

1. Introduction

1.1 Education Development Trust (EdDevTrust) is a leading education not-for-profit organisation, with over 50 years' experience of improving educational outcomes internationally, and a leading careers service provider. Bridging the gap between education, training and employment is key to our mission of transforming lives around the world. We work with national and local funders to deliver high quality careers support to young people and adults. We have been a leading careers service provider in the UK for over 20 years and have a successful track record of managing programmes delivering careers, employment and skills support. We have been delivering the National Careers Service on behalf of the UK government since 2004, as a prime contractor in the north-east, Cumbria, Yorkshire and the Humber and as a key subcontractor in the south-east and south-west of England. We also deliver transformative education programmes in the United Kingdom, Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, and South-East Asia, and combine our on-the-ground insight with international best practice to improve education systems and transform lives around the world.

1.2 EdDevTrust is submitting evidence in response to the call for written submissions on the DWP's preparations for changes in the world of work, in relation to four of the areas identified in the scope of the inquiry, namely:

- Are DWP Work Coaches well equipped to advise people who are looking for work on new and emerging sectors and jobs?
 - How could DWP improve the training and advice it offers to jobseekers?
- What support, advice and training should DWP offer to people who are looking to progress in work, or take up more hours?
- What is DWP's role in ensuring that young people have the skills they need to get into and progress in work?
- How could DWP work more closely with employers to ensure that claimants have the skills they need to find work in the future labour market?

2. Summary of key messages and recommendations

2.1 Key message: Quality careers advice and guidance, especially around new and emerging sectors should be provided by qualified, impartial careers advisers. The capability for this already exists in the UK market and should be brought to bear to the scale of the challenge of recovery from Covid-19. The UK Government and DWP should:

- Prioritise effective, impartial careers interventions delivered by qualified advisers, based on detailed labour market information, and geared towards sustainable employment outcomes.
- Make effective use of the existing strong contractor market in careers guidance services through strengthened interfaces between contractor organisations and DWP.

2.2 **Key message: Careers advice and education should be strategically embedded in education provision, including remote education.** The UK Government and DWP should:

- Invest in in-school careers advice and guidance services from qualified careers professionals, with capacity for remote delivery in the event of further disruption to the UK education system.
- Consider collaboration with the Department for Education to ensure an increased focus on careers and employability skills within the curriculum and wider education system – including primary-age interventions and training for staff.

2.3 **Key message: Proactive partnerships with employers, which make use of varied touchpoints, can promote strategic skills development among young people and jobseekers, and facilitate connections between employers and prospective employees.** The UK Government and DWP should:

- Seek to ensure a wide range of employer touch points are available to jobseekers and young people, including remote or virtual touchpoints. This may best be facilitated by employer partnerships with established careers services, with strong knowledge of localised and industry-specific LMI.
- Collaborate with the DfE or relevant local authorities to support school-mediated employer engagement.

3. Quality careers advice and guidance, especially around new and emerging sectors should be provided by qualified, impartial careers advisers.

3.1 The capability for this already exists in the UK market and should be brought to bear to the scale of the challenge of recovery from Covid-19. In a rapidly changing economic and careers landscape, helping people to find work requires strong knowledge of both this landscape and potential routes into different careers and professions.¹ Moreover, effective careers guidance requires significant competencies in skills recognition and knowledge of skills development: it amounts to more than simply sharing information, but rather helping individuals to explore and engage with their professional aspirations and options.² It also necessitates strong labour market information (LMI) – and crucially, the ability to interpret and apply this information to individual situations and circumstances. This is especially important in new and emerging sectors and jobs, where technology is transforming both the pathways to finding work and the types of careers available, but risks widening the gap between those equipped with relevant skills for the future and those who may be left behind.³ In this context, careers advisers need expert knowledge and training to effectively support

¹ This will include educational options (vocational vs. academic), differences between qualifications, and new pathways like T-levels.

