WHAT IS EFFECTIVE GUIDANCE? EVIDENCE FROM LONGITUDINAL CASE STUDIES IN ENGLAND

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Foreword

This study is being funded by the Department for Education and Skills, Access to Learning Division. Fifty-seven case studies were completed in organisations providing guidance to adults in England during the initial phase of data collection (December, 2002 to March, 2004). Two of these were pilots and five studies could not be used for various reasons (for example, the interview recorded was not, in the event, guidance). The fifty clients who participated in this study will be followed-up over a four year period (2004-2007) and their progression will be the focus of future reports.

This report is based on findings from the initial phase of data collection (and merges interim reports 1 and 2). Emphasis has been given to the identification of good practice together with the strategies and skills used by the guidance practitioners, so that issues can be raised relevant to the improvement of guidance practice.

The report structure comprises five parts:

Part A – serves as an introduction, highlighting how the study builds upon previous research, together with a discussion of the nature of guidance and an overview of the methodology.

Part B – focuses on the varied professional contexts in which guidance is delivered, with an emphasis on the organisational cultures in which guidance practitioners operate.

Part C – studies the similarities and discrepancies in the perceptions of guidance, related to what clients found useful, held by:

- fifty clients from the participating organisations who had received guidance;
- the fifty guidance practitioners who provided the guidance; and
- 'expert witnesses', who were independent third parties.

Part D – presents an in-depth analysis of the 49 digitally recorded guidance interviews that were found 'useful' by clients, identifying the characteristics of 'useful' guidance interviews and raising questions about what constitutes 'good practice'.

Part E – draws together the issues arising from the study and the conclusions.

Acknowledgements

Three research organisations, all with expertise in guidance research, co-operated in the collection of data for the initial phases of the project:

- **Institute for Employment Research (IER) at the University of Warwick** project managed and took a central role in the fieldwork, data management and data analysis. IER also led on the writing of the report.

  Dr. Jenny Bimrose – Principal Research Fellow and Project Manager
  Dr. Sally-Anne Barnes – Research Fellow
  Dr. Michael Orton – Senior Research Fellow

- **Centre for Guidance Studies (CeGS) at the University of Derby** assisted with fieldwork and data analysis. CeGS have also contributed to the report.

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  Lesley Haughton – Fellow
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Executive summary

1. Investigating what constitutes effective guidance is complex, but the **qualitative research methodology** used in this study has proved robust and provided data that allow for a significant deepening of understanding of the issues involved.

2. The research has been successful in capturing the **distinctive features of provision of guidance** in a diverse range of organisational and geographical settings, and with a diverse sample of clients and practitioners.

3. Guidance is delivered across **varied contexts** and from multiple funding streams. This creates opportunities like innovative service provision, but also pressures such as uncertainty.

4. **Quality standards** were evident across all organisational contexts and standards of specialist, and relevant, qualifications amongst practitioners were consistently high.

5. In exploring **how effective guidance is practised**, 'effective' has been defined as what was found 'useful' to clients, by clients, practitioners and expert witnesses.

6. Clients, practitioners and expert witnesses all have **similar understandings** of what 'useful' guidance is.

7. There is a **high level of agreement** amongst the clients, practitioners and 'expert witnesses', particularly about: the usefulness of the intervention; the welcome and introduction by the practitioner; whether the client felt comfortable discussing personal information; agreeing a future action plan; and issues of respect.

8. The **highest levels of disagreement** related to: whether the client had understood what was going to happen in the interview; whether the client's thinking had been changed in any way; and whether a client had understood the importance of something which they had not before the guidance intervention.

9. Of the fifty clients who participated in this research all but one stated that they had found the guidance they had received useful. **'Useful' guidance** was described as: supporting positive outcomes for the client; providing access to expert knowledge,

information and networks; promoting constructive change in the client; and, overall, providing the client with a positive experience.

10. **Key features of guidance,** again defined by clients, practitioners and expert witnesses reinforce findings on 'usefulness' and are associated with: the expertise of the practitioner; the need for guidance; and the complexities of guidance.

11. **Good practice** was identified as: allowing for reflection; discussion; and affecting some measure of transformation in the client. The need for guidance was emphasised and made explicit.

12. Detailed examination of interview transcripts revealed four main categories and forty sub-sets of activities typifying **the characteristics of useful guidance**. The four broad categories consist of: building a working alliance; exploration of potential; identification of options and strategies; plus ending and follow-through.

Each part of this report discusses significant findings, summarised as follows:

Part A: Introduction and methodology

Section 1: Introduction

The introduction to the report identifies important starting points for the research, including:

- views about what constitutes guidance;
- recognition of the potential strategic role for career guidance services in advancing lifelong learning goals and helping with the implementation of active labour market policies; and
- the lack of compelling evidence regarding the nature of effective guidance and its benefits.

The **aim** of the research is:

- to use a qualitative, longitudinal case study approach to investigate the nature of effective guidance for adults and how, over the longer term, it can add value to post-compulsory learning and enhance employability.

Objectives are to:

- compare the nature of guidance interventions in different professional contexts;

- examine what, exactly, was found to be useful in, and the key features of, guidance interviews by clients immediately after the interview, along with practitioner and expert witness views;
- investigate, in detail, the characteristics of guidance interviews found useful by clients;
- increase understanding of how to align processes of effective guidance practice with policy requirements in England; and
- examine how guidance is practised (beliefs, concepts, ideas, theories and actions) in the search for new understandings of effective guidance.

The **analyses** presented in this report are **based upon**:
- contextual data about the organisations in which the guidance took place together with background information on the clients and practitioners;
- responses to three open-ended questions from the 49 questionnaires completed by the client who found their interviews 'useful', together with corresponding responses from the practitioner and expert witness questionnaires; and
- practitioner interventions from each of the 49 digitally recorded guidance interviews clients found 'useful' to detail the characteristics of 'useful' guidance.

Recent, relevant research provides a foundation upon which this study has been built.

The **next phase of this study** will involve follow-up interviews with the 50 clients who participated in the case studies, approximately one year after the guidance interview featured in this research.

Section 2: Methodology

Section 2 discusses methodology, with particular reference to the research questions, the need for, and challenges associated with, evidence-gathering for guidance, research design, methods and the fieldwork. Key points:

The **research questions** for the study are:
- What is effective guidance?
- What are the barriers to effective guidance?
- How can effective practice be encouraged and supported?

There has been significant public investment to improve guidance for adults through support for information, advice and guidance (IAG) services. This investment requires

justification in the form of a firm evidence-base, though developing this evidence-base represents certain challenges.

The qualitative, longitudinal, **case study approach** adopted for this research has provided rich, thick descriptions that enable detailed comparisons to be made across a variety of English guidance contexts, with each phase informing the next.

An **analytical framework** derived from three categories – cognitive, affective and behavioural – was considered to offer most potential for comparing the perspectives of the client, the practitioner and an 'expert witness'.

The **research focus** includes:
- different perceptions of the guidance interview;
- the process and outcome(s) of the guidance interview;
- the client's current situation, their preferred future(s) and the action necessary to achieve the next stage; and
- the professional context in which guidance is delivered.

Contexts selected for the research were: (1) Connexions, Information, Advice and Guidance Partnerships (IAGP) and Job Centre Plus; (2) Higher education; (3) Further education; (4) Community/outreach guidance and not-for-profit organisations (which includes organisations with charitable status); and (5) Private careers organisations and organisations offering guidance on a funded basis in the workplace.

Three **questionnaires** were used to collect data against the same categories from the client, the practitioner and the expert witness for the purpose of comparison.

Sixteen questions were included in each questionnaire. The first fourteen asked the respondent to give a 'yes' or 'no' answer and then elaborate their answer by, for instance, providing examples. At the end of the questionnaire, there was one general question about the interview and an opportunity to add any further comments.

Fifty case studies have been completed in England during the first year of the research study (2003-2004). Clients will be followed up over a four-year period (2004-2007) to track their perception of progress, changes in their identity, and key events associated with these changes.

Each case study includes a **digital recording** of a guidance interview.

The ethical principle of **'informed consent'** was strictly applied to the involvement of all participant organisations and research subjects. It is possible that this has resulted in some bias in sampling.

Many clients that were approached to participate in the research were keen to help, believed that the guidance had been a personally worthwhile process and wanted to help others understand its usefulness.

Part B: Contextual comparisons
Section 3: Variations in delivery contexts

Section 3 compares the varied contexts in which guidance was delivered across a number of dimensions and also highlights the variations in the guidance interviews. The characteristics of the clients and practitioners who participated in the research are also examined. Key findings include:

The case studies are **diverse and reflect complexity**. They have captured guidance provision in a range of organisational and geographical settings, and with varied samples of clients and practitioners.

All participating organisations operated to some type of external and/or internal **quality standards**.

The majority of organisations (90%, n=45) operated **service level agreements** which required practitioners to work at multiple locations and to provide guidance under different funding streams. Many organisations experience pressure in trying to manage the demand for guidance across varied funding agreements and budgets.

Good levels of **in-service training support** were provided for employees, with some notable exceptions where training for Connexions Personal Advisers was reported as taking preference over training for adult practitioners.

Variations were found regarding the **type of intervention** and its length. Of the 49 'useful' interviews, 35 were **initial** within the professional context in which the interview took place and 14 were **follow-up** interviews. With the 14 follow-up interviews, the guidance intervention was often part of a planned, on-going schedule of interviews.

Although many of the features of the initial, compared with the follow-up interviews were similar, some were different.

The **length of guidance interviews** differed widely, with the range from 16 minutes to 1 hour 42 minutes. The two shortest interviews were both follow-ups in the community/outreach/not-for-profit organisational context, with practitioners primarily concerned that the client would feel comfortable about returning.

The **age, gender and ethnicity** of the clients who participated in the research were varied. Over half (58%, n=29) were aged between 18 and 29 years; 22% (n=11) were aged 30-39 years; and 20% (n=10) were aged 40 and above. The sample comprised 66% (n=33) female clients; 10% (n=5) of clients from minority ethnic groups (all of whom were female). 14% (n=7) of clients reported a **disability**.

The **highest qualification level** of 64% (n=32) of the clients was level 3/4; 28% (n=14) had level 1 or 2 qualifications. Three clients had no qualifications.

A high proportion (70%, n=35) of clients participating in the study had had **previous experience** of advice and guidance interviews, predominately from school, the Job Centre or previous interviews with the same practitioner or at the same organisation.

The age profile of the **practitioners** participating in the study was older than that of the clients.

62% (n=31) of practitioners who participated in the research held a **specialist qualification**. Specifically, a Qualification in Careers Guidance (QCG), a Diploma in Careers Guidance (Dip CG) or a Certificate in Careers Guidance (Certificate in CG); 8 practitioners had no careers guidance related qualifications.

60% (n=30) of the practitioners had been actively employed for over 10 years and had gained their **professional experience** in a wide variety of contexts.

In the majority of cases (66%, n=33), the practitioner was working with no or little **previous information** about the client.

Part C: 'Useful' guidance

Section 4: Perceptions of the guidance interview

Analysis of the client, practitioner and expert witness questionnaires indicates:

There were **high levels of agreement** between the client, practitioner and expert witness. The highest levels of agreement were noted between the client and practitioner responses (82% agreement), and the expert witness and client responses (78% agreement). However, a high level of agreement was also noted between the practitioner and the expert witness (75% agreement). Overall, therefore, individual perceptions of the guidance intervention were predominantly similar.

In all the comparisons of questionnaire analysis the only instance of **total agreement** (100%) was between the practitioner and the client for question 1 which focused on the guidance intervention introduction and welcome. 96% agreement for the same question was also found when comparing the practitioner and expert witness, and then the expert witness and client questionnaires.

Question 12, which focused on the practitioner/client relationship and issues of respect, together with question 14, which explored whether the guidance intervention had been useful, had the **highest levels of agreement** when comparing all questionnaires.

High levels of agreement were consistently found for: question 3 which considered whether the client was comfortable disclosing personal information during the intervention; question 5 which focused on whether the practitioner showed that they were listening to the client; question 6 which examined the practitioner's understanding of issues that mattered to the client; question 8 which explored whether the client had a better understanding of their situation as a result of the intervention; question 9 which tried to capture whether the practitioner had shown the client understanding of what they needed; and question 11 which focused on whether priorities had been established, as well as short and long term goals.

The **lowest agreement** (42% agreement) occurred for question 10 between the practitioner and expert witness, which investigated whether a client's thinking had been changed in any way. This also revealed the highest percentage of complex disagreements (26%). However, good levels of agreement for this question were noted between the client and practitioner, and the expert witness and client.

Remarkably high levels of agreement were noted for the responses to the **affective questions** with the highest level of agreement found between the client and practitioner responses (94%). Agreement levels for the **behavioural and cognitive question responses** were lower, with the highest level of overall agreement for the **cognitive questions** found between the expert witness and client responses. The highest level of disagreement between the client and practitioner responses was found for the cognitive question responses, even though it was only 20%.

Section 5: What is 'useful' guidance?

Section 5 presents a detailed analysis of what clients found 'useful' in their guidance interviews. 'Useful' guidance was variously defined as the outcomes of the interview and how it developed the skills and knowledge of the client.

Forty-nine of the fifty clients (98%) participating in this research indicated that they had found their guidance interview useful. Similar percentages of both practitioners and expert witnesses agreed with clients that the guidance interview had been useful.

'Useful' guidance comprises:

- supporting positive outcomes for the client, specifically: exploring and challenging client perceptions together with providing direction, focus and a new awareness of the learning and employment opportunities;
- giving clients access to networks, information and knowledge enabling them to feel better informed and better able to progress;
- encouraging constructive change in the client by: increasing self-confidence; developing skills; developing understanding which broadened ideas; together with motivating, inspiring and encouraging the client;
- providing the client with a positive experience by: creating the opportunity for reflection and in-depth discussion; and by reassuring, confirming and/or clarifying plans and/or progress.

It was also found that clients, practitioners and expert witnesses have **similar understandings** of the nature of 'useful' guidance.

Section 6: Key features of 'useful' guidance

Section 6 examines the key features of the guidance interviews as identified by clients, practitioners and expert witnesses. These key features focus on the different approaches to guidance, practitioner expertise and the need for guidance.

The **key features of guidance** identified were:

- the expertise of the practitioner: that is, their knowledge and skills together with their understanding of what affected individuals' education and employment opportunities;
- good practice examples and the need for guidance including: time allowed for reflection and discussion; the transformative power of the process; the demonstrable need for guidance; and positive validations of the service; and
- the complexities of guidance: encompassing varied approaches used by practitioners and differences in the balance of communication between the client and practitioner.

Some **practitioners** reflected on their practice, the reactions of their clients; and the impact of the digital recorder on the interview.

For both **clients and expert witnesses**, the key feature of the guidance interview was the skills used by the practitioner, whilst for practitioners it was the demonstrable need for guidance.

Part D: Characteristics of 'effective' guidance
Section 7: What happens in a 'useful' guidance interview?

Section 7 investigates exactly what occurred in the guidance interviews found 'useful' by clients and identifies the characteristics of these interviews by focusing exclusively on the practitioner interventions.

Four discrete categories of activities emerged from the analysis of the interview transcripts. These are: building a working alliance; exploring potential; identifying options and strategies; plus ending and following-through. Each category comprised between three and six sub-sets of activities. Not all activities of guidance are evident across all interviews, nor did any particular combination or sequence emerge. Key findings are:

All practitioners used at least **one type of strategy to establish and maintain a sound working alliance** with their clients. Typically, several strategies were used in combination throughout the interview.

Varied dimensions of the **client's background and present circumstances** were probed. Of the hard, factual data, most practitioners (80%, n=39) investigated their

client's educational and training history. Of the softer, attitudinal data, exploration of client preferences (about courses, jobs, strategies, options, etc.) was undertaken most, by 94% of practitioners (n=46).

Practitioners used **various methods to affect some measure of change in their clients' behaviour, attitudes and/or thinking**. These included some standard techniques, like giving information or advice together with other non-standard techniques like offering a personal opinion.

Finally, most practitioners presented an overall **summary of the interview**, with a high percentage of interviews developing some sort of **action plan**. A majority offered some type of **follow-up service** to clients.

Part E: Conclusions and issues arising
Section 8: Issues arising
Considerable **interest in evidence-based research** from participants was recorded. Generally, there seemed to be an acceptance by managers and practitioners that there is a lack of evidence relating to the outcomes of guidance and a willingness to participate in a study which was designed to address this deficit.

The **nature of the guidance** intervention, involving personal, confidential information, places constraints on the research methodology that can be used to gather evidence on the effectiveness of guidance.

An operational ambiguity exists around information, advice and guidance **terminology**.

Client follow-up – certain client groups are likely to present particular challenges for longitudinal studies that are designed to evaluate the impact of guidance.

This study focuses on an **evaluation of effective guidance from the client's perspective** immediately after the interview, with clients followed-up over a further period of four years. Similar understandings were evident amongst clients, practitioners and expert witnesses.

The digital recording equipment used in this study may have had an **impact on the research process** and affected the client-practitioner relationship in a small number of cases. The interview transcriptions from these recordings have, however, provided an

accurate and comprehensive picture of what actually occurred in guidance interviews and what clients found useful. Whilst practitioners may welcome the opportunity for formal feedback on their professional practice, they may find the **process of recording** interviews difficult.

Facilities and locations for guidance - an inhibitor to effective guidance is the physical resources available to practitioners for interviews with clients (i.e. access to libraries, electronic resources, etc.).

Embedding guidance in the curriculum in higher education does not necessarily result in positive outcomes.

Important **influences on the guidance process** come from outside the immediate boundaries of the interview itself (e.g. opportunity for follow-up, access to training support).

Guidance was offered as part of **an ongoing process**, rather than a 'one off' event. This aspect of the interview was appreciated by clients.

Certain client groups placed particular demands on the knowledge and, to a lesser extent, the skills of practitioners (e.g. migrant workers, clients with disabilities)..

The **production of an action plan** agreed by the client was a feature of most interviews. This raises questions about the extent to which organisational requirements to produce documentation from the interview drives the process.

Computer aided guidance programmes were used as an integral part of guidance by practitioners to reduce uncertainty and assist clients with job search strategies.

There was evidence that the **traditional matching approach** to guidance is still very influential in practice. The corollary to this finding was that there was little evidence of experimentation or new approaches to guidance. There is evidence of a wide range of **techniques and strategies** used by practitioners.

Organisational restrictions are generally placed on the time allowed for a guidance interview, though this varies according to the professional context.

Section 9: Conclusions

Investigating what constitutes effective guidance is complex, but the **qualitative research methodology** used in this study has proved robust and provided data that allow for a significant deepening of understanding of the issues involved.

The **research has been successful** in capturing the distinctive features of provision of guidance and its usefulness.

Guidance is delivered across **varied contexts** and from multiple funding streams, all with **quality standards** which were an accepted, often valued, feature of service delivery.

A **diverse range of participants** has been captured in this research: clients varied in age, ethnic origin, gender, disability and qualification level; and practitioners varied similarly. Consistently high practitioner qualifications were evident across all contexts.

The **guidance interviews varied** in length and whether it was an initial or follow-up guidance interview for the client.

An **evaluation of the interview** took place immediately afterwards, with the majority of client-participants (98%) judging their guidance as useful. In addition to the clients, the practitioners, who had conducted the guidance interviews, and an independent witness were asked to evaluate the guidance to gain different **perspective of effectiveness**.

There is a **high level of agreement** amongst the clients, practitioners and 'expert witnesses' about the usefulness of the intervention. These positive client evaluations were found in those provided, independently, by practitioners and expert witnesses. The **highest levels of disagreement** related to: whether the client had understood what was going to happen in the interview; whether the client's thinking had been changed in any way; and whether a client had understood the importance of something which they had not before the guidance intervention.

Nature of effective guidance – evidence from this study indicates guidance is useful to clients when it: provides support and safety, gives access to relevant resources, continues over a period of time and brings about positive change(s).

Of the fifty clients who participated in this research all but one stated that they had found the guidance they had received useful. **'Useful' guidance** was defined both as the

outcomes of the guidance process and how it developed the skills and knowledge of the client. **Key features** of 'useful' guidance included the importance of the knowledge and skills of the practitioner and their positive impact on the client.

Activities of guidance include four broad categories of activities and forty sub-sets which characterised useful guidance. A wide range of standard techniques and strategies, some advanced and some non-standard, were used by practitioners.

Positive outcomes from 'useful' guidance affect a measure of change in clients. This could relate to their attitudes, behaviour and/or thinking. These changes make a positive contribution to clients' transition(s) through education and training into employment.

Influence of context on the guidance process – outcomes of guidance are dependent, at least in part, on influences that exist outside the interview and that are beyond the control of the practitioner.

Part A: Introduction and methodology

1.   Introduction

1.1   Setting the context

A recent review by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2004[1]) highlights the potential role for career guidance services in advancing lifelong learning goals and helping with the implementation of active labour market policies (p.3). However, currently there is a lack of compelling evidence regarding the nature of effective guidance and its benefits (Hughes *et al.*, 2002[2]; Irving and Bates, 2001[3]), particularly on the medium-term and longer-term impacts of guidance (OECD, 2004[4]). Despite this, the strategic, economic role of guidance has been emphasised (DTI, 1994[5]; Employment Department, 1995[6]) and in England, guidance provision for those under 19 years has been enhanced and 'refocused' on social exclusion (DfEE, 1999[7]). Recently, government has made a significant public investment to improve guidance for adults through support for information, advice and guidance (IAG) services with the intention of developing a learning society (Irving and Slater, 2002[8]).

1.2   What is guidance?

In the UK, agreement on a definition of guidance acceptable to its broad community has, to date, proved elusive (see Appendix 3). Changes in the labour market (like globalisation and the development of information technology) have challenged the relevance of the established, narrow view of career transition as a one-off event at an

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[1] OECD (2004) Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap, Paris: OECD.

[2] Hughes, D., Bosley, S., Bowes, L. and Bysshe, S. (2002) The Economic Benefits of Guidance, Derby: Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby.

[3] Irving, P. and Bates, F. (2001) Evaluation of Information, Advice and Guidance Partnerships: Interim Findings, DfES Research Briefing, No: RBX 13-01, London: DfES.

[4] OECD (2004) Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap, Paris: OECD.

[5] Department for Trade and Industry (1994) Competitiveness: Helping Business to Win, Cmnd. 2563, London: HMSO.

[6] Employment Department (1995) Competitiveness: Forging Ahead, Cmnd.2867, London: HMSO.

[7] DfEE (1999) Learning to Succeed: A New Framework for Post-16 Learning, Cmnd. 4392, London: Department for Education and Employment.

[8] Irving, P. and Slater, A. (2002) Evaluation of Information, Advice and Guidance Partnerships, DfES Research Report 359, London: Department for Education and Skills.

early stage of an individual's development, replacing it with a broader understanding of how transitions into education, training and employment are more complex, more prolonged and often span lifetimes[9].

Recent definitions try to capture the implications of these changes for guidance. Two examples are those proposed both by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2004[10]) and the Council of the European Union (2004[11]). Both emphasise the need for guidance to support multiple transitions over a prolonged time-span and neither make particular distinctions about the type of activities guidance involves. The OECD (2004) notes how terms like information, advice and guidance, vocational guidance, vocational counselling, career counselling and career development are used to refer to a range of activities, which they include within the term 'career guidance' (p.18) and define as:

> *Services intended to assist people of any age and at any point throughout their lives to make educational, training and occupational choices to manage their careers. Career guidance helps people to reflect on their ambitions, interests, qualifications and abilities. It helps them to understand the labour market and education systems, and to relate this to what they know about themselves. Comprehensive career guidance tries to teach people to plan and make decisions about work and learning. Career guidance makes information about the labour market and about educational opportunities more accessible by organising it, systematising it and making it available when and where people need it.*
> (OECD, 2004, p.19)

The Draft Resolution of the Council of the European Union (2004) defines guidance in the context of lifelong learning, referring to it as:

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[9] Young, R.A. and Collin, A. (2000) 'Introduction: Framing the Future of Career', in Collin, A. and Young, R.A. (Eds) The Future of Career, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.5.

[10] OECD (2004) Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap, Paris: OECD.

[11] Council of the European Union (2004) Draft Resolution of the Council on the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in their field of Guidance throughout life in Europe, Brussels.

> *…a range of activities that enables citizens of any age and at any point in their lives to identify their capacities, competences and interests, to make educational, training and occupations decisions and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings in which these capacities and competences are learned and/or used.*
>
> (Council of the European Union, 2004, p. 2)

In contrast, a recent discussion document from the Department for Education and Skills in the UK on information, advice and guidance (DfES, 2003[12]), distinguishes four separate levels of service provision: information, advice, guidance and personal support. Within this framework of differentiated provision, information and advice are distinguished from guidance and personal support. Guidance is defined as helping clients to: understand their own needs relating to learning and work; set and review goals/objectives for learning and work; understand their barriers to learning and work; overcome barriers/obstacles to learning and work; and to produce learning and career action plans (p.15). Personal support is defined separately as 'intensive, one to one, continuity of support' (p.15), aimed at clients who reveal severe or multiple barriers to successful entry/progression in learning and work. The policy framework[13] that followed this discussion document reflects these distinctions.

Within this context of differing policy views about the nature and activities of guidance, key questions emerge: what actually occurs in a guidance interview, what exactly do clients find useful and (perhaps most importantly) what precisely does 'useful' mean in this context?

1.3   Building on previous research

A review of the economic benefits of guidance by Hughes *et al.* (2002[14]) recommends a research programme that takes account of existing studies and covers a 3-5 year period (p.21). This case study research builds on this recommendation by taking account of

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[12] DfES (2003) <u>Information, Advice and Guidance for Adults. Towards a National Policy Framework: Discussion Document</u>, Sheffield: DfES.

[13] DfES (2003) Information, Advice and Guidance for Adults. The National Policy Framework and Action Plan, London: DfES. Available online:

http://www.lifelonglearning.co.uk

[14] Hughes, D., Bosley, S., Bowes, L. and Bysshe, S. (2002) <u>The Economic Benefits of Guidance</u>, Derby: Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby.

relevant research into guidance. This includes: a study from further education of the value of appropriate guidance to successful completion (Martinez and Munday, 1998[15]); research into under-represented groups in higher education emphasising the importance of access to information, advice and guidance (Clark, 2002[16]; McGivney, 2000[17]); a study of the aspirations of final year graduates (Purcell and Pitcher, 1996[18]) and their subsequent labour market experiences (Purcell, Pitcher and Simm, 1999[19]); qualitative (Wilson and Mee, 2001[20]) and quantitative research (Guidance Council, 2001[21]) into the demand for adult guidance on education, training and/or 'return to learning'; research into the complexity of guidance support required, including one-to-one, group work and return-to-learn programmes (Guidance Council, 2000[22]); and studies into the availability of impartial guidance as an essential characteristic of the success of workforce development schemes in facilitating personal development (Maguire and Horrocks,

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[15] Martinez, P. and Munday, F. (1998) 9,000 Voices: Student Persistence and Drop-out in Further Education, London: Further Education Development Agency.

