures indicate that recruitment levels are higher for taught courses than for those that are delivered through distance-learning. In addition, the figures show that a larger proportion of participants are now not teachers and so do not have subject teaching commitments during the school day. This may mean that it is easier for them to obtain release from school.

Precise data is not available but it is estimated that no more than 100 school careers co-ordinators were participating in accredited courses in the year 2007-08.

## 1.12 Developments

When asked what developments they were currently considering, providers identified three broad areas: introducing awards at a **different level** (one HEI is thinking about introducing a Masters course); adding to the **course content** (several said that they planned to include more work on guidance skills); and / or moving towards using more **distance learning**, while recognising that they would need also to build in more support for participants (but see Section 2.6 in Paper 2).

## 1.13 Response to proposed new national qualification

All the providers expressed a positive interest in offering a nationally-recognised qualification for careers co-ordinators. The five HEIs that currently provide certificate and diploma courses targeted principally at careers co-ordinators said they would probably offer the proposed new qualification in place of their existing courses, although they would reserve a final decision until after they had seen the specification for the new qualification. OCR was equally keen as it recognised the need for a professional qualification for careers co-ordinators and that the existing specialist CEG pathway through the NVQ4 in Advice and Guidance is not meeting that need. Both the Tutoring for Transition course offered by Connexions Northumberland, with accreditation from Northumbria University, and the NOCN Certificate offered by County Durham Connexions are targeted at different audiences (lead tutors in schools and the wider IAG workforce respectively) so they would envisage supporting the new qualification alongside their existing programmes. Similarly, the University of Derby would want to continue its Masters programme alongside the new qualification.

Several providers mentioned the need for start-up funding to support the development of a new qualification and indicated that setting up a course would take six to nine months if it involved adapting an existing programme and up to 12 months if they had to gain approval for a new course. They all made recommendations about the proposed new professional qualification for school careers co-ordinators and these are reported in Working Paper 3, together with the suggestions collected from a sample of Connexions partnerships, local authorities and careers companies that currently support, or have supported, careers co-ordinators on accredited courses.

## **2. Working Paper 2 - The Perspective of Connexions, Local Authorities and Careers Companies**

### **2.1. Introduction**

This paper has been written as part of a project, commissioned by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), to inform the development of a national professional qualification for careers co-ordinators in schools. It provides a summary of the perspectives from a range of Connexions partnerships, local authorities and careers companies that choose to support, or not to support, careers co-ordinators to participate in the courses and programmes that lead to the professional qualifications currently available. The findings reported here are based on 18 telephone interviews: the list of organisations in the sample can be found in Appendix A.

The paper should be read alongside Working Paper 1, which describes the current provision of qualifications for careers co-ordinators in England.

### **2.2 Factors when choosing qualifications to support**

Historically careers services provided programmes of in-service training for school and college staff involved in careers education and guidance, and this support was continued by Connexions partnerships. A recent survey<sup>2</sup> has found that, now that local authorities have responsibility for IAG services, most areas still offer curriculum support and training for school staff. Many, but not all, include accredited courses and programmes leading to qualifications within their continued professional development (CPD) offer.

The main factor that determines which qualification the local authorities support is the availability of courses in the local area. Indeed the course was often established initially through a partnership between several local authority careers services and a local higher education institution (HEI). Other factors taken into account include: the learning approach, for example, whether the course is a taught programme or delivered through distance-learning; the quality of teaching; and the relevance of the course to the role of careers co-ordinators in schools.

### **2.3 Involvement in planning and review**

Connexions partnerships, local authorities or careers companies reported that they rarely limit their involvement to purchasing places on courses for careers co-ordinators or promoting the opportunity to participants. They noted that they are actively engaged in planning the programmes and keeping them under review. For example, development advisers and training managers from organisations in the East Midlands and the North West regions that use the Diploma in Careers Education provided by Nottingham Trent University meet with the university's tutors at three programme committees each year, two of which are combined with the examination board meeting. In addition they have further regional meetings and contribute to writing groups for new, or revised, course modules. A similar arrangement exists in the East of England region, where the education services managers meet once a term with the tutor from the University of Cambridge to review and plan the programme of Certificate courses.

