

Cross-government Review of Information, Advice & Guidance (IAG) Services for Adults in England

Summary Report March 2008

Cross-government review of Information, Advice & Guidance Services for Adults in England

Summary Report March 2008

Compiled behalf of the partners to the cross-government review (2007):-

- **Department for Education and Skills**
- **Department of Trade and Industry**
- **Department for Work and Pensions**
- **Learning and Skills Council**
- **Skills for Business Network**
- **Ufi learndirect**
- **Jobcentre Plus**

Compiled by the International Centre for Guidance Studies

Contact:

Jo Hutchinson (Deputy Director -Research)
International Centre for Guidance Studies (iCeGS)
University of Derby
Kedleston Road
Derby DE22 1GB
Tel: 01332 591267

Table of Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	1
(i)	Purpose of the report	1
(ii)	Research and consultation process	3
(iv)	Terminology	6
(v)	Report structure	7
(vi)	Overview of issues and challenges	8
2	PUTTING THE USER FIRST	11
(i)	Defining and understanding terms	11
(ii)	Access patterns, entry points and visibility	14
(iii)	Young people and transitions	17
(iv)	Older adults and transitions	18
(v)	What do adults want and need?	20
(vi)	Factors influencing attitudes to guidance	24
(vii)	The link between interventions and outcomes	27
(viii)	Developing user-focused services	30
3	THE PREVAILING OFFER	35
(i)	The National Policy Framework and Action Plan	35
(ii)	Clarifying the adult IAG offer	36
(iii)	Publicly funded provision: an overview	39
4	AN OVERVIEW OF CORE FUNDED PROVISION	43
(i)	<i>learndirect</i> advice and nextstep	43
(ii)	Purpose and outcomes	47
5.	AN OVERVIEW OF EMBEDDED PROVISION	49
(i)	Further Education	49
(iii)	Higher Education	52
(iii)	Jobcentre Plus	55
(iv)	Offenders' Learning and Skills Service	58

(iv) Other publicly funded provision	60
(vi) Non-publicly funded provision	61
(vii) Private sector providers	63
(viii) IAG in the workplace	65
6. DELIVERY METHODS	74
(i) Overview	74
(ii) <i>learndirect</i> advice telephone guidance trial	75
(iii) SkillsFile/Skills Passport/Skills coaching	77
(iv) The role of ICT in delivering IAG	78
7. QUALITY AND COMPETENCE	83
(i) Quality assurance arrangements	83
(ii) Practitioner competency	87
8. LABOUR MARKET AND COURSE INFORMATION	92
(i) Definitions	92
(ii) Current provision	92
(iii) Client and Practitioner LMI needs	95
(iv) Infrastructure for future delivery of LMI?	96
11. REVIEW SUMMARY	108
(i) Introduction	108
(ii) The service offer	108
(ii) Accessing the service	111
(iv) Underpinning the service	113
(v) Areas for further development	116

1 Introduction

The potential effects of career guidance can be thought of at the individual, organisational and societal levels. At the individual level, potential benefits could result from people being better able to manage their choices of learning and work, and to maximise their potential. At the organisational level, potential benefits could flow to education and training providers if learners were assisted to identify and enter learning programmes which meet their needs and aspirations. And they could flow to employers if career guidance resulted in a supply of job applicants whose talents and motivations were matched to employers' requirements.

Benefits could result at a societal level if career guidance leads to greater efficiency in the allocation of human resources; for example by enhancing the motivation of learners and workers; reducing drop-outs from education and training; reducing mismatches between labour supply and demand; encouraging up-skilling of the workforce; reducing the incidence of floundering between job transitions; and thus improving the ways that learning and labour markets operate. Social benefits could also result if career guidance helped to widen access to learning and work opportunities (both helping people to avoid social exclusion and helping the excluded to gain access to learning and work), thus enhancing social equity. Career guidance services might also be thought of as reinforcing the value attached in democratic societies to the right of individuals to make free choices about their own lives.

These potential effects can be thought of as operating at three stages: immediate attitudinal changes and increased knowledge; intermediate behavioural changes for example through improved search efficiency and persistence, or through entering a particular career path, course or job as a result of career guidance; and longer-term outcomes such as success and satisfaction.

OECD¹, (1994) Bridging the Gap, 33

(i) Purpose of the report

- 1.1. The OECD review of career guidance and public policy emphasised the benefits to be gained from effective careers guidance at an individual, organisational and societal level, not least through the achievement of greater efficiencies in human resource allocation.

¹ Sweet, R. & Watts, A.G. (2004). Career Guidance and Public Policy: *Bridging the Gap*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development.

- 1.2. The 2005 Skills Strategy² clearly articulated the major challenge for the UK in ensuring its workforce is equipped with the skills needed to compete in a global marketplace. This White Paper (Part One) recognised the problems that many people experience in making sense of and piecing together various parts of the learning and work jigsaw. It set out a vision for information and advice as part of a much wider goal to help people make the most of their lives, and achieve their ambitions for themselves, their families and their communities.
- 1.3. Part Two of the Skills White Paper (2005)³ set out a clear commitment to increasing access to high quality provision linked to meeting individuals' needs': It stated:-

'Better skills and qualifications will often be at the heart of that self-advancement. But for many people they will not be enough by themselves. Consistent with the theme of the whole Skills Strategy, they need to be part of a package which helps people fit together the pieces of the jigsaw: how skills and qualifications link to career options; how help with childcare and care of other dependents can support part-time and full-time employment options; and planning for retirement and old age

So this is our long term ambition: that everyone should be able to get help if and when they want it to take stock of where they are in their lives and their careers; to review where they would like to get to; and assess what steps they can take to get there. Some of that can be done through self-assessment, and many people will continue to rely on advice and guidance from informal sources and community groups. But some of it demands high quality, expert guidance, meeting each individual's needs.'

2005 Skills Strategy White Paper, Chapter 4, p. 41, paras. 164 & 165,

- 1.4. The White paper concludes, however, that the current infrastructure for guidance 'is not achieving anything like its full potential in providing high quality, individual information, advice and guidance for adults who want it. Too few people are aware of the service or do not think it would be relevant to their needs'⁴.

² Department for Education and Skills (2005). *Skills: Getting on in Business, Getting on at Work*. Cm 6483. London: The Stationery Office.

³ *Ibid*

⁴ Department for Education and Skills (2005). *Skills: Getting on in Business, Getting on at Work*. Cm 6483. London: Stationery Office. Chapter 4, para. 168, p.42

1.5. The Skills Strategy recommended a cross-government review of information, advice and guidance provision for adults, to be undertaken jointly by the DfES, DWP, DTI, LSC, Ufi/**learndirect**, Jobcentre Plus and SSDA. A Steering Group representing all partners was established to oversee the work. The work of the Review comprised *three* key elements, the **learndirect** advice telephone guidance trial⁵; the SSDA Skills Council Labour Market Information project⁶, and this Policy Review of IAG Services for Adults in England.

1.6. The strategic purpose of all three elements of the cross-government review was to:-

- secure high quality Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) services for adults that support achievement of the Skills Strategy (as indicated in the Skills Strategy White paper Commitments 148, 149, 152); and
- determine how best to pursue the long-term goal of an IAG service to support adults in progressing their careers; make informed choices on learning and work and enable them to achieve ambitions for themselves, their families and their communities.

(ii) Research and consultation process

1.7. This report is a summary of key findings from research and consultations undertaken between December 2005 and January 2007 that has informed the Policy Review of IAG Services for Adults in England . It also includes findings from consultations undertaken with ‘expert’ practitioners, managers, researchers, trainers and policy-makers at specially convened workshops; summaries of outcomes from conferences and meetings (both formal and informal); and feedback comments from the IAG Review website: www.iagreview.org. A wealth of data was reviewed and a substantial number of papers produced specifically for the Review.

⁵ Page, R. Newton, B. Hawthorn, R. Hunt, W. Hillage, J. (2007) An Evaluation of the Ufi/learndirect Telephone Guidance Trial. Department for Education and Skills Research Report 833, Nottingham.

⁶ Graver, A. Harrison, J. Letman, C. (2006) Sector Skills Council Information Advice and Guidance Project: Bringing Industry and IAG Services Together, Final Evaluation Report, Impact Research Limited, York.

Some vital key research questions framed the early work. These questions below were generated to offer focus on issues critical to the research and consultation process. In practice evidence was compiled that goes beyond these questions (for example, issues such as quality and competence).

Research questions

- A. **Infrastructure (formal and informal)**
 - What is the present information, advice and guidance infrastructure and how can it be made more coherent across ages and providers?
- B. **Users and prospective users, including promoting Equality and Diversity**
 - What do people want and what do people need?
- C. **Delivery methods**
 - What is ICT being used for, and how might its use be extended?
- D. **Labour market and course information**
 - What more might be done to deliver high quality, up-to-date, relevant LMI and course information to the guidance system for adults and young people?
- E. **Delivery models**
 - What are the current models (*nextstep*, *learnirect* advice, JCP, embedded in learning, embedded in workplace etc.); what do they cost and are they targeted effectively and appropriately?
- F. **Training and support**
 - How can training and support arrangements and provision be improved?
- G. **Engagement and marketing**
 - What are we marketing, what should we be marketing, how and to whom?
- H. **Funding**
 - Who should pay for what, i.e. the State, individuals, employers etc? What additional services might users pay for, which users and how much?

1.8. There were also, however some important and relevant issues that have been noted but not explored in-depth either because they were better considered at a later date (for example, the cost of a new service), or due to the paucity of available empirical evidence as in the following areas:- :

- the extent that IAG is delivered through the voluntary and community sector;

- the extent to which IAG is delivered within Adult Continuing Learning provision;
- the experience of young people as they reach transitions both in their own lives and in their relationship with young people's services and adult IAG services
- the reach of guidance services to support the specific needs of particular target groups
- the extent of the role and impact of 'informal' guidance.

1.9. This report has been prepared by Heather Jackson (External Policy Advisor to the IAG Review Working Group) and Jo Hutchinson (Deputy Director - Research) at the International Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby. The contents are made available on the IAG Review Website (www.iagreview.org) alongside the on-line publication of other key papers developed for the Review.

1.10. This report represents progress of the IAG Review as at January 2007. Since then, the Review of IAG Services for Adults in England has developed further with additional work being undertaken to inform the design and development of a Skills Health Check, whilst policy developments have extended their reach to transform IAG Services for Adults in England into a new 'Advancement and Adult Careers Service'. Consequently it should be read alongside "World Class Skills: Implementing the Leitch Review of Skills in England"⁷, and the Policy Framework for Advancement and Adult Careers Service.

1.11. In compiling the evidence discussed within this report, the approach adopted was to summarise key issues as they related to the Review, with particular emphasis on those issues that (i) need addressing for the future delivery of a high quality and effective service, and (ii) those that place the needs of the user at the heart of a new service. The authors have tried to balance the findings of research with feedback from the

⁷ Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (July 2007), *World Class Skills: Implementing the Leitch Review of Skills in England*", The Stationery Office, Norwich.

various constituencies involved; quite a difficult line to tread but one that was felt by key stakeholders to be important.

- 1.12. The prime focus for this main report was the 'user' or 'potential user' of services. The goal, in line with the 2005 Skills Strategy, was to contribute to the debate as to how government can increase the number of adults using guidance services; obtain better value for money within existing arrangements (i.e. more users accessing the current offer) and identify key issues to be addressed in future service arrangements.
- 1.13. As with the service provision itself, previous approaches to research and policy reviews have been fragmented. The OECD Review *Bridging the Gap*⁸ observed that while the UK had a strong knowledge base for its career guidance services, much of the research in the UK has been '*one-off and fragmented rather than strategic, and not disseminated widely or effectively.*' This report attempts to draw together a whole range of different strands of research and explore how they contributed to the general 'state of the service' as it currently stood at the time of the Review of IAG Services for Adults in England. This was the first time a cross-government review had been undertaken in such a comprehensive way. The authors have tried to do justice to the wealth of data available but, inevitably, were not been able to include everything. This introductory chapter, sets out the main report structure and presents a brief overview of issues and challenges

(iv) Terminology

- 1.13 A key issue emerging throughout the review process was the difficulties over service 'terms' or 'descriptors'. For the purposes of this paper the following terminology is used throughout to describe the generic Information, Advice and Guidance (AIG) offer, even though one of the key findings from the Review was that the terms currently used do not reflect, or represent, what has actually been on offer:

⁸ Sweet, R. & Watts, A.G. (2004) *Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

- Information, Advice and Guidance
- IAG
- guidance service for adults
- adult guidance services, and in some cases
- career guidance
- adult career guidance

(v) Report structure

1.14. The report begins with the issue of terms and definitions as part of a wider discussion on the needs and wants of users and non-users as regards IAG services. Section 2 examines the transition points when users might need services, and in particular transitions associated with young people moving to adulthood and older people moving to different patterns of working. The specific characteristics of services that people want and value are then rehearsed as are the outcomes that might be attributed to up-take of those services. The section concludes with a summary of principles that should underpin the development of user-focussed services.

1.15. Sections three to five outline the current IAG offer. Based on the National Policy Framework⁹ these sections present a critique of government policy, followed by a presentation of the services that have been developed in line with both that policy, and other government agendas in which IAG services play a role. Current provision is categorised as either 'Core' or 'Embedded' and an overview of services that comprise both is presented. The overview is intended to provide a picture of the range of activities that take place under the IAG banner,

⁹ Department for Education and Skills (2003) *Information, advice and guidance for adults: the national policy framework and action plan produced by the Department for Education and Skills in conjunction with the Learning & Skills Council*. London: DfEE
<http://www.lifelonglearning.co.uk/iag/npfreport.pdf>

within various delivery contexts (including FE, HE, JobCentre Plus and other publicly and privately funded services). A key element of embedded IAG is that which occurs within the workplace and section five explores what employers want from IAG and the issues associated with building an infrastructure for workplace IAG. Generally, issues arising out of complex delivery arrangements and policy layering are highlighted, not to criticise individual services but merely to draw attention to how those problems can be experienced by users and potential users of the service and by employers and businesses.

1.16. Sections six to ten summarise other issues about which decisions will need to be made and a clear policy stance taken. These include:-

- Delivery methods
- Quality and competence
- Labour market and course information
- The regional perspective
- Equality, diversity and existing provision.

1.17. In section eleven, we present a compilation of the issues that have been discussed throughout the report as a series of policy recommendations relating to:

- the features of an adult careers service;
- accessing the service; and
- the infrastructure required to deliver that service.

(vi) Overview of issues and challenges

1.18. IAG provision for adults has been available at a range of levels and in a number of settings and contexts, formal and informal, sometimes

delivered discretely, other times embedded within other provision; although most has been publicly funded there is also an important contribution to be made by the private sector. Drawing all the elements together into a coherent, quality assured whole is one of the major challenges facing policy makers in England.

- 1.19. While the National Policy Framework and Action Plan is clear about the 'type' of services that should be available, and how they should be delivered, there are no underpinning standards that define exactly what IAG provision for adults should look like, what specific activities should be involved, the level at which they should be undertaken and what the key purpose of all provision should be. The Review Working Group was concerned that while there was a substantial amount of good work being undertaken its style, approach and content varied from provider to provider and there was no standardisation - a major factor in the confusion and lack of transparency as far as the end user was concerned.
- 1.20. The Review Working Group was also aware that there was no strong culture of adult IAG usage amongst the wider population. Generally speaking, adults did not expect to receive (or seek out) adult career guidance once they ended formal education; the achievement of increased take up of work-related learning and skills by those not traditionally engaged in such activities would therefore take more than just a change in government policy.
- 1.21. At the time of the Review of IAG Services for Adults in England, young people's services were also being reviewed. Effective transition arrangements, including consistent quality assurance standards between the new services for young people and those for adults should be an essential element of all guidance services.
- 1.22. A revised IAG offer needed to address the employability, skills and learning needs of individuals in an integrated way, and promote sustainable employment and progression to all adults – whether employed or unemployed. This would involve:

- substantially restructuring current delivery arrangements so that the purpose, goals and outcomes are clear to all users, and potential users, of services;
- clarification on how the need to offer 'universal' access will be balanced against the need to provide targeted provision for priority groups;
- strong and clearly stated partnership arrangements between Jobcentre Plus and the wider IAG sector.

2 Putting the User First

(i) Defining and understanding terms

2.1. The OECD¹⁰ report, *Bridging the Gap* defines 'career guidance' in the following way:

Career guidance refers to services intended to assist people, of any age and at any points through their lives to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers. Career guidance helps people to reflect on their ambitions, interests, qualifications and abilities. It helps them to understand the labour market and education systems and to relate this to what they know about themselves. Comprehensive career guidance tries to teach people to plan and make decisions about work and learning. Career guidance makes information about the labour market and about educational opportunities more accessible by organising it, systematising it, and make it available when and where people need it.'

*While personal interviews are still the dominant tool, career guidance includes a wide range of other services: group discussions; printed and electronic information... telephone advice, online help. Career guidance is provided to people in a very wide range of settings; schools and tertiary institutions; public employment services; private guidance providers; enterprises and community settings
(Ibid. box 1.1, p.19)*

2.2. Hawthorn and Ford¹¹ in a paper produced for the Review felt that while definitions of career guidance such as this are useful at a professional level they are not necessarily shared by the public. Also, questions are raised in their paper as to whether this full range of activities is actually available through the current adult guidance offer and, if it is, whether the term 'Information, Advice and Guidance' accurately describes what is on offer as far as users, and potential users, of services are concerned. Difficulties over service descriptors have bedevilled the adult IAG offer for some time.

2.3 The term Information, Advice and Guidance originates from the work undertaken in 1996 around a 'free to enter – pay to stay service' model

¹⁰ Sweet, R. & Watts, A.G. (2004) *Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

¹¹ Hawthorn, R. and Ford, G. (2006) Defining IAG: Exploring Terms Purpose and Needs, *Summary of Thematic Literature Review for the Consultative Workshop 3rd March 2006*. [online]. Briefing Papers Prepared by the Research Partners. Derby: Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby. Working Group Paper. Available from: <http://www.iagreview.org.uk/papers/ICT%20and%20IAG.pdf> [Accessed 8 March 2008]

of provision, when it was used as a way of determining a cut off point for government funding. The basis of the model was that Information and Advice would be universally available and centrally funded, with the individual buying their one-to-one more in-depth guidance through the development of a 'guidance market' (for more detailed discussion of this see paragraph 5.43). In the absence of any better alternatives at the time, it also emerged as the main descriptor of services, even though the term has little resonance with most adults and does not effectively describe what is on offer.

- 2.3. While there has been some development of a more in-depth guidance offer through targeted funding for enhanced services, adult guidance pilots and, more recently, skills coaching, the generation of a visible, accessible market of guidance provision failed to materialize.
- 2.4. In 2003, in response to the Skills White Paper (2003) the DfES National Policy Framework and Action Plan on Information, Advice and Guidance for Adults sought to clarify expectations and levels of service from the Information, Advice and 'Guidance' offer as follows:

'Information' within the context of the IAG programmes, means the provision of information on learning and work, without any discussion about the relative merits of the options through:

- printed materials such as leaflets;
- audio-visual materials such as videos;
- computer software on CD rom or via the internet, and
- verbal information to the client on a face-to-face basis or through local or national helpline services such as **learnirect** or worktrain.

(Ibid, para.12, p6)

'Advice': The provision of advice requires more interaction with the service user, usually on a one-to-one basis. It may require explanation of some of the information provided, how to assess and use information, and a recognition of when more in-depth services may be required.

(Ibid, para.14, p8)

- 2.5. 'Guidance' remained within the broad description of services (the term IAG was retained) despite the fact that what was actually available was only Information and Advice (as defined above). There is an underlying problem with an offer that actually delivers less than its service

description implies.

- 2.6. The MORI¹² researchers in their survey of service users recognised the problem, and the accompanying ‘user’ misunderstanding of service terms and descriptors, taking the following approach:

For the purposes of this study Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) are not dealt with separately but are generally grouped together. This is because the general public, in responding to the survey questions, do not necessarily make distinctions between I, A and G and are not necessarily aware of their technical definitions or of the differences between them. However, it should be noted that subsequent analysis indicates that although the simple majority of respondents perceive themselves to receive information, the overall majority received either advice or guidance.
(Ibid, para.2, p3)

- 2.7. The Guidance Council¹³ literature review ‘Information, Advice and Guidance for Adults in key target groups’ (2002) also identified ‘user’ difficulties with terms:

Firstly, an important message for all those involved in adult guidance provision is that the term ‘guidance’ appears to have little meaning for those who are regarded as potential clients. This is important, especially where the ‘hard to reach’ groups are being targeted, as it points up the significance of using meaningful language when seeking to encourage access. This further emphasizes the point that guidance takes place in a range of formal and non-formal settings and points to a necessity for a recognition of the role to be played by staff from a multiplicity of organizations.
(Ibid, Section 6: Conclusion 1, Key Issues, 2nd para, p.42)

- 2.8. The lack of clarity and transparency around terms has had serious policy consequences and contributes to the difficulties – and concerns about low levels of take up - now being faced. It is not, however, the only explanation.

¹² Taylor, J., Vasickova, D., Byrom, A. & Dickson, J. (2005). *Demand for, and Perceptions of, Information, Advice and Guidance : A Research Study Conducted for the Guidance Council by MORI*. Leicester: Guidance Council.

