

# hidden talents: examples of transition of careers guidance from local authorities to schools

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# Contents

Acknowledgements	v
Executive Summary	vi
<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Research objectives	1
1.3 Methodology	2
1.4 Structure of the report	2
<b>2 Local authorities' approaches to supporting schools to meet their new duty</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1 Local authorities' overall approaches to providing support for schools	3
2.2 Local authorities' views on commissioning and resources	4
2.3 Local authorities' views on future provision of independent and impartial careers guidance	5
<b>3 Schools' strategies and approaches to careers guidance</b>	<b>7</b>
3.1 Schools' overall approaches to providing careers guidance	7
3.2 Schools' approaches to commissioning and resources	9
<b>4 Partnership working</b>	<b>10</b>
4.1 Local authorities' role in helping schools to develop links with local partners	10
4.2 Schools' collaboration with partners to provide careers guidance	10
4.3 Schools working in partnership with other schools	11
<b>5 Careers guidance for young people who are, or are at risk of becoming, NEET</b>	<b>12</b>
5.1 Identification of young people at risk of disengagement from education or training	12
5.2 Tracking and reengagement of young people who have become NEET	13
5.3 Resources for supporting potential and actual young people who are NEET	14
<b>6 Conclusions and recommendations</b>	<b>15</b>
6.1 Conclusions	15
6.2 Recommendations	17
<b>Appendix: Case Studies</b>	<b>18</b>
Case study: 1 Greater Manchester Combined Authority	18
Case study: 2 Leeds City Council	21

Case study: 3 East Sussex County Council	24
Case study: 4 Lincolnshire County Council	26
Case study: 5 London Borough of Ealing	28
Case study: 6 Wirral Borough Council	30
Case study: 7 Kent County Council	33

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# Executive summary

## Introduction

From September 2012, schools have a duty to provide independent and impartial careers guidance to students in years 9 to 11. This was previously the responsibility of local authorities (LAs) which are responsible for supporting vulnerable young people who are at risk of becoming, or who are, not in education, employment or training (NEET). LAs are preparing to support Raising the Participation Age (RPA) which aims for full participation of all 16 and 17 year olds, and maintain their duty to ensure all young people engage in education or training and that there are sufficient learning places for all 16–19 year olds. Effective careers guidance will play a considerable role in RPA strategies and in supporting vulnerable young people.

The Local Government Association (LGA) commissioned the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to collate case-study examples of how LAs, identified by the LGA, are supporting schools in the transition of the responsibility for careers guidance from LAs to schools.

## Key findings

### What are local authorities doing to support schools to meet their new duty?

LAs are supporting schools to meet their new careers guidance duty in three main ways:

Firstly, by discharging their duties, they are encouraging the continued participation of young people in appropriate pre- and post-16 learning, tracking young people's destinations, and identifying those with no clear pathways. They are doing this by providing young people and their parents with information, via schools or online resources, on transition and future career pathways. They are also targeting their own LA resources on providing support for young people who have the potential to be, or who are already, NEET.

Secondly, by providing direct support to schools, for example, updates on policy matters and information and training on commissioning independent external careers guidance (if they are not offering their own traded service) and on how to quality assure providers (for example, by the matrix Standard). LAs are also encouraging schools to integrate universal careers guidance into schools' curricula.

Thirdly, LAs are supporting schools with the commissioning of careers guidance services from external providers. The evidence points to a range of levels of support from high levels to a more 'hands-off' approach. The range of inputs include: drawing up a list of local careers guidance providers for schools to use; quality assuring providers on schools' behalf; providing information to schools about the different types of providers they might want to use and how to quality assure them (for example, by supplying a quality assurance checklist for schools to use) and providing practical support in the process of commissioning (for example, on requesting quotations and drawing up contracts).

### What are schools doing to meet their new duty to provide impartial and independent careers guidance?

The schools in this study (which were identified as examples of effective practice), report that what has helped them to feel well prepared to take on their new statutory duty is: being well informed and supported by the LA and local partnerships; embracing the new legislation and carrying out their own preparation for the transition; having a well-qualified careers coordinator on their staff (who has a significant time allocation for careers guidance); and building on their current careers guidance systems, which are already well established.

Furthermore, the schools indicated that they are developing their careers guidance strategies to meet their new duty by using a combination of internal



resources and external support. Internal approaches include: ring fencing resources to provide careers guidance from year 9 and throughout key stage 4; providing young people and parents with online information on their school websites on all different post-16 pathways; giving links to various careers-related websites and tools; organising a variety of mentoring and careers activities including visits to the workplace, work experience, and talks from employers and representatives from higher education; and continuing to provide an ongoing programme of careers education. External support was reported to be used to assess the school's careers guidance needs and is commissioned to secure independent, impartial provision, for example, to provide face-to-face careers guidance from external providers at the transition stage for vulnerable young people and those at risk of becoming NEET post 16.

### **To what extent are schools working in partnership to meet their new duty?**

In general, schools are collaborating with a variety of different individuals and organisations to provide universal careers guidance. These include; local employers and apprenticeship providers; colleges and universities; independent careers guidance companies; the local Chamber of Commerce; YMCA; Education Business Partnerships; their own LA, and other training providers.

In addition, they are working closely with their LAs to provide targeted support for vulnerable young people and those young people who are at risk of becoming NEET and to assist LAs in identifying young people who do not have plans in place for post-16 education or training.

However, on the whole, schools indicated that they do not work with other schools to commission careers guidance provision because their priority is to procure careers guidance that is designed to meet the needs of their own students. However, a few schools are working in partnership to deliver careers guidance, through, for example, shared sixth form delivery of careers guidance or through sharing good practice.

### **How is support progressing for vulnerable young people?**

In the context of RPA, all the LAs in this study have their own information systems to identify young people who might be at risk of disengagement from post-16 education or training. Additionally, most LAs have developed a list of risk of NEET indicators (RONI) to use in their own information management systems or for schools in their authority to use. These systematic processes for identifying potential young people who are at risk of becoming NEET are used together with schools' personal knowledge of their own students (gleaned, for example, from one-to-one discussions with them) to identify young people at risk of becoming NEET early and to target support at those most in need.

In terms of young people who are already NEET, the LAs reported using various strategies to track them. For example, liaising with schools, post-16 providers, and other services within Children's Services and either encouraging young people to refer themselves or using a call centre to track them. Once contact is made, LAs provide the young people with careers guidance and one-to-one support and reengagement provision. They draw on a range of professionals, such as health and social workers, to facilitate reengagement in learning. LAs found it difficult to estimate how much of their resources was allocated to supporting young people who are, or who are at risk of becoming, NEET. Evidence suggests some LAs are allocating substantial resources to targeted careers guidance and re-engagement provision for young people who are NEET.

### **The main challenges in effectively delivering careers guidance**

LAs feel the challenge to be, firstly, the lack of clarity to the meaning of 'independent and impartial' careers guidance within the statutory guidance; a view shared by schools. They believe that schools are, in some cases, unsure whether or not to employ their own staff to provide careers guidance or to commission external providers.

Secondly, LAs believe there is a tension between the need for schools with sixth forms to maintain their sixth form numbers and remain competitive with other schools and the requirement to provide guidance on all available post-16 pathways.

## Recommendations

### For policy:

Policy makers should provide greater clarity in terms of what is meant by 'impartial and independent' careers guidance. Young people need more than, for example, to be referred by schools to the National Careers Service (NCS), for careers guidance to be considered to be 'independent and impartial'.

Clear and transparent accountability is needed to ensure young people receive independent and impartial careers guidance. This is important for parents as well as young people. Destination tables can help with this process.

There needs to be an assessment made of the extent to which the new careers guidance model is addressing young people's needs in the current economic context. Securing employment is challenging and young people need as much careers education and guidance as possible to help them navigate their way through the educational opportunities and career choices available. It is hard to see how this can be achieved without one-to-one support.

The LAs in this research believe that they have developed effective links with schools in their local area, and supported them practically to take on their new duties. It is also clear that through effective local partnerships, young people who are, or are at risk of, disengagement can be identified. Support, which considers the range of other local support services and is provided through locally tailored and personalised, preventative or reengagement measures, may be needed.

### For local authorities:

LAs must continue to give careers guidance a high profile and maintain ongoing dialogue with all their schools (including academies) both in terms of enhancing partnership working and sharing good practice. Local authority maintained schools and academies need continuing support and clear guidance from the LA on policy, commissioning external careers providers and sharing good practice.

LAs need to balance their provision of traded careers guidance services with support for schools and academies to provide effective careers guidance to maximise participation of young people in learning.

To support vulnerable young people more effectively, especially in the context of raising the participation age, LAs should further develop their strategies for identifying the reasons why young people disengage from learning and the careers interventions needed to reengage them both pre- and post-16 years old.

### For schools:

Schools need to take advantage of the flexibility and greater ownership of careers guidance they have to procure the careers guidance that best meets their students' needs. Critically they need to fully embrace the spirit of 'impartiality' and secure the best possible careers guidance to enable young people to pursue their preferred pathway.

In order for careers guidance to thrive and secure a high profile within schools, and to fully support young people, the senior leadership team (SLT) need to wholly give their backing to careers education and guidance. For example, securing a school-based careers coordinator with sufficient time allocation and status would help to achieve this aim.

## The study

The purpose of the study was to collate case-study examples to demonstrate how LAs are supporting schools to undertake their new duty, which came into effect from September 2012, to provide independent and impartial careers guidance to young people in their school.

The LAs and schools that took part in this study were identified by the LGA as offering examples of effective practice in terms of meeting the new duty. Telephone interviews took place in July 2012.

# Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Significant changes have been made to national careers policy with a range of organisations delivering careers guidance – schools, colleges, local authorities, careers professionals and the National Careers Service (NCS).

Careers guidance is an essential component in preparing all young people at each pivotal stage of their lives for pre- and post-16 choices, and beyond. It must be responsive and tailored to need and age. The way in which it is delivered will impact on local authorities' existing statutory duties and the fulfilment of Raising the Participation Age (RPA).

Making sure we know where young people are, and ensuring they get the right support and guidance at the appropriate time, will be the only way we can ensure the full potential of our young people is realised. Responsive and effective relationships between local authorities, schools, colleges, other learning providers and employers should achieve this so that the local offer to young people – learning routes, and the careers support to help them navigate through these options – is consistent and coordinated.

Schools will play a crucial new role in careers guidance. From September 2012, they have a duty to provide independent and impartial careers guidance to students in years 9 to 11. The transition of this duty from LAs to schools provides an opportunity to document in this study the ways in which LAs are working with schools to ensure young people get the independent and impartial support they need throughout key stage 4 and as they move into post-16 compulsory learning. It examines how LAs are supporting schools to take on this new duty, explores emerging models of careers guidance that are being formed between schools, local partners and local authorities, and considers the commissioning process to secure quality-assured potential providers. This report also seeks to establish the costs to LAs involved in developing their local approaches and those associated with developing models of support to

young people not within education, employment or training (NEET) and other vulnerable groups.

Findings from this work will be invaluable to the LGA, which is continually looking to expand its library of case studies which can be shared across the local government sector, and more widely. This research should also prove helpful for LGA input into the House of Commons' Education Select Committee inquiry into careers guidance for young people (Autumn 2012). It will also form part of the LGA's Hidden Talents programme.

