Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)

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Purpose

1. This paper provides the Council with a report on LSC involvement with Information, Advice and Guidance for young people.

Recommendation

2. Members of the Council are recommended to:
   
a) receive and comment on this report; and
b) make recommendations for LSC to take forward with DCSF officials in the development of the forthcoming IAG strategy.

Background

3. At its meeting on 30 July 2008, Council agreed a programme of reports it wished to receive over the coming year on issues around young people’s learning and skills.

Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) for Young People

Overview

4. A key priority for the LSC is to support the Government’s 14-19 reform programme and to raise attainment across all providers post-16, to increase participation and narrow achievement gaps, and to reduce the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). It is especially important at a time of impending change in the system that there
remains a strong focus on young people in the system now. Ensuring young people are supported to achieve is central to young people’s participation and attainment and to achievement of PSA targets.

5 As part of our role in local 14-19 Partnerships it will be important for the LSC to work collaboratively with the local authority (LA), Connexions and IAG providers to agree strategies with colleges, schools and other providers to ensure all learners have access to high quality, comprehensive and impartial advice and guidance and are supported to choose the appropriate course for them.

6 This work to support learners to make the right choice of learning pathway is particularly important for key LSC programmes and projects including Entry 2 Employment, Foundation Learning Tier, Young Apprenticeships and Key Stage 4 engagement programme. It is a critical component to ensure the successful roll out of Diplomas and Apprenticeships towards a future entitlement for all young people and is fundamental to supporting learners who are the most vulnerable including Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (LLDD), young people in youth detention, looked-after children and young people at risk of disengagement.

7 There is some evidence of successful work on the ground and in local partnerships around support and IAG for young people both in terms of successful outcomes for learners as a result of the September Guarantee and in qualitative reports by Ofsted as part of their thematic 14-19 surveys. There remains though an underlying concern in many areas that despite excellent local effort and close collaboration between local partners, there remain strategic and structural difficulties that are hindering achievement of high quality, impartial information, advice and guidance for many young people in the system now.

8 The purpose of this paper is as a stimulus to discussion to enable LSC policy leads to take forward issues and propose solutions to DCSF officials in order to develop IAG strategic work and local delivery through 14-19 partnerships.

Work to be taken forward during 2009

10 Some key pieces of work need to be addressed in 2009, including:

- **IAG strategy and Principles of Careers Education** – DCSF publications aiming to achieve a ‘step change in IAG provision’.
- **Connexions transition** – continuing scrutiny and support for local 14-19 partnerships to ensure effective IAG at local level.
- **14-19 Area Prospectus** – LSC has developed a self-assessment improvement tool for the prospectus. It will be important to ensure that local 14-19 partnerships are supported to strengthen the
prospectus and develop work towards a Common Application Process (CAP) integrated with the new National Apprenticeship Vacancy Matching Service (NAVMS).

- **Apprenticeships** – activity to ensure that young people have access to the right information about Apprenticeships including progression routes into and from Apprenticeships and the links to Diplomas.
- **LLDD** - revised arrangements for the assessment of the education and training needs of young learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in England, and the provision required to meet those needs.

11 Further details of relevant themes are provided in the Annex.

**Clearance**

This paper has been cleared by Rob Wye, National Director of Young People’s Learning and Skills.

**Communications**

No external communications necessary.

**Impact assessment**

The various initiatives and activities described in this paper are intended to have a positive impact on the learning opportunities of young people, and in particular of disadvantaged young people.

**Resources**

The costs associated with the initiatives and activities described in this paper are within existing plans for increased participation by young people.

**Paper creator** Rob Wye
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**Document ref.**
Supporting information for IAG for Young People

IAG strategy and Principles of Careers Education

1. The DCSF ‘Delivering 14-19 Reform: Next Steps’ outlines the concept of a 14-19 entitlement for all young people to ‘the right learning opportunities and the right support’ so that young people can make the most of their opportunities and choices.

2. Chapter 3 focuses on four key programmes of support/IAG:

   • Excellent Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) and support to make the right choices at 14 and 16
   • A 14-19 Prospectus in every area setting out the courses and support available
   • A Common Application Process linked to the 14-19 Prospectus that makes it easier to apply for education and training
   • The September Guarantee to ensure all 16 and 17 year olds have an offer of a suitable place in learning and targeted supported to those who need it most.