¹³ Hawthorn, R. (2002). *Information, Advice and Guidance for Adults in Key Target Groups: A Literature Review*. Winchester: Guidance Council.

(ii) Access patterns, entry points and visibility

- 2.9. The MORI research¹⁴ observed that the delivery infrastructure for IAG was complex, with delivery not being confined to that delivered by formal guidance professionals but also available through a number of other settings, both formal and informal. Adults may access services through ‘a diverse pool of alternative sources of IAG, which vary according to age, social class and work status’. On the one hand, this could be viewed as a rich tapestry of provision offering a range and breadth of delivery and access arrangements; on the other hand, it can be seen as a potentially confusing map with unclear pathways and poor signposting.
- 2.10. Tyers and Taylor¹⁵ in *Information, Advice and Guidance: perceptions and outcomes* (2005) also observed that adults are likely to seek help from a number of different sources, both formal and informal, and will often return more than once. Their research identified complex patterns of IAG use, with individuals appearing to use a range of different interventions, often within quick succession, to help with specific issues as they arise, making ‘the idea of an advice or guidance ‘episode’ as a single encounter with one service providers quite inaccurate’
- 2.11. Wilson & Jackson¹⁶ came to the same conclusion - that guidance as a one-off activity, leading to an action plan, was only one element of the guidance process. While it might be sufficient for some, for others it would be only one small part of a longer, more complex process.
- 2.12. Similar findings have emerged from the early work of the ESRC Learning Lives Project¹⁷ Hawthorn summarised key aspects of that work for the Review workshop in March, 2006.

¹⁴ Taylor, J., Vasickova, D., Byrom, A. & Dickson, J. (2005). *Demand for, and Perceptions of, Information, Advice and Guidance : A Research Study Conducted for the Guidance Council by MORI*. Leicester: Guidance Council.

¹⁵ Tyers, C.& Taylor, J (2005) in *Information, Advice and Guidance: perceptions and outcomes*: Brighton: Institute for Employment Studies p.5.

¹⁶ Wilson, J. & Jackson, H. (1999) *What are adults' expectations and requirements of guidance? A Millennium Agenda?* Winchester: The Guidance Council.

¹⁷ Hodkinson, P. Hawthorn, R.Ford, G. Hodkinson, H. (2007) In/Formality in lifelong learning careers, A paper presented at the Annual Conference of the British Educational Research Association (BERA), 6-8 September 2007. (see www.learninglives.org: accessed on March 8th 2008)

- Adults participate in education and training throughout their lives, but many do so intermittently, with periods of engagement interspersed with periods of non-engagement;
- for many people, periods of non-engagement arose because the value of attending courses was not apparent or not important and/or because the availability of courses was not known;
- people with higher educational levels and from higher socio-economic groups are more likely to find learning for themselves;
- people seek education or training for reasons to do with employment, but also for other reasons such as: in response to life-changing events, out of personal interest and enjoyment and to be able to help others;
- although there are some examples in the study of individuals making decisions as a direct result of advice from a guidance worker, more common are decisions shaped by family, people met through agencies not specifically for career advice, friends or employers;
- for potential learners who lack confidence or relevant economic, social or cultural capital, provision in a local, known community centre is of vital importance;
- individuals can be highly mobile over the course of their lives: there are several examples of people whose studies stopped or started as the result of a move either between countries, between town and country, or even across town.

2.13. The issue of multiple transitions across an individual life course was discussed at length at the Review expert practitioner workshop held in May 2006 resulting in the following diagram:

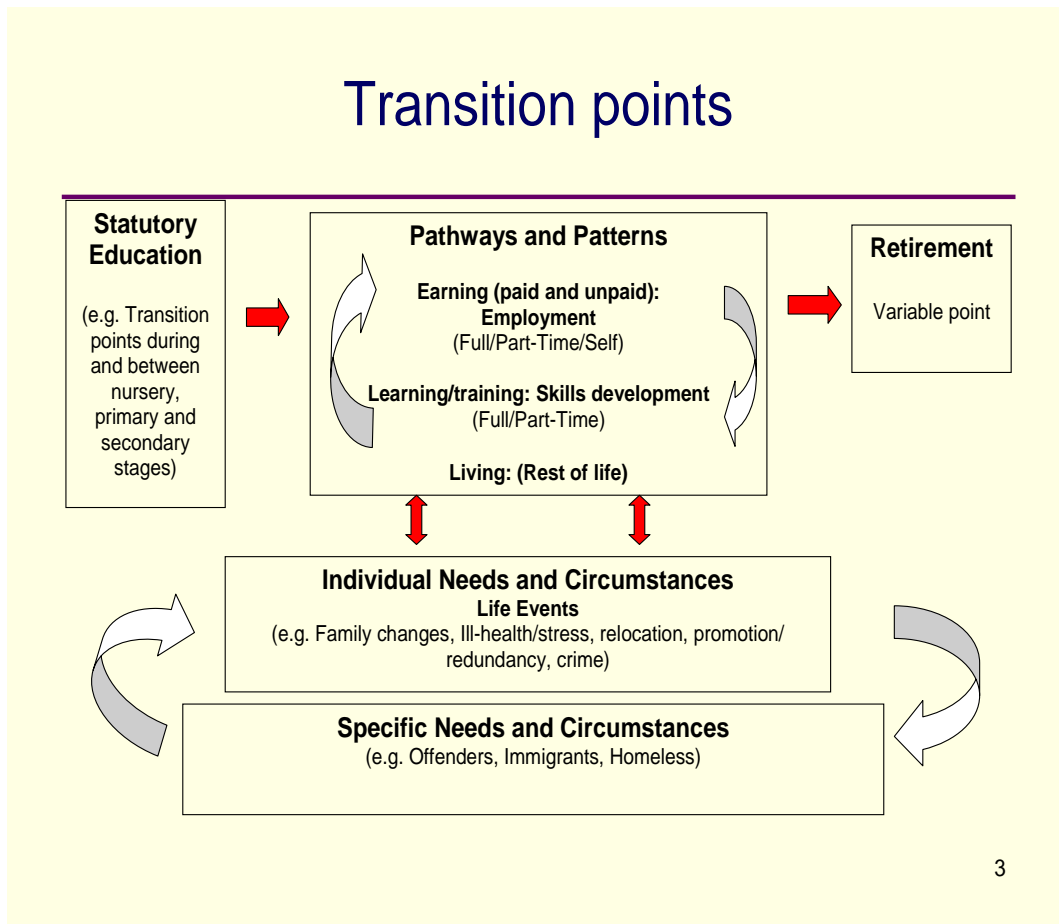


Figure One: Transition Points

2.14. The diagram illustrated that while two fixed transition points could be identified that constituted a universal experience – i.e. the end of statutory education (usually at the end of key stage 4) and retirement (at 60/65 or beyond) individual career pathways and patterns between these points were highly variable, and were cyclical rather than linear. Prevailing thinking was that on average people change their career 6-7 times throughout their lifetime, making career choice and change a lifetime process. Increasingly, people do not fall into easily defined categories as individual lives consist of a varied and changing mix of earning, learning and ‘rest of life’ activities.

2.15. In every life there are a series of critical incidences (positive and negative life events) that spark the need for action and/or consideration of options. These can be enablers (e.g. promotion at work) or disablers (e.g. unwelcome redundancy, illness) and are recurring in nature.

People often seek out 'guidance' during these periods of crisis or transition, although individual responses to each situation can be highly variable.

(iii) Young people and transitions

2.16. A specific transition exists between young people' and adult services. This transition is delineated by age limits to young peoples' services provided through Connexions – a service for those aged between 13 and 19. The exception to this is with young people with learning difficulties and disabilities for whom Connexions continues to provide support until the age of 25.

2.17. Jackson's paper¹⁸ on this subject produced for the Review Consultation Workshop on 3 March 2006 expresses concerns about the transition between young people and adult services, finding considerable anecdotal evidence to suggest that young people are at risk of falling down a 'gap' in provision at this stage. Jackson found, however, that the extent to which this is happening is actually unknown as there is negligible research about the specific 19 plus transition and little published research on the experiences of young people going through this transition.

2.18. This, despite the fact, that there is increasing evidence to suggest that the transition into 'adulthood' is taking longer than was previously the case. The Social Exclusion Unit¹⁹ reported that there is a view that "most young people are now taking longer over the transition to adulthood' which suggests that services to support young people through that transition may be needed beyond age 19, and consequently effective transition and referral from young people to adult services becomes an important issue. This finding was endorsed by the

¹⁸ Jackson, A. (2006) *Transitions*: Briefing paper available in "Cross-government Review of Information, Advice & Guidance Services for Adults: Selected Review Working Group Papers" [www.iagreview.org: http://www.derby.ac.uk/cegs/publications](http://www.derby.ac.uk/cegs/publications)

¹⁹ Social Exclusion Unit. (2005). *Transitions: Young Adults With Complex Needs*. Wetherby: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister., Social Exclusion Unit

OECD Study²⁰.

- 2.19. Participants at the consultative workshop on 3 March also raised concerns about the transition of young people to adult services and expressed strong support for, at a minimum, an all age guidance strategy (not to be confused with an 'all age guidance service') that would underpin all publicly funded services and be based on the recognition of significant transitions across the life course that are not based solely on age.
- 2.20. More research is needed in this area to include an exploration of the potential for linking entitlements to services to critical life stages rather than simply to chronological age.

(iv) Older adults and transitions

- 2.21. In a paper on the impact of an ageing population on career guidance, Ford et al²¹ provided a comprehensive study of current policy issues and future requirements. They argued that IAG needed to pay greater attention to older workers²²: because they constitute a growing proportion of the workforce, they are less well qualified, and most at risk of exclusion from the labour market.
- 2.22. Older adults in general have the lowest level of formal qualifications; they are the least likely age group to volunteer for training, and the least likely to be offered training by their employers. Participation in training declines progressively with age, increasing the risk that individuals become unemployable. Although the Government's Skills Strategy guarantees free learning for full Level 2 qualifications and basic skills, and half of those without Level 2 qualifications are over 50, they are seriously underrepresented in this provision. However, those who do continue to train (generally those who are already better qualified) are

²⁰ OECD (2004) *Career guidance and public policy: Bridging the gap*. Paris: OECD.
<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/33/45/34050171.pdf>.

²¹ Ford, G. McNair, S. Grattan, P. and Lamb, H (2006). The impact of an ageing population on career guidance, NIACE with TAEN and CeGS, Working Group Review Paper, Unpublished.

²² There is no agreed definition of an "older worker", and the rate at which people's capacities and aspirations change with age varies enormously. In this paper we are generally concerned with people over 45, the age at which the range of career opportunities open to most people begins to contract.

much more likely to remain in the workforce.

- 2.23. Although a number of small specialised voluntary and commercial agencies provide services particularly for this age range, current participation in publicly funded adult IAG services is heavily weighted towards younger adults.
- 2.24. Ford et al (*Ibid*) argued that much of what older people need from IAG services is common to people of all ages. All seek constructive activity, respect, interest, congenial social relationships and financial reward. Work and learning provide these, and many people want to continue working into their 60s, if not longer. This is not an unrealistic ambition: the labour market needs them, and while popular preconceptions about declining physical and mental capacity remain widespread, almost all jobs in the economy can now be undertaken successfully by most people into their late 60s.
- 2.25. However, as people approach retirement age, the balance of the employment relationship shifts, and most have the option (albeit at a price) to leave work if it fails to meet their expectations – whether to ease gradually into retirement or to seek new challenges.
- 2.26. They concluded that “while the generic guidance needs may be common to all ages, the special circumstances and characteristics of older people mean that an “age blind” service is unlikely to fully meet the needs of older workers, and there is good reason to believe that current provision is inadequate to meet their needs”²³

²³ Ford, G. McNair, S. Grattan, P. and Lamb, H. (2006) The impact of an ageing population on career guidance, Working Group Review Paper, Unpublished. p10.

(v) What do adults want and need?

2.27. Individual adults access help and support through formal or informal arrangements intermittently across a life course in a variety of ways. However, the fact that the terms used to define provision (see section 3.ii) do not have general resonance among adults contributes to a situation where many people appear to stumble across provision rather than make an informed choice about where they will go for their guidance. As a consequence, responses to the question, “what do adults want and need?” will be many faceted.

2.28. The 2005 MORI research²⁴ asked respondents specific questions about their wants and needs from guidance. Responses²⁵ were as follows:

- Opportunities for help on a one-to-one basis (35%)
- Help to identify my work-related skills (31%)
- Specialist advice about specific jobs/careers (31%)
- Help with interview techniques (31%)
- CV/application form support (27%)
- Financial advice (25%)
- Dedicated redundancy services (23%)
- Education links (22%)
- Help directly linked to getting a (better) job/job search facilities (20%)
- Opportunities for ongoing, long-term help (17%)

²⁴ Taylor, J., Vasickova, D., Byrom, A. & Dickson, J. (2005). *Demand for, and Perceptions of, Information, Advice and Guidance : A Research Study Conducted for the Guidance Council by MORI*. Leicester: Guidance Council.

²⁵ (NB: the questions were not open-ended, and the language used reflects the options put by the researchers; only those scoring higher than 10% have been included):

- Entitlements/benefits advice (16%)
- Dedicated services for people return to work after a break (16%)
- Employer links (15%)
- Local labour market information (15%)
- Computerised job/skills assessment packages (13%)

2.29. Wilson & Jackson²⁶, when asking similar (but open-ended) questions to adults of working age, found that the overwhelming priority for the majority of adults was getting a job – or a better job – and interest was expressed in separate services linked to this goal, as listed below (not in any order of priority):

- Learning information - including that linked to local labour markets
- Job related labour market information;
- Assessment opportunities (including ICT packages, specific skills testing and aptitude testing)
- Specialist vocational advice from 'experts' offering practice advice about work in particular sectors, preferably linked to the local labour market;
- Employer links – including work experience as well as better links generally with local industries;
- CV/job search support;
- Facilities to test out learning opportunities through access arrangements and tasters;

²⁶ Wilson, J. & Jackson, H. (1999) *What are adults' expectations and requirements of guidance? A Millennium Agenda?* Winchester: The Guidance Council.

- Identification of transferable skills;
- Financial and employment advice.

2.30. Research²⁷ undertaken by the LSC also identified a comprehensive list of adults wants and needs from guidance:

The desire to:

- Learn new skills
- Get qualifications/additional qualifications
- Update current skills
- Find out what qualifications one requires for a specific job or jobs and how to set about obtaining these
- Try out and sample particular learning opportunities to test personal suitability
- Find out more about one's potential to learn and the kinds of courses and the methods of learning that are likely to suit one best
- Find out ways of funding/paying for education/training.
- Find a job/get a new job
- Change direction and follow new interests
- Find out about a specific job or career
- Change the type of job one is currently doing
- Demonstrate one's skills and abilities to potential employers, e.g. through work trials
- Discuss the possibility of self-employment and what this may involve.
- Find out how well one is doing in one's current job
- Reassess one's career and where one is going – establish a new sense of direction
- Prepare a CV
- Make a job application
- Improve job interview techniques and self-presentation more generally
- Find out what type of job one is best suited to or qualified to do
- Discuss and try to resolve personal issues and circumstances that may affect personal ability to do job
- Seek help and support in returning to work after a break
- Seek help with returning to work after unemployment
- Seek help with return to work after redundancy
- Try out particular occupations or work opportunities through work trials or work experience to test personal suitability

²⁷ Learning and Skills Council (2002) *The role of information, advice and guidance*,. Coventry, Learning and Skills Council.

- Find out about volunteering opportunities and decide which might be the most suitable to match personal needs and values
- Seek advice about the ways in which volunteering may lead to paid employment.

2.31. Bimrose et al²⁸., reporting the results of a longitudinal study of effective guidance identified what the majority (49 out of 50) of clients found useful about the help they received:

- ‘Supporting positive outcomes for the client, specifically: exploring and challenging client perceptions together with giving direction and a new awareness of learning or employment opportunities;
- giving clients access to networks, information and knowledge, enabling them to feel better informed and better able to progress;
- encouraging constructive change in the client like: increasing self-confidence; developing skills; developing understanding which broadened ideas; as well as motivating, inspiring and encouraging the client;
- providing the client with a positive experience by: creating the opportunity for reflection and in-depth discussion; and by reassuring, confirming and/or clarifying plans and/or progress.’

2.32. They observed that, for all parties, the determining feature of ‘useful guidance’ is the skills held and used by the practitioner²⁹.

2.33. For non-users the MORI research³⁰ noted that they were unlikely to approach service providers due to a perception that it was of “no use at all” to them – and that their needs are more likely to be associated with issues associated with financial advice, returning to work after starting a family, and facing redundancy.

²⁸ Bimrose, J., Barnes, S.A., Hughes, D. & Orton, M. (2004) *What is Effective Guidance? Evidence from Longitudinal Case Studies in England*, Coventry: Warwick Institute for Employment Research.

²⁹ Op cit. , p.17-18

³⁰ Taylor, J., Vasickova, D., Byrom, A. & Dickson, J. (2005). *Demand for, and Perceptions of, Information, Advice and Guidance : A Research Study Conducted for the Guidance Council by MORI*. Leicester: Guidance Council.

(vi) **Factors influencing attitudes to guidance**

2.34. Individual attitudes towards learning and development, and an individual's willingness to seek support from third parties, are key factors when it come to the achievement of government skills goals and targets. Humphries³¹ notes:

It is extremely difficult to raise skill levels amongst adults of working age without their willing and active participation, and many need as much convincing that learning is 'worth it' as employers need convincing that skills are assets worthy of investment, not just costs. (p.8)

Any set of policies designed to significantly increase adult participation in work related learning and skills must seek to overcome the set of attitudes, beliefs and cultural mores amongst individuals and employers that fundamentally perceive access to learning as an elitist right that only brings benefits to the already privileged. Information, understanding, the positive promotion of the benefits, advice and guidance for adults, and the removal of barriers to access, perceived or real, will be essential elements of any successful adult engagement strategy. (p.9)

2.35. Critical to the success of increasing take up in guidance, learning, development or upskilling by those adults not currently engaged in any of these activities would be the recognition of different individual starting points. In particular, the differing needs of those adults who are:

- **interested but not engaged:** i.e. adults who may only require the right information in the right format and through accessible channels, and those who are
- **disengaged:** i.e. adults who will require not just the right information in the right format, but also encouragement and support if their aspirations are to be raised.

2.36. Wilson & Jackson³² identified a number of factors that influence whether an individual shows any interest in presenting themselves for guidance at all or, if they do, their possible responses to engagement with the

³¹ C.Humphries, Director General, City & Guilds, January 2006 'Skills in a Global Economy'

³² Wilson, J. & Jackson, H. (1999) *What are adults' expectations and requirements of guidance? A Millennium Agenda?* Winchester: The Guidance Council.

process. These are:

- *State of readiness*: whether an individual is 'service ready', i.e. is actively seeking out help of some sort.
- *Levels of self-confidence/self-esteem*: Levels of self-confidence/self-esteem will be strong enablers or disablers within the guidance process. Where self-confidence/self-esteem is low more encouragement and in-depth support will be required.
- *Motivation level*: Low motivation levels (which may stem from low self-confidence/self-esteem, or other personal, domestic or financial pressures) are strong disablers within the guidance process. Not only will they act as a barrier to entry, but they might also prevent effective action being taken after a guidance intervention.
- *Previous experience of guidance and/or learning*: Previous experience of guidance and/or learning (whether positive or negative) will influence individual attitudes to guidance, especially as to whether an individual will even present for guidance in the first place.
- *Labour market status*: Low-skilled, low-paid adults spoken to in the study indicated a lack of interest in guidance because 'it would not change anything' or because they were too busy surviving to consider it. More generally, the employed registered some of the following experiences when approaching services: difficulties over access (during working hours); difficulties with making and receiving phone calls at work; vague signposting and referral activities between providers; identifying suitable learning provision.
- *Personal/domestic responsibilities*: Domestic commitments and responsibilities may be enablers or disablers. On the one hand, a domestic situation might provide a degree of financial and emotional support at a time of change; on the other hand,

commitments may be such that the idea of any type of change which has a financial impact or which would require a degree of risk without a guaranteed return, is unlikely to be viewed positively.

- *Financial position:* For most people the priority is to ensure they can earn sufficient to live on, or to support their family and meet their commitments. In some cases, some of those spoken to in the study were doing two jobs to achieve this – taking time out to undertaken learning or skills development was not viewed as a realistic option. . There were indications, however, that those adults who had reached a time in their lives where they felt more settled, and financially and domestically secure, were like to be more open to considering learning.
- *Personal crisis/life transition:* A personal crisis or life transition can be one of the key drivers that brings an adult to guidance.
- *Age:* Age is a central factor in who comes to guidance and when. In some cases people felt the stigma of being ‘past a marketable age’ within the labour market, and had a strong sense of their options closing down. Others felt that re-training at their age might not be worth it. Highly skilled (highly paid) adults who get laid off in mid-life, with ongoing financial and domestic commitments, appear to be confronted by particular problems, finding themselves unmarketable because of their age and the labour market often inflexible with regard to their needs. Others had experienced guidance and felt that it fell short of their specific requirements – e.g. identification of transferable skills or remarketing themselves in a particular sector.