² Stewart, M. (2019) Understand the role of the Careers Adviser within 'Personal Guidance'. Career Development Institute. Available at: https://www.thecdi.net/write/CDI_27-Briefing- Personal Guidance- FINAL.pdf

³ Education Development Trust (2019). Putting People First: Delivering Outstanding Careers Advice and Guidance. Available at: <https://www.educationdevelopmenttrust.com/EducationDevelopmentTrust/files/ac/ac5983f3-c21a-4c66-a91d-d4bb60197813.pdf>

and supplement jobseekers' own ideas and research, match their skills and interests to new opportunities, and help them to acquire new skills to meet requirements or fill skills gaps. In our experience of delivering the National Careers Service, we recognise and use LMI as a powerful tool. Through this detailed knowledge base, which is informed by real-time data and local intelligence, our advisers are able to identify labour market trends and skills gaps in the economy (on a macro and micro scale), and harness this knowledge to enable jobseekers to make informed and empowered choices. In this process, different channels of engagement, such as one-to-one, social media and group settings, allow careers advisers to effectively reach varied and often less engaged groups.⁴

3.2 Moreover, when helping people to look for work in new sectors, the goal of advisers or coaches should not simply be to move them out of unemployment, but to help them to find longer-term, stable work, and ultimately help to guide them into a career journey, benefitting both the individual and the sector. There is evidence that professional careers guidance can help to smooth difficult transitions between education, unemployment and work, and that swift, targeted interventions focused on developing positive attitudes (for example, increasing self-confidence and self-efficacy), as well as practical support, are most effective in doing so.⁵ One study found that those proactively engaged in job-searching as a result of career guidance interventions were 2.67 times more likely to gain employment than those that did not participate in an intervention.⁶ In addition to benefitting the individual, good careers guidance can also have wider sectoral and economic impacts, decreasing shocks to the labour market which may arise from poor job-matching by helping individuals into appropriate and sustainable jobs.⁷ Furthermore, some studies have argued that in addition to reductions in unemployment, there are secondary economic benefits to career guidance, including increased tax revenue, improved health, decreased benefits costs, and lower crime rates.⁸

3.3 The evidence in favour of quality careers guidance is compelling, but it requires a distinct approach. In our experience of running the National Careers Service, we have sought to ensure the deployment of the right person in every role and region, including specialists in management, business development and careers guidance, as well as IT and data analysis,⁹ and created a robust system to evaluate staff and subcontractor inputs, processes and performance, helping them to measure and reflect on the impact of their work.¹⁰ A successful

⁴ Education Development Trust (2019). Putting People First: Delivering Outstanding Careers Advice and Guidance. Available at: <https://www.educationdevelopmenttrust.com/EducationDevelopmentTrust/files/ac/ac5983f3-c21a-4c66-a91d-d4bb60197813.pdf>

⁵ Hooley, T. & Dodd, V. (2015) The Economic Benefits of Career Guidance. Careers England. Available at: <https://cica.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Careers-England-Research-Paper-The-Economic-Benefits-of-Career-Guidance-July-2015.pdf>

⁶ Hooley, T. & Dodd, V. (2015) The Economic Benefits of Career Guidance. Careers England. Available at: <https://cica.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Careers-England-Research-Paper-The-Economic-Benefits-of-Career-Guidance-July-2015.pdf>

⁷ Hooley, T. & Dodd, V. (2015) The Economic Benefits of Career Guidance. Careers England. Available at: <https://cica.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Careers-England-Research-Paper-The-Economic-Benefits-of-Career-Guidance-July-2015.pdf>

⁸ Hooley, T. & Dodd, V. (2015) The Economic Benefits of Career Guidance. Careers England. Available at: <https://cica.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Careers-England-Research-Paper-The-Economic-Benefits-of-Career-Guidance-July-2015.pdf>

⁹ Education Development Trust (2019). Putting People First: Delivering Outstanding Careers Advice and Guidance. Available at: <https://www.educationdevelopmenttrust.com/EducationDevelopmentTrust/files/ac/ac5983f3-c21a-4c66-a91d-d4bb60197813.pdf>