## 1.2 Research objectives

In light of recent developments in careers guidance, highlighted above, the LGA commissioned the NFER to carry out a rapid compilation of examples, perceived to be effective, of the transition of the duty for careers education, information, advice and guidance (CE/IAG) from local authorities (LAs) to schools. Specifically, the objectives of the study were to:

- highlight the ways in which LAs are working with schools and other education providers to ensure that young people receive the independent and impartial support they need as they move from compulsory learning
- establish how LAs are supporting schools to take up the new duty
- explore emerging models of careers guidance that are being formed between schools, local partners and LAs, and the commissioning process to secure quality-assured potential providers
- seek to establish the costs to LAs involved in developing models of support to young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and other vulnerable groups.

For the purposes of this study, the term 'careers guidance' is based on that defined in the statutory

guidance for impartial and independent careers guidance <http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/statutory/g00205755/statutory-careers-guidance-for-young-people>.

### 1.3 Methodology

For the case studies, the LGA identified, through their existing networks, eight LAs across England. The participating authorities were able to demonstrate effective practice at the local level and to contribute to sharing the development of careers guidance. The LAs represent a geographical spread and a mix of council types (city, county and borough). One of these (Greater Manchester) is a combined authority, embracing ten individual LAs.

Four of the LAs have been involved in the Raising the Participation Age (RPA) trials. Seven then nominated a school in their authority which was felt to be showing evidence of best practice in light of the new duty on schools to provide independent and impartial careers guidance to all young people in years 9 to 11. The following table provides details of the LAs in the sample.

LA name	LA type	School details
Greater Manchester	Combined Authority	11–18 mixed
Leeds	City Council	11–18 mixed
East Sussex	County Council	11–16 mixed (Academy)
Lincolnshire	County Council	11–18 mixed
Ealing	London Borough	11–18 girls
Wirral	Metropolitan Borough	11–18 girls
Kent	County Council	11–18 mixed
Hertfordshire	County Council	n/a

Five of the schools are mixed gender and two are girls' schools; six are 11–18 schools and one is for 11 to 16 year olds; six schools are grant maintained and one is an academy.

The research adopted a qualitative case-study approach through strategic telephone interviews, conducted in July 2012, with key people in LAs to explore their views on the transition of careers guidance from LAs to schools. Within each case-study area we interviewed a representative (or representatives) from the LA, a senior leader in the school and a careers coordinator (if available). LA interviewees are managers within the 11–19, 14–19 or the RPA team, with responsibility for the transition of careers guidance responsibility to schools. School interviewees include six headteachers, two assistant heads, who are also the careers coordinators in their school, and a further five careers coordinators. Three of the careers coordinators have a qualification in CE/IAG.

### 1.4 Structure of the report

**Chapter 2** explores LAs' approaches, including views on commissioning and resources, to supporting schools to meet their new duty to provide impartial and independent careers guidance.

**Chapter 3** outlines schools' strategies and approaches to taking on their new duty to provide careers guidance and includes observations on commissioning and resourcing the new service.

**Chapter 4** examines partnership working in more detail and specifically the role of LAs and schools in the process.

**Chapter 5** explores careers guidance for young people who are already, or who are at risk of becoming, NEET. It discusses the identification, tracking and reengagement of young people at risk of disengagement and the resourcing of this service.

**Chapter 6** concludes the report and draws out the implications for the successful transition of the duty for careers guidance from LAs to schools.

## 2 Local authorities' approaches to supporting schools to meet their new duty

This chapter explores LAs' approaches towards supporting schools in meeting their statutory duty to deliver careers guidance from September 2012. It will focus on: overall approaches to providing support and views on the commissioning of careers guidance and resources, including the extent to which they feel prepared to support schools in delivering independent and impartial careers guidance. In addition, it will examine how LAs ensure that careers guidance provision meets quality standards.

### 2.1 Local authorities' overall approaches to providing support for schools

Discussions with the eight LAs provide evidence that they are planning a variety of approaches towards helping schools to meet their new statutory duty to deliver careers guidance. These approaches range from models where LAs are providing their schools with the tools to source their own careers guidance externally, to models where LAs are offering careers guidance services for schools to buy back from them.

Despite a variation across the eight LAs, evidence suggests overall approaches have much in common, in that, broadly, they aim to:

- encourage continued participation in pre- and post-16 learning, track young people's destinations, and identify those with no clear pathways, as part of their overall approach to RPA
- ensure that all young people participate in appropriate learning, whether academic, applied, vocational, or a combination of those routes, and provide them and their parents with information on transition and future career pathways
- convey information to schools on policy matters, in particular that it is their remit to deliver 'independent and impartial' careers guidance from September 2012
- provide information and training on commissioning independent external careers guidance (if they are not offering their own traded service) and on how to quality assure providers (for example, by the matrix Standard)
- encourage schools to integrate universal careers guidance into schools' curricula
- target their own LA resources on support for potential and actual young people who are NEET (which is the focus of Chapter 5 in this report).

The LAs in our sample which are offering a traded or 'buy back' service (Ealing, Hertfordshire, Wirral and most of the LAs in Greater Manchester) are offering schools a 'package' of careers guidance which they would have previously received free of charge from the LA Connexions Service. These packages will include face-to-face guidance from a careers specialist, online support, and access to careers events, among other things.

A Hertfordshire local authority representative explains:

*We have a minimum of 30 day packages for schools but in many schools they have bought into more than we used to give them for free which is really positive.*

The representative continued to explain what further support they offer:

- *careers matching software and access to the Higher Education (HE) convention in the county which attracts 9000 students each year*
- *information, resource centre support, and help with the 'Investors in Careers' award*
- *young people's needs analysis, which is where we assess all the young people from year 9 to 11 each year to identify their needs.*

The other LAs in the sample, which no longer provide a careers guidance service themselves, are offering, or will be from September 2012, information and consultancy services relating to post-16 participation and different careers pathways. Schools, young people and parents can access this service. This support focuses on:

- online careers guidance resources (via LA 14–19 websites, etc.), with links to national websites (such as the NCS and the National Apprenticeship Service)
- access to online careers tools (for example, 'U-Explore', which provides teaching and learning resources for learners, teachers and parents)
- meetings with schools and facilitating networks to discuss policy matters (for example, the implications of RPA) and share good practice in careers guidance
- offering training towards careers guidance qualifications, such as NVQ Level 4 Diploma in Advice and Guidance and the Qualification in Career Guidance (QCG)
- offering schools training and support in assessing their guidance needs, procuring their own careers guidance, and in quality assuring external providers.

Leeds, for example, emphasised the importance of ensuring that schools have access to excellent online careers guidance resources. The local authority representative points out that:

*We changed our information infrastructure around our online prospectus and application process and developed additional information pages so that young people, parents, careers teachers and professionals all went on one platform .... The information bit of it remains the central pillar of our infrastructure.*

Similarly, another LA reported that they have developed their website to bring information on careers resources and materials together in a 'one-stop shop' and to encourage schools to work with one another. In addition, they offer networking opportunities for schools across the authority, as she explains:

*With this network we fund some careers coordinators from schools in areas to lead the local network meetings and the idea of these meetings is to share*

*good practice; keeping up to date with what's happening .... We also have two county briefings a year when we invite all schools, academies, FE providers and so on, and we try to show them what is on offer.*

These are just two examples of the ways in which LAs are using their resources to develop their capacity to support schools without delivering a careers guidance service themselves. The LA representatives we spoke to, regardless of whether they are offering a traded service or not, find it very difficult to quantify the levels of resource they are investing in supporting schools to meet the new duty (in terms of numbers of individuals involved and time allocated). This is further complicated by contextual factors such as the size and structure of the eight LAs in the sample and the varied and multiple responsibilities of those delivering the support within each authority. They are, however, able to say how much their service, or services of other external providers, will cost for schools to buy; this is discussed in the following section.

## 2.2 Local authorities' views on commissioning and resources

LAs reported differing levels of involvement in supporting schools with the process of commissioning external providers (ranging from high levels of support to a more 'hands-off' approach). The kinds of input they provide include:

- drawing up a list of local careers guidance providers for schools to use
- quality assuring providers on schools' behalf
- providing information to schools about the different kinds of providers they might want to use
- providing guidance to schools on how to quality assure providers (for example, by supplying a quality assurance checklist for schools to use)
- providing practical support in the process of commissioning (for example, on getting quotations and drawing up contracts).

Leeds, for example, undertakes the first stage of the procurement process for schools checking processes

such as health and safety, safeguarding, references, etc. and the school and LA assess the provider on a short list of criteria. External providers are then added to an approved list for schools to use. Criteria included, for example, experience of careers guidance, capacity to deliver, staff development, careers guidance and teaching qualifications. They also provide briefings on commissioning procedures, as our interviewee explains:

*What we provide is the approved list which gives [the schools] a list to select from and we ran a couple of meetings where we showed schools how to use the list, how to select a provider, how to get quotes. We provided them with a standard contract they can use ... for careers guidance.*

Another LA has written a commissioning guide and delivered training sessions for schools to advise them what to look for when procuring external careers guidance. They have developed a checklist of criteria to use in assessing providers, including their local knowledge of the area, training opportunities available to them, how they are supported and how their guidance will support the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. The LA also advises that, from September 2012, all careers guidance professionals need to be qualified to Level 6 NVQ. It is then for the schools to initiate the commissioning process.

The evidence suggests, therefore, that LAs are providing different forms of guidance to schools to help them with the commissioning process, but it does not suggest that LAs are recommending some providers over others or that they are supplying schools with information on the cost of commissioning externally. LA (and school) interviewees generally acknowledge, though, that providers (including their own service providers) charge between £180 and £400 a day, an average of approximately £225.

This section has examined how LAs are helping schools to identify and procure careers guidance. Section 2.3 will explore the extent to which LAs feel prepared to support schools in meeting their statutory duty to provide 'independent and impartial' careers guidance.

## 2.3 Local authorities' views on future provision of independent and impartial careers guidance

Most LAs in our study are confident that they are very well prepared to provide support for schools in meeting the statutory duty (though two report that this is in their schools' remit rather than the LA's remit).

The LAs which offer a 'buy back' service for careers guidance have had their systems in place for a year or more and this has enabled them to fine-tune their services to local and individual need and to continue to employ well-qualified staff who are familiar with the authority through their work for Connexions. Ealing and Hertfordshire, for example, have ensured that their personal advisers have already achieved or are working towards a Level 6 NVQ qualification in careers guidance. They are both working towards the matrix Standard which will give them a quality framework by which they can accredit their careers guidance provision. In addition, they monitor the quality of their work through self-assessment and feedback from schools and young people.

In terms of schools' new duty to provide 'independent and impartial' careers guidance, LAs foresee that there will be differences between schools in their authorities with regard to how successfully they meet the duty. They report that there is a lack of clarity in the statutory guidance as to the meaning of 'independent and impartial'. Additionally, they express concern that there may be tensions between the need for schools with sixth forms to maintain their sixth form numbers and remain competitive with other schools and the requirement to provide guidance on all available post-16 pathways. The Hertfordshire local authority officer interviewed explains that in a county where every school has a sixth form the issue is ensuring that schools offer impartial careers guidance:

*All the schools are very effective in telling their students about their sixth form because it is on their doorsteps. The big issue is about enabling and ensuring schools inform young people impartially and independently about the other options that are out there and being knowledgeable about them with parents and young people. This is the key focus of our work.*



In addition, there is a potential conflict for schools between the desire to employ their own staff to deliver careers guidance (possibly to avoid redundancies) and the need to commission independent external providers to deliver the service. One LA representative, for example, reports that the statutory guidance is 'pretty poor' (LA officer, Greater Manchester) and this could lead to inadequate provision in some schools, because they are making arrangements to employ their own staff or redundant LA advisers rather than contracting with independent advisers. She notes that the DfE has now issued a practical guide for schools in meeting their duty to procure independent careers guidance, but that this was published too late in the school year (i.e. at the end of the summer term) to be of much use to schools in sourcing suitable provision:

*I know it's not a government thing to provide very detailed guidance but I do think more was needed earlier than we have actually had and, therefore, I think a lot of people have made decisions that are hard to retrieve now.*

LA officer, Greater Manchester

She reports that some schools have appointed unsuitable providers (in terms of qualifications or

experience) or are intending to use existing unqualified staff members whom they will train up once appointed.

