



Committee on Education, Skills and the Economy

Oral evidence: [Careers advice, information and guidance](#), HC 670

Wednesday 27 April 2016

Ordered by the House of Commons to be published on 27 April 2016.

Written evidence from witnesses:

- Department for Education ([CAD0040](#))
- Department for Education ([CAD0139](#))

[Watch the meeting](#)

Members present: Mr Iain Wright (Chair), Paul Blomfield, Neil Carmichael, Michelle Donelan, Suella Fernandes, Lucy Frazer, Catherine McKinnell, Ian Mearns, Amanda Milling, Amanda Solloway, Stephen Timms, Chris White.

Questions 188 – 253

Witnesses: **Sam Gyimah MP**, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Childcare and Education, Department for Education, and **Nick Boles MP**, Minister for Skills, Department for Education and Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, gave evidence.

Q188 Chair: Good morning, welcome to the Sub-Committee looking at the inquiry on careers information, advice and guidance. We are very grateful for your time and your answers to our questions. For the purposes of the record, could you just say who you are and which Department you are representing?

Mr Gyimah: Sam Gyimah, Department of Education.

Chair: I hope you are feeling better, Sam.

Mr Gyimah: Much better.

Nick Boles: Nick Boles, Minister for Skills, Department for Education and BIS, and I feel much worse.

Q189 Chair: Ministers, there has never been a golden age of career information, advice and guidance, I think that much is clear, but all the evidence that we have been receiving is suggesting that the quality of information, advice and guidance is getting worse. Why are young people receiving such inadequate guidance?

Mr Gyimah: First, thank you for having us here today. I agree with the premise that there has never been a golden age of careers, information and guidance—

Q190 Chair: Do you agree it is getting worse?

Mr Gyimah: Successive Governments have intervened in this space, to be honest, Mr Chairman, with mixed success. What Michael Wilshaw, the outgoing head of Ofsted, has said is that while the quality is patchy, it is improving. It is improving mainly in terms of school leaders taking more of an active interest, but also the revised statutory guidance that the Department published and the work that the Department is doing is beginning to bear some fruit. So I agree that there is still a lot to do.

Now, where I think we need to be focusing is more on careers education—what happens throughout a young person's time at school. I think one of the reasons why this area has been challenging is the focus on either one-to-one advice or work experience one week in a school person's year, as if that is the be all and end all, but we need careers education in order to address this longstanding issue.

Q191 Chair: In 2013 the Select Committee on Education published a report and it called on the Government to take urgent steps to improve the quality of careers guidance for young people. Why weren't those urgent steps taken? This is not a priority for Government, is it?

Mr Gyimah: It is an absolute priority. It is a priority and that priority has manifested in a number of ways. First, why is it a priority? It is a priority because as well as focusing on raising standards in schools, if we do not help young people with information and advice on understanding the world of work and what future they could build for themselves, we will not be delivering social justice. So it is a priority because we need to provide young people with the knowledge and skills that they need. We have taken a number of huge and important steps so far to address this. The Careers and Enterprise Company has been set up to focus on the critical link between schools and the world of work based on international evidence and the work by Sir John Holman. The international evidence that came out of that is a hugely important step. If we are going to have any success in this area, improving the link between schools and the world of work is a key foundation block. The Government are taking a big step in setting up the Career and Enterprise Company, from which I know the Committee has received evidence.

Q192 Chair: Nick, the Chancellor and the Business Secretary have said that the pressing economic challenge of this Parliament is productivity, and accordingly the Government have published a productivity plan. We on the BIS Select Committee looked at that. If, as Sam says, careers information, advice and guidance is a priority, why in the productivity plan is careers mentioned only once?

Nick Boles: If I may, I would also like to respond to some of the earlier points you made, because I think my perspective is a little bit more towards the adult end of careers advice and guidance, though obviously there is an overlap and I am responsible for what happens post-16 in FE colleges and sixth form colleges. I do not think any of us are claiming that it is a perfect situation; that there are not improvements to be made. If we thought that, we would not be doing all of the things we do and have done, including, as Sam mentioned, the new guidance for schools, which is beginning to make a difference, and the new Careers and Enterprise Company.

But I suspect there is not a Select Committee in Parliament that could find an online service, funded and supplied under contract by Government, that is better rated by its users, both young and old, than the National Careers Service. The figures are truly startling. Ipsos MORI did a study between April 2014 and April 2015 and it showed that 93% of adults who use the telephone, a local area based service, felt the quality of the service was good; 83% of customers were satisfied with the service and 41% were very satisfied. There are similarly high figures for young people who have accessed both the website and the telephone service.

Q193 Chair: That sounds suspiciously like complacency then, Minister.

Nick Boles: No. No, it is not complacency, but you raised the question whether the careers service was somehow woeful, and I am telling you that the users, who after all are the people we are elected to represent, are clear that they are very satisfied with the quality of the National Careers Service. So let's not somehow dismiss the current state of affairs and let's not say that there are not any achievements. Let us nevertheless recognise that we need to do more. In particular, I think we are agreed that we need to do more in schools to inspire young people and to inform them about the range of opportunities in the world of work. That is exactly what the Careers and Enterprise Company has been set up to do and—

Q194 Chair: Can I push you on the productivity point, Minister? Do you think that good careers information, advice and guidance improves productivity for this nation?

Nick Boles: Yes, it is certainly a factor, but I think that you do not measure the importance of something by the number of times it is mentioned in a document. This has to be integrated. The Government have very ambitious plans, which I know that other members of your Sub-Committee are very interested in, to transform the level of information provided, in particular destination data. That will be rolling out over the next couple of years. It has a huge potential as a new source of hard facts about what choices of course lead to what kind of opportunities and what kinds of incomes. That to me is a far more important thing than the number of times the word “careers advice” appeared in a plan.

Q195 Chair: Two very quick questions from me. You are planning as a Government to produce a comprehensive careers strategy. Where will the focus be for that strategy? Will it be for all ages or is it just going to focus on young people?

Mr Gyimah: Thank you. Yes, we are planning to publish a strategy later this year on careers. It will set out a vision to 2020 and it will focus on careers education throughout the education system. For example, at the end of primary this will mean developing and

inspiring children and firing their imagination to develop an awareness of the world of work and what it means. At the age of 14, when facing GCSE choices, this would mean developing an understanding of the routes that will be available to them in the future and of the link between school learning and the world of work. At the age of 16, this will mean receiving the required support in making key decisions about the key stage 5 routes and subjects, based on a strong understanding of how this influences subsequent choices. Then finally at the age of 18, giving young people the tools, skills and knowledge to make informed decisions about the next stage of education, training and work. So it will run throughout the whole school system. That is the first thing. But we will also be adopting a common national framework for careers education in the form of the Gatsby benchmarks. We will be adopting the Gatsby benchmarks in a new career strategy that will also be reflected in the statutory guidance.

Q196 Chair: That will include all ages?

Mr Gyimah: It will include all ages.

Q197 Chair: My final question: Minister, will you pledge that you will feed the findings and recommendations from this Committee's inquiry into this strategy later in the year?

Mr Gyimah: Absolutely. As you said, Mr Chairman, there is no golden age. There is also no magic bullet and I accept that there are a number of different interventions that we need in this place. I look forward to your recommendations as we finalise the strategy.

Chair: On the matter of Gatsby, Ian just wants to ask a quick question.

Q198 Ian Mearns: I used to work in the field of careers, not as a professional, but I chaired a careers company before the invention of Connexions, and there have been a whole range of measures to describe what is good and what is bad. I am still in touch with people in the profession and I am told by them on a regular basis that Gatsby benchmarks are a very helpful descriptor of what good guidance looks like, but do not define how to measure performance against the benchmarks; only the careers education, information, advice and guidance quality awards define and measure at the same time.