2.37. The issue of different starting points and ‘states of readiness’ is reflected in the OECD report³³, which argues that there are good grounds for the use of more differentiated career guidance methods to match different individual needs.

³³ Sweet, R. & Watts, A.G. (2004) *Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. p.80.

2.38. The use of initial 'screening tools' or 'diagnostic activities' can be a way of doing this (as well as a way of ensuring that the most effective use is made of staff time). An approach to initial screening to determine an individual's readiness for decision-making has been proposed as follows:

- *Those who are initially judged to have a high level of readiness for career decision-making can be referred to self-help services: career resource rooms and websites designed to help them to select, find, sequence and use resources with little or no help;*
- *Those judged to have a moderate level of readiness can be referred to as brief staff-assisted services: some help with the use of resources, supplemented by group sessions;*
- *Those with a low level of readiness can be referred to individual case-managed services: individual counselling and longer-term counselling³⁴.*

(vii) The link between interventions and outcomes

2.39. A review by Killeen and Kidd (1991)³⁵ of 40 (mainly US) studies identified positive links between career guidance interventions and the achievement of an individual's career learning outcome. These outcomes were framed within six main categories as follows:

- *Precursors:* attitudinal factors which facilitate rational decision-making such as reduced decision-anxiety
- *Self-awareness:* learning about self;
- *Opportunity-awareness:* learning about opportunities and options;
- *Decision-making skills:* learning rational decision-making skills

³⁴ Sweet, R. & Watts, A.G. (2004) *Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.
<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/33/45/34050171.pdf>

³⁵ Killeen, J. and Kidd, J. (1991). *Learning Outcomes of Guidance: A Review of Recent Research*. London: Department of Employment.

and strategies;

- *Transition skills*: learning skills for implementing decisions (including job-search skills and interview skills);
- *Certainty of decision*

2.40. The findings (*Ibid*) were overwhelmingly positive: of the 40 studies, only four reported no gains in the categories identified, 30 reported wholly positive results, and gains were reported in each category more often than nil results. Also, positive results were reported for each main type of guidance intervention: classes and courses, workshops and groups, individual guidance, test interpretation and feedback, experience-based interventions and multi-method interventions.

2.41. The OECD³⁶ report reports similar conclusions found in more extensive and more rigorous US meta-analyses of good quality controlled studies which concluded that:

- Career interventions are effective with most age groups;
- Individual guidance has the biggest effect, following by group sessions and classroom interventions;
- ‘Counsellor’-free interventions have the smallest effect sizes;
- Computer delivered interventions are the most cost effective.

(viii) Assessing user ‘competency’

2.42. This topic was discussed at an expert practitioner workshop in July 2006. Participants explored the benefits of a competency/outcomes

³⁶ Sweet, R. & Watts, A.G. (2004) *Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.
<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/33/45/34050171.pdf>. Page 34.

oriented approach that could provide a baseline assessment for the user and for the service provider as well as facilitate the measurement and recognition of distance travelled, and the achievement of positive outcomes. The competency assessment could be at a number of different levels, and could usefully recognise a range of competences such as motivation, knowledge, skills. Three possible levels were identified:

Basic – the individual has little knowledge or understanding of their needs and what they might need to do to address them.

Interpretative – the individual can articulate their needs and has some understanding of what to do next, but needs information or confirmation.

Discursive – individuals have already take some steps to address their needs and need to discuss future actions and options further.

2.43. The Blueprint for Life/Work Designs³⁷ (National Life/Work Centre, 2000) provides a competency model. It translates career development outcomes into sets of competences (that Canadians require) from childhood to adulthood, to manage their life and work development effectively. The Blueprint is developed from a US model and is used by public and private agencies throughout Canada. The primary aim of the Blueprint is to provide a nationally agreed framework of competences and to design services and products accordingly. The competences are available in four age/stage versions to be applicable equally with young people and adults. The headings, common to all four age/stage versions, are as follows:

- Build and maintain a positive self-image.
- Interact positively and effectively with others.
- Change and grow throughout one's life.

³⁷ <http://www.blueprint4life.ca>

- Participate in lifelong learning supportive of life/work goals.
- Locate and effectively use life/work information.
- Understand the relationship between work and society/economy.
- Secure/create and maintain work.
- Make life/work-enhancing decisions.
- Maintain balanced life and work roles.
- Understand the changing nature of life/work roles.
- Understand, engage in and manage one's own life/work building process.

(viii) Developing user-focused services

2.44. Reviewing the findings of the research phase of the review, an expert practitioner workshop held in May 2006 identified the following baseline principles required to underpin a user-focused service offer:

1. A service offer that reflects the following:

- career progression is cyclical not linear – transitions recur throughout life and are multiple;
- every ‘individual’ career is different, but there are two fixed points for all – end of statutory education and eventual retirement; patterns around these are highly variable;
- systematic career planning is not the norm; change (especially externally imposed) can cause confusion and anxiety; desire and readiness for change or need to upskill is variable;
- individual attitudes, needs and circumstances vary enormously; a series of life events can be triggers for action (as either enablers or disablers);
- individuals can develop their own career planning and management as a key life skill.

2. Provides clarity, transparency and quality through:

- a standardised offer – regardless of when, where and who delivers it – underpinned by a set of service standards and delivered by professionally qualified advisers;
- flexible ‘multi channel’ delivery – to meet a range of different needs at different times and different stages across a life course;
- availability of a range of self-help/self-managed tools to promote the use of non face-to-face provision at least at the initial stages of the process;
- one *identifier* or *brand* and logo for all provision that meets the required quality standard

3. That ensures equity of access by:

- effectively combining universal access with the prioritizing and targeting of those with the greatest need;
- being responsive, proactive and reactive to those with specific needs;
- encouraging everyone to participate, regardless of age, gender, race, ability/disability;
- recognising the individual nature of adult career needs and pathways

4. Is promoted as a service that is:

- positive, dynamic and accessible to everyone;
- proactive (and not remedial, i.e. to only be used when there is a problem).

2.45 During the wider workshop discussion practitioners present also noted the following:

- It would be important to be clear on the nature and purpose of the offer and use language to describe it that is familiar, transparent and accessible.
- There would need to be a range of entry points; a no wrong door approach to access.
- There would need to be a number of different delivery channels and access arrangements, including web, phone, face-to-face, group/workshop sessions, drop-in.
- If levels of individual understanding and capacity to self-manage and self-direct were to be assessed at the entry to the

offer, sophisticated generic tools will need to be developed – possibly at more than one level and involving different types of assessment.

- The emphasis would need to be, wherever possible, about encouraging people to help themselves; promoting the softer outcomes of greater individual autonomy and self-determination as well as the harder outcomes of increased skill levels, learning achievements or improved jobs and careers.
- Individuals move along learner or a career pathways in different ways. For example, while some individuals may move take steps in an linear way – e.g. a, b, c, d – it is equally likely that will enter from a whole range of different starting points – e.g. b, d, c, a; c, a, b, d. Any model of delivery needed to reflect this.

2.46 At a later Review consultative workshop held in July 2006, practitioners discussed the need to take a ‘holistic’ approach to services – recognising the synergy between personal and working lives. Tensions were identified, however, between the holistic approach to services (promoting the “whole-person”) with the need to promote the links to the skills and employability agenda (promoting the needs of employers and policy makers).

2.47 The discussion identified the challenge of articulating outcomes that are meaningful to the achievement of policy objectives at the same time as being meaningful to the longer-term goals and aspirations of individual users. There was discussion around the restrictive nature of target driven provision – i.e. restricting the offer to that which can be counted rather than what the individual actually wants or needs; eligibility criteria based on qualification levels rather than need. Tensions exist between the hard and soft outcomes of guidance provision, especially on ways of identifying and recording the achievement of the latter.

2.48 There was also discussion about whether the service offer should be conceptualised in the same way as the health service offer, i.e. with regular check ups (as with the Dental service or paid-for health checks),

a source of general advice and support (the GP service), and a more intense service when problems become severe (hospital).

2.49 It was agreed, however, that simple messages about the purpose of adult guidance were essential, i.e. that it supports

- **Getting into work (and keeping the job)**
- **Getting on at work, and**
- **Getting more out of life.**

3 The Prevailing Offer

(i) The National Policy Framework and Action Plan

3.1 The 'Information, Advice and Guidance for Adults: National Policy Framework and Action Plan (2003)³⁸ was produced by the DfES in response to commitments made in the 2003 Skills Strategy, and provides the policy context in which the current review is being undertaken.

3.2 While generally welcoming the Policy Framework, Watts and Hawthorn³⁹ expressed concern about the lack of clarity over the way services were being described, who would be eligible for what level of service and the proposal to focus on specific priority target groups:

Hitherto, policy has been based on universal access to 'information' and 'advice', and rationed access to 'guidance'. Now, however, it seems that universal access is to be confined to 'information', and that access to 'advice' is to be rationed. This is certainly the impression given in paragraph 1, which states that all adults should have access to 'information', but that the 'new priority to provide free, high quality advice' is to be confined to adults without a level 2 qualification. Confusingly, however, the statement about access later declares that 'core core IAG services will provide access to information and advice services for all adults'. ... The action plan adopts a mid-way position between these two statements, indicating that 'advice services will be available, giving particular priority to those people without a first full Level 2 qualification.

The foreword by Ivan Lewis, parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Skills and Vocational Education adds to the confusion. It states that 'the Government's efforts and investment of public funds should focus on those who need the most help, and who are least able to pay for it'. This statement is located at the end of a paragraph which earlier affirms that 'everyone should have access to information'. The same paragraph also states that 'some people will need advice to help them overcome their barriers to learning, suggesting that this is the only case where a need for advice is to be recognised. The economic and social benefits of assisting the confused, the concerned and the uncertain to make informed and well-thought-through choices about learning and work appear to have been overlooked or dismissed.

³⁸ Department for Education and Skills (2003) *Information, advice and guidance for adults: the national policy framework and action plan produced by the Department for Education and Skills in conjunction with the Learning & Skills Council*. London: DfEE
<http://www.lifelonglearning.co.uk/iag/npfreport.pdf>

³⁹ Watts, A.G & Hawthorn, R. (2004) *The IAG Policy Framework*, Newscheck, July.

3.3 Although the priority target group of those without a Level 2 qualification was clear the wider offer was set within a confusing policy context. What happened as a result of the implementation the National Policy Framework is reviewed in more detail in the next section.

3.4 While a detailed evaluation of the achievements and impact of the National Policy Framework and Action Plan is not in scope to the Review, it is important to recognise that the Policy Framework from 2003 provides the underpinning policy context of the prevailing adult IAG offer.

(ii) Clarifying the adult IAG offer

3.5 The terms in use at the time of the Review described generic levels of service and outlined different stages in the process; they gave little or no indication as to the actual nature of the offer, the purpose or, indeed, outcomes. As a result, over the years adult guidance practitioners have found ways of interpreting these service levels into a service offer which, while reflecting user needs and interests, can be different depending on where the service is delivered, and the nature of the funding arrangements underpinning it. Some providers will use CVs as a main activity; some a range of assessment tools; some will actively help clients seek work, or get on to courses; others will focus on longer term career planning and support to decision-making and action planning. Some will do all of these.

3.6 While there is no doubt there is a substantial amount of good work being undertaken through the current infrastructure, what is provided is a mix of old-style 'educational' guidance; career guidance; job matching/job search activities; personal guidance and mentoring activities (e.g. building confidence and self-esteem) and some community activism. All delivered under the 'IAG' descriptor.

3.7 During a discussion at an expert practitioner workshop held for the Review in July 2006 participants agreed that while there needs to be a clear purpose, set of outcomes and standardised menu of services for adult guidance, there might also need to be different ways of describing

services. While any new service to emerge from the Review process needed to put the user at the centre of the service, it was thought that it also needed to take account of the established set of values and principles of the service practitioner base and the wider policy needs of government. Workshop participants considered the following differing priorities:

- **Consumers** - to reflect the needs and interests of individuals for specific stated services; effective links with the labour market (and, where possible, employers) and for clear, user-friendly, flexible provision.
- **Practitioners** – to ensure continuity with the established set of values and principles of service delivery.
- **Policy makers** – to set the service within the frame of the emerging policy agenda.

3.8 For the practitioner, the process of offering careers related information, advice and guidance is multi-faceted. The sector has tended to depend on a typology of services determined by UDACE in 1986⁴⁰ - i.e.

- Informing; Advising; Counselling; Assessing; Enabling; Advocating; and Feeding Back (to providers data about unmet needs)

3.9 Marris (2004)⁴¹, summarising a discussion on ‘What is guidance?’ conducted through the National Guidance Research Forum website and therefore drawing on opinions expressed by practitioners, concluded:

- how careers guidance is defined will be influenced by the objectives of the parties responsible for the definition;

⁴⁰ Unit for the Development of Adult Continuing Education (1986) *The Challenge of Change: Developing Educational Guidance for Adults*. Leicester: National Institute for Adult Continuing Education.

⁴¹ Marris, L. (2004) What is career guidance? A practitioner's perspective.[online] National Guidance Research Forum website. Available from: www.guidance-research.org/EG/imprac/ImpP1/defining/ImpP1i/ImpP1if/. [Accessed 8 February 2007]

- careers guidance is best viewed as a process, rather than a one-off interaction;
- careers guidance depends on interactivity between adviser and client, which is frequently assumed to be face to face;
- careers guidance is often focused on an individual although its beneficiaries may be wider;
- careers guidance may have multiple outcomes that emerge only over time;
- careers guidance can draw on a large number of different activities and skills depending on the context and aims of the particular client and practitioner involved;
- information provision may form part of a guidance process, but is not in itself guidance.

3.10 For the policy maker, the funding of adult guidance has increasingly become a means to achieve wider goals and policy imperatives – e.g. skills and qualifications. In this way, it was thought that adult guidance risked becoming a remedial activity used to address other priorities – i.e. weaknesses in the current skills base. For example, prior to the 2003 White Paper on Skills (*Ibid*) the entitlement to free information and advice services was universally available, with specific targeting and prioritising undertaken at a local level. When the upskilling of those adults without Level 2 qualifications became a priority (following the 2003 Skills Strategy) the adult guidance offer became a key mechanism through which to identify, reach and facilitate the upskilling of the priority target group.

3.11 While prioritising the lower skilled for guidance makes good policy (and practical) sense, an individual's level of qualification is not necessarily an indicator of ability or needs. By making the pre-Level 2 group the main focus of the funding, other groups whose needs may be as great could have become disenfranchised.

(iii) Publicly funded provision: an overview

3.12 Publicly funded provision represents the vast majority of information, advice and guidance delivered to adults in England. It is defined as those services funded primarily by government through the Learning & Skills Council, the Higher Education Funding Council for England and the Department of Work and Pensions. However, as Nelson⁴² notes other government Departments do offer some services for particular groups. Some form of eligibility criteria applies to nearly all publicly funding.

Whilst the National Learning & Skills Council (NLSC) has a statutory duty to oversee LSC-funded information and advice services for adults, it also proactively works with other government departments and agencies to encourage the development of services for key priority groups. In this context, a wide range of delivery organisations resourced by at least four government departments, namely DfES, DWP, DTI and the Home Office, have a role in contributing to the design and development of information, advice and guidance services for adults. Educational and community-based organisations, private-sector individuals and companies also contribute in differing and significant forms to the overall existing “mix of services”⁴³.

3.13 The definition of the terms “Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)”, and the distinctive meaning and usage varies within and across the differing organisations which in turn can cause confusion about the actual services and types of interventions delivered to adult clients. For example:

- DWP offer a range of IAG services to unemployed people (mainly through Jobcentre Plus provision) as well as web-based jobseeker information and advice through direct.gov.uk;
- DTI offers a range of services to employed people (through direct.gov.uk) and to businesses through services provided via Business Link;

⁴² Nelson, B. (2006) Train to Gain and IAG – Criteria for assessing current IAG provision, Cross Government Review of Information Advice and Guidance Services for Adults, Review Working Group Papers, p.2. Available from: www.iagreview.org.uk

⁴³ Nelson, B. op cit. page 1.

- The TUC Union Learning Representatives (through **unionlearn**) play a significant role in IAG delivery to union members in the workplace.
- The recently launched DfES/LSC Train to Gain programme offers employers impartial advice and easy access to quality training, matching training needs with training providers and ensuring that training is delivered to meet employer's needs.
- The Home Office has responsibility for the IAG for offender/ex-offenders and through the probation service, working closely with the DfES and the LSC.

3.14 The number of people who benefit from these services is difficult to quantify. **Nextstep** providers, **learnirect** advice and the services offered through Jobcentre Plus all operate within a regime of targets and monitoring, as a result of which relatively full data is collected. However, the picture from FE colleges and HE institutions is much more patchy. Records of activity kept by individual universities and colleges are not collated in a standard format; even if they were it is likely that such records would only relate to IAG that is specifically delivered through careers or guidance services and exclude that provided through tutors.

3.15 The scope and aims of publicly funded IAG increasingly reflected government policies relating to education and employment. In **nextstep**, **learnirect** advice and further education provision the trend has been to increasingly target provision at users identified as priorities for learning and skills funding generally – particularly those who qualify for the 'Level 2 entitlement'. Meanwhile, higher education is being encouraged to identify effective vocational progression routes between different level programmes and make more effective links to workplace provision; Jobcentre Plus IAG is focused on supporting the government's Welfare to Work agenda.

3.16 Feedback from all aspects of the Review has been consistent on the impact of the post-2003 diversion of **nextstep** (and to some extent

learnirect advice) funding away from a universal entitlement to information and advice to the priority targeting of the Level 2 entitlement group. While significant achievements have been made in this area, not the least being the way in which **nextstep** have identified and engaged with a range of new partners and providers in order to reach the target group, difficulties have been encountered with regard to wider access to services.

3.17 Adults who did not meet the pre-Level 2 entitlement criteria may have been, by default, disenfranchised from provision. While many **nextstep** partnerships have identified other funding to see adults outside of the pre-Level 2 group, the availability of such provision is erratic and inconsistent. The result has been an offer which is not only difficult to identify but also has not been accessible in all areas.

3.18 Some examples of groups whose needs may well not be reflected in the current priority eligibility criteria, but whose needs are potentially just as great, are:

- HE non-completers
- young people in transition into work (and possibly moving around the job market)
- mid-life career changers (with higher level qualifications)
- adults experiencing redundancy
- labour market returners
- older people looking for a lifestyle change
- people with disabilities
- people with longer-term health problems
- newly arrived migrant workers (looking for a whole range of

support linked to work)

3.19 The other issue that arose consistently throughout the Review research and consultation activities was the fact that the current priority target groups are often the hardest to reach, i.e. adults who have probably not traditionally engaged in learning or skills development and who may not come forward of their own volition – people who probably need more in-depth support and help to enable them to move towards participation in the labour market, and consequently may well need more than the limited offer of information and advice only.

(iv) Core and embedded provision

3.20 Throughout England, IAG provision has unfolded in differing forms ranging from discrete services to those embedded within and outside of formal learning and work arrangements.

3.21 IAG provision can be divided into two main types:

- **Core:** Services that are directly funded and have the provision of guidance as their main activity.
- **Embedded:** Services delivered across a range of sectors and contexts (for example, the FE sector, HE sector, the workplace, the community and offender learning) and supported, either directly or indirectly, by a variety of funding streams.

3.22 The following sections outline in further detail issues associated with the planning and provision of these services relevant to the Review.

4 An Overview of Core Funded Provision

(i) *learn*direct advice and nextstep

4.1 At the time of the Review there were two main strands of LSC core funded information, advice and guidance provision for adults, i.e. the 47 local **nextstep** contracts and the **learn**direct advice telephone and web-based service.

4.2 Based on the commitments outlined in the National Policy Framework, an overview – and comparison – of the current arrangements for both **nextstep** and **learn**direct advice is provided below.

<u>learndirect advice</u>	<u>nextstep</u>
<p>Contracting arrangements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contracted out to Ufi/learndirect through the LSC with the contract managed nationally. <p>Service offer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> While, as nextstep, learndirect advice has targets for the pre-Level 2 priority group, they have a more flexible brief when it comes to handling enquiries outside the priority target group; apart from anything else, generic media advertising will, by definition, enlist a whole range of enquiries at all levels. learndirect advice is underpinned by one dedicated funding stream and all negotiations are undertaken directly between service managers at both learndirect advice and the national LSC; learndirect advice line is free, and is currently trialling phone-based career guidance as part of the review.. 	<p>Contracting arrangements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 47 nextstep services, contracted out to a range of providers delivering across LSC areas. Contracts overseen by national LSC, managed locally. <p>Service offer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Core funding to offer free, face-to-face information and advice services to pre-Level 2 priority target group (with additional priorities agreed with LSC at a local level); There is some flexibility over the budget allocation to nextstep network managers (to see other groups) as long as targets for information and advice sessions for the priority group are met. Many nextstep services supplement core budgets by bidding to other funding streams - for example AimHigher, Local Authorities, or ESF. Until recent changes nextstep also received funding to run <i>enhanced</i> services, which they could use at their own discretion in consultation with local LSCs. Some nextstep managers have arrangements for charged services. These are usually for corporate clients (e.g. redundancy services) and in-depth services such as psychometric testing. Where nextstep services are approached by clients who do not meet either the national or the local targets a number of things may happen: they may use alternative funding streams to see these clients; they may see them 'under the radar'; they may see them and find a way of recording them anyway or they may actually turn them away.