LAs, however, are very aware of the need to quality assure careers services in their authorities. Some LAs report, for example, that they are encouraging their schools to work towards a quality standard for their careers programmes, such as the 'Inspiring IAG' standard in Greater Manchester, or the 'Investors in Careers' standard in Ealing, East Sussex, Hertfordshire and Kent. Both standards are validated by Careers England in the national Quality in Careers Standard (QiCS) in February 2012.

This chapter has focused on LA approaches to supporting schools to meet their statutory duty to provide careers guidance. It has shown that, while approaches vary in different LAs, they have common aims in conveying the importance of continued participation in learning, training or work. Furthermore, it has highlighted an emphasis on providing information on all post-16 careers opportunities, and in supporting schools in commissioning independent and impartial careers guidance for all young people in years 9–11. Chapter 3 will now explore approaches to the provision of careers services from the school perspective.

## 3. Schools' strategies and approaches to careers guidance

This chapter outlines schools' approaches to taking on their new duty from September 2012 and explores how they intend to provide independent and impartial careers guidance to all their year 9–11 students, based on their needs and circumstances. It will examine: schools' overall strategies in providing careers guidance; views on how prepared they are to deliver careers guidance, and the extent to which they have found the statutory guidance useful. In addition, it will consider schools' approaches to commissioning external careers provision and the associated cost implications.

### 3.1 Schools' overall approaches to providing careers guidance

Discussions with senior leaders and careers coordinators in schools from seven LAs indicate that schools have similar strategies for meeting their statutory duty to provide careers guidance for their year 9–11 students. They have developed comprehensive careers guidance provision for all their young people, particularly in key stage 4, using a combination of internal resource and external support.

Their exact approaches differ in the detail but, broadly, they intend to:

- ring fence resources to provide careers guidance from year 9 and throughout key stage 4 (and key stages 3 and 5 in some schools) and commission independent, external provision to ensure its impartiality (for example, from Confederation for British Teachers (CfBT) Careers Guidance Services, LAs' traded service or an independent individual or organisation)
- provide universal careers guidance through one-to-one interviews in year 11, or earlier, using a combination of internal and external support (school careers coordinators, senior leadership team members, or independent personal advisers)
- secure access to face-to-face careers guidance from external providers at the transition stage for vulnerable young people and those at risk of becoming NEET post-16
- provide young people and parents with online information on school websites on all different post-16 pathways, giving links to various careers-related websites and tools (for example, 'U-Explore', Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), and other national websites)
- organise a variety of mentoring and careers activities, including visits to the workplace, work experience, and talks from employers and representatives from higher education.

The schools are, thus, intending to use a combination of approaches to deliver careers guidance, and, to a great extent, these approaches are no different from those in the past. In some cases, they are further developed, as one senior leader from a school in Lincolnshire explains:

*We want to build on what we have already got. We are certainly not going to dilute anything .... Our students will have their careers programmes that are in the curriculum; they will have a whole series of specialist provision and activities which take place during our enrichment days. Every child in the year group will have a one-to-one mentor, which will be either myself or one of the deputies, and then there will be specialist external provision put into place for those children that need it.*

Similarly, the careers coordinator from a school in the Wirral describes the development of their multi-faceted approach:

*I see it as a model including different approaches to it, sort of activity-based support – enterprise activities, careers fairs, careers talks, etc., support through PSHE lessons, and assemblies and form time.*

Furthermore, she continued to explain that approaches are often bespoke, for example, offered on a one-to-one basis or in group sessions depending on the needs of the young person:

*It might be that there is a group of them [young people] who are all interested in the same sort of things so we organise for them to come together to look at the choices available to them .... Then bespoke support for individual students if the opportunities arise. For example, we have close links with local universities and local businesses and they often offer visits and trips or come in and talk.*

In addition, she has designed a web page on the school website which has links to the main careers websites, including 'U-Explore', which all students can access to find out about the post-16 pathways open to them.

Despite the fact that the statutory duty to provide careers education has been removed from schools, evidence suggests that the schools are continuing to deliver it, and that this is integrated across the curriculum from year 7 to 13. They aim to continue to:

- deliver careers education and develop broader life skills (such as learning styles, decision making, and other transferable and employability skills), which are traditionally delivered in PSHE lessons and tutor time. This will be delivered and sourced within school or externally.
- run career-related activities such as careers fairs and career-related assemblies, and provide access to a careers library in the school.

The schools in the sample report that they are well prepared to take on their new statutory duty. There are a number of reasons for this, including:

- being well informed and supported by the LA and local partnerships (for example, the 14–19 partnership board and networks with other schools)
- having a well-qualified careers coordinator on their staff, who has a significant time allocation for careers guidance. In some schools, this is a full-time post

- building on their current careers guidance systems, which are already well established. They report not doing anything 'fundamentally different' (as the careers coordinator from the school in Greater Manchester explains)
- embracing the new legislation and carrying out their own preparation for the transition.

As the careers coordinator in one academy in Kent explains, they feel very well briefed because they are part of the LA careers network, which has a 'very robust information system that keeps us linked and keeps us very well informed'.

The careers coordinator in another school in the Wirral, on the other hand, where they are not commissioning external careers guidance, feels that it has been her task to ensure that the school is very well prepared:

*I have prepared myself. I have done a lot of work over the last year or so producing different documents for SLT, getting to grips with legislation, trying to understand what is expected and then trying to come up with a package which I feel is going to be the best for the students.*

It is this combination of school experience and expertise, together with input from external specialists, that equips these schools to meet their new duty to provide all their students with independent and impartial careers guidance advice from September 2012.

Schools have mixed views, however, on the usefulness of the statutory guidance. On the one hand, they welcome the fact that they can tailor provision to address individual and local need, because the guidance is not too prescriptive. On the other, they report that the guidance is not specific enough; it does not give an adequate definition of 'independent and impartial' or specify how this should be achieved (for example, whether schools should commission external providers rather than their own staff to deliver the guidance). The careers coordinator in a school in Kent, for example, feels that the statutory guidance is very clear in conveying to schools that it is their remit to provide careers guidance but it does not give enough guidance on how this should be done. As she explains, the document is:

*a bit vague in places but the message that young people from 14 to 19 have to be supported and given advice comes out very clearly.*

Section 3.2 will now examine schools' approaches to commissioning careers guidance from external providers and the resource implications associated with this.

### **3.2 Schools' approaches to commissioning and resources**

The seven schools in the LA sample are very aware that it is their responsibility to procure careers guidance, and all but one are commissioning additional external provision.

The six schools which are commissioning externally have been assisted by their LA or an independent organisation, to assess their careers guidance needs, in order to help them identify the most appropriate provider, be it the LA buy back service or an independent supplier (for example, CfBT). The senior leader in one school in Lincolnshire, for example, explains how this has worked in their authority:

*The LA came into school and helped us to do an audit, which we did in May of this year. That identified one or two key areas that we need to look at and then the CfBT team put a whole range of different packages on the table. We decided which package suited the needs of the school and then we commissioned them to deliver that package.*

The remaining school in the Wirral, on the other hand, is not commissioning significant external provision as yet. This is for reasons of cost, as the careers coordinator explains:

*We are holding fire at the moment with commissioning external provision. We find that a lot of people [e.g. universities] who come and work with us in school have got a lot of knowledge and information which they are passing on to the students really well.*

In addition to paying for some support from the LA relating to post-16 progression and UCAS applications, the school employs a former staff member as an impartial individual to deliver one-to-one interviews to all students in year 11 and is confident that the provision they have in place is working very well.

The schools found it difficult to quantify the resources they will be spending on delivering careers guidance, because they are using a combination of external providers and existing staff members. Some, however, are able to say how many days they will be buying in and to put an approximate cost to their external provision. The school in Greater Manchester, for example, will be spending approximately £23,000 to procure 110 days of universal support (in addition to the 55 days' targeted support they receive from the LA). In addition, they are paying £8000 for the career coordinator's additional TLR (Teaching and Learning Responsibility) payment and using further resources for the delivery of careers guidance in PSHE lessons and for software licences (another £3000 to £4000). Other schools are funding one full-time member of staff or several members of staff to deliver careers provision internally, as well as earmarking substantial amounts of their annual budget (for example, £30,000) to purchase the external resource. It is not, though, possible to interpret these figures meaningfully without a detailed knowledge of individual schools' contexts, for example, their structures, the size of their cohorts and their budgets.

This chapter has focused on schools' strategies and approaches in taking over the statutory duty to provide careers guidance from their LAs. It has shown that schools are building on their existing provision of careers guidance, that they are using a variety of approaches in doing this, and that they are confident in their capacity to meet their new statutory duty. Chapter 4 will now explore the extent to which schools are working in partnership with other individuals and organisations to fulfil their new responsibilities.

## 4 Partnership working

This chapter focuses on the extent to which schools are working in partnership with external and specialist providers to discharge their duty to provide careers guidance in years 9 to 11 and to ensure that their students have an in-depth understanding of all the options for 16–18 education or training available to them. It examines LAs' roles in facilitating partnership working between schools and other organisations, and the kinds of partners that schools are collaborating with (for example, independent careers guidance companies, employers, colleges and universities). It also explores whether (if at all) schools are collaborating with one another in their local area to procure external careers guidance.

### 4.1 Local authorities' role in helping schools to develop links with local partners

The LA representatives reported a continuing role in supporting schools to work in partnership with local careers guidance providers. This takes a number of forms. One LA (Greater Manchester), for example, is working closely with schools to develop their own careers guidance programmes as well as encouraging them to 'kite-mark' (or quality assure) their delivery of careers guidance by working towards a local quality award, 'Inspiring IAG'. This aims to aid organisations in effective partnership working and improve their knowledge of the careers guidance options open to them. Some LAs have facilitated links through local area partnerships, including local consortia of schools and colleges, employers and apprenticeships groups, and RPA groups. Other LAs have provided consultancy and training for schools to inform them about opportunities for working with local partners and to support them in developing relationships with different providers and commissioning independent provision (as discussed in Chapter 3).

### 4.2 Schools' collaboration with partners to provide careers guidance

Schools are working with a variety of different individuals and organisations to provide universal careers guidance. These include: local employers and apprenticeship providers (both large and small businesses) who can offer insights into the world of work; colleges and universities which can offer experience of further and higher education; independent careers guidance companies; the local Chamber of Commerce; YMCA; Education Business Partnerships; the former Connexions Service; their own LA (as discussed in 4.1 above), and other training providers.

In addition, they work closely with their LAs to provide targeted support for vulnerable young people and those young people who are at risk of becoming NEET and to assist them in identifying young people who do not have plans in place for post-16 education or training.

However, the evidence suggests that there is variation in the nature of partnership working and number of local partners with which schools collaborate. For example, schools which are using the LA traded service (for example, in Ealing, Hertfordshire and Wirral) tend to work with fewer partners than those who are using other external providers. Additionally, some schools (for example, in Leeds and East Sussex) report that they have developed good working relationships with colleges, training providers and schools through their local area partnership boards. The way in which schools work in partnership is examined in more detail in the individual case-study reports (see Appendix).