Mr Gyimah: In addition to adopting the Gatsby benchmarks and the strategy, we have been looking at a lot of ways of building capacity within the system so that schools can implement good-quality careers education as well as providing pupils with support. The Careers and Enterprise Company will be a key part of this. The first point is that we are going to say to schools, "This is what good looks like", but we are also going to give them the tools they need to implement what is good. Your question relates to how they measure themselves in the careers quality awards, which are obviously in the current statutory guidance. A lot of schools are being encouraged to do it and more and more are doing it. I think we will look at that seriously, along with a number of other tools that schools can use to measure how successful they have been.

But the other thing is that I want to be careful that we do not slip back into what I think has hampered careers education within schools over the years, which is approaches that kind of end up leading to ticked boxes but do not really transform the lives of young

people. The Careers and Enterprise Company is creating this situation whereby every school can have an enterprise adviser who will broker relationships and help them navigate what is a diverse and complex field. I think that is how you deliver quality rather than just saying, “Here is an award, go for it” and that is it. You know, you tick the boxes.

Q199 Ian Mearns: Except that the awards are externally assessed, whereas the Gatsby programme is mainly self-assessment. That element of external assessment and objective external assessment is vitally important.

Mr Gyimah: It definitely has a role and it is already in our statutory guidance, as I have said. But adopting the Gatsby benchmarks is not just about the assessment, it is about the eight specific benchmarks of what a good careers programme looks like. I think that is what will be a common approach so that we can have some consistency in this place.

Going back to Mr Wright’s earlier question on what is happening, one of the issues we have is that there is no consistent approach to careers education across the country. In fact, you have inconsistencies where schools that are in urban areas like London have very good access to employers, different programmes, getting people into the school. It does not apply around the country and that is why this consistent benchmark is important.

Q200 Paul Blomfield: I wonder if we can explore some issues in relation to co-ordinating across Government. When we look at the landscape, we start with DFE and BIS. We have heard in oral evidence that there are other initiatives within Cabinet Office, MOJ and DCLG. Do you know how much money in total is being spent on career initiatives across Government?

Nick Boles: It is a bit hard because it depends in a sense on how you classify, for instance, the advice provided in Jobcentres. I do not have the figures and I am not even sure whether they would break down exactly what people are doing, but if people in Jobcentres are advising people on how to get a job, then I think the layman would say that is careers advice and guidance. What matters is that, rather than having a total budget in our heads, those of us who have different responsibilities are constantly talking about what we are doing and co-ordinating it. I would say that that has worked better now than before.

We have a body called the Earn and Learn Taskforce that I sit on and Priti Patel sits on. We are focusing there on the apprenticeships programme, which is obviously a very important priority for the Government, and on the youth obligation, which is something that the DWP will be taking responsibility for. Obviously, Sam and I both sit in the Department for Education, so although my careers responsibility is more funded by BIS, because it is the National Careers Service contract, we see each other every week, several times a week. So I would say that there is a good tie-up, but I do not think that you can artificially somehow put it all into one place, because ultimately Jobcentre is probably doing more to help a specific group of people get jobs—which ultimately is the first step in a career—than any other Department, and that will always be the case.

Q201 Paul Blomfield: Recognising that point, do you think more could be done to co-ordinate more effectively?

Nick Boles: I am a great believer that all human activity can always be improved, so I am sure we could, but I do think that we are taking particularly good steps through this

taskforce. Sam has been talking about these benchmarks. Before the election I had responsibility for the schools end of careers advice and guidance and I met with Professor Holman, is it?

Mr Gyimah: Sir John Holman.

Nick Boles: Sir John Holman. I had been looking for something that had a very clear idea about what good looks like, not in airy-fairy language, but quite sort of practical, and I thought it was a terrifically clarifying piece of work. When that is adopted as part of the overall strategy, it will make it much easier to co-ordinate across Government, because we will all know in a sense what vision we are trying to deliver and what set of initiatives we all should be trying to support.

Mr Gyimah: If I can just come in on the co-ordination point, there is also an extent to which different Departments are answering different questions when it comes to careers. The question that I am most interested in is what happens within schools and changing the culture in schools so that careers are not seen as an add-on, something you get to once Ofsted is out of the way, but something that is intrinsic to how you operate and is embedded in the curriculum. Nick is really interested in post-16 and the world of work and how schools interact with the world of work. DWP has, through Jobcentres, a lot of labour market information, but it is interested in people who are out there in the labour market already and how to make sure that they are in work. So there are different questions, but you are absolutely right that there is more scope for co-ordination, not just in terms of campaigns—we are co-ordinating on some public-facing campaigns across our Departments—but in terms of a shared vision of how a young person from primary, through their life, understands their own skills and navigates education or training to fulfil their potential.

Q202 Paul Blomfield: I very much take your point about the importance of getting schools to embrace this agenda, but do you think that is necessarily helped by setting up another organisation? One of our witnesses said to us, “There’s nothing intrinsically wrong with the Careers and Enterprise Company but why is it there? Why did it suddenly appear?” Wouldn’t it have been better not to risk the overlap with the National Careers Service, which Nick talked about so glowingly, and wouldn’t a more joined-up approach have simply been to set up an all-age National Careers Service?

Mr Gyimah: It is a very good question and it highlights precisely the point I am making that they are answering different questions. The National Careers Service is there for post-16 people who are in the labour market. The Careers and Enterprise Company is independent of Government, independent in its operations, but is able to focus on something we have never been able to crack on an industrial scale, which is how to get schools across the country plugged into the world of work and the world of business. There are efficiencies—

Q203 Paul Blomfield: Why do you need another organisation to do that? Why couldn’t we build on the work of the National Careers Service?

Mr Gyimah: I look at it based on what they do. You could have plugged it into another organisation, but I think there is efficiency that comes from focus.

Nick Boles: The National Careers Service is basically a series of contracts, as you know. That is the way it is organised. It has a single unified website, which is perhaps the most important part of it, but in terms of the provision of direct advice, it is a series of contracts. One of the whole points about the Careers and Enterprise Company was to have a business-led organisation that was in charge of the process of bringing businesses much more into the heart of school life and ultimately creating an organisation led by somebody like Christine Hodgson, who has the extraordinary experience that she has. It is very hard to get somebody like that to take on a role within a nationally let contract from the Department of Business.

People of that calibre want to have a certain amount of independence, to be trusted with the budget, to be given a few clear objectives and then be allowed to get on with it. As a Government, we unashamedly believe that that approach tends to produce better results. I was inspired by that model in designing the framework for the Institute of Apprenticeships, which is going to be similarly independent from Government and business led. We would have lost something or not gained something quite special if we had just tried to do this through the National Careers Service, although in what it does I think it is doing a good job. It is obviously ultimately a Government contract.

Mr Gyimah: A final thing I would add is that the Careers and Enterprise Company has been able to go further than we otherwise would have. We have this very diverse landscape with lots of excellent organisations out there doing different things on the careers landscape, whether it is the Speakers for Schools programme, Barclays Life Skills, and hundreds of others. We have been able to create through the Careers and Enterprise Company an umbrella organisation that shows that the Government support them, but we also want to bring some coherence to a diverse sector. So it is not just, “Why don’t you bolt it on?” We have been able to go into parts of the careers space that we would not have been able to if we did not have an independent new organisation that is well led in this space.

Q204 Stephen Timms: You both mention work with DWP in this area. How much involvement did your two Departments have in developing the Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools initiative?

Nick Boles: Certainly it has been a matter of regular conversation in the Earn and Learn Taskforce. I cannot remember quite how often we meet, but it feels like often—it is probably about every six weeks or so—and it has been quite a regular agenda item there. We had a meeting two days ago in which we had a further report on that.

Mr Gyimah: I am conscious that it is dealt with on the Earn and Learn Taskforce. In terms of the interaction with schools, obviously the Jobcentre in this context is not interacting directly with students, it is interacting with the school as an organisation and supplying labour market information. So it is something that sits more on that taskforce and the BIS and the DWP side rather than my side.