<u>learnirect</u> advice	<u>nextstep</u>
<p>Service delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are two parts to the learnirect advice service – the telephone advice line and the web-based provision. The advice line is delivered (through a sub-contract with BSS); the web provision is managed by the learnirect advice central team. • The guidance trial aside (which has specific target groups) learnirect advice and nextstep networks have had the same core priority target group of clients below Level 2. <p>Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning for the learnirect advice is undertaken directly between Ufi/learnirect and the national LSC. <p>Marketing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learnirect advice benefits from a large, dedicated marketing budget with significant media advertising. • No data is available on whether the large numbers going through learnirect advice are as a result of a specific preference for using the phone or more a response to the media marketing campaigns, although it is apparent that most people prefer to stay with the phone line once they have made initial contact. 	<p>Service delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding arrangements generally are much more complex than for learnirect advice. nextstep networks are not expected to directly deliver any more than 40% of the funded information and advice interventions centrally; the other 60% has to be sub-contracted out. • Generally, nextstep network managers will look for sub-contractors who can help them access the pre-Level 2 target group. • This means that local nextstep managers can be managing sub-contracts of anything up to 20 or more different sub-contractors across their area some of which may not offer guidance as a core activity. In some cases minimum criteria are set for recruiting sub-contractors, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - commitment to the matrix Standard; - qualified staff (while the matrix Standard does not state a minimum qualification level the expectation of nextstep managers in this respect may vary from area to area); - additionality (i.e. colleges need to prove that what they are offering with the nextstep money wouldn't be offered otherwise - this can be a grey area); - equality and diversity. <p>Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LSC chair Local Strategic Partnerships, whose membership includes representatives from Connexions and Jobcentre plus to ensure a more strategic approach to the planning and funding of adult learning and IAG services. The Local Strategic Partnerships will draw on the findings of Strategic Area Reviews. <p>Marketing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no direct link to learnirect advice advertising. While attempts have been made to develop the referral activities between the different service levels this has not proved successful. The nextstep brand and face-to-face service does not currently feature at all on the telephone advertising, (although the advertising for the guidance trial means that one-to-one guidance is now promoted). • The marketing of services is undertaken as much by building complex local partnership arrangements as it is about direct marketing activity.

learndirect	Nextstep
<p>Quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learndirect advice has the matrix Standard and a grading of 2 across the board from its ALI inspection. • All learndirect advisers have to achieve an NVQ Level 3 or 4 depending on which level of the service they are involved in. <p>Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships at a national level with the media, SSCs, Jobcentre Plus (particularly through the Guidance Trial) and a range of other agencies, including the media (for specific campaigns). <p>Labour Market Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasingly closely liaison with SSCs and development of their own labour market information resources.. <p>Service development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learndirect advice offers some specialist sector advice through links with specific sectors or SSCs – e.g. NHS and Skillset and is continually expanding this more specialist provision. 	<p>Quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each nextstep contractor must achieve (or at the very least be working towards) the matrix Standard. • ALI inspections of nextstep networks are now also being undertaken. The ALI Inspection process covers the management and delivery across the whole network, and focuses on the learner experience. Results so far have been mixed, with grades varying between 2 and 4. Although this poses a number of questions about the quality of the offer provided through the nextstep arrangement, it is possible that this is as much a reflection of the complexity and restrictions of the delivery arrangements and <u>must</u> be seen in the context of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - nextstep networks having to manage a large number of sub-contractors; - the diminishing resource provided for cross-network training and development activities; - working with the hardest to reach client groups within the constraints of only being able to offer short information and advice sessions. • Some of the ALI inspection reports also suggest that while individual users have felt listened to and responded positively to the service, not enough ‘hard’ outcomes have been achieved. The viability of whether a service that is only funded to offer information and advice to traditionally hard-to-reach groups, with a range of agencies with limited experience of the process, can then be assessed on hard outcomes requires further discussion. <p>Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong regional and local partnerships with a range of community providers; Jobcentre plus; FE and AE providers; local employers. <p>Labour Market Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to local LMI through local and regional bodies and local intelligence. Partnerships with SSCs at a regional level being developed. <p>Service development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nextstep managers are keen to offer services to the workplace and in many cases are already involved, where there is commitment by the local nextstep manager and the opportunities available to them. In most cases (although by no means all) redundancy services tend to be the main nextstep workplace activity. A lot of work is currently being undertaken to support the role of nextstep networks in the roll out of Train2Gain.

4.3 In the context of the 2003 National Policy Framework and Action Plan, it is clear that the intended aim of supporting the development of an integrated service has not been achieved, despite considerable effort on the part of all those involved. Areas where particular difficulties have been experienced appear to be:

- **learnirect** advice is funded and contract-managed through the national LSC; **nextstep** partnerships work to a national LSC specification, are contract-managed by local LSCs and are influenced, but not directly managed by, the national LSC; **nextstep** partnership managers have to manage a whole range of sub-contractors, many of which may not be guidance specialists, and over whom they have limited management control.
- The operational management arrangements for **learnirect** advice involve a certain amount of autonomy and single contract management; operational management arrangements for **nextstep** are complex and complicated and given the multiple companies that are involved in the contracting arrangements opportunities to influence the way services are run and targets prioritised is problematic
- **learnirect** advice benefits from substantial media advertising which doesn't apply (directly) to **nextstep** provision; while **nextstep** have developed considerable expertise in community outreach a future position would need to provide a better balance between the costs of promoting telephone advice and other forms of provision.
- The common identifier referred to in the Policy Framework never materialised due to difficulties over agreeing what the common identifier should be. A considerable amount of investment has been made in the **learnirect** brand and it has, as a result, high brand familiarity. There continue to be concerns, however, as to whether its strong emphasis on 'learning' reflects sufficiently the breadth and range of an adult

career guidance offer.

Any future decisions about a common identifier will need to learn from the difficulties encountered the first time. Decisions will need to be made based on the underpinning rationale and purpose of a new service and the need to present this to users (and potential) users with as much clarity and transparency as possible.

- Effective referral arrangements between telephone and face-to-face services have not been developed and numbers referred have been low.
- Generally, there has been no standardisation of the offer either between the **learn**direct advice and **next**step provision, or even across the different **next**step providers themselves.

(ii) Purpose and outcomes

4.4 It was considered that a weakness in the way the value and benefits of the guidance process for adults has been assessed in the past is that hard impact measures have been applied to services that, realistically, were only ever funded to deliver soft outcomes.

4.5 For example, current **next**step funding is targeted at pre-Level 2 groups (traditionally hard-to-reach) and is limited in terms of the offer available (restricted to information and advice sessions). Achieving hard outcomes from such a set of arrangements was always going to be a challenge. What would have been preferable would have been to identify what type of service would be best suited to the priority group and appropriate provision developed accordingly.

4.6 It was considered that work could usefully be undertaken about the purpose/expectations, impact measures, services requirements, individual expectations/commitment of any future service, with realistic expectations as to what can be achieved, how and in what timescale. The prevailing position of prioritising the hardest to reach clients with a limited offer that does not reflect their needs was thought to be

unsustainable, especially if the success of the service is to be assessed on hard outcomes around skills.

- 4.7 Guidance may or may not be a quick fix solution. Where individual needs are simple and straightforward it is possible; for others more time and support will be required which will probably mean the achievement of **soft** outcomes, at least initially. It is not realistic to try and expect all individuals to have a standard response to the guidance process; targets and impact measures for the revised service will need to reflect this.

5. An Overview of Embedded Provision

5.1 The Review found that Further Education, Higher Education (and to a lesser extent Adult & Community Learning) all have a commitment to providing adult IAG in some form, although the way they are funded, the levels of commitment and the extent to which provision meets needs varied enormously. An overview of the position of IAG in each of these is provided:

(i) Further Education

5.2 Generally, Further Education colleges aim to provide basic impartial information, advice and guidance to all students irrespective of age; continuing study guidance (progression) and referral to specialist skills learning where appropriate.

5.3 There are generally a variety of staff involved in the delivery of IAG through FE colleges. Frontline staff provide information relating to course enquiries and to refer callers to the appropriate member of staff for further information or advice. Course tutors offer more substantial advice about a particular programme, and even on the kind of jobs it could lead to in the case of specific vocational provision. Student services offer ongoing advice to support all other student needs (including advice on things like finance and childcare) and personal tutors are available to students for ongoing queries over their learning.

5.4 In many cases there will also be a central guidance unit staffed by permanent employees who have professional training. Information and advice may be provided face-to-face, by phone, in employment or in the community, and is commonly available on a drop-in or appointment basis.

5.5 Many colleges have strong links local with communities, and are engaged in workplace activities (whether this is through formal programmes like Train to Gain or via specific links forged at a local level between the college and local employers). There are also examples of colleges working with and through intermediaries such as learning

champions/ learning ambassadors and Union Learning Representatives in support of their roles.

- 5.6 When it comes to providing IAG to adults, however, the picture becomes more complex, and colleges find themselves not always able to respond, especially with regard to adults who are not students. Where funding is available (for example, **nextstep**) the college will give priority to those people yet to achieve a Level 2 qualification; and the change in Government direction for colleges, generally, means that the principal focus and safeguarded funding is overwhelmingly on 14-19 year old students as identified in Success for All. Evidence from case studies gathered for an early mapping activity undertaken for the Review indicates that colleges are increasingly unable to focus attention on adults outside of those groups who qualify for priority funding.
- 5.7 As very few adults are aware of the impact of such policies, however, colleges are still some of the key places that adults approach when wishing to return to learning, especially in those areas where the local college has a strong community ethos.
- 5.8 The White Paper⁴⁴, '*Further Education: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances*' identifies a series of measures for the reform of FE. While it recognises the value of the information and advice available through **learnirect** advice and **nextstep** for adults and what is currently provided in colleges through designated services and those embedded in learning, 'from pre-entry to help with progression opportunities and job seeking', it notes:

'there is considerable local variation and scope for incoherence across ages and providers. Services for adults are a long way from giving everyone advice and guidance when and where they need it. There is also a perception – fair or otherwise – that advice is sometimes prejudiced in favour of universities and non-college provision... We believe that the provision of learner-focused advice and guidance is a key area for action; networks of pathways are not much use without signposts

- 5.9 The White Paper also emphasises the importance of meeting individual,

⁴⁴ DfES (2006) *Further Education: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances* London: Department for Education and Skills. Paras 124 – 6.

employer and community needs, with a strong emphasis on the development of employability:

'...the key strategic role for the (FE) sector is to help people gain the skills and qualifications for employability, so that they are equipped for productive, sustainable and fulfilling employment in a modern economy.... FE has the leading role to play in helping both young people and adults to acquire the skills which are an essential component of a competitive economy..'

5.10 A recent study undertaken for the LSC⁴⁵ made a number of recommendations on ways of improving the provision of IAG in learning provision for adults (covering FE, ACL and work-based learning providers). These are summarised below:

- To increase consistency in the delivery of IAG embedded in learning and to support progression, providers need to give particular attention to the induction process and continuing professional development for all staff involved in the delivery of IAG.
- Providers should assure that they have the capacity to provide appropriate, sufficient and accessible services, delivered by specialist IAG staff that support learner engagement, retention, achievement and progression.

5.11 The paper also recommends that FE providers should pay particular attention to providing adequate IAG to support progression by adult learners on part-time programmes and training and supporting tutors in the delivery of on-programme IAG, although it is difficult to see how this can be achieved within the current funding arrangements.

5.12 More generally, the changes in the way adult provision (particularly part-time provision) is funded, and the priority given to young people, has meant that traditional routes into education and advice and guidance for adults are reducing. This is a concern that has been expressed consistently throughout the review by guidance practitioners, trade union representatives and FE staff alike. NIACE is currently

⁴⁵ LSC, August 2006, *Embedding Information, Advice and Guidance in Learning Provision for Adults*,

undertaking work in this area to identify the extent of the reduction of opportunity.

(iii) Higher Education

5.13 The review received two papers outlining key issues for the Review from the HE perspective; one from Bimrose and Hughes (2006)⁴⁶ and a second submission from AGCAS⁴⁷.

5.14 A recent literature review of evidence regarding curricular and extra-curricular interventions which assist students and graduates to make career-related decisions has identified six types of career development intervention within the HE context.⁴⁸ Specifically, these were:

- pre-entry interventions;
- career-related interventions;
- curricular interventions to support vocational trajectories;
- curricular-related interventions;
- extra-curricular interventions; and
- multicultural interventions.

5.15 The actual level of provision across the HE sector varies enormously. The resource bases of different University careers services will reflect not only the financial health of the institution, but the priority attached by senior management to information, advice and guidance. One indicator is the staffing levels available in different services. Variations identified

⁴⁶ Bimrose, J. and Hughes, D. (2006) IAG Provision and Higher Education Cross-government Review of Information, Advice & Guidance Services for Adults: Selected Review Working Group Papers, Available from www.iagreview.org

⁴⁷ AGCAS (2006) Paper from AGCAS to the IAG Review Group on IAG for Adults in England. Cross-government Review of Information, Advice & Guidance Services for Adults: Selected Review Working Group Papers, Available from www.iagreview.org

⁴⁸ Bimrose, J., Barnes, S.A. & Brown, J. (2005) *A Systematic Literature Review of Research into Career-related Interventions for Higher Education*. Manchester: HECSU
http://www.hecsu.ac.uk/cms/ShowPage/Home_page/Research_reports/Review_of_Research/plkifgjf

in recent research across just ten universities⁴⁹, revealed a range in the staffing levels between one service that employed over seventy careers staff compared with one other service with fewer than six.

- 5.16 A review of guidance and counselling for higher education, commissioned by the Council of Europe⁵⁰ highlighted several tensions in the provision of services, including that of the extent to which University Careers Services are integrated with the Admissions process. As Careers services within Universities were originally intended to help graduates secure employment at the point of exit careers specialists employed by University services tend not to be involved in admissions to courses, nor to have the authority to make offers. The power of admissions remains with admissions tutors, who are unlikely to have had career guidance training and in many cases, their role is primarily grounded in 'marketing' and/or 'student admissions'.
- 5.17 A recent study⁵¹ on the Demand for Flexible and Innovative Types of Higher Education found that many 'non-students' felt the quality of advice and guidance on HE opportunities available to them was inadequate. This came strongly through research in the groups of under-21s not in HE.
- 5.18 A further issue revealed by research is that gaps exist in service provision. AGCAS specifically noted three groups of adults for whom services are not well developed or accessible:-
- *Adults who wish to enter higher education but cannot access guidance services because they do not fit into the target NEET group or the Level 2 entitlement criteria.*
 - *Adults who drop out of HE and return home.* Whilst University careers staff may be able to offer guidance support to the

⁴⁹ Bimrose, J., Barnes, S.A., Hughes, D. & Orton, M. (2004) *What is Effective Guidance? Evidence from Longitudinal Case Studies in England*. DfES/Warwick Institute for Employment Research. Available from: <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/publications/bydate/egr2004.pdf>

⁵⁰ Bimrose, J. (1996) *Guidance & Counselling for Higher Education*. Cheltenham, Gloucestershire: Council of Europe/UCAS.

⁵¹ HEFCE (2006) *Demand for Flexible and Innovative Types of Higher Education*, by SQW Ltd. & Taylor Nelson Sofres. London: HEFCE.

individual as they are coming to their decision to discontinue, once they have left the institution, the ability to continue to support these clients will vary⁵². Data from a survey of higher education careers advisory services (2005) found that while all offered free services to their current students, many restricted their services to their own graduates⁵³.

The 'non-completer' is, therefore, in danger of falling into the gap between services provided free by higher education careers advisers and services outside universities which often operate eligibility criteria which may exclude individuals qualified above level 3.

- *Adults who graduate but are either under- or un-employed.* Some universities continue to offer support to their graduates for up to two years after completion and some support students from other universities who have re-located to the area. However, this provision is not consistent.

5.19 Particularly worrying is the fact there is evidence to show that adults and those from non-traditional backgrounds are more likely to fail to complete in HE (sources HESA website⁵⁴). Statistics also indicate that institutions which have the highest non-completion rates are amongst the leaders in widening participation. The challenge of widening participation and aiding social mobility means that it is important not to pursue a policy of minimising non-completion, but rather build pathways and guidance services which support non-completers in HE in their career and learning progression.

5.20 "Futuretrack⁵⁵", a major research study has been commissioned by the Higher Education Careers Service Unit (HECSU) in collaboration with

⁵² Harris (2001) (op cit) indicated that 'The sector needs to agree the services which students are entitled to receive after leaving the institution.....some institutions may want to extend availability of their services beyond two years, either on a fee-paying basis or as part of their strategy for maintaining links with alumni.' (recommendation 9)

⁵³ In the case of their own graduates, only 38% of HEIs offered an indefinite service; most of the rest restricted it to 2-3 years post-graduation. In the case of graduates from other institutions, many confined it to a limited service and/or for a limited period (usually 2-3 years post-graduation). Extract taken from: Watts, A.G., Hughes, D. & Wood, M. (2005) *A Market in Career? Evidence and Issues*. CeGS Occasional Paper. Derby: Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby.

⁵⁴ www.hesa.ac.uk

the University and Colleges Admission Services (UCAS). Two cohorts of applications are being surveyed at four points in their careers – the research will provide an unprecedented and robust account of the way students plan and prepare for their working lives beyond university. The core studies will be complemented by a range of shorter-term subsidiary studies examining emerging themes in more depth as part of a funded study on career decision-making.

(iii) Jobcentre Plus

- 5.21 In a summary of the extensive work of Jobcentre Plus, Ford and Watts⁵⁶ drew attention to the wide range of contexts in which guidance is offered to clients as a core part of the service offer. Within mainstream Jobcentre Plus services they noted that Personal Advisers have time to spend with individuals, normally those who are 'hard to place'. Their role includes responsibility for building good working relationships with these customers, for conducting work-focused interviews which include assessment and drawing up agreed action plans, and then for helping individuals to implement these plans. Guidance-related activities here include information (LMI and financial), signposting, networking, advice, assessment, enabling, mentoring and following-up.
- 5.22 Across the range of other programmes including New Deal and the variety of other programmes (such as Work-based learning for adults, work trials, action teams for jobs, pathways to work, WORKSTEP, redundancy support service and so on), they found that careers support and guidance activities represents a core part of the work of advisers.
- 5.23 A specific example is Skills Coaching and Skills Passports. Skills Coaching is a pilot project which is part of the New Deal for Skills. It is aimed at adults of working age for whom a lack of skills is a barrier to sustained employment. Skills Passports provide a record of learning progress and skills acquisition. Skills Coaching supports individuals

⁵⁵ www.futuretrack.ac.uk Website accessed 8th March, 2008.

⁵⁶ Ford, G. and Watts, A. G. (2006), Information, advice and guidance aspects of the work of jobcentre plus, Cross-government Review of Information, Advice & Guidance Services for Adults: Selected Review Working Group Papers, Available from www.iagreview.org

aged 20 or over (with no upper age limit) to:

- Identify their skills and barriers in improving their skills (Skills Diagnostic).
- Plan and achieve employment-related learning goals (Skills Development Plan).
- Participate in learning to raise their skill levels and improve their chances of sustained employment (Passport).
- Make the transition into the labour market.

5.24 Implicit within these activities are many of the activities that comprise guidance⁵⁷.

5.25 The evaluations of the initiative⁵⁸ showed that feedback from customers and other participants was positive, and especially so where they have had access to the same skills coach throughout the programme (turnover of skills coaches has been a problem, which may in part be related to the job insecurity inherent in short-term funding). In Stage 2 over half the participants found work, which they attributed to the help they received during the programme.

5.26 A critical issue found in this example, and from across the services provided through Jobcentre Plus is that of staff training and support. Staff who join JCP are not necessarily selected specifically for front-line work nor to work as Personal Advisers. JCP has a significant number of staff with the potential to provide high-quality guidance, if they were given the time, training and internal management support and encouragement to do so. In general, however, there appears to be limited understanding or appreciation of guidance at either management

⁵⁷ Ford, G. (2005). *Am I Still Needed? Guidance and Learning for Older Adults*. Derby: Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby

⁵⁸ Hasluck, C., Bimrose, J., Barnes, S.-A. & McGivern, G. (2005). *Evaluation of Skills Coaching Trials and Skills Passports: Early Lessons from Implementation and Delivery*. Warwick: Institute for Employment Research.

Hasluck, C., Bimrose, J., Barnes, S.-A., Marris, L. & White, R. (2006). *Evaluation of Skills Coaching Trials and Skills Passports: Stage 2 Qualitative Survey Report*. Warwick: Institute for Employment Research.

or front-line levels. This means that the complexity of much of the front-line work is not appreciated in many sections of the organisation. At the same time, front-line staff themselves often realise they are not properly equipped to provide individuals with the help they require and report feeling inadequately prepared for their roles especially when working with individuals with special needs.

5.27 Ford and Watts⁵⁹ did however highlight two other very positive aspects of Jobcentre Plus. The first was the development of a formal partnership agreement to manage referrals with Ufl/**learn**direct so that both organisations can work together to help customers. JCP was also collaborating with **learn**direct advice to ensure that the telephone helpline advice and guidance service is available to JCP customers. JCP and **learn**direct advice staff are working together to give joint presentations on the new service to managers and advisers throughout the regions.