[16] Clark, S. (2002) 'Paving the Way: Working with Selected Under-represented Groups to Assist their Progression into and Through Higher Education', Newscheck, Vol. 12, No. 5, pp. 19-20.

[17] McGivney, V. (2000) Working with Excluded Groups, Leicester: NIACE.

[18] Purcell, K. and Pitcher, J. (1996) Great Expectations: The New Diversity of Graduate Skills and Aspirations, Manchester: HE Careers Services Unit.

[19] Purcell, K., Pitcher, J. and Simm, C. (1999) Working Out? Graduates' Early Experiences of the Labour Market, Manchester: HE Careers Services Unit.

[20] Wilson, J.L. and Mee, M. (2001) Identifying Information, Advice and Guidance Needs and Delivery to Priority Groups, London: Marketry.

[21] Guidance Council (2001) Demand for Information, Advice and Guidance, Winchester: Guidance Council.

[22] Guidance Council (2000) What are Adults' Expectations and Requirements of Guidance? A Millennium Agenda?, Winchester: Guidance Council.

1995[23]; Maguire, 1997[24]).   Research into adults' perceptions of improved work-life balance have also been considered (Bond *et al.*, 2002[25]; Dex and Smith, 2002[26]).

The study also provides the scope to follow clients up over a five year period (2004-2007).

1.4   Aim and objectives

The aim of this case study research is:

- to use a qualitative, longitudinal case study approach to investigate the nature of effective guidance for adults and how, over the longer-term, it can add value to post-compulsory learning and enhance employability.

This is in line with a current policy interest in examining whether guidance increases the likelihood that adults will engage in learning, gain qualifications (or improve existing ones) and progress into work or within work. Fifty case studies have been undertaken in organisations offering guidance in England. The objectives are to:

- compare the nature of guidance interventions in different professional contexts;
- examine what, exactly, was found to be useful in, and the key features of, guidance interviews by clients immediately after the interview, along with practitioner and expert witness views;
- investigate, in detail, the characteristics of guidance interviews found useful by clients;
- increase understanding of how to align processes of effective guidance practice with policy requirements in England; and
- examine how guidance is practised (beliefs, concepts, ideas, theories and actions) in the search for new understandings of effective guidance.

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[23] Maguire, M. and Horrocks, B. (1995) Employee Development Programmes and Lifetime Learning, Working Paper No. 6, Leicester: Centre for Labour Market Studies, University of Leicester.

[24] Maguire, M. (1997) 'Employee Development Schemes: Panacea or Passing Fancy?' in F. Coffield (Ed) A National Strategy for Lifelong Learning, Newcastle: University of Newcastle.

[25] Bond, S., Hyman, J., Summers, J. and Wise, S. (2002) Family-Friendly Working? Putting Policy into Practice, Joseph Rowntree Foundation: York Publishing Services.

[26] Dex, S. and Smith, C. (2002) The Nature and Pattern of Family-Friendly Employment Policies in Britain, Bristol: The Policy Press.

The analyses presented in this report are based upon:

- contextualised data about the organisations in which the guidance took place together with background information on clients and practitioners;
- responses to three open-ended questions from the 49 questionnaires completed by the client who found their interviews 'useful', together with corresponding responses from the practitioner and expert witness questionnaires; and
- practitioner interventions from each of the 49 digitally recorded guidance interviews clients found 'useful' to detail the characteristics of 'useful' guidance.

1.5   What next?

The next phase of the research will involve follow-up telephone interviews with the fifty clients who participated in the case studies, approximately one year after the guidance interview featured in this research. Their progress will be tracked and key issues that have emerged from the analysis of data will be further investigated. A report will be produced in the summer of 2005 on the first stage of the follow-up. This process (with questions modified by the emerging findings) will be repeated three more times, with related reports produced in the summers of 2006, 2007 and 2008.

1.6   Report structure

The report comprises eight further sections. Section 2 clarifies the research questions and discusses the use of qualitative research for evaluating guidance effectiveness. The research design, methods and the approach to the analysis are also outlined, together with a discussion of the effects of the research on the guidance process.

Section 3 describes and highlights the variations in delivery contexts.

A comparative analysis of questionnaire responses is presented in Section 4. Substantive discussions about 'useful' guidance interviews and the key features of the guidance interviews drawn from the questionnaire response can be found in Sections 5 and 6. Specifically, Section 5 examines what is found 'useful' by clients. The key features of this guidance are scrutinised in Section 6.

Section 7 presents and discusses the characteristics of 'useful' guidance drawn from an in-depth analysis of the recorded guidance interviews.

Finally, an overall summary and discussion of the issues arising from the first three phases are the research can be found in Sections 8 and 9.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research questions

Across Europe, guidance is increasingly regarded as vital for education and training (European Commission, 2001[27]). Three policy priorities have been identified within Europe: skills growth, individual development and social integration (Bartlett *et al.,* 2000[28]). In the UK, the policy focus for guidance has emphasised the 'skills growth' model for guidance, requiring individuals in transition to be matched with the 'right' education, training or job opportunities as efficiently as possible[29].

However, the evidence-base for the framework (trait and factor) informing this type of 'matching' approach to guidance is flawed. Scharf (1997[30]) argues that there is little research supporting or refuting this as a viable theory of career development. Rather, the large amount of research that has been undertaken has related traits and factors to one another or has established the validity and reliability of measurements of traits and factors. Its usefulness in fluid labour market conditions has also been questioned, since matching assumes a degree of stability (Mitchell and Krumboltz, 1996[31]). The shortcomings of this theory in its application to women (Farmer *et al.,* 1998[32]) and minority ethnic groups (Leong *et al.,* 1998[33]) have also been highlighted.

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[27] European Commission (2001) Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality. Available online: http://www.eropa.eu.int/comm/education/life/.

[28] Bartlett, W., Rees, T. and Watts, A.G. (2000) Adult Guidance Services and the Learning Society: Emerging Policies in the European Union, Bristol: Policy Press.

[29] Bartlett, W., Rees, T. and Watts, A.G. (2000) Adult Guidance Services and the Learning Society: Emerging Policies in the European Union, Bristol: Policy Press.

[30] Sharf, R.S. (1997) Applying Career Development Theory to Counseling, Pacific Grove, California: Brooks/Cole.

[31] Mitchell, L.K. and Krumboltz, J.D. (1990) 'Social Learning Approach to Career Decision Making: Krumboltz's Theory' in Brown, D., Brooks, L. and Associates (Eds) Careers Choice and Development (2nd edition), San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, pp. 145-196.

[32] Farmer, H.S. (1997) 'Women's Motivation Related to Mastery, Career Salience, and Career Aspiration: A Multivariate Model Focusing on the Effects of Sex Role Socialization', Journal of Career Assessment, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 355-381.

[33] Leong, F.T.L., Austin, J.T., Sekaran, U. and Komarraju, M. (1998) 'An Evaluation of the Cross-Cultural Validity of Holland's Theory: Career Choices by Workers in India', Journal of Vocational Behavior, Vol. 52, No. 4, pp. 441-455.

A primary purpose of this research, therefore, is to investigate the nature of effective guidance in England that adds value to post-compulsory learning and enhances employability, and to disseminate practices that enhance this guidance. It will address the following research questions:

- What is effective guidance?
- What are the barriers to effective guidance?
- How can effective practice be encouraged and supported?

2.2   Evaluating effectiveness using qualitative research

Analysing the nature of effective guidance is highly challenging. Key issues include: the time frame being considered (i.e. immediate, intermediate or long-term) and the point-of-view from which effectiveness is being examined (e.g. policy-maker, practitioner, guidance manager, client, independent observer).

So far as time-frame is concerned, evidence from the first and second phase of this study relates to an investigation of the immediate impact of guidance on the client. The longitudinal nature of this research will allow for follow-up over a further period of four years, enabling analysis of intermediate and (some) long-term affects of guidance on clients in future reports.

The point-of-view of the client has been given primacy in this study, though this has been qualified by comparisons with the views of practitioners and independent observers (referred to as 'expert witnesses'). In evaluating effectiveness, 'useful' was selected as the most appropriate word to probe the clients' perceptions of their guidance interview. An open-ended invitation to elaborate on the initial evaluation of whether the guidance had proved 'useful' provided detailed information on exactly how that interview had been useful. Open-ended responses were used rather than a rating scale because of the limitations of these scales in clarifying precise meaning in everyday life[34]. That is, a bland choice of 'level of usefulness' where 1 = very dissatisfied and 5 = satisfied, leaves the interpretation of 'satisfied' open to the respondent. The purpose of this study is to provide clarification of the meanings attributed by participants in the 'real world' of guidance. Respondents were, therefore, also provided with further opportunities to

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[34] May, T. (1997) Social Research: Issues, Methods and Processes (2nd edition), Buckingham: Open University.

elaborate their views of the interview. Details of how this was achieved are provided below, in Section 2.4.

2.2.1 The need for evidence

In recent years, there has been significant financial investment into information, advice and guidance services (IAG) for adults in England[35]. However, the Government's Skills Strategy (2003) makes explicit that 'a lot more needs to be done to improve the quality, consistency and visibility of adult information, advice and guidance provision'[36]. The concept of 'accountability' has become an overarching feature designed to bring about 'the establishing of responsibility for certain outcomes, given a set of human and non human resources' (Sampson *et al.*, 2003[37]). Policy-makers and providers have become engaged in a new type of dialogue focusing more on the demonstration of the impact of services and less on anecdotal accounts of how clients have benefited from IAG. However, various stakeholders can be identified with differing agendas:

- *government policy-makers* primarily influenced by the need to ensure that their set targets are met. Their agenda is often very explicit in relation to obtaining robust evidence to show politicians that their vision and goals have been realised.

- *managers* tasked with meeting organisational goals which, in turn, may or may not be linked to government funding sources. They have other intrinsic motives for their work such as ensuring high quality services to individuals; wanting to make a difference; and working in partnership with others. However, they are inevitably driven by funding mechanisms that allow them to deliver their services. For those largely dependent on government funds, 'policy and practice agendas' inevitably converge.

- *practitioners* trained to deliver information, advice and guidance are responsible for implementing policies and being accountable to others for their work.

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[35] During the financial year 2002/2003, the National Learning and Skills Council invested £34.8 million in the provision of IAG for adults through its network of local Learning and Skills Councils. (National Learning Skills Council (2003) <u>Annual Report and Accounts 2002-2003: Skills – The Nation's Competitive Edge</u>, Coventry: LSC.)

[36] National Learning and Skills Council (2003) <u>Information, Advice and Guidance Services for Adults – A Quarterly Progress Report (April to July 2003)</u>, MISC/0925/03, Coventry.

[37] Sampson, J.P., Reardon, R.C., Peterson, G.W. and Lenz, J.G. (2003) <u>Career Counseling and Services: A Cognitive Information Processing Approach</u>, Florida State University: Wadsworth, Thomson Learning.

Experience, training, ethics and values that place the client at the centre of their work will inform the practitioners' agenda. Some may question the rationale for collating and aggregating data i.e. for what purpose and for whose benefit?

These different 'discourses' trigger contrasting motivations towards assessing the outcomes of effective guidance, with varied outcomes identified, such as:

- providing value for money;
- meeting organisational goals;
- achieving government agendas;
- providing a meaningful service of value and use to recipients;
- benefiting an individual client on a personal level.

With different stakeholder groups interested in different types of outcome, assessing guidance outcomes is not without problems.

2.2.2 Challenges for evidence-gathering

Certain types of evidence are already available. Previous research (Hughes *et al.,* 2002[38]; Killeen *et al.,* 1992[39]) shows that effective guidance can be assessed through activities that focus on:

- **Immediate outcomes** – these may include enhanced knowledge and skills including the ability to make effective transitions; attitudinal change including self-confidence and esteem; and motivation including willingness to consider new employment or learning options.
- **Intermediate outcomes** – these may include enhanced job-search, or other search strategies, and the individual's contingency planning.
- **Longer-term outcomes (for the individual)** – these may include enhanced participation in new opportunities and retention within learning and labour markets.
- **Longer-term outcomes (for the economy)** – these may include increased Gross Domestic Product (GDP), productivity gains when individuals are settled in appropriate employment, reductions in skills gaps and shortages, and enhanced income levels and reductions in benefit payments.

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[38] Hughes, D., Bosley, S., Bowes, L., and Bysshe, S. (2002) The Economic Benefits and Guidance, Research Report, Derby: Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby.

[39] Killeen, J., White, M. and Watts, A.G. (1992) The Economic Value of Careers Guidance, London: Policy Studies Institute/Department for Education and Employment.

In seeking to assess and measure the effectiveness of guidance, it is crucial to understand and take account of the complex inter-relationships and variables that exist. These include:

- individuals vary in respect of their personal circumstances such as gender, age, ethnicity and attainment;
- the contexts in which they operate also vary in relation to their domestic situation, geographical location, mobility and labour market status; and
- the guidance individuals receive can vary extensively in terms of the intensity and duration of the intervention(s), the nature of their specific needs, the experience and training of the practitioner and the discreteness of provision (for instance, experienced as a specific activity or part of an integrated, on-going learning programme).

Additional questions are relevant, including: how should change in the client receiving guidance be assessed and which sources of information should be used to assess change resulting from guidance (i.e. the client, the guidance practitioner, a 'significant other' or an independent expert in guidance)?   Whilst the client's perspective is important, problems, need to be acknowledged:

- whilst some benefits of effective guidance are immediate and recognisable (for example, entry to an educational course) others are likely to accrue over an extended time period. It is not unusual for clients to recognise, only with the benefit of hindsight over a number of years, that guidance contributed to their personal development.
- the extent to which beneficiaries of guidance are able to distinguish and recognise the value of an effective guidance intervention in enhancing their educational progress is likely to be problematic, since clients may place more value on the learning or employment that may follow from guidance than on the guidance itself.
- a positive outcome from a guidance intervention might be facilitating a client's acceptance that aspirations are unrealistic. This could be (and often is) regarded negatively, even though retrospectively its value is recognised.

Models that have been developed to assess the effectiveness of guidance are limited in number. Sampson *et al.* (2003[40]) suggest that the apparent lack of progress in the development of useful accountability and evaluation models is linked to 'the absence of conceptual and operational constructs that define the outputs of career service interventions.' Four contrasting models for assessing and measuring effective guidance are briefly outlined in Appendix 4.

The model used for this research investigation is detailed below (Section 2.3).

2.3 Research design and methods

A qualitative, longitudinal, case study approach is being used since it encourages multiple methods of investigation and recognises the importance of both context and social structure. In so doing, it combines elements of the psychological and social scientific approaches to assessing effective guidance (outlined in Appendix 4). The theoretical origins of the approach used for this research are detailed in Appendix 5.

The research was designed to enable detailed comparisons to be made across a variety of English guidance contexts. It focuses on:

- different perceptions of the guidance interview (that is, the client, the practitioner and an 'expert witness');
- the process and outcome(s) of the guidance interviews;
- the clients' current situation, their preferred future(s) and the action necessary to achieve the next stage; and
- the professional contexts in which guidance is delivered.

2.3.1 Research phases

The phasing of data collection has allowed the findings and insights from each stage to inform subsequent stages (Glaser and Strauss, 1967[41]). Phases for the study are:

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[40] Sampson, J., Reardon, R.C., Peterson, G.W., and Lenz, J. (2003) <u>Career Counseling and Services: A Cognitive Information Processing Approach – Accountability and Evaluation in Career Services</u>, Florida Sate University: Wadsworth Thomson Learning.

[41] Glaser, B.G. and Stauss, A.L. (1967) <u>The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research</u>, Chicago: Aldine.

Phase 1: Protocols for data collection were developed using two pilot studies. Feedback from the first pilot was used to modify the protocols for the second pilot and feedback from the second pilot was used similarly in the development of the final versions.

Phase 2: Data was collected from a sample of fifty English case studies representing a variety of professional contexts. Results from this phase of data collection will be used to inform phase 3.

Phase 3: During the third phase of the research, data will be collected from clients. Clients will be followed up about 12 months after the guidance interview, using postal survey, telephone interviews and/or (where appropriate) email contact. The purpose of this follow-up will be to track clients' perceptions of their progress, changes in identity and to identify key events associated with these changes. Again, results from this phase of the research will shape data collection in phase 4.

Phase 4: Clients will be followed up through a further three cycles of data gathering, over a period (in total) of five years.

2.3.2   Guidance contexts

Fifty case studies have been completed in England during the first year of data collection (2003-2004). All of the organisations that participated wish to be acknowledged. They are listed in Appendix 1, whilst further information on the organisations and the contexts in which guidance interventions were recorded are detailed in Appendix 2.

Contexts selected for the research were determined by their offer of guidance. Organisations offering only information and advice were excluded. To ensure, as far as possible, equal representation from different types of guidance organisations, the following categories were used:

1. Connexions, Information, Advice and Guidance Partnerships (IAGP) and Job Centre Plus;
2. Higher education;
3. Further education;
4. Community/outreach guidance and not-for-profit organisations (which included organisations with charitable status); and
5. Private careers organisations and organisations offering guidance on a funded basis in the workplace.

Precise definition of the contexts in which guidance has taken place has been problematic. Adult guidance practitioners are often working at multiple locations and providing guidance under different funding streams. The guidance episodes taking place under the Connexions, IAG partnerships and Job Centre Plus organisations have been easier to define than others. However, adult guidance funded as part of Connexions and IAG partnerships has, in some instances, taken place in private interview rooms at the back of Connexions' offices. One client regarded this as rather strange as the literature and advertisements in the reception area were targeted at young people.

Higher and further education careers centres are funded to undertake work for other agencies and projects, in addition to providing guidance to prospective, current and past students. There is one recorded case in which a private careers organisation operated within a college. Further education colleges are well located and easily accessed by the public so adult guidance practitioners working for IAG partnerships are also using them.

Defining community and outreach guidance projects has also been problematic. There are two documented instances in this study where guidance is being undertaken by higher education institutions under separate funding streams to that of their institutional work.

The most problematic to identify have been organisations offering guidance on a funded basis in the workplace. One organisation contracts its guidance requirements out to the IAG partnership's adult guidance team. There are also two recorded cases of workplace guidance taking place away from the client's employing organisation as they were given the option of a visit from the practitioner or an alternative location.

2.3.3 Negotiating access to organisations and participants

Gaining access to the organisations offering guidance was time-consuming and challenging.

Although many organisations were very keen to be involved in the research, internal pressures have hindered some from participating. Organisations that were approached but declined to participate in the study cited varied reasons, including:

- recording interviews was believed to be inappropriate as it was considered to breach clients' confidentiality;
- the client target group were transient, so follow-ups would be difficult;
- too many work pressures;

- working towards, or just about to be assessed for, Matrix standards;
- no careers centre within the (FE) institution; and
- no practitioners willing to volunteer to participate.

In a small number of cases, organisations initially agreed to participate, but substantial delays followed, which meant these organisations were not in the end involved in the project.

Obtaining practitioners' consent to participate was relatively unproblematic, though delays have occurred. Reasons given included: increased work pressures, inability to find suitable clients, concerns about confidentiality and concerns about being evaluated. In some cases access had to be negotiated with another practitioner at the same organisation because of clients cancelling appointments or the practitioner's availability changing. However, these did not present insurmountable problems. There was only one case in which the practitioner cancelled.

Most delays in completing the research fieldwork resulted from clients not turning up for their appointments or cancelling at the last minute. This occurred both in cases when the practitioner had spoken to the client about the research prior to their appointment, to seek consent and when there had been no prior contact with the client. In the most extreme case, a researcher visited an organisation six times in order to record one guidance intervention. However, there was a strong sense of the research process reflecting the everyday realities of guidance provision.

Some clients were selected by practitioners as they were considered to be good examples of guidance interventions. Others because they already had an established relationship with the practitioner and would therefore feel comfortable consenting. Throughout the whole process, only four clients refused to participate in the research.

Many of the clients that were approached to participate in the research were keen to help, believed that the guidance had been a personally worthwhile process and wanted to help others understand its usefulness.

2.3.4   Data sources

Data sources for each case study were:
- organisational sources (reports, mission statements, researcher observations, managers, practitioners, publicity leaflets, etc.);

- digital recordings of the guidance interviews and typed transcriptions;
- questionnaires completed by individual clients, guidance practitioners and 'expert witnesses'[42] about the guidance interviews (Appendices 6, 7 and 8);
- questionnaires collecting brief background data on the client (Appendix 9), the practitioner (Appendix 10) and the context in which guidance was delivered (Appendix 11) was collected from the client, the practitioner and an organisational representative, respectively.

The approach taken allowed participants to articulate, from their own perspective, the meaning and significance of the guidance event. It also allowed discrepancies or conflicts in viewpoints about the guidance interview amongst research participants (that is, clients, practitioners and expert witnesses) to be documented (see Section 5 and 6 below).

2.3.5 Questionnaire content: perceptions of the guidance interview

Three questionnaires (see Appendices 6, 7 and 8) were designed to collect data against the same categories from the client, the practitioner and the expert witness for the purpose of comparison. Sixteen questions were included in each questionnaire. The first fourteen asked the respondent to give a 'yes' or 'no' answer and then elaborate their answer by, for instance, providing examples. At the end of the questionnaire, there was one general question about the interview and an opportunity to add any further comments.

Of the first fourteen questions:
- four were designed to relate to affective dimensions of the interview (i.e. the relationship between the client and practitioner);
- four were designed to relate to behavioural dimensions (i.e. the practitioners' behaviour and conduct, including strategies and skills);
- four were designed to relate to cognitive dimensions (i.e. client changes in understandings and/or perceptions);
- one question related to a combination of affective and behavioural dimensions; and
- one question asked whether the interview had been useful.

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[42] Expert witnesses were required to have significant experience of delivering and/or assessing guidance. They did not observe the interviews 'live'. Rather, they listened to a digital recording of the interview and were able to read a typed transcript.

Field researchers were provided with a prompt sheet, to ensure that they were giving similar explanations about what a particular question meant (see Appendix 12).

2.3.6   Research team

A team of eight researchers undertook the data collection. All were experienced in research and six were experienced both in research and in delivering guidance. Five, who were all experienced and/or qualified in guidance and assessment of guidance, acted as 'expert witnesses'. Moderation of the expert witnesses was undertaken, on a random basis, by two senior researchers in the team.

2.3.7   Sampling method

Organisational contexts were targeted to try to ensure representation across five categories (see Sections 2.3.2 above and 3.1 below). Once organisations had been identified, the manager was approached with a request to participate in the research. If consent, in principle, was secured at this stage, there usually followed a process whereby the manager would circulate details of the research to practitioners, with a request for a volunteer. Where a practitioner indicated interest, he/she was put in contact with the field researcher. The practitioner was then asked to identify a client to whom they expected to give guidance and who might agree to participate

The ethical principal of 'informed consent' was strictly operated at every point of the three stage process of organising field visits. Because of the personal nature of information disclosed by clients during guidance together with the possible perception by practitioners that, in some way, the research might result in an assessment of their competence, no other approach would have been viable. This may, however, have resulted in some sample bias, since all participants were given the option of withdrawing after they had been fully informed about the research requirements. Every practitioner and client was asked to sign a consent form. Additionally, clients were asked to provide contact details, so that they could be followed up over the next four years.

Whilst a primary objective for the research was to secure varied and interesting organisational settings, the complexities of securing participants meant that clients and practitioners were not specifically targeted to provide diverse samples in terms of race, gender or disability, nor other factors such as length of experience (practitioners) or employment status (clients). However, considerable diversity was, in fact, evident amongst participants (see Tables 3.3 and 3.4).

2.4   Approach to analysis

The analysis presented in this second report is based upon:

a. responses to three open-ended questions (14, 15 and 16) from the 49 questionnaires completed by clients who found their interviews 'useful', together with corresponding responses from the practitioner and expert witness questionnaires. Question 14 asked whether the client had found the interview useful, and is so, how. Question 15 invited an open-ended response to the question: 'Thinking back on the interview, what stood out?' Question 16 provided an opportunity to elaborate further on any aspect of the interview. From the responses to these three questions, the nature of useful guidance together with its key features is revealed.

b. practitioner interventions from each of the 49 digitally recorded guidance interviews clients found 'useful'. From the interview transcripts, the detailed characteristics of 'useful' guidance interviews emerged, including the strategies and activities of guidance.

Analysis of both the questionnaire responses and interviews were undertaken using QSR NVivo 2, a qualitative data analysis software package. Further details of this package and its use in this research can be found in Appendix 13.

2.4.1   Analysing the open-ended questionnaire responses

As indicated in Section 2.4a above, question 14 first asked respondents to answer 'yes' or 'no' to whether the interview had been useful and then, if so, to explain (open-endedly) in what ways. Coding of the open-ended responses together with the open-ended responses to questions 15 and 16 revealed 12 descriptive categories (see Appendix 14) relating to what clients found 'useful' in their guidance interviews. Results can be found in Section 5.

The open-ended responses to questions 14, 15 and 16 relating to the key features of their guidance interviews were similarly coded. Thirteen themes emerged (see Appendix 15) which were categorised under broader headings. These revealed key features of useful guidance and details are examined in Section 6.

The analysis of the open-ended questionnaire responses has drawn on the three perspectives of client, practitioner and expert witness, with evidence drawn from across the sample as a whole.

Every stage of coding was independently moderated, to ensure validity.

2.4.2 Analysing the interviews

A similar but more intensive process was used to analyse the interview transcripts. Initially, an independent moderator read the first 10 interview transcripts, and focused upon the practitioner interventions. Different elements of the interviews were categorised using codes. As new elements of the guidance interview were identified these codes were added. The first 10 transcripts were then re-read to ensure that any new codes had not been omitted. The transcripts were then checked and coded independently by a second member of the research team and loaded into NVivo. This process was repeated for the second set of 10 transcripts.

At this stage, a sample of coded transcripts was independently moderated by two further members of the research team. Any discrepancies (approximately 10%) were discussed and a final code agreed. This process was continued for all the interview transcripts. In total, all transcripts coded by the moderator were also moderated by one other member of the research team, whilst 20% were independently moderated by a third member of the research team and a further 10% were independently moderated by a fourth member of the research team. Forty codes were identified from the interview transcripts (see Appendix 16) that were categorised under broader headings for a more in-depth analysis (see Table 6.2a, below).