Nick Boles: I think one of the motivations is something very much driven by the previous Secretary of State, but also by the Minister for Employment; it is that there are certain young people who Jobcentres say they know will become clients of theirs unless something happens. What they are saying is that it is mad that they are sitting there waiting when they sort of know who is likely to come. We all bewail the fact that certain

situations into which people are born are such strong predictors of their path through life. What Jobcentre is saying is that it would like to be able to go into schools and help them get people on to a path that means that they do not need up becoming clients of the Jobcentre in adult life. It is something that we are keen to explore. Of course one would want to do it in a measured way and to assess the progress and everything else, but I think as an initiative it is a welcome one.

Q205 Stephen Timms: Sam, if I understood you correctly, you were saying that Jobcentre Plus staff are not going to interact directly with students, is that right?

Nick Boles: No, historically they have not, but they will under this programme.

Mr Gyimah: Yes, that is it.

Q206 Stephen Timms: So they will be interacting directly with students?

Nick Boles: Yes, their advisers will be, exactly. Probably nobody in the world knows more about Jobcentre than you, but their advisers will in future be going into some schools to work with them in a quite targeted way. Not everybody, but in particular schools and particular groups.

Q207 Stephen Timms: Yes, that was certainly my understanding of what Jobcentre Plus was proposing. So what do you think will be gained by having yet another Department involved—you have said there are already some issues about the coherence of all this. A third Department involved going into schools?

Nick Boles: Is it not fair to say they are already involved in providing careers advice. The way it is currently constituted, they are providing it a bit late. Would it not be better, given they have a huge amount of expertise, they already have the labour market information and they are already locally rooted? We all know that from our constituencies. We all know our own Jobcentre and how well it understands the local employment market. It is slightly odd to then preclude it from any contact with people before they enter the job market.

I am not saying that it is necessarily going to be transformative for everybody, but I certainly think it is worth a try to see, as I say, especially given that we all know that there are some people, sadly, whose path it is possible to predict and we all know the interventions that historically have taken place. Indeed, the Connexions service was, to some extent, set up for a similar group of people. None of these things have worked previously. I am a great believer in “Let us try something and see if it can make a difference”.

Q208 Stephen Timms: Can you say just how you think it is going to work? Are you expecting staff from Jobcentre Plus to approach head teachers directly and say, “We can come in and offer this support to your students” or do you expect them to go through the Careers and Enterprise Company’s enterprise advisers, given the role that you have explained to us with the Careers and Enterprise Company providing an umbrella for all this?

Nick Boles: I think it will be a relationship with schools, but I would just nervously say I think you might want to talk to Priti Patel about this, because it is very much her

programme and I do not want to give you wrong information. It is not yet down to the absolute last detail of the exact procedures. Of course you will understand that the enterprise advisers are themselves then going to be involved in setting up an enterprise co-ordinator, which is what we are calling it, for each school. So the enterprise adviser is linked to the LEP, but then within a school it might be a member of the governing body, or it might be another local employer. Once every school has one of those, then you can imagine that the head teacher will say, if they get an approach from the Jobcentre or indeed from other independent groups, "Can you deal with this?" But at the moment they do not exist, and we do not want to hold back until these people are in place everywhere on this programme of trying to see whether Jobcentre has a role to play.

Mr Gyimah: I cannot comment on every detail of the Jobcentre's interaction with schools, but one way of looking at it is how coherent government is. But the other way of thinking about coherence is how a school interacts with the system. The careers system is not just what the Government are doing; it involves a lot of other organisations. Schools need a blended approach to solve this problem. There is no single source that they can go to and say, "Okay, that is it. Off the shelf, that is my careers programme done". That is where the enterprise co-ordinator working with the school will allow the school to bring some coherence and sense to this system and get what they need for the different stages of school life.

Q209 Stephen Timms: You have explained to us that the Careers and Enterprise Company is there to provide an umbrella, but is the Jobcentre Plus initiative under that umbrella or not?

Mr Gyimah: No, it is not. It does not cut across careers—

Nick Boles: Nor is it going to be universal. It may end up becoming universal if it is a tremendous success, but this is a new initiative and we are going to explore it. We are going to explore it in places where it makes no sense and we are going to assess how it has worked and what impacts it has had. So every single school is not suddenly going to get a call from their Jobcentre and be asked to facilitate sessions.

Q210 Stephen Timms: Will you be involved in suggesting to Jobcentre Plus the schools they should contact?

Nick Boles: I am sorry, Mr Timms, I am not the Minister for Employment. I am not here to talk about the details and about the process that Jobcentre, for which I have no responsibility, is going to undertake. If you would like to find out the precise details of who is going to call whom when, then I suggest you ask Priti Patel. I am sure she will be delighted to come and give evidence to the Committee. All I am saying is that it is a good idea to try out a more proactive approach so that we are doing what I thought we all wanted to do, which is to prevent people from getting into a situation where they become a client of the Jobcentre as an adult and ensure that they make choices that mean that they never need Jobcentre services later in life.

Q211 Stephen Timms: The problem for the Committee is that there is, as you recognised, an issue about coherence in all of this. Here we have another Government

Department doing something that you told us is outside the umbrella. It feels incoherent. Is there anything you can say to me—

Nick Boles: That was by the Earn and Learn Taskforce, on which a relevant Minister sits. That is the whole reason for these cross-Government taskforces, to be able to co-ordinate this stuff. Priti Patel does not know the detail of the apprenticeships levy because she is not the Apprenticeships Minister, I am. She sits on the Earn and Learn Taskforce where we talk about the apprenticeships levy. I do not know the detail, Sam does not know the detail of the procedures that the Jobcentre is going to follow in approaching schools, but we are going to pursue the idea of Jobcentre going into schools to talk to pupils at an earlier age in particular targeted places with particular targeted groups, because we believe that that will help prevent people becoming NEET.

Mr Gyimah: Mr Timms, maybe to give you some assurance on this, the career strategy that we will be publishing will be a cross-Government one. It will take into account what else is happening across Government and where that impacts on schools, including obviously taking on board the recommendations of this Select Committee. That career strategy will be a coherent statement from the Government on the vision for careers advice leading up to 2020 and the support that schools need, the framework for how to implement it, and funding and everything.

Q212 Chair: Ministers, can I just ask, in terms of this new initiative from DWP and Jobcentre Plus, will more resources, will more funding be allocated as a result?

Nick Boles: I am afraid that is a question for DWP. I do not know what their budget conversation is with the Treasury and how it is being funded. But as you know, they already employ a great number of face-to-face advisers who provide that service within Jobcentres, so they have resources that are already covered. But any questions for the detail of the programme you do need to put to DWP.

Q213 Chair: Do you know any detail in terms of where this will be targeted—which particular areas?

Nick Boles: I do not have that detail with me now and I am not even sure whether the DFE have decided where it is going to be targeted. With respect, Mr Chairman, I am Minister for Skills in two Departments. I am not in DWP. I am aware of this programme. I have discussed the role of this programme and the way that it contributes towards our overall targets, but the detail of the programme you will need to put to the Minister for Employment, who is responsible for it.

Q214 Chair: But with the greatest respect, Minister, you are also in charge of co-ordinating careers information, advice and guidance across Government and we are not getting that much reassurance that there is much co-ordination going on.

Nick Boles: You can say that, but I am very confident that the Earn and Learn Taskforce is co-ordinating this. I sit on it, the Minister for Employment sits on it. The role of Jobcentre in schools is discussed at that committee, but we do not go into the precise budgetary arrangement and allocations between the Treasury and DWP on the funding of Jobcentre advisers.

Q215 Neil Carmichael: Sam, I think this is directed at you. We went along to St Marylebone Church of England School not so very long ago and we saw at first hand some excellent examples of how to deliver careers advice embedded in the school curriculum effectively and certainly fully supported by members of staff. That was demonstrated by the fact that it was after the normal close of school time, when they were still doing quite a lot of useful work. What can we do to incentivise schools to replicate that kind of delivery?

