

Education Committee

Oral evidence: [Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance, HC 54](#)

Tuesday 15 November 2022

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Members present: Ian Mearns (Chair); Apsana Begum; Mrs Flick Drummond; Kim Johnson; Andrew Lewer.

Questions 111 - 166

Witnesses

I: Oli de Botton, Chief Executive, Careers and Enterprise Company; and Roger Cotes, Director of Careers and Further Education, Department for Education.

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Oli de Botton and Roger Cotes.

Q111 Chair: Good morning everyone, and welcome to the Education Select Committee. This is our third session in our inquiry on careers education, information, advice and guidance, and holding to account the bodies that oversee it.

This session is an accountability hearing with the National Careers Service and the Careers Enterprise Company. We will look at whether they provide value for money to the taxpayer, and at the work they do to ensure young people receive high-quality careers education.

We have with us two witnesses. Introduce yourselves, please, and say why you are here.

Roger Cotes: I am the director for careers and further education at the Department for Education; in particular, I am SRO for the National Careers Service. We also fund the Careers Enterprise Company, so I am also the SRO for the Careers Enterprise Company funding.

Oli de Botton: I am the chief executive of the Careers and Enterprise Company. I have been in post for about 18 months and I joined from being the head teacher and co-founder of School 21 in Stratford in east London.

Q112 Chair: Thank you. This session is being broadcast live on parliamentlive.tv, so the world can see you. To Oli de Botton first, can you provide us with a brief overview of what the Careers Enterprise Company does, and the impact that you have on the quality of careers education, information, advice and guidance provision for children and young people?

Oli de Botton: The Careers Enterprise Company does two things primarily. We train careers leaders, so that they can deliver fantastic careers programmes for young people, and we bring schools, colleges, employers and apprenticeship providers together in careers hubs. That means more employers and providers going into schools and more young people going out.

When schools and colleges work with us, their careers provision improves. Schools and colleges in established careers hubs meet nearly six Gatsby benchmarks. That compares with less than three for those schools not engaged. That is important for two reasons. First, it means that young people are getting a more rounded, rich and holistic educational experience, more porous to the world of work—the sort of education I tried to deliver as a head teacher. Secondly, they are also securing stronger outcomes. The better a school does against the Gatsby



benchmarks, the more likely a young person is to be in a sustained destination, and that effect is stronger in schools serving the most disadvantaged cohorts. They are more likely to take up an apprenticeship, and that is great for those young people, but also great for the Exchequer. Our latest estimates are that by 2020, 3,700 young people were in sustained destinations as a result of careers guidance, saving around £150 million.

Q113 Chair: You said 3,700; that is a relatively small number, given the number of youngsters in a cohort.

Oli de Botton: Sure. As we have seen in evidence, and as previous witnesses have said, careers guidance and education affect sustained destinations, but that is not the strongest impact; there are impacts on things such as achievement rates pre-16, and the curriculum offer. I do not want to overclaim for the impact that careers education can have, but it is part of the picture that helps to secure young people into sustained destinations. We can answer what I think previous sessions have asked: what are the Gatsby benchmarks, and do they mean something? Yes, they do. They mean there is an impact on sustained destinations; but that is, I agree, not the whole picture.

Q114 Chair: In previous accountability hearings with the Careers Enterprise Company in 2018, four years ago, our previous Select Committee—I was there—raised a number of concerns, including wasteful spending, high salaries for senior staff, and low awareness of the Careers Enterprise Company's work. What steps have you taken to address these issues? How has the situation improved since then?

Oli de Botton: That was feedback that the organisation took very seriously. Let me take those concerns in turn. On awareness of our organisation, a recent Teacher Tapp survey taken on behalf of the Sutton Trust said that three quarters of head teachers were working with us and being supported by us. We saw that not just in the statistic but also in the submissions. The Academies Enterprise Trust, one of the largest academy trusts in the country, is happy working with us. Capital City College Group is working with us. We have done work on awareness. There is always more to do, but I think that is progress.

People said, "Tell us about value for money," so we are sharing this information on our website. On the interventions we are putting in place, the careers leader training and the careers hubs have been shown to improve provision, so they are making a difference on the frontline, and we are seeking to deliver them as efficiently as possible. In the last year, we have added 50% to the number of schools and colleges in the hubs. We have kept the programme costs the same and reduced the overheads.

My final point on value for money is that we are leveraging additional resource. For the money invested—and we feel very privileged to be able to do this—we are getting quite a bit back. We get about half as much



back for every pound invested—47 pence—from local authorities and combined authorities who are co-funding parts of the careers hubs, the volunteer time of the business. Another thing the Committee said previously was, “Can you get additional resource from the private sector?”, and we have been able to do that.

We have tried very hard to take on the feedback, and I think we have made progress, but of course there is more to do.

Q115 Chair: We heard evidence in previous sessions that the overall spend on careers education, information, advice and guidance per young person is very low indeed. Are you confident that you are supporting youngsters who have a deficit in social capital—those who do not have the sorts of networks of family and friends to support them in furthering their horizons?

Oli de Botton: I absolutely agree. That is why I started the school in Stratford. I understood that the schools and colleges need to provide the social networks that may not be there at home for some young people. That is why I was committed to extended work experience.

In the CEC, schools serving the most disadvantaged cohorts—high FSM schools, the schools I used to work in—are more likely to be in a careers hub, more likely to have a careers leader trainer and more likely to have employers in. We can show that over time.

Of course I agree that the disadvantage gap in education is everywhere—in progress, in achievement, in access to inclusion services and in exclusion rates. It would be odd if careers education was not bedevilled by that in the same way as other areas are. We want to do more, which is why we went to JPMorgan Chase & Co and worked with them on a £2-million fund to work with disadvantaged cohorts across the country. They said that we had to do something about disadvantaged young people who may not have the time to think about their future careers, who may be battling other issues at home. As a result, we have some work going on across the country—a project in Liverpool on supporting working-class boys into secure transition; work with excluded men in London; and work with young people with SEND in Leicestershire. We are seeking to do more and want to do more, but I agree with your essential point, Chair. Employers are critical to building social networks for young people.

Q116 Chair: I am afraid to say that the Education Committee does get a lot of representatives from the field or Ministers coming along and giving us examples of good practice, but they are few and far between in terms of what is required. You know that the Careers Enterprise Company is expected to support schools in the requirements of the Baker clause, but your own data shows that compliance is very low. Less than half of schools said that the majority of their students had encounters with independent training providers last year. What support are you providing—and why is it not working?—to ensure that schools comply with the Baker clause, so that youngsters get a variety of information,



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advice and guidance about what is available out there, rather than being constrained to a bums-on-seats funding regime?