2.5 Effects of the research on the guidance process

It is worth noting that the impact of the research on the guidance process was commented on variously by a small number of practitioners and expert witnesses. Some comments related to its potentially positive effect. For example:

> *…I feel the benefit of this project to the client could be immense as a means of supporting her and taking an active interest in her progress.*
> [Practitioner questionnaire 28]

However, the inevitable failure of the digital audio equipment to pick up on non-verbal behaviour was also noted. For example:

> *The tape can't see body language! He was really smiling all the way through.*
> [Practitioner questionnaire 19]

Additionally, 5% of responses from practitioners and expert witness questionnaires (n=7) commented on the way the digital recorder had negatively affected the flow of the interview. Examples from a practitioner (see also Section 6.6, below for examples of practitioner reflections) and two expert witnesses follow:

> *I was actually quite conscious of this interview being recorded and felt less than relaxed, when discussing things with the client…*
> [Practitioner questionnaire 16]

> *…Many of the qualities of a technically 'good' interview were missing…and (there was) the sense that it was a bit of a performance for the microphone…*
> [Expert witness questionnaire 10]

Overall, five practitioners (10%) and three expert witness questionnaires (6%) referred in some way to the effects of the research on the guidance process.

Part B: Contextual comparisons

3.   Variations in delivery contexts

3.1   Organisational contexts of guidance

As indicated above (see Section 2.3.2), the contexts in which guidance was recorded for the purposes of this research were varied and cover the following broad organisational categories:

1. Connexions, Information, Advice and Guidance Partnerships (IAGP) and Job Centre Plus
2. Higher education
3. Further education
4. Community/outreach guidance and not-for-profit organisations (which included organisations with charitable status)
5. Private careers organisations and organisations offering guidance on a funded basis in the workplace

As far as possible, an equal representation of contexts across these categories was secured. The contexts were geographically dispersed across several regions in England including:

Bristol, Cambridgeshire, Cornwall, Cumbria, Derbyshire, Devon, East Riding of Yorkshire, Gloucestershire, Greater London, Greater Manchester, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and Rutland, London, North Yorkshire, Oxfordshire, South Yorkshire, Staffordshire, Suffolk, Warwickshire, West Midlands and West Yorkshire.

A summary of those organisations that participated in the study and their characteristics (including size, quality standards, service level agreements, organisational pressures and requirements, in-service training support for employees) by organisational context as listed above are shown below in Table 3.1).

3.1.1   Organisational size

There was considerable diversity in the size of participating organisations and the adult guidance teams located within these organisations. The size of the adult guidance teams ranged in number from 2 to 59 employees. Teams within higher and further education institutions tended to be relatively small, operating with teams of 2 to 23 members. Variance was also found in the size of organisations within which these guidance teams were located. Private careers organisations and organisations offering

guidance in the workplace had up to 350 employees. Connexions teams offering IAG to both young people and adults had from 40 to 650 employees. One further education institution employed around 1,600 staff, whilst one not-for-profit organisation reported 3,200 plus employees across the country.

3.1.2   Quality standards

All the organisations included in this study operated quality standards and all, with the exception of one organisation, operated external quality standards (see Table 3.1). With the exception of two organisations, all were accredited with, or were working towards, the Matrix standards. Those organisations that were working towards the Matrix mostly held the Guidance Accreditation Board accreditation or adhered to the Guidance Council's quality standards.

External quality standards recorded included the Investor's in People Award and the Charter Mark (although this award was not found in the further education context). Specific external quality standards identified were: Investors in Careers, Positive about Disabled People and Business Excellence awards. Other external quality standards included: Ofsted inspections; inspections carried out by the Adult Learning Inspectorate and Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education framework; and International Standards ISO9001 and ISO9002.

Although not specifically investigated, internal quality standards were also recorded by some organisations. Client feedback and internal monitoring procedures were widespread and considered important mechanisms for assuring internal quality. Higher education institutions operated within the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS) Code of Practice on Guidance and the AGCAS Code of Best Practice for Graduate Recruitment. Equal opportunity, race equality and disability awareness policies were also in place at many organisations.

Table 3.1 Organisational characteristics by context

Organisational context	Size of organisation	Quality standards	Service level agreements (SLAs)	Organisational pressures & requirements	In-service training support
Connexions, IAGP & Job Centre Plus (n=14)	▪ Adult guidance teams ranged from 7 to 59 ▪ Connexions remit ranged from 40 to 650 employees	▪ All operated quality standards ▪ Only 1 operated without external quality standards ▪ All had or were working towards Matrix standards	▪ All had SLAs in operation	▪ 2 operated with no or few organisational requirements or pressures	▪ 11 organisations had good levels of training support
Higher Education (n=10)	▪ Careers centres in HE ranged from teams of 3 to 23 ▪ HE organisations ranged from 80 to 1000+ employees	▪ All operated quality standards ▪ All operated external quality standards ▪ All had or were working towards Matrix standards	▪ 5 had SLAs in operation	▪ 3 operated with no or few organisational requirements or pressures	▪ 9 organisations had good levels of training support
Further Education (n=10)	▪ Careers centres in FE ranged from teams of 2 to15 ▪ FE organisations ranged from 50 to 1600 employees	▪ All operated quality standards ▪ All operated external quality standards ▪ 9 had or were working towards Matrix standards	▪ All had SLAs in operation	▪ 5 operated with no or few organisational requirements or pressures	▪ All had good levels of training support
Community/ outreach guidance & not-for-profit organisations (n=8)	▪ Organisations offering community/outreach guidance ranged from teams of 3 to 11 ▪ Not-for-profit organisations ranged from teams of 5 to 54, including 3200 employees across the country	▪ All operated quality standards ▪ All operated external quality standards ▪ 7 had or were working towards Matrix standards	▪ All had SLAs in operation	▪ Only 1 organisation operated with no organisational requirements or pressures	▪ All had good levels of training support
Private organisations & workplace guidance (n=8)	▪ Private organisations ranged from 1 to 350 employees ▪ Guidance taking place in the workplace ranged from 1 person working on a project to a team of around 8	▪ All operated quality standards ▪ All operated external quality standards ▪ All had or were working towards Matrix standards	▪ All had SLAs in operation	▪ 2 operated with no or few organisational requirements or pressures	▪ All had good levels of training support

3.1.3 Service level agreements (SLAs)

With the exception of five higher education institutions, participating organisations had service level agreements (SLAs) in place (see Table 3.1). These SLAs were predominately made with the local IAG partnerships. Connexions services, IAGP and Job Centre Plus organisations reported SLAs with local community organisations, employers, training providers and European funding bodies. These SLAs were similar to those found at private careers organisations and organisations offering workplace guidance.

SLAs within higher education careers services were typically made with faculties and departments within the institution, together with international universities. In further education colleges, SLAs were predominately made with local IAG partnerships and Connexions. Two further education colleges reported SLAs with their local universities.

Community and not-for-profit organisations reported SLAs with relevant organisations such as local health authorities, other voluntary organisations as well as the local IAG partnerships.

3.1.4 Organisational pressures and requirements

Organisations recorded a wide range of pressures and/or requirements with funding a recurring theme. Many of the organisations were trying to manage the demand for guidance within funding agreements and budgets. For organisations within the Connexions, IAGP and Job Centre Plus organisational context there were requirements and pressures to meet targets (which were in some instances regarded as unrealistic), account for funding and generate income.

Organisational pressures and requirements for further and higher education institutions were similar in that there were targets to meet and some internal monitoring. Many guidance centres in these institutions were not income generating, so experienced some funding pressures. Limited resources and increased demand for services were also identified as pressures by several institutions. One further education college stated that there was a requirement placed upon them to aid recruitment and retention.

Pressure arising from working within budgets and other funding pressures were experienced by many community/outreach and not-for-profit organisations offering guidance. Similar pressures were also noted by private careers organisations. One community based organisation working with hard-to-reach clients needing guidance and

enhanced services stated that the way funding operated was inappropriate to the way they need to work. Workplace guidance practitioners reported that pressures often exist to work to the requirements of the client organisation and that consequently discrepancies can arise between what clients receive and the services paid for by the organisation.

3.1.5 In-service training support

The majority of the organisations offered good levels of in-service training support for their employees (see Table 3.1). Regular appraisals, continuing professional development and access to free training were noted across all the organisational contexts. Sometimes, where services were provided both to the clients in the Connexions target group and adults, there was no or little in-service training support for adult guidance practitioners because training was focused on the Connexions teams. National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Levels 2, 3 and 4 were offered by Connexions, IAGP and Job Centre Plus organisations together with training and seminars run and organised by the local IAG partnerships. This training was also offered to those working in community/outreach, not-for-profit and private organisations.

Further and higher education institutions reported good levels of in-service training support with organised staff development programmes and training through AGCAS. Training within these institutions was generally offered whenever it was required. Only one higher education institution did not offer training for practitioners and at the time of the research was undergoing major reorganisation.

Table 3.1.6 Target client groups by organisational context

Organisational context	Target client groups
Connexions, IAGP & Job Centre Plus (n=14)	16-59 year olds receiving benefits or not 18 year olds plus Adults aged 18-65 years Any adult aged 20 years plus Adults working or unemployed aged 20 years and above Adults aged 20 years or above living and/or working in a specified area Adults aged 20-64 years All adults in a specified area Employed and unemployed adults

Higher education (n=10)	Potential/prospective students All students and staff of HEI Contract researchers Former graduates Graduates from other institutions (up to 3 years after graduation) Any adults Local unemployed Employers and trainers
Further education (n=10)	All ages/anybody 15 years and above 16 years and above 16-19 year olds on courses with high drop out rates 20 years and above Potential/prospective and current students Home and overseas students Local population of 16-18 years Employed and unemployed adults Local community
Community/ outreach guidance & not-for-profit organisations (n=8)	18 years old and above Adult aged 20 years and above Suffering disadvantage (including those with attendance problems, with poor literacy/numeracy, suffering low esteem plus those excluded from school, the homeless and the long term unemployed) Working age seeking employment In receipt of benefits Employed and unemployed (including the unwaged) Disabled (as defined by DDA) New Deal for Disabled People Graduates People ready for change and seem ready to cope with it Residents of local community Refugees, asylum seekers and ethnic minorities who are suffering disproportionately high levels of unemployment
Private organisations & workplace guidance (n=8)	Young offenders and young people at risk of offending 14-19 year olds especially those at risk 16 year olds plus Not in Education, Employment or Training Long term unemployed aged 16-25 years Adults working or unemployed aged 20 years and above 50 years and above Women returners Teenage parents Talented/gifted facing barriers to HE People of all ages working or living in a specified area Services sold to organisations Employed or unemployed adults living or studying in a specified area Anyone working in the contract organisation Anyone working within a specified industry (including new recruits and experienced sector workers)

3.1.6 Target client groups

The organisations that participated in this research targeted a wide variety of client groups which were not necessarily in the expected remit of the organisational context (see Table 3.1.6). Education institutions, for example, not only targeted prospective students, current students, graduates and staff of the institutions, but also members of the local community who may have needed advice and guidance. Community/outreach and not-for-profit organisations were not simply targeting the disadvantaged or the unemployed. Private careers organisations again targeted diverse client groups. This diversity in target client groups outside the expected remit of the organisation indicates the level of demand for guidance amongst adults. It also reflects funding pressures with organisations seeking contracts to work with groups beyond their core function.

3.2 Interview variations

3.2.1 Initial or follow-up

Of the 49 'useful' interviews, 35 were initial interviews within the professional context in which the interview took place and 14 were follow-up interviews (see Table 3.2 for more detail).

Of the 35 initial interviews, seven were with clients who had been referred for guidance. Proportionately, there were more referrals in the community/outreach/not-for-profit contexts than the other professional contexts in which guidance took place. No referrals were found in Further Education contexts. The source of referrals was as follows:

- 3 from 'duty' interviews[43] within the same organisation;
- 1 from a Job Centre;
- 1 from a training course;
- 1 from a community project; and
- 1 unspecified.

With the 14 follow-up interviews, the guidance intervention was part of an on-going schedule of interviews. Across the six different types of professional contexts, there were more follow-up interviews in community/outreach/not-for-profit organisations and private/workplace guidance organisations than in the other contexts (60%, n=9).

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[43] 'Duty' interview refers to those interviews conducted by a designated guidance practitioner 'on duty' in an organisation to see clients with no prior appointment.

Although many characteristics of the initial, compared with the follow-up interviews were similar (like establishing a contract, giving information, agreeing an action plan, identifying opportunities for follow-up), the content of the interview (i.e. what was discussed) was sometimes different. For example, in one follow-up interview where detailed exploration of the client's potential had previously taken place, the practitioner probed, in detail, the results of a skills assessment that the client had completed. As part of this process, job preferences were clarified. The major outcome, similar to many initial interviews, was agreement that the client would undertake some focused research on particular job areas.

3.2.2   Length of guidance interviews

Considerable variations in the length of time taken for a guidance interview were found and this inevitably influenced what occurred. The two shortest interviews lasted just over 16 minutes, with the longest taking 1 hour 42 minutes. The interviews that took place within both Further and Higher Education contexts were all in the range 26-65 minutes long. The longest interview took place in a private organisation. The average length of time taken for a guidance interview was 50 minutes (see Table 3.2 for more detail).

The two shortest interviews were both follow-ups. These both took place in community/outreach/not-for-profit organisational contexts and were part of an on-going programme of support and development. Because the clients were known to the practitioners, time was not spent building relationships or establishing rapport. There was a sense in which the practitioners were 'picking up from where they had left off' and monitoring progress as well as moving their clients on. Although agreed outcomes were occupationally relevant (in one case, it was agreed that the client and practitioner would work collaboratively on developing a CV; in the other, the client was advised about the support available to get a driving license, to broaden job options), it was evident that the practitioners were concerned that the client would feel comfortable about returning for the ongoing support deemed necessary for their re-entry to the labour market.

Table 3.2 Summary of interview characteristics by context

Interview characteristics	Organisation context					Total
	Connexions, IAGP & Job Centre Plus n=14	**Higher Education** n=10	**Further Education** n=10	**Community/outreach guidance & not-for-profit organisations** n=7	**Private organisation & workplace guidance** n=8	 n=49
Interview type						
initial *(referral)*	12 *(3)*	9 *(2)*	8	3 *(2)*	3	35
follow-up	2	1	2	4	5	14
Total	14	10	10	7	8	**49**
Length of interview (minutes)						
15-25	1			2	1	4
26-35	1	1	2			4
36-45	3	3	3		1	10
46-55	3	5	3	1	3	15
56-65	3	1	2	2		8
66-75	2			2	2	6
76-85	1					1
86-95						
96-105					1	1
Total	14	10	10	7	8	**49**
Resources used*						
Adult Directions (including feedback/interpretation)	3	1	2		3	9
Adult Directions identified as next step	2			1		3
Prospects Planner		7	1	1		9
websites (including Worktrain)	7	5	3	2	3	20
career profile	1	1				2
MBTI results					1	1
ESHL skills audit		1				1
Psychometric testing identified as next step	3				1	4

Notes:

* includes resources used, discussed or identified as next step

N.B. a guidance interview may use or discuss more than one resource

3.3   Clients

This section presents information on the clients who participated in the research study including: gender; age; disability; and ethnic origin (see Table 3.3). It should be noted that ethnic origin and disability were both self-reported by the client.

3.3.1   Gender

66% (n=33) of the participating clients were female. The only context in which the number of male clients outnumbered females was the community/outreach guidance and not-for-profit organisational contexts.

3.3.2   Age

A high proportion of clients (58%, n=29) who participated in this research were aged between 18 and 29 years. This is more pronounced in the higher education context where 9 of the 10 clients were in the 19 to 29 years group. Across all contexts 22% (n=11) of all clients were aged 30 to 39 years, whilst 20% (n=10) of all clients were aged 40 years and above. No clients over the age of 60 were recorded.

3.3.3   Ethnic origin

Asking clients to self-report their ethnic origin resulted in a variety of terms being used. The majority defined themselves as 'White British', but a number of clients from minority ethnic groups also participated (see Table 3.2). Across all contexts, 66% (n=33) of the clients defined themselves as 'White' or as 'White' with a nationality assigned. 24% (n=12) all the clients defined themselves as 'British' or 'English'. All clients from Connexions, IAGP and Job Centre Plus, and the higher education context defined themselves as belonging to these ethnic groups. However, it should be noted that one client defined herself as 'British', whilst the researcher noted that she was of African Caribbean descent. Five clients (10% of the sample) all of whom were female, defined themselves variously as 'British Caribbean', 'Black Caribbean', 'Black British' and 'Philippine' and 'Half cast' (50% Nigerian and 50% White).

Table 3.3 Client characteristics by organisational context and gender

Client characteristics	Organisational context															Total
	Connexions, IAGP & Job Centre Plus			Higher Education			Further Education			Community/outreach guidance & not-for-profit organisations			Private organisations & workplace guidance			
	Male	Female	Total n=14	Male	Female	Total n=10	Male	Female	Total n=10	Male	Female	Total n=8	Male	Female	Total n=8	
Age																
18-29	3	4	**7**	2	7	**9**	2	4	**6**	3	1	**4**		3	**3**	29
30-39	1	1	**2**	1		**1**		3	**3**	1	1	**2**	1	2	**3**	11
40-49	1	3	**4**								1	**1**	1	1	**2**	7
50-59		1	**1**					1	**1**	1		**1**				3
60+																
Total	5	9	14	3	7	10	2	8	10	5	3	8	2	6	8	50
Ethnic Origin																
White UK		1	**1**	1	1	**2**	1		**1**							4
White British	2	2	**4**	2	4	**6**		2	**2**	1	1	**2**	1	3	**4**	18
White English				1		**1**										1
White European		2	**2**				1		**1**				1		**1**	4
White		1	**1**		1	**1**		2	**2**		1	**1**		1	**1**	6
British	3	2	**5**					1	**1**	3		**3**				9
English		1	**1**					1	**1**	1		**1**				3
British Caribbean								1	**1**							1
Black Caribbean											1	**1**				1
Black British														1	**1**	1
Phillipine								1	**1**							1
Half cast (Nigerian/White)														1	**1**	1
Total	5	9	14	3	7	10	2	8	10	5	3	8	2	6	8	50
Disability																
yes		3	**3**		1	**1**				1	1	**2**	1		**1**	7
no	5	6	**11**	3	5	**8**	2	7	**9**	3	2	**5**	1	6	**7**	40
unknown					1	**1**		1	**1**	1		**1**				3
Total	5	9	14	3	7	10	2	8	10	5	3	8	2	6	8	50

Table 3.3.5 Clients' highest qualification level by organisational context and gender

Organisational context		Qualification Level						Total
		1 **Foundation**	**2** **Intermediate**	**3** **Advanced**	**4** **Higher level**	**5** **Higher level**	**No** **qualifications**	
Connexions, IAGP & Job Centre Plus	Male		3		2			**5**
	Female	2	2		5			**9**
n=14	**Total**	**2**	**5**		**7**			
Higher Education	Male			1	1	1		**3**
	Female			6	1			**7**
n=10	**Total**			**7**	**2**	**1**		
Further Education	Male			1	1			**2**
	Female		3	3			2	**8**
n=10	**Total**		**3**	**4**	**1**		**2**	
Community/outreach guidance & not-for-profit organisations	Male	2		1	1		1	**5**
	Female	1		2				**3**
n=8	**Total**	**3**		**3**	**1**		**1**	
Private organisations & workplace guidance	Male		1		1			**2**
	Female			2	4			**6**
n=8	**Total**		**1**	**2**	**5**			
Total		**5**	**9**	**16**	**16**	**1**	**3**	**50**

Level 1 = GSCE (D-G); CSE; GNVQ Foundation; City and Guilds Level 1
Level 2 = O Level; GCSE (A*-C); CSE Grade 1; GNVQ Intermediate
Level 3 = A Level; Advanced GNVQ; NVQ Level 3; BTEC National; Scottish Highers; Access course; City and Guilds
Level 4 = HND; BTEC Higher; Advanced Diploma; Degree; Higher TEC
Level 5 = Postgraduate qualification; Postgraduate diploma

3.3.4   Disability

Seven clients (14% of the sample) described themselves as having a disability (see Table 3.2). As with ethnic origin, disability was self-reported by the client, so it cannot be certain that a client defining themselves as 'disabled' would meet the criteria for 'disabled' specified in the Disability Discrimination Act (1995). However, those clients who defined themselves as having a disability may have felt that their illness, immobility or learning difficulty hindered their employment opportunities, so wanted it to be recorded. For instance, one stroke victim was suffering from a weakness on the left-side of his body which, he maintained, influenced the types of eligible jobs that he could undertake effectively. Other examples included registered disabilities, learning difficulties, illness and lack of mobility. Three cases were classified as unknown as nothing was recorded. There were no notable differences between organisational contexts.

3.3.5   Highest qualification level

64% of clients (n=32) achieved qualifications at level 3 or 4 (see Table 3.3.5). This level of qualification was evident across all organisational contexts. Fourteen clients (28%) gained their highest qualification at levels 1 and 2. One client in the higher education context reported a level 5 qualification. Three clients (6% of sample) (from further education, community/outreach guidance and not-for-profit organisations) had no qualifications. One client from a further education context had achieved an overseas qualification. An equivalence statement was obtained from the UK National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) and this statement was used to designate her qualification level for the purposes of this research.

3.3.6   Clients' experiences of advice and guidance

A high proportion (70%, n=35) of clients participating in the study reported previous experience of advice and guidance interviews. This was evident across all organisational contexts (see Table 3.3.6). These experiences had been predominately gained from schools, Job Centres and/or previous interviews with the same practitioner or at the same organisation. Other experiences of advice and guidance came from further and higher education institutions as part of a pre-course interview or (at one university) as part of a course. Advice and guidance had also been gained on New Deal programmes and at adult centres.

Table 3.3.6 Clients' experiences of advice and guidance interviews by organisational context and gender

Any previous experiences of advice and guidance interviews?	Male (n=17)	Female (n=33)	Total
Connexions, IAGP & Job Centre Plus	2	8	**10**
Higher Education	2	6	**8**
Further Education	2	4	**6**
Community/outreach guidance & not-for-profit organisations	3	2	**5**
Private organisations & workplace guidance	2	4	**6**
Total	**17**	**33**	**35**

3.4   Practitioners

This section presents information about the practitioners who participated in the research including: gender; age; ethnic origin (self-reported unless otherwise indicated); qualifications; experience in guidance; and previous knowledge about the client.

3.4.1   Gender

46% (n=23) of the practitioners participating in this research were male. There were equal numbers of male and female practitioners in: Connexions, IAGP and Job Centre Plus; higher education; and community/outreach guidance and not-for-profit organisational contexts.   In both further education, and private organisations and workplace guidance organisational contexts, there were more female practitioners than male.

3.4.2   Age

The majority of practitioners (38%, n=19) participating in this research were aged between 40 and 49 years.   Similar numbers of practitioners were aged 30-39 years (24%, n=12) and 50-59 years (30%, n=15). Three practitioners (6% of the sample) were aged 60 years and above. The age profile of the practitioners was older than that of the clients' age profile. This may account for the fact that in this study there were only three recorded instances where the practitioner was younger than the client.   Overall, there were no major differences between organisational contexts.

Table 3.4 Practitioners' characteristics by organisational context and gender

Practitioner characteristics	Organisational context															Total
	Connexions, IAGP & Job Centre Plus			Higher Education			Further Education			Community/outreach guidance & not-for-profit organisations			Private organisations & workplace guidance			
	Male	Female	Total n=14	Male	Female	Total n=10	Male	Female	Total n=10	Male	Female	Total n=8	Male	Female	Total n=8	
Age																
30-39	2		**2**		3	**3**	2	2	**4**	1	2	**3**				12
40-49	2	4	**6**	4	2	**6**	2*		**2**		1	**1**	1	3	**4**	19
50-59	2	1	**3**	1		**1**		4*	**4**	2	1	**3**	2	2	**4**	15
60+	1	1	**2**							1		**1**				3
unknown		1	**1**													1
Total	**7**	**7**	**14**	**5**	**5**	**10**	**4**	**6**	**10**	**4**	**4**	**8**	**3**	**5**	**8**	**50**
Ethnic Origin																
White UK	1		**1**	1		**1**	1*	1*	**2**							4
White British	3	5	**8**	2	2	**4**		3	**3**		4	**4**	1	1	**2**	21
White European				1	1	**2**	1		**1**				1		**1**	4
White English										1		**1**				1
White Welsh					1	**1**										1
White	1	1	**2**					1	**1**							3
British	1		**1**	1	1	**2**				1		**1**	1	1	**2**	6
English	1		**1**											1	**1**	2
Scottish								1	**1**							1
Irish										1		**1**				1
Black British										1		**1**				1
Indian							1		**1**							1
Hindu														1	**1**	1
Pakistani							1		**1**							1
Jewish - UK														1	**1**	1
unknown		1	**1**													1
Total	**7**	**7**	**14**	**5**	**5**	**10**	**4**	**6**	**10**	**4**	**4**	**8**	**3**	**5**	**8**	**50**

* one of the cases indicated was reported by the researcher

3.4.3 Ethnic origin

68% (n=34) of the practitioners participating in this study defined themselves as 'White' assigned to a nationality which includes 42% (n=21) who defined themselves as 'White British' (Table 3.4). Ten practitioners (20%) defined themselves as 'British', 'English', 'Scottish' and 'Irish'. Five practitioners (10%) defined themselves as belonging to ethnic minority groups including 'Black British', 'Indian', 'Hindu', 'Pakistani' and 'Jew'. Practitioners from minority ethnic groups were represented in further education, community/outreach and not-for-profit organisations together with private careers organisations and workplace guidance. One practitioner did not disclose their ethnic origin.

3.4.4 Qualifications

62% (n=31) of practitioners who participated in this study held either a Qualification in Careers Guidance (QCG), a Diploma in Careers Guidance (Dip CG) or a Certificate in Careers Guidance (Certificate in CG) (see Table 3.4.4). Similar numbers of men and women held these qualifications across all contexts. Practitioners with these qualifications were more likely to be working in Connexions, IAGP and Job Centre Plus, higher education and further education contexts. Within these contexts practitioners were more likely to have attained further qualifications and have undertaken related continuing professional development.

Two practitioners (4%) working in the community/outreach and not-for-profit context had attained an NVQ Level 3 in Advice and Guidance, whilst six practitioners (12%) across all contexts had attained an NVQ Level 4 in Advice and Guidance. Those practitioners participating in this study who had attained these qualifications were less likely to identify any further qualifications or training.

Across all contexts, eight practitioners (16%) held no specialist careers guidance qualifications. Three practitioners (6%) were working towards NVQ Level 3 or 4 in Advice and Guidance. All the practitioners with no specialist qualifications had related qualifications and/or had undertaken related continuing professional development.

Nine practitioners (18%) across all contexts held teaching qualifications. These practitioners were more likely to be working in the further education context.

Qualifications held by the practitioners participating in this study are shown in Table 3.4.4. For each type of qualification, an indication is given as to whether a practitioner

also had training or qualifications in one or more of the following: psychometric testing, Morrisby and BPS profiling; a Personal Adviser Diploma; some training or certificate in counselling, mentoring and/or coaching; a teaching qualification; and/or related continuing professional development.