¹⁰ Education Development Trust (2019). Putting People First: Delivering Outstanding Careers Advice and

careers service requires open, experienced, and knowledgeable staff who strive to understand the needs of individual clients and provide a person-centred, impartial service. For example, as part of the NCS redundancy service, our advisers have taken individuals through a skills recognition and development process, building their confidence, giving them a clearer sense of purpose and direction, and helping them to develop new CVs – and the ability to use these effectively. This has enabled our clients to successfully gain ideal jobs for their skillsets and lifestyles.¹¹ This is significant, as evidence shows that employment advice for individuals is more effective when it is integrated into a wider programme of career guidance activities and support,¹² and where it recognises the diversity of individuals and their needs.¹³

3.4 Such an approach would require significant revision of KPIs and targets in context of DWP work coaches. It may involve, for instance, a move away from targets based on moving people (often temporarily) off the unemployment register, towards a goal of assisting people into stable and appropriate employment with opportunities for progression. It may also require greater policy coherence between government departments to ensure effective delivery of impartial services. For DWP work coaches, it could require substantial upskilling and training, not only to help them attain qualified career adviser status, but also to ensure their skills continue to be developed throughout their careers. To qualify, Careers Advisers typically undertake a Diploma in Career Information and Advice, which takes approximately 12 months, and at the National Careers Service, they are expected to undertake additional CPD (for example, in Advanced Career Guidance, use of LMI, or careers theory) each year. In 2018, National Careers Service staff undertook over 3000 hours of CPD, from a range of over 60 opportunities.¹⁴

3.5 There may be some question as to how realistic such a transition within DWP will be, given the likely increase in the volume of jobseekers as a result of Covid-19, and regional variations in staffing numbers. For instance, in districts where there are currently few DWP schools advisers, a move towards a full careers advice and guidance offering would require considerable increases in staff numbers. However, there are aspects of its work that could change for the positive with increased interface between DWP work coaches and qualified careers professionals (e.g. the National Careers Service). There is a strong contractor market in careers guidance services, which already delivers very successfully at scale, upon whose experience, expertise and reach DWP may be able to rely more through strengthened interfaces. This may be especially true where contractors have already garnered high levels of trust: the National Careers Service, for example, is already a trusted DWP partner, and is trusted by customers to provide impartial advice with no connection to state benefits. While wholesale change is likely to lead to further redundancies at scale, collaboration between existing, experienced contractors offers a practical and sustainable alternative.

Guidance. Available at:

<https://www.educationdevelopmenttrust.com/EducationDevelopmentTrust/files/ac/ac5983f3-c21a-4c66-a91d-d4bb60197813.pdf>

¹¹ Education Development Trust and National Careers Service (forthcoming). Case study: Nora.

¹² Everitt, J., Neary, S., Delgado, M.A. and Clark, L. (2008). Personal Guidance. What Works? London: The Careers & Enterprise Company. Available at:

https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/sites/default/files/uploaded/1146_what_works_-_personal_guidance_digital_15-11-2018.pdf

¹³ Hooley, T. (2014). The Evidence Base on Lifelong Guidance: A Guide to Key Findings for Effective Policy and Practice. European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network. Available at: <http://www.elgpn.eu/publications/browse-by-language/english/elgpn-tools-no-3.-the-evidence-base-on-lifelong-guidance/>

¹⁴ Education Development Trust (2019). Putting People First: Delivering Outstanding Careers Advice and Guidance. Available at:

<https://www.educationdevelopmenttrust.com/EducationDevelopmentTrust/files/ac/ac5983f3-c21a-4c66-a91d-d4bb60197813.pdf>

3.6 DWP should:

- Prioritise effective, impartial careers interventions delivered by qualified advisers, based on detailed labour market information, and geared towards sustainable employment outcomes.
- Make effective use of the existing strong contractor market in careers guidance services through strengthened interfaces between contractor organisations and DWP.

4. Careers advice and education should be strategically embedded in education provision, including remote education.

4.1 As they make the critical transition from school to further learning and employment, it is hugely important that young people receive expert advice and guidance. Such advice can inform students about their options and empower and motivate them to seek work or training that will help them reach their goals. Investment in careers guidance is an important way to support young people through transitions and help them to internalise responsibility for their career plans, education, and employability. Indeed, there is an extensive literature that highlights the efficacy of careers guidance in helping young people to manage their careers, increase their human capital, and maximise their potential.¹⁵ In our own experience, 93% of the young people who met with our qualified careers advisers in January 2020 felt that they had a clearer understanding of the actions they would need to take to progress their careers as a result of the guidance they had received, and 92% felt that they had increased clarity around their career plans.