Oli de Botton: The requirement is critical. The work-based routes for vocational education are often life-changing for young people.

Since I have come in, we have said to the careers hubs, "Can you amplify technical and vocational routes?" We asked the careers leaders to do the same. Then we looked at the Ofsted reports. I know the Committee has asked if Ofsted have a look at the Baker clause, and that Ofsted has submitted to this inquiry. Over the last two months, we have seen that they are looking at it more, and there is perhaps more compliance, but I agree with you that there is more to do.

The conversation around apprenticeships, which I know are dear to all of us, does seem to be changing. Take UCAS applications, particularly for degree apprenticeships. Take the youth unemployment statistics from the UK survey—a very respected survey over two years. It now says that young people are getting information about apprenticeships. Albeit that we are starting from a low base, I think the conversation is changing. However, there is obvious friction—I have seen this myself with students I have taught: when a young person wants to go on a work-based route or a technical route, but experienced an academic route pre-16, there can be issues. There might be issues with the availability of apprenticeship provision; there may be issues around the timing of apprenticeships; and of course there may be issues around the school. We are doing three things to support that.

First, we want to deal with the friction for young people—the Baker clause—and we are seeking to put the full weight of the careers hubs behind the new provider access legislation, which I think is critical because it is asking: what are the critical encounters that young people need? I spoke to careers leaders on Friday, because I thought you would be asking me about this. To Liz, in North Yorkshire, for example, I said, "How are you managing the new requirements that come into force in January?". She said, "We need to make adjustments, but a colleague from the hub is helping, and we know what we need to do." We work with careers leaders. The evaluation of our careers leader training said it was helping teachers to understand the different routes, the brilliant vocational routes, that young people can take. That is why we work with the AELP, which came to a previous inquiry, on a technical pathway, and are getting that information out there.

A third bit of friction we are trying to reduce is with employers. What the Learning and Work Institute said a couple of weeks ago about what happens with apprentices is interesting. They said employer readiness to receive a young person is critical, and we see that in our work.

I give you the example of the Sovini property management group in the Liverpool city region, which came to the hub and said they were not getting enough apprentices. The hub spoke to some young people and



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told Sovini that the way they were advertising apprenticeships did not appeal to young people, or was not quite what they needed. That interaction with young people helped Sovini and the hub to get the pipeline right.

One last thing, which I am very passionate about: when businesses and organisations are very serious about engaging with schools, there is a very positive trajectory. Outreach leads to work experience, leads to internships, leads to apprenticeships. We have seen that with organisations like Morgan Sindall in East Anglia. Helen Clements is a fantastic social value manager.

There is a lot there. I have spoken too much, but it is something that we take on board, and that we need to get right.

Q117 Chair: Roger Cotes, your perspective: you are the procurer, as it were, and the delivery is by the Careers Enterprise Company. Are you satisfied? What are you doing to try to improve school compliance with the Baker clause? Also, by the way, Oli de Botton has talked about careers leaders in schools. They are very much under-resourced at the moment in what they can offer and do. There is also a question about careers leaders in schools lacking impartiality and independence from the institution. How can we overcome that?

Roger Cotes: First on the Baker clause, we want to make sure that schools are consistently providing access to providers of further and technical education. The new legislation comes into effect in January. Ofsted has already been much more explicit in its inspection handbook about what is expected. It is very much a two-pronged approach.

As Oli de Botton has just described, the Careers Enterprise Company is providing support, and often the providers of further and technical education will be in the same hub as the schools, so that is a network that helps to establish those relationships and make sure that those encounters do happen.

Schools do pay close attention to the expectations of what Ofsted looks for, and I know you have Ofsted's Amanda Spielman coming in shortly. We have seen instances of Ofsted picking schools up on not delivering the Baker clause, and of course with the new legislation coming into effect, expectations are more specific than they have been. Previously, it was regarded as a more general expectation. The new legislation and the guidance that comes with it are much more detailed about what good encounters and quality access for providers of further and technical education look like.

To the point about school leader training, the critical point for us is that the Government have seen the responsibility for delivering career education for young people as integral to their overall education. It must be integrated with the curriculum. It is not an add-on that is done separately. Therefore, the focus of having those trained career leaders is



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that they are part, quite often, of the senior leadership team of the school or college and what we want is not just for them to spend a proportion of their time being a career leader but to take that role with them to everything they do. Careers must be integral in curriculum planning and thinking about how you design the institution's offer, thinking about what visits from employers and providers of further and technical education could be aligned with the curriculum so careers is thought about at leadership level in the school.

Q118 Mrs Flick Drummond: Oli de Botton mentioned private providers such as JPMorgan. What about more vocational providers? I am thinking about house builders, plumbers, and those sorts of employers. Do you have good relationships with them, and are you trying to link them to schools?

Oli de Botton: Yes, 100%. I can get the details to you, but I am pretty sure we had the plumbers association working with us in Birmingham. The point about the hubs is that they are vehicles. Historically, people have said—I know this myself from being a head teacher—that the way employers were getting into schools was not always co-ordinated. I guess that was the reason why we were set up. Of course there is more to do, but it is about providing a strategic and practical way for employers to get into schools, so that it is manageable for the school as well as the employer.

Q119 Mrs Flick Drummond: It is quite obvious that schools are pushing academic routes and maybe apprenticeship routes, but not pushing the purely vocational routes. Having talked to employers, I hear them say they are not getting the people they want because the schools are diverting the students elsewhere. You mentioned Birmingham, but what about the rest of the country?

Oli de Botton: We see that one of the primary reasons why employers work with hubs is exactly for that reason: to get an insight into the future talent. I was speaking to one of the business volunteers recently, Unipres vehicle parts manufacturer. He told me the reason he was getting involved is he needed to see the young people, and I need to help them understand what is brilliant about apprenticeships. We see a virtuous circle where it works. Organisations go into schools, do the outreach, speak to the young people and inspire them about business. Then they offer them work experience placements—maybe in year 10—or maybe when they leave school at 16, they have an internship or perhaps are at FE college, and then they take them up as an apprentice. Our most recent survey data from all the employers working in the hubs told us that 70% of those employers are doing it to get apprentices.

To get this right, and it is a challenge to ensure parity of esteem and so on, you need the voice of the employer very strongly within the system.

Q120 Mrs Flick Drummond: One of my colleagues in Wolverhampton says that the armed forces do not go in either; they are not invited into the schools. That might be something that you want to pursue.