Mr Gyimah: A good question, Mr Carmichael. The story of careers education is incredibly patchy and I have also seen some excellent examples around the country. It is one of the great things about being a Minister that you get to see best practice wherever it occurs. Then the question is, how do you spread that? The careers strategy would go a long way to setting our expectation of schools in this place, but also the expectations that parents and their children should have of schools in terms of what good quality careers education is.

But as you well know, in the education system the accountability framework is also important in making sure that expectation works. From September 2015, Ofsted is now looking at the quality of careers education in its evaluation of schools, but one of the most transformative things that is going to happen is the introduction of destination measures in the performance metrics of schools. I think that is going to transform how schools see their role in preparing children for adult life.

Q216 Neil Carmichael: Before we talk about destination measures, can we just probe the impact of league tables, because of course there are unintended consequences lurking around, not least the tendency for a secondary school with a sixth form to encourage students to go down the A-level route because they are going to be measured on A-levels. Is that not one of the many brakes on comprehensive and effective careers advice for pupils who might be thinking about something else than A-levels?

Mr Gyimah: Yes, you are absolutely right. We have talked about careers education very much in terms of work, but we have to remember that it is also about what leads to further education and training. One of the issues we have is that the opportunity to get impartial advice is lacking in many areas. As an example of co-ordination, that is something that Minister Boles and I have discussed in detail and as part of the career strategy we would be legislating so that students will have impartial advice. Schools will have a duty to procure impartial advice for students in order to decide whether to carry on in the sixth form, but also to look at alternative routes, the technical route, the apprenticeship route and they should get advice to evaluate all of those options, rather than being shunted into the sixth form because a school has a sixth form. That is something that we are working very closely on and will be bringing forward legislation on.

Nick Boles: Just on the league tables, you are completely right, of course, that the emphasis placed on the academic content of the league tables has led to perhaps a skewing of the messages. I do not think anybody would suggest that the answer—I am sure you are not—is to remove that content. The answer is to balance it with other routes to a successful life. That leads us on to the destination measures that we are going to bring in. These things take an incredibly long time, but I think in 2017 there will be more information about apprenticeships as a destination for people coming out of schools, so that at least parents can see, as it were, the balance of who went to university and what are the school's league table results in terms of academic subjects.

The other driver of school decision-making and behaviour, is how schools are measured, either by Ofsted—that was why it was important to change the guidance for Ofsted inspections—or in league tables. Those are the measurements that the public see and their customers see. But then it is also how schools are funded. One of the things that I have been concerned about and we are looking at—it is complicated—is that schools are currently not penalised if they keep somebody on to start an A-level programme that is not appropriate for them and they drop out after a year. Currently it seems to me that that varies. There is basically no downside and that is not ideal, because in truth, the value of the programme is to complete it; it is a two-year programme. One of the things that we are going to look at is whether we can change the funding. The overall funding would still be there for the complete programme, but we might build in something. When I have talked to colleges about this, they certainly feel that that could make a difference, alongside the transparency of destinations.

Q217 Neil Carmichael: Because we could certainly, for example, look at league tables and see how we can adjust the model to reflect the value of non-A level routes and make sure that that is properly calibrated, so that the league table measures a wider range of outcomes. I would be interested to hear at some stage—not now—how that might work. Of course, the alternative would be to look at a national baccalaureate, which would measure vocational, technical and professional training alongside A-levels. That might have an impact.

Nick Boles: I know you are very much aware of Lord Sainsbury’s panel advising us on the reform of technical education. The whole purpose of that is to ensure that if somebody is not going to go down the relatively well-defined route of A-levels—or possibly A-levels and a few BTECs—to university, or another full-time programme at the age of 18-ish, there is clarity about the technical routes available. We are hoping to be able to publish the panel’s recommendations relatively soon, and the Government’s response. It will create a basis for much clearer information that complements the information about the well-trodden and well-understood A-levels and university route, so that then we can set up, as you say, destination data that reflect the full range of places that young people may go to have successful lives.

Q218 Neil Carmichael: Because of course if you were thinking about universities and the focus that the current system gives to going to university, the other slight problem is that there are different types of universities—Russell Group universities and universities like, for example, Manchester Metropolitan University. We would want to make sure, would we not, that we were not just saying it is a university, but it is a university of some value or it is a university that is going to lead to something very useful?

Nick Boles: I think you are right, but the way to do that is not by trying to label institutions, not least because those labels almost always end up being out of date. I am sorry to be single-issue obsessed on destination data, but with the matching of people’s income with what they have done in their school career and later, we can measure the economic value to the individual of having gone to do a degree or other programme at a different institution. We do not need to say how many of them went to Russell Group and how many went to the non-Russell Group. What we can just say is whatever they did, what happened to them three to five years later, did they get a job and how well-paid were

they? That will be a much fairer way for all of the institutions of later life, as it were, to be judged on what impact they had on people's lives.

Q219 Neil Carmichael: Can I just ask about the quality award and whether you are thinking of making that a part of statutory guidance?

Mr Gyimah: The quality awards are currently reflected in the statutory guidance with thousands of schools already taking them. My thinking is to focus on outcomes, rather than more prescription. I would like to avoid a situation where a school feels that so long as it took the quality award its job is done. Going back to what Nick was saying on destination data, we need to get them to look beyond the award to a year after that child left school. Are they NEET, are they an apprentice, are they at university or are they in some kind of training somewhere? That is where, on balance, I would like to focus, but there is more we can do about getting more schools to take the careers quality award and use it. There is a lot more we can do.

Q220 Neil Carmichael: Last but not least—I expect I know the answer to this—what about additional resources for careers advice? Or are we expecting schools to collaborate more to find funding within the existing budgets?

Mr Gyimah: We have announced the envelope for the Parliament—I think £70 million. I will just get the exact number for you. That is the envelope for the Parliament. We have not said yet how exactly that is going to be spent. We should be careful not to think that the more money there is in the system then the more—there are a lot of schools engaged in some form of careers activity. If you look at Sir John Holman's report, he said roughly it would cost schools £53,000 in the first 12 months and £45,000 thereafter. But if you look at the activity that is going on within schools at the moment, schools are already, within their existing budgets, doing something.

What we do not have is a coherent and consistent approach to how budgets are currently deployed. We have announced the envelope for this Parliament and it is £90 million; £20 million is for the mentoring programme that the Prime Minister announced as part of his life chances speech. There is new money going into the system in a budget that is unprotected, so we have fought to increase the budget for careers and I think that that, along with the career strategy and what is going on across Government, should ensure that we are putting in the financial resource that is needed as one of the key levers to deliver a good career strategy across schools.

Q221 Ian Mearns: I am just reflecting on that amount of money though, Minister, because I seem to remember a figure of above £200 million was the global figure for the careers service nationally, prior to the invention of Connexions, and that was in the late 1990s. Overall, that is a massive difference in terms of the amount of resources available across a 15-year period.

In your previous answers to Neil, you emphasised the importance of impartiality of advice, but a good careers service in schools has four main elements: education, information, advice and guidance and unless all of those four elements are delivered independently and impartially, they will not have an impact on the thinking, the decision-making and the

choice of the student in terms of their next destination. I would just ask you to reflect on that as well.

There is a huge diverse market out there in terms of who is delivering careers education and advice. As well as those who are working directly and embedded within schools, there are a vast number of organisations providing careers advice. We have at least 240 in London alone. What is being done to regulate this market to make sure that all of those providers are providing good quality, independent and impartial advice?

Mr Gyimah: Thank you, Mr Mearns. On the point of the budget, as I said, schools are already spending significant amounts of money on careers and I am sure that if you were to aggregate what is being spent in the 2,000-plus secondary schools in the country, you would get quite a significant number.