4.2 Moreover, evidence also shows that helping individuals to understand labour market needs and pathways between learning and work can help to address social inequalities.¹⁶ Significantly, careers guidance has been shown to reduce the likelihood of individuals dropping out of education, and increase their likelihood of re-engaging in education or training, as well as increasing skills utilisation and improving the efficiency of education funding.¹⁷ Further to this, a recent qualitative study highlighted the importance of destination tracking, which not only enables additional wrap-around support for the most vulnerable and those not in education, employment and/or training (NEET),¹⁸ but also helps schools and local authorities to gain a better understanding of how well careers interventions are working for their students.¹⁹ This has been evident in EdDevTrust's own careers work. For instance, in Hounslow, 15.9% of young people were classified as NEET in 2005/6. EdDevTrust

¹⁵ Hooley, T. & Dodd, V. (2015) The Economic Benefits of Career Guidance. Careers England. Available at: <https://cica.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Careers-England-Research-Paper-The-Economic-Benefits-of-Career-Guidance-July-2015.pdf>

¹⁶ Hooley, T. & Dodd, V. (2015) The Economic Benefits of Career Guidance. Careers England. Available at: <https://cica.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Careers-England-Research-Paper-The-Economic-Benefits-of-Career-Guidance-July-2015.pdf>

¹⁷ Hooley, T. & Dodd, V. (2015) The Economic Benefits of Career Guidance. Careers England. Available at: <https://cica.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Careers-England-Research-Paper-The-Economic-Benefits-of-Career-Guidance-July-2015.pdf>

¹⁸ Hughes, D. (2020). COVID-19: Where do I go for careers support? Careers Development Institute. Available at: https://www.thecdi.net/write/Covid-19_Where_Do_I_Go_for_Careers_Support_.pdf

¹⁹ Good Career Guidance (Gatsby), 2020. *Addressing the Needs of Each Pupil*. [online]

Goodcareerguidance.org.uk. Available at: <https://www.goodcareerguidance.org.uk/case-study/addressing-the-needs-of-each-pupil>

subsequently took on management of the careers advice and guidance contract and destination tracking, and as a result, by 2017/18, the district had the lowest combined NEET and 'Not Known' rates in the country, at 1.9%.

4.3 To best ensure that young people have the knowledge and skills they need to enter the workplace – and to progress – there needs to be an increased focus on careers and employability skills within the curriculum and wider education system. Such a focus on career guidance can support the acquisition of skills and qualifications, by encouraging individuals to commit to completing formal education and informal learning opportunities. Careers provision within the education system can also help to address issues of inequity – especially where students' sole exposure to careers information or work experience would otherwise be through family or social connections, which may serve to reinforce, rather than challenge, social immobility.²⁰ By contrast, empowering young people with knowledge about their options can broaden their aspirations. There must therefore be a concerted effort to ensure that all young people have access to careers education, advice and guidance (CEAIG) before leaving school. Furthermore, evidence suggests that in-school interventions are most effective in helping students to broaden and develop their career aspirations when introduced at a young age,²¹ as children as young as seven risk ruling out future job options because of their gender, race and background.²² The earlier CEAIG interventions are introduced to the curriculum, the more effective they are likely to be. This may, once again, require collaboration and policy coherence between DWP, DfE and other government departments, such as the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government.

4.4 Ordinarily, CEAIG can be delivered in-school, ensuring its availability to all students, but the Covid-19 pandemic – and any subsequent school closures – will limit options for in-school guidance and workshops. That said, many of these services may be provided remotely. For example, at EdDevTrust, we have pivoted 95% of our school careers services to remote offerings, and have remained able to deliver meaningful guidance even without face-to-face meetings. However, plans for remote provision must consider accessibility for students who may not have adequate hardware or connectivity to access services online. In the UK, an estimated one million children and their families do not have adequate access to a device or connectivity to participate in online learning. This is also likely to apply to online CEIAG,²³ so alternatives must be available. In our remote careers offerings for schools, for example, we offer GDPR-compliant telephone support, as well as specialised training for staff providing this service.