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Oli de Botton: We will.

- Q121 **Chair:** There is a problem, in that in many areas, the employment base does not include many large employers. How do we get employers in small and medium-sized enterprises engaged in thinking about where they will recruit apprentices from, and how they will do it? Do we not need some sort of brokerage to bring employers together in localities?

Oli de Botton: I saw this very clearly at the Derbyshire careers hub with the GF Tomlinson construction company. I am going to bring my supply chain into the conversation now. Smaller businesses do not always have the time to engage. You are right: big employers may have the capacity, but where you have smaller businesses in a local area, we can get to them through to the hub and have the advocates, those big organisations, saying that engaging with schools is the right thing to do.

- Q122 **Mrs Flick Drummond:** That brings me to my official question about the Gatsby benchmarks. The 2017 Careers Strategy stated that the CEC would act as the backbone for co-ordinating the Gatsby benchmarks, but we have heard that only 7% of schools are adhering to them in full. What support do you provide to help schools meet the benchmarks, and why has it not been enough? You mentioned six benchmarks, but I have eight. Can you let us know what you are doing there?

Oli de Botton: Speaking as an educationalist, if you told me every school in the country was meeting eight benchmarks, I probably would not believe you. We all understand that change takes time. It is quite a new system. Historically, there have been changes in careers education. I think the numbers are about 12% now that are meeting eight benchmarks.

The important question is: what about the provision is improving? It is important for policy makers to know what makes the difference. These are simple things. When the careers leaders are trained to understand how you connect the benchmarks—when they know that they need a whole-school strategy, that young people in year 7 might have employers coming in, and that in year 8 they might go out to employers, and in year 9 they might have a curriculum connected to the world of work, and might have personal provider interviews in year 10—when we train up the careers leaders, the provision improves. We have also found over time that when schools, colleges, employers and apprenticeship providers work together and collaborate and make sure of the porosity between them, the benchmarks improve.

I am not seeking to overclaim for those things, but those are the interventions in the system, and that is when provision improves. That is where we have got to with the investment we have put in place.

- Q123 **Mrs Flick Drummond:** You have both sides, haven't you? You have the schools, but you also have the employers. I know that it is difficult to get employers to engage with the T-levels. Are you finding it easy to engage



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employers in years 7 to 13—that they want to come in? Are you working with them, as opposed to just the schools?

Oli de Botton: Yes. Employers have lots of constraints on their time. However, we have found that the employers we work with understand what we are trying to do, which is that careers education is not a one-off, that it needs to be a full part of a holistic education. Employers therefore need to be within the school, not just once.

We all know the historical stories about going to the wrong work experience. That is not the model we are pursuing. Where this works really well is where you have employers engaged for the long term, and understanding that it is in their interests, for their talent pipeline, but is also in the interests of the young people. Again, not to overclaim, the hubs are providing more access to employers, and more employers are going in as a result of that intervention.

Q124 **Chair:** On the numbers, Oli, we were told at a session only a month ago that only 7% of schools were adhering to the benchmarks in full. You are saying today that it is 12%. Could you provide us with evidence for that claim, please?

Oli de Botton: Yes. I am pretty sure that it is on our website, but I can say in advance that last year, the number that met eight benchmarks doubled. Having been on the frontline for many years, I can say that when you put a non-statutory requirement in schools, it is not always taken up, but people have taken to the Gatsby benchmarks, and I think that is because they are logical, coherent and have an ambitious vision at heart.

My favourite benchmark, benchmark 4, says: "Let's connect the curriculum to the real world. Let's think about ratio and proportion in year 7 maths, and how they could be used in the creative industries; let's think about English in year 9, which I used to teach, and connecting that to the world of work." There is an ambition in there that I think educators have taken on board.

Q125 **Chair:** You say it has gone from 7% to 12%. What do you anticipate happening by, say, this time next year? If it is 12%, that means that 88% are not complying with the Gatsby benchmarks in full.

Oli de Botton: They are not complied with in full, I agree, but it would be like saying that every school in the country had world-class assessment systems. I certainly didn't, on world-class inclusional behaviour. What the benchmarks are doing is saying, "This is the gold standard and this is how we can get there." I have to be honest with you: I don't think every school is going to be meeting eight benchmarks next year. However, what is important in policy terms is what helps us to get there. I would say it is training, support and employers. It speaks well of our system that when you put support for frontline practitioners in place, they buy into it and they do a great job.



Chair: Thank you.

Q126 **Kim Johnson:** Roger Cotes, my first question to you is about the impact of the National Careers Service. Data from the Department for Education from September last year show that 18 to 19-year-olds who were eligible for free school meals were more likely to have received no information, advice or guidance in the previous 12 months, and that only between 1% and 2% found NCS helpful. Why would you say that young people are so disengaged from the service, and how will you try to improve it?

Roger Cotes: I think the statistic was that a small number—1% or 2%—found it the most useful source of support, and I think that reflects that if you are a young person, your most trusted sources of advice will be the people you know. It is not necessarily a service or something that you go to. We find that of the people who use it, young people aged 18 to 24 have the higher satisfaction levels with the National Careers Service, in terms of the value that they find that the advice gives them.

Those aged 18 to 24 are a priority group for our regional advice service. Those who deliver the National Careers Service are incentivised to focus on delivering to that group. Recently we have run the Get the Jump campaign, focused on promoting technical skills to young people aged 14 to 19. It is hosted on the National Careers Service website, and 1.8 million young people have gone to the website as a result of the campaign. Certainly we are seeing raised awareness of the service.

Q127 **Kim Johnson:** How long have you been the director of careers and further education? What has been the most significant difference and improvement during your tenure?

Roger Cotes: I have been the director of careers and further education since August 2021, and we have seen improvement. We were talking just now about the Gatsby benchmarks. I think we have seen an average improvement of one benchmark since last year. It is gradual progress. I know from the conversation you were having with Oli de Botton that if you go back to 2017, the average number of benchmarks that a school delivered was two and it is now five. Obviously we would like it to be eight. We would like to keep driving progress, but we have seen continuous improvement during that period.

Recently, we have had the publication of both the skills and the schools White Papers, both of which have commitments on careers. The Skills and Post-16 Education Act, which will be coming into force in January, includes much stronger requirements in terms of the Baker clause, and I think that will bring progress in the twin approach of providing support and having accountability in place.

Q128 **Kim Johnson:** Have you seen any regional variations in that data? We know that there are significant regional variations in educational attainment.



Roger Cotes: You are right. Educational attainment varies and we are particularly keen to focus on it. Career support can make the greatest difference to those who have the fewest connections, and the fewest networks and that support can be most important for that group.