5.28 Second was the development of a framework of performance management to measure the impact of the significant support offered through the service. Significant potential for enhancing the IAG elements of mainstream JCP provision is offered by the National Employment Panel Skills Advisory Board's report *Welfare to Workforce Development* (NEPSAB, 2004⁶⁰). This emphasised the importance of JCP enabling customers to develop their abilities through skills training rather than prioritising immediate reduction of the unemployment register by submitting individuals to (often) unsuitable and unfulfilling vacancies. It accordingly proposed a move from job-entry targets (JET) to job-outcome targets (JOT). Key performance indicators proposed in the report (designed to be applicable to the training and FE sectors as well as JCP) were:

- Job-entry rates.

⁵⁹ Ford G. and Watts, A. G. (2006), Information, advice and guidance aspects of the work of jobcentre plus, Cross-government Review of Information, Advice & Guidance Services for Adults: Selected Review Working Group Papers, Available from www.iagreview.org.

- Skills and qualifications achieved.
- Retention in work (seen as distinct from retention in work with an individual employer).
- Wages at entry (higher wages are linked to sustainable employment and are seen as the best proxy for the economic value that an employer places on a job).

5.29 Within JCP, the move to JOT has been accepted and is gradually being implemented. The new model will continue to be targeted through points awarded on a twelve-point scale according to the degree of priority allocated to specific customer groups (e.g. lone parents, ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities). But it should provide scope for front-line staff to pay greater attention to the quality as well as the quantity of job placements, and to training to enhance career prospects and assist progression.

5.30 There are close relationships between Jobcentre Plus and **nextstep** at a local level in most (although by no means all) areas. Jobcentre Plus will signpost/refer individuals to **nextstep** for a range of guidance activities.

(iv) Offenders' Learning and Skills Service

5.31 From 31st July 2006, the LSC took responsibility for offender learning and skills across England. The LSC manage planning, funding and delivery of the integrated Offenders' Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) across all nine English regions, having previously had responsibility for three development regions in the Northwest, Northeast and Southwest for a year. The vision for OLASS is

"that offenders, in prisons and supervised in the community, according to need, should have access to learning and skills, which enables them to gain the skills and qualifications they need

⁶⁰ National Employment Panel Skills Advisory Board (2004). *Welfare to Workforce Development*. London: National Employment Panel.

*to hold down a job and have a positive role in society*⁶¹.

5.32 The main focus of OLASS is an early, intense focus on assessment, advice and guidance, leading to the production of an individual learning plan that will cover the offender as s/he passes through the criminal justice system. The aim is to develop an educational system that the offender can pursue through custody and into the community. The contribution of a range of service providers to the success of the service is vital, these include prisons, probation, the LSC, youth justice, **nextstep**, Connexions, training providers and JobCentre Plus. The role of IAG within the process is also vitally important and one that was recognised in the evaluation of the services' first year⁶². OLASS has been associated with improved IAG services for offenders by over half of the sample of those involved in the evaluation. The improvements were linked to:-

- Improved standards in the delivery of IAG (including the delivery of learner focused advice rather than recruitment to what training was on offer)
- Increase in numbers of staff and/or hours that they worked within the institution for face to face delivery with offenders
- Improved multi-agency working and co-ordination of services
- Increase in staff development and training opportunities and
- Greater recognition and prioritisation of IAG.

5.33 Clearly, many of these are mutually reinforcing. Similarly, it was where these factors were not apparent that stakeholders reported few improvements to the IAG received by offenders in their institutions.

⁶¹ <http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/2006/externalrelations/press/nat-responsibilityforoffenderlearningpassestothelsc-pr-july2006.pdf>

⁶² Halsey, K. Martin, K. & White, R. (2006) *The Implementation of OLASS: An assessment of its impact one year on*. Research Report 810. Nottingham, Department for Education and Skills.

(iv) Other publicly funded provision

5.34 As noted in the introduction to this report, one of the limitations of the research undertaken to date has been the lack of detailed information about the range, extent and quality and purpose of IAG within Adult & Community Learning (ACL). Whilst the provision is funded by the LSC and will therefore be underpinned by the LSC's own commitment to quality IAG within all its funded programmes, information as to exactly how much goes on, where and by whom is limited.

5.35 The non-vocational nature of ACL provision means that it has not been on the radar of the current policy agenda – i.e. skills and vocational learning. However, part time study around an interest or a hobby remains one of the most important ways in which adults engage with, or may return to, learning. As raised previously in this report, concern has been expressed from a number of stakeholders as to the reduction in adult learning opportunity being experienced as a result of current funding priorities.

5.36 NIACE input to the Review on embedded provision provided some observations and recommendations for ACL. They concluded that providers should pay particular attention to:

- helping adult learners develop the skills to make and act upon decisions about learning and work;
- where appropriate, preparing and supporting learners with progression into work;
- adequately training and supporting subject tutors in the delivery of on-programme IAG;
- assuring that the range of approaches taken to delivering on-programme IAG is adequate to meet the diversity of learners' needs.

5.37 Other areas for which there is currently a lack of specific information as

to the extent to which adult guidance provision is available, but where we feel there is probably a lot of informal advice being provided, are:

- information and advice provided through the work of health and social care professionals;
- information and advice provided through libraries;
- provision for specific groups – e.g. refugees, adults with disabilities;
- community-based provision (funded through a number of different funding streams);
- Ukonline and **learndirect** learning centres.

5.38 More work needs to be undertaken to determine the extent to which the above agencies are involved in the delivery of adult guidance activities, and the extent to which the level and nature of their involvement could be increased (for example, the ukonline infrastructure is located in libraries and other community-based locations).

(vi) Non-publicly funded provision

5.39 Non-publicly funded provision refers to a range of services delivered through the voluntary and community sector (VCS), business advice and brokerage, the workplace and fee-based provision. It also includes private training providers.

5.40 Although these services are distinguished by the sources from which they generate their income – i.e. fees, voluntary and private sources as well as government - it is important to stress that they overlap significantly with publicly funded IAG provision. For example, voluntary and community organisations (VCOs) account for nearly one-third of providers that make up local **nextstep** networks and they receive client referrals from public sector agencies. Elsewhere, some providers that are predominantly publicly funded, notably **nextstep** services and higher education services, have developed fee-based strands directed at

specific groups of employers and individuals.

- 5.41 Again, quantifying the resources committed specifically to IAG activities, or the numbers of clients using those serviced provided through non-publicly funded routes is difficult. Many organisations operate independently (although private training providers do have an umbrella body, the Association of Learning Providers, which speaks on their behalf); there are no central sources that gather data; funding streams are diverse and dispersed; and IAG elements are often embedded within programmes and projects following a wider remit so may not be easy to discern or measure.
- 5.42 For instance, much fee-based provision is delivered by commercial companies operating in the private and outside any regulatory framework. In the VCS, IAG work has most often attracted funding when it has been included as a secondary aim in wider ranging advice and support interventions. Similarly, when IAG is delivered as part of a business advice service this will usually form only a small part of a broader pack of support.
- 5.43 The chief characteristic of this category of provision, and its main strengths, is the sheer range and diversity of user needs that it is able to address. It is flexible and adaptable and has considerable potential to develop carefully tailored and targeted services through a large number of providers.
- 5.44 VCOs have particular strengths in working with disadvantaged groups and individuals for whom mainstream provision is, in many cases, inaccessible; fee-based providers and business advice services can offer a range of specialist provision directed principally at highly qualified individuals including senior managers; Union Learning Representatives can help address the IAG needs of union members in the workplace. It is perhaps indicative of the often highly specialised nature of some of this provision that, within quite different contexts, much use is made of peer support to mediate between individuals and sources of IAG. Learning brokerage in business, community activists

and learning champions/ ambassadors in the VCS, and ULRs in the workplace all provide evidence of this trend.

5.45 There is, however, a serious issue about 'regulation' and 'quality' across the whole of the non-publicly funded sector. Recent findings from some of the **nextstep** ALI inspections, for example, indicate a weakness in the IAG provision delivered by some of the sub-contracted bodies. The very strengths that these agencies bring to the range of provision – their capacity to engage with a range of groups; flexible approaches; user constituencies who may not approach other services - are also a potential weakness. They are not specialists, and their interests in becoming even 'para-professionals' within the IAG context is probably as much linked to their capacity to generate income for their own agency as it is an interest in developing their own professional skills in this area.

(vii) Private sector providers

5.46 An analysis of Yellow Pages by the Centre for Guidance Studies⁶³ in their report for the DfES on *A Market in Career? Evidence and issues* estimated that there were around 1,400 organisations offering careers advice nationally and of these around 550 were private sector organisations. Some of these had more than one listing, especially the larger companies, which may have a number of offices throughout the UK.

5.47 Some of these companies provided services solely to companies, others only to individuals and some offered both. In addition, there is an increasing number of life coaching type services, which may claim to include an element of career coaching. Some are sole practitioner consultancies; others management consultancies or working through private colleges. The UK International Coach Federation has about 650 members and at the top end of the executive coaching market services are offered by members of the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC).

5.48 There is a wide range of provision available through private sector agencies, some specialising, others working more generally. Examples of the types of services they might provide are given below:

- Personal careers consultation/career counselling
- Careers coaching
- Business outplacement services
- How to get interviews and be successful
- CV services
- Psychometric testing
- Personality questionnaires
- Workshops in career rethinking and job search skills;
- Career development at work;
- Interview skills
- Networking and jobsearch skills.

5.49 A significant amount of the in-house career counselling undertaken in the workplace is undertaken by these private sector providers.

5.50 There are also increasing number of web-based agencies who offer similar services on line – in particular CV development and job matching. The CeGS research surveyed a sample of 20 of these and found that nearly half were free and the rest charged for some or all of their services. They offered a range of services including career guidance, psychometric assessment and preparation of CVs. All

⁶³ Watts, A.G., Hughes, D. & Wood, M. (2005). *A Market in career? Evidence and Issues*. CeGS Occasional Paper. Derby: Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby. .

charged for their CV writing services although some offered free web-based information on CV writing.

- 5.51 Again, data is not available on the total volume and value of fee-based provision, the sector generally is not regulated so the quality of services is not assured. That is not to say that staff may not hold qualifications or that the services on offer are not of a high standard. It is just that there is no way of measuring this.

(viii) IAG in the workplace

Language and scope

- 5.51.1 As with the language associated with defining terms and services for IAG in general, there are similar issues when discussing the nature, role and outcomes expected of IAG in the workplace. The term workforce development has been defined as covering:

'All activities which increase the capacity of individuals to participate effectively in the workplace, thereby increasing their productivity and employability⁶⁴.

- 5.52 IAG has a crucial role to play in workforce development and concerns both learning and work activities. It does this most effectively by ensuring that the right individuals undertake the right learning and development activities, with the right levels of support and so achieve the 'right' outcomes (although what constitutes 'right' will vary from individual to individual) - in terms of maximising their own productivity, employability and progression prospects.

- 5.53 The evaluation of the Employer Training Pilots⁶⁵ suggested in regard to planning learning and development provision in the workplace that this should be provided at key transitions, as follows:

⁶⁴ PIU (2001) *In Demand: Adult Skills on the 21st Century*. London: Performance and Innovation Unit, Cabinet Office.

⁶⁵ Hillage, J. Loukas, G. Newton, B. & Tamkin, P. (2005) *Platform for progression: Employer Training Pilots. Year 2 Evaluation report*, Sheffield, Department for Education and Skills.

- Getting in - in terms of understanding what the training is about, overcoming any concerns, ensuring the proposed course is appropriate, having current skills assessed/accredited and any barriers to learning properly identified.
- Getting on - in terms of support with the learning/development process, including maintaining pace and momentum through giving/receiving feedback on progress.
- Moving on - in terms of progression on achievement, including considering what further learning/development would be appropriate.

5.54 Evidence related to career interventions in the workplace was provided to the review in a paper by Bysshe and Hirsh⁶⁶. The paper explored the role employers play in delivering IAG in the workplace. It noted that recent market research by MORI⁶⁷ has shown that *one in three* respondents had received IAG via this channel, most of which related to the user's current job and one *quarter* of which related to a future job. The evaluation of the Employer Training Pilots⁶⁸ indicated that the majority of learners (71%) agreed strongly that employers should give internal career guidance. The most common approach is for career management support to be provided by line managers.

5.55 There were some concerns that in practice, support is skewed towards a relatively small group of senior or high potential employees⁶⁹. In addition, workforce and career development practice is different in SMEs where there is generally less 'infrastructure' and fewer 'support' functions. As a consequence, smaller companies are typically very lean

⁶⁶ Bysshe, S. and Hirsh, W. (2006) Career Interventions in the workplace. *Summary of Thematic Literature Review for the Consultative Workshop 3rd March 2006*. [online]. Briefing Papers Prepared by the Research Partners. Derby: Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby. Working Group Paper. Available from: <http://www.iagreview.org.uk/papers/ICT%20and%20IAG.pdf> [Accessed 9 March 2008]

⁶⁷ MORI (2005) *Demand for, and perceptions of, information advice and guidance*. The Guidance Council: Leicester.

⁶⁸ Department for Education and Skills (2005) *Platform for Progression: Employer Training Pilots. Year 2 Evaluation Report*. Sheffield: DfES.

⁶⁹ Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2003) *Managing Employee Careers*. Survey Report: London.

and career ladders - where they exist - are short⁷⁰. Finally, the least likely people to receive employer-delivered IAG are manual, older and ethnic minority employees⁷¹.

Balancing the needs of employers and employees

- 5.56 The management of individual career development in the workplace effectively requires an understanding of how best to align individual, wider workforce and business development agendas in a company and to see the relationship between individual and organisational learning. A critical issue is reconciling individual and business needs in the delivery of workplace IAG.
- 5.57 The challenge is to be able to balance those needs in such a way as to provide a framework of provision, whether it be provided through external intermediaries or as part of a wider approach to the management and development of staff.
- 5.58 Employers need to consider how best to deliver career support to individuals in the context of their wider human resource development (HRD) strategies. These should include consideration of key issues such as the state of the psychological contract between employers and employees, the extent and nature of performance management and appraisal systems and selected methods of staff training and development (be those formal or mainly informal in nature).
- 5.59 Hirsh⁷², in a recent paper, took an employer's perspective on the business case for 'guidance' in the workplace and argued that career development in the workplace has several different business benefits:

⁷⁰ Westhead, P., and Storey, D.J., (1997) *Training Provision and the Development of Small and Medium-Sized Businesses*. DfEE Research Report No 26.

⁷¹ Simon Bysshe and Associates Ltd. (2006) *Developing IAG in the workplace: evaluation of IAG demonstration projects in the East of England*.

⁷² Hirsh, W. & Jackson, C. (2004) *Managing Careers in Large Organisations*. London: The Work Foundation.

(i) **Growing skills** which cannot easily be hired on the external labour market. Such skills are usually grown by progressive work experiences, and often involve the acquisition of knowledge and skills quite specific to the employing organisation. This is as true of development potential call centre supervisors or section leads in a retail store as of senior management or highly specialised professionals. In public policy terms this links with the government's skills agenda, the desire to increase social and economic mobility, and the economic drive to a higher-value economy.

(ii) **Deploying skills** more effectively within the organisation. Open internal labour markets are now the norm and rely on employees who know which jobs to apply for. For the employee this offers career opportunity – for the employer, skill mobility. At times of cutbacks or re-organisations, career development is essential to make sure skills are not lost and then re-recruited. In public policy terms this links with policies of flexible labour markets and increasing national productivity, and also of keeping low levels of unemployment.

(iii) **Career development** is where the needs of the individual and the needs of the employer are most explicitly negotiated. Attending to career issues honestly and with care seems to engage employees and have the capacity to motivate them to perform better. It may also improve attraction and retention, although the evidence here is less strong. In public policy terms this links with the desire to see more participation of employees in the workplace and improved employee relations, as well as providing a different route to increased productivity.

5.60 Hirsh goes on to argue that workplace career support for employees in terms of information, advice, guidance and support for action is required to make the process of career development effective. Without this support many employees will not be proactive in developing their potential at work or in finding the jobs which suit them best.

5.61 Companies and organisations (irrespective of their size) that have not considered how best to meet the career support needs of their employees are very unlikely to be maximising the investment they have made in them, or to be releasing fully the potential of the individuals concerned.

What do employers want from IAG?

5.62 A paper was produced for the Review by Ann Mason of Skillset and John Baker of the DTI⁷³, in consultation with four Pathfinder Sector Skills councils (with input from the CBI, BCC, the Small Business Council and other employers) on 'What employers want from a universal IAG service for adults?'. The needs of employers were articulated as follows:

- A steady stream of qualified and/or experienced people, with many sectors struggling to achieve this. Generally, trying to attract the right people with the right skills was expressed as a problem – a situation that can only get worse given the current demographics.
- An IAG service that is client-focused and places the onus on the individual to research and approach employers that s/he may be interested in working for.
- Some recognition that employers need to collaborate so that individuals can access accurate, up-to-date, information on their sectors providing a national overview with as much regional breakdown as practicable, to include:
 - qualitative intelligence on sectors;
 - labour trends within individual sectors;
 - career routes into and within specific sectors together with information on related qualifications;
 - information tailored for specific groups within the labour market;
 - the management of expectations on the rates of return from particular careers and the dispelling of perceptions about some industries so that individuals can make informed choices;

⁷³ Mason, A. and Baker, J. (2006) What do employers want from a universal IAG service for adults, Cross-government Review of Information, Advice & Guidance Services for Adults: Selected Review Working Group Papers, Available from www.iagreview.org

- clear signposting within the system to sources of sector-specific information.
- Local chambers could have a role in achieving this given that they already conduct quarterly reports that feed into the Quarterly Economic Survey.

5.63 The paper also presented a summary of responses to questions put to employers for their views of the current delivery arrangements. These were:

- The IAG infrastructure has not been particularly helpful to employers in taking a proactive role in seeking to match their labour requirements with job seekers. There is currently no intermediary role between those visiting job centres and firms needing to fill vacancies. Currently IAG focuses on the needs of jobless individuals and not on the needs of the employer.
- There needs to be a seamless IAG service from school-leavers to adult. This is difficult to achieve with current government emphasis on the 14-19 age group. People need to access IAG services at different stages in their lives, due to changes in their circumstances.
- Support was voiced for the establishment of a single IAG service for employers and those above the age of 19, citing the benefits this would bring to SMEs.
- Specific comments were that the profile of **nextstep** was not high enough (and needs to be raised); **learnirect** service was not effective enough (at the level of careers linked to jobs advice and vacancies) and that Jobcentre Plus were offering businesses the wrong candidates for jobs (poor links between Jobcentre Plus staff and employers).

5.64 The paper then explored the potential role of employers in supporting the provision of sector-specific IAG. For example, Skillset operates a network of industry advisers that provide one-to-one advice and guidance for people wishing to enter or progress within its industries. Recruited from

companies in the sector, they are also provided with presentation skills training that enables them to promote their respective industries within schools, careers fairs and at other events. This type of activity is being developed by an increasing number of SSCs.

Delivering IAG in the workplace

5.65 Research undertaken for the LSC⁷⁴ highlights the range of formalised career development/IAG and learning support that is currently (albeit variably) found in the workplace⁷⁵, for example:

- formalised in-house career management and development programmes (which are a well-established feature in a restricted number of larger organisations);
- Union Learning Representatives ('front-line' learning advice and support for union members);
- learning/training provider support (e.g. provided by assessors/trainers who are supporting work-based learning - including Apprenticeships).
- IAG/guidance providers: this includes public (e.g. **nextstep**) as well as private sector provision (e.g. career/executive coaching).
- Outplacement/Progression: (e.g. support in redundancy situations is extensively available through outplacement; in the context of the Armed Services, extensive resettlement provision is available) and, more recently
- Train to Gain, with an emphasis on the assessment and upskilling of those below Level 3.

5.66 NIACE recommend that all work-based learning providers should pay

⁷⁴ Learning and Skills Council, (2006) Developing an employer focussed IAG strategy'. Simon Bysshe Associates Ltd.

⁷⁵ There is very limited research on the actual extent, nature and effectiveness of much of this provision.

particular attention to quality of IAG delivery in the workplace by:

- assuring employees have access to the services of specialist IAG staff as necessary, through either the development of in-house expertise or referral;
- assuring that staff delivering IAG are able to access adequate and appropriate support from specialist IAG staff, either internally or externally;
- reviewing whether their staff handbook could be better used to support staff delivering embedded IAG;
- reviewing whether greater use could be made of ICT to deliver IAG in a workplace setting;
- ensuring that arrangements for progression to further opportunities are adequately and appropriately provided.

Role of Union Learning Representatives

5.67 Within a working group paper on the role of Union Learning Representatives (ULRs) in the workplace, it was noted that the Union Learning Fund (ULF) has developed almost 500 projects involving most unions, with the development of some 40 learning centres meaning that there are now nearly 12,000 trained ULRs who working with peers, mentors and colleagues helped over 67,000 workers back into learning last year⁷⁶.