3.4.5   Practitioners' experience

Practitioners participating in this study had considerable professional experience. 60% (n=30) of the sample had been active practitioners for over 10 years and had gained their experience in a wide variety of contexts. Table 3.4.5a shows the numbers of years for which the practitioners had been *active* practitioners and indicates whether their training had been initial or continuous.

Only six (12%) had been *active* practitioners for less than five years and 14 (28%) had been *active* for between 6 and 10 years. 40% (n=20) of the practitioners had been *active* practitioners for between 11 and 20 years. Nine of those participating in the study (18%) have been active between 21 and 30 years, whilst one practitioner has been active for more than 31 years. There were again no notable differences across organisational contexts.

A high proportion of the practitioners (96%, n=48) reported that they had undertaken continuous professional development, with only two practitioners indicating that their training was limited to initial qualification. This is consistent with the finding that the majority of organisations had good levels of in-service training support for their employees (see Section 3.1.5 above).

It is evident that the practitioners have gained their professional experience in a wide variety of contexts and work experiences. Table 3.4.5b provides a list of these contexts.

3.4.6   Previous knowledge about the client

The levels of information a practitioner had about the client prior to the guidance interview is presented in Table 3.4.6. In the majority of cases (66%, n=33) the practitioner had no or little information about their client. For the remaining cases, practitioners had met the client at: a guidance session run by the practitioner; a coaching relationship; at courses run by the organisation; or pre-interview booking/referral documents.

Table 3.4.4 Practitioners' qualifications by organisational context and gender

Qualification attained by practitioner (plus number of practitioners with qualification and qualifications/training defined as relevant by practitioner)	Organisational context										Total
	Connexions, IAGP & Job Centre Plus		Higher Education		Further Education		Community/outreach guidance & not-for-profit organisations		Private organisations & workplace guidance		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
QCG, Dip CG, Certificate in CG	**4**	**5**	**5**	**5**	**3 #**	**4**	**2#**	**2 ##**	**2**	**1**	**33**
with psychometric testing, Morrisby, BPS	3	3	2		1	1			1		11
with Diploma Personal Adviser		1	~		1	~					2
with counselling/mentoring/coaching		2		2					1		5
with a teaching qualification*		1	1	1	1	2					6
with related CPD**	1	4	5	5	3	4	2	1	2	1	28
NVQ Level 3							**1**	**1**		**1**	**3**
with psychometric testing, Morrisby, BPS											
with Diploma Personal Adviser											
with counselling/mentoring/coaching											
with a teaching qualification*											
with related CPD**							1			1	2
NVQ Level 4	**1**	**1**				**1**	**1**			**2**	**6**
with psychometric testing, Morrisby, BPS	1										1
with Diploma Personal Adviser											
with counselling/mentoring/coaching										1	1
with a teaching qualification*		1								1	2
with related CPD**	1	1				1				2	5
Related qualifications	**2**	**1**			**1**	**1**		**1**	**1**	**1**	**8**
working towards NVQ Level 3 or 4	1	1			1						3
with a Degree	2							1	1		4
with psychometric testing, Morrisby, BPS	1									1	2
with Diploma Personal Adviser											
with counselling/mentoring/coaching						1		1		1	3
with a teaching qualification*	1					1			1		3
with related CPD**	1	1			1	1		1	1	1	7

* teaching qualification includes MEd, PGCE, City and Guilds, FE teaching certificate, Cert Ed

** related CPD includes in-service training, MA, MBA, MSc, AGCAS training, D32, D33, D34, D36, FE certificate, ECDL

one practitioner has a Dip CG and NVQ Level 4 in Advice and Guidance

one practitioner has a QCG and NVQ Level 3 in Advice and Guidance

~ undertaken some Connexions courses but no qualification gained.

Table 3.4.5a Practitioners' experience in years and training by organisational context and gender

Practitioners' experience	Organisational context															Total
	Connexions, IAGP & Job Centre Plus			Higher Education			Further Education			Community/outreach guidance & not-for-profit organisations			Private organisations & workplace guidance			
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
			n=14			n=10			n=10			n=8			n=8	
Experience as active practitioner (years)																
0-5	2	1	**3**	1		**1**					2	**2**				**6**
6-10	2		**2**	1	2	**3**	3	2	**5**	1	1	**2**		2	**2**	**14**
11-15		2	**2**	1	1	**2**		1	**1**	2	1	**3**	1	2	**3**	**11**
16-20	1	3	**4**		1	**1**	1		**1**				1	2	**3**	**9**
21-25	1		**1**	2	1	**3**		1	**1**	1		**1**				**6**
26-30								2	**2**				1		**1**	**3**
31-35	1		**1**													**1**
Has training been initial or continuous?																
initial	1		**1**								1	**1**				**2**
continuous	6	7	**13**	5	5	**10**	4	6	**10**	4	3	**7**	3	5	**8**	**48**

Table 3.4.5b Contexts in which practitioners had gained their experience

Organisational context	Contexts in which practitioners had gained their experience
Connexions, IAGP and Job Centre Plus (n=14)	Youth employment officer Local education authority (including Schools) Sixth form Further Education Higher Education Volunteer/Community work (including the Samaritans) Local government Private careers organisation Careers service Connexions Adult guidance sector (including Adult centres) Job Centre TEC
Higher Education (n=10)	Local education authority (including Schools) Further Education Higher Education Post-16 education sector Careers service Connexions Adult guidance sector (including Adult centres)
Further Education (n=10)	Local education authority (including Schools) Further Education Higher Education Careers service Connexions Government departments Private careers organisations Private recruitment consultancies
Community/outreach guidance and not-for-profit organisations (n=8)	Community work Working with adults Working with people with disabilities National Association of the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (voluntary organisation) Not-for-profit organisations Employment service Further and higher education Private organisations
Private organisations and workplace guidance (n=8)	Schools Sixth form Further Education Job Centre Voluntary organisations Private careers organisations EDAP Outplacement agency TEC Career service Commercial organisation DfES with long term unemployed and ex-offenders Outreach work Redundancy counselling

Table 3.4.6 Practitioners' previous knowledge about client by organisational context

Practitioners' knowledge about client	Organisational context					Total
	Connexions, IAGP & Job Centre Plus	Higher Education	Further Education	Community/outreach guidance & not for profit organisations	Private organisations & workplace guidance	
No information	6	1	2	1		10
Basic information*	7	6	4	2	4	23
Client already had guidance interview with practitioner	1	2	1	3	2	9
Met client via a drop in advice session		1	1	1		3
Client known from another situation **			1	1	2	4
Unknown			1			1

* information recorded when appointment was made, from referral form, proforma or questionnaire
** including from a group guidance session run by the practitioner, from coaching relationship, from course run by the organisation

Part D: 'Useful' guidance

4.   Perceptions of the guidance interview

One of the research questions for this study is: what is effective guidance? (see Section 2.1). Important starting points for such an investigation are to establish what did, or did not, occur during the course of the interview and what was valued by participants. This type of investigation has proved contentious. For example, a small scale study into careers guidance by Wilden and La Gro (1998[44]) studied the separate views of clients and practitioners and found high levels of disagreement, with practitioners typically viewing the guidance intervention more positively than their clients. The current case study research similarly recorded the views of the client about the guidance interview separately from the views of practitioners. Additionally, it compares similarities and differences between clients and practitioners with an independent third party ('expert witness'). This section sets out results of the analysis of the yes/no answers to each of the questions in the client, practitioner and expert witness questionnaires.

Analysis of the client, practitioner and expert witness questionnaires indicates:

4.1   Key findings

There were high levels of agreement between the client, practitioner and expert witness.

The highest levels of agreement were noted between the client and practitioner responses (82% agreement), and the expert witness and client responses (78% agreement). A high level of agreement was also noted between the practitioner and the expert witness (75% agreement).

In all the comparisons of questionnaire analysis the only instance of total agreement (100%) was between the practitioner and the client for question 1 which focused on the guidance intervention introduction and welcome.

Question 12, which focused on the practitioner/client relationship and issues of respect, together with question 14, which explored whether the guidance intervention had been useful, had the highest levels of agreement when comparing all questionnaires.

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[44] Wilden, S. and La Gro, N. (1998) 'New Frameworks for Careers Guidance: Developing a Conceptual Model of the Interview', British Journal of Guidance and Counselling, Vol. 26, No. 2, pp. 175-193.

The lowest agreement (42% agreement) occurred for question 10 between the practitioner and expert witness, which investigated whether a client's thinking had been changed in any way.

Remarkably high levels of agreement were noted for the responses to the affective questions with the highest level of agreement found between the client and practitioner responses (94%). Agreement levels for the behavioural and cognitive question responses were slightly lower.

4.2   Levels of agreement about the guidance interviews

Table 4.2a gives a summary of the counted agreements, disagreements and complex disagreements for all three questionnaires by question, highlighting 'high' levels of agreement. The triangulation at the centre of the analysis is reflected in this table. Since it compares the counted agreements, disagreements and complex disagreements between:

- the client and practitioner;
- the practitioner and expert witness; and
- the expert witness and practitioner.

In Table 4.2a 'agreements' are questions in which the two respondents have identical answers, such as yes-yes, no-no and yes/no-yes/no. Disagreements are counted when question responses by the two respondents are not in agreement, such as yes-no and no-yes.

Although respondents were asked to answer 'yes' or 'no', some responded by circling both 'yes' and 'no' or by writing something different. These instances have been labelled 'complex disagreements'[45] and are also counted in Table 4.2a. They relate to where one or two respondents did not answer 'yes' or 'no', but rather gave a combination of the two possible answers or wrote something different (such as '?', 'unsure', 'but', 'unclear', 'not applicable' and 'not exactly') which, in the majority of cases, was then qualified in their written answer. These complex disagreements have been further analysed by categorising responses as 'almost agreement', 'probably disagreement' and 'impossible to categorise' (see Table 4.2d).

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[45] These complex disagreements do not include instances where both respondents have written the same answer, such as yes/no-yes/no or n/a-n/a.

Table 4.2a Summary of counted questionnaire responses by question ('high' levels of agreement highlighted)

Questionnaire and responses (n=50)	Question														Total (%)
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
Client and Practitioner															
Agreement	100	74	94	82	94	86	72	80	90	60	82	96	50	90	**82**
Disagreement		16	2	8	2	4	14	10	6	26	12	2	30	2	**10**
Complex disagreement		10	4	10	4	10	14	10	4	14	6	2	20	8	**8**
Total (%)															**100**
Practitioner and Expert witness															
Agreement	96	54	84	68	76	82	62	74	80	42	88	94	60	92	**75**
Disagreement	2	22	6	20	8	8	14	6	10	32	6	2	18		**11**
Complex disagreement	2	24	10	12	16	10	24	20	10	26	6	4	22	8	**14**
Total (%)															**100**
Expert witness and Client															
Agreement	96	64	84	70	78	82	76	86	84	44	82	94	56	96	**78**
Disagreement	2	18	8	18	6	6	6	4	6	38	10		28		**11**
Complex disagreement	2	18	8	12	16	12	18	10	10	18	8	6	16	4	**11**
Total (%)															**100**

Table 4.2b Comparing questionnaire responses: the agreements

Questionnaire and responses		Question														Total
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
Client and Practitioner																
yes	yes	50	36	47	39	47	43	36	38	45	19	39	48	19	45	**551**
no	no		1		2				2		10	2		6		**23**
y/n	y/n											1				**1**
Total		**50**	**37**	**47**	**41**	**47**	**43**	**36**	**40**	**45**	**30**	**41**	**48**	**25**	**45**	**575**
Practitioner and Expert witness																
yes	yes	48	24	42	31	38	40	31	35	40	17	42	43	25	45	**501**
no	no		3		3		1		2		4	2	4	5		**24**
?	?														1	**1**
Total		**48**	**27**	**42**	**34**	**38**	**41**	**31**	**37**	**40**	**21**	**44**	**47**	**30**	**46**	**526**
Expert witness and Client																
yes	yes	48	28	42	32	38	40	38	40	42	18	39	46	25	48	**524**
no	no		4		3	1	1		3		4	2	1	3		**22**
Total		**48**	**32**	**42**	**35**	**39**	**41**	**38**	**43**	**42**	**22**	**41**	**47**	**28**	**48**	**546**

For the purposes of this report, 'high' levels of agreement are defined by 70% and above. In comparing client and practitioner, practitioner and expert witness, and expert witness and client questionnaires, there is a 50% chance of both respondents answering the same to any particular question even taking the diverse responses into consideration (i.e. 'unsure', '?' etc.). Although this definition is arbitrary, findings would not differ significantly if high levels of agreement were defined as 75% or above, or 80% or above. This definition is used because the majority of frequencies are in this range, whilst the remaining frequencies fall well below 70%. The only exception is the response to question 4, between the practitioner and expert witness, which had a 68% agreement

level. High levels of agreement (i.e. those of 70% or above) are shaded in on Table 4.2a. To ensure consistency with the measure of high level agreement, 'poor/low' levels of agreement are defined as 30% or less. Those agreement levels falling between 31% and 69% can neither be defined as 'good' or 'poor'.

Table 4.2c Comparing questionnaire responses: the disagreements

Questionnaire and response		Question														Total
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
Client and Practitioner																
yes	no		5		3		1	6	3	2	4	2		8		**34**
no	yes		3	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	9	4	1	7	1	**33**
Total			**8**	**1**	**4**	**1**	**2**	**7**	**5**	**3**	**13**	**6**	**1**	**15**	**1**	**67**
Practitioner and Expert witness																
yes	no	1	9	3	8	4	4	2	1	3	7	1	1	3		**47**
no	yes		2		2			5	2	2	9	2		6		**30**
Total		**1**	**11**	**3**	**10**	**4**	**4**	**7**	**3**	**5**	**16**	**3**	**1**	**9**		**77**
Expert witness and Client																
yes	no			1				1	1		12	4		10		**29**
no	yes	1	9	3	9	3	3	2	1	3	7	1		4		**46**
Total		**1**	**9**	**4**	**9**	**3**	**3**	**3**	**2**	**3**	**19**	**5**		**14**		**75**

Table 4.2d Comparing questionnaire responses: the complex disagreements

Questionnaire and response	Question														Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
Client and Practitioner															
almost agreement		4	2	3	1	3	2	4	2	4			6	4	35
probably disagreement		1		1	1		3	1		2	1				10
impossible to categorise				1		2	2			1	2	1	4		13
Total		**5**	**2**	**5**	**2**	**5**	**7**	**5**	**2**	**7**	**3**	**1**	**10**	**4**	**58**
Practitioner and Expert witness															
almost agreement	1	8	3	3	6	2	7	4	4	5	2	2	3	2	52
probably disagreement		2				1	1	2		2			3		11
impossible to categorise		2	2	3	2	2	4	4	1	6	1		5	2	34
Total	**1**	**12**	**5**	**6**	**8**	**5**	**12**	**10**	**5**	**13**	**3**	**2**	**11**	**4**	**97**
Expert witness and Client															
almost agreement			2		2				1	1	2	1	4		13
probably disagreement						1	1						1		3
impossible to categorise	1	9	4	4	8	3	8	5	4	8	2	2	3	2	63
Total	**1**	**9**	**4**	**6**	**8**	**6**	**9**	**5**	**5**	**9**	**4**	**3**	**8**	**2**	**79**

N.B. In all cases the lead questionnaire (i.e. that completed by the client) had priority in determining whether the comparison was an agreement or a disagreement, and any ambiguity from the lead questionnaire meant that the comparison was defined as a complex disagreement.

Almost agreement = y-?, y-y?, y?-y, y-unsure, y-y/n, y-y/n?, y but-y, y-not sure, y-y but, y/n?-y/n.
Probably disagreement = y-n/a, y-n?, y-n/a, y but-n, n-y?, n-y/n, n?-y/n, n-?, n?-y.
Impossible to categorise = y?-y/n, ?-y/n, ?-y, ?-n, n-not exactly, y/n?-y, y/n-not clear, y/n-y, y/n-n, y/n-n/a, n/a-y, n/a-n, n/a-y/n, not clear-n?, not sure-y, unsure-y, not exactly-y.

4.2.1 Comparing the client and practitioner questionnaire responses

The practitioner and client questionnaire responses provided the highest level of agreement (82%) suggesting that a practitioner and client's perceptions of a guidance intervention were more congruent than that of a third party. A disagreement level of only 18% (including complex disagreements) emerged. The questions with the highest levels of agreement between the client, and practitioner were:

- question 1 (100% agreement) on the welcome and introduction by the practitioner;
- question 12 (96% agreement) which explored issues of respect in the practitioner/client relationship;
- question 3 (94% agreement) on whether the client felt comfortable discussing personal information;
- question 5 (94% agreement) on whether the practitioner demonstrated careful listening throughout the interview;
- question 9 (90% agreement) which probed whether the practitioner understood what the client needed; and
- question 14 (90% agreement) which asked whether the intervention had been useful.

Additionally, high levels of agreement were noted for:

- question 6 (86% agreement) which focused on whether the practitioner understood what mattered most to the client;
- question 4 (82% agreement) which explored if the practitioner had helped the client explain what they wanted to get out of the interview;
- question 11 (82% agreement) which focused on agreeing a future action plan;
- question 8 (80% agreement) which looked at whether the intervention had helped the client achieve a better understanding of themselves and their situation;
- question 2 (74% agreement) probed if the client had understood what was going to happen in the interview; and
- question 7 (72% agreement) on whether the client understood the reason for moving on to new topics of discussion in the interview.

High levels of agreement between the client and practitioner were, therefore, noted for most questions, except 10 (26% disagreement) and 13 (30% disagreement).

4.2.2   Comparing the practitioner and expert witness questionnaire responses

Overall, there was a 75% agreement found between the practitioner and the expert witness questionnaires. The highest levels of agreement were noted for:

- question 1 (96% agreement);
- question 12 (94% agreement); and
- question 14 (92% agreement).

High levels of agreement between the practitioner and expert witness were also found for: question 11 (88% agreement); question 3 (84% agreement); question 6 (82% agreement); question 9 (80% agreement); question 5 (76% agreement); and question 8 (74% agreement).

Question 10 had the lowest agreement between the practitioner and the expert witness at 42% (agreement).

4.2.3   Comparing the expert witness and client questionnaire responses

There was 78% overall agreement between the client and expert witness responses which equated to 22% disagreement (including complex disagreements). The highest levels of agreement were again noted for:

- question 1 (96% agreement);
- question 12 (94% agreement); and
- question 14 (96% agreement).

High levels of agreement between the expert witness and the client questionnaire responses were noted for: question 8 (86% agreement); question 3 (84% agreement); question 9 (84% agreement); question 6 (82% agreement); and question 11 (82% agreement).

A good level of agreement was found for: question 5 (78% agreement); question 7 (76% agreement); and question 4 (70% agreement). Question 2 (64% agreement) and question 13 (56% agreement) also had good levels of agreement between the practitioner and the expert witness. Question 10 had the lowest agreement between the practitioner and the expert witness at 44% (agreement).

4.3   Analysis of the affective, behavioural and cognitive questions

Remarkably high levels of agreement were noted for the affective (i.e. regarding the relationship between the client and practitioner, including trust and confidence) question

responses (see Table 4.3a). The highest level of agreement was again observed between the client and practitioner responses (94%). The levels of agreement between the practitioner and expert witness (86%), and the expert witness and client (87%) responses were also high. High levels of agreement were found for all the affective questions. However, agreement between the practitioner and expert witness (76%), and the expert witness and client (78%) were not as high for question 5 compared to the other affective questions. Question 5 focused on whether the practitioner showed that they were listening to the client and had a high level of agreement between only the client and the practitioner. This may have been a result of the 'expert witness' being unable to observe non-verbal behaviours that would have demonstrated that the practitioner was listening and understanding.

High levels of agreement were also noted for the behavioural question responses (see Table 4.3b). An 82% agreement was noted between the client and practitioner responses, which were again the highest level of agreement. A high level of agreement (76%) was observed between the expert witness and client responses compared to an agreement level of 70% between the practitioner and expert witness responses. The agreement levels for the behavioural question responses were lower than those observed for the affective question responses (see Table 4.2b).

The responses to the affective and behavioural questions reflect the overall agreement levels which were observed in Table 4.2a.

The cognitive question responses range from a 42% to 88% agreement level (see Table 4.3c). The highest level of overall agreement for the cognitive questions was observed for question 11 which was focused on the development of goals and planning. The complex disagreement levels for the cognitive question responses were relatively high compared to those of the affective question responses.

The highest level of overall agreement for the cognitive questions was found between the expert witness and client responses. The highest level of disagreement between the client and practitioner responses was observed for the cognitive question responses, even though it was only 20%.

Table 4.3a Questionnaire responses for the affective questions

Questionnaire and response	Affective questions					Total
	1	**5**	**6**	**12**	**3**	
	warm	listening	empathic	acknowledging	confidentiality,	**(%)**
(n=50)	welcome		understanding		genuiness	
Client and Practitioner						
Agreement	50	47	43	48	47	**94**
Disagreement		1	2	1	1	**2**
Complex disagreement		2	5	1	2	**4**
Total (%)						**100**
Practitioner and Expert witness						
Agreement	48	38	41	47	42	**86**
Disagreement	1	4	4	1	3	**5**
Complex disagreement	1	8	5	2	5	**8**
Total (%)						**100***
Expert witness and Client						
Agreement	48	39	41	47	42	**87**
Disagreement	1	3	3		4	**4**
Complex disagreement	1	8	6	3	4	**9**
Total (%)						**100**

* Column does not sum to 100 because of rounding.

N.B. Question 3 is both affective and behavioural.

Table 4.3b Questionnaire responses for the behavioural questions

Questionnaire and response	Behavioural questions					Total
	2	**4**	**7**	**9**	**3**	
	scene	joint	introducing	explaining	confidentiality,	**(%)**
(n=50)	setting	understanding	topics	information	genuiness	
Client and Practitioner						
Agreement	37	41	36	45	47	**82**
Disagreement	8	4	7	3	1	**9**
Complex disagreement	5	5	7	2	2	**8**
Total (%)						**100***
Practitioner and Expert witness						
Agreement	27	34	31	40	42	**70**
Disagreement	11	10	7	5	3	**14**
Complex disagreement	12	6	12	5	5	**16**
Total (%)						**100**
Expert witness and Client						
Agreement	32	35	38	42	42	**76**
Disagreement	9	9	3	3	4	**11**
Complex disagreement	9	6	9	5	4	**13**
Total (%)						**100**

* Column does not sum to 100 because of rounding.

N.B. Question 3 is both affective and behavioural.

Table 4.3c Questionnaire responses for the cognitive questions

Questionnaire and response	Cognitive questions				Total
	8	**10**	**11**	**13**	
	developing	challenging	developing	broadening	**(%)**
(n=50)	coherence	assumptions	long term goals	perspectives	
Client and Practitioner					
Agreement	40	30	41	25	**68**
Disagreement	5	13	6	15	**20**
Complex disagreement	5	7	3	10	**13**
Total (%)					**100***
Practitioner and Expert witness					
Agreement	37	21	44	30	**66**
Disagreement	3	16	3	9	**16**
Complex disagreement	10	13	3	11	**19**
Total (%)					**100***
Expert witness and Client					
Agreement	43	22	41	28	**67**
Disagreement	2	19	5	14	**20**
Complex disagreement	5	9	4	8	**13**
Total (%)					**100**

* Column does not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Some of the highest levels of agreement were recorded for question 14 between: the client and practitioner (90%, n=45[46]); the practitioner and expert witness (92%, n=46[47]); and the expert witness and client (96%, n=48[48]). What emerges, strongly, was how the guidance interventions had been useful to the clients for varied reasons. These will be explored in Sections 5 and 6.

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[46] The outstanding 5 comparisons were: 1 disagreement and 4 complex disagreements which were categorised as 'almost agreement'.

[47] The remaining 4 comparisons were complex disagreements which were categorised as 2 'almost agreement' and 2 'probably disagreement'.

[48] The remaining 2 were complex disagreements which were impossible to categorise.

5.   What is 'useful' guidance?

The purpose of this section is to establish, in detail, what was defined as 'useful' guidance by clients, practitioners and expert witnesses. This was achieved by an analysis of the questionnaires completed by the client and practitioner immediately after the interview, and subsequently by the expert witness (see Section 2.4 above). The views of these groups of participants were, for the most part, similar. That is 'useful' guidance was defined both as the outcomes of the guidance process and how it developed the skills and knowledge of the client.

5.1   Key findings

A key finding of a comparative analysis of the views of clients, practitioners and expert witnesses is that they all have similar understandings of the usefulness and overall benefits of guidance to clients (see Table 5.3). These include:

- giving a client direction, focus or a plan for the future (47%, n=69);
- providing a client with access to information, leading to a feeling of being better informed (29%, n=43); and
- increasing a client's self-confidence and self awareness, encouraging a positive attitude and reducing client confusion (23%, n=34).

Additionally, developing a client's understanding, increasing their awareness and broadening their ideas (18%, n=26) together with motivating, inspiring and encouraging clients (16%, n=24) were highlighted as 'useful elements of guidance.

13% of practitioner and expert witness questionnaires (n=19) indicated that reassurance, confirmation and clarification of a client's ideas and progress were 'useful' elements of guidance. Practitioners and expert witnesses also remarked on how many clients had given positive feedback in their interviews, together with clear affirmation of the help received.

In summary guidance is regarded as 'useful' to clients when it: promotes positive outcomes for the client; provides access to networks, information and knowledge; brings about constructive change in the client; and provides the client with a positive experience.

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5.2   'Useful' guidance

Question 14 asked whether the guidance interview was useful (closed question: yes/no) and if so, in what ways (open ended response). All but one of the fifty clients indicated that the guidance had been useful (see Table 5.2).   Similar percentages of both practitioners and expert witnesses agreed. This report is based on an analysis of those 49 interviews identified as 'useful' by clients together with the corresponding questionnaires, the findings of which are presented in Section 5, 6 and 7.

Table 5.2 Number of positive responses to 'Was the interview useful to…?'

	Number of positive* responses n=50	Percentage of positive* responses n=50
Client	49	98%
Practitioner	47	94%
Expert witness	48	96%

* A positive response includes one instance in which a practitioner answered 'yes?'.

Three practitioners were unsure whether the interview has been useful to that client. For example:

> Unsure about this. The client had a lot of other things impinging on the career decisions and I'm not sure how far she will have felt she was 'moved along'…
> [Practitioner questionnaire 16]

> I think the client felt I confirmed a lot of what she has already considered. I'm uncertain I offered her any new suggestions.
> [Practitioner questionnaire 41]

Only one expert witness was unsure about the usefulness of the interview for the client:

> In that it signposted her to information but it appears that she was accessing much of this anyway.
> [Expert witness questionnaire 7]

5.3 Aspects of 'useful' guidance identified by clients, practitioners and expert witnesses

In addition to indicating whether the interview was useful, respondents were asked to elaborate. The client, practitioner and expert witness responses to this open-ended element of question 14 were coded (see Appendix 14 for the list of codes) and systematically analysed to draw out exactly what had made the guidance interview useful.