The National Careers Service is a national service, universally available, but it is particularly targeted at those who have been unemployed for 12 months, who are NEET aged below 24, those with special educational needs or with low skills, and that is for that reason. It is very much focused on those who most need that support.

Q129 **Kim Johnson:** Oli, you started the session by saying that CEC is about providing fantastic career services, but the data that we have seen from this and previous witness testimonies would suggest otherwise. Previous witnesses to this inquiry have testified that the biggest barriers for disadvantaged children were the lack of aspiration. Can you tell us about the Effective Transitions Fund and how this has had an impact on deindustrialised areas that are suffering from generational poverty and lack of meaningful employment opportunities? Could you also say a bit about the project that you mentioned earlier in Limerick, with working-class boys? That would be helpful, thanks.

Oli de Botton I agree that we need to do a huge amount to ensure that we give more support to young people in communities that need more support, which is why we work more closely with schools serving the most disadvantaged cohorts.

I went to a school in Stoke a couple of weeks ago, St Peter's School. When I interviewed the students, I saw something really important. They had a curriculum careers lesson, but it was absolutely fluid. It was with the local ceramics factory, Emma Bridgewater. They did the learning in the classroom; they had a project that they built up to, and then they went to visit the local factory. We did a pupil panel, and the young people said, "We're not from London like you, sir. We're passionate about our area and we want to build our area here." That is what careers education can do, because it says, "Our local economy is critical to us".

Young people are the social capital who can build the future. I have seen some good practice, and it is that connectivity with what young people are learning, and connecting it to their local economy. That is why we work with people like the Liverpool City Region, Greater Manchester Combined Authority and the GLA, because those organisations where those hubs are hosted understand what the local needs are.

The particular project in Liverpool, which came from the JPMorgan fund, was an issue identified by colleagues in Liverpool. Working-class boys were their target cohort. They said, "If we put in intensive careers intervention with those young people, whether it is extending workplaces, whether it is extended mentoring, can we make that transition from year 11 to a secure destination in year 12 more 12?" The evidence that we saw from that project was that that is the danger zone for young people



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who face disadvantages. Years 10, 11, and 12 are when things might become more difficult at home or where the academic pressure is strong. Therefore, it seems to be the right time to target that support. I am happy to write to you separately with more details on the project if it is of interest.

Q130 Kim Johnson: That would be interesting, thanks, Oli, but we are in the midst of a major crisis; we are looking at the possibility of austerity 2.0 and an impact on our public sector, particularly schools. What would you say would be the major impact on young people in disadvantaged areas?

Oli de Botton I have been a head teacher, and I understand the pressures. If we are talking about careers, we have to hold on to thinking that it is worth investing in careers. I would say that, wouldn't I? When there is pressure, it is important to help young people understand their next steps. When I was a head during the pandemic, what did I learn? When the exams were gone and we were just working with young people, we focused more on careers and more on the future because we thought that that was the right thing to do. Schools will be under enormous pressure. I absolutely understand that and I know it will be challenging. I am advocating keeping up the momentum with careers because it will help those young people, it will help them transition into the job market and motivate them in the here and now as well.

Kim Johnson: Do you have anything else to add to that, Roger?

Roger Cotes: You talk about economic disruption and global economic challenges. Careers advice for adults—if you are going through a period where there is economic change, some businesses are doing well and others are doing less well, the difference that careers advice can provide is in-depth support to think through what someone's options are. If someone is referred to the National Careers Service, they will get an extended session with a qualified adviser who can help them to think, "What industry am I hoping to get a job with, what skills and training would I need to do to progress in that, how can I make myself attractive to employers in that area, do I build up relevant experience?" If you are someone who has lost their job or is in low-paid work and struggling to go further, that sort of support can help the person who has been affected by economic change to do better.

Q131 Chair: I am just wondering, Oli; when you talked about working with youngsters in years 10 and 11, is it not important to try to get in and talk to youngsters in years 8 and 9 before they are doing their GCSE options or looking at a vocational option? Is that not a better early intervention time to try to get involved?

Oli de Botton Yes, absolutely. We would advocate for primary school as well. Career-related learning is absolutely critical. The research that JPMorgan funded was very concerned with what happens at the point of transition, as Kim Johnson said, that point about the transition being that key point and whether you can put in an intensive intervention then. Of



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course you are right that what went before is equally important but that was the concern about that bit of research, which has led to the project.

Chair: Thank you very much. Flick, back to you.

Q132 Mrs Flick Drummond: Moving on to young people with SEND, we have evidence that it is more than twice as likely that they get no careers guidance, and in particular, there are gaps for young people who do not fall within the EHCP system. What more needs to be done to ensure these young people are getting the careers support that they need? Roger, we have also heard that it is very difficult to access the NCS website if you are deaf. Could you comment on that as well, please?

Oli de Botton Careers education needs to be inclusive, as does any school agenda, such as a behaviour policy. The gaps with benchmark 3 relate to an inclusive careers programme. We have that over time that has improved. There is more to do but it has improved, things like making sure young people who have EHCP or those with SEND anyway are properly supported through transition. We have seen that improve.

Why might that be? First, we have some specific training in inclusive practice for the people who run hubs. That has been important. Secondly, which I think is also important, is the employer voice here. Wilmott Dixon is a partner of ours in Birmingham. Marie Wilks is one of the business volunteers at the special schools there. She uses her interaction with young people to make her work experience programmes more inclusive. Those supported routes into work are critical.

Special schools and APs sometimes do lead the way in some of this practice. The Stone Soup Academy in Nottingham has extended work placements with Crowne Plaza that work through us. In a way, some of those schools, some of the non-mainstream provision, can teach the mainstream provision about inclusive practice for young people. I acknowledge the question and we need to make careers education as inclusive as it can be.

Q133 Mrs Flick Drummond: People with Down syndrome are quite often pushed into one particular kind of job, whereas they would quite like a range of different things. It is as important to get employers engaged and looking at that as it is trying to get employers to understand that autistic people have much more to offer than the preconception suggests.

Oli de Botton Exactly right. Other people have said this. We have to exploit all the talents of everyone in our economy. It is something that we are focused on. You are right that we need to be as inclusive as possible.

Roger Cotes: The National Careers Service website is part of gov.uk. It has accessibility standards and it is designed to be used with assistive technology. Sometimes that can be a combination of the machine and how you are accessing it as well as the website. Obviously we want to keep on improving it and if we are getting that feedback, we want to look



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at it and think about how it can be better. There is a new legislative requirement to report on accessibility for British Sign Language. That is something that we will be looking at to see what we can do to improve.