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<sup>2</sup> Watts, A.G., McGowan, A. & Andrews, D. (in press) *Local Variations: a follow-up study of new arrangements for Connexions/careers/IAG services for young people in England*. Reading: CfBT Education Trust

## 2.4 Involvement in delivery

The partnership between the course providers and the Connexions partnerships, local authorities and careers companies extends beyond planning and reviewing the qualifications to contributing to the teaching. Personnel from the IAG services teach some modules, lead local days or tutor particular sessions. In addition they provide support to individual participants and, where the course is provided through distance or open learning, they often facilitate local tutorial groups.

## 2.5 Supporting careers co-ordinators to gain qualifications

Many Connexions partnerships, local authorities and careers companies support careers co-ordinators in schools to gain a professional qualification. Once the careers co-ordinators are registered on the course the support is through the means outlined in Section 2.3, but the organisations interviewed said that they put considerable effort into enabling careers co-ordinators to get on to the courses. They reported that they promote actively the qualifications through a range of approaches, including mailing details of the courses and qualifications to careers co-ordinators, headteachers and senior leaders with responsibility for CPD in schools. They said that they also arrange personal meetings with individual careers co-ordinators whom they think would benefit from the courses and arrange information briefings about the courses. They may also work through the personal advisers linked to the school, to promote the courses to the careers co-ordinators with whom they work.

Most of the IAG services that support careers co-ordinators on accredited courses offer financial assistance. The majority pay the course fees or a significant contribution towards them that the school then matches. There are a few that used to pay the fees but do not do so now because their budgets for in-service training have been reduced. A minority also offer supply cover costs but this support is far less common than it was in the past, again because of smaller budgets. Of those services that do pay supply cover only some pay the full costs: others offer to cover the costs up to a maximum figure or pay part of the costs.

## 2.6 Changes in numbers and profile of participants

There does not appear to be any particular pattern to the numbers of school careers co-ordinators participating on the courses. Some services report an increase, due to a large turnover of staff as many experienced careers co-ordinators reach retirement age, while others report a decline in numbers coming forward and yet others say that numbers remain fairly consistent.

There are, however, clear changes in the **profile** of course participants. Fewer of the school careers co-ordinators now attending the courses are said to be qualified teachers and more appear to be from professional backgrounds other than teaching (for example, librarians and administrators). Further, although many course participants are employed in the traditional role of careers co-ordinators, there seem to be more and more participants for whom being the careers co-ordinator is only one part of a wider role, such as PSHEE co-ordinator, or who have been allocated only part of the role (they may, for example, be responsible for managing the careers library and arranging guidance interviews with personal advisers, but have no subject leadership responsibility for careers education in the curriculum). Several organisations said that they support their own personal advisers to gain the qualification, so that they can then support their schools to develop programmes of IAG and careers education.

## 2.7 Barriers to participation

The most commonly cited reason for careers co-ordinators not participating in courses leading to qualifications was the school not releasing individuals to attend the training sessions, particularly when careers education and guidance is not viewed as a high priority, or where the careers co-ordinator has other subject teaching responsibilities that are given a higher priority for CPD. The IAG services reported that making funding available for supply cover does not seem to be a big factor, not least because more careers co-ordinators are now not teachers and therefore do not need to be released from the classroom to attend courses.

Another factor reported as being significant is that teachers on the courses appear to suggest that accreditation is not a high priority. Careers co-ordinators say that they want to attend courses to help them with the role and to network with other careers co-ordinators, but those who are teachers are apparently not motivated by the accreditation: they already hold a graduate or postgraduate qualification. Some IAG services suggested that teachers might be more interested if the qualification was at Masters level. Associated with the lack of interest in accreditation are reports that careers co-ordinators claim not to have the time to compile portfolios of evidence for assessment, or to write essays, and that they might be more inclined to complete assignments linked to review and development work undertaken in their schools.

This issue of workload was not confined to teachers. On the one hand, careers co-ordinators who are not teachers, and particularly those who are also not graduates, appear to place a higher value on the qualification than teachers, according to the interviewees. However, it is reported that some participants do not complete courses because they cannot cope with the level of work required (see Paper 1, Section 2.6). This suggests that, in the future, there may need to be qualifications available at a range of levels.