All clients who had found the guidance interview 'useful' (n=49) gave a positive example as to why the guidance interview had been useful to them. Three practitioners and one expert witness, as indicated above in Section 5.2, were unsure. Responses to questions 15 and 16, which will be discussed further in Section 6, were analysed alongside the open-ended responses to question 14 to produce a more in-depth understanding of what is useful guidance. A summary of these responses is shown in Table 5.3.

Analysis revealed four broad categories of 'usefulness': promoting positive outcomes for the client; providing access to networks, knowledge and information; encouraging constructive change in client; and, overall, providing the client with a positive experience. Three included two or more sub-elements:

Promoting positive outcomes for the client
Understanding explored and challenged
Identification of next steps/future plan, provided direction/focus and advocacy.
New awareness of learning and employment opportunities.

Providing access to networks, information and knowledge
Given access to and/or advised of networks and information, being better informed.
Given knowledge/information enabling the client to progress.

Encouraging constructive change in the client
Increased self-confidence, positive attitudes, confusion reduced.
Developed new skills.
Developed understanding, increased awareness and broadened ideas.
Motivated, inspired and encouraged.

Providing the client with a positive experience

Opportunity for reflection and an in-depth discussion.

Answered questions and/or concerns.

Gave reassurance, confirmation or clarification of ideas/plans/progress.

These categories and elements are examined in more detail in Sections 5.4, 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7.

5.4 Promoting positive outcomes for the client

The positive outcomes of the guidance interview were defined variously by clients, practitioners and expert witnesses as: instances in which a client's understanding of their own situation and/or the wider environment had been explored and/or challenged; or where a client had been given direction and a plan for the future. Particular examples follow:

5.4.1 Understanding explored and challenged

Six clients (12%) valued the interview because their ideas and understanding about something had been explored and/or challenged. For example:

> *It has helped me explore my own ideas about the kind of job I would like and explored why I had replied in certain ways and the kind of expectations of a job.*
>
> [Client questionnaire 24]

Views of practitioners and expert witnesses were similar, with one practitioner and two expert witnesses giving the same reason. Examples follow:

> *…and by opening up possibilities he hadn't thought of.*
>
> [Practitioner questionnaire 4]

> *…the client was helped to see a different way of looking at possible careers/jobs and how to think about them. He went away with a number of jobs to consider, many of which he would not have looked at previously…*
>
> [Expert witness questionnaire 37]

Table 5.3 Summary of coded responses: 'useful' guidance

Code	Code description	Number of responses coded by questionnaire*			Number of questionnaires coded	Percentage of all questionnaires coded
		Client	Practitioner	Expert witness		
	Promoting positive outcomes for the client					
7	explored/challenged perceptions, ideas and understanding	6	1	2	**9**	**6**
9/4b	identification of next steps/future plan, given direction/focus, advocacy	20	26	23	**69**	**47**
1b	new awareness of learning and employment opportunities	6	0	1	**7**	**5**
	Providing access to networks, information and knowledge					
5	access to/advised of information/networks, being better informed	16	14	13	**43**	**29**
2b	knowledge/information communicated enabling client to progress	8	5	1	**14**	**10**
	Encouraging constructive change in client					
1/3b	increased self-confidence/self-awareness, positive attitude, confusion reduced	15	12	7	**34**	**23**
2	developed new skills	4	5	2	**11**	**7**
3	developed understanding, increased awareness and broadened ideas	9	10	7	**26**	**18**
8/9b	motivated, inspired and encouraged	7	8	9	**24**	**16**
	Providing client with a positive experience					
4	opportunity for reflection and an in-depth discussion	2	5	6	**13**	**9**
6	questions/concerns answered	2	0	3	**5**	**3**
13	reassurance, confirmation and clarification of ideas/plans/progress	0	11	8	**19**	**13**

Notes:

49 open-ended responses to question 14, 15 and 16 were coded relating to the client, the practitioner and the expert witness.

* Although a code may appear more than once in a specific questionnaire, it is only counted as occurring once in the document.

5.4.2　Provided direction, focus and a plan for the future

Being provided with direction, focus and a plan for the future was identified as useful by 41% of clients (n=20), for instance:

>*…Pointed me in the right direction. I didn't know where to start now I have a plan.*
>
>[Client questionnaire 1]

>*Helped me focus on why I'm doing my degree.*
>
>[Client questionnaire 25]

>*…the idea of arranging to meet people already employed in various careers was probably the standout piece of advice…*
>
>[Client questionnaire 26]

>*Set my mind at ease! Very reassuring and focused as I do now have a plan and I know what I have to do.*
>
>[Client questionnaire 27]

>*Gave me direction and a first stepping stone.*
>
>[Client questionnaire 40]

Agreement was found in 53% of practitioners (n=26) and 47% of the expert witness questionnaires (n=23). For example:

>*This client had already given a lot of thought to his future plans. Needed some clarification on exactly what to do next.*
>
>[Practitioner questionnaire 1]

Some practitioners wrote about 'strategies', 'action plans' and 'next steps', implying that the guidance interview is part of a longer process. For instance:

>*…Identifiable action points at end of interview gave him a future plan/strategy.*
>
>[Practitioner questionnaire 30]

Views of expert witnesses were similar to both the clients' and practitioners' views on this theme, for instance:

The interview enabled the client to move on and to start investigating short and long term goals. It has also shown the client that she needs to take ownership of the decision…

[Expert witness questionnaire 36]

5.4.3 Clients found out about opportunities for learning and employment

Six clients (12%) believed that they had gained a new awareness of learning and/or employment opportunities. This served to enthuse clients, for instance:

The idea that I could do a whole variety of different jobs, with the experience I have and how I could get more training to do the things I would like to.

[Client questionnaire 30]

Some issues I had, have been clarified and I am delighted to come away with new thoughts on possible career options, that will hopefully benefit me in the long run.

[Client questionnaire 44]

One expert witness noted how:

The client was helped to see that there was a wide range of career/course options open to her, through the practitioner's use of information.

[Expert witness questionnaire 20]

5.5 Providing access to networks, knowledge and information

Providing a client with access to networks, knowledge and information was identified to help the client feel better informed and enable them to progress.

5.5.1 Clients feeling better informed as a result of access to networks, knowledge and information

Being given access to networks or provided with relevant information, which resulted in feeling better informed, were identified as useful by clients (33%, n=16) and practitioners (29%, n=14), plus 27% of the expert witness questionnaires (n=13). For instance:

I was unsure where to look for vacancies…helped in giving me a comprehensive listing of (where) night vacancies are advertised.

[Client questionnaire 8]

Similar responses were given by practitioners:

> *Lots of useful information and a couple of useful contacts.*
>
> [Practitioner questionnaire 14]

These were reinforced by expert witness views. For example:

> *…She was given clear and relevant information about various possible routes into these career areas…*
>
> [Expert witness questionnaire 18]

Although the focus of this analysis has been the 49 interviews found useful by clients, it is relevant to note that the one client who indicated their guidance interview had not been useful had wanted:

> *More precise specialist information.*
>
> [Client questionnaire 43]

5.5.2 Enabling client to progress as a result of access to networks, knowledge and information

Eight clients (16%) recognised that knowledge and information gained would assist future progression, for instance:

> *He talked about stepping stones and using different approaches to get to where you want to go.*
>
> [Client questionnaire 31]

According to five practitioners (10%), this knowledge and information helped clients to progress by clarifying ideas and increasing understanding of their situation and the employment market. For example:

> *A clear case of someone who is very able but being within a situation cannot see the wood for the trees or a clear path ahead. I did not really tell her anything new except open her eyes and mind. I told her about the skills gap in (job title) which would be a suitable direction for her. She left the interview quite bullish and pleased to have had the session, clearly motivated to carry out her action plan.*
>
> [Practitioner questionnaire 49]

5.6   Encouraging constructive change in clients

Four ways that guidance encouraged constructive change in the client were identified. Examples of each are provided below.

5.6.1   Increased self-confidence, positive attitudes and confusion reduction

Fifteen clients (31%) stated that their confidence had increased, that they felt more positive in general and that they were less confused about issues. For instance:

> *…and I feel more confident about being at college…*
> [Client questionnaire 12]

> *…given me renewed confidence to continue job hunting. I had become quite negative about ever finding a new job before now.*
> [Client questionnaire 26]

> *Came away feeling far more positive about my future than I had in years.*
> [Client questionnaire 28]

This enhanced self-confidence and a new found self-awareness also resulted in a more positive attitude to learning and career options. For example:

> *I feel that I have gained a great deal from the interview because it is helping me to identify my strengths, skills, ideals and to identify jobs that may be relevant, fit into my personality…*
> [Client questionnaire 24]

Such positive changes in the client were also noted by 12 practitioners (24%), for example:

> *By making him feel more positive about himself…*
> [Practitioner questionnaire 4]

> *…To boost his confidence.*
> [Practitioner questionnaire 22]

> *The recognition by the client that she is in control of her situation and that she has developed her self-confidence and self-awareness beyond her expectations. The new positive attitude.*
> [Practitioner questionnaire 28]

Seven of the expert witness questionnaires (14%) similarly noted positive changes in clients' attitudes about themselves and their future. Three examples follow:

…I also felt that the interview helped to raise his self-confidence, which had dropped because he had been doing a job that he didn't enjoy.
[Expert witness questionnaire 37]

There were various moments in which he appeared to gain confidence in himself…His tone of voice was positive at the end of the interview.
[Expert witness questionnaire 42]

The practitioner really helped the client to identify her achievements gaining NVQ level 1 qualification in a shorter time than normal. She had not understood how these qualifications compared with GCSEs and that seemed to improve her self-esteem…
[Expert witness questionnaire 46]

5.6.2 Developed new skills

Other positive changes identified by clients included the development of new skills relevant to job searches. For example, researching a job or course:

…Suggested ways of researching ideas and sources of information.
[Client questionnaire 5]

…Where/how to look for information. How to prepare to sell yourself.
[Client questionnaire 21]

Overall, four clients (8%), five practitioners (10%) and two of the expert witness questionnaires (4%) identified the acquisition of new skills as 'useful'. Examples from a practitioner and expert witness questionnaire follow:

How to make some use of Prospects Planner material. How to use resources.
[Practitioner questionnaire 35]

The client gained a much clearer understanding of how to go about making career decisions. When she starts to look more closely at particular jobs she will be much better equipped to think carefully about whether they are a good match to her skills, interests and values.
[Expert witness questionnaire 24]

60

5.6.3 Developed understanding, increased awareness and broadened ideas

Nine clients (18%), together with ten practitioners (20%) and seven of the expert witness questionnaires (14%) highlighted the usefulness of increasing understanding about the range of options available. Client examples include:

> …It's made me rethink options. I'll probably do a more varied course and I now have other job ideas.
>
> [Client questionnaire 20]

> The thinking outside the box thing again…better perspective.
>
> [Client questionnaire 37]

According to both practitioners and expert witnesses, broadening a client's ideas assisted their progress. An example follows from an expert witness:

> The suggestion of broadening out his job search into a wider range of employers was acknowledged by him to be a new idea and his tone indicated that it was welcome. The referral to the programme centre would help him to be more effective in his job search.
>
> [Expert witness questionnaire 4]

5.6.4 Motivated, inspired and encouraged

Seven clients (14%), eight practitioners (16%) and nine of the expert witness questionnaires (18%) indicated how the guidance interviews had motivated and inspired clients to undertake or rethink their learning and career options. Two examples from clients:

> …A 2nd interview is booked so I have loads to do! The interview was also very interesting and of course inspiring…
>
> [Client questionnaire 27]

> It's made me want to really think about the future.
>
> [Client questionnaire 33]

Two practitioner examples follow:

> …He had done a great deal of work using 'Which Way' booklet. He already has a large degree of self awareness so I feel I'm encouraging him to realise that so that he can find a long term career path which will suit him better…
>
> [Practitioner questionnaire 22]

Gave her a clear sense of what she could achieve. Gave her some
'heart' to go forward and investigate opportunities using any interviews as
opportunities for experience.
[Practitioner questionnaire 49]

Expert witnesses also noted how practitioners had encouraged, inspired and even motivated clients. For example:

…The client's obvious enthusiasm and excitement at the end of the
interview. She clearly felt that it had moved her a long way!...
[Expert witness questionnaire 24]

5.7 Providing the client with a positive experience

The importance of the interview experience as a positive experience for clients was emphasised in three ways. Specifically as: space for reflection; an opportunity to address concerns; and reassurance, confirmation or clarification of ideas. These are discussed and illustrated below.

5.7.1 Opportunity for reflection and an in-depth discussion

Whilst only two clients (4%) specified that they valued the opportunity to reflect and discuss their concerns, ideas and plans with an interested professional in a sympathetic environment, a slightly larger proportion of practitioners (20%, n=10) and expert witness questionnaires (12%, n=6) identified this as useful for the client. For the clients, the opportunity to talk to someone who listened and helped was clearly appreciated:

…being able to speak to someone who will listen. And will try to help.
[Client questionnaire 23]

Very much needed after being at home with children for 10 years and
'experimenting' in the work place since.
[Client questionnaire 29]

Practitioners similarly recognised how clients valued the opportunity to talk with someone:

An opportunity to verbalise his thoughts and consider decisions/future
action with someone else…
[Practitioner questionnaire 30]

So did expert witnesses, for example:

> *…He seemed able to talk about all aspects of his life, work and feelings*
> *and so see his work choices in the context of his real personal needs and*
> *wants…He seemed to feel understood and accepted for who he was.*
> [Expert witness questionnaire 15]

5.7.2   Client questions and concerns were answered

Two clients (4%) regarded their interviews as useful because concerns and questions were addressed, for example:

> *It answered a lot of my questions.*
> [Client questionnaire 2]

Three expert witness questionnaires (6%) similarly highlighted this as a valuable aspect of guidance, for instance:

> *Directly addressed concern(s) presented.*
> [Expert witnesses questionnaire 2]

> *She came in for 'some ideas' and got plenty*
> [Expert witness questionnaire 39]

5.7.3   Reassurance, confirmation and clarification

An essential element of 'useful' guidance interviews for 22% of practitioners (n=11) and eight of the expert witness questionnaires (16%) was reassurance, confirmation or clarification of the client's ideas, plans and progress: Examples follow:

> *To clarify his thoughts surrounding the research and exercises he has*
> *already completed…*
> [Practitioner questionnaire 22]

> *…It confirmed that some of the areas she was applying for were a good*
> *match, such as events organiser.*
> [Expert witness questionnaire 5]

However, this particular aspect of guidance was not specified as useful by any clients.

Findings about 'useful' guidance are complemented and reinforced by those related to key features, discussed next in Section 6.

6.   Key features of 'useful' guidance

The features of the interview regarded as the most notable by clients, practitioners and expert witnesses are examined in this section.   In addition to the key features of guidance, evidence of reflective practice was also highlighted.   The findings presented here develop those in Section 5.

6.1   Key findings

Key features of guidance are:

- the skills of the practitioner (38%, n=56);
- the explicit need for guidance (27%, n=39); and
- the different techniques and models of guidance (17%, n=25).

For most clients and expert witnesses, therefore, the key feature of the guidance interview was the expertise of the practitioner.   In contrast, it was found that most practitioners identified the explicit need for guidance as the key feature.

A further finding relates to the similarities in the perceptions of practitioners and expert witnesses regarding the expertise (i.e. knowledge and skills) of the practitioner.   For some clients, the practitioner's expert knowledge stood out, together with their rapport building skills.   Some practitioners were able to recognise the value of both their knowledge and skills to their clients.   Similarly, some expert witnesses acknowledged the importance of the knowledge and skills of the practitioners and their positive impact on clients.

Overall, guidance was valued as part of a long-term ongoing process which allows time and space needed for reflection and discussion in a safe, supportive environment.

6.2   Key features of 'useful' guidance identified by clients, practitioners and expert witnesses

Key features were identified from the responses to questions 14 (presented in Section 5), 15 and 16 from the client, practitioner and expert witness questionnaires.   Question 15 asked respondents to reflect upon the interview and to write down 'what stood out' for them.   Table 6.2a, below indicates how only one practitioner did not respond to this question.   Question 16 invited additional comments.   Less than two fifths of clients and only half of practitioners responded to this question.   Responses were again coded and systematically analysed as described in Section 2.4 and a summary of the codes (and

their descriptions) together with the number of documents coded is provided in Table 6.2b, below.

Table 6.2a Response rates for questions 15 and 16

Responses to	Question 15 'What stood out for you?' n=49*		Question 16 'Anything further you wish to add?' n=49*	
	Number	**Percentage**	**Number**	**Percentage**
Client	49	100%	19	39%
Practitioner	48	98%	25	51%
Expert witness	49	100%	49	100%

* The client, practitioner and expert witness questionnaires for the interview not found useful by the client were excluded from the analysis.

Three broad groups emerged: the expertise of the practitioner; examples of good practice together with the need for guidance; and the complexities of guidance. Each group contains three or more sub-elements as follows:

Expertise of the practitioner

Knowledge of the practitioner (exemplified by the range, quality and quantity of information provided).

Skills of the practitioner (for example, listening accurately, supporting, inspiring confidence, respecting and building a good rapport).

A practitioner's understanding of wider aspects which affect an individual's education and employment opportunities (for example barriers, influences and constraints).

Examples of good practice and the need for guidance

Space for reflection and discussion.

The transformative power of guidance.

The explicit need for guidance (e.g. the option to return (if necessary) was valued, recognition of the need for this type of help and how this is seen as part of an on-going process).

Positive validation of the service and guidance process.

Complexities of guidance

The complexities of guidance.

The different approaches to guidance used by practitioners (including comments on computer aided guidance packages and internet resources).

Balance of communication between the client and practitioner.

Each broad group and the sub-elements are examined and illustrated below.

6.3 Expertise of the practitioner

Certain aspects of practitioner expertise were identified. These included the range, quality and extent of knowledge and the skills demonstrated by the practitioner. Additionally, their understanding of wider aspects of learning, work and employment were noted. Practitioners were aware how they had used skills to good effect.

6.3.1 Knowledge of the practitioner

The range, quality and quantity of information communicated by the practitioner were emphasised by eight clients (16%). For example:

Helpfulness of interviewer and level of detailed knowledge that she had.
Level of knowledge impressed me, especially compared to career interviews that I had been to many years ago.
[Client questionnaire 18]

I have been pleasantly impressed by the standard of my adviser on her obvious research into potential areas of interest for me.
[Client questionnaire 49]

A broad knowledge base for moving clients forward was acknowledged as valuable by ten of the expert witness questionnaires (20%):

In this interview I was struck by the impressive range of information about specific areas of work that the practitioner was able to draw on immediately, and how much progress was possible in helping the client move forward because this information was immediately forthcoming…
[Expert witness questionnaire 6]

One practitioner demonstrated how her knowledge informed her assessment of opportunities available to her client:

…Felt her skills and interest looked stronger for public sector work. Not sure that she was a strong contender for City law firms.
[Practitioner questionnaire 6]

Table 6.2b Summary of coded responses: key features of guidance

Code	Code description	Number of responses coded by questionnaire*			Number of questionnaires coded	Percentage of all questionnaires coded
		Client	Practitioner	Expert witness		
	Expertise of practitioner					
5	knowledge of practitioner	8	1	10	**19**	**13**
6	skills of practitioner	18	5	33	**56**	**38**
7	practitioner's understanding of wider aspects which affect an individual	1	1	2	**4**	**3**
	Examples of good practice and the need for guidance					
10	allowing reflection and discussion	5	3	1	**9**	**6**
11	transformative power for guidance	7	1	2	**10**	**7**
12	explicit need for guidance	13	19	7	**39**	**27**
15/10a	positive validation of service and guidance process	11	6	5	**22**	**15**
	Complexities of guidance					
14	complexities of guidance	0	14	8	**22**	**15**
17/11a	different models/techniques of guidance	0	1	24	**25**	**17**
8	balance of communication between the client and practitioner	1	3	6	**10**	**7**

Notes:

49 open-ended responses to questions 14, 15 and 16 were coded for the client, the practitioner and the expert witness.

* Although a code may appear more than once in a specific questionnaire, it is only counted as occurring once in the document.

6.3.2   Skills of the practitioner

Both clients (37%, n=18) and expert witnesses (67%, n=33) emphasised practitioner skills as an outstanding feature of the guidance interview.   These included: listening accurately, supporting, inspiring confidence, respecting and building a good rapport.   A client example follows:

> *The fact that I didn't feel uncomfortable.   I was relaxed, not nervous. When I'm nervous I stutter and can't listen and can't understand,   she explained things in a way I understood and if she didn't I was happy to ask which I'm not always happy to do.*
>
> [Client questionnaire 11]

Expert witnesses also commented on the role played by practitioner skills in helping motivate clients and clarify ideas.   Additionally, skills had helped create a safe and supportive environment in which client's felt able to discuss problems, ideas and plans. For example:

> *The ways in which interviewer attempted to develop client's self-concept. This client had a speech impediment … that made him extremely difficult to understand.   Practitioner worked with this in a way that did not make the client feel awkward.   Reassured him about his concerns re. his telephone manner.   Encouraged self and career exploration.*
>
> [Expert witness questionnaire 22]

Practitioners often seemed well aware of skills used:

> *I think we got on very well, good rapport established…*
>
> [Practitioner questionnaire 2]

> *The client was keen to find work so benefited from feeling that someone listened to his difficulties…*
>
> [Practitioner questionnaire 23]

And noted their own enjoyment of the interview:

> *A feeling of achievement, my client seemed happy and satisfied…*
>
> [Practitioner questionnaire 27]

> *…Enjoyed interview as gave opportunity to use variety of guidance skills…*
>
> [Practitioner questionnaire 39]

6.3.3   Practitioner understanding of wider aspects

Beyond basic skills, practitioners showed an understanding of the barriers, influences and constraints faced by clients. One client commented specifically on this:

> …*good practical advice and understanding of my situation and where I want to go.*
> [Client questionnaire 32]

Together with two expert witnesses:

> …*The practitioner dealt well with the range of influences on the client e.g. her family, friends, her own observations based on previous experience, misconceptions etc. He took all of these seriously and did not dismiss them but introduced sufficient additional information to allow for a clearer focus…*
> [Expert witness questionnaire 6]

> …*The way in which the adviser understood what was important and made constructive suggestions about ways of combining various aspects of her aspirations and his alternatives…*
> [Expert witness questionnaire 14]

6.4   Examples of good practice and the need for guidance

Examples of good practice that were highlighted included: creating the space for reflection and discussion; the transformative power of guidance; the need for guidance; and finally, positive validation of the service.

6.4.1   Space for reflection and discussion

Seven clients (14%) and two expert witnesses (4%) commented on the guidance interview providing and allowing much needed 'space' for reflection and discussion. Client examples included:

> *The interview allowed reflection in everything I desire and the interviewer was so enthusiastic in what I was doing which is most positive…*
> [Client questionnaire 27]

> *When researching careers you can't just read about them, as prospectuses do not outline all areas. You do need to discuss careers to do anything about them, get an overall picture of things. Books are easy*

to put down and never pick up again! Talking helps get a broader picture
of things…
[Client questionnaire 38]

I very much enjoyed the interview experience – having the chance to
discuss my many career issues and possibilities helped clear my mind…
[Client questionnaire 44]

Expert witnesses also recognised this aspect of guidance:
…There is an understanding that the client is able to do a great deal for
themselves and that the adviser acts as a signpost and sounding board…
[Expert witness questionnaire 14]

6.4.2   The transformative power of guidance

Seven clients (14%) gave a clear indication of how the guidance process had 'transformed' their thinking. The transformative power of guidance is defined here as changing a client's thinking or understanding to positive effect. For some clients, this meant being more focused and optimistic about the future:

…I realise that I've got to change the way I think. I'm still looking for jobs
within my own tier…but I can look outside that, and consider other things.
The interview made me realise this.
[Client questionnaire 13]

…It has helped me go from not knowing, or having any idea about my
future, to being more focused and much more enthusiastic about my
options and future jobs.
[Client questionnaire 24]

…I have been living with depression for some years and my confidence
was rock bottom and saw no future. The guidance has helped turn this
around immensely.
[Client questionnaire 28]

This feature of the guidance interview was also recognised by one practitioner and two expert witnesses.

6.4.3 The need for guidance

The general need for guidance was highlighted, explicitly, as a significant feature of the guidance interviews by clients (27%, n=13), practitioners (39%, n=19) and expert witnesses (14%, n=7). Sometimes this was expressed by clients as their understanding that they could come back for help in the future, for example:

> *…It's reassuring to know I can come back again…*
> [Client questionnaire 1]

> *…knowing if I have a problem I can always pick up the 'phone or pop in for help if I need it.*
> [Client questionnaire 8]

For other clients this was more about recognising how the interview had helped their situation:

> *This has been an immensely valuable service helping me find hope and direction for the future.*
> [Client questionnaire 28]

For expert witnesses the need for guidance related to the ability to provide time and facilities to help clients, as well as an acknowledgement that guidance is a continuing process, for example:

> *…Lastly, this interview impressed upon me yet again how little people feel they are listened to in everyday life and what an enormous impact this simple thing can have. This interview was quite long and the feeling of space within it was impressive.*
> [Expert witness questionnaire 13]

Similarly some practitioners stressed how guidance was a necessary part of an on-going process, for example:

> *Most of the work is still to take place. I will need to act as an advocate with course coordinators, gather more info from their side, and then see the client again.*
> [Practitioner questionnaire 34]

6.4.4 Positive validation of the guidance process

Positive validations of the guidance process, together with acknowledgements that it had been an enjoyable process, served to reinforce specific examples of good practice and

emphasised a general need for guidance. Eleven clients (22%) and six practitioners (10=2%) gave positive validations of the service. Examples from client questionnaires:

Really, really helpful…
[Client questionnaire 1]

It was fun, I learnt from it…
[Client questionnaire 10]

It's a good service to have!
[Client questionnaire 13]

6.5   Complexities of guidance

Comments about the outstanding features of guidance covered its complexity. This was noted by 29% of practitioners (n=14) and eight of the expert witness questionnaires (16%). Comments related to client circumstances, the complexity introduced by the presence of a third party (two interviews were conducted with parents present) and multicultural issues. Examples follow related to client circumstances:

…Adult appointments can be very complex as the client's 'story' can be quite a long one and also affect their decisions. There are also often a lot of other things to take into account, e.g. age, practical considerations like mobility, etc. I felt that this was a very good example of the complexities of adult guidance…
[Practitioner questionnaire 16]

There were other things I could have asked, e.g. about health, but I did not feel they were relevant at this time. This was clearly the first in a series of interviews. I did not wish to over burden her with information at this stage.
[Practitioner questionnaire 2]

6.5.1   Different approaches to guidance

Varied approaches taken to guidance were commented upon. In particular, differences in the skills, techniques and strategies used by practitioners and the application of resources (e.g. computer-aided guidance packages and internet-based resources) were highlighted. Some practitioners (24%, n=12) reflected on their own use of different approaches and techniques (see Section 6.6, below). 49% of expert witnesses (n=24) chose this as a key feature that had stood out for them and particular examples follow:

…This session was a full one-hour guidance session, very much towards the 'counselling' end of the spectrum…

[Expert witness questionnaire 15]

A focus on assessment of skills and matching…

[Expert witness questionnaire 16]

…Strong focus on supporting/encouraging career aspiration. A lot of information giving…

[Expert witness questionnaire 30]

Working style of interview. Seemed to accommodate the level of ability of the client. Challenged effectively early in the interview … (and later) perceptions that were false. No-nonsense approach (no time like the present!).

