



A review of careers professionals' involvement with schools in the UK

Tami McCrone and Caroline Filmer-Sankey



How to cite this publication

McCrone, T. and Filmer-Sankey, C. (2012). *A Review of Careers Professionals' Involvement with Schools in the UK* (NFER Research Programme: From Education to Employment). Slough: NFER.

National Foundation for Educational Research,
The Mere, Upton Park, Slough, Berkshire SL1 2DQ
www.nfer.ac.uk

© National Foundation for Educational Research 2012
Registered Charity No. 313392

Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Introducing The NFER Research Programme | 1 |
| Executive summary | 2 |
| 1. Introduction | 5 |
| 1.1 Background to the review | 6 |
| 1.2 Strength and nature of the evidence base | 7 |
| 2. Approaches to CE/IAG in the UK and internationally | 9 |
| 2.1 Universal approaches to CE/IAG | 10 |
| 2.2 Targeted approaches to CE/IAG | 14 |
| 3. Successful approaches to and the impact of CE/IAG | 16 |
| 3.1 Approaches perceived to be successful | 16 |
| 3.2 Impact of CE/IAG | 20 |
| 4. Discussion | 24 |
| 4.1 Conclusions | 24 |
| 4.2 Gaps in the evidence | 27 |
| 4.3 Implications for The NFER Research Programme | 28 |
| 5. Next steps | 29 |
| References | 30 |
| Further reading | 33 |
| Appendix | 34 |
| Our thanks | 36 |



Introducing The NFER Research Programme

From Education to Employment

NFER has a worldwide reputation for excellence in research in education and children's services, built up over 65 years of working with a wide range of partners to produce independent evidence to drive change.

As a charity, the Foundation exists to improve the education and life chances of learners through the provision of independent evidence aimed at influencing policy, informing practice in the learning environment and directly impacting learners. To help achieve this, The NFER Research Programme was set up in 2011. Funded by NFER, it is developing partnerships with organisations and individuals who share our commitment to solving unanswered challenges young people face in education. The Programme targets key areas of education, highlighting gaps in existing evidence and conducting new research to provide the evidence to fill the gaps. Current areas of focus are *From Education to Employment*, *Developing the Education Workforce* and *Innovation in Education*.

From Education to Employment examines approaches that could help the over one million young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) carve a route to meaningful and sustainable employment. It builds on NFER research carried out in 2009 which highlighted discrete groups within the NEET population likely to benefit from different forms of intervention.

The initial phase is a suite of four reviews that identify strategies that can assist young people with the potential to disengage from education, employment or training to 'stay on track'. It comprises:

- effective approaches to supporting young NEET people
- careers professionals' involvement with schools
- employer involvement in schools
- curriculum and qualification needs of young people who are open to learning, or undecided about their futures.

These reviews offer a unique perspective on the research and evidence-based practice of the last five years in this area and identify the gaps for future research. A series of easy-to-use guides for practitioners, school leaders and local authorities based on the findings will also be available.

Sarah Maughan
Research Director, NFER

Executive summary

The NFER Research Programme currently consists of two major thematic areas: *From Education to Employment* and *Developing the Education Workforce*. This review forms one of a suite of four literature reviews that have been completed under the *From Education to Employment* theme. These reviews collectively identify strategies for assisting young people at risk of becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) to make effective transitions into learning or employment post 16.¹ In 2011 one in five (22.3 per cent) young people aged 16–24 were unemployed (a total of 1.04 million) (Rhodes, 2011). A slightly lower, but still large, proportion (19.2 per cent) of young people aged 16–24 were NEET (DfE, 2011). All four reviews build upon a large body of research on the reasons why young people are NEET, and on recent NFER research (Spielhofer *et al.*, 2009), which presented a ‘segmentation’ analysis identifying three discrete sub-categories of NEET young people aged 16–17.

- **‘Open to learning’ NEETs** – young people most likely to re-engage in education or training in the short term and with higher levels of attainment and better attitudes towards school than other NEET young people.
- **‘Sustained’ NEETs** – young people characterised by their negative experience of school, higher levels of truancy and exclusion, and lower academic attainment than other NEET young people. They are most likely to remain NEET in the medium term.
- **‘Undecided’ NEETs** – young people similar in some respects, such as their attainment levels, to those who are ‘open to learning’ NEET, but dissatisfied with available opportunities and their inability to access what they want to do.

This report explores what the best available recent research tells us about successful careers education, information, advice and guidance (CE/IAG) approaches for supporting all young people (universal support) and young people at risk of becoming NEET (targeted support) in their transitions and decision-making. The *From Education to Employment* theme within The NFER Research Programme has a particular interest in young people who are ‘open to learning’ or ‘undecided’ NEETs, as there is the potential to make a substantial difference to these groups, if they can be effectively identified and supported.

Key findings

The 26 items of literature assessed for this review tell us that CE/IAG programmes for all young people, and for those at risk of becoming NEET, share similar characteristics across secondary schools. Successful approaches have three key features, and there is evidence of their positive impact, particularly on soft outcomes for young people. These findings are

¹ This review focuses upon all NEET young people in the 16–24 age range. However, the *From Education to Employment* theme will focus specifically on the 16–19 year old age group in the future.

presented within the context of economic recession, high youth unemployment, and a sustained reduction in public funding, all of which compound to make the task of supporting young people to make effective transitions post 16 highly challenging. The key findings are outlined here.

Approaches used

- Schools' careers coordinators or form tutors deliver careers education (CE) as part of personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, as a separate subject, or as a subject integrated across the curriculum. The programmes focus on developing personal and practical skills, as well as providing factual information on key stage 4 subject options and future careers. They generally incorporate careers events, visits from outside speakers and work experience.
- External advisers or schools' careers coordinators and teachers deliver careers information, advice and guidance (IAG) in one-to-one interviews with young people. Young people also have access to telephone helplines and online support.
- CE/IAG programmes vary in content and quality between different schools and geographical locations. In particular, schools without sixth forms are more likely to provide high quality, impartial advice on all career pathways open to young people because they do not have a vested interest in retaining students post-16.
- Schools provide additional CE/IAG support targeted at specific groups of young people who might be at risk of becoming NEET, but there is little detailed research evidence of specific approaches for different types of young people.

Features of successful approaches

- Collaborative working between informed stakeholders, timely, personalised support; and well-structured, impartial programmes are the key features of successful approaches to CE/IAG.
- Good collaborative working between informed stakeholders within schools and with outside agencies is fundamental to providing effective careers guidance for all young people but is particularly effective with 'at risk' young people because it enables schools to draw on different kinds of support to tackle specific needs.
- Impartial, personalised support is essential for understanding and addressing the complex issues of different groups and individuals.
- Successful CE/IAG programmes are well structured, and most effective, when they are appropriately timed, providing support early on and at key transition points.
- A combination of these approaches, together with high quality, impartial and relevant programmes, works best when supporting young people's decision-making.

Impact of CE/IAG programmes

- Good CE/IAG can have a positive effect on soft outcomes for young people, such as improved attitudes, self-confidence, aspirations and decision-making skills.
- There is little research evidence on the impact of CE/IAG on hard outcomes for all young people, that is the transition to education, employment and training. Young people are influenced by many interacting factors, such as their own circumstances and the views of their families, which make such outcomes difficult to measure.

This review has examined different approaches to CE/IAG, the main features of successful provision, and evidence of the impact of CE/IAG on outcomes for young people. It also considered gaps in the evidence base in relation to all young people, and more specifically, those at risk of becoming NEET.

Summary and next steps

The review also highlights that effective CE/IAG can have a positive effect on soft outcomes for young people, such as improved attitudes, self-confidence, aspirations, and decision-making skills. However, there is little research evidence on the impact of CE/IAG on hard outcomes for all young people, that is the transition to education, employment and training. Additionally, young people are influenced by other interacting factors, such as their own circumstances and the views of their families, which make such outcomes difficult to measure.

Furthermore, although there is data that discuss CE/IAG approaches for NEETs, these appear to be in terms of 'sustained' NEETs. There is little evidence in this literature that links successful CE/IAG approaches to 'open to learning' or 'undecided' NEETs, that is those young people who are likely to benefit significantly from well-informed and appropriately timed and delivered CE/IAG.

This suggests that there is currently a gap in research around effective CE/IAG strategies that enable young people who are susceptible to becoming 'open to learning', or 'undecided' NEET to continue to progress in education, employment and training. This gap will be the focus of the *From Education to Employment* theme within The NFER Research Programme. Key features of the theme will be: the development and implementation of indicators that can assist in the identification of young people who are 'open to learning' or 'undecided' NEET; the trialling and evaluation of specific strategies that aim to support these groups; and the validation and dissemination of good practice. Through this research theme, the NFER hopes to go some way towards reducing the gap in what is known about effective NEET prevention strategy, and to make a difference to the lives of learners.

1. Introduction

This report presents the findings of a literature review conducted as part of The NFER Research Programme. The programme currently consists of two major thematic areas: *From Education to Employment* and *Developing the Education Workforce*. For full details of The NFER Research Programme, please see Appendix A.