The further point I would add to that is that, in the time when hundreds of thousands of pounds were spent, whether on Connexions or just merely preceding that, we all admit that we did not transform the careers landscape. What is good about what we are doing now, particularly what the Careers and Enterprise Company is doing, is that we are using a lot of data, we are testing things, we are learning, we adapt as we go along, rather than just having big sums of money going into a system and not understanding what outcomes we are trying to achieve.

Your point about independence is absolutely right, but alongside that is quality. There is one story of someone who said a careers adviser asked them, “What do you like doing?” and they said, “I like canoeing”, to which the careers adviser replied, “You might want to join the Navy then.” That is where we got to; it became a punchline for a joke. Our statutory guidance therefore talks about quality of advice and how schools can identify—whether it is an independent careers adviser and so on—who is quality and what database they are on, which I think is managed by the National Careers Service. The statutory guidance deals with that as well. But most importantly, the Careers and Enterprise Company is doing a lot of data work on what works and that it is going to be published, so that we understand what works and when schools procure advice in this independent service, they do that saying, “It is not just because we got a leaflet through our door; we are going to go to this company and we know what works”. The Education Endowment Foundation is also conducting some randomised control trials that they will be publishing to provide information on what works. That is important to make sure you have the independence, but also quality could come with that.

Q222 Ian Mearns: I remember my own careers advice session, which lasted about five minutes. I went in to see a teacher called Mr McGill, who had on his desk a big pile of application forms for the Department for Work and Pensions, which was the building next door to my school, where 10,000 people were employed doing pensions work across the whole of the country. That was his advice, yes. That is a long time ago.

Mr Gyimah: Did you spurn the advice?

Ian Mearns: I did not go to the Ministry.

Nick Boles: Mr Mearns, just to add to the point about a quality check, you are probably much more familiar with the detail of it than me, but the matrix standard is owned by the Secretary of State. BIS has 2,131 accredited organisations. Schools and others who are engaging with different careers advisers and companies can find out if an organisation or individual has the matrix standard and provides a service that is up to a benchmark of quality. But as ever in these things, we want to be able to assure quality, but we also want to encourage diversity. There is an amazing range of new social enterprises and charities and the like—and indeed big companies and small companies—doing stuff. We would not want to put people off from doing things, but we do want to be able to indicate to schools who has fulfilled the standards through the matrix standard.

Q223 Ian Mearns: But it is not beyond the wit of an amazing community enterprise company to gain the matrix standard rather quickly if they are good enough. Therefore I am wondering, should there be a requirement for all careers guidance that is delivered in our schools to have the matrix standard? It is owned by the Government and you obviously think it is important.

Nick Boles: I agree. Every now and then one bumps into the philosophical differences between our two parties, and I think this may be one. I would prefer it to be transparent, to be recommended, to be actively offered and marketed by Government. We have another debate in education about whether teachers should be required to have a particular qualification before they are allowed to teach in a school. We have this philosophical difference. We would prefer people to be able to make a choice about who to work with, based on, yes, information about whether they have the matrix standard or not, but also their own judgment about whether this individual or institution has something to offer them.

Q224 Ian Mearns: So would you encourage all of those innovative new companies to work towards gaining the matrix standard?

Nick Boles: I very much welcome it, and if anybody has any comments on the process and how that process could be made not less demanding in terms of quality, but less demanding in terms of bureaucratic process, I would be happy to hear them. If the Committee has any recommendations on that, I would also be grateful to hear.

Q225 Ian Mearns: But it is a Government standard so the Government themselves could help to raise awareness of the matrix standard among the field that is out there.

Nick Boles: Yes.

Mr Gyimah: Mr Mearns, just to add to that, I think I concur with everything that Minister Boles has said; no surprise there. But one thing I would add is that we do not slip into frustrating what is some really innovative activity in this area. Schools that do this well do a whole number of things. We were very fixated on work experience and work experience in year 10 at one point and the best schools organised what they called working site days. Working site days could be pupils spending half a day with an employer, maybe for an entire term, getting people from that employer to come to the school to give assemblies and doing a whole raft of things. We have to make sure that as we go down this route we

do not end up with a situation in which even the employers who are willing to volunteer staff time and so on get caught up in something like this.

Where it works well, you need a lot of ingenuity and innovation to bring different types of local resources to educate or inspire, but also to give the actual careers advice. For some people, what is careers advice for them is someone who works for a company down the road coming and giving an assembly and saying to them, “By the way, I never employ anyone whose email address is acekiller@hotmail.com. That does not show you are professional.” That is careers advice that for a young person could be the difference between coming across well when they apply for a job or not. We should be careful that we do not frustrate the diversity and the ingenuity in this space by imposing a standard.

Nick Boles: Now I understand why my progress through the ranks of Government has been so slow, it is my bloody email address.

Q226 Ian Mearns: Look, I do not think anyone wants to stifle innovation or diversity, but we can all think of examples from experience of something that looked on the face of it to be very innovative, exciting and diverse then turned out to be totally bonkers. We can think of examples of that, so I would just counsel caution when thinking about that. We have to be trying to make sure that we are embedding quality, because this is about the lives of young people and making sure that they get the best information, advice, guidance and education that we can possibly provide for them, bearing in mind that we are using public money to do so.

I am just wondering—I am guessing the answer to this is probably no, given your previous answer, Minister Boles—whether there is a case for merging the matrix and quality in career standards to create a more recognisable single Government-endorsed brand.

Nick Boles: I am not going to pretend to have thought about it. It is a suggestion I will take away and talk to officials about and I would be happy to write to the Committee with our views on it.

Ian Mearns: That is not the answer I was expecting. Thank you very much indeed.

Q227 Lucy Frazer: The Minister for Skills has said during this evidence session that destination data have huge potential and you are single-issue obsessed. I completely agree, it is absolutely essential that we have labour market information that ensures students know what students like them have done, what jobs they have and how much people have earned, and the Gatsby report also recognises this. I am slightly concerned that the labour market information that we are collecting is not sufficient. As I understand it, you will find out that someone went to this school, went to this university and then went into retail or went into law, and the person who went into law might be a barrister, might be a solicitor or might indeed be the receptionist in a law firm. I am just slightly concerned that the information that we are collecting is not going to be as brilliant as it could be. Is there a mechanism that we can use to get more detailed information so that it can be more fruitful for students?

Nick Boles: I think it is a good question. I do think that there is always a potential tension between specificity and granularity and then being able to extrapolate from that some broad patterns, because part of the power of destination data is to be able to say, “If you take this combination of GCSEs and you then go and do this apprenticeship, you are, on

balance, likely to arrive at these following outcomes”. If every category of job and employer is somehow noted differently, it is rather harder to then give people very simple messages. Ultimately you do not want to have a blizzard of information because then nobody will ever go through it. But on the other hand, nor do you want to mislead people by having overly general and therefore slightly meaningless categories. So I think it is a very fair challenge.

The labour market information that lies at the heart of this has until now been gathered and the research has been done by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills. We are going to be taking that back into the Department when the UK Commission winds up its activities. I would be very open to having a discussion about whether we are collecting the right kind of data. The other part of it though that I think is probably more powerful is ultimately the earnings matching, because then in a sense you almost do not need to know whether they are working as a paralegal or whatever, so long as you know that five years later, on average, somebody who has done this set of courses is earning this amount of money. That is a pretty vivid message. I agree that money is not everything, but—

Q228 Lucy Frazer: For some people it is the vocation and the job, rather than how much they are going to earn.

Nick Boles: Yes. But perhaps that level of detail is better captured through qualitative advice, because what we are talking about with the destination data is a table that says, “If you do this course, you are likely to end up in this place”. There will be academic researchers who will deal these questions all the time, but I would be very happy to open a conversation about what is the specification for our labour market information and are we getting the right stuff, because it may well be that we can be more revealing than we are currently able to be.

Lucy Frazer: That would be great.