3. The document asks for a ‘step change in IAG provision’ with a focus on raising aspirations – including pathfinder projects at KS2 to ‘test the impact of early careers interventions’ and a ‘personal tutor’ in every secondary school – and work to challenge stereotypical choices. Schools will be required to deliver impartial careers education through the Education and Skills Bill 2008 and to have regard to ‘principles of careers education’ and good practice to be published in 2009. A varied programme of workforce development is also outlined.

Connexions Transition

4. From April 2008, responsibility for the delivery of all local IAG, including Connexions, was passed to local authorities (LAs). The aim was to help LAs to align IAG services to complement other youth support services working for the benefit of young people in the area.

5. Based on information held by DCSF, Connexions services following transition are delivered as follows:

   (a) delivering Connexions services in-house: 35;
   (b) sub-contracting the services to former Connexions Partnerships: 53;
   (c) tendering out to other providers: 62.
6. Concerns have been expressed by LSC colleagues around the adequacy and impartiality of IAG as a result of Connexions transition. The LSC’s 14-19 Group convened a working group to address these concerns. The group reported issues with the apparent fragmentation of the service and initial loss of resource, expertise and capacity, although in many areas transition had indeed progressed seamlessly. The working group will continue to monitor progress in 2009.

14-19 Area Prospectus

7. 14-19 Prospectuses are already available in every area as a result of LA, LSC and Connexions partnership and extend the potential for online provision of IAG by offering information on local learning opportunities and how to apply for them. Many areas have collaborated to develop a single 14-19 Prospectus to cover a wider area reflecting travel to learn patterns. Local 14-19 Prospectus websites can be found through the DirectGov website.

8. The future intention is that areas will strengthen their 14-19 Prospectus so that young people have comprehensive information including on the quality of courses. There is a proposal for all areas to develop a Common Application Process (CAP) by 2010 that is linked to the Prospectus so that young people can apply through one system regardless of where or what they want to learn. Detail of this will be published in a Forward Action Plan in early 2009. One particular concern which LSC colleagues are addressing with DCSF, DIUS and NAS is to ensure that a local CAP integrates fully with the new National Apprenticeship Vacancy Matching Service (NAVMS).

9. There is a key role for 14-19 Partnerships to ensure that all key delivery partners understand their roles and responsibilities in delivering the Prospectus and Common Application Process. In particular it will be essential to actively engage schools, colleges and training providers to ensure that Prospectuses:
   - hold fully up to date information on the courses available; and
   - are introduced to young people at the right time as part of a careers education programme.

Apprenticeships

10. A key lever to ensure that Apprenticeships become a mainstream option for young people is the availability and delivery of innovative, up to date and relevant information advice and guidance. The Apprenticeship section within the Children, Skills and Learning Bill places a duty on schools to deliver IAG about Apprenticeships. However, it is essential that the supporting resources, information and expertise are in place to ensure all guidance professionals can deliver IAG about Apprenticeships.
11. One concern is that labour market information (LMI) has not been a priority for IAG in recent years. It is essential to ensure that consideration of progression routes for young people take into account labour market opportunities and the needs of local employers. The required focus of IAG providers and Connexions upon the NEET agenda coupled with limited resource have for many areas been at the expense of progression opportunities with limited real contact with employers, and also HE.

12. The LSC is proposing therefore that a working group with DCSF should be established to develop ways in which 14-19 Partnerships and the NA Learner Services team can work together to co-ordinate resources and share knowledge to facilitate the delivery of excellent and comprehensive information, advice and guidance at a local level.

**Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (LLDD)**

13. The Education and Skills Act 2008 has resulted in revised arrangements for the assessment of the education and training needs of young learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and the provision required to meet those needs. The key change is that the statutory duty to arrange an assessment is now placed on Local Authorities and not the Secretary of State under s139A of the Learning and Skills Act as amended by the Education and Skills Act.

14. The Connexions team at DCSF are publishing revised (now) S139A guidance for consultation during December 2008, which will need to reflect these changes. The LSC’s funding guidance for the placement of Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities in independent specialist providers for 2009-10 will also incorporate the change and will be published by the end of December 2008.

15. The legislative change may place additional issues around capacity, capability and the resources of Local Authorities over the next 18 months. Recurrent issues from LSC regional teams (in relation to practice by Connexions) include widespread ceasing of statements where the young person is under the age of 19, and also at the age of 16. Several areas still have no post-16 provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.