This review forms one of a suite of four reviews that have been completed under the *From Education to Employment* theme. These reviews collectively identify strategies to assist young people at risk of becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) to make effective transitions into learning or employment post 16. The three other reviews in the series focus on strategies to support NEETs, the role of employer engagement in schools, and the role of curriculum and qualifications in supporting NEET young people.

The focus of this review is to establish what is known about careers professionals' involvement in schools in the UK and internationally, in particular with regard to approaches used with young people at risk of becoming NEET, and more specifically, those viewed as 'open to learning' or 'undecided' NEETs.

While the end of compulsory schooling is at the age of 16, young people aged 16–19 have the potential to be engaged in *either* learning *or* employment. However this demographic will change as the Raising the Participation Age legislation comes into force. From 2013, all young people aged up to 17 will be required to be in education, training or work-based learning (including work with part-time study), with only those aged 18-19 potentially in full-time employment. From 2015, all young people up to the age of 18-19 will be required to be in education, training or work-based learning. A focus on prevention of disconnection (as opposed to reintegration into learning among the 16-19 age group) will therefore become all the more relevant among the 17-19 element of the NEET population over the coming years.

The findings of this and the other three reviews will support the *From Education to Employment* theme within The NFER Research Programme by providing a solid evidence base for ongoing and future primary research into NEET prevention. They will also be of interest to national and local-level policy makers focusing on NEET identification, prevention or mitigation. The timeliness of this research is apparent in recent statistics: In 2011 one in five (22.3 per cent) young people aged 16–24 were reportedly unemployed (a total of 1.04 million) (Rhodes, 2011). A slightly lower, but still large, proportion (19.2 per cent) of young people aged 16–24 were NEET (DfE, 2011). A recent government conference paper outlines concerns about the rising numbers of young people who are NEET, and the personal and social implications that this can have:

The on-going consequences [of unemployment] impact not only on the individual but also on the state: young people who are NEET are more likely to suffer health problems and are five times more likely to enter the criminal justice system, with the life-time cost to the state of each young person who is NEET standing at £97,000.

(see <http://www.insidegovernment.co.uk/children/neet-employment/>)

1.1 Background to the review

In order to provide evidence of the most timely and current approaches to supporting young people who are NEET, this review focuses upon very recent literature published since 2006 (see section 1.2 below for details of the review's parameters).

This review's focus upon careers professionals' involvement with schools builds upon recent research conducted by the NFER (Spielhofer *et al.*, 2009) that examined in detail the underlying causes of NEET status in the UK. This research explored a complex interplay between structural, cultural, educational and familial factors that can culminate in lost opportunities and hope for large numbers of young people. In recognition of the fact that those young people classified as NEET are a heterogeneous group, the research undertook a segmentation analysis with the aim of identifying discrete sub-categories of young people within the overarching NEET umbrella. The research identified three types of NEET young people.

- **'Open to learning' NEETs** – the largest sub group (around 41 per cent of the NEET group). These young people were the most likely to re-engage in education or training in the short term and generally had higher levels of attainment and better attitudes towards school than most other NEET young people.
- **'Sustained' NEETs** – around 38 per cent of the NEET group. These young people were characterised by their negative experience of school, higher levels of truancy and exclusion and lower academic attainment than other NEET young people, and the fact that they were most likely to remain NEET in the medium term.
- **'Undecided' NEETs** – around 22 per cent of the NEET group. These young people were similar in some respects, such as their attainment levels, to those who were 'open to learning' NEET, but they were dissatisfied with available opportunities and their ability to access what they wanted to do.

This review, and the other reviews within the *From Education to Employment* theme, have a particular interest in young people who are, or are at risk of becoming, 'open to learning' or 'undecided' NEET. Most studies, and indeed strategic approaches, focus upon the sustained NEET group. This is because this group is often the easiest to identify and presents with the most acute needs. However, it is a resource intensive and challenging group of young people to support, and it represents only a small proportion (under two-fifths) of all NEET young people.

It is crucially important that 'sustained' NEET young people continue to receive bespoke, intensive support. Additionally, it can be argued that through effective identification of young people who are 'open to learning' or 'undecided' NEET, and by tailoring support to meet their specific needs, it is possible to make a difference to the post-16 trajectories of large numbers of young people. This ambition necessarily needs to be set within the context of economic recession, public-sector budgetary reductions, and a constricted labour market. While part of the story is about effective preparedness and aspiration, availability and opportunity of

employment and work-based learning for young people are equally significant. It is important not to present a deficit model that 'blames' NEET young people for their situation. Indeed, the context within which they are trying to progress and the structural obstacles that many young people are currently facing are of crucial importance in determining 'success'.

Currently, careers education and guidance is undergoing significant change. The new all-age National Careers Service became fully operational in April 2012 and provides careers education, information, advice and guidance (CE/IAG) through a range of channels – online, telephone and in the community – with prioritised intensive face-to-face guidance. The Department for Business Innovation and Skills has published a reform plan (BIS, 2012) to support the service's launch. Schools will not have to provide careers education but will be under a legal duty to secure independent, impartial careers guidance for their pupils. Local authorities will continue to have a statutory duty to provide services to young people that enable, encourage and assist them to participate in education and training.

This NFER review aims to address the following research questions:

- What approaches to CE/IAG are used by primary and secondary schools in the UK and internationally?
- What are the key features and principles of successful CE/IAG?
- What is the evidence that CE/IAG is helping young people to progress to education, employment or training post-16?
- What are the gaps in the evidence base?
- What are the implications of this review for policy and practice in the UK and internationally?

Few of the authors cited in this review comment on CE/IAG strategies for young people at risk of becoming NEET and there is no evidence with regard to 'open to learning' or 'undecided' NEETs. This strengthens the rationale for the *From Education to Employment* theme within The NFER Research Programme as it develops and attempts to identify and address the CE/IAG needs of these young people.

1.2 Strength and nature of the evidence base

A systematic search of key databases and websites identified 52 potential sources to be reviewed. These were rapidly screened in October 2011 and coded in order to identify key items. Twenty-six documents were identified as relevant to the review's research questions. Seventeen of these were found to be highly or mostly relevant, and nine were found to be of some relevance. An assessment and analysis of identified items took place in November 2011.

The documents appraised for this review comprise of research reports, literature reviews and one academic dissertation. The quality of the evidence is moderate to high: ten

documents have a strong evidence base and 15 a moderate evidence base. One further document, though deemed to be impressionistic, is included in the review because it contains some detail of different approaches to careers education. Most of the evidence reviewed is based on qualitative rather than quantitative analysis (see Appendix B for a definition of these terms).

The following chapters examine the approaches used for CE/IAG, the perceived success and impact of such approaches, and a discussion of the findings and implications for the *From Education to Employment* theme within The NFER Research Programme.

2. Approaches to CE/IAG in the UK and internationally

This review presents a summary of CE and IAG approaches used by staff in schools and external agencies to support young people with their post-16 and post-18 decisions. It concludes that the approaches used in schools share many similarities, but it is not solely in the approach taken that success lies. Rather, there are three overarching characteristics that are perceived to determine whether CE/IAG approaches are successful. Firstly, that CE/IAG support is provided to young people by well-informed teachers, careers coordinators, external advisors and employers working in collaborative partnerships, and that the young people are supported by informed parents. Secondly, that CE/IAG programmes are well timed to support transition points in young people’s lives, are tailored to their needs, and use appropriate delivery mechanisms. Lastly, CE/IAG should provide high quality, impartial and consistent information in relation to, for example, course content across schools, the socio-economic context in which a school is located, and what will benefit the young person most.

As a starting point, analysis of key documents identified for the review examined approaches to careers education/information, advice and guidance (CE/IAG) used by primary and secondary schools in the UK and internationally. It considered universal approaches for all young people and then looked at whether there is any evidence of approaches targeting different ‘types’ of young people, in particular young people who are NEET, and more specifically, ‘open to learning’ or ‘undecided’ NEET.

Evidence from 16 studies suggests that schools are using similar approaches to CE/IAG, but the content and quality of careers programmes varies from school to school. Table 1 below summarises common approaches to CE/IAG in terms of approaches predominantly used for CE and those predominantly used for IAG, though there is overlap between the two and the distinction is not always made explicit in the literature:

Table 1.1 Common approaches to CE/IAG

| CE approaches | IAG approaches |
|---|---|
| CE delivered by form tutors or school careers coordinators. It can be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • part of PSHE • a separate subject on the curriculum • integrated across most subjects of the curriculum. | One-to-one interviews with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an external careers adviser (e.g. Connexions, Education Business Partnership) • a teacher and/or schools careers coordinator • additional interviews for young people with special education needs (SEN), learning difficulties, disabilities, potential NEETs. |

| CE approaches | IAG approaches |
|---|--|
| Content of programmes includes the following topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • decision-making skills • personal qualities • information on key stage 4 options • teamwork • skills in the workplace • CV writing, applications, interviews. | Telephone support/helplines |
| Computer packages are used to support careers learning in small groups | Web-based support (e.g. databases and career planning tools) |
| Information on careers is distributed in written form and web-based form | Links with employers (e.g. outside speakers, visits to businesses) |
| External careers advisers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conduct assemblies • undertake group work • support teachers in class • attend careers events and options evenings. | Work experience |
| Self-assessment tools (e.g. personality and learning styles assessments) | Visits to colleges/universities |
| Events (e.g. careers fairs) provide information on post-16 pathways | Teachers working as ‘academic mentors’ |

2.1 Universal approaches to CE/IAG

There is a general consensus in the items reviewed as to the broad types of universal approaches that schools are using to deliver CE/IAG to their students. As Table 1 shows, CE/IAG is provided through a combination of school-based delivery and external support from careers advisers, employers and representatives from further and higher education.