### 4.3 Schools working in partnership with other schools

Schools indicated that they do not work with other schools to commission careers guidance provision because their priority is to procure careers guidance that is designed to meet the needs of their own students. This careers coordinator from a school in Leeds explains that collaboration with other schools is:

*great in theory but tricky in practice. Because everyone wants something slightly different tailored to their school, and so in lots of ways it's easier to do things on your own .... What we're most bothered about is getting the right advice for our young people with the right person to do it. If it means we can work in connection with another school, we'll do that, but not at the expense of quality.*

An exception to this is a school in East Sussex which has tendered jointly with other schools and colleges in its local area 14–19 partnership board for £50,000 of careers guidance, as the headteacher explains:

*We are part of a local area partnership board, which is all of the 14–19 providers in the area, about nine schools and a couple of post-16 colleges ... as a partnership we have agreed from September to allocate some of the funding to independent advice and guidance for all schools.*

Working in collaboration with other schools and colleges has enabled them to secure approximately £5000 for the school and to procure approximately 20 days of independent provision.

There is, however, some evidence to suggest that a few schools are working in partnership to deliver careers guidance. The school in Kent, for example, which shares a sixth form with another school, is planning to deliver careers guidance jointly from September 2012 (and is confident that this will reduce the cost of delivering its programmes). Similarly, a school in Leeds organises joint activities with another local high school's sixth form and has students doing different programmes at two local colleges. In addition, it collaborates with other schools to share good practice, as the careers coordinator explains:

*We're also part of a network of schools that meet and share good practice – rather than sharing people. We work on projects together. As a city Leeds works pretty closely with its schools, so we have regular forums, training sessions, and have put together a list of approved providers for careers guidance who have all been quality checked by the LA.*

Similarly, in terms of sharing good practice, the school in Greater Manchester, which has achieved an 'Inspiring IAG' gold standard award in careers guidance, receives requests from other schools who want to find out about their work.

This chapter has focused on the role of LAs and schools in working with local partners to provide universal careers guidance. It has shown that LAs continue to have a role in helping schools to develop links with local partners, that schools are working in collaboration with a variety of providers to deliver universal careers guidance and that some schools are working together, in particular to share good practice. Chapter 5 will now explore careers guidance specifically targeted at vulnerable young people and those who are, or are at risk of, becoming NEET.

## 5 Careers guidance for young people who are, or are at risk of becoming, NEET

Chapters 2 to 4 of this report have focused on approaches towards the implementation of universal careers guidance by schools, which now have the responsibility to coordinate provision for all their young people (for example, in integrating careers guidance into their curricula, liaising with external agencies and providers for support, and in arranging work-related learning). This chapter now focuses on targeted careers guidance approaches for two groups:

- young people at risk of disengaging from education: how they are identified and the approaches where schools and LAs are working closely to support, and keep engaged, students at risk of disengagement and other vulnerable groups of young people.
- young people who are already not in education, employment or training, a group which can be more difficult and costly to support, and is the responsibility of LAs.

### 5.1 Identification of young people at risk of disengagement from education or training

In the context of RPA, all the LAs we spoke to have their own information systems in place to identify young people who might be at risk of disengagement from post-16 education or training. LAs' existing datasets (for example, the Schools Information Management System, or SIMS) hold details of the characteristics of all young people in the authority and enable them to identify vulnerable groups. These might include young people with special educational needs/learning difficulties and disabilities (SEN/LDD), looked-after children (LAC), those on free schools meals (FSM), young offenders, teenage parents, those with poor attendance, those with a history of exclusions and low attaining young people.

In addition to existing databases, most LAs have developed a list of risk of NEET indicators (RONI) to use on their own information management systems or

for schools in their authority to use. Lincolnshire, for example, has promoted its own programme (known as SHIRPA, or Systematic Helpful Indicators for Raising the Participation Age) to its schools for use with students from year 7.

Similarly, East Sussex has developed its own RONI for schools to run as a report on their own databases, in order to score each young person in terms of vulnerability to becoming NEET. In addition to this, the LA also works very closely with its schools to assess each young person's support needs individually, as our interviewee explains:

*Every case is assessed individually, so we don't have a blanket statement that anyone who is a looked-after child will be entitled, but they will be assessed individually and if they need that support, then it will be provided.*

LA officer, East Sussex

The number of indicators on LAs' lists varies according to geographical area and to cohorts. Some LAs are refining their RONI to reflect the local profile of young people (because certain indicators are not useful NEET predictors for their area). One LA, for example, is, conducting an analysis to understand which characteristics of young people are more likely to predict that they will be NEET in the future and will be designing a RONI to reflect that, as the LA representative explains:

*We'll find out from the raw data and try and tease out exactly what this risk indicator will look like for Kent, and then we'll be working with a small group of schools over the coming year, to develop and fine tune it.*

In Greater Manchester, all ten LAs in the combined authority are developing their list of local risk indicators, but these vary in terms of the factors they include, and some are only targeting their support at the 'traditional' vulnerable groups (for example, those with LDD). The LA is concerned that some vulnerable young people will not be detected, including those who 'fall in and out of vulnerability, so young people who



perhaps overnight become vulnerable because of circumstances that have changed at home'. (LA officer, Greater Manchester)

The schools we spoke to also report that they have systems in place to identify their vulnerable young people and those at risk of becoming NEET and some (for example, the school in East Sussex) have developed their own RONI matrix separately from the LA system. These systematic processes for identifying potential young people who are at risk of becoming NEET must be used together with schools' personal knowledge of their own students (gleaned, for example, from one-to-one discussions with them) to identify young people at risk of becoming NEET early and to target support at those most in need. The careers coordinator in one school in Leeds explains, for example, that a student may be identified as being potentially NEET, but may also have clear ambitions and be on track to achieve them, while a student who is only identified on one risk indicator may have some big barriers to progress:

*So it's a combination of recognising what are clearly potential NEET factors, but also knowing our students, and being flexible to work with them on a one-to-one basis if we see them needing support.*

The evidence suggests, therefore, that LAs have responsibility as part of their RPA strategy to identify and support vulnerable groups and those at risk of disengagement from education and training, and that some groups of young people (for example, those with SEN and those in care) are already well supported. However, schools also play a vital role in assessing the needs of all their students and identifying those who would not be detected through data management systems alone.

## 5.2 Tracking and reengagement of young people who have become NEET

In addition to supporting vulnerable young people and those at risk of disengagement in making the transition to participation post 16, LAs also have a duty to reengage 16- and 17- year-old young people not in education, employment or training. This fits with the overarching ambition to support all 16 and 17 year olds in to learning.

The LAs we spoke to have various systems in place to track young people in their authority who are already NEET. East Sussex, for example, addresses the task in a number of different ways, including:

- sharing data with schools about the post-16 destinations of all their students
- collecting enrolment data from all post-16 providers
- using information from other services within Children's Services
- encouraging young people to refer themselves for support (for example, they are developing a Facebook page to reach young people)
- using a call centre to track young people.

Other LAs use broadly the same approaches to tracking young people who have become NEET, in particular telephoning them on a regular basis to establish whether they are in education, employment or training. They are able to give an approximate figure for the level of young people at risk of becoming NEET in the authority and draw up a list of young people for whom they have no information. In this respect, one LA is concerned that they currently have a lot of 'unknowns', largely because they have prioritised resources on the transfer of the careers guidance duty to schools this year. The LA is now addressing this issue by telephoning all last year's school leavers to find out what they are doing, and to support them to reengage in education, employment or training.

The LA managers reported using broadly similar approaches to support their young people who are NEET. These include:

- providing information, advice and guidance over the telephone (East Sussex has appointed someone specifically to this role)
- providing intensive one-to-one support
- drawing on a range of professionals (for example, teachers, health workers and social workers) to support NEET young people.

Leeds, for example, reported allocating substantial resources to support the reengagement of young

people who are NEET. This included using additional funds from their Youth Contract to provide more opportunities for 16–17 year olds to volunteer and to work with employers and to procure business and peer mentors to young people. Additionally they will provide more intensive one-to-one key worker support (for example, offering help with interviews, supporting young people on college visits, monitoring their progress on placements, etc.). Furthermore, they will be facilitating group work through their post-16 Connexions centre to motivate young people to reengage.

In Ealing, the authority conducts outreach work with young people who are NEET, using a network of personal advisers who can target their support towards those who are not on post-16 pathways. As a council they have a strong apprenticeship scheme which takes 25 young people a year on to apprenticeships with the council, many of whom stay on into employment with them. In addition, they have a pre-apprenticeship scheme for about 20 young people a year who are not ready for full-time employment, which helps them to develop transferable and employability skills (such as punctuality and reliability).

### **5.3 Resources for supporting potential and actual young people who are NEET**

On the whole, the people we spoke to in the eight LAs find it difficult to quantify the level of resources they are allocating to supporting young people still in school who are likely to become NEET post 16 and to those who are already NEET. In addition, they struggle to separate out the funding for these two groups. It is not possible to provide an accurate assessment of the levels of funding for targeted support without a detailed knowledge of LA contexts (for example, size of the authority and number of young people in the cohort) and budget allocations, but the evidence does suggest that some LAs are allocating substantial

resources to targeted careers guidance for young people who are NEET as they require intensive support to reengage.

Lincolnshire, for example, has earmarked £1.4 million to support post-16 reengagement in education and training. This represents a significant proportion of their 14–19 budget and will fund the equivalent of approximately 32 full-time advisers. Kent has a total budget of £6.7 million for its universal and targeted services, but is unable to disaggregate the resources allocated. Leeds has a budget of £2.6 million for its careers guidance services overall but reports that it is difficult to disaggregate specific funds used for specific groups. The Greater Manchester LA interviewee reports that there is considerable variation in the size of individual LAs and in how they allocate their resources to support reengagement of young people who are NEET; in some areas the ring fenced budget for the young people who are NEET has fallen to about 40 per cent of what it was two years ago.

The interviewee in Hertfordshire, on the other hand, was able to be more specific, reporting that they spend about half their budget on pre-16 and about half on post-16 services. This equates to 3000–4000 days in schools and 3000–4000 days in the community, working with young people through one-to-one guidance and group work. For the post-16 aspect, about 15 per cent of their budget is spent on tracking, about 70 per cent on one-to-one engagement and about 15 per cent on other services.

This chapter has focused on support for young people at risk of disengagement and for those who have already become NEET. The evidence suggests that LAs and schools are working together to track these young people and that LAs are investing considerable time and resource in encouraging these young people to reengage in education, employment and training. Chapter 6 concludes the report and draws out the implications for the successful transition of the duty for careers guidance from LAs to schools.

## 6 Conclusions and recommendations

This chapter draws out the key research findings in terms of effective practice in the transition of careers guidance from LAs to schools, and makes recommendations for the way forward in terms of policy and practice.

### 6.1 Conclusions

#### What are local authorities doing to support schools to meet their new duty?

Most LAs in our study are confident that they are very well prepared to provide support for schools to meet their new statutory duty. Broadly, they are supporting schools in three main ways, by:

- discharging their duties, as LAs, to encourage the continued participation of young people in appropriate pre- and post-16 learning, to track young people's destinations, and to identify those with no clear pathways. They are doing this by providing young people and their parents with information, via schools or online resources, on transition and future career pathways. They are also targeting their LA resources on providing support for young people who have the potential to be, or already are, NEET.
- providing direct support to schools, for example, updates on policy matters and information and training on commissioning independent external careers guidance (if they are not offering their own traded service) and on how to quality assure providers (for example, by the matrix Standard). LAs are also encouraging schools to integrate universal careers guidance into schools' curricula.
- supporting schools with commissioning, including: drawing up a list of local careers guidance providers for schools to use; quality assuring providers on schools' behalf; providing information to schools about the different types of providers they might want to use and how to quality assure them (for example, by supplying a quality assurance checklist

for schools to use) and providing practical support in the process of commissioning (for example, on requesting quotations and drawing up contracts).