Chair: Just be aware that BSL has regional differences. Believe it or not, it does.

Q134 **Apsana Begum:** My first question is to Roger Cotes and is about home education. Young people who are home-educated cannot access careers support through schools, meaning that the NCS is the main resource they can draw upon. How does the NCS work with home-educated young people and what data do you have on how many you have supported and the evidence of the impact it has had?

Roger Cotes: Yes, the National Careers Service is there and the intention has been that it is there as a source of trusted information for everyone to use, and that includes young people and parents. The National Careers Service has been designed to be available to those aged 13 and upwards. We have data that around 7,000 young people and parents of school age have used the National Careers Service offer. That is a small number but it is not their primary source of careers advice. We have also provided some support through the Careers and Enterprise Company to look at how better we can support that cohort of the home-educated.

As I have described it, the overall strategy has been that career education should be integrated into learning in general and that is how it is delivered through schools. Where somebody is being home-educated, we want to make sure that parents can access that support so that they are able to think about careers as part of doing that home education.

Q135 **Apsana Begum:** What evidence is there of the impact that has had and also what about the quality compared with pupils in schools?

Roger Cotes: To be honest, we do not have data in the same way on those who are home-educated. In schools we can measure compliance with the Gatsby benchmarks, we can see how careers is being integrated into the curriculum and so on and they will use the Compass+ tool that gives us data on that. We do not have the same level of evidence on those who are home-educated but obviously we want to understand more. We have given some seed funding to the Careers and Enterprise Company to look at how better we can support that cohort.

Apsana Begum: It would be good to know, going forward, if that is something that the DfE might consider trying to collect information on.

Q136 **Chair:** Coming in on that one, we have had evidence that the number of youngsters who are being home-educated has grown quite dramatically in the last four or five years. That is for a whole range of different reasons and not always the best educational reasons. Given the numbers now of those who are home-educated, and you think that about 7,000 have used the service and for others it is not their primary source, how



would we know? That is a big question. If we do not know; that is a problem. Is there any evidence to say what is happening out there or not?

Roger Cotes: We do not have that level of information as to how well home-educated students are having that standard of what good-quality careers education looks like, as we would apply it to schools. We have detailed data on how that is being delivered for schools but because of the nature of home education, we do not have that information. You are right to challenge us and ask how we can learn more and how we can get more insight into that. We are very keen to learn more and to think about how we can better support that group.

Q137 **Chair:** I am wondering whether the Careers and Enterprise Company could be commissioned to do some sort of outreach project for these young people, because the numbers are becoming quite substantial.

Oli de Botton As you say, the numbers increased over the pandemic. I saw that myself as a head. As Flick Drummond said, there sometimes is an interrelationship between those young people who might be waiting for a diagnosis of SEND and their being home-educated. It is a complicated issue but as we said in our submission, it is an area where we would want to do more if we are privy enough to do it. It is an area we could work on.

Chair: Maybe the pair of you need to get your heads together on that particular question.

Q138 **Apsana Begum:** One more question for Roger Cotes. We have had several submissions highlighting that pupils in alternative provision also have lower access to and poorer-quality careers advice. Do you have any comments on that?

Roger Cotes: That is important. As we have said, careers education can make the greatest difference to those who have the greatest needs and have the furthest to go. We want all young people of school age to be accessing good and high-quality career education. Through the CEC we have been developing tailored networks and support for those who are not in mainstream schooling or mainstream schools but with SEND, and other groups. It is important that we create networks that enable those institutions to do better and also to share techniques which might be different in terms of how you can provide individual support.

One of the Gatsby benchmarks is around providing individual support that reflects the need of the child or young person. If you are in alternative provision, you need tailored career support that fits the needs of that individual.

Q139 **Apsana Begum:** It would be good to know—if not now, then at some point in future—how many APs are in careers hubs, or that kind of set-up.



Oli de Botton The majority are now. I can give you the specifics. We are now getting data from both AP and special schools, and you can see the progress that they are making. We adapted the tool so that it is more appropriate and more person-centred for those schools.

There is some incredible practice in those schools. I saw it Mill Green School—again, it is in Liverpool. Working with the hub, they took virtual reality headsets for those young people who have social anxiety and did not want to leave the school. They worked with the local employers, including Regenda Homes and Knowsley Safari Park, and put the work experience opportunity on the headsets. That gave those young people confidence. We are seeing innovation in APs and special schools that we could all learn from.

Q140 **Apsana Begum:** My next question is to you, Oli. Your written evidence did not provide much information at all about support for pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds, yet we have heard and we have had submissions that these young people are less likely to receive careers support and have lower awareness of employers in their local area. Why is this not a bigger area of focus for the CEC and how do you propose to improve the support you provide to these young people?

Oli de Botton It is an incredibly important issue, as you say, because there are barriers for young people around race and gender, particularly as they enter the workplace. One of the things that is worth emphasising is that we are trying to build capacity at the frontline, with head teachers, with schools and with careers leaders. The school will know how to effectively target the young people.

Apsana Begum: Are you blaming the schools?

Oli de Botton No, I am not blaming the schools; of course not. I am saying that I do not think that it is right for me to say, "X school here should target those cohorts". The YUK survey in particular said that black youngsters were more likely to value school-based careers support. That is why I think that it is very important to provide to the school to deliver well.

Q141 **Apsana Begum:** What are you providing to make sure that those ethnic minority pupils are getting the support? Your aim is to, "Grow the network of careers hubs" and, "Providing training and support for careers leaders". Do you also have data around careers leaders? I understand that schools have to publish who their careers leaders are. Is there an ethnic minority gap in terms of the representation of people from ethnic minority backgrounds that are careers leaders that could be addressed to make sure that they can meet the needs of people from those backgrounds? What can be done to help? The data show significant gaps.

Oli de Botton The data show that when you put in support for the schools and colleges they are improving their provision in all elements of it, including the targeting that relates to the Gatsby benchmark 3. The



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evidence also suggests that young people from ethnic minorities value more the support that they are getting from schools. That is why we are set up to do that.

In the school I was head of, there were interrelated barriers for young people. Some of them had barriers related to SEND, discrimination, to economic disadvantage. I do feel it is right that decisions about where to target particular support are made there.

Having said that, the projects that we get through JPMorgan that I mentioned before are targeting particular cohorts—working-class boys in Liverpool, those young people eligible for free school meals in Leeds. We are trying to do additional support as well.