Evidence from the items reviewed suggests that schools deliver **careers education** in a number of different ways, including as a separate curriculum subject and as part of PSHE. A large-scale European study of careers guidance for young people at risk of disengagement from education, employment and training (Cedefop, 2010) identifies the following five models of mainstream curriculum-based guidance across Europe, including the UK:

- guidance as a separate subject in the curriculum
- careers guidance embedded in other broader, specialist subjects concerning wellbeing and social education
- careers guidance integrated in most subjects of the curriculum

- careers programmes covered through seminars and workshops
- optional career guidance subjects for young people.

Careers education programmes are generally delivered by careers coordinators or form tutors and focus on developing decision-making skills, on recognising personal strengths and weaknesses, on team working and workplace-related skills. The programmes provide information on KS4 options, as well as support in CV writing, applications and interviews. They also incorporate careers events, such as options evenings and careers fairs, as well as visits from external speakers, including employers, representatives from further/higher education and careers advisers (for example, external personal advisers). In addition to this, support and information on careers is distributed in written and web-based forms, including databases, self-assessment tools (such as personality and learning styles assessment tools), and career planning tools. Historically, careers education programmes have also incorporated a period of work experience, usually at the end of year 10 or the beginning of year 11.

Typical approaches to **careers guidance**, on the other hand, include one-to-one interviews with an external careers adviser (for example, from an organisation such as the former Connexions or an Education Business Partnership), or with a teacher and/or schools careers coordinator, working as an ‘academic mentor’. Additional interviews (usually up to three) are arranged for young people with SEN, learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and potential NEET young people. As well as face-to-face interviews, external organisations also provide telephone and online support/helplines to guide young people in their decision-making.

Research by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted, 2010) provides a good overview of CE/IAG in secondary schools, special schools, pupil referral units and services for looked after children. It found that all institutions visited during the course of its research provided CE internally, and that this was delivered by teachers, tutors, residential staff and carers. The research also showed that all institutions had good links and written agreements with the Connexions service and that, in half of these, specialist Connexions personal advisers worked with the schools, students, parents and carers. The level of provision differed between schools, however, with some offering a good quality, comprehensive programme of CE/IAG, and others adopting a less-structured, more informal approach.

Variation in provision is a recurring theme in a number of the items reviewed. The evidence suggests that CE/IAG differs in content from school to school, between geographical localities and in terms of the balance of CE and IAG strands. In addition to this, it varies in quality, in terms of the experience and skills of those who provide CE/IAG programmes and the time they have to deliver their input.

Evidence from a qualitative study of 24 secondary schools in England, for example, (Foskett-Nicholas *et al.*, 2008) suggests that the approach taken to CE/IAG and the balance between CE and IAG is closely related to the characteristics of individual schools. Schools with a student-centred approach, for example, and without sixth forms, operate on the basis of the needs of their pupils and work with many external agencies to provide CE/IAG. Schools with

sixth forms, on the other hand, and where the institution and its image are most important, have minimal connections with external careers advisers and focus their IAG on progression into their own sixth forms.

A longitudinal study of the educational and occupational aspirations of young people aged 13 and 15 in three cities in the UK provides evidence of variation in the content of CE/IAG programmes according to geographical location (Kintrea *et al.*, 2011). Evidence from two-stage surveys of young people at age 13 and 15 suggests that there were quite different approaches and levels of support in London, Nottingham and Glasgow. Young people surveyed in London, for example, said that their school provided universal support for all young people and extra support for 'slow learners'. However, young people in Nottingham said that there was a group of young people in the school who were strongly supported to be high achievers, but that there was also a more 'problematic group' of students who were subject to discipline and containment, and who had less opportunity for discussion with teachers about careers and university.

As well as variation in the balance of CE/IAG, there is evidence that there is variation between schools in terms of the quality of CE/IAG provision given. Research by Ofsted (2010), for example, suggests that provision of in-school careers information is varied because not all staff have the experience, knowledge or skills to deliver it (see section 3.1.4 for more detail). It also suggests that IAG at age 16 is not always impartial enough: schools without sixth forms are more likely to offer impartial advice about all the possible post-16 pathways open to young people, whereas schools with sixth forms are more likely to focus their IAG on staying on in the sixth form rather than other post-16 options. This is corroborated by evidence from other studies (Blenkinsop *et al.*, 2006; Foskett-Nicholas *et al.*, 2008; Hughes and Gration, 2009), which suggest that young people in schools without sixth forms are more likely to receive impartial, student-centred, advice and that *'teachers in 11-18 schools, in general, lack impartiality by encouraging some students to stay on in their school sixth forms'* (Hughes and Gration, 2009, p.6).

The majority of documents reviewed are concerned with CE/IAG approaches in secondary schools and describe generic approaches to CE and/or IAG, without elaborating in depth on approaches at school level. A few, though, provide more detail of the kinds of activities undertaken 'on the ground'.

For example, research carried out by the NFER (Blenkinsop *et al.*, 2006; McCrone *et al.*, 2009), conducted for the then DCSF, provides detailed accounts of how secondary schools in England run their CE/IAG programmes. In a study of the role of careers coordinators in schools, McCrone *et al.* (2009) report that CE programmes are delivered by careers coordinators or form tutors and their content follows a broadly similar pattern: in Years 7 and 8, CE lessons are quite general and focus on topics such as decision-making, personal qualities (such as skills, strengths and weaknesses) and sometimes, financial management and 'the world of work'; in Year 9, the focus is on KS4 options, but some schools also cover areas such as teamwork and skills in the workplace. Work experience is introduced at the end of Year 10 or beginning of Year 11, and careers lessons use this focus to cover topics such as CV writing, job applications and interview skills. In Year 11, careers programmes are

devoted to post-16 choices and there is an emphasis on IAG provided by careers advisers from external bodies such as Connexions or Education Business Partnerships (EBPs), or by schools' own careers coordinators. In this respect, research from 18 case study schools showed that, in nearly a quarter of schools, careers coordinators spent a large proportion of their time giving individual interviews to all Year 11 students (plus their parents in some cases). In other schools, teaching staff were allocated as 'academic mentors' to students in Years 9 and/or 11.

Research conducted by Ofsted presents a similar picture of the content of careers education programmes and is illustrative of the broadly similar pattern of CE/IAG provision outlined above. It reports that:

In one school visited, students enjoyed the very structured careers education programme linked to the Every Child Matters curriculum. In Year 8, students looked at the world of work and their own interests. In Year 9, lessons included examining stereotypes in career planning and using an internet-based programme to give personalised careers information and advice. In Year 10, students were involved in work experience and in Year 11, in thinking about the future and applying for options or opportunities outside schools.

Ofsted (2010, p.12).

Research commissioned by the Welsh Assembly Government (Watts, 2009) provides an informative overview of the IAG services that an external organisation, Careers Wales, delivers to secondary schools. Their careers guidance services are offered face-to-face (for example, in careers centres, jobcentres and other community centres), on the telephone (from a call centre) and in web-based form (including databases and career planning tools). They also deliver consultancy support to schools and colleges in the delivery of their careers programmes, and support in the area of work-related education. This includes education business links, brokering work experience placements, health and safety assessments, employer-supported curriculum-linked activity and employer mentors working with students. The authors of further research commissioned by the Welsh Assembly Government (Edwards *et al.*, 2010) to consider the effectiveness of careers provision in Wales and identify whether there was scope for improvement, reflected on the need to build on best practice and to improve their careers service. The authors defined their vision for careers services in Wales as:

To create fully integrated online, telephone and face-to-face services designed to ensure that every individual, regardless of their circumstances, can develop and apply career management and employability skills that will sustain them throughout life.

Edwards *et al.* (2010, p.16)

Interestingly, the report on Careers Wales (Watts, 2009) is one of the few items reviewed to allude to work-related learning in primary schools, though it does not provide any detail of what this might be.

2.2 Targeted approaches to CE/IAG

The literature reviewed provides consistent messages about the main approaches secondary schools use to deliver their CE/IAG programmes to all young people. There is, however, little evidence in the literature of approaches to CE/IAG (and IAG in particular) specifically targeted at different groups of young people at risk of becoming NEET, and no evidence of approaches targeted at 'open to learning' or 'undecided' NEETs.