#### What are schools doing to meet their new duty to provide impartial and independent careers guidance?

The schools in this study report that they feel well prepared to take on their new statutory duty. Reasons for this include: being well informed and supported by the LA and local partnerships; embracing the new legislation and carrying out their own preparation for the transition; having a well-qualified careers coordinator on their staff, who has a significant time allocation for careers guidance; and building on their current careers guidance systems, which are already well established.

Furthermore, the schools indicated that they are developing their careers guidance strategies to meet their new duty by using a combination of internal resources and external support. Their approaches include:

- ring fencing resources to provide careers guidance from year 9 and throughout key stage 4 (as well as in the rest of key stages 3 and 5 in some schools) and to commission independent, external provision to ensure its impartiality (for example, from CfBT Careers Guidance Services, LAs' traded service or an independent individual or organisation). (Schools also reported being assisted by their LA or an independent organisation to assess their careers guidance needs.)
- providing universal careers guidance through one-to-one interviews in year 11 or earlier using a combination of internal and external support (from school careers coordinators, members of the senior leadership team, or independent personal advisers)
- securing access to face-to-face careers guidance from external providers at the transition stage for

vulnerable young people and those at risk of becoming NEET post 16

- providing young people and parents with online information on their school websites on all different post-16 pathways, giving links to various careers-related websites and tools (for example, 'U-Explore', UCAS, and other national websites)
- organising a variety of mentoring and careers activities, including visits to the workplace, work experience, and talks from employers and representatives from higher education
- continuing to provide an ongoing programme of careers education.

### **To what extent are schools working in partnership to meet their new duty?**

In general, schools are collaborating with a variety of different individuals and organisations to provide universal careers guidance. These include: local employers and apprenticeship providers who can offer insights into the world of work; colleges and universities which can offer information on, and experience of, further and higher education; independent careers guidance companies; the local Chamber of Commerce; YMCA; Education Business Partnerships; the former Connexions Service; their own LA, and other training providers. In addition, they work closely with their LAs to provide targeted support for vulnerable young people and those young people who are at risk of becoming NEET and to assist them in identifying young people who do not have plans in place for post-16 education or training.

However, on the whole, schools indicated that they do not work with other schools to commission careers guidance provision because their priority is to procure careers guidance that is designed to meet the needs of their own students. There is, nevertheless, some evidence to suggest that a few schools are working in partnership to deliver careers guidance, through, for example, shared sixth form delivery or through sharing good practice.

### **How is support progressing for vulnerable young people?**

In the context of RPA, all the LAs in this study, have their own information systems in place to identify young people who might be at risk of disengagement from post-16 education or training. Additionally, most LAs have developed a list of risk of NEET indicators (RONI) to use on their own information management systems or for schools in their authority to use. It is generally acknowledged though that these systematic processes for identifying potential young people who are at risk of becoming NEET are used together with schools' personal knowledge of their own students (gleaned, for example, from one-to-one discussions with them) to identify young people at risk of becoming NEET early and to target support at those most in need as they require intensive support to reengage.

In terms of young people who already are NEET, the LAs report using various strategies to track them. This included, liaising with schools, post-16 providers and other services within Children's Services and either encouraging young people to refer themselves or using a call centre to track them. Once contact is made, LAs provide the young people with careers guidance, one-to-one support and reengagement provision and draw on a range of professionals, such as health and social workers, to facilitate reengagement in learning. LAs found it difficult to estimate how much of their resource was allocated to supporting young people who are, or who are at risk of becoming, NEET. However, the evidence does suggest that some LAs are allocating substantial resources to providing targeted careers guidance for young people who are NEET.

### **What are the main challenges ahead?**

LAs perceive the main challenges to be, firstly, the lack of clarity in the statutory guidance as to the meaning of 'independent and impartial' careers guidance (this perception was shared by schools). They believe that schools are, in some cases, unsure whether to employ their own staff to provide careers guidance or to commission external providers.

Secondly, LAs believe there is a tension between the need for schools with sixth forms to maintain their sixth form numbers and remain competitive with other schools and the requirement to provide guidance on all available post-16 pathways.

## 6.2 Recommendations

### For policy:

Policy makers should provide greater clarity in terms of what is meant by 'impartial and independent' careers guidance. Young people need more than, for example, to be referred by schools to the National Careers Service (NCS), for careers guidance to be considered to be 'independent and impartial'.

Clear and transparent accountability is needed to ensure young people receive independent and impartial careers guidance. This is important for parents as well as young people. Ofsted inspections and destinations' tables can help with this process.

A developed understanding of the careers guidance needs of young people in the current economic context is required and an assessment of the extent to which the new model of careers guidance is addressing these needs. Securing employment is challenging and young people need as much careers education and guidance as possible to help them navigate their way through the educational opportunities and career choices available. It is hard to see how this can be achieved without one-to-one support.

The LAs in this research believe that they have developed effective links with schools in their local area, and supported them practically to take on their new duties. It is also clear that through effective local partnerships, young people who are, or are at risk of, disengagement can be identified. Support, which considers the range of other local support services and is provided through locally tailored and personalised, preventative or reengagement measures, may be needed.

### For local authorities:

LAs must continue to give careers guidance a high profile and maintain ongoing dialogue with all their schools (including academies) both in terms of enhancing partnership working and sharing good practice. Local authority maintained schools and academies need continuing support and clear guidance from the LA on policy, commissioning external careers providers and sharing good practice.

LAs need to balance their provision of traded careers guidance services with support for schools and academies to provide effective careers guidance in house and through external provision to maximise participation of young people in learning.

To support vulnerable young people more effectively, especially in the context of raising the participation age, LAs should further develop their strategies for identifying the reasons why young people disengage from learning and the careers interventions needed to reengage them both pre- and post-16 years old.

### For schools:

Schools need to take advantage of the flexibility and greater ownership of careers guidance they have to procure the careers guidance they need for their students. Critically they need to fully embrace the spirit of 'impartiality' and secure the best possible careers guidance to enable young people to pursue their preferred pathway.

In order for careers guidance to thrive and secure a high profile within schools, and to fully support young people, the senior leadership team need to wholly give their backing to careers education and guidance. For example, securing a school-based careers coordinator with sufficient time allocation and status would help to achieve this aim.

# Appendix 1: case studies

## Greater Manchester Combined Authority

**Context:** Type of authority: Sub-regional group of ten LAs  
**Type of school:** Mixed, Academy

### How is the local authority supporting schools in their new duty to provide independent and impartial careers guidance?

In this sub-region, responsibility for the post-16 skills and employment is delegated to an agency working across the ten LA areas which make up the Greater Manchester Combined Authority. All the LAs are committed to ensuring that young people have access to appropriate and impartial careers guidance that enables them to identify a progression route that meets their needs, be it academic, vocational or applied, or any combination of the three. This is part of the sub-region's commitment to deliver RPA. In doing so, sub-regional partners, including the ten LAs, pre- and post-16 providers and other agencies working with young people, aim to ensure that the service and advice which young people receive is consistent and that young people participate fully in education and training.

Staff at sub-regional level felt very well prepared to support schools with their duties from September 2012 and to help them to develop their careers guidance programmes. They have worked with schools to identify the support they need for over two years. Although individual LAs retain some autonomy, they have agreed to work to common sub-regional targets. The approach, therefore, is to have an overarching strategy which is delivered through individual work at LA level.

There is currently no system in place at sub-regional level to quality control careers providers commissioned by individual schools. However, the sub-region has developed a Quality Mark for the delivery of careers information, advice and guidance which has been achieved by over 100 organisations, including schools, colleges, training providers and other organisations working with young people.

Partners at sub-regional level believe the greatest challenge to the way the new duties will be implemented will be to ensure impartiality especially where relationships already existed between schools and learning providers or where a school has its own post-16 provision. At the same time, they believe there is a need to ensure that where schools built their own capacity (and deliver more in-house) this is done to supplement rather than replace the work of those who bring an external perspective. They feel that the implementation of the new system could become fragmented as schools became autonomous. Relationships between schools and LAs and the wider commitment to the skills and employment agenda at sub-regional level will need to be fostered.

### How is the school preparing for their new duty?

A senior teacher at the school is responsible for leading the work relating to careers education, a position which is designated as a Teaching and

Learning Responsibility. She is also responsible for other aspects of work-related learning such as enterprise education, and leads the school's internal quality assurance work which includes gathering student feedback and some lesson observation.

The school described its mission in terms of careers education as being to provide education and guidance that is robust, impartial and meets learners' needs. This new statutory duty will not affect the service offered to students.

At present careers education is included as one element of PSHE to year 9 after which it becomes a discrete aspect of the school's work. Year 9 students are introduced to the careers library and the personal adviser, who delivers some sessions alongside teachers. In year 10 the personal adviser conducts targeted interviews with young people focusing on their ideas, what they need to achieve and what steps they need to take to enable them to fulfil their potential. This is followed by a full programme of interviews with all year 11 students. The school will maintain this system in future. It will be buying into the Connexions Service, delivered through the LA, and based on agreements which have been negotiated about the level of service with which they will be provided. As part of the agreement the school will be buying approximately 100 days of service. The school has also been able to ensure continuity in terms of the personal adviser who will be working with the school. The senior leadership felt this was important as they were particularly keen to keep the same members of staff who have been working with the school in recent years.

### **To what extent are schools working in partnership to deliver careers guidance?**

A range of links have been developed with local employers and others to meet students' needs. This includes an annual programme of visits by employers to the school and opportunities for students to spend time in the workplace. The school felt that by buying into the LA-wide careers education service they were able to access their

expertise and knowledge to support the delivery of provision.

The school has not been approached by other providers offering careers guidance. As part of the commissioning process the LA organised for its service provider to deliver a presentation to secondary headteachers and the LA then worked with the school to identify their needs and agree the contract that will be the basis for future delivery.

### **What careers guidance do young people who are, or are at risk of becoming, NEET receive?**

The sub-regional organisation tailors its work according to the needs of its constituent LAs. It recognises that economic factors in different LAs impact on opportunities for training and employment in a way that affects the number of young people who are NEET and their needs.

It has built on previous work in targeting young people who are vulnerable to becoming NEET by developing systems to identify and monitor those at greatest risk. This work has included identifying: vulnerable learners, including those with learning difficulties; looked-after children; care leavers; teenage parents; young offenders; those with a history of poor attendance; and young people who have been excluded. At the same time, however, they have extended their identification of young people who are NEET to capture those who may become vulnerable unexpectedly, for example, through changed home circumstances.

The sub-regional organisation has also developed its capacity to track and monitor young people. In order to do so, it has created a system that builds on the information about young people collected by schools by linking it to the wider Children's Services data so that they have been able to do much more to track young people who move across LAs than would have been the case when LAs worked individually.



The degree to which individual LAs are able to provide targeted services varies. While one LA is able to provide a high level of service, funding in the other LAs is at a level equivalent to 40 per cent of what it was two years ago. This means that LAs will need to be clear about what their responsibilities are and have a discussion with schools about what targeted services they will be able to provide in future.

The school has developed processes to identify the young people most at risk of becoming NEET and to ensure they are given additional support. This includes ensuring that they are interviewed early in the process and that their progress is monitored closely. In practical terms, they are supported through personal guidance. For instance, the school provides coaching on interview skills and other skills that will assist the young people to remain engaged in education and training. The work is led by the careers coordinator who pays close

attention to the needs of vulnerable children and ensures that their progress is monitored closely.