5.68 Although the paper notes a number of development issues arising from a project-based approach to learning in the workplace, it does note that “the ULR role is capable of impartiality as the ULR is not usually committed to one specific provider or group of providers and theoretically could provide members with a very broad range of learning

⁷⁶ Hughes, S. and Haughton, L. (2006) Information advice and guidance: a mapping project to explore the relationship and role of ULRs within other work-based intermediaries. TUC Union Academy.

opportunities.”⁷⁷

A sustained programme of development

5.69 In summarising the role of IAG in the workplace Bysshe and Hirsh (Ibid) noted that there was a need for a sustained programme of activity to develop:

- A clearer understanding of work that is taking place in the field (including the need for inter-agency co-operation).
- The evidence-base (particularly in regard to building the business case for developing career interventions in the workplace).
- The competence and capability of practitioners (including recognising the over-lapping skills of different professional groups and the different contributions they can make in this area).
- The profile of career and wider human resource development (HRD) work and their inter-relationship in contributing to wider policy objectives.

5.70 They concluded that many adults that would probably not even consider making an independent approach for careers guidance could be reached through the workplace.

⁷⁷ Ibid page 19.

6. Delivery Methods

(i) Overview

6.1 Evidence from across the research and consultative activities undertaken as part of the Review process indicated that there are a range of approaches and interventions which are effective in engaging service users. These include:

- face-to-face provision (whether individually or in group settings)
- phone and email support;
- drop-in, group or workshop arrangements;
- self-help techniques, increasingly as part of web-based services;
- IAG open-access resource units, which users can approach on a self-service basis, with minimal help;
- targeted and personalised services embedded in the workplace, in learning and across other group guidance activities;
- harnessing the expertise of community members, sometimes on a voluntary basis, to deliver some aspects of IAG services; and
- using support staff to work alongside more highly qualified staff in delivering services: for example, providing help with information searches; managing relationships with community members and providing ongoing support where needed.

6.2 While the National Policy Framework and Action Plan outlines the type of provision that should be made available, there is no clearly defined and agreed set of standards or outcomes against which differing methods of delivery can be assessed. In a study undertaken

in 2005 Hillage⁷⁸ et al highlighted the absence of a common set of agreed performance indicators and/or standards for assessing and measuring the effectiveness of different approaches on outcomes – i.e. different providers largely use their own customised systems.

6.3 The different ways in which adult guidance is delivered are well known, as is the fact that adults will approach services through a variety of routes, locations and arrangements and have personal preferences as to whether they initially want to access services, face-to-face, by phone, email or online. No detailed analysis exists on how and why users of services make specific choices. The **learnirect** advice line (both in its work during the last few years, and through the guidance trial) has been very successful in drawing in large numbers of adults to its service. While there is no doubt the telephone is a major strand of any delivery system, what is unknown is whether those individuals who have responded have done so because they made a specific choice for telephone advice, or whether it is the only service that has had sufficient profile to reach their attention. Whatever the position, it is clear that, that visibility, ease of access and cost are critical factors. Also, evidence from the Review indicates that the use of workshop and group activities; the development of a range of advocacy support activities and the need to promote, equally, a range of different ‘delivery channels’ will need to be important features in the design of any future service.

6.4 It is also useful to look in more detail at some of the new delivery methods being tried (or explored). A brief summary of the some of these is provided below, along with an analysis of the role of technology in future provision. There are fuller papers on all of these available as part of the Review documentation.

(ii) *learnirect* advice telephone guidance trial

6.5 The 2005 Skills White Paper established a trial extension of the Ufl/**learnirect** telephone advice service to provide in depth personal

⁷⁸ Hillage, J. Loukas, G. Newton, B. & Tamkin, P. (2005) *Platform for progression: Employer Training*

guidance. The service was to target an audience of callers looking to develop their careers or progress to a Level 3 qualification or beyond or who were seeking to return to work. An evaluation of the trial⁷⁹ which initially ran from January to July 2006 generated a number of conclusions that were relevant for the Review:

- Over 85,000 adults used the service in the first 12 months. 15,000 more than expected.
- It has successfully generated demand for careers guidance among people who haven't had any help recently - 75% of users haven't used careers guidance since leaving school; and it reached its intended target groups - 55% women; 60% either unemployed or not in work; and 36% qualified to Level 2 but without a Level 3 qualification. There was under-representation of the over 50's (possibly due to their lack of familiarity or ease with communication technologies).
- Telephone was the preferred medium via which to receive guidance for many users who valued the convenience and accessibility of the service, although this is unsurprising given the nature of the television advertising campaign.
- 86% of users rated the quality of advice as good and expert assessment showed that it was often as good as the best face-to-face guidance.
- Even in the short time since the start of the service the outcomes achieved by users were impressive. 20% said they had gained employment since their first call and 30% had already started learning or training courses.
- 52 per cent of callers indicated that the telephone guidance service had been a significant or quite a big influence in helping them to

Pilots Year 2 Evaluation Report. Nottingham, Department for Education and Skills

make decisions about their career.

- But the evaluation also suggested some improvements. For example, while people with career plans achieved more positive outcomes, some customers were a little reluctant to develop them. So more needed to be done to overcome that.

6.6 The trial demonstrated that guidance could be delivered over the phone in an effective and user-friendly way. Telephone guidance would not meet universal needs, however, and should be seen as a significant service offer to be combined with a range of other delivery channels and mechanisms.

(iii) SkillsFile/Skills Passport/Skills coaching

6.7 Skills Coaching aims to offer support to individuals to help them find the most effective and efficient route to improved employability. Skills Coaching is intended for adults of working age (20 years and over with no upper age limit) for whom lack of skills is the main barrier to sustained employment.

6.8 Two key elements of the programme are the SkillsFile and the Skills Passport which are undertaken as mediated activities with a trained Skills Coach. The purpose of the SkillsFile is to record existing skills and help individuals to identify where they may want to further develop skills or obtain employment in the future. The Skills Passport provides the opportunity to summarise individual skills and achievements to show to a prospective employer. The Skills Passport will benefit the employer because it not only tells them what qualifications and competences an individual has but also what other skills they are working towards. An employer can also use the Skills Passport as a development tool.

6.9 The paper based passport is compiled using the information gathered in the Skillsfile. The Passport is a way of showing all the skills a person has and includes the following:

⁷⁹ Page, R., Newton, B., Hawthorne, R., Hunt, W. & Hillage, J. (2007). *An Evaluation of UFI/Learndirect*

- A brief introduction to employers
- Space for CV
- Skills profile (taken from the Skillsfile) and evidence (e.g. certificates, qualifications and assessments)
- A skills development plan (adapted from the Skillsfile)
- Space for any other appropriate information

6.10 The target audience is adults of working age (20 years and over with no upper age limit) with specific focus on two key groups:

- Inactive benefit recipients for whom lack of skills is the main barrier to employment and who intend to return to the labour market in the mid to longer term but want to do something in the short term to improve their job prospects, and
- JSA recipients for whom lack of skills is the main barrier to employment, including those moving into employment with a company or organisations participating in Train to Gain.

6.11 Additional planned target groups are adults aged 50+, black minority and ethnic groups and low skills women . It is not expected that these groups will be formally signing on at jobcentres, so community outreach activities by Skills Coaching providers is expected.

6.12 It is anticipated that skills coaching support will cease once the individual secures employment, although referral to the **learn**direct advice service may be appropriate as a source of further support.

(iv) The role of ICT in delivering IAG

6.13 Summarising the evidence on the current and potential use of ICT in the

delivery of guidance services Watts and Offer⁸⁰ presented a paper to the Review that stressed the different uses of ICT as follows:

- As a medium for the interaction between a guidance worker and a client and
- As a resource in the decision-making process.

6.14 Email, chat, newsgroups, SMS, telephone and videoconferencing can all be used as media for technically mediated guidance-worker/client interactions, supplementing or replacing face-to-face interactions. Websites and software, on the other hand, are resources which guidance workers may use in their interactions with clients, or to which they may refer clients, or which may be used quite independently of a guidance worker.

6.15 There is some evidence that users prefer different media for different IAG tasks. For example, Behrens & Altman⁸¹ in a survey of US students found that 80% would rather gain information from a computer than from a book, 85% would rather use a computer program to help them develop a résumé, and 70% thought computers would help them find jobs much faster than would traditional job-search methods. But when a job search did not work out, 75% would rather discuss that frustration in a face-to-face counselling session than via a video hook-up, and 90% would rather get personal feedback from a career counsellor than from a computer when practising interview techniques.

6.16 Meanwhile, in terms of resources there is growing evidence that users look significantly to the Internet for information.⁸² It is also clear that the Internet is changing the ways in which employer-employee matches are

⁸⁰ Watts, A. G. and Offer, M. (2006) The Current and Potential Role of ICT in Delivering Information, Advice and Guidance IAG Review: Summary of Thematic Literature Review for the Consultative Workshop 3rd March 2006. [online]. Briefing Papers Prepared by the Research Partners. Derby: Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby. Working Group Paper. Available from: <http://www.iagreview.org.uk/papers/ICT%20and%20IAG.pdf> [Accessed 8 March 2008]

⁸¹ Behrens, T. & Altman, B. (1998) Technology: impact on and implications for college career centers. *Journal of Career Planning and Employment*, 58(2), 19-24.

⁸² Also, in a separate MORI survey of final-year undergraduates, 83% of those actively looking for careers information used the Internet to do so. Market and Opinion Research International (2001)

made, as the labour market becomes increasingly 'wired'.⁸³ The impact of the internet as a resource but also as a communication media will change further as the hitherto separate 'analogue streams' of the computer, the television and the telephone are increasingly merging into an integrated 'digital river'.⁸⁴ Individuals are now able to access the Internet not only through their personal computers but also through their televisions and mobile phones. Greatly enhanced bandwidth is enhancing its speed and its capacity for transmitting video and audio as well as text. Alongside this, the likely move towards more ready domestic access to videophones or interactive digital television will enhance the range and flexibility of the services that can be offered.

6.17 Using the English experience, in 2000 roughly equal numbers of people rang the **learnirect** helpline and accessed the **learnirect** website, in 2006, ten times as many people access the web site as ring. Furthermore, nearly one third of those calling have previously visited the website. In terms of the types of people preferring each method, Ufi profiled **learnirect** advice callers in 2006 who also used the website compared to those who called the helpline but did not use the website and found the following;

- The main drivers are working status and qualification level. Website users are much more likely to be full time workers (38% are full time workers) compared to callers who have not used the website (29% are full time workers).
- Enquirers who are retired, home bound or home based are much less likely to have used the Internet - indicating that enquirers use their work online access
- 86% of web enquirers have qualifications, compared to just 75% of callers who have not enquired over the web
- There are slight differences by age - internet users are

Careers Information and Career Planning: a Survey of Degree Finalists, Study conducted for the Higher Education Careers Services Unit. London: MORI.

⁸³ Autor, D.H. (2001) Wiring the labor market. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 15(1), 25-40.

⁸⁴ Cunningham, P. & Fröschl, F. (1999) *Electronic Business Revolution*. Berlin: Springer.

marginally younger (under 34) but the differences between age of user are not significant

- There is very little difference by ethnicity or gender

6.18 Website developments in both Scotland and Wales (for Careers Scotland and Careers Wales respectively) and the North West Regional Development Agency have been significant and are good models that have facilitated access for the individual users as well as other partners and providers. Careers Wales offers a particularly interesting example as they do not mention the terms Information, Advice, Guidance or even Careers, preferring to use a range of specific headings:

- Looking for a job
- Facing redundancy
- Returning to work
- Moving to a new area
- Returning to learning
- Thinking about training
- Retirement
- Volunteering
- Developing in your current job
- Promotion
- Changing direction
- Getting to know yourself

- Find out what's available
- Planning for action

6.19 Careers Northwest is a resource for all young people, adults and advisers, highlighting and promoting career opportunities in the Northwest. The website "www.careersnorthwest.com" brings together information that supports individuals and advisors in their efforts to:

- Find out about growth industries and major project information on where job opportunities may arise
- Match skills to appropriate careers through "fun" skills matching tools, and
- Search through over a 1,000 job profiles

6.20 Careers Northwest has also produced a series of 26 sector fact sheets, major project fact sheets and a CD-Rom specifically for advisers containing the latest labour market information on employment, business data and forecasts for future employment.

6.21 Support for practitioners can also be found on the National Guidance Research Forum website; www.guidance-research.org which has brought together sources of LMI from across a range of 30 sectors and broad occupational groups that can be interrogated by sector, individual characteristic and by region. A recently developed self-directed learning module to support individuals' knowledge, understanding and use of LMI can also be found on the website.

6.22 The government's own directgov website is planned as the single portal to public services and, as such, will be the obvious choice within which to locate any web-based activities developed for a future service. The challenge for policy is to assess how ICT can be used as both a media and a resource to offer a blended approach to effective service delivery attending to clients varied needs and preferred learning styles.

7. Quality and Competence

(i) Quality assurance arrangements

7.1 It was agreed at the outset of the Review that while Quality arrangements would be an essential aspect of the Review, a detailed analysis of the existing quality arrangements would be undertaken as a second stage activity, when a clearer view of what a future service might look like (and therefore how best to assure its quality). The issue came up consistently throughout the Review, however, and was the subject of a small group session at one of the expert practitioner workshops. A summary of the points raised and issues causing concern is provided below.

7.2 The underpinning quality assurance framework and systems must reflect the purpose and objectives of the service and the organisations that deliver them. Similarly the competences required by professionals will need to underpin the services that are offered and reflect both the mode of delivery and its context.

7.3 Quality should be considered in a number of ways:

- the quality assurance process must reflect the service that is offered;
- it must be underpinned by a set of sector standards;
- it must focus on outcomes achieved by service users;
- the process must be clear with greater coherence between different but overlapping quality arrangements; and
- robust and consistent quality arrangements will drive up demand.

7.4 It was noted that there were a number of quality assurance arrangements that either directly or indirectly involve (some level of)

adult guidance activities, i.e.

- the **matrix** Standard
- Common Inspection Framework administered by the Adult Learning Inspectorate
- Investors in People
- LSC performance requirements for contractors
- Targets for externally funded projects

7.5 At the time of the Review the first round of inspections of the core funded guidance provision was being undertaken by the Adult Learning Inspectorate, so there was insufficient data to make any detailed assessment of the position. Concerns were being expressed by practitioners, however, which are related later in this report about the increasing complexity of quality arrangements, especially with the differing demands being made by **matrix** and the LSC's Common Inspection Framework.

7.6 **matrix** is a national standard that has been specifically designed for organisations that deliver IAG on learning and work opportunities. The **matrix** Standard consists of eight elements, four focused on how an organisation delivers its services and four focused on how it manages those services. In order to become matrix accredited, organisations are assessed independently against the eight elements of the standard. The **matrix** website⁸⁵ publishes the number of accredited organisations (1660 in Feb 2007), and the number of accredited sites (3330 in Feb 2007).

7.6 The Review process revealed concerns about the high levels of investment of time and resources required by some organisations that are obliged to meet the requirements of the Common Inspection Framework and **matrix** accreditation. While the view was that it is

⁸⁵ www.matrixstandard.com

possible to use evidence generated for one to support the other, a more coherent system would produce enhanced benefit for both organisations and practitioners. There would be scope to deliver a more coherent framework through

- simultaneous assessment (e.g. for Investor in People (IiP) and **matrix**)
- dual-branded inspectors (e.g. ALI inspectors that can award **matrix**)

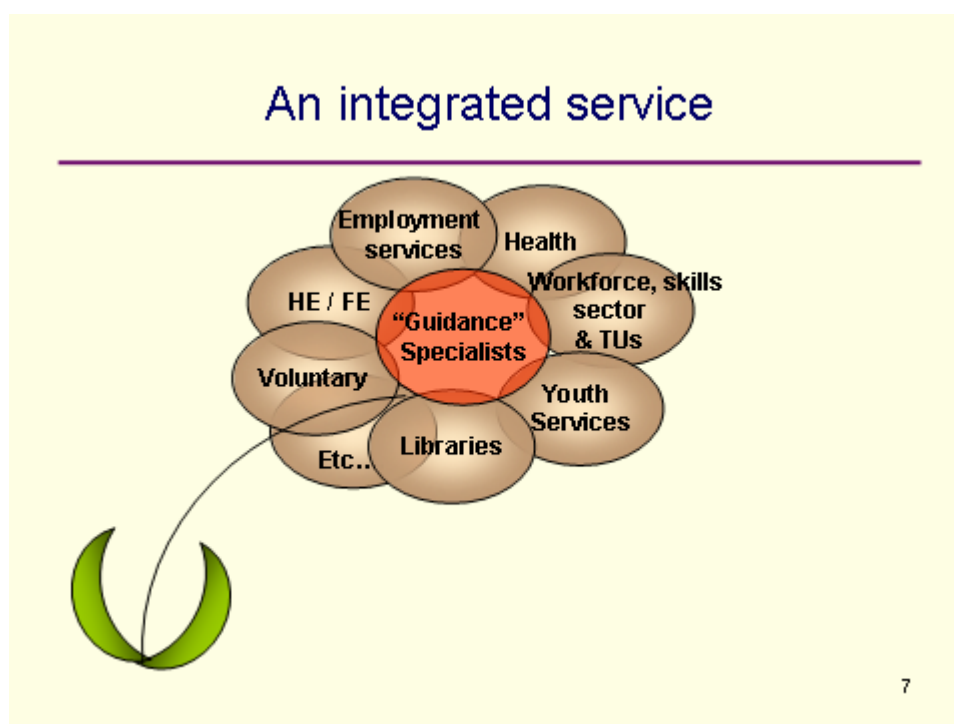
7.7 Participants at the workshop raised a number of issues related to the delivery of quality services generally:

- As the development and achievement of quality is a continuous process, a quality mark that is graded not binary may encourage wider take up and would also recognise ongoing efforts and achievements.
- The quality brand should have a recognised logo, which should also be considered as the ‘branded logo’ for the service as a whole. This could be the **matrix** brand (although despite efforts to invest the brand with a salience for the public it is not widely recognised). Alternatively, a new brand could be created – a ‘thumbs-up’ logo was suggested.
- The nature of the service must be clearly articulated by the sector and underpinned by sector standards and learning outcomes. This is essential in order to improve clarity and consistency of the offer across the sector but, even more importantly, to provide transparency of the offer, and increased familiarity and relevance, to individual users – or potential users – of services.
- Informed customers are critical to the achievement of a quality service. An imperative is to devise ways to communicate what the service is and what it offers individuals and develop a brand identity that reflects this. The group briefly discussed ‘life-nav’

(as opposed to sat-nat) as an example - the service being about giving people a landscape and showing them the way to navigate it.

- Partners working within a range of other contexts (health, workforce, learning institutions, voluntary and community sectors etc.) are a further critical element of a quality assured service, whether delivering IAG services themselves or in a signposting and referral role. With the right kind of support, and understanding of the service offer, these partners can be very effective at identifying individuals who need IAG services even if potential users themselves might not be aware of it. They can be very effective signposters to the service offer, thus contributing to an integrated model of quality assured provision.

7.8 The flower concept generated at the workshop represented the relationships between a range of different providers as part of an integrated service, the basis for the delivery of which should be a recognition that there is a core profession of guidance specialists who have relevant qualifications and who are subject to a set of professional standards.



(ii) Practitioner competency

7.9 As with Quality, no detailed work was undertaken on practitioner competence as part of the Review, although it was considered in one of the expert practitioner workshop groups and was the subject of a report commissioned by the LSC through NIACE.

7.10 Findings and feedback generally indicates that the fragmented nature of adult IAG services in England is reflected in the approaches that are currently taken to qualifications, training and Continual Professional Development (CPD) of the adult IAG workforce.

7.11 At a practitioner workshop held in Stratford, May 2006⁸⁶ a discussion around practitioner competency identified three clear imperatives for action. These were:

- to revisit (with a view to redesigning and enhancing) the qualifications framework that provides the foundation for the trained practitioner;
- to have a clear career pathway for those working in partner services, and
- to ensure the systematic take up of continuous professional development.

7.12 A review of the current qualifications framework (and underpinning standards) needs to:

- revisit existing roles (including those of key signposters in a range of different settings); identify new roles and develop a qualifications framework accordingly;
- review the fact that there is no 'licence to practise';

⁸⁶ Expert practitioner Workshop of IAG Services, Stratford-upon-Avon (2006), Summary Report. www.iagreview.org.uk/papers

- address the fact that no single qualification route exists for staff delivering IAG to adults, and the ones that are used are very different in style and approach with subsequent impact on practitioner competency and knowledge;
- take account of the changed wider environment in which the sector now operates;
- take account of new ways of working – for example: guidance via email and synchronous versus asynchronous discussions.
- recognise the emphasis on analytical rather than process skills - the NVQ portfolio approach does not necessarily develop analytical skills;
- enhance theoretical underpinning to practice – obtain a better mix of academic and practical competency;
- formalise the ‘sole trader’ role through appropriate accreditation
- explore the need to accredit separate modules or units to cover specialist activities such as telephone advice; using the web to support users; using diagnostics; analysing and interpreting labour market information
- address the needs of staff working with specific client groups who have complex IAG needs, and are more likely to be accessing IAG services in larger numbers due to policy initiatives such as Welfare to Work and New Deal; others may include ex-offenders, adults with disabilities and learning difficulties; people with mental health difficulties; refugees and asylum seekers and migrant workers⁸⁷.