Mr Gyimah: I would add an accountability measure. It is pretty radical to say to schools, “You are being held accountable for what happens to students in your school immediately afterwards”. It is a huge step. The accountability system that most schools are familiar with now is Ofsted and the Ofsted judgment and now we are going even further. There is clearly a lot that we can do here. Once you start data matching you can drill into lots of granularity and over time we can make this really rich and even more interesting. But as an accountability measure, it is a radical step, and that is worth highlighting.

Nick Boles: Have we shared with the Committee—because we are very happy to—the datasets? There is a table of the different datasets that are collected and we are happy to share that with the Committee. Any thoughts that the Committee has on it would be welcome.

Q229 Lucy Frazer: That would be great, thank you. Once you have collected the data, whatever the data are, the question is then who provides the data to the individuals who are going to benefit from it? That could be Government, the LEPs or private enterprises. What is your vision of who is going to be analysing the data and doing the spreadsheets or making it available on the website? Is it one of those three entities?

Nick Boles: I guess there are three routes that I think we should do all of. First, we are going to be requiring schools, alongside their league tables, to be publishing more of this stuff. It is going to be progressively more as we are able to collect the data. But there will be a legal requirement to have that information collected and it will be displayed alongside other information about the schools—Ofsted reports and everything else.

Q230 Lucy Frazer: That would be, “This person went to this school and then went on to ...”, so it will be local information?

Nick Boles: It will be information about the destinations of people who went to that school in that year.

Mr Gyimah: A student journey, yes.

Nick Boles: Then there will also be the general labour market information data that will be published on the National Careers Service website and will be accessible to anybody who wants to go on that website, as many millions do every month. Then I think what would be good—I would want to understand exactly how we do this, but I think it is a good principle—is that we should make the raw data available for other people to go out and crunch, because they might come up with insights that we have not been able to come up with. In what we have published, yes, on the one hand you want to be thinking afresh about how to make this as useful as possible, but also on the other hand you want to have consistency of data so that you can compare. There is all of that tension between how often you want to change things, but there is no reason why others cannot try out new things. I would be very keen to make as much data available as possible.

Recently I had a conversation with the Social Market Foundation, which has been doing some work on apprenticeships and they had come to a conclusion about a particular level of apprenticeships and its impact. They did not have access to our data and I just thought, “That is mad. I would much prefer you were working with all of the data we have, because you might tell us something that we have not found out yet”. The principle should be that we have a responsibility to publish it in certain ways, but we should also make it available to other people to go out and do what they want with it. If they come up with something interesting, we might even end up including it in what we require people to publish.

Q231 Lucy Frazer: I have looked at some of the stuff that other people produce and it is quite difficult to get to grips with. Someone who works in my office, who has just graduated, did the same thing and it is quite turgid. The Gatsby Foundation has recommended that you need a person to talk it through with you, so a careers adviser plus the information is the better result. Is that something that you are looking at and will be doing?

Nick Boles: That is very much then part of the two ends of the provision, the school end and the National Careers Service. With the National Careers Service you can talk to advisers, who have the labour market information, so that is very much what is informing their conversation with you, whether it is on the phone or through a face-to-face meeting. They have their face-to-face advisers, many of them collocated with Jobcentres. Then within careers provision in schools, as you will know, many schools will, as part of their careers provision, employ either from within the existing full-time staff or they will bring in professional careers advisers who also have that information available to them. The

Gatsby benchmarks that Sam has talked about set out clearly the kind of face-to-face provision, the individual provision, that people should be receiving when they are at school.

Q232 Lucy Frazer: It sounds like in the school setting you will be motivating people to do this, not providing people to do this. Is that accurate? So you will be motivating schools to adopt this formula because it is set out in the Gatsby analysis, rather than providing someone from Government to do it or funding someone?

Mr Gyimah: It is going to be in the performance tables of schools, so schools will be—

Lucy Frazer: But the provision of a careers adviser to talk about the information.

Nick Boles: That will be part of that. It is part of the inspection regime that they have a statutory responsibility to provide independent advice and guidance and to demonstrate to Ofsted that they have done so. The guidance is going to become more specific when we adopt these Gatsby benchmarks. They already should be doing it. Where I think you are right is making sure that in providing that, they are using the latest and best data.

Lucy Frazer: Also that they know how to use it.

Nick Boles: That is a fair point, but I would suspect you cannot compel that. I think you have to encourage and advise that.

Q233 Lucy Frazer: You touched on the fact that the UK Commission for Employment and Skills would be dissolving and would be taken into the Department. Will we be missing out on anything by the withdrawal of funding?

Nick Boles: No, far from it. I think the UK Commission has done an excellent job, but we are intending to take it in as it is and then we will carry on developing it, because we believe that the potential for this is vastly greater than anything we have realised so far. I would hope that we will be fairly ambitious in what we do with it.

Lucy Frazer: So there might be a new structure.

Q234 Chair: In reply to Lucy, you said that you would be able to identify that this particular person went to a particular school and then went to this particular institution. I do not necessarily disagree with that—I am a big supporter of destination data—but how do you ensure privacy and confidentiality?

Nick Boles: It is an interesting tension. Indeed, one of the reasons why it has taken so long is that it was a pretty big step for us to link people's income data, which obviously comes from HMRC, with their educational data. Of course we anonymise it, so there is no question that people can know, but of course if you start being specific about a particular course at a particular institution and a particular job, then it may not end up being quite as anonymous as you would like. You are absolutely right that there will always be a point beyond which it would become intrusive. I am not an expert, but I suspect that data protection would begin to come into play. That is why I think it is not specific institutions, but it is if you went and did an engineering degree or you went and did a higher apprenticeship in electrical engineering, what then happened to you in terms of average

earnings, rather than you did these three A-levels and you went to this university and you did that course. That might be a bit too close to the knuckle.

Q235 Catherine McKinnell: As you have said—it always comes across very clearly—it is often easy to point to examples of good practice, but we know that the experience in reality is very variable on the ground. Clearly, the engagement of employers and businesses as part of careers advice is vital. What are you doing to ensure that some of the barriers that we know do exist to employers getting involved are overcome?

Mr Gyimah: A good question. I think that is something that the Careers and Enterprise Company has attacked with great gusto. For example, they have done a very detailed piece of work looking at the cold spots in the country—cold spots judged by attainment, apprenticeships and some of the outcome measures. What they are then doing is they have a £5 million fund to fund What Works best practice. The fund was oversubscribed by 10 to one and the idea was specifically to support good practice or to spread good practice into the parts of the country that need it most. That is an example of where the Careers and Enterprise Company's understanding of data and what is going on in the country is used. It has received funding to address some of these problems.

I also think there is a lot of scope for collaboration across schools and that is something that I will be looking at in the career strategy. So if you have one school down the road that has got a great programme and is very good at getting employers into the school, how do you get them to work with some of the other schools in the local area? I think across those, what we can do via the strategy, but also the Careers and Enterprise Company, will begin to address the patchiness that exists in the country.

Q236 Catherine McKinnell: It is a very shifting landscape at the moment, and certainly the White Paper would indicate that the landscape is going to shift even further in terms of academisation and structures. Employers may or may not be engaged with their Local Enterprise Partnership; they may or may not be engaged with the combined authority. They may already have some engagement with a school, but not necessarily all schools, and we have already touched on the process through Jobcentre Plus. So employers and businesses may have a contact through there. It is quite a confusing landscape for businesses. I have certainly understood on a local basis that they may wish to get involved but are not entirely sure how to do that. Are you suggesting that the Careers and Enterprise Company would be the vehicle for that, or how is it supposed to work?

Mr Gyimah: Precisely, and you have made a very persuasive case for having a business-led organisation led by people who have set up a structure to interact with schools that is based on local business areas in, for example, the Local Enterprise Partnership. The enterprise adviser would know the businesses in the local area, the enterprise co-ordinator would also know them, and between them would work to get those businesses into the schools. That is why the Careers and Enterprise Company should work so well, because it is solving this critical connection, but exactly because of the problem that you have outlined you need an organisation out there solving that problem.