Research undertaken by the NFER (McCrone *et al.*, 2009) and Ofsted (2010) indicates that schools provide more IAG for certain types of young people, including those with SEN, learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and potential NEET young people, but the evidence points to additional support (for example, more one-to-one interviews) rather than specific approaches for different types of young people.

The recent research undertaken by the NFER, for example, shows that personal careers advisers (for example, from Connexions) work with all Year 11 students, but their highest priorities are 'the most needy or vulnerable' (McCrone *et al.*, 2009, p.26), those deemed most like to become NEET, those with statements of special need, and students underachieving and/or unlikely to gain five GCSEs. A personal adviser in one case-study school explained that she was given a list of Year 11 students with risk indicators ranked alongside their names, and she was working her way down from the top of the list, fitting in other students if she had a gap. Careers coordinators in a number of schools acknowledged that the more diligent or academic students might never see a personal adviser, and one commented: 'Connexions only look after the "naughties", they don't worry about the middle of the road students' (p.27). There is an indication in this comment that personal advisers are providing support to 'sustained NEETs', that is, those with entrenched barriers to engagement, but not to those at risk of becoming 'open to learning' or 'undecided' NEETs.

The research carried out on understanding the impact of Connexions on young people at risk (Hoggarth and Smith, 2004), although some time ago and strictly outside the parameters of this review, clearly indicates the value of the trusting relationship between the Connexions' personal advisers and young people facing multiple barriers: 'A trusting relationship is key to impact with young people at risk [...]. Many of the young people in the sample faced multiple risks in their lives and needed intensive attention' (p.7). The report goes on to emphasise the importance of taking into account all of a young person's barriers when supporting them: 'A holistic and non-stigmatising approach to these problems was most effective and single-stranded interventions had less impact' (p.7). The report was concerned with those young people described as 'sustained NEETs', although it could be argued that the need for an holistic approach to support from a trusted adviser would equally apply to those young people at risk of temporary disconnection from learning.

The report commissioned by Careers Wales (Edwards *et al.*, 2010) also comments on specific approaches to reducing the number of young people disengaged from education pre-16. They state that:

Education Gateway [services that are part of the partnership arrangement with schools] and other Careers Wales additional support services provide preventative, integrative and recovery support aimed at developing motivation in relation to young people's learning and work goals.

Edwards et al. (2010,p.42).

It further comments that where additional funding has been available 'outcomes for young people can be excellent'. (p.42)

Similarly, a mixed-methods study of young people's experiences of education and employment transitions, conducted by the Young Foundation (Kahn *et al.*, 2011), explores different kinds of alternative provision for young people at risk of disengagement. The programmes described focus on developing personal and life skills, career planning, teamwork and networking, and they deliver their CE/IAG through group work, project-based work and practical/applied learning. One organisation, for example, runs a long-term programme in which students in Years 10 to 13 learn to run a business for a year with volunteer business advisers. In addition, it organises day programmes for primary and secondary students. The primary programme focuses on work-related learning; the secondary programme, Learn to Earn, helps students with GCSE choices by putting them in context.

A review of relevant documents has provided an overview of approaches to CE/IAG, and some evidence of approaches to CE/IAG for young people at risk of becoming NEET (though no approaches for 'open to learning' or 'undecided' NEETs). Chapter 3 discusses successful approaches and evidence of the impact of these approaches.

3. Successful approaches to and the impact of CE/IAG

Having identified the approaches that schools use to deliver CE/IAG, this review now examines what the key features and principles of successful CE/IAG might be and whether there is any evidence in the research base that CE/IAG has been successful in helping young people progress to education, employment or training post-16. The evidence will be discussed in terms of approaches that are **perceived to be successful**, and those that have been **shown to have had an impact**. It is important to note here that there is some overlap in the research evidence as to which approaches are *used* (as examined in chapter 2) and which approaches are *viewed as successful*. From the evidence, it is not possible to state whether the research studies that identify approaches to CE/IAG do so because these approaches are used or because they are successful, or conversely, whether those who identify successful approaches do so because they are used. Seven of the studies do both, that is, they identify approaches and then proceed to examine which are successful.

3.1 Approaches perceived to be successful

Evidence from approximately two-thirds of the literature reviewed shows that there is a high degree of commonality in teachers, careers professionals and young people's views on the key features and principles of CE/IAG that are effective in supporting young people. Successful approaches may be grouped into a number of broad categories:

- collaborative approaches
- personalised approaches
- appropriate programmes of support
- other key ingredients of successful approaches.

These findings are discussed under the four categories in greater detail.

3.1.1 Collaborative approaches

Ten of the documents reviewed identify collaborative working, good communication (both within the school, and between schools and outside agencies/organisations), and multi-faceted provision as key features of successful IAG. An evaluation of IAG services conducted by the NFER (McCrone *et al.*, 2010) found that successful partnership working between schools, colleges, Connexions and local authorities appears to underpin and facilitate good IAG practice. The evidence indicates that individual aspects of IAG delivery rarely take place in isolation. Rather, 'good' IAG practice is often the result of many aspects of provision successfully integrated with each other to achieve a multi-faceted IAG

programme fit for all young people's needs. This is further supported by evidence from a systematic review of the impact of IAG at key stage 4 on post-16 transitions (Smith *et al.*, 2005) and from Ofsted's (2010) research into IAG. These studies suggest that collaborative working is effective in supporting continuing engagement and that partnership working is particularly effective for providing targeted help at specific groups of 'at risk' young people.

Smith *et al.* highlight the need for schools to work flexibly with partner organisations to deliver effective IAG for young people at risk of disengagement:

Schools that wish to integrate programmes aimed at those 'at risk' will need to be flexible in their approach and attitudes towards such programmes and towards the young people, and be prepared to work in partnership with other agencies and organisations in order to develop and deliver the programmes.

Smith et al. (2005, p.57)

Similarly, Ofsted highlights the benefits of collaborative working for identifying and supporting young people in danger of becoming NEET. Its research showed that:

Effective inter-agency collaboration resulted in a wide range of community-based projects and programmes. The most effective of these provided personalised support and challenge to young people, helping them to improve their self-esteem and motivating them to involve themselves in learning and employment again. Community-based teams of Connexions personal advisers provided specialist support and good practical advice on housing, benefits, health and welfare.

Ofsted (2010, p.22)

Ofsted's research identifies collaborative working as key to providing personalised support for individuals and groups of young people. This is the second key feature of successful CE/IAG identified in the literature reviewed, and is discussed in more detail in section 3.1.2.

3.1.2 Personalised approaches

Evidence from seven of the documents reviewed suggests that effective provision must be well targeted (and seen to be relevant by the target audience), personalised, and tailored to students' needs rather than the needs of a school or organisation. As Smith *et al.* (2005) conclude:

Careers education and guidance (CEG) interventions, timetables and tools appear to be more effective if they are flexibly designed to meet the needs of individual young people, or specific groups of young people, rather than the needs of the organisation and its (and others) systems.

Smith et al. (2005, p.65)

They also suggest that a tailored approach can be particularly successful with 'at risk' groups. This is a common theme in a number of the documents reviewed.

Evidence from research into guidance for ‘at risk’ young people across Europe (Cedefop, 2010), for example, suggests that early school leavers are a heterogeneous group of young people with complex support needs, and that the guidance process should start with identifying what these needs are and then be tailored to each young person’s circumstances. Similarly, UK research into the impact of CE/IAG policy and practice on different groups of young people’s post-16 destinations (Hutchinson *et al.*, 2011) stresses the importance of understanding the needs and issues of young people in different groups, careful targeting and differentiation of CE/IAG at different types of young people, and ongoing advice and support, rather than one-off interventions.

3.1.3 Appropriate programmes of support

A third feature of successful CE/IAG to emerge from a review of the literature is that of appropriately structured programmes of support. Evidence from a number of documents reviewed (for example, Bowes *et al.*, 2005; Hughes and Gration, 2009; Smith *et al.*, 2005; Cedefop, 2010) suggests that effective CE/IAG programmes are those that are appropriately timed, provide support at key transition points and, if possible, early on.

Additionally, it suggests that CE is more effective when it is integrated with IAG and the wider curriculum, and where it has a higher profile and strategic support from senior management (for example, where the careers coordinator is a member of the senior management team (Blenkinsop *et al.*, 2006)). Poorly integrated CE/IAG programmes can have negative effects on young people’s transitions and can be further exacerbated by the lack of a coherent strategy for CE/IAG across key stages and an absence of partnership working between subject and career departments (Bowes *et al.*, 2005).

A number of items reviewed identify timing as crucial to the success of CE/IAG programmes, in that it influences the effectiveness of interventions and their subsequent impact on post-16 transitions. Evidence suggests that many young people, especially those who are planning to remain in education, make their decisions earlier than Year 11 and would like more support with decision-making at times that best suit their needs. In addition to this, it is reported that earlier interventions may help raise students’ awareness of subject-related careers and counteract external influences, such as peer group pressure, which can be very strong by Year 11 when choices are made (for example, Smith *et al.*, 2005; Bowes *et al.*, 2005).