Q142 Apsana Begum: I want to ask, and my colleague will pick up on it as well, about £30 million of funding, doubled from £14.7 million in 2017. The DfE's careers strategy in 2017 talked about specific measures to be delivered between 2018 and 2020, with at least one particular measure that the CEC was asked to deliver, which was the new investment fund of £5 million to support disadvantaged pupils. Can you say a bit more about what the funding has resulted in and has any of that funding and work been targeted towards ethnic minority pupils?

Oli de Botton That funding was put in quite before my time. It is obviously right, but my understanding of it is that that funding was to support particular interventions for particular cohorts of young people—Gypsy, Roma and Traveller cohorts, particular cohorts around the country who face discrimination and disadvantage. The learning from that and the evaluation of that is available. It said, I think, if I read it correctly, the things that are important to support those young people—near-peer role models; people who can show a relationship that understands where that young person is coming from; the role of employers for young people who may not have them. The interventions that we are putting in place nationally, things like more employers, more support for schools, have taken on the learning from that additional resource.

Q143 Apsana Begum: I appreciate that the CEC is not there to deliver the service directly but is to support the work to be delivered, but I do not get a sense of how pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds have been supported. It would be good to see the evidence. Can you write to us after this session with evidence of how ethnic minority pupils in particular have been supported by the CEC?

Oli de Botton Of course.

Roger Cotes: The National Careers Service also has the flexibility to target support to ethnic minority groups where that is identified as being an issue. Recently, I visited Coventry where there had been targeted support for the black community because that had been identified as being a need locally. The advice service that the National Careers Service provides has the flexibility to be put in community settings. You can



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arrange for the advice service to be local and accessible where there are groups that particularly need support.

Q144 Chair: Moving on from that, we have also been doing some work recently about care leavers. We have been told that 41% of care leavers are not in education, employment or training. The Committee has heard that many young people in residential care do receive any career guidance at all. The number of youngsters who are NEET has increased. Does the Careers and Enterprise Company or the National Careers Service provide any specific support to children who are known to the care system, and if not why not?

Oli de Botton I am happy to cover from the school perspective. The practical support for a young person who is looked after should include careers education as part of that ongoing support. We have seen good practice in the west of England where the West of England Combined Authority is very focused on looked-after children. We are seeking to build capacity for schools and colleges as best as we can to fulfil those obligations and we will continue to do that.

Our argument would be that the same inclusive practice that you would expect for looked-after children for any element of school life—making sure that we understand their learning needs, making sure that we understand their behaviour needs—should apply to careers education, which needs to be part of the support for those young people.

Q145 Chair: I am particularly concerned because the 41% that I alluded to is for care leavers aged 19 to 21. That means that they have missed out from the school perspective. What are we going to do to tackle that particular cohort? They are already suffering from multiple disadvantages, being care leavers, but 41% of them not being in education or training or employment.

Roger Cotes: You are right. It is absolutely critical that that group receives support. They are a priority group for the National Careers Service to provide support to. The regional advice service that we provide is incentivised. If the young people were NEET, aged 19 to 24 as you described, the service would receive a higher funding rate to provide support to that cohort.

We talk about the range of community settings that National Careers Service advice is available in locally. We would want to make sure that that is accessible to that group. You are right that the Department for Education has a collective parental responsibility for that group of care leavers. You are right to challenge us and say that we need to make personalised support available for them.

Chair: I would suggest that you take that away and contact us in the near future to let us know if there are any proposals that you are going to bring forward to get into that group at all.

Roger Cotes: I am very happy to do that.



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Q146 **Mrs Flick Drummond:** Children in care often move around a lot when they are in school let alone when they leave school. Would it be a good idea to have some sort of mentoring service so that one careers adviser is linked with that child and young person as they go through so that later on they can give them advice as well? I do not know how expensive that would be, but it would seem to me that it would be very useful to do that.

Roger Cotes: I can totally see the sense of the proposal, and we can look at that, but it is not policy currently.

Q147 **Andrew Lewer:** Looking more broadly now at overall funding, Roger, taken together, the Careers and Enterprise Company and the National Careers Service receive about £100 million from the DfE. Given the concerns that we have outlined with some of the problems with some of the aspects of careers provision, would you say that that is taxpayers' money being well spent?

Roger Cotes: Of course we look very carefully at value for money. The evaluation of the National Careers Service that we have done finds that for every £1 of government investment that we put in, there is a return of £17 of benefit. From the National Careers Service's advice that is provided to the individual, you can look at the outcomes that are achieved. That is a progression through into better jobs or into work for people who are out of work, or progression into education that then leads to better outcomes. If you look at that against what you might normally expect to see from a control group and then you look at the outcomes that have been achieved, you can see that that has had a real benefit. There is good evidence that it does provide value for money.

You talk about the money that we invest through the Careers and Enterprise Company. Its focus is to make the quality of careers education in schools better, which is then more integrated with the overall education offer for the school. It is harder to distil down and look at outcomes and say that this is exactly what has made the difference.

However, as Oli was describing to you earlier, there is evidence that if schools deliver the Gatsby benchmarks well, an individual is less likely to be NEET, which obviously has very long-term costs. Also, for the money that we put in, the CEC then gets significant other support as well. You talk about the 3,500 enterprise advisers, and the 400 cornerstone employers. There is significant support that is not from the Government that goes along with the government investment. We want to keep on improving value for money but there is evidence that there is good value achieved with the money that goes in.

Q148 **Andrew Lewer:** During my many years as a county council leader, everybody I used to fund used to come back to me with five times return on investment, or 17. I think the record-breaker was 44 times. For every £1, I got £44 back, apparently. I do not remember seeing it, but I did, I was told. It is a bit hard to track these things sometimes. It is almost like



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the Del Boy theory of public investment—"Next year, we will all be millionaires." Are you convinced not only that you have a return on the money you put in, but that that return is as good as if that money were deployed elsewhere? It is one thing to say, "I have put this money in and I have this return," but how do you assess whether it is as good a return as if you had invested that money in some other provision?

Roger Cotes: Of course we are always looking to improve the return. In terms of the impacts of those who use the National Careers Service, this is the face-to-face or telephone support, then 71% go on into new learning, so that might be an apprenticeship or a technical qualification or it might be another form of education, 44% go into employment progression, so it might be a better job than they are in now, or if they are not in work, going into work. Again, when we are doing that value for money analysis then that will look at the counterfactual, because it is obviously targeted at the hardest-to-reach groups currently. So those who have been out of work for 12 months, those with very low skills, and those with special educational needs, and that will be taken into account when coming up with that calculation.