7.13 On the issue of continuing professional development, specific concerns were expressed around the following:

⁸⁷ Work with groups of users who have complex needs often requires extensive additional knowledge and skill requirements. For example, work with refugees and asylum seekers will require a knowledge of related legislation; migration patterns and equivalence of qualifications

- there are a number of professional associations/practitioner organisations with differing terms of membership;
- there is increasingly a lack of clarity as to what the minimum requirement is for a 'professional guidance practitioner';
- there is no single register of professionals
- there is no requirement of a licence to practice
- there is no standard requirement for professionals to undertake CPD and, as a consequence, no systematic approach to identification and response to workforce needs.

7.14 The other significant issue that was raised was the way that quality standards such as **matrix** and liP promote accreditation and CPD. The LSC's 2005 strategy for a co-ordinated and quality controlled CPD programme across its IAG provision noted that:

*all organisations in receipt of LSC programme funds to deliver I and A services are contractually required to quality assure their services by achieving **matrix** accreditation (LSC, 2005)*

7.15 Element 6 of the **matrix** Standard requires that 'Staff competence and the support that they are given are sufficient to deliver the service', and includes a requirement to undertake appropriate CPD to ensure that "The competence of staff is maintained and developed to meet service demands'. However, the **matrix** Standard does not actually define what competencies are required.

7.16 A final, cross cutting theme raised was the need for a sectoral anchor. The guidance profession needs a strong national presence with guardianship offered by a national organisation – such as a Sector Skills Council. This anchor organisation would own and lead the development of national standards and codes of professional practice, and would build the profile of a guidance sector that would draw in a range of practitioners, including sole traders, life coaches and private

and voluntary groups.

Developing adviser roles

7.17 Discussions at the January 2007 expert practitioner workshop recommended further work be undertaken on a number of new 'roles' for the IAG sector, with particular regard to the need to consider a standardised approach to skills diagnostics and future service delivery in the future. The roles proposed were:

- 'Skilled' advisers
- 'Informed' advisers
- Sector/occupational mentors (or sector/occupational champions; sector/vocational advisers; sector/vocational specialists) possibly to be identified through BLINKs, Chambers, SSCs, FE and employers
- Personal voluntary mentors/advocates

7.18 These were suggestions only and it was recognised that more work needs to be undertaken in this area.

7.19 A summary of additional anecdotal concerns captured on this topic during the Review is provided below:

- Standards haven't been completely revised for nearly 10 years. While the current standards (that underpin the NVQ) are been reviewed recently they still do not reflect the realities of the work that is now being undertaken, and will almost certainly fall short when the skills agenda becomes mainstreamed through the guidance process.
- The ways in which contracts are structured, and the need to meet targets sometimes prevents staff from being released to attend training and CPD.

- Where practitioners are working with both young people and adults, priority is likely to be given to training for work with young people, particularly where this relates to legislation and meeting targets, and
- Apart from occasional **nextstep** and ICG conferences, access to regular CPD and updating is minimal and does not always address operational practice.
- Concern was expressed about the quality of provision delivered by **nextstep** sub-contractors which are often not IAG specialists, where staff turnover may be high and the requirement is only that staff are 'working towards a qualification'. Maintaining quality control over what is often a large number of sub-contractors who may have actually achieved the **matrix** Standard but still be falling short of the expected standard is problematic and needs addressing.

8. Labour Market and Course Information

(i) Definitions

8.1 Labour market information (LMI) is variously defined⁸⁸ as:

- ‘data about the workplace, including employment rates and salary information’;
- ‘any information about the structure and working of a labour market and any factors likely to influence the structure and working of that market, including jobs available, people available to do those jobs, the mechanisms that match the two, changes in the external and internal business environments’;
- ‘essentially data, statistics and research about the workplace including things like unemployment rates, salary, demand for, and supply of, labour’.

8.2 The Learning and Skills Council⁸⁹ note the distinction between labour market information and labour market intelligence. The former relates to information about supply and demand and covers all those aspects outlined above. While labour market information can be assimilated as part of a skilled technical process, labour market intelligence requires skilled interpretation of data to assess and comment on the reliability, quality and appropriateness of the available data.

(ii) Current provision

8.3 Bimrose’s⁹⁰ paper for the Review states the importance that is ascribed to LMI within several key policy agendas. Foster’s⁹¹ review of FE

⁸⁸ Offer, M. (2003). *Labour Market Information on Careers Service Web Sites in Higher Education*. Cambridge: NICEC.

⁸⁹ Learning and Skills Council (2006) “Developing an employer focussed IAG strategy, reported in Graver, A. Harrison, J. and Letman, C. (2006) Sector Skills Council Information Advice and Guidance Project: Bringing industry and IAG services together, Final Evaluation Report, DfES.

⁹⁰ Bimrose, J. Labour Market and Course Information: A position paper for Skillset, Cross Government Review of Information Advice and Guidance Services for Adults, Review Working Group Papers, Available from: www.iagreview.org.uk/papers

⁹¹ Foster, A. (2005). *Realising the Potential: A Review of the Future Role of Further Education Colleges*. London: Department for Education and Skills.

provision notes that learners report how “*information, advice and guidance is out of date, fragmented and ill-informed*”. Regarding information provided to **learnirect** he states that “*as a condition of receiving public funding, providers should also be under an obligation to keep the information for these external signposting services current and helpful to potential learners*”. Relating the issue to the skills agenda, Leitch⁹² characterized the problem as an “information failure”.

8.4 However, shortcomings and gaps in current LMI provision have been documented for example, a scoping exercise by ASW Consulting Services (2004) found that there was a scarcity of LMI in a format that was ‘digestible’ (Appendix 5, p.37) and identified the need for improved LMI⁹³.

8.5 The OECD⁹⁴ report also flags up a number of concerns about prevailing LMI systems. The concern is that in several countries existing labour market information does not capture changes within occupations, is slow in capturing and describing new occupations, and recommends a ‘competency-based approach’.

8.6 Bimrose⁹⁵ has identified a number of more specific limitations to currently available LMI:-

- LMI that is available on-line across varied websites is reasonably comprehensive but can be difficult to find.
- There is currently no common formatting or presentation style.
- Whilst the type of occupational information examined from selected sources was found to be similar, the detail and type of information is varied. Additionally, the on-line presentation of

⁹² Leitch, S. (2005) Skills in the UK: the Long Term Challenge. London: HM Treasury. P.5.

⁹³ ASW Consulting Services (2004). Scoping the National Resource Services, Report [Online] Available From: http://www.learnirect-advice.co.uk/nrs/existing/research_papers/scoping_nrs2004.pdf [Accessed 9 March 2007]

⁹⁴ Sweet, R. & Watts, A.G. (2004) *Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

⁹⁵ Bimrose, J. Barnes, S.A. Green, A. Orton, M. Davies, R. (2005). *Enhancement of the National Resource Service: Local Labour Market Information*. Coventry: Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick

the information differs and the availability of occupational information as downloadable and printable pdf documents is limited.

- Many IAG Partnerships do not directly collect vacancy information, but rely more on available local information and knowledge. Collation of a comprehensive list of sources (both online and in hard copy) is therefore indicated.
- Local information routinely gleaned by practitioners in the course of their work would represent a valuable source of intelligence. However, operational difficulties that need to be addressed before local information could be linked to a national database include IT compatibility and resources.
- Local labour market information (LLMI) is consistently identified by practitioners as centrally important to effective guidance practice. However, whilst existing provision offers rich sources of LLMI for this purpose, it has considerable shortcomings. In particular, there are gaps regarding information at regional and (more particularly) at sub-regional level. Provision of these data would create a far more comprehensive LMI coverage to support further the work of practitioners. However, it would not be feasible to include all existing local labour market information (LLMI) sources in one on-line LLMI facility because of their dynamism, number and range.

8.7 The digital divide is an important consideration in making LMI directly available to clients. A recent study found that the expansion of LMI services delivered through ICT risks leaving behind the most disadvantaged in society.⁹⁶ Practitioner-mediated provision of LMI would reduce the risk of penalising those with least access to information technology.

8.8 A training need for practitioners is indicated by inconsistent approaches to the use of LMI by advisers, reluctance of some advisers to see LMI

⁹⁶ Lindsay, C. (2005). Employability, Services for Unemployed Job Seekers and the Digital Divide, in *Urban Studies*, 42(2), 325-339.

as part of their remit; and uncertainty in how to relate LMI to an individual client⁹⁷.

(iii) Client and Practitioner LMI needs

8.9 Bimrose noted that there was considerable overlap between the types of LMI identified by practitioners for guidance and that required by clients. For LMI to be of value to clients, it is argued that it needs to focus on: the demand for labour, progression routes; geographical availability; trends; transferability of skills and qualifications; and recruitment and selection methods.⁹⁸ Practitioners have identified, via the NGRF website, consensus regarding what they feel to be essential, useful and desirable elements of LMI:

LMI identified by practitioners as **essential** included:

- local information and trends;
- equal opportunities issues;
- regional data and trends;
- self-employment trends;
- detailed occupational information (including career paths, entry point and salaries);
- qualification level of the sector's workforce;
- current developments in education and training;
- types of employers in the sector (such as number of SMEs);
- vacancies information; and
- destination of graduates with sector specific degrees.

LMI judged **useful** by practitioners:

- up-to-date local data (vacancies, training opportunities, salary levels);
- trends related to skills, organisational change and labour market restructuring;

⁹⁷ Bimrose, J. & Orton, M. (2005) *Labour Market Information (LMI) for Effective Guidance within Skillset*, Warwick: Warwick Institute for Employment Research

⁹⁸ Offer, M. (2000) *The Discourse of the Labour Market*, in B. Gothard, P. Mignot, M. Offer & M. Ruff (eds) *Careers Guidance in Context*, London: Sage, pp. 78-79.

- client-centred, accessible materials;
- specific, sector-based examples (e.g. particular career paths);
- information that can be printed out and given to clients;
- information on skill mis-matches;
- information on how skills transfer between contexts; and
- information available via the internet.

LMI practitioners would **most like** to have:

- LMI specifically targeted at adults;
- information about 'new' job titles, skill levels, career paths⁹⁹;
- information that helps clients think about the future and jobs available (such as applicant/entrant ratios and information about the types of employers offering particular types of employment);
- information with an equal opportunities dimension;
- information on salary levels (continually up-dated) for different occupations;
- fact sheets on particular areas;
- samples of job descriptions at different entry points; and
- simple summaries of government employment initiatives.

(iv) Infrastructure for future delivery of LMI?

8.10 Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) should be well positioned to collect and disseminate high quality, current and comprehensive sector-based LMI for guidance. The £2.4 million Sector Skills Council Information Advice and Guidance Project sought to enhance the capacity of SSCs in delivering sector-specific IAG services including LMI for guidance services. The evaluation¹⁰⁰ of this project found that capacity of SSCs

⁹⁹ It should be noted that there is always (and will be) a delay in standard statistical sources attending to 'new' developments, such as job titles.

¹⁰⁰ Graver, A. Harrison, J. and Letman, C. (2006). *Sector Skills Council Information Advice and Guidance Project: Brining Industry and IAG Services Together. Final Evaluation Report*. York: Impact Research Limited.

to conceptualise, model requirements, introduce processes to fulfil these requirements and deliver quality LMI has been enhanced, although However, the authors query the sustainability of this improved capacity post-Project..

- 8.11 The evaluation also noted substantial improvements in the awareness and use of SSC LMI among practitioners. Initially the level of awareness and understanding of SSCs and their IAG role among IAG practitioners was low. This had been improved, particularly via workshops which have been well received by practitioners. The workshops also significantly altered some advisers' views and attitudes towards specific sectors.
- 8.12 Finally, the evaluation noted that *"The project has confirmed that the principal role of SSCs should be to produce timely sector LMI and make this accessible to a range of IAG practitioners"* and that *"they see their role as providing an expert service in relation to sector intelligence and its interpretation for use by practitioners"*. The extent to which these conclusions could be extrapolated across the full range of SSCs is questionable as they have been established relatively recently and are at different stages of development. Consequently, some remain more advanced than others in operating systems of data collection from their sectors of relevance to guidance.
- 8.13 There are also other players in the field at a local and regional level. Traditionally local planning authorities have undertaken labour market research; the LSC, RDAs and local Chamber of Commerce have all been involved and, more recently the Regional Skills Partnerships have an interest.

9 The Regional Perspective The focus that is accorded to IAG at a regional level was explored by NIACE for the Review¹⁰¹ .. Their paper mapped how IAG featured in each of the English Region's Regional Skills Action Plans Initially formed out of the 2003 Skills Strategy White Paper: 21st Century Skills; Regional Skills Partnerships brought together key strategic agencies at a regional level on both the supply and demand sides for skills. Whilst partnerships had some common features (some prescribed by government), their membership, maturity and emphases varied. Each RSP had the task of prioritising spending to reflect regional priorities, articulated in a Regional Skills Action Plan.

9.2 NIACE analysis of these Plans revealed that:-

- “there is a general lack of strategic focus on IAG for adults in regional planning” (p.11)
- “generally IAG is referred to in relation to the development of business support and brokerage... and to upskilling and engaging young people” (p.8)
- “there is little linking of IAG with useful analyses of skills gaps and skills needs (p.11)
- “the linking of the work of RSPs with other agendas, for example, health, regeneration and culture is understandably at an early stage” (p.11)

9.3 Whilst there was some variation between regions of the stated potential role of IAG in promoting regional skills and learning priorities, there was an underlying acknowledgement that IAG infrastructure was important to the delivery of key agendas – including that of widening participation. The report concluded by urging that a regional dimension to IAG planning and delivery be part of the Review findings.

10 Equality, Diversity and Existing Provision

¹⁰¹ NIACE (2006), IAG Review and the English Regions: Some Implications, Cross Government Review of Information Advice and Guidance Services for Adults, Review Working Group Papers, Available from: www.iagreview.org.uk

(i) Policy Definitions

- 10.1 The Equality Review¹⁰² was commissioned by the Prime Minister as an independent review to set out a vision for an equal society, one that seeks equality in the freedoms that people have to lead a fulfilling life. It set out landmark improvements in addressing inequality and discrimination but noted that “entrenched inequalities in education, employment and quality of life remain”. It summarised the three key reasons why inequalities still persist in Britain, namely prejudice, lack of awareness and understanding about what equality means, and little clarity over who should deliver what and whose responsibility it is to take the lead.
- 10.2 The Equality Review outlined a series of measures that need to be taken to promote an equal society defined as:-

“An equal society protects and promotes equal, real freedom and substantive opportunity to live in the ways people value and would choose, so that everyone can flourish.

An equal society recognises people’s different needs, situations and goals and removes the barriers that limit what people can do and can be”

- 10.3 Those measures were presented as part of a systematic overall framework in which all stakeholders in our society have a part to play and include targeting action on persistent inequality and enabling and supporting organisations in all sectors.
- 10.4 While the review did not focus on adult guidance *per se* it did set its findings in the context of the same policy imperatives that framed the IAG Review.

(ii) Issues of equality and diversity in the labour market

¹⁰² The Equality Review (2007) *Fairness and Freedom: The final report of the equalities review*. London: The Equalities Review.

- 10.5 The labour market is experienced differently by different groups. In a comprehensive summary of guidance issues for girls and women Bimrose¹⁰³ highlights the gender aspects of guidance work. She noted the research evidence that highlights the particular challenges faced by men and boys with regard to career progression, like: the devaluation of their work; the loss of secure employment; more career shifts in lateral or downward directions; increasing ambivalence about the role of work in their lives¹⁰⁴; and difficulties encountered when entering traditionally female jobs¹⁰⁵. In her focus on women and girls however she highlights the employment patterns of women in developed European countries which are characterised by increased levels of economic activity and which in turn have brought with them ever increasingly complex patterns of female labour market participation resulting in different types and varying levels of commitment to paid employment.
- 10.6 For example, whereas it has been assumed that women take a block of time as a career break to raise young children, the increasing recognition that early returns to work are of key importance to women's future economic prospects, together with the financial pressures associated with consumer debt, have resulted in employment patterns for women that have been minimally disrupted by childbirth¹⁰⁶. Alongside this trend has developed a significant decline in satisfaction with hours worked and workload due to the intensification of work and shifts in values¹⁰⁷.
- 10.7 Consequently therefore a more recent conceptualisation of women's commitment to employment, is of three broad groups of women: one committed to their full-time careers; a second giving priority to their domestic lives; and the third combining work and family in different

¹⁰³ Bimrose, J. (2001). Girls and women: Challenges for careers guidance practice. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 29, 79-94

¹⁰⁴ Ackah, C., & Heaton, N. (2004). The reality of 'new' careers for men and for women. *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 28, 141-158.

¹⁰⁵ Bagilhole, B., & Cross, S. (2006). 'It never struck me as female': Investigating men's entry into female-dominated occupations. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 15, 1, 35-48

¹⁰⁶ Smeaton, D. (2006). Work return rates after childbirth in the UK – trends, determinants and implications: A comparison of cohorts born in 1958 and 1970. *Work, Employment and Society*, 20, 1, 5-25

¹⁰⁷ Rose, M. (2005). Job satisfaction in Britain: Coping with complexity. *British Journal of Industrial Relations*

ways¹⁰⁸

- 10.8 The Women and Work Commission¹⁰⁹ emphasised the economic and social opportunity costs of pursuing policies that do not recognise issues of gender and diversity. They reported that:-

Women who work full time earn 13 per cent less than men who work full time, base on median hourly earnings, and 17 per cent less based on mean hourly earnings. These lower earnings leave women at greater risk of falling below the poverty line and of being off than men in retirements. Women face an unfair disadvantage and the UK economy is losing productivity and output.

Women are crowded into a narrow range of lower-paying occupations, mainly those available part time, that do not make the best use of their skills. The Commission estimates that removing barriers to women working in occupations traditionally done by men, and increasing women's participation in the labour market, could be worth between £15 billion and £23 billion.

There are huge opportunities for change....

Women and Work Commission, (2006) p1.

- 10.9 Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups also experience the labour market differently from an early age. Evidence of differences between white young people and young people from ethnic minorities are apparent in relation both to subject choices and career aspirations¹¹⁰. The Transitions Review Group¹¹¹ (2003) noted that science, business studies, accountancy and computing were attractive subject choices amongst the Asian community. The influence of ethnicity can also be

¹⁰⁸ Hakim, C. (2006) Women, careers, and work-life preferences. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 34, 279-294

¹⁰⁹ Women and Work Commission Report (2006) *Shaping a Fairer Future*, London, Women and Work Commission

¹¹⁰ Hutchinson, J. Lamb, H. and Crompton, N. (2007) Review of literature on support for work choices, Unpublished report for YWCA, Oxford.

¹¹¹ Transitions Review Group (2003). *A Systematic Review of Research into the Impact of Careers Education and Guidance during Key Stage 4 on Young People's Transitions to Post-16 Opportunities*. London: EPPI-Centre

seen in career aspirations, with analysis by BME group indicating that “the choice of a trade was noticeably absent from the groups except white British”. The Review Group concludes that ethnicity narrows the choice of curriculum choices and results in a preference for high status jobs.

10.10 As for women, intra-group differences are also significant. Research by the Equal Opportunities Commission¹¹² identified differences in the experiences of Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women entering the workforce.

10.11 There are also differences in the importance attached to qualifications, with young people from ethnic minorities increasingly regarding them as “the only route to a good job’. Dale et al ¹¹³ report that the attachment to vocational qualifications is particularly strong for young Asians as this provides a means of overcoming the ‘ethnic penalty’:

“For young Asians, having a specific vocational qualification is likely to provide one means by which labour market barriers can be lowered, either at first entry or on subsequent re-entry following child bearing” (Dale et al, p.954).

10.12 It is, however, important to note that, at the same time it is folly to generalise between BME groups, it is also in poor judgement to apply findings to both men and women. For example, Britton et al.’s¹¹⁴ (2002) study of disaffected groups identified profound gender differences from those of Pakistani and Bangladeshi descent, including the reaction of families to the education and employment.

(iii) Equality and diversity in adult guidance services

¹¹² Equal Opportunities Commission (2006a). *Moving On Up? Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Black Caribbean Women and Work: Early Findings from the EOC’s Investigation in England*. Manchester: Equal Opportunities Commission

¹¹³ Dale, A., Shaheen, N., Kalra, V. & Fieldhouse, E. (2002). Routes into education and employment for young Pakistani and Bangladeshi women in the UK. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 25(6), 942-968

¹¹⁴ Britton, L., Chatrik, B., Coles, B., Craig, G., Hylton, C. & Mumtaz, S. (2002). *Missing Connexions: the Career Dynamics and Welfare Needs of Black and Minority Ethnic Young People at the Margins*. Bristol: Policy Press

10.13 It is a policy imperative that adult guidance services are underpinned by equality and diversity frameworks. Since 2006 the Adult Learning Inspectorate has been conducting inspections under the Common Inspection Framework that has equality and diversity issues running throughout all questions but with specific focus on the following elements;

- Equal opportunities is promoted and discrimination tackled
- Equal opportunities statistics are collected and monitored
- Evidence of targeting clients
- Appropriate publicity and materials offering support
- Research has been conducted into the profile of clients
- Examples of clients being provided with additional support in relation to equal opportunities.