Furthermore, while guidance is important for all age groups, it is particularly important at key transition points in young people’s lives. Effective strategies, which have been identified across Europe, to help young people across these transitions include: the sharing of information between schools, discussions with a mentor or personal adviser, shared projects between primary and secondary schools, and joint careers events between schools, for example, careers fairs and taster sessions (Cedefop, 2010).

3.1.4 Other key ingredients of successful approaches

Whilst the literature reviewed identifies collaborative working, personalised approaches and structured programmes of CE/IAG provision as the three key ingredients for success in engaging young people in education, employment and training, a number of other factors have emerged which are worthy of note. These include: the role of employers and outside organisations; the quality and impartiality of CE/IAG delivered, and the contribution of parents and families. These are examined in this section.

Firstly, a significant theme in a number of documents reviewed is the role of employers, businesses and colleges/universities, where the substantiated evidence suggests that CE/IAG programmes would have greater relevance and impact if they were more connected to the wider world of work, education and training (Hughes and Gration, 2009). In addition to this, other studies suggest that the contribution of external organisations would be more influential in delivering CE/IAG if a number of factors were taken into account.

- Programmes should deliver relevant, accurate and up-to-date labour market information (LMI), linked to employment trends and longer-term earnings potential (Hughes, 2010).
- LMI and other career-related information is delivered through practical activities, provided by a variety of deliverers and in a range of different formats, such as project work, that interest young people (Smith *et al.*, 2005).
- People are involved in the guidance programmes: ‘Young people appear to value the involvement of people in the provision of career information, seeing them as more important and/or more helpful than written sources of information’ (Smith *et al.*, 2005, p.67).
- Work experience matches the careers interest of young people:

In the best instances, work placements closely matched students’ careers aspirations, and collaboration between schools and local authorities was effective. Links with the Education Business Partnerships enhanced the quality and relevance of both careers education and work experience.

Ofsted (2010, p.19).

The quality and impartiality of CE/IAG programmes is a second additional strand emerging from the literature. In addition to the coordinated, personalised and structured approaches discussed in this chapter, there is a need for well-qualified, experienced personal advisers and teachers, who can deliver a wide range of high-quality careers education activities that are appropriately targeted at individual’s and groups’ needs. Research by Ofsted, for example, found that in all the local authorities visited, there were examples of staff providing IAG support who had little knowledge and understanding of the full range of options for young people, the expectations and demands of different education, training and employment routes, or what young people’s next steps entailed (Ofsted, 2010). In addition, the evidence suggests that written careers guidance (for example, options booklets) must be high-quality, clear and sufficiently detailed (Blenkinsop *et al.*, 2006).

In relation to targeted provision, the evidence also highlights the need for varied levels and types of support to suit different students. Teachers need more training and support from external organisations when they are working with ‘young people “at risk”, who often face multiple issues that can impact upon the decision-making and transitions process’ (Bowes *et al.*, 2005, p.5). In addition, as indicated in section 2.1, a number of the sources reviewed identify impartial guidance, working in the long-term best interests of the individual, as a key ingredient of successful guidance programmes (for example, Blenkinsop *et al.*, 2006; Hughes, 2010; Ofsted, 2010; Hutchinson *et al.*, 2011).

Thirdly, evidence from a number of the documents reviewed indicates that informal influences, such as advice from parents and friends, in addition to CE/IAG from teachers and careers professionals, are also an important factor in young people’s decision-making processes.

Finally, the evidence also suggests that it is a combination of approaches that works most effectively rather than any one approach on its own. Research by the NFER, for example, suggests that individual aspects of careers and guidance provision rarely take place in isolation, rather that ‘good’ practice is the result of many aspects of provision successfully integrated with each other to achieve a holistic programme fit for individual young people’s needs. Furthermore, interviews conducted with young people themselves show that they find a mix of approaches, including home support, personal advisers, careers evenings, PSHE or careers lessons, and work experience as most helpful when making post-16 decisions (McCrone *et al.*, 2010).

The evidence discussed in section 3.1, which is derived from an assessment of literature reviews and qualitative investigations with careers advisers, teachers, employers and young people, suggests that collaborative working between agencies, personalised support, and structured programmes are the features of CE/IAG perceived to be most effective in terms of their impact on young people’s progression and engagement, but these approaches are perceived to be most successful when used together.

Section 3.2 looks at studies where there is research evidence that CE/IAG is successful in helping young people progress to education, employment or training post-16, that is where there is evidence of an impact on young people’s progression.

3.2 Impact of CE/IAG

Where the majority of the literature assessed for this review and discussed in section 3.1 provides evidence of approaches that are *perceived* to be key features of successful CE/IAG, only seven sources provide *evidence* that CE/IAG is successful in helping young people to progress to education, employment or training post-16. This is a distinction made clear in a report for Careers England (Hughes, 2010), which states that research studies range from ‘opinion studies’, where users of guidance say what they *believe* are the benefits and outcomes of the support they have received, to studies which *measure* impact empirically.

One research report, in particular, is a very thorough and systematic literature review of research on the impact of careers and guidance-related interventions (Hughes and Gration, 2009). It was commissioned by the CfBT Education Trust and provides substantial evidence of impact from 45 documents, including studies of factors influencing the decision-making processes of young people's learning, attainment and progression; studies of IAG services delivered remotely (online or telephone services); Connexions user satisfaction surveys and related evaluations; studies of targeted support for young people, including those at risk of exclusion, and other careers-related impact studies of generic relevance. The report stresses, however, that the research findings tend to relate to soft outcomes for young people, such as increased motivation and enhanced aspirations, rather than hard outcomes, such as successful progression to education, employment and training. This distinction is found in other documents assessed for this review and is used to structure the contents of this section.

3.2.1 The impact of CE/IAG on soft outcomes for young people

A number of the items reviewed (for example, Hughes and Gration, 2009; Hughes, 2010; McCrone *et al.*, 2010) provide evidence to suggest that CE/IAG provided by school careers coordinators, external advisers, and employers can have a positive impact on soft outcomes such as young people's self-confidence, motivation and aspirations. The evidence also suggests that CE/IAG can improve career exploration and decision-making skills.

Research conducted for CfBT, for example, found that increased volumes of users are accessing telephone and online IAG support services, and, though this support can help with hard outcomes, it is particularly effective in improving motivation, self-awareness and confidence, and fostering a greater awareness of opportunities (Hughes and Gration, 2009). The same study also found that 'formal' sources of CE/IAG may have significantly less impact than informal sources and influences (for example, parents). However, formal sources offer the reassurance of professional authority and impartiality. In addition, an assessment of Connexions user satisfaction surveys show that young people's satisfaction levels were generally high, but there was minimal tracking of young people's destinations. This is corroborated by an evaluation of IAG services conducted by the NFER (McCrone *et al.*, 2010), which concluded that local authorities and Connexions perceive IAG services to contribute to raising young people's aspirations.

A three-year longitudinal study of the impact of CE/IAG on young people's attitudes, career expectations and decision-making, conducted with young people in years 9 – 11 (Nicoletti and Berthoud, 2010) also provides evidence of the impact of CE/IAG on soft outcomes for young people. It found that talking to family members or to teachers about future studies in the course of years 9 and 10 has some positive effects on attitudes to school and the intention to stay in education, and reduces students' probability of not knowing what they want to do after year 11. However, the study found very little evidence that CE/IAG from any source made any difference to young people's eventual decisions post-16. It found that young people who had received substantial CE/IAG from their teachers were significantly more likely to remain in full-time education but, when other variables were taken into

account, it emerged that these young people were more likely to remain in education anyway.

A recent study conducted by Deloitte (2010), which focuses specifically on employers rather than careers professionals, also identifies soft outcomes for young people. It provides evidence that employers should be more involved in CE/IAG in schools because of the impact of their input on young people's confidence and aspirations. It found that young people who had been in touch with four or more employers in the past two years were nearly twice as likely to believe that they had a good idea of the knowledge and skills needs for the jobs they wanted to do. The authors reported:

Whether through classroom talks, course delivery, careers fairs, mentoring or any number of other activities, exposure to employers when done properly, motivates, inspires and informs young people, and can equip them with the skills needed to succeed in the workplace.

Deloitte (2010, p.1)

They also reported that young people exposed to employers, are one and a half times more likely to believe they will be able to find a job, than their peers who were not exposed to employers. Although this study relates to employers rather than careers professionals, it delivers a clear message that employers should be more involved in schools' careers programmes, there should be better communication between schools and employers, and awareness should be improved on both sides of how schools and employers operate.