### Key elements of effective practice

- Identifying capacity to deliver centrally, especially in terms of tracking young people moving across LA borders (either within the LA or at sub regional level).
- Agreement about what can be delivered centrally and ensuring that as schools take forward their responsibilities, they draw on the capacity that exists centrally.
- Ensuring that information is shared and that learners are supported to make their choices on the basis of a robust understanding of their needs.

## Leeds City Council

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<b>Context:</b>	Metropolitan
<b>Type of school:</b>	Mixed, Foundation

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### How is the local authority supporting schools in their new duty to provide independent and impartial careers guidance?

The LA's work to support the delivery of careers guidance is a central theme in the much broader work which is undertaken by the LA's 11–19 Partnership. Its remit encompasses the broad area of RPA with a specific focus on matters such as attainment, child poverty and healthy lifestyles. The LA feels well prepared for the changes that are to be introduced from September 2012 and has been reviewing its support for schools in the area of careers guidance for over two years, focusing on how best to fulfil its role and ensure that its work is sustainable in the long term and builds capacity across the partnership. As part of this process, it has consulted schools to assess what support they need and has held a series of network meetings to discuss how schools can respond to their duties from September 2012. These have included discussing themes such as the RPA agenda and the destination measures.

The LA is providing support to assist schools with commissioning independent careers guidance provision by setting up an approved provider list, and will continue to maintain an online information infrastructure that can be used by schools as they implement their new duties. In developing the approved list, the LA has established a panel which includes its own staff and school representatives who have determined the criteria against which potential providers should be judged. As a result, a list of approved providers has been created which schools can use when commissioning provision. As part of the process, potential providers were required to demonstrate their capacity to deliver a high-quality service. This included ensuring their staff are suitably qualified. Feedback received by

the LA from schools indicated that they valued this work.

The LA briefed the schools on how to use the approved provider process and provided a standard contract, advice on contract monitoring and evaluating the impact of service delivery, which schools would be responsible for.

The LA is further developing the Leeds Pathways website which contains information for young people, parents/carers and teachers/professionals about the range of learning and training opportunities which are available together with an online prospectus and application process. The website has a focus on local jobs and careers and uses case studies of young people at work and local labour market information to help young people with career choice and employability skills. Alongside these activities, the LA runs an annual programme of awareness raising, including a media campaign, highlighting the benefits of post-16 education and training and the opportunities that are available.

According to the LA, the extent to which schools are prepared for the new duty varied. Some had made considerable progress and were actively reviewing both their provision and the way in which it was delivered. Others were grappling with the financial implications of the duty and the fact that they would now have to pay for a service that has been provided for them in the past. The LA believed it was important to develop expertise and resources to help schools build their own capacity to respond to their new duty.

The LA is also developing the signposting skills for non-IAG specialists who may be expected to answer questions about progression, transition and career planning. The training includes an interactive

quiz, information and video developed to support taught sessions. The training will be rolled out across the children and young people's workforce through recruitment of volunteer trainers who will cascade information across teams to ensure more people can support young people's progression.

### How is the school preparing for their new duty?

Careers education in the school is managed by a careers coordinator who is also responsible for PSHE and work-related learning. The post-holder is a science teacher who has dedicated time for careers education and related work. In the school, careers education is addressed through dedicated activities and as part of PSHE, in pastoral work and through a cross-curricular approach. In total, the school has approximately the equivalent of three full-time members of staff working on careers education.

The school has ring fenced the funding which it receives to implement careers education and this will be used to commission a package of support to students. Staff have worked closely with the LA to commission provision using the list of approved providers. They felt that the LA had been a source of strength to them as they prepared for their new statutory duty. In particular, they had encouraged practitioners to help to conceptualise what provision might look like in future.

The school is looking either to employ a careers adviser or to appoint an agency to provide the service. In doing so, it is looking for personal advisers who will provide transparent, impartial advice. Careers guidance will be delivered from year 9, and will comprise of a programme of face-to-face interviews for all learners and targeted support, purchased by the school, for students who are judged to be at risk of becoming NEET. As part of PSHE and pastoral sessions, students experience a carousel of activities throughout their time in the school that is delivered by staff who have been trained internally by the school and who work closely as a careers team. At the same time a range of specialists, including local employers and others working in industry, visit the school to talk to students.

The school will be monitoring the effectiveness of its delivery by a range of methods, with a strong focus on using the destinations and outcomes data.

### To what extent are schools working in partnership to deliver careers guidance?

The school works closely with the Connexions provider to deliver targeted support. However, it is not working with other schools to commission the service. It felt that such an arrangement could work in theory but that it was difficult in practice because schools were looking for bespoke provision.

In terms of external partners, the school holds joint activities with another school sixth form and links with local colleges, where students can access programmes. At the same time, the school is part of a network that collaborates to share good practice around the area of careers education.

### What careers guidance do young people who are, or are at risk of becoming, NEET receive?

The work to support those who are at risk of becoming NEET is informed by the LA's systems to identify and track learners. This includes data analysis to recognise the types of young people most at risk of becoming NEET. The LA commissions a provider to deliver the targeted support and it supports the delivery of transition arrangements for key groups of students, including vulnerable learners and those who are pursuing courses off-site.

The school operates an intensive programme of one-to-one support for all students judged to be at risk of becoming NEET and other vulnerable learners. The individuals who are to receive this support are identified through the school's own support structures to which a range of agencies input. In assessing learners' needs, the school takes account of factors such as family background, achievement/underachievement, outcomes, attendance, exclusion history and substance misuse. The support is delivered by a personal adviser who is

employed by a commissioned provider to work in the school for four days (two of these are paid for by the school) each week and has an identified caseload. The work varies depending on the needs of each young person and includes intensive support with CV writing, coaching the young people on how to conduct themselves in interviews, accompanying them to college, and tracking destinations as part of the transition process.

### **Key elements of effective practice**

A partnership approach between the LA and schools which draws on the LA's capacity where appropriate has been essential. This should be

alongside effective systems to identify and track NEET and potential NEET young people and the delivery of appropriate support, including one-to-one work to help young people identify what opportunities exist and to help them with transition.

## East Sussex County Council

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<b>Context:</b>	County
<b>Type of school:</b>	Mixed, Academy

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### How is the local authority supporting schools in their new duty to provide independent and impartial careers guidance?

In this LA, careers guidance is a key feature of the RPA strategy and a great deal has been done to prepare schools for their new duties. The LA published a careers guidance Strategy which outlines how they are working with schools, colleges and key partners to ensure young people receive good quality careers guidance. It believes schools are very well prepared to take on the new duty. This is because of national guidance which has been issued and the LA's own briefing work that has provided detailed information about what schools are required to do and exemplar case studies of how schools can deliver and meet their obligations.

Commissioning is undertaken by the schools themselves. To facilitate this, the LA has produced a careers guidance commissioning guide, which outlines the steps they need to take and the issues to be considered when commissioning from providers. The guidance includes suggestions about what provision schools might want to commission, what qualifications providers' staff should hold (which the LA recommends should be Level 6), and what schools should require of providers in terms of their quality assurance processes.

In addition, the LA has offered training for schools to use to develop the skills of their own staff which has provided Level 4 courses on careers guidance and it also delivers support to enable schools to achieve the Investors in Careers Quality kite mark.

### How is the school preparing for their new duty?

Careers education in the school is managed by an assistant principal and headteacher of the school. The operational work is undertaken by a member of staff who has a Teaching and Learning Responsibility (TLR) for leading the work in the area of careers education. The role accounts for around a third of the postholder's time. She is a teacher by background and has developed an interest in careers education and related issues over a number of years.

The school delivers a wide-ranging careers education programme which encourages young people to think about their future aspirations from year 7 onwards. During key stage 3 the PSHE programme includes a term of activities which are delivered by a company established by former Connexions personnel. The company also delivers a programme of work which includes one-to-one interviews with year 10 students during which they discuss what they might go on to do and the pathways by which they can achieve their goals. All year 11 students take part in one-to-one interviews which form part of a moving-on programme.

This work is undertaken alongside a programme of events and activities organised by the school such as the work experience which all students undertake in year 10, and an annual careers convention which includes a range of providers with detailed knowledge of the labour market in the area. The school also organises visits by guest speakers from local companies and other taster events. The school believes that this service provides a comprehensive range of support that ensures that all young people receive comprehensive advice that highlights the range of means by which they can progress after year 11.

The school evaluates its activities through a formal process. This is done internally by the school where staff regularly review the work that is undertaken internally and by the external providers by looking at lesson plans and schemes of work.

### **To what extent are schools working in partnership to deliver careers guidance?**

One of the functions of the 14–19 Partnership Board is to commission advice and guidance for a consortium of schools who have pooled their resources to do so. This method is seen as a means of achieving economies of scale and also offers a way of enabling providers to learn from one another. This joint process has been used to develop the procurement specification for the aspects of the provision which are commissioned collaboratively.

The Partnership Board has also led work to deliver a project on transition from key stage 4 to 5 and it has examined the use of destination and outcomes data, collected as part of a Transition Audit, to review and improve the quality of the service that is provided and to inform the programme's design.

### **What careers guidance do young people who are, or are at risk of becoming, NEET receive?**

The LA uses the risk of NEET indicator (RONI) to identify the young people at risk of becoming NEET taking account of factors such as whether they are being looked after by the LA, whether they are in receipt of free school meals, their attainment history and what their pattern is in terms of exclusions and attendance history. This data is

discussed with the schools concerned in order to set the information in context and also to coordinate the work that is being done at school and LA level.

The LA believes it is important that support is provided during the summer holidays in order to avoid a loss of momentum and to try to avoid a situation where young people may drift out of the system. Support provided includes helping with application processes and ensuring different professionals working with the young people are in contact with one another.

The school stated that in addition to the targeted support being delivered by the LA to learners identified as being at risk of becoming NEET, they also commission provision that is delivered to a broader group of students who are identified as being potentially vulnerable by the school's own system. This draws on indicators such as attendance, behaviour patterns and the Every Child Known data. This enables the school to create a Venn diagram of potential NEET young people who are supported internally through work that includes mentoring, coaching, extra interviews and guidance when moving forward from year 11.

### **Key elements of effective practice**

Both the school and the LA felt that the new system will ensure that the services that are commissioned respond to what the schools themselves identified as their priorities and needs. They believe that effective practice exists where schools and LAs work together to share information and where schools collaborate to commission provision. At the same time they emphasised the importance of appropriate training and quality assurance processes that need to be evaluated thoroughly.

## Lincolnshire County Council

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<b>Context:</b>	County
<b>Type of school:</b>	Mixed, Academy

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### How is the local authority supporting schools in their new duty to provide independent and impartial careers guidance?

The LA feels well prepared to support schools. It has provided a free consultation to schools to assess what the schools have in place and what they need to do to meet their new duty, and has run a series of free events for schools and local partners to find out more about the new duty. The LA will offer a traded service that schools can purchase presented in leaflet form. For example, schools can purchase one-to-one guidance interviews or careers evenings. It has also funded apprenticeship champions who have visited students in school. In addition, they are keeping a careers education information and guidance manager with a team of three staff who are able to support schools to meet their new duty. There is a team of 32 careers guidance staff (employed by the local authority and managed by CfBT on behalf of Lincolnshire County Council) to support young people age 16–19 who are NEET and provide the traded service.