Connexions Cumbria supports both careers co-ordinators from schools and its own personal advisers on the Nottingham Trent University diploma course. The personal advisers are given a study day to complete each of the assignments. The schools were informed of this arrangement and encouraged to make similar provision for careers co-ordinators participating in the course but, in practice, this did not happen.

Other reasons given as possible barriers to participation were:

- a lack of appropriate provision locally;
- the time period for completing the qualification being too long (18 months);
- the course being delivered through an approach (distance learning) that did not appeal to the teachers' preferred style of learning.

These findings are consistent with the reasons given for not supporting careers co-ordinators on accredited courses by those organisations that no longer provide such support, namely: no courses available in the local area; courses not at the appropriate level; teachers not being able to find time to complete the assessment requirements and not wanting the qualification; courses taking too long to complete; careers co-ordinators not being willing to travel for the twilight sessions. Other reasons for not supporting careers co-ordinators to gain qualifications included reduced budgets for CPD and/or the Connexions partnership not considering CPD for school staff a priority. Some local authorities also reported that collaboration between organisations had become more difficult and that this, in turn, had led to the closure of courses that had relied on participants attending from several different areas in order to achieve a viable group. One local authority said that the collaboration had ended some years ago, when the local authority careers services were privatised, while another

said it had ended more recently when the Connexions partnership was broken up into its five constituent local authorities.

## **2.8 CPD needs met**

The IAG services reported that, in general, the current courses meet the full range of CPD needs of careers co-ordinators in schools. The only exceptions are those courses that are not designed primarily for careers co-ordinators, such as the NOCN level 3 certificate in IAG that does not include sessions on the leadership and management of careers education in schools. There were a few concerns expressed about courses not always being able to respond quickly to changes in IAG and careers education policy and practice. Courses also need to respond to the changing profile of the participants. At the moment none include sessions on classroom management skills, even though a growing number of participants have had not teacher training yet are expected to teach careers education lessons.

## **2.9 The experience of careers co-ordinators from special schools**

With one exception, all the current courses are designed primarily for careers co-ordinators from mainstream schools, but are open to careers co-ordinators working in special schools and units. The IAG services report that careers co-ordinators from special schools are able to gain from the courses provided that tutors give examples that illustrate how the course content can be applied to the special education context. They also provide additional support to special school careers coordinators by offering individual consultancy and through local special educational needs network meetings.

### **3. Working Paper 3 - Recommendations from Current Providers and Information, Advice and Guidance Services**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This paper has been written as part of a project, commissioned by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), to inform the development of a national professional qualification for careers co-ordinators in schools. It provides a summary of recommendations about the proposed new qualification collected from all the providers of the accredited courses currently available and from a sample of Connexions partnerships, local authorities and careers companies that choose to support, or not to support, careers co-ordinators to participate in these programmes and to gain a professional qualification. The recommendations were gathered through a total of 29 telephone interviews.

The paper is the third in a series. Working Paper 1 describes the current provision of qualifications for careers co-ordinators in England and Working Paper 2 provides a summary of the perspectives of the sample of IAG services described above.

#### **3.2 Level of qualification**

The level at which the proposed qualification is to be offered is seen as a major factor in determining whether or not careers co-ordinators would consider registering for the award. Reported evidence suggests that while they are interested in participating in courses to help them fulfil the job, they are only likely to seek the qualification if it offers progression from qualifications they currently hold and is linked to their own future career advancement. For careers co-ordinators who are teachers, therefore, and for those who are not qualified teachers but are graduates, interviewees suggested that the new qualification should be part of a Masters degree programme or, at least, offer progression onto a Masters programme. This is seen as an increasingly important point now that all teachers are to be encouraged to gain a Masters in teaching and learning. For the growing number of careers co-ordinators who are not teachers and not graduates, interviewees proposed that the qualification should be offered at undergraduate level or NVQ level 3 and/or level 4. This suggests that the qualification should be offered at a range of levels to accommodate the fact that careers co-ordinators are now being recruited from a wider range of professional backgrounds and with a wider range of qualifications. They may also be looking ahead to a wider range of subsequent moves in their own careers. An earlier study<sup>3</sup> indicated that teachers in the role often look to moving into senior leadership roles in school or advisory and consultancy work. Anecdotal evidence indicates that some more recently appointed 'non-teachers' look to progressing onto teaching roles or training to become Connexions personal advisers.