With regard to CE/IAG provision for 'at risk' groups and individuals, there is mixed evidence in the literature of the impact of CE/IAG on soft outcomes. For example, the research conducted for CfBT (Hughes and Gratton, 2009) shows that targeted support for young people at risk of exclusion, and for those with fewer qualifications and in jobs without training is valued because it can increase motivation and improve attitudes among these groups. Similarly, research by the Young Foundation (Kahn *et al.*, 2011) found alternative provision had a positive impact on young people at risk of disengagement in terms of increasing awareness of personal strength, improving motivation and raising awareness of potential career pathways. A recent study for the Department for Education (Nicoletti and Berthoud, 2010), on the other hand, found no evidence that CE/IAG was especially effective for low-attaining young people and those with SEN.

3.2.2 The impact of CE/IAG on hard outcomes for young people

While there is evidence to suggest that CE/IAG has a positive impact on soft outcomes for young people, there is a lack of evidence of its impact on hard outcomes such as continuing engagement in education or making the transition to employment or training. The research for CfBT (Hughes and Gratton, 2009), for example, indicates that there is some evidence of a link between careers guidance and participation and retention in learning or training, but it provides no detailed evidence relating to the causal effects of CE/IAG on young people's transitions.

However, research conducted by Ofsted (2010) does provide some detail, albeit on a small-scale, from evidence relating to the impact of CE/IAG programmes on NEETs. In three local authorities visited in 2008/9, good links with employers gave young people opportunities to develop skills allied to the needs of industry. In one local authority, for example, alternative education was provided at a local factory, where young people were able to focus on key skills and work towards National Vocational Qualifications. This was successful in engaging the young people in further training and employment. Another local authority ran two-week programmes each month for young people aged 16–18 who had been referred to them for additional support. The courses, which included sports activities, work-related experience and IAG, were effective in that three-quarters of course participants progressed into education, training or employment. In addition, another school organised a one-week work placement for key stage 4 students in danger of becoming NEET, introducing a Level 2 certificate covering fire and rescue in the community, hazards in the workplace, and a young lifesaver award scheme. This was successful in reducing the number of NEET young people as they progressed into education, employment or training. The evidence base for the Ofsted's study, however, was moderate, in that the findings are based on individual, localised examples of CE/IAG practice.

3.2.3 Soft versus hard options

As discussed in section 3.2.2, CE/IAG can have an impact on both soft and hard outcomes for young people, but there is little evidence that it makes a difference to young people's actual career destinations, particularly in terms of employment. As Hughes (2010) concluded in her recent report on social mobility for Careers England:

*Careers services and careers support activities can and do make a significant difference in terms of learning outcomes such as increased self-confidence, self-esteem, motivation, and enhanced decision making. There is also strong evidence that CE/IAG supports significant participation in learning and educational attainment. For progression into employment, the case is less clear, although there is some evidence that highly intensive support for the unemployed can make a difference. This is not to say that careers support activities have no value in producing longer-term employment outcomes, but that it is more **difficult to demonstrate the unequivocal connection.***
Hughes (2010, p.48)

A number of studies also highlight the difficulty of establishing a causal link between various CE/IAG approaches and young people's decisions regarding careers and eventual pathways post-16 because:

- it is difficult to measure CE/IAG inputs accurately and succinctly (Nicoletti and Berthoud, 2010)
- the impact of CE/IAG can be 'latent and delayed' and subject to many other interacting influences, such as the media, family and friends (Hutchinson *et al.*, 2011, p.vii).

The difficulty of measuring the impact of CE/IAG on young people's transitions, and the consequent lack of substantial research evidence, is discussed in more detail in chapter 4.

4. Discussion

This review has identified evidence in relation to the first three research areas from an assessment of 26 relevant documents. It has described the main CE/IAG approaches that schools are using in the UK and internationally, and the features of CE/IAG approaches that are perceived to enable successful engagement of young people in education, employment or training. It has also looked for research evidence that careers education and guidance has on the outcomes for young people, in terms of progression to education, employment and training post-16. This chapter discusses the main findings from the review and considers the last two research questions:

- What are the gaps in the evidence base?
- What are the implications of this review for policy and practice in the UK and internationally?

4.1 Conclusions

Evidence from the items reviewed suggests that schools use broadly similar approaches in providing CE/IAG for young people. Schools careers coordinators or form tutors deliver **careers education** as part of PSHE, as a separate subject, or as a subject integrated across the curriculum. CE programmes focus on developing personal and practical skills (for example, decision-making skills, personal strengths and weaknesses, writing CVs and applications), as well as providing factual information on key stage 4 subject options and future careers in written or web-based form. The programmes generally incorporate careers events, such as careers fairs and options evenings; visits from outside speakers, including personal careers advisers and employers; and a short programme of work experience. External advisers or schools careers coordinators and teachers deliver careers guidance in one-to-one interviews with young people, who also have access to telephone helplines and online support.

There are, however, variations in the delivery method, content and quality of the programmes in different schools. In particular, a number of studies reviewed suggest that schools with sixth forms focus their IAG on progression to their own sixth forms whereas schools without sixth forms are more likely to provide high quality, impartial advice on all post-16 pathways open to young people.

The literature reviewed provides some evidence of CE/IAG targeted at specific groups of young people who might be at risk of becoming NEET in terms of extra support (such as additional interviews with a personal adviser, one-to-one mentoring and small group work). However, there is little evidence of specific approaches for different types of NEET young people.

In addition to identifying schools' approaches to CE/IAG, the review examined the key features of successful CE/IAG and evidence about the approaches that have been shown to have a positive impact on young people's progressions.

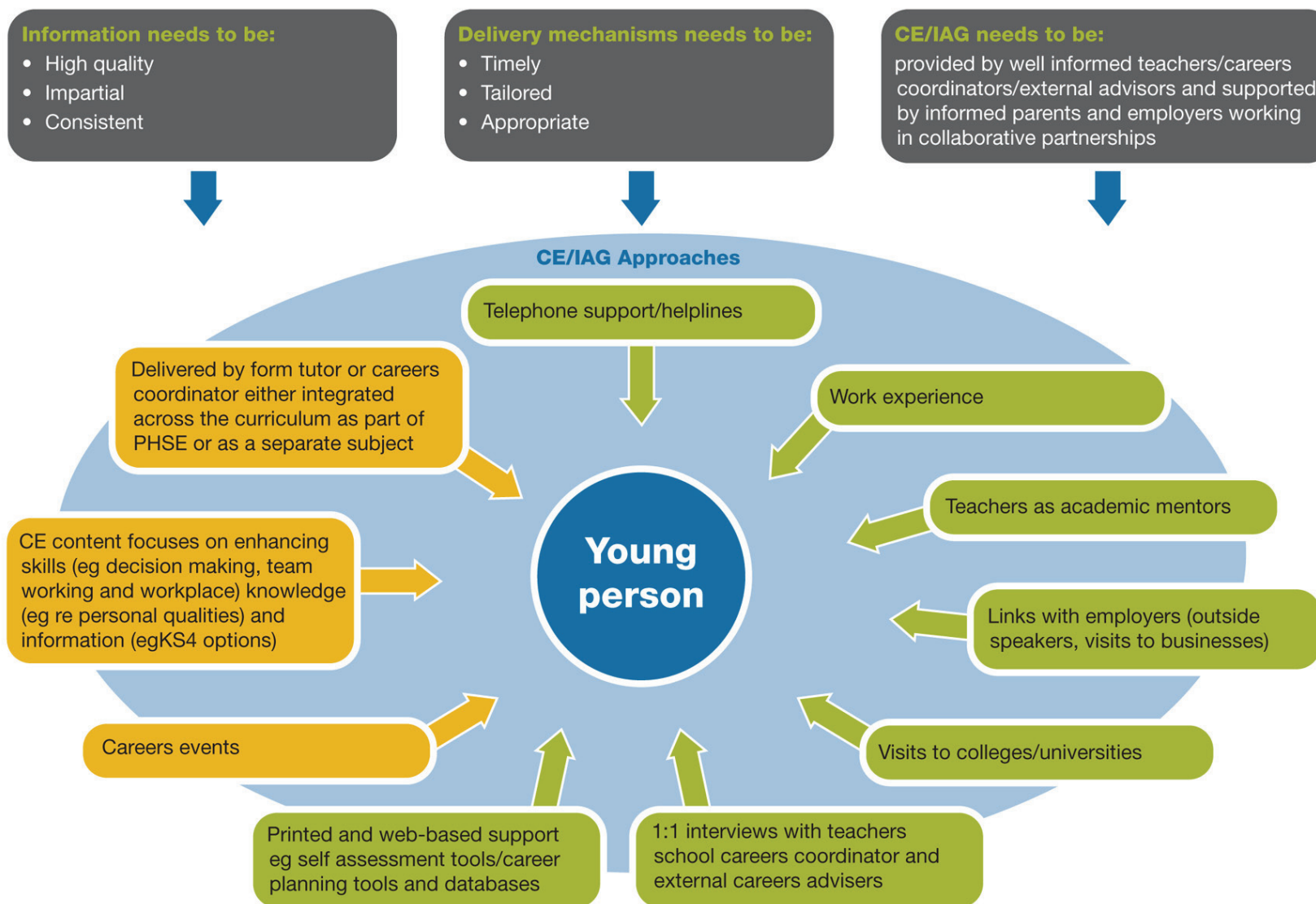
In terms of successful approaches, the review has found that there are three main ingredients to effective CE/IAG programmes: collaborative working; personalised support; and appropriate programmes.