[Expert witness questionnaire 50]

Overall, expert witnesses commented positively about techniques and approaches:

…I thought this was a remarkable example of guidance at its most helpful and client-centred…

[Expert witness questionnaire 15]

A successful interview which exhibited…many characteristics of a humanistic approach high level of empathy, respect, acceptance, tentative, checked constantly paraphrased feelings.

[Expert witness questionnaire 17]

6.5.2   Balance of communication between the client and practitioner

Three practitioners (6%) and six of the expert witness questionnaires (12%) remarked on the balance of communication in the interview. Practitioners were particularly sensitive to the extent they may have dominated the conversation and (in one questionnaire) whether they had led the conversation (see also practitioner reflections in Section 6.6, below). Examples from expert witnesses include:

The adviser talked a great deal more than the client, it's interesting to see she noticed this herself and felt it was caused by the recording equipment.

[Expert witness questionnaire 7]

Balance of communication – client did lots of talking…
[Expert witness questionnaire 23]

6.6   Examples of reflective practice

24% of practitioners (n=12) used questions 15 and 16 to reflect upon their practice. Some were critical of their approach and the methods/techniques they had used:

> *…I feel that I did too much talking and led the interview too much at times. I think this was because I wanted to make the client aware of lots of different ways of developing skills. I am also aware that I did not challenge the client. This was a conscious decision as I didn't feel it was appropriate.*
> [Practitioner questionnaire 25]

Four practitioners (8%) reflected on the reactions of their clients. For example:

> *The client seemed quite defensive, particularly around his CV and would also say he "would do that" or that's how he would present it for everything I mentioned.*
> [Practitioner questionnaire 26]

As already noted (see also Section 1.4.3, above) the affect of the research process was highlighted by some practitioners:

> *Really unhappy about the interview. I think we both got very nervous about being part of a research project. Without being too hard on myself, I don't think she knew why she wanted a careers interview! Failed at the initial contract stage.*
> [Practitioner questionnaire 7]

As was the impact of the digital recorder:

> *Just how important the process of reflection on own practice is and how restricting a microphone is to natural flow.*
> [Practitioner questionnaire 50]

Having examined the precise nature of useful guidance and its outstanding features, the characteristics and activities of guidance will be scrutinised next, in Part D, Section 7.

Part D: Characteristics of 'effective' guidance

7. What happens in a 'useful' guidance interview?

'Effectiveness' in this study is defined as what is found useful to the client (see Section 2.2 above). The forty-nine guidance interviews that clients specified were 'useful' were, therefore, transcribed, coded and systematically analysed to establish the characteristics of effective guidance. The focus of this part of the analysis was exclusively on practitioner interventions and from this, the activities of guidance have been identified.

7.1 Key findings

Four broad categories of guidance activities emerged from the analysis, as follows: building a working alliance; exploration of potential; identification of options and strategies; plus ending and follow-through.

Each broad category consisted of between three and six sub-sets of activities.

Not all activities were evident in all interviews, nor were they to be found in any particular sequence.

All practitioners used at least one type of strategy to establish and maintain a sound working alliance with their clients. Typically, several were used in combination throughout the interview.

Varied dimensions of the client's background and present circumstances were probed. Of the hard, factual data, most practitioners (80%, n=39) investigated their client's educational and training history. Of the softer, attitudinal data, it was the exploration of client preferences (about courses, jobs, strategies, options, etc.) that was undertaken most, by 94% of practitioners (n=46).

Practitioners used different methods to affect some measure of change in the clients' behaviour, attitudes and/or thinking. These included giving information, giving advice and other influencing techniques, like challenging or self-disclosure.

Lastly, the majority of practitioners (90%, n=44) presented a summary of the interview towards the end, with 86% of interviews (n=42) including some sort of action plan. 90% of practitioners (n=44) offered some type of follow-up service to clients.

7.2   Activities of guidance

The purpose of this study was to understand what, exactly, occurs in guidance interviews that are found useful by clients, rather than investigate what evidence-base is used by practitioners or how it may be used[49]. To achieve this, practitioner interventions from digital recordings of the 49 'useful' interviews were analysed in-depth. Four discrete categories of activity emerged from the detailed analysis of transcripts, as follows: building a working alliance; exploration of potential; identifying options and strategies; plus ending and follow-through. Each broad category comprised two or more sub-sets of activities:

Building a working alliance
Scene setting/orientation.
Contracting.
Rapport building and maintenance.

Exploration of potential (where are you now?)
Exploration (hard, factual data).
Exploration (soft data).

Identification of options and strategies (where do you want to go and how do you get there?)
Information.
Advice.
Influencing.

Ending and follow through
Ending.
Follow through (from interview).

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[49] Research undertaken approximately ten years ago had this focus: Kidd, J.M., Killeen, J., Jarvis, J. and Offer, M. (1993) Working Models of Careers Guidance: The Interview, Report to the Employment Department, London, Birkbeck College, University of London.

Table 7.2a Themes emerging from analysis of practitioner interventions

Building a working alliance			Exploration of potential (Where are you now?)		Identification of options and strategies – (Where do you want to go and how do you get there?)			Ending and follow through	
Scene setting/ Orientation	Contracting	Rapport building and maintenance	Exploration – hard, factual data	Exploration – Soft data	Information	Advice	Influencing	Ending	Follow through (from interview)
Name, role, welcome, time; physical comfort, documentation (explained and completed), opportunities for FU and research process	Implicit	Encourager	Probe: work history; selection experiences; work experience	Probe: career; employment; educational interests; leisure pursuits	Resources: CAG options; websites; interest inventories; reference texts; networking organisations	Applications and CV; job search strategies; how to approach CAG	Opinion expressed – judgemental	Summary and goals	Advocacy
Confidentiality	Explicit (assumed and negotiated)	Reinforcer	Probe: education and training history	Probe: motivation to complete a course of action	Options	Finance	Opinion expressed – reinforcement	Action Plan	Follow-up
Summary of previous interview (in FU interviews)		Intermediate summary	Probe – influences and constraints: finance; location; home and family circumstances; health	Probe: feelings	Educational routes; adult learning; useful contacts; sources of vacancies; job requirements; possible employers; timing of applications; recruitment	Advice – skills: identification of relevant skills and presentation	Self-disclosure		Referral

					policy and practices; benefits; childcare support; course fees; help with CV				
		Sympathy	Probe: skills and general abilities	Probe: preferences			Challenging: thinking and/or attitudes		
		Checking: accuracy or understanding of what the client said or did	Probe – personality	Probe – awareness: job requirements; self-awareness; transition strategies; job search strategies; vacancy sources; course requirements; confidence; problem-solving ability			Self-efficacy		
							CAG interpretation		

Notes:

CAG = Computer Aided Guidance

Table 7.2b Number of interviews by broad category and sub-set

Code	Broad category and code description	Number of interviews coded	Percentage of interviews n=49
Building a working alliance			
	Scene setting/orientation		**48***
1	note taking - pre-interview information	46	94
2	confidentiality explained and made explicit	17	35
40	summary of previous interview	7	14
	Contracting		**100****
7	contract - implicit	6	12
8	contract - explicit	43	88
8a	*(contract explicit - assumed)*	*12*	*28*
8b	*(contract explicit - negotiated)*	*28*	*65*
	(contract explicit - both assumed and negotiated)	*3*	*7*
	Rapport building and maintenance		**74***
9	encourager - rapport, relationship building and maintenance	49	100
18	reinforcer - confirming behaviour/attitudes	34	69
19	summary - intermediate	41	84
27	sympathy	11	22
38	checking accuracy or understanding of what client said	47	96
Exploration of potential			
	Exploration: hard data		**54***
3	probe - work history/selection experiences/work experience	28	57
4	probe - education and training history	39	80
6&35	probe - finance/location/influences/constraints	64	65
36	probe - skills and general ability	19	39
37	probe - personality	9	18
	Exploration: soft data		**62***
5	probe - career/employment/educational interests	35	71
28	probe - motivation	17	35
29	clarifying - feelings	33	67
30	clarifying - preferences	46	94
39	probe - awareness	22	45
Identification of options and strategies			
	Information		**67***
15	information - resources (CAG/websites/interest inventories)	36	73
16	information - options	14	29
17	information - educational routes/useful contacts/job vacancies	48	98
	Advice		**48***
13	advice - applications/CV/job search strategy/how to approach CAG	48	98
14	advice - finance	14	29
32	advice - skills	9	18
	Influencing		**50***
11	opinion expressed - judgemental	45	92
12	opinion expressed - reinforcer	27	55
21	self-disclosure	30	61
25	challenge - thinking/attitudes	18	37
33	self-efficacy - confirming achievements or giving positive feedback	23	47
41	CAG interpretation	4	8
Ending and follow through			
	Ending		**88***
20	summary - final	44	90
24	action plan	42	86
	Follow through		**47***
23	advocacy - acting on behalf of client	20	41
26	follow-up	44	90
34	referral	5	10

Notes:

* percentage of interviews that are coded using codes for each broad category

** all interviews were coded either as 'contract implicit' or 'contract explicit'

Activities within each sub-set are summarised in Table 7.2a, above, and described and illustrated more fully in Sections 7.3, 7.4 and 7.5. It should be noted that not all activities are evident across all interviews, nor did any particular combination or sequence of activities emerge strongly. Attempting to establish casual relationships between particular activities and outcomes from guidance is not feasible using this qualitative research design.

Table 7.2b, above, provides a summary breakdown of both the number and percentage of interviews in which each category and sub-set of activities was identified.

7.3 Building a working alliance

Constructive change in a client is most likely to take place within a relationship in which the client feels respected and accepted. Whether working with a client for the first time, or in a follow-up interview, it is important, therefore, for the practitioner to work at this relationship. It has been argued that this phase of the interview is particularly important when working with clients from a culturally different background. Practitioners need to be flexible in their approach to accommodate individual need and be prepared to invest effort in the continual development of rapport and trust [50].

Within this phase of the interview, three distinct types of activities were identified: scene setting (or orientation); contracting; and rapport building/relationship maintenance.

7.3.1 Scene setting

Various strategies were used to set the scene for the interview. These were: providing a general orientation, making a statement about confidentiality; and (in follow-up interviews only) presenting a summary of the previous interview. Details of each strategy follows.

Orientation

Most practitioners (94%, n=46) ensured that their clients felt comfortable and understood the basis on which the interview was being carried out. Various strategies were used, including:

a. personal introduction: the practitioner introduced him/herself to the client (sometimes this had occurred place before recording started). Often (but not

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[50] Ivey, A.E., Ivey, M.B. and Simek-Morgan, L. (1997) Counseling and Psychotherapy: A Multicultural Perspective (4th edition), Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon, p. 75.

always) they explained their role in the organisation and welcomed the client, formally;

b. time: availability of time for the interview was specified;

c. boundary setting: practitioners indicated what was possible and (sometimes) what was not possible in the interview;

d. follow-up: opportunities for follow-up from the interview were explained;

e. documentation: requirements from the interview (for accountability purposes) were explained. This included client data that needed to be collected and action plans. Additionally, personal information held on record was verified and (towards the end of the interview) clients were asked to sign a confirmation that the interview had taken place;

f. physical comfort: the physical comfort of clients was checked, with offers to adjust room temperature, supply refreshments, etc.

Various combinations of these orientation techniques were used to set the scene for the interview.

Confidentiality

In 35% of interviews (n=17), the interviewer made it explicitly clear to the client that all material discussed would be in confidence.

Summary of a previous interview

In half of the follow-up interviews (n=7), a brief summary of what had happened in the previous interview was presented.

7.3.2   Contracting

An interview contract has been defined as a specific commitment to a clearly defined course of action (Culley, 1991[51]). In 88% of interviews (n=43), some kind of explicit contract (i.e. where priorities and desirable outcomes were agreed) was evident. In the remaining 12% of interviews (n=6), the contract remained implicit (i.e. priorities or desirable outcomes were not specified by the practitioner or agreed with the client).

Within the 88% of interviews (n=43) with explicit contracts, different approaches were discernable. This is hardly surprising since practitioners working from different frameworks will emphasise different possibilities. For example, in one type of approach,

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[51] Culley, S. (1991) Integrative Counselling Skills in Action, London: Sage.

the practitioner will aim to ensure that the client determines the agenda for the interview and shares power in identifying outcomes (person-centred[52]). In another, the contract will focus on the need for the practitioner and client to work together towards specific occupational goals (behavioural[53]). Of the interviews with explicit contracts, 65% (n=28) were, to some degree, negotiated by the practitioner with their clients. 28% (n=12) were assumed (that is, determined by the practitioner without reference to the client). In the remaining 7% of interviews (n=3) with explicit contracts, a mix of these two approaches was discernible. Examples of these different types of explicit contract follow.

Explicit contract – negotiated with clients

The following is an example of a contract negotiated with the client at the beginning of the interview. Agreement is reached regarding what would be covered in the interview and how this would be done:

> *Practitioner: So, what would you like to talk about today?*
>
> *(Client identifies two occupational interests)*
>
> *Practitioner: Right, so it sounds like you've got a couple of ideas. Are those the sort of things that you would like to talk about today, your ideas?*
>
> *(Client confirms that this is correct)*
>
> *Practitioner: Right, OK. If we maybe look at things that you've mentioned – sort of try to relate those to your skills and interests – things that you like doing – how they match up with you as a person. Would that be useful?*
>
> *(Client agrees)*
>
> [Interview 21]

In the next example of a follow-up interview, the practitioner again negotiated the contract at an early stage and then checked towards the end of the interview that the client was satisfied with the outcome:

> *Practitioner: …and what are you hoping to get from the appointment today?*
>
> *(Client indicates help is required in finding a particular type of placement)*

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[52] Mearns, D. and Thorne, B. (1989) Person-Centred Counselling in Action, London: Sage.

[53] Brammer, L.M. (1985) The Helping Relationship (2nd edition), Englewood Coliffs, N.J: Prentice-Hall.

> *Practitioner: …what we can do is have a chat about various approaches*
> *that you might want to take…to get a placement…and I might be able to*
> *suggest some further sources of information…and talk about CVs,*
> *applications…and practical things connected with getting a placement.*
> *(Discussion with client about these issues follows)*
> *Practitioner: …any other things that you wanted to…?*
> *(Client indicates satisfaction)*
> *Practitioner: Yes, you've got quite a lot to sort out. Are you happy with*
> *the things that we've discussed?*
> *(Client responds in the affirmative)*
> *Practitioner: And is there anything that you thought we were going to talk*
> *about but we haven't touched on?*
> [Interview 14]

The question of when, exactly, is the best time to negotiate a contract is not straightforward and is likely to vary[54]. Below is an example where the contract was negotiated some time into the interview, with the purpose of establishing the client's priorities for the remaining time:

> *Practitioner: …it depends on how you want to use the time. I mean, we*
> *could look at discussing midwifery, and the pros and cons of it – find out*
> *more about it – if you want to? Or we could, for the remainder of the time,*
> *we could look at broadening those out and then trying to give you some*
> *pointers as to how, you know – things you might want to do to get more*
> *ideas about midwifery? It's entirely up to you, which would you like to do?*
> [Interview 16]

Explicit contract – assumed by practitioner

This was where the practitioner decided what would be covered in the interview and made this explicit to the client, though did not involve the client in the decision-making process. Often in this type of contract, whilst the practitioner did not involve the client in the decision-making process, they did check with the client that what had been suggested was relevant to their needs. For example:

> *Practitioner: ….what I'm hoping…is that you'll get a clearer picture of*
> *what you want and what you can offer, and we might have some job*

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[54] Gothard, W.P. (1999) 'The Contract and Effective Careers Counselling: A British Perspective', Journal of Career Development, Vol. 25, No. 3, pp. 217-299.

ideas for you to go away and research…My objective is that…you'll be ready to start to research some ideas…and then come back again maybe…

(Discussion progresses)

Practitioner: …Are you happy to keep looking at these responses?

[Interview 24]

Mix of negotiated and assumed contracting

An example of an explicit contract that was neither fully negotiated with the client, nor assumed by the practitioner follows:

Practitioner: Okay, so…well, you kick off (name) and tell me what you hope to get out of this session.

(Client indicates interest as finding out about course options)

Practitioner: …so perhaps if we just talk a little bit about what you've done previously, just to get a bit more of a background…

(Discussion follows about client's caring responsibilities and educational background)…

Practitioner: …Well, how about we look at what you've done in the past and see how that might relate to different areas of work? And then look at things that you might not have thought about?

[Interview 18]

6.3.3   Relationship building and maintenance

A number of techniques were used by practitioners to establish rapport with clients early on in the interview and then to develop and maintain the relationship throughout the interview. These included strategies: for encouraging the client to 'tell their story'; for reinforcing, or indicating their agreement, with something the client had said; for expressing sympathy about some disclosure made by the client; and for checking the accuracy of their (practitioners') understanding of what has been said. Examples follow:

Encouragers

These were used frequently by practitioners in all 49 'useful' interviews and involved minimal, verbal responses – to show the client that they were attending to what was being said and encouraging them to say more. Examples include combinations of prompts like: excellent; mmm; yes; yeah; right; ok; ah ha; and absolutely.

Reinforcer

These relate to a range of verbal responses used by practitioners in 69% of interviews (n=34), to emphasise the wisdom of a particular set of client behaviours or attitudes. For example:

> *Practitioner: But you're absolutely right, it's useful for most jobs. You don't have to be an expert in computers, but you have to be aware of stuff.*
>
> [Interview 2]

Intermediate summary

Brief summaries were frequently offered during 84% of interviews (n=41), but for different purposes. Most commonly, they were used to check the practitioner's understanding of what had been said or done. These summaries covered a range of topics including: the client's educational history; their occupational preferences; their personality traits; a particular problem that had emerged; the client's preferences in a job; their skills and qualities; and pressures experienced by the client. They were also used to refocus the interview (e.g. after an interruption) and check the client's understanding of progress in the interview up to that point. Examples of each type of intermediate summary follow:

Educational history

> *Practitioner: OK. So the picture I've got is that…you weren't happy at school…and that's been reflected in your results…GCSE, mainly Gs…Although you were bullied at school…Perhaps your GCSEs don't reflect how good you are, because your NVQs show that you're better than grade G, no doubt at all? You do have a problem, a literacy and numeracy problem…*
>
> [Interview 46]

Occupational preferences

> *Practitioner: But what I'm saying is the theme that's come out (client's name)…one side is the caring area and the other side is the kind of admin, administration, office…area.*
>
> [Interview 33]

Personality traits

Practitioner: So, you like to do that to plan, plan ahead, and make sure everything's organised…make sure everything's in place rather than being terribly spontaneous about things?

[Interview 5]

Problem identified

Practitioner: So, from what you're saying, although this could be a nice, comfortable opportunity for you, working with a group of people that you respect…and you know it would accommodate your needs…you've got this underlying concern that you could get drawn into doing that old, physical work.

[Interview 23]

Preferences in a job

Practitioner: So…am I right…what's important is a degree of autonomy? So that you've not got someone over your shoulder…variety of skills, even though there might be some repetition in your daily routine? Having a variety of skills is important, having autonomy is important…

[Interview 16]

Skills and qualities

Practitioner: So you've got good admin skills. You've built up very good… people skills…and confidence through your door supervisor work…shown a lot of initiative and motivation to keep pushing your own development…

[Interview 17]

Pressures experienced by client

Practitioner: …so to get a regular income and the… pressure's building up and it…feels like you need to get something…Yeah. Right, so you need to earn some money. Pressures are building up on you.

[Interview 17]

Refocusing the interview (after interruption)

Practitioner: Right, so just summarising…what we've currently talked about…it sounds like from the story you've just told that you're obviously a very resourceful person. You like using your initiative and that kind of

thing, quite confident. You want to be in a job that involves working quite closely with people. From your experience…you like that sort of teamwork scenario. You like being a part of a team and possibly you would consider leading people and listening to them and trying to help them in terms of resources and reaching goals and that sort of thing. The other thing that's quite important to you personally is this helping people in some way.

[Interview 21]

Intermediate summary of interview so far

Practitioner: OK. So can we just sort of recap a little bit, where we are?…18 years of age, you've worked in construction for most of your working life…you left school with sort of average GCSEs. Um, you gained no additional qualifications, you told me.

[Interview 50]

Intermediate summary to check understanding

Practitioner: Right. So it's, as you say, teaching a subject that you're interested in and you've got some knowledge of. That's really what you want to do?

[Interview 40]

Sympathy

In 22% of interviews (n=11), the practitioner expressed sympathy (or demonstrated a sympathetic attitude) about a client's difficult situation or circumstance. This often included some level of interpretation, but gave a clear indication that the practitioner had heard, understood and accepted what the client had said. For example:

Practitioner: I just want to say I'm really sorry it hasn't worked out for you. It's a real shame.

[Interview 35]

Checking understanding

Checking their understanding was a technique used by practitioners in 96% of interviews (n=47). Often, this technique was used differently from an intermediate summary (see above), since it did not represent a resume of what had been discussed, rather an interpretation:

Practitioner: So, you feel that you could live in that kind of pressure-cooker?

[Interview 6]

Practitioner: Well, it strikes me that you've done quite a bit of supervisory stuff?

[Interview 30]

Sometimes, it simply involved checking the accuracy of their understanding:

Practitioner: Does that sound like the sort of things that you would enjoy?

[Interview 37]

7.4 Exploration of potential (where are you now?)

Adult clients come for guidance with complex, sometimes messy, problems with which they want help, related to transition into or through education, training or employment. To provide this help, practitioners need to understand the nature of the problems and their origins. Probing or exploring client potential and/or assessment of their readiness for career choice[55] covered two broad domains in the 49 case study interviews found useful by clients:

- first, 'hard' factual client data – that is, information about client circumstances, their employment, training and education history together with an assessment of their skills, abilities and personality. This was collected in 54% of interviews.
- second, 'soft' client data, which was related to clients' interests, motivation, feelings, preferences and awareness. This information was collected in 62% of interviews. Brief descriptions follow.

7.4.1 Exploration – hard, factual data

The first category of information probed was hard, factual information about the client. This was required to enable practitioners to assess client potential for the achievement of certain goals. It included their: work-related history; educational and training background; influences and constraints; skills and abilities; and personality traits.

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[55] Sampson, J.P. Jr., Reardon, R.C., Peterson, G.W. and Lenz, J.G. (2004) Career Counseling and Service: A Cognitive Information Processing Approach, Belmont, CA: Thomson Brooks/Cole.

Overall, 54% of interviews (n=27) included some type of investigation of one or more of these areas:

Work-related history

In 57% of interviews (n=28), practitioners probed, often in some detail, the employment records of clients:

> *Practitioner: …why don't you sort of kick off by telling me a little bit about yourself. How you got into (occupational sector). You know, how you got into the work you got into…the reasons for leaving and what you've done since…*
> [Interview 49]

As part of a client's work history, experiences of selection processes were sometimes included. Where clients were students (in Further or Higher Education) without formal employment records, work experience was typically discussed:

> *Practitioner: …have you had any experience at all?…voluntary work at all?*
> [Interview 7]

Education and training

Practitioners in 80% of interviews (n=39) spent time establishing the detail of their client's educational and/or training achievements. This often included experiences of educational and training systems and their impact on motivation to undertake further learning. For example:

> *Practitioner: Can we go back a couple of steps really? I mean, the degree that you did, the degree in fashion, can I ask where you did it?...Can I ask, before you went on and did the degree, had you done an art foundation course at all?...How had you got through to that?...What subjects did you do you're A levels in?...Can I ask what grades you got?...For all of them?...So didn't you expect to do better in any of them?...When you chose your 'A' levels, you chose (subjects). What made you choose to study those particular subjects at 'A' level?*
> [Interview 5]

Influences and constraints

Exploration of the types of influences and constraints operating on clients, relevant to career planning, occurred in 65% of interviews (n=32). This included the client's

geographical location and mobility (affecting the ability to apply for opportunities in certain areas), for instance:

> *Practitioner: Do you mean that you would relocate if you found a job?...What, to other parts of the country or local?...Have you applied for any jobs outside (place), just to test the water?*
> [Interview 13]

Financial commitments (that affected an individual's ability to forgo current levels of income), for example:

> *Practitioner: What kind of money do you earn?...So how much do you earn a year? Before Tax?*
> [Interview 1]

Home and family circumstances, including the nature and extent of caring responsibilities:

> *Practitioner: So childcare's going to be an issue for you...if the children are ill, sick, etc....Are you a lone parent...So you're the prime carer?...So really it's got to fit round your life hasn't it?*
> [Interview 12]

And the extent to which close friends and relatives are a significant influence:

> *Practitioner: Can I ask, do you come from a creative family? I mean, what do other people in your family do?...What are other people – and I'm thinking about your boyfriend, your parents – have they got ideas about…the sort of direction that they think that…?*
> [Interview 5]

Finally, the effect of health on the ability to work:

> *Practitioner: How long are you going to be on sick leave?*
> [Interview 36]

Skills and abilities

In 39% of interviews (n=19), clients were helped to identify the skills and abilities they had to offer a future employer (e.g. communication and team-working skills, driving competence and IT ability), for instance:

> *Practitioner: What would you say if somebody said to you "what do you feel that your key-skills are?" Like your top 2 or 3 things, what would you say?*
>
> [Interview 5]

Personality

Dispositional characteristics relevant to particular career aspirations were probed in 18% of the interviews (n=9). One example follows:

> *Practitioner: How would other people describe you? Just personality-wise, what would they say about you?...Do you think, I know this is a difficult question personality-wise, but do you think you have any negative traits?...would people say anything negative about you? What might they say?*
>
> [Interview 5].