4.5 Ensuring strong careers provision in schools will also mean ensuring that staff receive adequate training and guidance on skills, employability and careers, to support young people in developing the skills they will need to enter and thrive in the modern workforce. Of course, the Covid-19 pandemic has delayed possible in-person workshops or training courses, but many courses and CPD programmes can be provided remotely. For example,

²⁰ Mann, A. & Dawkins, J. (2014). Employer engagement in education. CfBT Education Trust (now Education Development Trust). Available at: <https://www.educationdevelopmenttrust.com/EducationDevelopmentTrust/files/a9/a9cc3ab2-2b86-4366-90d0-67f91e77b4ef.pdf>

²¹ Hughes, S. and Smith, G. (2020) Youth Transitions: creating pathways to success. Education Development Trust. Available at: <https://www.educationdevelopmenttrust.com/EducationDevelopmentTrust/files/76/7625c6ce-d1cd-4250-80b7-7b0bd23ac421.pdf>

²² <https://www.educationandemployers.org/ingrained-assumptions-about-jobs/>

²³ Nominet. (2020). Digital Access for All Launches to Help Solve Problem of Digital Exclusion. Available at: <https://www.nominet.uk/digital-access-for-all-launches-to-help-solve-problem-of-digital-exclusion>

TechPathways London, a programme coming out of EdDevTrust's London Connected Learning Centre (CLC), has been delivering a variety online CPD courses, as well as remote one-to-one training (on Zoom) for educators in London, focussing on technology, 21st Century skills, and the future of work. Some courses have been specifically tailored to remote education – e.g. 'Using Video Conferencing with Learners' and 'Use of Audio for Remote Learning' – but the programme has also retained its core provision of digital skills training and critical literacy support. Its remote learning model is not only highly relevant in the context of Covid-19, but also makes it highly scalable in both the immediate and long term.

4.6 DWP should:

- Invest in in-school careers advice and guidance services from qualified careers professionals, with capacity for remote delivery in the event of further disruption to the UK education system.
- Consider collaboration with the Department for Education to ensure an increased focus on careers and employability skills within the curriculum and wider education system – including primary-age interventions and training for staff.

5. Proactive partnerships with employers, which make use of varied touchpoints, can promote strategic skills development among young people and jobseekers, and facilitate connections between employers and prospective employees.

5.1 Strong relationships with employers – on a local, regional, and national scale – form a fundamental part of understanding local and sectoral labour markets. Such collaborations improve careers advisers' ability to ensure effective referrals (especially on a local scale), while generating specialist insights that benefit both jobseekers and employers. They also create gateways to employer engagement for priority and hard-to-reach groups. Employer partnerships can be valuable in all facets of careers and employability services for both adults and young people, but there are particular benefits for the latter: exposure to business and employers has been shown to positively impact on their aspirations, skills development, attitude to studying, and social mobility.²⁴ With fewer young people than ever undertaking part-time work alongside their studies,²⁵ alternative touchpoints with employers are now all the more important.

5.2 The Covid-19 context demonstrates the importance of contextualising labour market information and thereby ensuring a variety of employer touchpoints, which give careers services and advisers the flexibility to engage with a wide range of businesses²⁶, understand local business and skills needs, and help to account for unforeseen measures (such as

²⁴ Percy, C. and Tanner, E. (2020). Closing the Gap: Employer Engagement in England's Schools and Colleges in 2019. London: The Careers & Enterprise Company. Available at:

https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/sites/default/files/uploaded/closing_the_gap_2019_report_0.pdf

²⁵ Between 1997-99 and 2017-19, the employment rate of 16-17-year-olds decreased from 48.1% to 25.4%.