Evidence from a number of studies suggest that good collaborative working between schools and outside agencies is fundamental to providing good careers guidance for all young people. Additionally, collaborative approaches are particularly effective with 'at risk' young people because they enable schools to draw on different kinds of support to tackle specific needs, and so provide tailored guidance and personalised support. This is essential to understanding the complex issues of different groups and individuals.

Research evidence suggests that successful CE/IAG programmes are those that are well structured, integrated into the curriculum, and supported at a strategic level by senior management teams. They are most effective when they are appropriately timed, providing support early on and at key transition points.

The evidence suggests that it is a combination of these approaches, together with high quality, impartial, and relevant programmes, as well as advice from parents and families, that works best in supporting young people's decision-making. Figure 1 summarises diagrammatically the broad determinants of successful CE/IAG that overarch the approaches used. These features need to be in place for the approaches to be successful.

Figure 1 Perceived determinants of successful CE/IAG



In terms of impact, a number of the reviewed documents provide evidence that good CE/IAG can have a positive effect on soft outcomes for young people, such as improved attitudes, self-confidence, and aspirations as well as enhancing their ability to explore different potential career paths and make decisions about the route they wish to take (though the evidence in relation to NEETs is mixed).

It could be inferred from this that improved soft outcomes can help young people towards making successful transitions to education, employment and training post-16. There is, however, little detailed evidence in the literature that soft outcomes leads to hard outcomes for all young people. In this respect, a number of studies allude to the difficulty of assessing the effect of different kinds of CE/IAG approaches on young people's actual career destinations, because of other interacting variables (such as individuals' characteristics, and the influence of family and other external factors). Consequently, an intervention's impact may not be apparent until much later on.

This review has examined different approaches to CE/IAG, the main features of successful provision, and evidence of the impact of CE/IAG on outcomes for young people. It now considers gaps in the evidence base in relation to all young people, and more specifically, those at risk of becoming NEET.

4.2 Gaps in the evidence

Firstly, although there is evidence of extra support (for example, more interviews) for some young people who appear to be at risk of disengagement, there is limited evidence of CE/IAG using different delivery methods and different content for young people facing disengagement for different reasons (for example, not liking the courses available or being a carer of an adult relative). There is little detail on tailored CE/IAG for NEET young people (and no evidence for 'open to learning' or 'undecided' NEETs) To what extent do schools tailor their provision for these groups? And if so, in what ways?

Secondly, there is very little evidence of the impact of CE/IAG on young people's continuing engagement in education or training or on their transition to employment. Current evidence relates mainly to soft outcomes, such as attitudes and aspirations, rather than concrete information on career pathways. There is a need for evidence that CE/IAG has an impact on hard outcomes such as young people's ability to navigate their way through the 14 to 19 phase of education to higher or further education, training or employment.

Thirdly, the review reveals very little evidence of CE/IAG in primary schools. Only four documents refer to primary schools, and only one in a substantive way. Wade *et al.* (2011) evaluated a career-related learning pathfinder pilot programme that took place in seven local authorities in 2010 with key stage 2 pupils. They found that pupils involved in the pilot programme showed increased awareness, knowledge and understanding of types of employment and the pathways required to achieving employment. This endorses the evidence that signals towards the need for CE/IAG interventions early on.

Lastly, although this review included international sources, there appears to be little substantial evidence about the impact of CE/IAG professionals in schools outside the UK.

4.3 Implications for The NFER Research Programme

The first three gaps identified above will be the future focus of The NFER Research Programme. Indeed, key features of the research programme are likely to be: the development and implementation of indicators that can assist in the identification of young people who are 'open to learning' or 'undecided' NEET; the trialling and evaluation of specific strategies (for example CE/IAG) that aim to support these groups; and the validation and dissemination of good practice. Through this programme of research, the NFER hopes to go some way towards reducing the gap in what is known about effective NEET prevention strategies, and to make a difference to the lives of young people.

In chapter 5, a series of hypotheses about strategies that could have a positive impact on young people who are 'open to learning' or, as yet, 'undecided' about their futures are extrapolated from the review's findings.

5. Next steps

This review highlights that the success of CE/IAG approaches is dependent on provision by well-informed careers professionals who are supported by senior management, informed parents and collaborative partnerships between schools and employers. Delivery mechanisms need to be timely, tailored and appropriate, and the CE/IAG of a high quality, impartial and consistent. It has also shown that effective CE/IAG can have a positive effect on soft outcomes for young people, such as improved attitudes, self-confidence, aspirations, and decision-making skills.

This review, however, suggests that there is a gap in the research concerning the impact of CE/IAG on hard outcomes for all young people in terms of their transition to education, employment or training. Furthermore, although there is data that discusses CE/IAG approaches for NEETs, it appears to be in terms of sustained NEETs. There is little evidence in the literature reviewed that links successful CE/IAG approaches to 'open to learning' or 'undecided' NEETs, that is those young people who are likely to benefit significantly from well-informed and appropriately timed and delivered CE/IAG.

These gaps, along with any gaps identified in the other three reports in this suite of reviews (on strategies to support NEETs, the role of curriculum and qualifications in supporting NEET young people and employer involvement in education) will be the focus of The NFER Research Programme in the future.

Additionally, through the development of indicators, the NFER will undertake more work to better understand the distinctions between 'open to learning' and 'undecided' NEETs. It will be able to hone understanding of the approaches that can have the greatest effect with each group respectively and tailor the NFER's research accordingly.

For now, 'open to learning' and 'undecided' NEETs are considered together, distinguished by the fact that such young people tend to present quite different characteristics to those in the 'sustained' NEET group. Furthermore, it is suggested that CE/IAG is helpful for all young people but is especially relevant for those that are potential 'open to learning' and 'undecided' NEETs who might disconnect from learning in the short to medium term.

Those who know what they want to do at an early age need less CE/IAG, while those who are vulnerable to becoming 'sustained' NEETs often need extra support beyond CE/IAG. The young people who are vulnerable to becoming 'open to learning' or 'undecided' NEETs need never become NEET if they receive appropriate and timely CE/IAG.

References

- Blenkinsop, S., McCrone, T., Wade, P. and Morris, M. (2006). *How Do Young People Make Choices at Age 14 and Age 16?* (DCSF Research Report 773). London: DfES [online]. Available: <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/RR773.pdf> [10 April, 2012].
- Bowes, L., Smith, D. and Morgan, S. (2005). *Reviewing the Evidence Base for Careers Work in Schools: a Systematic Review of Research Literature into the Impact of Career Education and Guidance During Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 on Young People's Transitions* (Centre for Guidance Studies Occasional Paper). Derby: University of Derby, Centre for Guidance Studies [online]. Available: http://www.derby.ac.uk/files/icegs_reviewing_the_evidence_base_for_careers_work_in_schools_2005.pdf [10 April, 2012].
- Cedefop (2010). *Guiding At-Risk Youth Learning to Work: Lessons from Across Europe* (Cedefop Research Paper No. 3). Luxembourg: Office of the European Union [online]. Available: http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/5503_en.pdf [12 April, 2012].
- Deloitte (2010). *Helping Young People Succeed: How Employers Can Support Careers Education*. London: Education and Employers Taskforce [online]. Available: <http://www.educationandemployers.org/research/research-reports/young-people/helping-young-people/> [12 April, 2012].
- Department for Business Innovation and Skills (2012). *National Careers Service: the Right Advice at the Right Time. New Challenges, New Chances: Further Education and Skills System Reform Plan* [online]. Available: <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/further-education-skills/docs/n/12-677-national-careers-service-right-advice-right-time> [12 April, 2012].
- Department for Education (2011). *NEET Statistics – Quarterly Brief: November 2011* (Statistical Release OSR 25/2/11). London: DFE [online]. Available: <http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/STR/d001040/osr25-2011.pdf> [12 April, 2012].
- Edwards, H.E., Saunders, D. and Hughes, D. (2010). *Future Ambitions: Developing Careers Services in Wales*. Cardiff: Welsh Assembly Government [online]. Available: <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/research/101115futureambitionsen.pdf> [12 April, 2012].
- Foskett-Nicholas, H., Dyke, M. and Maringe, F. (2008). 'The influence of the school in the decision to participate in learning post-16', *British Educational Research Association Journal*, **34**, 2, 37–61.
- Hoggarth, L. and Smith, D.I. (2004). *Understanding the Impact of Connexions on Young People at Risk* (DfES Research Report 607). London: DfES [online]. Available: <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/RR607.pdf> [12 April, 2012].