As you say, obviously Government can spend money in lots of different ways to support people, and whenever we go through a Spending Review process or business planning within the Department then there is a business case process to do that, and obviously a fair degree of challenge in terms of why we are using money in that way and that is then used to evaluate as to is this the best use of money, and ultimately it is a decision for Ministers in making those prioritisation decisions.

Q149 **Andrew Lewer:** To both of you and regarding schools particularly, what is your view about the value of funding the Careers and Enterprise Company and the National Careers Service, rather than simply giving that funding in some sort of proportionate or pupil premium weighted way straight to the schools?

Roger Cotes: Schools obviously deliver careers education as part of their overall education offer. The money that we give to the Careers and Enterprise Company, £30 million, is significant, but it is money that is designed as improvement support. If it was divided up and given to every school, it would not be a huge amount of funding, about £5,000 per school, and that reflects the overall career education that is provided that in a sense is integrated into school funding and that funding to the CEC is about enabling schools to deliver career education better by providing a structure of support to enable them to do that.

I think you have reflected that the evidence shows that career education in schools has improved, but clearly has further to go, particularly things around connection with technical education and further education the Government would like to see it improve further and having external support and networks to do that is seen as being important. That is why the service has been designed in that way.



Oli de Botton: Our grant from Government last year was £23.8 million year—less than £5,000 per school. I think a previous witness said it was £2 per pupil. As the Chair will know, we had a previous witness say that there was £300 million for young people. We are very privileged to do this work and we seek to deliver it as efficiently as possible, so the hubs are being delivered more efficiently and the careers leaders are being delivered more efficiently because we totally understand it. I do not think it would be right to say to schools, “You have to deliver the Gatsby benchmarks but we are not going to give you capacity and support to do it.” Of course, we can take feedback about whether our support is good enough and could improve, obviously we will, but I think it is right to support. There are lots of hubs—English hubs, maths hubs and so on—and often they work, but I think careers education deserves public investment. Of course, we can disagree about who does that, but I think it deserves public investment.

Q150 **Andrew Lewer:** Two things about that investment: first, we have heard figures of the CEC receiving £30 million, but then £23.8 million keeps being quoted as well. Can you unpack that discrepancy?

Oli de Botton: Yes, it is all on our website, in our value for money reports and in our accounts. The £23.8 million was the grant from the Department for Education last year. There is £600,000 from private additional resources, and that delivered about 700 careers leader training places across the country, and it got us to about 65% of schools and colleges in hubs. That is what we are focused on doing, making sure that we deliver those interventions as efficiently as possible.

I would note that our work is primarily in schools and colleges and is young people-focused, whereas the National Careers Service is primarily focused on adults.

Q151 **Andrew Lewer:** Since 2017 the money has doubled, but have your achievements and outcomes for young people doubled?

Oli de Botton: Before my time, but we have seen very solid foundations. We trained up to 2,099 careers leaders, which is a significant number in the sector. We committed to rolling out the careers hubs across the country because they are shown to have an impact. Other people have said they have had an impact, people who in fact were previously critical of the CEC, and people such as the AELP or other organisations have said they like that and that it is a useful part of the system. We are being asked to do these things; we are seeking to do them as efficiently as possible, and we are sharing the impact data on our website so that people can see.

Of course we take feedback but we seek to do the best job that we can.

Roger Cotes: That funding is providing national coverage. Originally the careers infrastructure was more limited and targeted, and it has been



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expanded and rolled out. It was a commitment of the Skills for Jobs White Paper that we would do that.

As for progress that has been achieved across the system, again going back to the Gatsby benchmarks measure, back in 2017 it was an average of two benchmarks per school and it is now five. There is progress while also saying that we would like it to go further.

Q152 Chair: You mentioned a number before, the £1 and leveraging £17 worth of return. Could you provide us with the evidence for that, please?

Roger Cotes: Yes, sure, and we can provide you with a lot of detail on that if you would like it. It is focused on the outcomes for the individuals who get advice and support from the National Careers Service. In other words, if someone is unemployed and gets into work, that is someone who will generate an economic contribution to the economy, will pay more in tax, will not cost benefits to the same extent, and if they go into education, they go into a higher level of education and that again leads to better outcomes and we can see that that is achieving value.

Q153 Chair: That is all entirely correct, as long as having entered that next stage they stick with it, but what if they do not stick with it? What checks do you have for individuals who enter into that stage of training or employment or whatever, and then stick with it?

Roger Cotes: I know a lot of work has been done around things such as data matching, looking at people who progress through the skills system and matching it through LEO to the Department for Work and Pensions data. It gets a bit technical, but we will look at the average outcome—if you go on to this qualification what do people who do that qualification achieve, and how would that have compared to what they might have been expected to do before getting that qualification? It is a technical calculation but if you would like more detail on it we can provide it.

Q154 Chair: I think that would be useful. I do not want to cause any personal friction between you, but the Careers and Enterprise Company's financial statement for the financial year 2022 showed that in that year, the grant amounted to £27.9 million, but the company has only received £23.8 million. What happened to the £4.1 million?

Oli de Botton: I can speak on that. We never received the £4 million. We claim for what we do, and as we have said before, we try to do it—

Q155 Chair: You sent money back?

Oli de Botton: No, we never received it. We claim each month. Previous Select Committees have said, "Deliver as efficiently as possible," and that is what we have sought to do.

Q156 Chair: Having said that, given some of the things that we have highlighted today, possibly you might think about how you could spend that money on some of the shortfalls, particularly on vulnerable youngsters or youngsters from minority ethnic backgrounds or with



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special educational needs or from the care system. That could be money well spent, particularly with those vulnerable groups.

Oli de Botton: I do not want to speak to that. We are led by what the Department seeks for us to do, we will only do that in agreement with the Department, and would not want to get ahead of that. We hope the Chair can see that we are trying to do this efficiently, because people before had said that we were not, so that is our agenda there.

Q157 **Kim Johnson:** A question for Roger Cotes. We have heard that the use of NCS by young people is very low. We know from previous Select Committee inquiries that there are major issues with value for money. Can you tell us how much of the funding is invested in young people and what you propose to do to ensure that more young people access the service?

Roger Cotes: We have just run the "Get the Jump" campaign, a campaign specifically targeted at young people to think about training, particularly technical routes. It is hosted through the National Careers Service digital offer, and 1.8 million young people have engaged with the campaign; that is 1.8 million distinct visits to the National Careers Service website. Clearly that is a route to driving greater engagement with the service.

As to how we incentivise our National Careers Service contractors that deliver the regional advice service, if you are a young person who is aged below 24 then you are a priority group, the delivery organisations are incentivised to prioritise that group in terms of focusing their advice.