Gardiner, L., 2020. *Never Ever: Exploring the increase in people who've never had a paid job*. Resolution Foundation. Available at: <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2020/01/Never-ever.pdf>

²⁶ Education Development Trust (2019). Putting People First: Delivering Outstanding Careers Advice and Guidance. Available at:

<https://www.educationdevelopmenttrust.com/EducationDevelopmentTrust/files/ac/ac5983f3-c21a-4c66-a91d-d4bb60197813.pdf>

social distancing) which may disrupt business-as-usual. The pandemic has rendered traditional employer engagement more challenging, as social distancing and health and safety measures mean that typical work placements, secondments, and workshops cannot take place. However, there are opportunities to facilitate virtual employer encounters and engagement. For example, in May 2020, EdDevTrust's Work-Related Learning team developed and delivered digital work experience sessions for students, helping them to engage with employers from various industries, and gain more detailed insight into the skills and qualifications that new entrants to the sector would need. The National Careers Service has also developed 'virtual jobs fairs' to better enable connection between employers and prospective employees, especially in groups who are prevalent users of social media. In May 2020, the virtual jobs fair featured over 1000 employment opportunities posted around England in just four days. Even after the current crisis, there may be benefits to retaining some elements of remote or blended provision, as this model can create more flexible, further-reaching touchpoints across a range of industries.

5.3 There are further benefits of employer engagement. Based on local and sectoral insights, careers advisers can encourage the employers they engage with to be more inclusive of disadvantaged groups with poorer access to the labour market, and support them in recruitment processes, as in the National Careers Service. By supporting employers, careers professionals can deliver a better service for clients and strengthen local communities. This, in turn, helps careers advisers to ensure effective referrals – including under time pressure. For example, because of its engagement with employers and consequent understanding of local needs, the National Careers Service is able to run highly valued Rapid Redundancy Support services²⁷ – which are likely to be all the more important in the economic fallout of the current pandemic. These Rapid Redundancy Services have received extremely positive feedback from employers, described as 'excellent' and providing 'invaluable support' thanks to their efficiency, empathy, and ability to signpost individuals to appropriate new roles and support.

5.4 Looking to the long term, there is also compelling evidence that school-mediated employer engagement improves school-to-work transitions among young people. Where pupils are disengaged from education, first-hand experience of work or work-related learning programmes have been shown to be effective in re-engagement or skills acquisition.²⁸ For higher achievers, evidence suggests that 'personalised use of employer engagement can help secure access to the most competitive undergraduate courses.'²⁹ As noted in section 2 (above), there is evidence to suggest that earlier in-school interventions (as early as primary school) are most helpful in ensuring that young people are well informed and well equipped to enter the labour market.³⁰ While this is not a critical dependency for immediate recovery

²⁷ Education Development Trust (2019). Putting People First: Delivering Outstanding Careers Advice and Guidance. Available at:

<https://www.educationdevelopmenttrust.com/EducationDevelopmentTrust/files/ac/ac5983f3-c21a-4c66-a91d-d4bb60197813.pdf>

²⁸ Mann, A. & Dawkins, J. (2014). Employer engagement in education. CfBT Education Trust (now Education Development Trust). Available at:

<https://www.educationdevelopmenttrust.com/EducationDevelopmentTrust/files/a9/a9cc3ab2-2b86-4366-90d0-67f91e77b4ef.pdf>

²⁹ Mann, A. & Dawkins, J. (2014). Employer engagement in education. CfBT Education Trust (now Education Development Trust). Available at:

<https://www.educationdevelopmenttrust.com/EducationDevelopmentTrust/files/a9/a9cc3ab2-2b86-4366-90d0-67f91e77b4ef.pdf>

³⁰ Hughes, S. and Smith, G. (2020) Youth Transitions: creating pathways to success. Education Development Trust. Available at: <https://www.educationdevelopmenttrust.com/EducationDevelopmentTrust/files/76/7625c6ce->

from the Covid-19 crisis, the development and implementation of such early interventions is likely to have clear long-term benefits (see section 2, above), and should therefore be a long-term aspiration.

5.5 DWP should:

- Seek to ensure a wide range of employer touch points are available to jobseekers and young people, including remote or virtual touchpoints. This may best be facilitated by employer partnerships with established careers services, with strong knowledge of localised and industry-specific LMI.
- Collaborate with the DfE or relevant local authorities to encourage school-mediated employer engagement.

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