The LA does not have a system in place to quality control careers providers. It intends to point out to schools the issues they should consider, such as quality assurance standards matrix but do feel that the providers are in competition with the LA so it is a more appropriate role for schools to quality control providers.

The LA feels that for some of their schools (most are for young people aged 11 to 18) there is a tension between the requirement to provide impartial and independent careers guidance and the need to maintain their sixth form numbers. Currently significant numbers leave after completing AS-levels. The LA perceives the main challenge is to ensure young people receive

thorough, impartial, independent careers guidance at 16 years old so that they do not drop out at 17 years old.

### How is the school preparing for their new duty?

Careers provision in the school is led by a dedicated careers coordinator qualified in careers guidance to Level 6, supported by a headteacher, who had a careers and pastoral role when a deputy head, and another SLT member who leads on RPA. Between them, they feel they have prepared themselves for this new duty.

The school is planning to strengthen their current programme that they have had in place for some time (for example, they have had Career Mark for ten years) by including some external provision to support the young people who need it (costing approximately £4000). This will complement internal provision of a careers programme for years 7 to 13 (such as work relating to learning styles and reflective learning) and a personalised advice programme (mainly in key stage 4) that will look at a whole range of aspirations for students. This commitment to one-to-one support for students takes considerable resource and funding in terms of senior staff time and is considered appropriate to ensure the right provision for the young people. The school is currently preparing a quality assurance programme so that all people (internal staff and external sources such as CfBT Careers Guidance Services) work to the same standard.

The school was assisted by the LA who helped them carry out an audit to identify key areas where they would benefit from additional support. The school then commissioned CfBT to supply 20 to 30 days of support for targeted students.



### To what extent are schools working in partnership to deliver careers guidance?

The school works with local employers, training providers, the youth service, education welfare officers, apprenticeship organisations, colleges, universities, the LA, their CfBT school improvement partner and careers consultants provided through the CfBT Careers Guidance Service. They are part of a cluster of schools and have discussed careers guidance with them but will continue to deliver careers guidance on their own at present. A further education college presents in the school to all their year 11 students. The school has not been approached by other providers offering careers guidance.

### What careers guidance do young people who are, or are at risk of becoming, NEET receive?

Looking ahead, the LA's priority is to focus on young people aged 17 or 18 staying in education. They have promoted to all schools a programme called SHIRPA (Systematic Helpful Indicators for Raising the Participation Age) which starts in year 7. The LA supports schools to ensure that young people at risk of disengagement are identified and supported. For example, it has a flow chart in place and one of the requirements is that schools have a system in place to identify young people at risk of NEET. The LA will support schools but only when the school has demonstrated that they have done everything they can to meet their statutory duties. Different sub-groups of vulnerable young people receive targeted support, for example, looked-after young people or those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Additionally, under the 14–19 partnership group, support is provided for 'raising the participation age of vulnerable learners'.

The LA intends to focus on establishing how many 'unknowns' there are in addition to the number of 'known' NEETs. They are aware that during the transition year many unknowns have not been

reached. The LA team are now phoning young people to try to track them down and start to re-engage them. Approximately £1.4 million pounds has been identified over the next year to support reengagement of this group.

The school tracks their NEETs against the school's inclusion system. It offers them additional support from specialist services. In terms of careers guidance the school has maintained dialogue with employers as their input is felt to be especially important for these young people. Additionally, these young people are said to be nurtured, monitored and supported by a team of staff within the school and given extra support if needed. For example, if they want to visit a college, a member of staff will accompany them or external support, such as counselling, will be accessed.

### Key elements of effective practice

- Engaging and maintaining a working partnership with schools is key from the LA's perspective (especially as most schools are outside LA control i.e. academies).
- Ensuring that careers guidance has curriculum time and is led by dedicated, experienced staff is viewed as important by school staff.
- It is also crucial that there is an understanding of the importance of careers guidance throughout the school. This needs to be led by, and seen to be supported by, the senior leadership team and the governing body.
- A need for the guidance programme to be flexible and strong so that it caters for all the transition stages in a changing landscape.
- The provision of one-to-one interviews for young people by an external adviser and having an FE college present to talk to the students about alternative courses post 16, contributes to the school providing impartial and independent careers guidance.

## London Borough of Ealing

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<b>Context:</b>	London Borough
<b>Type of school:</b>	All girls, Foundation

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### How is the local authority supporting schools in their new duty to provide independent and impartial careers guidance?

In this authority work relating to careers education is linked closely to the broader activities relating to Raising the Participation Age (RPA) and the LA emphasises the role which careers education will play in ensuring that young people make appropriate choices and that they do not drift onto the wrong course. The LA has continued to provide the Connexions Service and eleven of its thirteen schools have chosen to buy into that offer after September.

The LA has been active in supporting schools to move to the new system, providing detailed briefings on what the changes will mean, and how the system will work. It has also developed a matrix by which schools can measure the quality of what is being delivered based on the twelve careers guidance standards originally proposed in the legislation as a means of auditing provision. These have been reviewed by an external consultant appointed by the LA. The LA matrix also includes a survey of young people which is conducted to identify their needs and how they feel about what is being delivered.

As part of its provision for schools, from September, the LA will provide a menu of services, mainly for years 9–11 and sixth forms, to be delivered over two days each week to every school which buys into its service. This will be delivered by advisers who are trained to Level 4 Diploma in careers guidance.

The LA maintains a network which supports Investors in Careers and it purchases specialist support to give it additional capacity to do so. It hoped that this capacity at LA level will encourage

schools to maintain an interest in the Careers Mark and contribute to the quality of the service. It does not provide training on commissioning, given that so many schools had bought into their provision.

The LA believes that the biggest challenge facing schools is the need to maintain capacity to deliver careers guidance as they will be shouldering the responsibility for a service that has been provided for them in the past. The work around Investors in Careers was seen as an important part of the work of maintaining capacity for the future.

### How is the school preparing for their new duty?

Careers education in the school is overseen by an assistant headteacher and managed on a day-to-day basis by the head of applied learning and careers coordinator. A key role is also undertaken by the sixth form tutor.

The school has taken the decision to continue to buy into the LA's service and has negotiated its Service Level Agreement (SLA) with them. The careers education programme includes: a drop-in service which is provided during the dinner break three days a week; group work in years 8 and 9; and individual interviews in years 9, 10 and 11.

Year 8 students experience a careers and self-development day while year 10 are involved in a Careers Taster Day. In year 11 students take part in post-16 pathway sessions which enable them to access a programme of support that is differentiated and tailored to meet individual needs.

At the same time, the school delivers an annual programme of activities including work experience, industry day, youth enterprise and welcomes visiting

speakers from industry as part of personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons and curriculum enrichment days. All students follow the Academic Quality Audit (AQA) Preparation for Working Life certificate. Careers education also features as a cross-curricular theme and is highlighted as part of the subject teaching wherever this is appropriate.

The effectiveness of the provision is evaluated annually by the school. This includes looking at the careers education that is delivered as part of PSHE and the work of the personal advisers. When undertaking the reviews, the school uses a range of outcomes based on the National Framework.

### **To what extent are schools working in partnership to deliver careers guidance?**

Schools which have bought into the LA service receive a package of support which they have negotiated individually with the LA and there is no joint commissioning arrangement. The school consulted has developed a number of partnerships with outside organisations to enrich delivery and these contribute to the delivery of careers education. They include people working in industry who give talks to students and partnerships established to support enterprise days and curriculum enrichment days.

### **What careers guidance do young people who are, or are at risk of becoming, NEET receive?**

The LA uses a standard risk of NEET indicator (RONI) to identify young people who are at risk of becoming NEET and they are then provided with additional, personalised support from year 11. The assessment is undertaken at the beginning of the school year and looks at NEET indicators and also draws on the schools' own knowledge of the students in order to enrich the data. The type of indicators which are looked for include whether a young person is being looked after by the LA, their

history in terms of attendance and exclusion and other background factors. The LA emphasises that the young people who are identified as being at risk of becoming NEET are not offered a different type of service from that which is delivered universally but that the work is targeted and students receive more intensive one-to-one work. The focus throughout is on keeping the young people motivated on their identified goals as a means of avoiding a situation of drift. This is done early in order to prevent negative attitudes becoming ingrained. The work which is undertaken by the LA is delivered in partnership with schools and through two Connexions centres from where intensive one-to-one support can be accessed. In addition to delivering support, the LA is itself involved in delivering apprenticeships alongside a work experience programme for young people to nurture 'soft' skills such as working with others and punctuality.

The school has a range of measures to support students at risk of becoming disengaged. They identify cases which are a high priority which are discussed at meetings involving the careers coordinator, form tutors and divisional heads and other relevant staff such as the SEN coordinator. The young people who are identified through this process access individual guidance from personal advisers which focuses on setting goals and the steps which they need to take to achieve them.

### **Key elements of effective practice**

The key features of effective practice identified in the LA were the need to maintain sufficient capacity at the centre to support the work undertaken by schools, especially services for young people who are at risk of becoming NEET. Tailoring support and early intervention has enabled strategies to be put in place which have helped the young people concerned to access quality support before problems become more serious. At the same time, stakeholders in the LA believe there is a need for robust and externally monitored quality assurance processes to be in place and that these were strongest where schools sought external verification for their provision.

## Wirral Borough Council

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<b>Context:</b>	Metropolitan
<b>Type of school:</b>	All girls, Academy

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### How is the local authority supporting schools in their new duty to provide independent and impartial careers guidance?

The LA felt their responsibility is to meet their statutory duties around the RPA agenda and to ensure that there is appropriate and sufficient provision for all young people in the LA. It has maintained its online prospectus to enable young people and their parents to access information about the provision. The LA feels it has good relationships with their schools and is familiar with their careers guidance programmes. However, the extent to which schools are meeting their new statutory duty to provide independent and impartial careers guidance to young people in years 9 to 11 is perceived by the LA to be variable. They are not confident, as yet, that all schools will deliver a programme of impartial careers guidance.

In terms of support for schools, the LA keeps them up to date with the policy landscape and their statutory duties. They signpost careers providers to schools but they do not recommend any, and do not see that they have a role in quality assuring careers provision that schools might buy. Historically they have a system of support for schools in place, for example, they have a heads of sixth forms network and a joint careers guidance and work-related learning network in place so good practice can be shared. They also provide a traded service, 'Education Quality', through which schools can purchase packages of support, for example, U-explore, 360 degree tours of organisations, enterprise resources, job casts, Kudos software (a tool to self-assess skills) and professional consultancy.

In addition, the LA has made available an interactive web-based portal for use by teachers, learners and

parents/carers. Mersey Interactive ([www.merseyinteractive.com](http://www.merseyinteractive.com)) aggregates skills and careers information/resources in a single access point.

### How is the school preparing for their new duty?

The school has a dedicated member of the senior leadership team, qualified to Level 4 in careers guidance, who leads the provision of careers guidance. She sees the new duty on schools from September 2012 as a 'continuation' to provide impartial careers guidance to students from year 7 to 13. She has been proactive in preparing for the new duty by, for example, gaining an understanding of the legislation (she felt Connexions provided a good summary), the expectations and impact on the school. She estimated that 60 per cent of her time is currently spent on making sure that the school meets the new statutory requirement. To gain information, she has used the internet and informal sources such as colleagues in school and teacher friends from other schools.

Overall, the school's model for the provision of careers guidance encompasses activity-based support, such as enterprise activities, careers fairs and talks and support delivered through assemblies, personal and social education (PSE) lessons and form time. There is a team of specialist PSE teachers, and a work-related learning group of staff, who are fully briefed and who share good practice and disseminate back to the subject departments. The school has a programme of careers education that builds from year 7 to year 11. It encompasses topics such as a young person's qualities and skills and explores these issues through enterprise skills and how to make choices and the options available in year 9 and pathways from 16 and 18 years old. In addition, all teachers are asked to have a display in

their room that links their subject to possible careers; this is not only informative for the students but also ensures teachers have a better understanding of the importance of the careers agenda.