It is a universal service, but it does have those particular focuses. We are also particularly thinking about how we look to develop the digital offer to make it more engaging to young people. At the moment the digital offer is through gov.uk, which has standards about how things are presented clearly, transparently and consistently, but we also want to get young people's user feedback to think about how we can make it engaging, and something that draws them in. How we can enhance that service to young people is an ongoing programme of work.

An Ipsos MORI survey shows that 71% of young people are satisfied with that service and have given positive feedback. Obviously we would like the percentage to be higher, which is why we continue to work at it but it is used by a lot of young people and those who do use it, on the whole say that they have a positive experience.

Q158 **Kim Johnson:** Would you agree with me that without significant funding for levelling up and providing opportunities for young people there are going to be a lot of issues for young people accessing training and well-paid, good jobs in the future?

Roger Cotes: The evidence we have seen has been that careers advice is an important ingredient in enabling young people who may be disadvantaged, who have not had the opportunities that you would want



them to have, to think through how they can progress, particularly in terms of access to further training and support and apprenticeships. Careers advice is a valuable route into that.

As a first step, we want that to be available through schools, but when they leave school the National Careers Service is a valuable route in. It is delivered through qualified advisers, and it is more in-depth perhaps than some other sources of advice that young people might get, for example through speaking to a work coach, if they were to go in through a job centre. It can provide support to think about how they can access opportunities, what is right for them as an individual and how they can develop a CV or experience that will enable them to get into a career that will be fulfilling.

Q159 Kim Johnson: Oli de Botton, you mentioned the recruitment and training of careers specialists. Do you have data on the numbers that are still in existence? We are aware that a lot of teachers have left the service particularly during the pandemic. What is the current level of qualified and highly trained careers advisers who are still available to provide the information to young people?

Oli de Botton: I can get that. I do not have it off the top of my head, but each school must have one careers leader, and I think that is right, on their website. We are training them to support brilliant careers programmes that are run through the school.

On the career specialists, it is important to note that we have seen the relationship between the career leader who is running across the programme and the career specialist who can target support specifically for young people when they need it. I was speaking to a career leader from Lancashire the other day who said he has a whole programme and if he spots someone in year 8 who needs specific support that is when he brings in the career specialist. At its best, that is when careers works brilliantly, across the whole school and targeted at the individual.

Of course, we can get you the numbers. My colleague at the CDI, Dave Morgan, will probably be able to provide that information as well.

Q160 Chair: Is anything being done on workforce planning and ensuring that there are enough professional careers advisers out there, or is it just laissez-faire—hoping that people will automatically enter that field of training and work?

Roger Cotes: Of course we work with Careers England and our delivery partners. You are right, it is a challenge. We do not have a dedicated workforce programme for careers at the moment, but as you say there is that standard that we expect our careers advisers to be qualified, at least to Level 4 and a proportion of them to Level 6. Those who are there at the moment do a good job. They are people who are committed and have done that qualification. You are right, workforces are challenging across a range of areas.



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Q161 **Chair:** Is there any data on what the workforce profile looks like in terms of the age range within the workforce? I have a funny feeling, and I am just guessing, that we may be talking about a workforce that is getting towards the older end of the age scale by and large.

Roger Cotes: I do not have that data here, but we can look into that and see if we can get that for you.

Q162 **Chair:** It may be that by looking at that data you might avert a problem in a couple of years' time. It is a thought anyway.

A previous iteration of this Committee six years ago highlighted concerns about overlaps and duplication in the system, yet five years later the Skills for Jobs White Paper described the system as, "confusing, fragmented and unclear." Why is that, and why is that problem still ongoing and what are you going to do to fix it?

Roger Cotes: You are right, we want to have a co-ordinated system that is clear and simple and we have been looking at how we can create that alignment. Professor Sir John Holman has been looking at what those options could be. He has written to Ministers so Ministers have his advice and will be considering the outcomes of his recommendations.

Q163 **Chair:** I know that there has been a revolving door of ministerial profiles at the DfE, but they have had that advice since the summer, yet we have not had any updates on that.

Roger Cotes: It is with Robert Halfon, our new Minister for Skills, Apprenticeships and Higher Education. I know you know him well.

Chair: I have never heard of him.

Roger Cotes: He will have Professor Sir John Holman's recommendations, and will consider them now that he is in post.

Q164 **Chair:** I think we will be seeing our erstwhile Chair as a Minister in front of us in a few weeks, so that will be useful. It is interesting that we have had that work done by Professor Sir John Holman and we can put a marker down to the Department that we are urgently hoping to see it come forward.

Roger Cotes: You are right. I know Ministers support having an aligned, simple and easy to understand system and we will continue to look at that.

Q165 **Chair:** This is a question probably above your pay grade, but I am going to ask it anyway. Do you think the Department for Education is the right place to oversee careers, education information, advice and guidance?

Roger Cotes: Going back to the question that you asked just before, we have an all-age careers system, so if you want to cover something that goes from school age all the way through to adult then there is a clear rationale for why you might choose to put careers education with the DfE. There is also a really strong alignment with technical education and the



skills agenda, and that is more in-depth support for how someone can progress through. It is not just about getting into work, but about thinking about how you can develop and fulfil your potential as an individual over the long term. From that point of view, there is a clear rationale why it would sit with DfE, though it clearly links with both the Department for Work and Pensions and BEIS and other Government Departments are important as well, and we need to keep and maintain those links.

Q166 Chair: I think that is entirely appropriate. I concur with the need to have this very much education-focused, but also have much more than just a weather eye on the needs of other Departments on the requirements for workforce planning into the future.

Roger Cotes: For example, we have a career reform steering group and I chair that, but it is a joint steering group with DWP and we have a programme where we have been working closely with DWP to think about how you can align the Jobcentre Plus offer and the National Careers Service support, which have distinct skillsets but clearly are very closely related. The majority of users of the National Careers Service come through Jobcentre Plus, so clearly that is an important connection.

Chair: Thank you very much indeed, gentlemen. It has been a pleasure to meet you both this morning. As the Education Select Committee, we take evidence, we write reports, make recommendations to Government. That is our duty and then sometimes, in time, those recommendations turn into policy. You never know, it might work. We will see.

Thank you both again for providing evidence to us this morning. Tomorrow the Committee will have a new Chair elected by the House, so we will be handing over to the new Chair and who will take over immediately after that election. Thank you very much for your attendance and thank you to the members for coming along this morning too.

Roger Cotes: Thank you for your time and your questions.