#### **3.3 Models of delivery and programme structure**

The majority of the interviewees suggested that the qualification should be based on a taught programme, but that the course should not rely solely on participants being released to attend sessions during the school day. Attendance at taught sessions is seen as important in building a group identity among participants, providing direct and regular contact with course tutors and offering opportunities to share practice with other careers co-ordinators. Interviewees recommended that there should also be access to online support materials that would supplement the taught sessions and which could be completed by participants who cannot attend sessions. It should be noted, however, that almost a quarter of the interviewees suggested the alternative approach of e-learning plus local support groups.

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<sup>3</sup> Andrews, D. & Barnes, A (2003) 'Career Development of Careers Co-ordinators' in *Career Research and Development: the NICEC Journal* No.9 Summer 2003. Cambridge: NICEC

There was a unanimous view that the programme leading to the qualification should be designed as a framework of core and optional modules. This would accommodate the different CPD needs arising from the different ways in which schools now organise the role of careers co-ordinator. The optional modules could be associated with different aspects of the role and/or with co-ordinating careers education and IAG in different settings such as special schools and FE colleges.

A modular structure, it was believed, would also enable a wider range of individuals beyond careers co-ordinators alone to benefit from the provision. Interviewees suggested that other members of school staff involved in IAG and in careers education could participate in modules relevant to their particular roles and could possibly carry forward credits gained towards the full qualification at a later date.

Interviewees envisaged that participants could gain the qualification through an appropriate combination of free-standing modules but that these modules could be linked directly into a wider provision of CPD. Several interviewees suggested that the modules could be part of a common framework of CPD for guidance professionals and that it is timely to consider this option as the sector skills council for lifelong learning, Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK), is currently undertaking a review of qualifications and CPD for careers advisers. It is due to report in July 2009, soon after the completion of this current research project. By developing the qualifications for careers co-ordinators and personal advisers into a common framework, interviewees argued, individual careers co-ordinators and personal advisers might then be able to select pathways through the modules to reflect their particular needs. School careers co-ordinators involved in providing guidance interviews could take modules on guidance theory and practice and personal advisers involved in supporting schools to develop their programmes of careers education could take modules on curriculum planning. This approach, it was thought, would also enable more opportunities for careers co-ordinators and personal advisers to engage in CPD together, and this in turn could help to foster more effective partnership working in the delivery of IAG and careers education to young people. Other interviewees raised the possibility of linking the CPD modules for careers co-ordinators into a wider framework of CPD for co-ordinators of a range of components of what is now termed personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) in schools. One further advantage of adopting a modular structure is that it would be possible, in theory at least, for some of the modules to be integrated into programmes of Initial Teacher Training.

### **3.4 Programme content**

Interviewees recommended that the qualification should reflect the professional roles of both managing IAG and subject leadership for careers education and that the programme should, therefore, provide sufficient grounding in the theory, policy and practice of IAG and careers education to equip the careers co-ordinator to fulfil this dual role. It was further recommended that the qualification should cover IAG and careers education in the sixth form as well as for young people aged 11-16, and the importance of this point is underlined by the raising of the participation in learning age to 18. Interviewees were keen to stress that the role is one of middle leadership, not just a set of administrative tasks, and that the qualification must reflect this both in its title and its size. One individual said that it will be important to find the right title for the qualification: one suggestion is 'Certificate in Careers Leadership'. Several people commented that the new qualification should be designed so that it could be completed within 12 months, but also warned of the dangers of making it too 'light touch'. They also felt that the qualification should be capable of being updated quickly to reflect changes in IAG and careers education policy and guidelines.



### **3.5 Assessment**

Interviewees talked about the need to balance the rigour of the accreditation process with the time demands on careers co-ordinators in schools and concluded that the assessment requirements should be directly relevant to the participants' work in school. Tasks such as producing reflective accounts of practical review and development work should be favoured over writing essays or assembling portfolios of evidence. They suggested that opportunities to submit work linked to achieving local quality awards for IAG and careers education should also be explored.