- Hughes, D. (2010). *Social Mobility of Young People and Adults in England: the Contribution and Impact of High Quality Careers Services*. Northallerton: Careers England [online]. Available: [http://www.iccdpp.org/Portals/1/Social%20Mobility%20and%20Careers%20Service%20Provision%20in%20England%20160810\[1\].pdf](http://www.iccdpp.org/Portals/1/Social%20Mobility%20and%20Careers%20Service%20Provision%20in%20England%20160810[1].pdf) [12 April, 2012].
- Hughes, D. and Gration, G. (2009). *Literature Review of Research on the Impact of Careers and Guidance-related Interventions*. Reading: CfBT Education Trust [online]. Available: <http://www.eep.ac.uk/DNN2/Portals/0/IAG/Literature%20Review.pdf> [12 April, 2012].
- Hutchinson, J., Rolfe, H., Moore, N., Bysshe, S. and Bentley, K. (2011). *All Things Being Equal? Equality and Diversity in Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance* (Equality and Human Rights Commission Research Report 71). Manchester: Equality and Human Rights Commission [online]. Available: http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/research/71_careers_information.pdf [12 April, 2012].
- Kahn, L., Abdo, M., Hewes, S., McNeil, B. and Norman, W. (2011). *The Way to Work: Young People Speak Out on Transitions to Employment*. London: The Young Foundation [online]. Available: http://www.youngfoundation.org/files/images/The_Way_to_Work.pdf [12 April, 2012].
- Kintrea, K., St Clair, R. and Houston, M. (2011). *The Influence of Parents, Places and Poverty on Educational Attitudes and Aspirations*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation [online]. Available: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/young-people-education-attitudes-full.pdf> [12 April, 2012].
- McCrone, T., Marshall, H., White, C., Reed, F., Morris, M., Andrews, D. and Barnes, A. (2009). *Careers Coordinators in Schools* (DCSF Research Report 171). London: DCSF [online]. Available: <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/DCSF-RR171.pdf> [12 April, 2012].
- McCrone, T., Gardiner, C., Southcott, C. and Featherstone, G. (2010). *Information, Advice and Guidance for Young People*. Slough: NFER. [online]. Available: <http://www.nfer.ac.uk/nfer/publications/LIAG01/LIAG01.pdf> [12 April, 2012].
- Nicoletti, C. and Berthoud, R. (2010). *The Role of Information, Advice and Guidance in Young People's Education and Employment Choices* (DFE Research Report 019). London: DFE [online]. Available: <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/DFE-RR019.pdf> [12 April, 2012].
- Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (2010). *Moving Through the System: Information, Advice and Guidance*. London: Ofsted [online]. Available: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/moving-through-system-information-advice-and-guidance> [12 April, 2012].
- Rhodes, C. (2011). *Youth Unemployment Statistics* [online]. Available: <http://www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN05871> [12 April, 2012].

Smith, D., Lilley, R., Marris, L. and Krechowicka, I. (2005). *A Systematic Literature Review of Research (1988-2004) into the Impact of Career Education and Guidance During Key Stage 4 on Young People's Transitions into Post-16 Opportunities*. London: University of London, Institute of Education, Social Science Research Unit, EPPI-Centre [online].

Available:

<http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/cms/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=dwsUf3OFcmM%3d&tabid=346&mid=1275> [12 April, 2012].

Spielhofer, T., Benton, T., Evans, K., Featherstone, G., Golden, S., Nelson, J. and Smith, P. (2009). *Increasing Participation: Understanding Young People Who Do Not Participate in Education or Training at 16 and 17* (DSCF Research Report RR072). London: DCSF [online]. Available:

<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/RSG/Youthandadolescence/Page7/DCSF-RR072> [20 October, 2011].

Wade, P., Bergeron, C., White, C., Teeman, D., Sims, D. and Metha, P. (2011). *Key Stage 2 Career-Related Learning Pathfinder Evaluation* (DFE Research Brief 116). London: DFE [online]. Available: <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/DFE-RB116.pdf> [12 April, 2012].

Watts, A. (2009). *Careers Wales: a Review in an International Perspective*. Cardiff: Welsh Assembly Government [online]. Available:

<http://www.careerswales.com/prof/upload/pdf/090515WattsReporten.pdf> [12 April, 2012].

Further reading

Billett, S. (2006). *Informing Post-School Pathways: Investigating School Students' Authentic Work Experiences*. Adelaide, SA: National Centre for Vocational Education Research.

De-Cos, P.L., Chan, J. and Salling, K. (2009). *The Careers Project: a Summary with Policy Options*. Sacramento: California Research Bureau [online]. Available: <http://www.library.ca.gov/crb/09/09-005.pdf> [12 April, 2012].

Gill, R.S. (2010). Postsecondary education preparation/career exploration: designing a pilot educational counselling program for rural counties. Unpublished thesis, Dominican University of California.

Hillman, K. (2009). 'School careers advice well received by students', *Research Developments*, **20**, 20–22.

Menon, E.M. (2010). 'The effect of career counsellors on the decision to pursue higher education: a mixed-methods investigation', *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, **34**, 4, 519–536.

Perry, J.C., Liu, X. and Pabian, Y. (2010). 'School engagement as a mediator of academic performance among urban youth: the role of career preparation, parental career support, and teacher support', *Counselling Psychologist*, **38**, 2, 269–295.

Wiggins, A. and Coe, R. (2009). *Careers Guidance and Participation in Education: Findings from the YELLIS Dataset*. London: The Sutton Trust [online]. Available: http://www.suttontrust.com/public/documents/1Careers_guidance_report.pdf [12 April, 2012].

Appendix

This review uses specific terminology to describe the robustness of the evidence appraised for the themes under discussion. The terminology used is outlined and explained below:

Strong evidence

In order to make statements about there being a 'strong' evidence base on a particular theme, we seek to ensure that a number of studies have been produced that concur in their findings. We expect these studies to be sufficiently large in scale (for example adopting adequate sample sizes to enable robust statistical analysis), or based on sufficiently in-depth case studies to allow a full explanation of findings. Typically, 'strong' evidence will include quantitative and qualitative research:

- **Quantitative research** 'measures' impact. Such studies usually adopt experimental or quasi-experimental designs (QEDs) involving baseline and follow-up surveys, or treatment and control group designs, as well as statistical analysis.
- **Qualitative research** provides data on perceptions of impact. The most reliable studies of this type are those that have conducted a number of in-depth case studies, across a number of locations, drawing on the views of a wide range of stakeholders, and triangulating those views in order to assess the degree of agreement, or dissent, among different individuals in varying locations.

Moderate evidence

The same types of evidence as those cited as strong evidence are included in this category. The distinction between a theme being described as having a 'strong' or a 'moderate' evidence base is related to two points:

- **The weight of evidence** – themes with 'moderate' evidence are likely to have only a small number of studies (typically two to three) that concur in their findings. There may also be some studies that present a contradictory view.
- **The quality of evidence** – themes with 'moderate' evidence may include studies with rather small sample sizes (for example, QED studies based in only one or two schools), or qualitative studies that have drawn on the views of certain, but not a full range of, stakeholders.

Impressionistic evidence

As this title suggests, this category includes evidence that is based on the observation or opinion of practitioners, or upon a case study in one organisation only, for example. Very often, we find impressionistic evidence of one particular benefit within a study that was established to evaluate an entirely different benefit. Such findings cannot be dismissed entirely, but they tend to be anecdotal, subjective or descriptive in nature.

Our thanks

The authors would like to express their thanks to many NFER colleagues, without whose support they would not have been possible to produce this report. Firstly, our thanks to Sarah Maughan, Director of Research, and the rest of The NFER Research Programme team, Bethan Burge, Joana Lopes and Julie Nelson, for their conceptual guidance on all stages of the work. Secondly, we thank Pauline Benefield, Information and Reviews Director and her colleagues, Hilary Grayson, Emily Houghton and Amanda Harper, for undertaking all searches for the review. This report would not have been possible without the assistance of our research colleague Michelle Judkins, who has appraised and analysed many of the referenced sources. Finally, we would like to thank Pat Bhullar and Alison Jones for their efficient administration of the review, and for formatting and referencing this report.

We also offer our grateful thanks to the NFER's Advisory Group who have effectively steered our research programme, and in particular to Anthony Mann of the Education and Employers Taskforce and David Pye of the Local Government Association, who provided detailed comments on drafts of the review. Additionally, we extend thanks to Dr Deidre Hughes OBE for her expert comments in the field of careers education/information, advice and guidance.

The NFER Research Programme

From Education to Employment

The NFER Research Programme

This Programme was set up in 2011. Funded by NFER, it is developing partnerships with organisations and individuals who share our commitment to solving unanswered challenges young people face in education. The Programme targets key areas of education, highlighting gaps in existing evidence and conducting new research to provide evidence to fill the gaps. Current areas of focus are: *From Education to Employment, Developing the Education Workforce and Innovation in Education.*

© 2012 National Foundation for Educational Research

**National Foundation for
Educational Research**

The Mere, Upton Park,
Slough, Berks SL1 2DQ

T: 01753 574123

F: 01753 691632

E: enquiries@nfer.ac.uk

www.nfer.ac.uk