

Conclusions and recommendations

Quality of careers advice in schools

1. It is three years since the Education Committee produced a Report raising serious concerns about the quality of careers information, advice and guidance in schools and yet provision remains patchy across England. We are very disappointed that careers advice and guidance is still poor in so many schools: the system has failed too many young people for far too long. The Government's careers strategy is urgently needed and must include immediate steps to ensure all young people have access to high quality information, advice and guidance. (Paragraph 15)

What should schools be doing?

2. An effective school careers programme should include a combination of impartial and independent advice and guidance, careers education embedded in the curriculum, and opportunities for students to engage with employers. We consider the Gatsby Foundation's eight benchmarks a useful statement of the careers provision to which all schools should be aspiring. The Government's policy objective should be to incentivise all schools to ensure their careers provision is brought up to a good standard and to hold them to account when they fail to do so. (Paragraph 19)

Incentivising schools

3. *We welcome the Government's intention to legislate to require schools to collaborate with training providers and look forward to seeing further details of how it will work in practice. We recommend that the Government set out robust mechanisms to ensure that the new law is well-publicised and properly enforced.* (Paragraph 23)

Ofsted

4. We welcome the increased emphasis Ofsted has placed on careers provision but agree with the Minister for Skills that it should be downgrading schools that do not provide effective information, advice and guidance. (Paragraph 26)
5. *We recommend that Ofsted introduce a specific judgment on careers information, advice and guidance for secondary schools, and set clear criteria for making these judgments. The Common Inspection Framework should be amended to make clear that a secondary school whose careers provision is judged as "requires improvement" or "inadequate" cannot be judged to be "outstanding" overall; likewise, a secondary school should be unable to receive an overall judgment of "good" if its careers provision is judged to be "inadequate".* (Paragraph 27)

Destination data

6. *We invite the Government, in its response, to set out a comprehensive plan for improving destination data, including the timescales for doing so. This plan should include steps to make the data available in a more timely way and to ensure that they*

cover a longer period of time, and give more details on how the data will draw on information held by other Government departments. The Government should also consider how best to present its destination data, to mitigate the risk that schools are judged primarily on the number of their students going onto higher education. (Paragraph 32)

Co-ordination

7. *We recommend that the Government, in its careers strategy, take steps to simplify the delivery of its careers policy at the national level. It should put a single Minister and a single Department in charge of co-ordinating careers provision for all ages, and set out how it plans to rationalise the number of Government-funded organisations delivering careers programmes. (Paragraph 44)*
8. *We recommend that all Government-funded careers initiatives, including the Jobcentre Plus support for schools scheme, be brought under the umbrella of the Careers & Enterprise Company. We further recommend that the Government consult on transferring responsibility for the National Careers Service from the Skills Funding Agency to the Careers & Enterprise Company. We also encourage the Careers & Enterprise Company to set out how, in addition to its existing programmes, it plans to support the provision of independent and impartial careers guidance in schools. (Paragraph 45)*

Quality standards

9. *We support the merger of the Quality in Careers and matrix Standards and recommend that the Government support the establishment and promotion of a single quality brand covering schools, colleges, careers services providers and careers websites, with appropriate criteria for the different types of organisation to meet. As part of this work, it should also encourage the bringing together of the 12 different awards recognised by the Quality in Careers Standard into a single award. (Paragraph 52)*
10. *We recommend that the Government, once the new quality brand is in place, amend statutory guidance to require all schools to work towards being accredited under this brand, and only to use careers services from organisations holding it. (Paragraph 53)*

The careers guidance profession

11. *We recommend that the Government statutory guidance is amended to require those delivering advice and guidance in schools to hold, at a minimum, a relevant level 6 qualification. (Paragraph 56)*

The labour market

12. *Investing in good quality careers advice can help to tackle the skills misalignment by making young people aware of the opportunities available in the job market and helping them to match these opportunities to their skills and interests. Failing to invest will only exacerbate the skills mismatch, which in turn will have a negative impact on the country's productivity. (Paragraph 60)*

13. In our view, accurate labour market information is vital to providing young people and their parents with guidance about available routes and salaries; it is also important to recognise the key role careers advisers play in helping young to understand this information and how the opportunities in the jobs market fit with their skills and aspirations. (Paragraph 61)
14. *The Committee is disappointed that the consistently high quality analysis and advice provided by the UK Commission on Employment and Skills (UKCES) is to be lost. We welcome the Government's commitment to continue operating the LMI for All dataset. We trust that the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills will build upon the good work of the UK Commission for Employment and Skills. We recommend that the Government set out in its response how it will ensure that LMI data published in future will match the high standards achieved by UKCES. We recommend that in its careers strategy, the Government set out its plans for further improving the quality and usefulness of the data.* (Paragraph 62)

Role and capacity of Local Enterprise Partnerships

15. *We recommend that the Government take steps to ensure that all Local Enterprise Partnerships have the capacity and are encouraged to provide up-to-date good quality labour market information to schools, college and careers professionals within their local area. The Careers & Enterprise Company could be charged with supporting LEPs to improve their data provision. Money saved by the rationalisation of national careers organisations we proposed earlier in this Report could be used to boost the capacity of LEPs for this and other roles in support of careers provision.* (Paragraph 65)

The role of employers

16. Employers have an important role to play in careers education but there have been longstanding challenges in building links between employers on the one hand and schools and colleges on the other. We welcome the Careers & Enterprise Company's work to overcome these challenges, in particular through its Enterprise Adviser scheme. It is important, however, that employer engagement is seen as a complement to, rather than a substitute for, impartial, independent careers advice and guidance. Young people who take part in employer engagement programmes should have the opportunity to reflect on their experiences with an impartial careers adviser. (Paragraph 72)
17. *We welcome the involvement of Local Enterprise Partnerships in the Enterprise Adviser scheme. We encourage all LEPs to play their full role in brokering links between employers and schools. We recommend that, for its part, the Careers & Enterprise Company ensure that the scheme leaves plenty of room for local flexibility and that it supports, rather than duplicates, any existing work being carried out by the LEP.* (Paragraph 73)

Work experience

18. *We recommend that the Government work with employers and schools to produce a plan to ensure that all students at Key Stage 4 have the opportunity to take part in meaningful work experience. It should also ensure that there are mechanisms in place to ensure that work experience is being effectively delivered through Key Stage 5 study plans. (Paragraph 79)*