### **3.6 Development work**

It was assumed that the new qualification would be developed at regional HE centres. All interviewees stressed that it would be important to build on existing good courses and for the HEIs to work in partnership with local IAG services and the guidance professional associations to develop the new qualification. The HEIs identified a need for development funding to cover the costs of staffing involved in planning and preparing new courses. The IAG services talked about the need to promote the new qualification as part of an overall strategy to raise the profile of IAG and careers education and to clarify the role of careers co-ordinator, in the context of the 14-19 agenda and partnership working. One interviewee went further to suggest that gaining the qualification should be made a requirement for the role. Certainly, several interviewees highlighted the need to promote the new qualification to headteachers and to local authorities.

## 4. Conclusion

There is a lot of support for the idea of a nationally recognised professional qualification among both the HEIs that currently offered accredited CPD and qualifications for careers co-ordinators in schools and IAG services, including those that do not currently support participants on such a course. There is an equivalent amount of goodwill to contribute to the development of a new qualification. The following quotations illustrate the urgency of moving forward with this work

*“... the sooner, the better, we need something”.*  
(local authority Connexions development manager)

*“ A professional qualification for careers leaders is definitely needed - schools are appointing people to the role, or are splitting the role among several members of staff, who do not have the full picture”.*  
(Development adviser in a careers company providing IAG services to a local authority under contract)

The support and goodwill are accompanied by concerns that the qualification will be given the right **status**, that the content of the programme that leads to the qualification will have sufficient **breadth and depth** and that **funding** will be made available to HEIs, local authorities, IAG services or schools to support individuals to gain the qualification.

There is a recognition that, although what is being considered is a national qualification, it will need to be delivered at the local level; that level, it is argued, should be wider than a single local authority area in order to achieve viable numbers. This means that there would need to be at least one centre in each Government Office region and possibly some at a sub-regional level.

The main recommendations for the proposed new qualification reported here are:

- The qualification should be offered at several levels, and provide progression onto a Masters programme
- Programmes leading to the qualification should include a significant taught element, but this should be accompanied by online materials and support networks
- The qualification should be designed as a framework of core and optional/specialist modules, perhaps as part of a wider common CPD framework for all guidance professionals
- The programme content should reflect the middle leadership roles of both managing IAG and being the subject leader for careers education, and should include IAG and careers education in the sixth form
- Assessment should be based on tasks linked directly to the participants' work in school.

## Appendix A - The qualifications

| Awarding body   | Title   | Award  |
|---|---|--|
| University of Cambridge   | Getting Started on CEG/IAG in Schools                                 | Certificate of Further Professional Studies                        |
| University of Cambridge   | Leading and Managing CEG/IAG in Schools                               | Certificate of Further Professional Studies                        |
| University of Cambridge   | CEG in Special Schools  | Certificate of Further Professional Studies                        |
| University of Cambridge   | Cambridge Certificate in Leading and Managing Careers Work in Schools | Certificate of Further Professional Studies                        |
| Canterbury Christ Church University                                 | Certificate in Careers Education and Guidance                         | Certificate  |
| Canterbury Christ Church University                                 | Advanced Certificate in Careers Education and Guidance                | Advanced Certificate   |
| University of Derby   | Certificate in Managing Careers Education and Guidance                | Certificate of Achievement   |
| University of Derby   | MA Education: Guidance Studies  | Master of Arts<br>Postgraduate Diploma<br>Postgraduate Certificate |
| Manchester Metropolitan University                                  | Postgraduate Certificate in Careers Education and Guidance            | Postgraduate Certificate   |
| National Open College Network (NOCN), with County Durham Connexions | Developing IAG Skills and Knowledge                                   | NOCN Level 3 Certificate   |
| Northumbria University, with Connexions Northumberland              | Tutoring for Transition   | Certificate  |
| Nottingham Trent University   | Diploma in Careers Education  | Diploma<br>Certificate of Achievement                              |
| OCR   | NVQ in Advice and Guidance (Careers Education and Guidance)           | NVQ Level 4  |

## **Appendix B - Organisations interviewed**

Better Choices (Career Solutions)

Calderdale and Kirklees Careers

Cambridgeshire County Council

Careers Management Futures

Connexions Berkshire

Connexions Black Country / Prospects

Connexions Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole

Connexions Cornwall and Devon

Connexions Cumbria

Connexions Herefordshire and Worcestershire

Connexions Northamptonshire

Connexions Nottinghamshire

Connexions Stockton-on-Tees

Connexions Swindon

LB Haringey

Igen

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