10.14 The definition of equality and diversity used by ALI¹¹⁵ (and therefore familiar throughout the **nextstep** community) is as follows:-

“equality of opportunity must be reflected in the ethos of the whole organisation and promoted to ensure that all learners achieve their potential. It includes the provider’s work in widening participation; targeting under-represented groups; developing an inclusive curriculum, which acknowledges diversity in the learning situation; and recruiting a diverse workforce. Providers need to ensure that there is a framework of effective measures to eliminate oppressive behaviour and that they comply with the increasingly complex and challenging range of legal requirements. This includes the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000) and Disability Act (2001).”

10.15 Management information collected on the users of the current IAG

¹¹⁵ Adult Learning Inspectorate (2004) *Making an impact on individuals and communities: the effect of adult and community learning provision today*. Coventry: Adult Learning Inspectorate.

services show performance against targets including overall use, user satisfaction, advice to adults without L2 qualifications, those aged 50+, and those with learning difficulties or disabilities. This shows that services are reaching those target groups and doing so using methods and resources that recognise the several needs of equality and diversity principles.

10.16 The critical importance of ensuring effective practice in relation to equality and diversity among the adult guidance community also comes from outside the sector. In recognition of the role of IAG services to addressing such equality and diversity issues the EOC's recent study¹¹⁶ 'Opening up opportunities through advice and guidance' had three main aims:

- to identify the key agencies delivering IAG on jobs, learning and careers to young people and adults;
- to assess the extent to which these agencies enable individuals to consider and pursue non-traditional choices and ways of working and encourage women to overcome the barriers they may face in participating in working and learning;
- to assess the extent to which agencies recognise and relate to the changing nature of work, including flexible and other non-traditional working patterns.

10.17 The research identified seven main barriers and gaps in provision in relation to opening up opportunities for adults through the existing information, advice and guidance provision:

- The current priority given to individuals with qualifications below NVQ Level 2...leads to limited access to guidance for other groups... There is a case for access to guidance to be decided on the basis of need rather than qualification level.

¹¹⁶ Rolfe, H. and Nadeem, S. (2007) Opening up opportunities through advice and guidance, Working Paper Series 49, Equal Opportunities Commission, Manchester.

- The scope for partnership working between adult IAG and HE careers services is limited by the focus of adult IAG on meeting the needs of individuals with few or no qualifications. A refocusing of adult IAG to include mature entrants to HE would assist policy aims to improve skills and promote closer working between HE and IAG services.
- In some agencies, there is resistance to the idea that IAG services should seek to open up opportunities by challenging gender stereotypes. This might be addressed through a stronger policy directive on the role of IAG in opening up opportunities for young people and adults at all qualification levels, and improved training and development for advisers.
- The current review of IAG services for adults is an opportunity to put in place a stronger framework for which can open up opportunities, including through client interventions.
- There appears to be little work within advice and guidance agencies addressing different working patterns and working lives, including flexible working, which is aimed either at individuals or at groups, such as women returners. There is a need for IAG to be more informed by LMI. This would be assisted through closer partnership working with organisations with labour market knowledge, including employers.
- Individuals who take non-traditional routes, including young people, are not given the additional support they may need. Potentially higher rates of turnover among individuals in occupations where they are under-represented could be avoided through support such as mentoring, or even more limited support through follow-up calls by a PA.
- There is a need to promote closer working between Connexions and primary schools, to introduce LMI and challenge gender stereotyping.
- In addition to the steps proposed above, the performance of

IAG services needs to be measured in relation to the achievement of equality and diversity objectives.

10.18 In addition the Women and Work Commission¹¹⁷ have also generated a range of useful recommendations in relation to access to learning and training, careers advice and guidance throughout women's lives. In particular they recommend that:-

- The Department for Education and Skills and relevant Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland departments publish strategic documents... which describe a systematic change in the way education is delivered in order to reduce stereotypical choices, improve take-up of vocational skills training and improve employment outcomes for young women;
- The Sector Skills Councils should work with employers on providing and promoting Apprenticeships for women in industries where there are skills shortages.
- Government information campaigns should show women in occupations not traditionally taken up by them, and men as parents and carers.
- A £20 million package to pilot measures designed to enable women to change direction , and progress in their jobs and careers, through raising their skills levels.... to include free skills coaching for women who are not in work who already have a level 2 qualification....access to a high quality careers information, advice and guidance service which tackles gender stereotypes under the New Deal for Skills and Train to Gain.
- The Department for Education and Skills and relevant Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland departments should develop programmes, linking with Train to Gain and the Sector Skills Councils, identifying best practice on career development and working with partner employers to create career paths.

¹¹⁷ Women and Work Commission Report (2006) Shaping a Fairer Future, London, Women and Work Commission.

- ensure that action is taken on all causes of the gender pay gap including occupational segregation, the impact of family responsibilities and unequal pay..... public authorities should ensure that their contractor promote gender equality in line with the public sector Gender Duty.

11. Review Summary

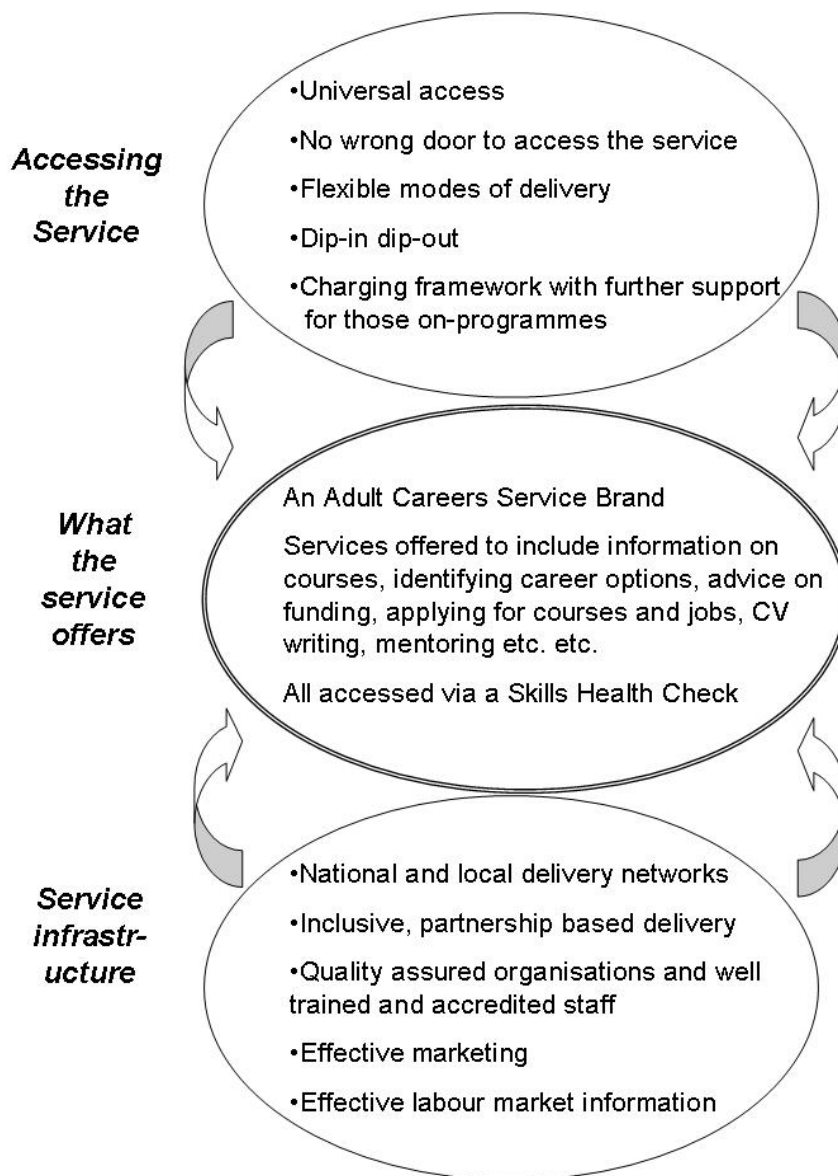
(i) Introduction

11.1 The Review process was informed by key policy drivers, it was thorough, consultative, evidence based, and grounded in the reality of practice. It concluded that there is a need for a powerful new skills and careers service. In January 2007, the purpose of the Adult Careers Service was defined as to ***drive progression in learning, work and careers***. As a result of the work of the Review a set of principles and propositions to underpin the development of the future service have been generated.. While decisions about the exact nature and level of funding available were yet to be made, the findings of the Review provided a clear statement of ambition with regard to the development of an Adult Careers Service that supports the imperatives presented by Leitch and achieves the policy goals of a range of partners.

11.2 This section presents a summary of those principles and propositions that were informing thinking in January 2007. It focuses firstly on the nature of service, how people access the service and the infrastructure that needs to be in place to underpin effective, network based delivery of the service. This is presented diagrammatically over the page.

(ii) The service offer

11.3 It was conceived that at the heart of the proposed Adult Careers Service would be a service that offered an individual a variety of ways to drive and to achieve progression. The service offer would be presented to the individual as a menu of services.



11.4 A **menu of services** would be developed that clusters services within the following phases; Assessing Need, Exploring Options, Taking Action, Following up, with other Additional Activities that individuals may find helpful. Menu options could include introductory services; skills diagnostic activities; individual learning action plans; career options assessment and planning; course information; CV writing and job getting skills; access to and advice about financial support such as learner accounts and adult learner grants; specialist services; and signposting and referral to other parts of the service. Building on the

consensus achieved at the January 2007 Derby consultation event¹¹⁸
the menu of services should:-

- Be described in very clear and simple language, and
- Have clearly defined outputs so that a service user knows that participation will provide them with tangible and real outputs, whether it be an improved CV, a list of training opportunities, or an appointment to see a guidance practitioner
- Be presented in a way that encourages an individual to move through, back and around the various services – in recognition of the fact that job acquisition, learning and career development is rarely a linear process,
- Be supported by up-to-date and relevant labour market information. Some decisions that individuals take are based on a personal analysis of the cost implications and potential cost benefits.

11.5 From the website feedback¹¹⁹ there was general agreement that effective linking, signposting and referral would be central to the effective operation of a new menu system of services.

11.6 At the heart of the menu would be a **Skills Health Check**. The function of the Skills Health Check would be to provide an initial diagnostic front-end activity to determine for every client exactly what type of specific support and/or assessment is required either from within the wider Skills Health Check portfolio of assessment tools, or from the Menu of Services.

11.7 There could be four different elements to the process:

- One: an exploration of motivations including readiness for

¹¹⁸ IAG Review: Expert Practitioner Workshop, 22nd-23rd January, Breadsall Priory, Derby. Summary Report. Available on : <http://www.iagreview.org.uk/papers>

¹¹⁹ Bimrose, J. (2007) IAG Review: Summary of Responses from the IAG Review Website, Available on : <http://www.iagreview.org.uk/papers>

change / action

- Two: further exploration of interests, skills and experiences and initial skills profile (e.g. up to 50 questions – not necessarily sequential)
- Three: Reflecting back, i.e. these are the results, what do the results tell you and do you recognise and value the accuracy of the assessment? If yes... if no.....
- Four: What next? Do you want to improve and/or to change? Where you can go next in relation to (i) key skills, (ii) vocational skills and (iii) personal management skills.

11.8 On completion of the Skills Health Check an individual should have a clear idea of what they need to do next. If the Health Check is used in a mediated setting then it should enable an advisor to identify those unemployed and inactive people who would benefit from participation in skills training, especially those for whom up-skilling is necessary to get good quality, sustainable employment.

11.9 The services offered should promote a positive, proactive approach to managing learning, skills and career development. For some target groups of service user (current policy imperatives would include for example offenders, migrants, and those on long term incapacity benefit), an out-reach strategy would be required to ensure engagement with the service and encourage recognition of its potential utility.

(ii) Accessing the service

11.10 To encourage recognition and access it was considered important that the Adult Careers Service should have an identifiable brand and logo. The brand should stand for professionalism, putting the customer first, giving people appropriate, high quality help about employment and skills, and a demonstration of the links between learning and work and economic and social benefits. It should be promoted through a national multi-media marketing strategy at an appropriate time.

11.11 The Skills Health Check would form the start of a substantive relationship between the client and the service. In many cases, but not all, the Skills Health Check would be the introduction to the service. There would be a “no wrong door” approach to the service. The aim would be that no matter where people approach the system (whether through a job centre, a college, by telephone or on-line, through face-to-face provision or in the workplace) individuals and employers will get the right help about employment and skills.

11.12 The service should be characterised by flexible delivery modes: on-line, mediated face-to-face or over the telephone, ensuring that users have a choice about the nature, level and type of service they want to use, and access at a time and place to suit them. Those who can help themselves would be encouraged to do so; estimates of the proportion needing individual, case-managed services tend to vary, but fall somewhere between 10% and 50%¹²⁰.

11.13 Mediated services could be used in a variety of ways to meet the needs of clients. Mediation can be provided in a number of ways including:-

- face to face with one, or a series of, meetings with an adviser
- telephone contact with a named adviser;
- telephone contact with a series of advisers informed by a client information database;
- ongoing email dialogue with advisers;
- chat room support with advisers or peer mentors;
- workshop sessions with small groups.

11.14 The principle of universal access for all adults has been established. It was recognised that there would need to be more resource intensive

¹²⁰ Samson, J.P, Palmer, M. and Watts, A.G. (1999), Who needs guidance? CeGS Occasional Paper, Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby.

options, such as face-to-face advice, targeted on particular groups such as benefit recipients, the low-skilled, young adults and others with Skills Strategy priority. Marketing would be targeted in order to ensure that the service reached under represented groups such as BME communities, those with learning difficulties or disabilities, older workers or people wishing to return to the labour market.

11.15 A charging framework for services could be explored. Any charging policy should be clear and explicit within the menu of services, and be clearly established from the initial launch of the service.

11.16 The services would not be delivered solely by professionals working within a core Adult Guidance Service. Rather, the range of professionals and voluntary sector workers who already have established relationships with client groups (including ULRs and HR professionals) can be supported through training and quality accreditation processes to offer part, or all, of the Menu of Services.

11.17 There should be reformed 'on-programme' support, linked to the skills and careers service, for those in LSC funded learning offering personalised support to learners – from pre-learning skills assessment and help to make the right choice of providers and courses, to expert on-programme input from tutors and advisors, to further advice at the end of the course to achieve outcomes and progression to further job or learning opportunities.

(iv) Underpinning the service

11.18 It was noted that advisers require high quality labour market information, purpose built by Sector Skills Councils and accessible to all advisors. Feedback from the *learnirect* telephone guidance trial suggests that customers want and expect industry specific information and in some instances callers required a depth of sector specific information that is not currently generally available. Eventually there will be comprehensive information about all careers including pay rates and the economic value of particular qualifications which can be examined at local level. This will help advisors to guide the career choices of people

who are considering what new skills to develop, looking to re-enter the labour market, moving into a different industry or occupational area, or relocating to another part of the country. LMI given by advisors must challenge stereotypes and give users an understanding of occupations not traditionally take up by their gender.

- 11.19 The service would have to be clearly branded, and the brand must be synonymous with quality provision evidenced by a national quality standard mark, to be further developed but building on the **matrix** national quality Standard. In the longer term there could be scope to develop closer links between adult standards and those being developed for Youth Matters. In the future the accountability of individual advisors could be improved by introducing customer feedback mechanisms, possibly using the eBay model.
- 11.20 The delivery of a universal service requires a reformed, empowered signposting and referral **network** of libraries, voluntary and community organisations, learning centres, employer representative organisations, Union Learning reps etc which will help to promote the service, involve hard-to-reach groups and refer people on to qualified advisors and other service menu options as appropriate. The Adult Careers Service should have recognition among the Regional Skills Partnerships as a key partner and should be able to generate synergies of partnership working within partnerships at a regional, sub-regional and local level.
- 11.21 Quality service delivery through network arrangements requires a comprehensive workforce development strategy to support all delivery partners. The foundations to this are currently being laid with the exploration of the possibility between YP IAG and FE colleagues of developing a joint workforce development strategy.
- 11.22 Clear links would be established with employers and employer-facing support, integrating the service with support programmes such as Train to Gain and Business Link, offering effective workplace information and guidance to help individuals in work-related learning and career planning, and assist employers to develop and plan their workforce.

- 11.23 The Adult Careers Service should offer feed-back information to learning providers about the provision that customers are demanding, whilst at the same time, mediating messages from employers and sector skills councils about skills gaps and labour market trends.
- 11.24 The delivery of a seamless service to individuals could be facilitated through a database that is able to link their Unique Learner Number with a personal customer record and tracking system. Such a system could build on data sharing arrangements with DWP. Using this facility career plans would be updated as, for example, skills were developed and the customer enters and progresses in employment or learning. Progression would be encouraged by repeat contact with the learner, who is now a member of the learning community, so that further learning entitlements, work and skills opportunities, and new incentives can be promoted. The need to assure confidentiality and develop information-sharing protocols within this development was emphasised in the web-based feedback¹²¹.
- 11.25 A user-focussed service will require funding arrangements and incentives increasingly focused on the delivery of outcomes whilst achieving value of money. Contractual targets could include increasing the take-up of services by low/no skilled and harder-to-reach groups, users entering jobs or training and users achieving sustained employment and progression. The aim is that more secure funding streams for high performing delivery partners will mean less reliance on short term contracts and chasing other sources of funding.

¹²¹ Bimrose, J. (2007) Summary of Responses from IAG Review Website. Available at : <http://www.iagreview.org.uk/papers>.

(v) Areas for further development

11.26 The Review process achieved a great deal. It identified the defining features of a new service that could offer world class support to individuals who need to achieve progression in work, learning and careers. It promoted a vision of services which were coherent, demand led and responsive to the needs of individuals and employers, one that could open up opportunity for those in and out of work to gain the skills and qualifications they need to progress their career throughout their working lives. It could raise individual ambitions, encouraging personal enterprise and the appetite for increased responsibility for those in the workforce. It would also be used and valued by employers (especially small and medium employers without an HR function), helping them assess and develop the skills of their workforce and providing links to employer facing support such as Train to Gain, Business Link etc.

11.27 The Review however noted that further work needed to be done.

11.28 Firstly, the evidence base, thorough and extensive though it is, is incomplete. Some “unknowns” included:-

- How to successfully integrate charged for services with those that are free to the user in a manner that is open, transparent and fair
- How to encourage private sector practitioners to adopt the quality standards that are required for public services
- The role of IAG within the healthy living agenda
- The role of IAG and the active ageing agenda
- The role of the voluntary sector within the network of delivery partners – how might their role best be supported and encouraged?
- How best to position the service for adult and community

learning

- The extent of the role and impact of informal guidance
- What the specific characteristics of need are for typical life course transitions, and for specific groups (and how they can be most effectively supplied within the new Adult Careers Service).

11.29 Secondly, the management and structures associated with possible delivery models had been proposed but the metrics to identify the costs and benefits of particular models of delivery had not been fully developed.

11.30 The cultural shift required among guidance practitioners and those delivering guidance in other professions or as volunteers to embrace new ways of working, and closer case-work based system. The overwhelming feedback to the IAG Review website that face-to-face activities are both more attractive and more effective suggests that a managed change programme would assist the development of an Adult Careers Service.

11.31 Related to this was the need to identify and quantify those outputs that could be expected to be delivered by the Adult Careers Service and its partners. Any service must have clearly defined outputs and outcomes that measure both progress and achievements. The targeted level of outputs should be challenging but represent reasonable expectations of what might be expected with particular client groups. Those client groups would be self-referrals and those identified in the prevailing skills strategy. The development and testing of a performance measurement framework was needed prior to implementation that measures inputs, throughputs, outputs and outcomes utilizing management information and intelligence generated through the customer database to maximum effect.

11.32 Thirdly, the specification for Skills Health Check, the Menu of Services and associated tools and resources requires tight definition. Feedback

to the Review via the website¹²² broadly welcomed the development of a Health Check and it was noted that although many types of skills inventories already exist, there were concerns about general fitness for purpose, consequently careful design and development of a new version would indeed be necessary.

11.33 Similarly, the definition of a brand and the specification for a marketing strategy to target the service were also yet to be undertaken.

11.34 Finally, the development of an all age strategy. Provision in Scotland and Wales is described as 'all age' services. This does not mean that young people and adults can access the same help – in fact, services differ considerably by age. But it does mean, because provision for both young people and adults are operated by the same organisation, that there is scope for common branding, a common website, and some commonality in terms of quality and workforce development etc, which certainly gives an impression of coherence. However, there is no evidence that an 'all age' service of this type more effectively meets users' needs than properly connected age related services and, in practice, given the clear direction of travel following *Youth Matters Next Steps* for young people's IAG provision based upon Children's Trusts, there would appear to be little scope to achieve this at this stage. A better option is to develop a coherent, **all age strategy** for careers advice, taking account of the extension to the participation age to 18 years. The strategy would ensure that transitions between services were managed effectively and that common issues such as quality standards, labour market and occupational information, contracting and workforce development were increasingly looked at collaboratively, wherever possible. But it would also ensure that the different concerns and problems of adults and young people would be acknowledged and respected in the way they were responded to.

¹²² Bimrose, J. (2007) IAG Review: Summary of Responses from the IAG Review Website. Available on : <http://www.iagreview.org.uk/papers>.