Q237 Catherine McKinnell: It sounds like a good theory, but I think the practice could be very different. One of the concerns is that LEPs are non-statutory bodies. What

levers do the Government have to ensure that that happens in practice and that it does not just end up extremely patchy across the country?

Mr Gyimah: The Careers and Enterprise Company has been going for a year and it has made rapid progress—35 to 39 LEPs, last time I checked, had signed up to this. LEPs are a convenient way of organising the country into different local areas, but they have funding to back this. The enterprise advisers are funded and matched with match-funding from the LEPs, so it is not just some sort of a nice idea. There is money behind this effort to make sure that it delivers on the ground.

Just touching on your previous point with academies as well and the change in landscape, one of the great things is that within the academy chain, especially a multi-academy trust, some of this collaboration can happen a lot more easily. I do not see any of this disappearing if you have schools within multi-academy trusts, I think in fact the opposite—there is more scope to share best practice in that context.

Q238 Catherine McKinnell: How do you ensure that this focus on employers and employer engagement does not become a substitute for the impartial careers advice that we have been talking about? How do you ensure that one does not replace the other in either circumstance?

Mr Gyimah: The career strategy that we will publish later on this year will make schools aware of what the expectations are of them, as I said right at the beginning, for children right from primary through to when they make choices at key stage 4 and key stage 5. There are different interventions as far as careers education is concerned that you need at every stage of a child's life and that is where the Gatsby benchmarks are so helpful. They will help set a common framework for what those interventions should look like and what quality looks like, so that you don't have a school thinking, "So long as they get impartial advice at age 16, that is our job done". On the contrary, if you want that impartial advice to mean anything at the age of 16, you should have been building up to it. You do not want a child thinking they want to be a doctor, having chosen different subjects, and then they get to the point and it is like, "You do not have A-level chemistry, that is not possible". It has got to flow throughout the education system and ideally be embedded in the curriculum as well and that is what the strategy would set out to do.

Q239 Catherine McKinnell: Just one last question, to pick you up on something that you said about the move to academisation that is proposed across the board. You said that it would make it easier for this engagement to take place. I do not understand how it would make it any easier or more difficult than the current situation. Could you explain why academisation would actually help?

Mr Gyimah: The reason why is that when schools are in a multi-academy trust they are part of the same family, and they collaborate on a whole range of things, including sometimes shifting staff from one school to another where needed. Within that context, something like getting the capacity in place to deliver a coherent and consistent careers education programme should be totally possible. Westminster Academy is a school that I visited last year and they have this programme where they work with local employers and over a period of about a year people spend time going to the employers and the employers coming to the school. That is all organised; it is totally possible. I do not think we will

necessarily lose anything with a move to academisation as far as careers education is concerned.

Q240 Chris White: Sam, you mentioned work experience in your opening remarks. I wondered if we could go into a bit more detail. How important do you think it is for young people to experience the world of work before they leave school?

Mr Gyimah: Work experience is hugely important for young people to experience for a whole number of reasons. It connects the future with the present; I think that it helps by demonstrating what is out there and what is required of you when you are out there; it probably helps you make sense of what is being required of you at school; I think it probably helps with attainment because you understand why you are being asked to do certain things at school. But what work experience is not is one week with an employer where you might spend most of your time making the tea and running errands. For work experience to work, it should be a feature of your school life. That is why I like what one school called it—Work Insight. There are Work Insight opportunities, everything from professionals coming into the school to give assemblies, to careers fairs and work experience. In some cases, the work experience, as I said in the case of Westminster Academy, is half an afternoon every now and again, but over a consistent period of time across many different types of employers. I think that is how work experience that is important can connect the future with the present for young people.

Q241 Chris White: What sort of age were you thinking about for young people to take part in work experience?

Mr Gyimah: As I said earlier on, I think you want young people to become aware of the world of work from primary, but doing work experience or visiting employers, I think secondary is when that starts.

Q242 Chris White: We often get the complaint from employers that they are not seeing young people who have work experience, or experience of the world of work. How do we encourage more employers to give young people this opportunity?

Mr Gyimah: It is a good question. I think one of the things we need to do is break down the barriers between schools and the world of employment, in particular employers, and that is one of the things we expect the enterprise advisers to be able to do. First, we need to break down the barriers. The enterprise advisers and the enterprise co-ordinators will help do that, but I also think you need more employers going to schools as well as creating opportunities for more young people to get work experience. The challenge certainly I have made to a lot of employers when I have spoken to them is, “You cannot just sit back saying, ‘Young people do not have the work experience’ and complain about it. You have a responsibility as well and you have to engage with this.” There are a lot of employers that are doing so. The Barclays LifeSkills programme is a greater example of a large employer that is very engaged in the world of careers and doing a whole number of things to give young people experience of the world of work.

But I think employers need to engage at different levels, as I have said. Speakers for Schools gets successful professionals to go into schools in disadvantaged areas to talk about

their experience and how they got the jobs they have. I think that is also important for our young people.

Q243 Chris White: Thank you. You clearly recognise the importance of work experience. Does that mean that you would be planning to reintroduce a duty on schools, say at key stage 4, for their students to take part?

Mr Gyimah: Obviously, post-16 work experience happens as part of a study programme. In terms of pre-16, I do not think a duty for work experience achieved very much. What you had is a week where if you want to be a journalist, you go to a local paper and you end up sitting in their offices making tea. I do not think that is where we want to get to. If anything, what we want to focus on is the number of employer interactions that you want a young person to have over the course of their time at school, and we will look at how best to encourage that to make sure that young people are having enough employer interactions over their time at school in the career strategy.

Q244 Chris White: Presumably anything in that direction would help give people guidance in terms of what sort of apprenticeship they may wish to take up?

Mr Gyimah: Yes, it would be helpful in that respect.

Q245 Chris White: My final question is that you may have noticed the sharp decline in young people taking up part-time employment. Evidence from the London Council states that the proportion of 16 and 17 year-olds combining study with a part-time job has halved in the last 15 years. How do you think we can reverse that decline?

Mr Gyimah: There are a number of reasons for that decline. I remember I worked in a filling station and a Sainsbury's depot, a warehouse depot, when I was young. I think there is a different culture now, but at the same time work experience and my time working at the filling station was enormous fun and helped me earn some pocket money and a whole range of other skills that came with that. It is worth encouraging, but that is what happens outside of school rather than within school and I think we should look at how we can encourage that.

Q246 Chair: What is the role of the governing body in encouraging employers to interact more with schools?

Mr Gyimah: Very good. I think the governing body and the senior leadership team have a huge role to play in terms of how Ofsted calls schools to account now. Ofsted looks at the senior leadership and their involvement in careers education. I think there is a bigger role that governing bodies can play in driving this forward so that the whole job of careers education is not left to one person in the school—who might work there half a day a week—to organise. Governors can bring contacts, governors can bring spirit, a whole lot of things they can do, and they are and should be very much a part of it.

Q247 Amanda Milling: Good morning, Ministers. A lot of emphasis has been put on apprenticeships by the Government and we have a 3 million target, so it is pretty

frustrating to receive evidence, read reports and speak to young people who say that they have not really heard about apprenticeships or had those promoted within schools. That suggests that not enough is being done to promote apprenticeships, whether that is in the interest of the school or just a desire to keep them on to sixth form, or they are just more interested in their pupils going on to university. To start off with, I am interested to understand whose role it is to ensure that teachers and careers advisers are up to date with accurate information about apprenticeships.

Nick Boles: It is a very good question and I agree with the fundamental starting point that the young people are not being given enough information, or indeed a true picture of the potential that apprenticeships offer and the fact that they can go to any level, that you can get a degree through them, that you can now get an apprenticeship in almost every occupation under the sun. So they are not what apprenticeships perhaps once were. I think there are a number of ways that we can improve the situation. One which Sam has already mentioned is this requirement we are planning to legislate for, for schools not just to give independent advice and guidance, but to open up their establishment to enable FE colleges, apprenticeship providers of different kinds, apprenticeship employers into the school during school hours to talk to young people about alternatives, because I think it is perhaps too much to expect every teacher to know everything about every aspect of the world of work.