Year 11 students have one-to-one interviews with an ex-teacher of the school whose remit is to provide impartial careers information, to listen to the young person, to facilitate the young person to do their own research and to answer the list of questions that the student has formulated prior to the interview. In addition, the school holds group sessions on alternatives such as apprenticeships.

External speakers cover the range of options available to the young people on leaving school. This includes different universities and courses; apprenticeships; gap years and talks, visits and trips from employers.

The school does not host talks from alternative sixth form providers. However, they would not be averse to an open evening along with all local sixth form providers, should the LA want to organise this. In addition, assemblies direct students to obtain independent information from the school website that provides links to external sources, for example, the UCAS and National Apprenticeship Services' websites and U-explore. Letters are also sent to parents with information on the website and how to access further guidance.

### **To what extent are schools working in partnership to deliver careers guidance?**

The school works with local partners, such as universities. For example, the school has a service level agreement with a local university which provides support to young people from year 7 to 13. Additionally, the school works with training providers, who offer alternative provision, and a wide range of employers in terms of size, sector and focus who give talks on subjects such as setting up a business, apprenticeships or the perspective from a national company. The school

does not work in collaboration with any other schools.

In terms of the new duty, the school has been approached by a range of careers providers. The school feels that most of the provision appears to be expensive and their current view is that they provide comprehensive careers guidance to their students already. They have chosen not to use Connexions as they view their provision as too expensive. At present, they have only purchased support from the LA to provide support for UCAS applications, for example, how to write a personal statement and the provision of mock interviews. In terms of other offers, they are reflecting on what will best support the curriculum and add value to their provision. They are also resistant to using providers until they are quality approved and feel that this may be a role for the LA.

### **What careers guidance do young people who are, or are at risk of becoming, NEET receive?**

The school identifies those young people who are at risk of becoming NEET early on through monitoring data such as behaviour tracking systems and provides a suitable curriculum and careers guidance for them. The LA has developed a risk of NEET indicator (RONI) tool which it is hoped will further help schools to identify at an early stage those young people with a high probability of becoming NEET. The RONI tool will be tested and trialled with seven schools during 2012/13.

As well as the provision of the traded service by the LA (described above), the LA also provides a targeted service. Through this, the LA identifies and provides additional support to young people at risk of becoming NEET. For example, those who have a statement (subject to a learning difficulty assessment) or those who are in care at key stage 4 or are post-16 carers.

### Key elements of effective practice

Effective practice in meeting the new statutory duty in this case study is characterised by:

- careers guidance having a high profile in the school through SLT support and direction
- high levels of staff awareness of careers guidance
- the use of external speakers
- the LA maintaining good relations with schools
- the LA offering a range of services
- ensuring all young people have access to appropriate careers information.

## Kent County Council

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<b>Context:</b>	County
<b>Type of school:</b>	Mixed, Academy

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### How is the local authority supporting schools in their new duty to provide independent and impartial careers guidance?

The council has provided a clear remit to reduce youth unemployment over the next three years and careers guidance is viewed as key. The LA established a careers guidance network in 2009, which enables nine local groups to provide one another with peer-to-peer support on careers guidance, to share good practice and to keep up to date with what's happening. It has produced a careers guidance framework which helps schools to deliver careers guidance from year 7 to year 13.

Careers guidance is part of the RPA strategy and key to it is the area prospectus and the common application process ([www.Kentchoices4u.com](http://www.Kentchoices4u.com)), which has an IAG portal for young people, professionals and parents. Over 13,000 year 11s unlocked their accounts in 2011/12, and over 11,500 people applied for their post-16 institutions through the common application process. The online prospectus provides information on all post-16 education providers and apprenticeships.

The LA organises two briefings a year to update schools about careers guidance issues. In the last year, schools were briefed on their statutory duty and the criteria that external careers providers have to meet (e.g. being part of matrix and having practitioners qualified to Level 6). Invites were also sent to academies and colleges. They have also held an event where Careers England provided information on the commissioning process (and made resources available on the website). The LA maintains responsibility for vulnerable learners and NEETs.

The LA carried out a consultation with schools about future careers provision. Twenty-two out of

103 schools responded and the majority of those responding were making few changes in their provision. 'Independent and impartial' are terms that are open to interpretation and the view is that all schools will develop different strategies. For example, the provision of a website or a permanent helpline could be viewed to meet the criteria. The LA does not quality control careers providers. In terms of cost, schools have volunteered little by way of size of budget they have available – there is a view in the LA that there is a significant range in size of budgets available.

There will be two measures of accountability; firstly, Ofsted and secondly the destination measures. The LA will be working through the Careers, Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) Network this coming year to help schools understand the destination measure and achieve positive outcomes.

### How is the school preparing for their new duty?

The school feels well prepared for the new duty partly because they have a well-qualified careers coordinator and also academy status enables individual agreements with providers without any LA collective process. As an academy, the LA is not obliged to provide them with support, but they do provide advice and guidance, and the LA conferences are perceived by the school to have been key to outlining responsibilities and priorities in terms of transitions from education to employment. The school reports that it is going beyond the statutory guidelines (which they found helpful), for example they make sure students from key stages 4 and 5 carry out work experience and they continue to ensure that they have a strong vocational offer for young people even though they



perceive the current emphasis from this government to be on academic achievement.

Careers guidance is led by a full-time, dedicated careers progression mentor, qualified at Level 6 in careers guidance and registered with the Institute of Careers Guidance. She is qualified to deliver programmes and to secure bespoke provision from external sources. She is a member of the steering group for the LA careers guidance network and values the careers guidance framework, the online area prospectus (and the LA training to help young people with the application process), the glossy magazine ('Choices') for young people, advice on sharing costs and service level agreements with partners.

The careers guidance offer that the school has had in place for some time includes: careers education programmes that run cross-curriculum from year 7; option interviews in year 9 with a member of the senior leadership team; vocational training and taster sessions; one-to-one and group sessions provided by Connexions for young people in years 11, 12 and 13; one-to-one support in years 9, 10 and 11 provided by the Careers Progression Mentor; work experience; mock interviews; talks from local employers; higher education taster sessions; and open days and careers fairs. Looking ahead, the school plans more focus on active involvement with colleges in terms of support with CV writing, interview skills and mock interviews, and with the local Chamber of Commerce in terms of input into the work experience programme. Additionally, there will be more internal focus on key stage 4 and more input from Connexions at key stage 5, and the LA on the careers network. The school will have more power in terms of commissioning external providers, so if provision is not felt to be adequate, another provider can be used. They are currently looking at a cost of £12,000 to £15,000 for external provision for the next year (and have estimated an internal cost (excluding staff costs) of £20,000). Performance of external providers will be tightly monitored as the quality of the school's careers provision will be assessed in July 2013 as part of the Investors in Careers kitemark scheme.

### To what extent are schools working in partnership to deliver careers guidance?

The school has an audit of careers needs and best providers. They value the LA support but as an academy, view their needs to be bespoke and will source external provision from where they consider appropriate. Currently, their main external providers are Connexions, the council's careers arm 'Choices for You', colleges, universities, the local education and business partnership, local employers and the local Chamber of Commerce. They describe the cost of procurement as 'fluid'. The school considers working in collaboration with a 'sister' school (with whom they have a written agreement of association) will considerably reduce the cost of procuring external provision.

### What careers guidance do young people who are, or are at risk of becoming, NEET receive?

All vulnerable young people receive careers guidance. The LA is developing its risk of NEET indicator (RONI). From September 2012, they are piloting an integrated support strategy and they intend to review provision in 2013. The LA informs schools of the names of young people who are at risk of becoming NEET (based on profiles of students in years 10 and 11). The careers coordinator carries out one-to-one interviews with the young people and tries to ensure that they have a career plan, have applied to a post-16 institution and she emphasises the importance of English and maths. She then informs the post-16 institution so they can 'keep an eye on' the student.

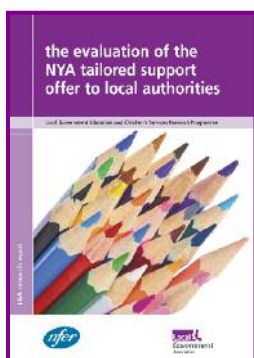
### Key elements of effective practice

These include:

- school SLT commitment to careers guidance
- a school-based, dedicated, qualified careers coordinator
- clear, coherent guidance on the new expectations
- area network where proactive LA and schools can support one another.

## Recently published reports

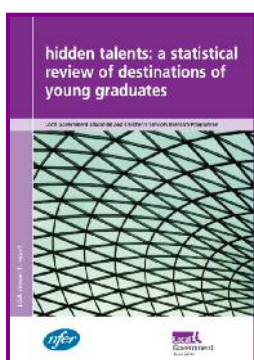
The Local Government Education and Children's Services Research Programme is carried out by NFER. The research projects cover topics and perspectives that are of special interest to local authorities. All the reports are published and disseminated by the NFER, with separate executive summaries. The summaries, and more information about this series, are available free of charge at: [www.nfer.ac.uk/research/local-government-association/](http://www.nfer.ac.uk/research/local-government-association/)



### **The evaluation of the NYA tailored support offer to local authorities**

This report shows how local authorities have benefited from the National Youth Agency (NYA) programme of tailored support to local authorities. Drawing on interviews with local authorities who had received support, this evaluation highlights the support received by LAs and the benefits and impacts this has had on their youth service.

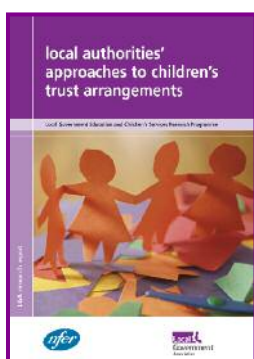
[www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/NYASO2](http://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/NYASO2)



### **Hidden talents: A statistical review of destinations of young graduates**

This report is in addition to the 'Hidden Talents - A statistical overview of the participation patterns of young people aged 16-24'. It looks at graduate employment rates by Local Authority allowing the reader to see variation across the country and where there has been the most change over two time periods.

[www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/LGHT02](http://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/LGHT02)



### **Local authorities' approaches to children's trust arrangements**

Local authorities appear to have taken advantage of new flexibilities and freedoms around Children's Trust arrangements. With partners, local authorities remain committed to ensuring their Children's Trust Boards (or equivalent); Health and Wellbeing Boards and Clinical Commissioning Groups are strategic, streamlined and focussed on improving outcomes. This report outlines seven local authorities' models of practice.

[www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/LGCH01](http://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/LGCH01)

For more information, or to buy any of these publications, please contact: The Publications Unit, National Foundation for Educational Research, The Mere, Upton Park, Slough, Berkshire SL1 2DQ, tel: +44 (0)1753 637002, fax: +44 (0)1753 637280, email: [book.sales@nfer.ac.uk](mailto:book.sales@nfer.ac.uk), web: [www.nfer.ac.uk/publications](http://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications).

From September 2012 schools are responsible for providing independent and impartial careers guidance to the young people in years 9 to 11. This report highlights ways in which local authorities are supporting schools to take up this enhanced role. It covers:

- Local authority approaches to supporting schools to meet their new duty
- Schools' strategies and approaches to careers guidance
- Partnership working
- Careers guidance for young people who are, or at risk of becoming, NEET.