7.4.2 Exploration – soft data

The second category of client information explored was more subjective, personal information, including: interests, motivation; feelings; preferences; and awareness. 62% of interviews (n=31) included coverage of one or more of these categories. Examples are given below to illustrate each:

Interests

71% of interviews (n=35) involved exploration of educational, leisure, employment and/or career interests:

> *Practitioner: But can I come back to you, yeah, what is it about a job? Can you pin-point what it is about a job that keeps your interest, that keeps you feeling buzzy like that, stops you getting bored? Do you know?*
>
> [Interview 13]

Motivation

35% of interviews (n=17) probed a client's motivations to engage with, or complete, a particular course of action:

> *Practitioner: You seem interested in one of the things that…obviously that is motivating you, if you like – that you wanted to help people. Is that the kind of help that you meant? Helping people through tasks?*
>
> [Interview 21]

Feelings

In 67% of interviews (n=33), practitioners attempted to clarify a client's feelings about a situation, decision or choice they had to make:

> *Practitioner: ...there's quite a lot of pressure to deliver, often against deadlines...Are you comfortable with that? Personal pressure?…somebody requiring you to come up with the goods…Are you comfortable with that side of things?*
> [Interview 6]

Preferences

Client preferences about the options identified as available were investigated in 94% of interviews (n=46):

> *Practitioner: Does that side of it interest you or appeal to you as much as personnel, would you say? If I gave you a choice between (a) personnel job and sort of Connexions...type sort of position?*
> [Interview 41]

Awareness

In 45% of the interviews (n=22), a broad category of issues were probed that related to client awareness of employment structures:

> *Practitioner: Are you aware of other employment service programmes, such as supported employment or work step, or…*
> [Interview 11]

And their own general self-awareness:

> *Practitioner: So looking back, if you have that decision to make again, would you have chosen to study those subjects again, or would you have chosen something different?*
> [Interview 5]

7.5   Identification of options and strategies (where do you want to go and how do you get there?)

If a client's circumstances are unacceptable or problematic in some way, then they need help in identifying possibilities that are more satisfactory[56].   Making progress in a guidance interview involves identifying suitable options for the client and agreeing strategies for achieving these options. In the case study interviews this was achieved by using combinations of the following: information-giving; advising; and influencing techniques.

7.5.1   Information

Overall, practitioners gave information to their clients in 67% of the case study interviews.   Three types of information were clearly discernable: information about resources; information about available options; and generic careers information. Descriptions of each follow.

Information – resources

In 73% of interviews (n=36), specific information about relevant resources was provided. This fell into the following categories:

   a. paper-based information about courses (e.g. prospectuses); jobs (e.g. vacancy bulletins); or training providers (e.g. for NVQs);

   b. information about computer-aided guidance programs (i.e. descriptions of available options and/or how programs works);

   c. information about websites for different purposes: a) providing interactive/experiential learning (e.g. about consultancy work); b) giving information about courses (i.e. entry qualifications, vacancies); c) presenting job vacancies; d) of general relevance to client's needs (e.g. Teacher Training Agency);

   d. internet navigational information (i.e. how to access various internet resources, how to make use of a particular website resource);

   e. information about resources available from the guidance organisation (e.g. reference books; access to the internet);

   f. information about psychometric tests (i.e. available for client referral).

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[56] Egan, G. (2001) The Skilled Helper: A Problem-Management Approach to Helping (7th edition), Belmont, CA: Brooks Cole.

Information – options

One other type of information provided was that related to particular options relevant to the client's aspirations. This was given in 29% of interviews (n=14). For example, information was provided about optional routes into teaching or information about the implications of taking course module options. It tended to be more specifically relevant to the client's situation than information about resources (above) or generic career information (below), but stopped short at becoming advice about the most suitable alternative.

Information – generic

98% of interviews (n=48) involved the provision of what is referred to in this context as generic careers information. This included: general information about educational routes (e.g. into the legal profession, construction industry); broad sources of job vacancies (e.g. websites, vacancy bulletins, professional journals, newspapers); and information about useful contacts.

7.5.2   Advice

Advice was given about different issues related to career progression in 48% of interviews. This was specific to the client's particular situation and related to: how to acquire competencies that would help clients with their transition into education or employment; the financial circumstances of the client; and the identification and development of skills relevant to the client's aspirations. Details follow.

Advice – applications and CV/job search strategy/how to approach CAG

98% of practitioners (n=48) gave advice to their clients which, if acted upon, would enhance their competence in key areas relevant to successful transitions. This included advice on how to complete an application form or develop a CV; advice on appropriate job search strategies (e.g. using professional networks effectively, advice on approaching employers for possible employment opportunities); and advice on identifying and/or developing relevant skills.

Advice – finance

In 29% of interviews (n=14) advice was given on some aspect of the client's situation. For example, sources of financial support for the achievement of a particular goal (like going on a course), eligibility for various types of benefits or the financial implications of committing to a full-time, compared with a part-time course of study.

Advice – skills

18% of interviews (n=9) included advice on skills. For example, the identification of skills that would be required for a specific occupational area and how to develop these (e.g. through an IT training course) or the identification and emphasis of skills identified in various contexts (e.g. in the home or in a caring role) that would be relevant to a particular occupational aspiration.

7.5.3   Influencing

Giving information and advice are both strategies for influencing a client's thinking. In addition to these two strategies, practitioners in the case study interviews used others intended to bring about some degree of change in their clients. These strategies were similar to, but different from, giving information or giving advice, sometimes containing elements of each. Their purpose was to change a client's thinking and/or behaviour and included: expressing a personal opinion; self-disclosure; challenging; developing or increasing a client's self-efficacy; and interpretation of computer-aided guidance results. Examples of each of these influencing strategies follow.

Expression of personal opinion

Frequently, practitioners expressed a personal opinion about an issue under discussion. Two types of opinion were distinguishable: those that conveyed a personal judgement and others that served to reinforce some aspect of an issue under discussion. Examples of both types follow.

Opinion expressed – judgemental

In 92% of interviews (n=45), practitioners expressed opinions that conveyed a personal judgement regarded as relevant client's situation. Sometimes, this was also a form of advice-giving intended to influence a course of action. For example:

> *Practitioner: So I think Access would probably be a good route…I think*
> *you would enjoy it…I think it would be very hard to do in a year if you*
> *were working full-time.*
> [Interview 1]

Other opinions were offered to reassure the client:

> *Practitioner: I wouldn't dismiss those things…I think that's probably a*
> *good thing to have.*
> [Interview 14]

Or confirm the client's thinking:

> *Practitioner: I would have thought it would have been just up your street.*
> [Interview 17]

Or they represented an interpretation of information provided by the client:

> *Practitioner: But I don't even think it's about money, talking to you. I think this is about your own self-development.*
> [Interview 29]

Opinion expressed – reinforcement

In 55% of interviews (n=27), practitioners used personal opinions to reinforce, positively, some presenting aspect of the client's situation:

> *Practitioner: Well, I actually think that it's quite a good age really – because you've been around a bit, and you know what the world of work is like and you can appreciate the privilege, really, of being a student.*
> [Interview 1]

Or encourage them in their aspirations:

> *Practitioner: I think that's a really, really good approach, because what you may find is even if it was the job for you, you don't have to have it for life. Things change, circumstances change, your life will change, the job could disappear…I think that the way you're approaching it is, yeah, great.*
> [Interview 39]

Self-disclosure

This technique was used for a variety of purposes. Different types of personal self-disclosure were identified in 61% of interviews (n=30). These included disclosures about a close relative to encourage clients to pursue a particular course of action:

> *Practitioner: …my daughter-in-law…she had twins…(Girl's name) was only one and a half when the twins were born. She had three kids really close together. Didn't expect to have twins. Only found out the day before they were born, because one was behind the other. And she put her career on hold as well. But now she's started back and she's got a job and she's developing things about herself.*
> [Interview 29]

Disclosures relating to their own experiences were used by practitioners to reassure clients:

> *Practitioner: …when I was a teenager, I got the job and I learned how to be a manager by the seat of my pants….*
> [Interview 29]

Or to emphasise how advice given (in this instance, making a targeted approach to an employer) was worth taking:

> *Practitioner: …the first job…I got…I had a friend who worked in (name of place)…and I actually went with them when they went on their orientation. Having a tour around and finding out a bit more about the job, what it involved…I just got talking to the manager who was showing them around. About a week or so later they actually gave me a call because a job had just come up and they said, 'Why don't you apply?'*
> [Interview 26]

Professional self-disclosure was used by practitioners to be open with clients about knowledge gaps:

> *Practitioner: ...it's more honest for me to say that I don't know, um, exactly what it will cover…*
> [Interview 42]

It was also used to explain to clients the approach taken to guidance:

> *Practitioner: 'Cos I've never told anybody in 20 years what to do…much as I've been tempted to on some occasions…I can't tell you, I can only support, guide…*
> [Interview 28]

Or to illustrate the potential limitations of computer-aided guidance:

> *Practitioner: Whenever I do this, I always get 'prison governor' and I always get 'police officer'…I mean I always get 'barrister' or 'solicitor' or something like that But I've no intention of going off and doing five years' training.*
> [Interview 24]

Challenge – thinking/attitudes

Challenging competently in an interview is difficult[57]. Any challenge should be genuine and intended to increase, not decrease, a client's self-confidence. In 37% of interviews (n=18), practitioners used challenging to help clients re-think a problem or issue or to stop them from regarding themselves negatively. For example:

> *Practitioner: You've got a slightly jokey attitude to all of this and you…put yourself down because you've never been put in a position to know whether you can do it, or can't. But I'm very interested that your current boss…and somebody in the past…have recommended you for a supervisory role…people do not do that unless they think you're capable…*
>
> [Interview 29]

Challenges were used to confront the client about a self-defeating attitude:

> *Practitioner: …it isn't actually isn't necessarily so…I don't think you are on the shelf at all…you're outside of it and you want to get back in. In fact, really you should be feeling – well, you're still in the industry – you just need to get work!*
>
> [Interview 49]

Self-efficacy

In 47% of the case study interviews (n=23), practitioners used different strategies to increase self-efficacy in their clients. For example, bolstering a client's self-perception by giving positive feedback:

> *Practitioner: You've got a wealth of experience. Because of your age, because of the fact that you've stayed in a particular industry or trade, your experience and your commitment about going to work and achieving high standards…you set your own standards and you achieve them. And your reputation has been built through that…*
>
> [Interview 23]

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[57] Egan, G. (2001) The Skilled Helper: A Problem-Management Approach to Helping (7th edition), Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

In the following example, the practitioner coached the client in 'positive self-talk' (i.e. reframing the perspective of the client)[58] in an attempt to increase their determination to succeed and develop self-esteem:

> *Practitioner: You've got to think positive and think like "I am going to get interviews." "I am gong to get something out of this". And a lot of it will depend on how determined that you are to make something of what you've learned…Because you know what you're good at, you know you can do it, and it is a case of being confident enough to say "look I can do this".*
> [Interview 4]

CAG interpretation

The final strategy used by practitioners in the case study interviews to influence their client's thinking and behaviour was an interpretation of results from computer-aided guidance (CAG) programs. This occurred in 8% of interviews (n=4). For example:

> *Practitioner: What we've got here…in a very clear form…are your strong dislikes and likes. So whichever job you go for, it needs to, ideally, include the kind of things that are on there…But we've also got the things you should try to avoid a lot of…*
> [Interview 33]

7.6   Ending and follow through

The final interview phase typically deals with goals, action and closure[59]. The case study interviews were characterised by formal endings which included the identification of goals, as well as the action needed to achieve these goals and discussions about any relevant follow-through.

7.6.1   Ending
Summary and goals

90% of practitioners (n=44) presented a summary of the interview that included goals and outcomes. Their length and amount of detail varied. One example follows:

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[58] Mitchell, L.K. and Krumboltz, J.D. (1996) 'Krumboltz's Learning Theory of Career Choice and Counseling', in Brown, D., Brooks, L. and Associates (Eds) Career Choice and Development (3rd edition), San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

[59] Culley, S. (1991) Integrating Counselling Skills in Action, London: Sage.

> *Practitioner: So, just kind of looking at what we've talked about today…It sounds like we've kind of discussed the kind of things that are going to be important factors in the kind of career that you do. Going back to things that we've talked about before, like teamwork, some sort of contact with people and…you mentioned that you didn't want to be in the kind of job like your dad…Now the issues that come out of that seems to be…you've looked at things like the police, the security service and you've actually applied to the security service…But the other area that you haven't looked at is the more…socially caring side of things…And we've got…the other strand that you're interested in…like Human Resources, possibly working for some sort of recruitment agency…*
>
> [Interview 21]

Final summaries were invariably combined with the completion of an action plan (see below).

Action plan

86% of practitioners (n=42) wrote an action plan for the client during the final phase of the interview. Often, the client was asked to validate the plan and counter-sign the document. In the following example, the practitioner reads the action plan to the client:

> *Practitioner: And I'm just going to read what I've put here and leave you a copy. But we discussed your education and career to date. We've noted that you've got your (subject) degree. We've gone on to use the Adult Directions program to generate some alternative career ideas for you…We've printed off some detailed information on the ones that were most favoured. And I've just put here...you'll give these further thought. And that's as far as I think we need to go today…*

7.6.2 Follow-through (from interview)

Various strategies were used to signpost some form of follow-through from the interview: advocacy; referral; and follow-up interviews.

Advocacy

In 41% of interviews (n=20) the practitioner offered and/or agreed to undertake some type of action on behalf of the client. For example, speaking on behalf of the client to the leader of a particular course:

Practitioner: What I will also do…the name of the tutor is (name)…I know she has a lot of students this year, but what I will do is make a point of seeing her tomorrow, because I think you are in a strong position this year. You already have some good qualifications – a real clear idea of what you want to do at University. You have thought the stuff through. So I can say to (name) I really think you are worth having an interview. So I will make sure you do get an interview for it.
[Interview 1]

In the following examples, practitioners offered to use contacts to give the client some sort of advantage in an employment opportunity:

Practitioner: I've got some links I can make for you…I'll contact…various people in (place name). Is it OK to… just say that I know somebody who would be interested? And then once I've…got some leads...
[Interview 17]

The following example relates to a practitioner using their influence to secure financial support for a specific type of training:

Practitioner: Right, then I'll ask (name of colleague) very nicely if he'll pay for it.
[Interview 3]

Follow-up

In 90% of interviews (n=44), practitioners offered the client some type of follow-up support. This was usually the offer for the client to return for subsequent interviews, though sometimes this was limited to an invitation for the client to return to the guidance organisation to use various resources.

Referral

Practitioners referred clients to other agencies in 10% of interviews (n=5). Examples of types of referrals included a programme centre (for a client in receipt of benefits):

Practitioner: I don't know if I mentioned it before but one of the things that we are supposed to do now, is refer you to the programme centre.
(Client confirms that the practitioner has mentioned it)
Practitioner: Now the programme centre, did you go last time…?
(Client says no)

> *Practitioner: Possibly didn't…It wasn't as big a thing then…The thing with the programme centre is – apart from the obvious, which is saving you money, because you can send everything through their post rather than having to pay for it, the cost of the phone, fax, all the rest of it – they will…help you more with your job search…*
>
> [Interview 4]

One other example was of a graduate employee who wished to change job and was referred back to the University from which they had graduated:

> *Practitioner: …What your university careers service will do, they will allow people access to all their information facilities, whether they are their graduates or somebody else's or just a normal graduate. So you can go back and if it is graduate level occupation they might have a lot more detailed information say, than you would find here or even you would find on the internet.*
>
> [Interview 5]

A final example was of a referral to a different guidance agency:

> *Practitioner: So there are other places and I do know if you prefer to seek help from someone outside the college, I've got a very good contact in the Adult Guidance Service, (name of practitioner), who would be delighted to help you find some other options.*
>
> [Interview 34]

In the next part issues arising from the research findings are discussed together with some conclusions.

Part E: Conclusions and issues arising

8. Issues arising

Case study research sets out to capture rich, thick descriptions, together with interesting examples of practice. The intention in this study was not, therefore, to attempt to secure a representative sample. Rather, it was to gain access to organisations that reflected the diverse contexts in which guidance is delivered, together with the varied approaches to delivery that have developed to meet demand for adult guidance. From the initial stage of analysis of data from fifty case studies have arisen the following issues for guidance and guidance research:

Interest in evidence-based research

Considerable interest in the research from participants was recorded. Generally, there seemed to be an acceptance by managers and practitioners that there is a lack of evidence relating to the outcomes of guidance and a willingness to participate in a study which was designed to address this deficit.

Whilst some difficulties have been experienced in negotiating access to guidance organisations and participants, overall, the response has been extremely positive. Indeed, the majority of managers and practitioners approached to participate in this research study expressed enthusiasm and interest. They were keen to be involved and interested in the outcomes. All requested a copy of the report summary. One practitioner asked for permission to use the questionnaire pro-forma in refresher interview training within his organisation, as he had found it to be such a useful framework for reflecting upon his practice. Another indicated how pleased they were to take part. A third said that it had been interesting to take time to reflect on the interview and think about how it had gone.

Many of clients also expressed interest in the research. Notably, clients interviewed in higher education contexts took an interest in the methodology. One asked for a copy of the report.

The nature of guidance

The nature of the guidance intervention, involving personal, confidential information, places constraints on any research methodology that can be used to gather evidence on guidance.

Because of the methodology adopted for this study, requiring guidance interviews to be recorded for subsequent analysis, a high level of trust had to be established between the research participants and researchers. Practitioners and clients had to feel confident that personal material arising from the guidance intervention would be treated in the strictest confidence. A guiding principle for this study has been, therefore, to operate high standards of ethical research practice throughout. The 'informed consent' of all participants has been of paramount importance. It is impossible to judge whether, and to what extent, this has resulted in bias in the sample. A small number of organisations, clients and practitioners withdrew from participation in the research after initially indicating interest.

Terminology
An operational ambiguity exists around advice and guidance.

The clear-cut distinctions assumed by funding methodologies for the activities of information, advice and guidance are not always operational in practice. Practitioners reported that, not infrequently, they found themselves in the position of needing to extend the service offer to clients from information and/or advice to guidance, because it had emerged during the interview that the actual issue presented by the client was different from the one initially highlighted.

One service manager in a further education college said, when approached to participate in the study, that she was keen to contribute to the research, but that her service was not officially funded to give guidance – only for information and advice. She went on to explain that most of her practitioners held specialist guidance qualifications and even where they were not yet qualified, they were working towards an NVQ in guidance. In her professional opinion, they gave clients guidance. This college was excluded from the research, because it was not officially funded to deliver guidance.

Client follow-up
Certain client groups are likely to present particular challenges for longitudinal studies that are designed to evaluate the impact of guidance.

The selection of clients for the research was determined by participating practitioners. They used their professional judgement to decide who might be a guidance client willing and able to participate. The approach adopted by practitioners varied. Some contacted clients booked in for appointments for interviews to ask if they would be willing to

participate. Others waited until clients arrived for appointments to discuss their possible participation. In some instances researchers spoke to clients about the research and gained their consent.

Discussions between field researchers and practitioners revealed that certain 'gate-keeping' arrangements were operated implicitly by practitioners. Specifically, participating practitioners generally ruled out clients who were offenders or asylum seekers, since these client groups were considered to be unsuitable candidates for a longitudinal study. First, they were, by definition, in transition, so it was thought that there was a danger that contact information would be unreliable. Second, there was concern that asking these clients for contact information might be experienced as threatening.

In two case studies, researcher observations revealed further issues relevant to client follow-up. The first related to one of the participants suffering from mental health issues. The researcher highlighted potential problems for the follow-up which had become evident during the fieldwork visit related to their general health. A second example related to the occupational aspiration of a client who wished to work in an area that would restrict the client's ability to give information for security reasons.

Evaluating effectiveness from the client's perspective
In this study, effectiveness was defined from the viewpoint of the client, immediately after the interview.

Effectiveness was defined as guidance that clients found useful and high levels of agreement were found amongst clients, practitioners and expert witnesses. Evaluations were carried out immediately after the interview, but the longitudinal nature of the study allows for client follow-up over a further four year period, so any change in the clients' views of usefulness can be tracked.

Impact of the research process
The use of digital recording equipment to identify the characteristics of guidance may, in some measure, have compromised the client-practitioner relationship in a small number of cases.

Given that this investigation was to be carried out in the midst of the day-to-day operation of guidance organisations, digital audio-recording was judged to be the least disruptive

method of data collection (alternatives considered included video-recording and direct observation). This method may, however, have compromised the client-practitioner relationship in some measure since the equipment was experienced as intrusive by a small number of practitioners. A further limitation of audio-recordings has also been highlighted, since they do not permit any analysis of the role of non-verbal communication.

Overall, the approach adopted may have limitations, but has provided an accurate and comprehensive picture of what actually occurred in useful guidance interviews.

Recording guidance interviews

Practitioners may welcome the opportunity for formal feedback on their professional practice, but may find the process of recording interviews difficult.

A number of practitioners asked researchers for feedback on their guidance interviews. That is, they felt they would benefit from some kind of independent evaluation of their professional practice. A number also remarked on how inhibiting and intrusive they had found the recording equipment on their practice.

Facilities and locations for guidance

An inhibitor to effective guidance is the physical resources available to practitioners for interviews with clients. An enhancer for effective adult guidance delivery may relate to accessibility and visibility of services.

A number of researchers noted that, in certain contexts, the physical facilities in which guidance was carried out were not ideal. In particular, the lack of private space for interviews, which compromised client confidentiality, was a problem. It was similarly noted that benefits arose where an adult guidance organisation shared premises with other public organisations, like libraries, since this could result in a high level of client self-referral.

Guidance and the curriculum

Embedding guidance in the curriculum does not necessarily result in positive outcomes.

Two contrasting cases from further and higher education indicated how embedding guidance in the curriculum could have both an enhancing and an inhibiting effect on clients. In one case, a guidance practitioner had been successful in integrating group

sessions in the curriculum. The impact was considered to be extremely positive. In another case, where guidance was a compulsory part of the curriculum and subject to assessment procedures, the impact was judged to have been negative on the client.

External influences on effective guidance

The study demonstrates how some factors that influence the guidance process come from outside the immediate boundaries of the interview itself.

Variations in the professional contexts within which guidance is delivered are multidimensional and the circumstances in which guidance is undertaken are unpredictable. For example, a room reserved for an interview is suddenly not available; or a parent unexpectedly accompanies an adult client to their interview. Any evaluation of effective guidance is, therefore, unlikely to be comparing like with like.

Guidance as an on-going process

In practice, guidance was offered as part of an ongoing process, rather than a 'one off' event.

In the majority of interviews, practitioners offered some sort of follow-up service to clients. This ranged from an invitation to use organisational resources on a continuing basis, through help with writing a CV, psychometric testing and follow-up interviews. This aspect of guidance was appreciated by clients and highlights how individual transitions through education, training and employment are expected to take place over time.

Clients with particular needs

Certain client groups placed particular demands on the knowledge and, to a lesser extent, the skills of practitioners.

All clients in this study presented needs that were unique to their circumstances. However, it was evident that some, for example, those with health-related issues posed particular challenges for guidance. Specialist knowledge (both about medical conditions and financial benefits) were essential, combined with high levels of practitioner skill to secure a satisfactory outcome for the client. Other client groups similarly placed specific demands on practitioners, for example, those from overseas with English as a second language.

The role of action plans

The production of an action plan agreed by the client was a feature of most interviews.

The value of an action plan to most clients was apparent. However, in most cases, there appeared to be an organisational requirement related to securing the client's signature – which indicated their agreement. This raises the question of the extent to which the need to produce documentation in a particular way determines, in some way, the interview process and, perhaps, its outcomes. That is, the requirement for an action plan that identifies 'next steps' may impose a structure not entirely suited to a client's particular circumstances (e.g. a client with mental health issues).

Computer aided guidance

The use of computer aided guidance programmes was used often to reduce uncertainty and assist clients with job search strategies.

Computer aided guidance was frequently used by practitioners as an integral part of the guidance interview. Additionally, several practitioners referred clients for more in-depth psychometric assessment as part of the guidance process. However, programs were not always used as intended. For example, one practitioner recommended that their client completed a program even though they should expect that the job suggestions would be unsuitable. This process could still be of some value since it may help the client eliminate options.

Evidenced-based practice: old or new?

There was evidence that the traditional matching approach to guidance is still influential in practice.

The continuing influence of 'matching' is illustrated by the large proportion of interviews (about three quarters) that included recommendations for, or actual usage of, various resources that were based on this paradigm (e.g. computer-aided guidance; interest inventories; and psychometric tests).

The corollary to this finding was that there was little evidence of new approaches to guidance. This raises important questions about why practitioners are not using these approaches, what actually constitutes good practice and how this can be supported.

Standard v. non-standard activities of guidance

A wide range of techniques and strategies are used by practitioners.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the nature of effective guidance – not to assess the competence of practitioners. Judgements about individual performance against some external standard have, therefore, not been made. However, observations about the techniques and strategies used by practitioners are relevant in the context of establishing what clients find useful. Evidence from the interview transcripts reveals the comprehensive range of standard techniques and strategies used by practitioners (e.g. contracting, rapport-building, information-giving, exploration and referral). In addition, non-standard techniques, like giving personal opinions, were being used for particular purposes, as well as some advanced techniques, like challenging and self-disclosure.

Time allocations for guidance

The time taken for a guidance interview is typically under one hour.

This varies according to the professional context. Managing a complex guidance agenda within (what for the most part is) a strict time limit places considerable demands on the skills of practitioners. A number of practitioners struggled with these limits.

9. Conclusions

Researching effective guidance

Investigating what constitutes effective guidance is complex, but the qualitative research methodology has proved robust and the first phase of investigation has provided data that allow for a significant deepening of understanding of the issues involved.

Successes of the research

The research has been successful in capturing the distinctive features of guidance provision in a diverse range of organisational and geographical settings, and with a diverse sample of clients and practitioners.

The data has allowed us not only to increase understanding of the contexts in which guidance is delivered to adults in England, but to gain an in-depth, (although at this stage preliminary), appreciation of client and practitioners' perceptions of guidance, its key features and usefulness. Importantly, this initial analysis has highlighted issues which will need further study in the second report.

Guidance delivery and contexts

Adult guidance in England is delivered across varied contexts and from multiple funding streams. Whilst this diversity brings with it certain benefits (e.g. access to varied networks for client referrals, which is particularly important in the community/outreach guidance and not-for-profit organisational contexts), it also creates considerable pressures (e.g. arising from the uncertainty of future funding support) and may prove confusing (for instance, one adult client being interviewed in a Connexions service was bemused by the front-of-house information, which was clearly targeted at young people).

Quality standards

Quality standards, both internal and external, were evident across all organisational contexts and were an accepted, often valued, feature of service delivery. Good levels of in-service training support were found across all contexts, with on-going training programmes and support for practitioners. However, there were exceptions to this, where training for adult practitioners was systematically overlooked in favour of training for Connexions Personal Advisers.