Every school needs to—and already has the statutory duty—to provide that broad range of guidance, but the best way of giving people information is for them to see first-hand the full range of alternatives. That is why something else that we are planning to do is to introduce a sort of commitment on the part of an apprentice and the apprentice's employer that the apprentice will go back to their school when they have completed their apprenticeship and talk about the value of the apprenticeship that they did, because I do believe that ultimately young people are more likely to listen to somebody who is three years older than them, went to the same school, might well have lived not too far away from where they live, somebody they can identify with. I think the messages that they will get through that will do more to correct the bad impressions and any amount of Government marketing, though that has a role to play and one of the few things that we are allowed to spend any money on in the marketing area is on marketing apprenticeships. Ultimately, I think hearing from young people that you can identify with is probably the most powerful thing of all.

Q248 Amanda Milling: I do not disagree with you at all that apprentices are definitely the best advocates of apprenticeships, but when it comes to ensuring that staff and careers advisers understand apprenticeships and are up to date with information, what body or whose responsibility is it to ensure that?

Nick Boles: It is the school's responsibility. The school has statutory guidance on which they are inspected, and that includes currently a requirement to provide independent advice and guidance about all opportunities available to young people once they leave the school. It is going to be beefed up in the way that Sam has talked about with the more specific guidance through the Gatsby benchmarks. Then we are also, as I say, going to be requiring schools to open up their premises. A lot of criticism has come that some schools, not the best ones, do exclude others from coming and talking, because ultimately if any FE college comes into the school, one of the things unquestionably it will talk about is apprenticeships because it is a lot of what it offers. The responsibility is squarely upon the

school and therefore the school governing body and the school leadership team to fulfil their statutory duties.

Q249 Amanda Milling: Going back to the statutory duty then, how are you going to enforce that and how do you measure whether or not a school has the colleges and the apprenticeship providers going into the school to provide that all-important information for their pupils?

Mr Gyimah: We will be bringing the legislation forward and in part of the legislation, we will be making sure that we are looking at ways of enforcing it. That will be part of the legislation and the regulations.

Nick Boles: But ultimately it is Ofsted, isn't it? It is like anything else that you ask a school to do. There are some things that obviously schools can be sued for not doing, but most of the things that you ask schools to do are inspected by Ofsted. I have had a conversation with Michael Wilshaw in which we both agreed that we need to start seeing a school that has perhaps done well on its teaching quality and the more traditional measures. We need to start seeing a few schools marked down in their Ofsted judgment because they have failed to provide independent advice and guidance on the full range of options; the jungle drum will work pretty quickly once that starts happening. I know that Sir Michael has been encouraging his inspectors—who now, as you know, are all employed by Ofsted, so there are no longer these sub-contracted arrangements—to be more assertive on the careers advice and guidance requirement than perhaps they have historically been.

Q250 Amanda Milling: Can I just pick you up on that? Are you suggesting therefore that part of an Ofsted report could include a measure around career provision and also about apprenticeships specifically?

Nick Boles: It does already. Apprenticeships are really important, but they are not the only important thing. Schools have a statutory requirement to provide independent advice and guidance about the full range of opportunities that young people can access, and that judgment is something that is included in Ofsted reports. All we are saying is that we would quite like to push it up a bit, and maybe on occasion change the overall assessment of the school. The different bands that you are judged—Good, Outstanding, Requires Improvement; it might be one or two cases where somebody slips over a border because they have failed to deliver on that. I think that would be very powerful.

Q251 Amanda Milling: You talked about young people and apprentices being the best advocates and going into schools. I completely agree, but it is not only the perceptions of the young people we need to challenge, it is the perceptions of parents because often apprenticeships are wrongly perceived to be second class versus other qualifications. How do you get the balance in terms of promoting apprenticeships not only with the young people but with their parents?

Nick Boles: I think you are absolutely right. The two groups who probably have the most influence on young people's choices are the teachers and the parents, or the other adults in their family life, and the parents and the family members are a harder nut to crack. It is one of the reasons why we have secured a renewed commitment this year for a pretty big

Government marketing campaign, because I think ultimately we need to get messages out into the general conversation and not just within schools.

I do think the apprentices going back to the school is a route, because you can imagine if you have just heard from somebody who has just done a higher apprenticeship at a local law firm or has got an engineering degree through their degree apprenticeship at Jaguar Land Rover or whatever, you are quite likely to go home to your parents and talk about it. It would be more interesting than most of the other things you probably had to do that day. I think it is sometimes that the young people themselves are changing the minds of their parents. What is fascinating is when you meet young people who could have gone and done a full-time university course; they absolutely had the grades to get offered a place, but chose to do an apprenticeship, often against parental pressure. They managed to change the minds of their parents because they talked to them about the opportunities, about the earnings, about the fact that they can still get a degree and about the investment you have to make in a university education if you do go down the full-time degree course route. But I think you are right that we have a lot of work to do to bring everybody up to date with the modern reality of apprenticeships, which is a much more exciting one than it was 30 years ago.

Q252 Lucy Frazer: I just wanted to follow up on something you said to Amanda, which Amanda agreed with and that I agree with, which is the importance of local role models— people like you standing up and saying, “Look what I have done”. That is not just the case for apprenticeships. You said there was going to be a commitment or incentive for people to come back. Why limit that to apprenticeships? Why shouldn’t everybody come back and say the fantastic things that they have done?

Nick Boles: I think it is a great idea. I just happen to be in charge of apprenticeships, so I am acting where I am allowed to, and to some extent I want to steal a march on everybody else because I am trying to raise the profile of apprenticeships.

Q253 Lucy Frazer: But there is a risk, isn’t there? There is a risk that we skew it another way and in fact it is very powerful—

Mr Gyimah: I think you are right, and getting an alumni to go back is incredibly powerful. They do not even need to be an alumni necessarily from that school, although that is powerful; people from the local area who have gone to do something else is incredibly powerful. The reason why I thought the question particularly pertinent is that at the moment the playing field is very much levelled against the non-academic route and that is where we need to take specific action. We have 50% of young people go to university and that is a great thing, but we hardly hear anyone talking about people who do not go to university. I think where the work that Nick is doing is particularly important is to make sure schools focus on those other options as well as the academic one. I do not think they are mutually exclusive though.

Nick Boles: It was interesting Mr Mearns talked about the four elements—I think it was information, education, advice and guidance. I think that there is a fifth element that I suspect we would all agree about—not to downplay any of those four, it is inspiration. Inspiration is a less controlled thing, because you do not quite know what encounter with who is going to suddenly turn somebody on and light them up. Sorry, I mean that in an

intellectual way. I think it is getting alumni to go back, getting people to go back who have had a whole range of experiences and just talk about their path through life. You will find suddenly somebody who will think, “I could imagine doing that”. It is the imagination part of it as well as the information and the advice and the guidance and the education, it is capturing people’s imaginations and ultimately there is nobody better to do that than somebody a few years older than you who you can identify with.

Ian Mearns: I have no problem at all with people coming back to pass on their experience to students and to inspire them, but sometimes it is good to do some research about the person who is doing it first. I was once at a school awards ceremony when a north-east Businessman of the Year came along and regaled the students with stories about what an unruly and inattentive pupil he was, saying “Look what happened anyway.”

Chair: Ministers, thank you very much for your time. This is often a very neglected area, but it is of crucial importance, so I hope that we can work together to ensure that the provision of careers information, advice and guidance is pushed up the agenda and is embedded throughout all schools and indeed all businesses to make sure that everyone has a fair chance. Thank you very much for your time, we really appreciate it.