Diversity of participants

A diverse range of clients has been captured in this research which encompasses: age; ethnic origin; gender; disability; and varying qualification levels.

A similarly diverse range of practitioners participated. Standards of specialist, and relevant, qualifications amongst practitioners were consistently high. The majority continually participated in training to update their skills, expertise and knowledge.

Variations in interviews

Initial guidance interviews are different from follow-up interviews in some, but not all, respects. For example, action plans and recommendations may be similar whilst introductions and the context of interviews differ. The length of time taken for guidance interventions differs considerably (i.e. 16 minutes to 1 hour 42 minutes).

An evaluation of effective guidance from the client perspective

The focus of this study was whether the client found their guidance interview 'useful' and why. Evaluation of the interview took place immediately afterwards, with the majority of client-participants (98%) judging their guidance as useful. Follow-up of clients over four years will allow comparisons to be made over time.

Different perspectives on effectiveness

In addition to the clients, the practitioners who had conducted the guidance interviews were asked to evaluate the guidance they had given. A third and independent evaluation was also collected from 'expert witnesses'. High levels of agreement with the positive client evaluations were found in those provided both by the practitioners and the independent expert witnesses. Additionally, the understandings of what constituted useful guidance and its outstanding features, were similar amongst these three groups.

High levels of agreement

There were high levels of agreement amongst the clients, practitioners and 'expert witnesses', particularly about: the welcome and introduction by the practitioner; whether the client felt comfortable discussing personal information; agreeing a future action plan; issues of respect; and the usefulness of the intervention.

High levels of disagreement

The highest levels of disagreement were for questions relating to: whether the client had understood what was going to happen in the interview; whether the client's thinking had

been changed in any way; and whether a client had understood the importance of something which they had not before the guidance intervention.

Nature of effective guidance

Evidence from this study indicates guidance is useful to clients when it: provides challenge and direction; gives access to relevant resources; brings about positive change(s); continues over a period of time and provides support and safety.

The usefulness of guidance

Of the fifty clients who participated in this research all but one stated that they had found the guidance they had received useful. Question 14 (which asked whether the guidance intervention had been useful to the client and in what ways), had some of the highest levels of agreement between: the client and practitioner; the practitioner and expert witness; and the expert witness and client. Several reasons were identified:

Clients stated that they had found their guidance useful because: they had felt encouraged and supported, it had increased their confidence; their ideas had been challenged; they had been inspired to consider new options; it had provided the opportunity to discuss and reflect; and because they had been able to discuss personal matters with an interested professional.

Practitioners indicated that the benefits of guidance for clients included: the development of positive attitudes; increased self confidence; the development of new skills; being respected and accepted (not judged); enhanced understanding of the job market; job-search skills; and increased self-awareness.

Overall, 'useful' guidance interventions defined by clients, practitioners and expert witnesses included: the quality of the client-practitioner relationship; opportunities for the client to discuss and reflect; securing positive outcomes for clients; motivating and inspiring the clients; the levels of knowledge and skills displayed by practitioners; and the obvious need for guidance.

Key features of useful guidance

The key features of useful guidance, identified by clients, practitioners and expert witnesses, include the expertise of the practitioner; good practice examples and the need for guidance.

Characteristics of guidance

Four broad categories of activities and forty sub-sets characterised useful guidance. A wide range of techniques and strategies were used by practitioners, some advanced, some standard and some non-standard. Two important influences were the administrative requirement to produce an action plan (that identified the next steps for clients) and the matching paradigm (emphasising the assessment of individual traits that are then matched to jobs). There was little evidence that practitioners were using new techniques or theories in practice. This raises questions about what comprises 'good practice', as well as what encourages and supports the adoption of new thinking and practices.

Positive outcomes from guidance

Useful guidance affects a measure of change in clients. This could relate to their attitudes, behaviour and/or thinking. These changes make a positive contribution to clients' transition(s) through education and training into employment. Some (like attitudes) are difficult to measure and would not necessarily result in immediate placement into employment, education or training.

Influence of context on the guidance process

How guidance is conducted and its outcomes are dependent, at least in part, on influences that exist outside the interview, which are beyond the control of the practitioner. This relates both to the general resources available within the guidance organisation (including facilities and time available, opportunities for follow-up, materials, etc.) and the particular challenges that clients bring to the interview (like multicultural or health issues).

Appendix 1: Organisations that participated in the research by context

Connexions, IAG Partnerships and Job Centre Plus

Atherstone One Stop Shop, Warwickshire

Burton Adult Centre, Signpost to Success

Connexions West of England

Direxions (Lincoln), Connexions Lincolnshire and Rutland

Direxions (Stamford), Connexions Lincolnshire and Rutland

Gains, Suffolk

GO4 for Adults (IAG Partnership for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, Devon, Plymouth and Torbay)

Jobcentre Plus, Cumbria

Learn and Earn Shop, Coventry

New Frontiers Adult Guidance Connexions Cumbria

New Futures, Sheffield

North London IAG Partnership

Prospects Review, London

Stafford Adult Centre, Signpost to Success

Stoke on Trent Adult Centre, Signpost to Success

Higher education

Anglia Polytechnic University

De Montfort University

Exeter University

Kings College, University of London

Manchester and UMIST University Careers Service

Oxford University Careers Service

University College St Martins, Cumbria

University of Derby

University of Gloucestershire

University of Lincoln

Warwick University Careers Service

Further education

Burton on Trent College

Carlisle College

City College, Coventry

Cornwall College

Doncaster College

Hull College of FE

Leicester College

North Warwickshire and Hinckley FE College (Connexions, Coventry & Warwickshire)

Warwickshire FE College

West Suffolk College

Community/outreach and not-for-profit organisations

Manchester City Pride (Manchester University Careers Service)

Parson Cross SRB5 project, Sheffield (New Futures, Sheffield)

Prescriptions for Learning, Nottingham*

Rathbone Training for the National Probation Service, Cumbria

RNIB South West Education and Employment Centre

RNIB Yorkshire and Humber Education and Employment Centre

Suffolk Community Education

Trades Hall Centre, Workington (two case studies undertaken)**

Waltham Forest QEST, London

Working Actively to Change Hillfields (WATCH) Ltd., West Midlands

Private organisations and organisations offering guidance on a funded basis in the workplace

Calderdale and Kirklees Careers Ltd.

Careers Management Futures, London

Central Careers Consultancy, London

Family Learning Works Project, Warwickshire College*

Guidance Services Ltd.

Right Coutts, London

skillsformedia, London

Workplace guidance provided by GO4 (IAG Partnership for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, Devon, Plymouth and Torbay)

Workplace guidance provided by New Futures Sheffield

* Organisation/initiative participated in the research and although organisational context report is included in Appendix 2 the case study could not be included in the overall 50.

** Organisation/initiative participated in the research, but case study could not be included in the overall 50.

N.B. all the organisations listed wished to be acknowledged for their participation in the research.

Appendix 2: Organisational context reports

2.1 Context reports for Connexions, IAG Partnerships and Job Centre Plus case studies

Atherstone One Stop Shop, Warwickshire

Atherstone One Stop Shop is part of the Coventry and Warwickshire Connexions service. Adult Guidance in Coventry and Warwickshire is provided by Coventry Warwickshire Guidance (CWG). Coventry and Warwickshire Connexions and CWG are both part of a broader sub-regional organisation called the Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Partnership (CSWP).

CWG aim to provide free and accessible information, advice and guidance centres of excellence which reach into the community, supporting post Connexions clients in their transition to adult life. The organisation targets any adult aged 20 years plus. Service offers include help with CV writing and job applications; information, advice and guidance on education, training and learning opportunities; job search strategies; computer aided guidance; psychometric testing; and labour market information. All services are offered free and there is a strong commitment to ensuring that services are tailored to individual needs.

Burton Adult Centre, Signpost to Success

The adult centre houses a range of community and voluntary groups and is run through a mixture of funding including the European Social Fund and the Social Regeneration Budget 6. The latter is known as the Burton Community Project and a range of outreach workers are based in the centre, including Signpost to Success. A full range of IAG and guidance services are offered at the centre. There is no charge for services as these are funded by Jobcentre Plus, the Learning and Skills Council and ADVANTAGE West Midlands (as part of SRB6).

The adult centre is aimed at adults aged 18-65 years. It does not have many casual callers and appointments are booked via a variety of agencies or directly from members of the public. The service is very focused on targets and undertakes, on average, 22 vocational guidance interviews per week of 1 hour each. The main agencies are: the Jobcentre, from where clients are referred directly to the career guidance specialist if they need more in-depth help; SRB 6 workers; voluntary and community agencies; Signpost to Success outreach workers; and Connexions staff.

Connexions West of England (N.B. the organisation re-wrote this report)

Connexions West of England regards itself as the lead body for a number of learning related contracts in the West of England area - formerly known as Avon. These include:

- The West of England Information, Advice and Guidance Partnership (helping adults 20+ make choices about learning and work), www.mychoices.info
- West of England and Gloucestershire learndirect Hub
- Avon online virtual learning centre, www.virtualcentre.org.uk
- Career Consultants West (Commercial Guidance services, career development and training programmes)
- The Learning Information Help-line
- Employability Skills group (13 – 19)
- Connexions (13 – 19), www.connexionswest.org.uk

In order to fulfil these varied roles the company has developed links with local schools, colleges, private training providers, HEIs, the voluntary and community sector, sector skills groups, local authorities, employers, Business Links, the TUC and Job Centre Plus amongst others. The company as a whole employs 342 staff (296 full time equivalents) over 6 sites with significant use of outreach venues. Guidance services are delivered through the Connexions services, the commercial team and through Enhanced Services support offered through IAG Partnership funding. Individuals self-refer through access to marketing materials or are referred through the wide range of partners detailed above.

Direxions, Stamford Connexions Centre and Lincoln Connexions Centre, Lincolnshire and Rutland

Direxions is the adult guidance service working with Connexions Lincolnshire and Rutland which are both part of the Lincolnshire and Rutland Information, Advice and Guidance for Adults (IAGA) partnership. Case studies were undertaken at both centres.

The service is targeted at adults aged 20 years to 64 years. It offers a full range of free services to clients. Some organisations are charged for the services. The services offered include one-to-one information, advice and guidance; career development; forces resettlement; redundancy counselling; and psychometric testing. These are offered together with help with CV writing, job applications, job change and occupational choices. Clients can also include those in prison and those wishing to return to the labour market.

Guidance for Adults in Suffolk (GAINS)

GAINS is a network of seven advisers co-ordinated by the Suffolk IAG Partnership, and services are funded by Suffolk Learning and Skills Council, and the European Social Fund. The service is available to adults aged 20 or over who live or work within the county of Suffolk. Appointments are available in Ipswich, Lowestoft and Bury St Edmunds. Administration is from the IAG Partnership office in Ipswich. Referrals can be made to the service from IAG Partnership-funded advice sessions if the client is eligible. Clients are entitled to an initial interview of an hour's duration, and to follow-up appointments, including personality and ability tests. "Bitesize" course bookings can also be made. All services are free to the client.

GO4 for Adults, IAG Partnership for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, Devon, Plymouth and Torbay

GO4 is the local name of the Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) Partnership that covers Cornwall, Isles of Scilly, Devon, Torbay and Plymouth. The local GO4 partnership consists of over a hundred organisations from all sectors involved in the provision of IAG in the context of learning and work to people aged 20 years or over, with special emphasis on reaching groups of adults who have never benefited from education and training. GO4 is legally a branch of Connexions Cornwall and Devon and is located throughout the region at four main sites plus outreach sites.

The services provided are free and include: helping with CV writing and job search; advice and information on job ideas including self employment; advice and signposting to funding for learning, improving job skills and job prospects; advice and guidance on applications to further and higher education; general careers guidance; and workshops and courses for adult community groups and projects. IT based guidance software packages are used extensively as a tool to aid decision making, but talking to three of the adult guidance workers it was clear that with their experience and extensive knowledge of the local area they relied heavily on personal contacts to obtain information or redirect clients to other sources of expertise.

Job Centre Plus, Cleator Moor, West Cumbria

Job Centre Plus has several service level agreements with a range of local and national partners, which include Connexions, the Probation Service, local authorities, colleges, voluntary organisations, churches and a local redundancy task force. The organisation targets a client group of 16-59 year olds in receipt of any working age benefit. However, those who are not in receipt of any benefit will also be seen as there are targets for non-

claiming clients and for those who are currently employed. The organisation offers all of its services free and includes help with applications, CV writing and basic skills assessment. Clients are also helped with preparing for interviews and psychometric tests. There is also a Work Support service to ensure people are able to stay in work. Issues that are considered to be barriers to a client taking up work are tackled or referred to a partner organisation.

As Job Centre Plus rolls out the service will undergo major changes. They will deal with all working age benefits and all individuals in receipt of these will have to undertake a 40 minute 'work focused meetings.' This will be mandatory for claimants of all benefits including incapacity, single parent, carer and bereavement benefits. The manager believed that these changes would mean advisers having a greater guidance element in their work which would have massive training implications for staff.

Learn and Earn Shop, Coventry

The Learn and Earn Shop in Coventry city centre is part of the Coventry and Warwickshire Connexions service. Adult Guidance in Coventry and Warwickshire is provided by Coventry and Warwickshire Guidance (CWG). The practitioner who participated in this research is a member of the adult guidance team which is part of CWG. Coventry and Warwickshire Connexions and CWG are both part of a broader sub-regional organisation called the Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Partnership (CSWP).

All the services offered at the Learn and Earn Shop are free and include: information and advice on learning and work; guidance which is defined as a one-to-one in-depth discussion to explore your current situation and options; computer aided guidance; job search including help in preparing CVs, completing application forms and interview skills; and access to the internet to help job searches. CWG also carry out redundancy counselling with Amicus, participate in educational and employment fairs in the community and undertake guidance work at outreach centres in the community.

New Frontiers Adult Guidance, Connexions Cumbria (N.B. the organisation re-wrote this report)

Connexions Cumbria regards itself as the lead body for New Frontiers, the IAG Partnership for Cumbria. It is special in that it coordinates a partnership and provides an adult information, advice and guidance service which has been available to all since 1997 (in the days of Cumbria Careers). Over the years it has been successful in winning

funding from a variety of streams; Single Regeneration Budget, IAG and European Social Fund and working in partnership with other agencies to ensure a coordinated and coherent approach to service delivery.

Connexions Cumbria is the only service which provides a countywide in-depth guidance service promoting lifelong learning and skills development. It provides support to help individuals to overcome the barriers they face and helps clients with taking up learning and employment opportunities.

All the services offered are free and cover careers and education guidance, help with writing CVs and applications, job hunting strategies and redundancy counselling. The service targets adults aged 20 years plus who are living and/or working in Cumbria. As well as delivering services from Connexions centres it also undertakes outreach work in adult education centres, job centres and community centres, and is commencing innovative outreach delivery through utilising ICT and mobile facilities hosting which include BBC Bus and county library buses.

New Futures, Sheffield

New Futures is the recently adopted 'branding' for the adult guidance team and is part of Sheffield Futures, the Connexions service for South Yorkshire. The service originally had around 250 staff, but in 2002 merged with the local authority Youth Service and now has approximately 600 employees.

The target client group is anyone over the age of 18, but this can vary dependent upon a specific contract. The case study took place in the city centre office which particularly deals with employed adults wishing to change direction. A comprehensive, universal and free service is offered to clients. The principal focus in the city centre office is one-to-one interviews, which are scheduled for one hour, but additional services are being developed e.g. group sessions on interview skills and CVs.

North London IAG, Connexions for Adults

Until recently, North London Information, Advice and Guidance (NLIAG) Partnership managed various service strands, including Connexions for Adults (CFA) which was involved in the research. During the period of the fieldwork, management of CFA passed from NLIAG to Prospects Employment. At the time of writing, CFA is managed by Prospects Employment, along with Prospects Review, North London. CFA is a unique advice and guidance service that provides on-going help and support to people 20 years

and over who have experienced difficulties in entering learning or work. It is for people living in the London Boroughs of Barnet, Enfield, Haringey and Waltham Forest. (See also for the context report for Prospects Review, below)

Prospects Review, North London

Prospects Review is part of the Prospects group and offers IAG to adults aged 20 or over, living or working in Barnet. They also offer a range of services to adults in the North London area. The company has other adult guidance services within London. In North London there is also a Connexions for Adults service providing specialised help and guidance at outreach locations within four boroughs. The Connexions for Adults team have specialist areas such as those aged 45 and over, people with disabilities, lone parents, and people with mental health issues.

All the service's provisions are free to users and offered on the basis of client need. Services include help with CV preparation. Clients can then produce these on the IT available. There is also access to a range of computer based software including guidance and information programmes together with use of the Internet. There is a well resourced information library. Guidance sessions of up to one hour with a written action plan and drop-in advice up to 15 minutes are also offered. Furthermore under Connexions for Adults, outreach work across four boroughs is provided to support people with multiple barriers such as going with them to college interviews, acting as an advocate, working with community-based organisations and taking self-referrals as well as taking them from (and making referrals to) Prospects Review where appropriate.

Stafford Adult Centre, Signpost to Success (N.B. the organisation requested substantial changes to the researcher's report)

'Signpost to Success' is the branding for the adult division of Connexions in Staffordshire. It provides services to any adult aged 20 years plus through the Staffordshire IAG partnership, the New Deal, the Single Regeneration Projects and the European Social Fund.

The Stafford Adult Centre operates under 'Signpost to Success'. A careers guidance specialist visits the adult centre each week for two days. There are 8 people based at the Stafford Adult Centre, whilst there are about 46 staff (not all working in the field) in the adult division across the county. The centre offers: information, advice and guidance; help with CV writing, interview skills and writing job applications; access to computer packages such as Adult Directions, Pathfinder and Odyssey; and exploration

of career and job opportunities. There is no charge for services as these are funded by Job Centre Plus as part of the New Deal contract.

Stoke on Trent Adult Centre, Signpost to Success

As with the Stafford Adult Centre, 'Signpost to Success' is the branding for the adult division of Connexions in Staffordshire. It provides services to any adult aged 20 years plus through the Staffordshire IAG partnership, the New Deal, the Single Regeneration Projects and the European Social Fund.

The adult division of Connexions Staffordshire is 'Signpost to Success' which employs 500 plus staff. A careers guidance specialist visits the adult centre each week for two days. The adult centre targets both employed and unemployed adults and offers information, advice and guidance; help with CV writing, interview skills and writing job applications; access to computer packages such as Adult Directions; and exploration of career and job opportunities.

There is no charge for any services as these are funded by Jobcentre Plus as part of the New Deal contract or the IAG Partnership through the local Learning and Skills Council. The organisation is target driven by targets set by the ESF and IAG funding. There is also some pressure to maintain a balance between quality and quantity.

2.2   Context reports for the higher education case studies

Anglia Polytechnic University

Anglia Polytechnic University (APU) is a Higher Education institution with two main sites in Cambridge and Chelmsford. It also offers courses through other colleges in the region. The APU Careers Service is open to all potential entrants, students and graduates of APU, as well as to graduates of other universities by agreement. The service employs seven staff at the Cambridge careers service; a separate service is available at the Chelmsford site.

The APU careers service is located within the student services area of the university, which means that students can easily access a range of information and services in the same place. In addition to educational and vocational guidance interviews, a programme of psychometric testing, CV preparation, mock interviews, job search and career management skills is available. The service has a well-stocked, accessible information room, with private rooms for interviews, all equipped with computers. There is also

public access to computers in the careers information library, where clients can use Prospects Planner, Funderfinder and various other facilities.

De Montfort University

De Montfort University (DMU) is a new university which operates from a number of sites. The university has a strong record of attracting students from non-traditional backgrounds and a high proportion of students are local to the university. The careers service at the Leicester campus brands itself as Careers DMU (Leicester). It is located within Student Services and has 10 members of staff. The main client target groups are current students and graduates. However, a full guidance service is provided for prospective students and staff. The service has an IAG contract to provide guidance for local people who left HE prematurely, are potential HE students (age 20 years plus) or are underemployed graduates. Guidance is also available to local unemployed people.

A wide range of services are offered including: written and computer-based resources; 20 minute drop-in interviews; pre-booked guidance interviews; employer events; psychometric testing; CV clinics; and 'contracted coaching' which offers intensive work with repeat users of the service who require greater focus (and is seen as recognition of supporting non-traditional entrants).

Exeter University

The University has 15 academic schools, 9,000 undergraduates and 3,500 postgraduate students. There is a comprehensive range of careers guidance on offer to students at Exeter, with a strong commitment to the continuous improvement of services. The Careers Advisory Service sits within the Academic Division of the University and is seen as an integral part of both general student services and the learning/teaching arena. There are currently three full time professional guidance practitioners – including the head of service – on-site with administrative support.

Students have an entitlement to a 15 minute guidance direction interview, followed by more in-depth guidance if required. The service runs seminars, workshops, three vacancy websites, services to employers, a personal development programme, a survey of destinations of graduates and there is a resource library. In addition there is: the employability website which is interactive and offers information and practical help on personal development, work experience placements, key skills, career planning and becoming self-employed; a service linking former and current students in a type of mentoring service designed to offer career choice support; PESCA profiling which

enables individuals to record their development and make decisions about goals; and TargetGRAD a specific website which links students with top graduate recruiters.

Kings College, University of London Careers Service

The University of London Careers Service (ULCS) is by far the largest higher education careers service of its kind in the country, with about 100 staff. It aims to be a centre of excellence and expertise in graduate careers advice. There are seven units based in other London University colleges and the central office of ULCS also serves some other London higher education institutions.

The careers service targets current students at Kings College and its associated medical schools, but can be used by staff and former students. Services offered include: the use of employer and general careers libraries; 'quick query' sessions; one-hour interviews; employer presentations and careers forums; workshops on CV-writing, application forms and interview techniques; mock interviews; aptitude tests; a website; support in finding work experience; and Myers Briggs (MBTI) psychometric testing. Skill-development sessions run by employers are also offered together with sector-specific fairs.

Manchester and UMIST University Careers Service

Manchester and UMIST universities are in the process of merging and will formally do so in 2004. Irrespective of the merger, Manchester and UMIST have always had a single careers service although operating from three sites. There are sixteen guidance practitioners and a total of 60 staff in the service. The service has a large business access team which works with employers, and a significant special projects team.

The main target client group is students at the university, but there is some provision for university staff and graduates as well as some specific separate contracts. The service offers 'quick query drop in sessions', pre-booked guidance interviews, a 'Careers Service Express' function at the Students Union, extensive written and IT resources, employer events and a mentoring programme. Considerable emphasis is placed on working with employers.

Oxford University Careers Service

The Oxford University Careers Service is the principal provider of guidance at the university. There are eleven guidance practitioners who each have specialist job sectors. The service monitors numbers of clients and it has a system whereby users have to register to become a member of the service. There used to be a charge of £4 for

membership, but this has been abolished. Approximately 75% of undergraduates are registered with the service.

The main target client group is students at the university, graduates up to four years after graduation and contract research staff. The service offers a drop in service, pre-booked guidance interviews, group work on, for instance, CVs, and employer events.

University College St Martin's, Cumbria

St Martin's College was founded in Lancaster in 1963 as a Church of England teacher training institution. It has since expanded to sites in Cumbria, at Ambleside and Carlisle, offering degrees awarded by Lancaster University. A large proportion of students are mature, often with family responsibilities.

The careers service at St Martin's college is open to all existing and prospective students. All services are free and cover careers education, information and guidance (CEIG) as defined by QAA and UUK. A lot of support is provided with applications and personal statements. There is also a large amount of confidence building and networking skills development. One-to-one guidance is offered to all students and awareness of the service is raised through induction sessions. Group sessions are an important feature of the careers work in this college.

University of Derby

The Career Development Centre at the University of Derby has six careers advisers all employed by the university. There are currently unfilled posts so pressure on staff is high. Every day a Duty Information Officer provides initial assistance to clients and a Duty Careers Adviser offers short 15 minute interviews. Further appointments are made to see careers advisers who specialise in and link with specific work areas.

The centre targets current students and graduates of the university, students and graduates of any university within 3 years, academic staff together with employers and trainers. The centre offers guidance, advice and information individually or in groups, together with help with self-awareness, CVs and job applications. There is also a vacancy service, student employment agency and an employability co-ordinator. Staff at the centre also act as consultants to academics and teach on assessed modules.

University of Gloucestershire

The University of Gloucestershire received university status in 2001 and is located across several sites in both Cheltenham and Gloucester. It is comprised of seven schools, three research units and a faculty overseeing the academic activities: the Careers Centre is part of this faculty. The Careers Centre employs 8 people, including an administrator and a receptionist which equates to 5.3 FTEs.

The service targets prospective, current and past students (up to 3 years after graduation), staff, as well as graduates of other institutions although a small fee is charged for the services accessed by these graduates. Services offered include: information, advice and guidance; a series of careers events throughout the academic year; vacancy information; identification of transferable skills; help with job, education and career decisions; access to PC packages such as Prospects Planner; and the exploration of career opportunities, postgraduate study and funding, working abroad and voluntary work. The Careers Centre runs its own 12 week module, primarily for Level 2 undergraduates, called 'Skills for Graduates in the 21st Century', as well as inputting to Academic Schools' modules at Levels 1, 2, 3 and postgraduate courses as requested.

University of Lincoln

The University of Lincoln operates across four main sites in Lincoln and Hull. In 2002/03 the University had 6,799 full-time undergraduates, 1,208 part-time undergraduates and 903 post-graduate students across these four main campuses, with the majority being based in Lincoln. Student numbers for 2003/04 have risen above last years figures.

The careers service of the University is situated within Students Services, which is managed overall by the Director of Students Services. It comprises a Senior Careers Adviser, a fully qualified Careers Adviser, a trainee Careers Adviser and an 'acting' Information Officer. Each of the Careers Advisers is linked to particular faculties and/or departments.

The main target group for the service is students at the University. In addition, the Careers Service offers its services to potential students who are referred to them. The service offers a range of information including copies of all AGCAS leaflets, information on the website and its own information leaflets about a variety of topics. There is a careers library in the Student Services reception area, but the service is also developing its own virtual careers library on the University website. It provides a series of career management workshops for students including CV writing and job search techniques. A

student recruitment service is provided both through the publication of employer vacancies on the website and through employer links with, and visits to, the University.

All undergraduate students in their second year undertake a module entitled Employability and Career Development, which includes writing a CV and a personal statement and starting to research potential career ideas.

Warwick University Careers Service

The Warwick University Careers Service has a total of 19 staff including (the equivalent of) 4.3 careers advisers. The Service has Matrix accreditation and also has a service level agreement for working with academic departments. The Service is a member of the Coventry and Warwickshire Adult Guidance Network. A wide range of services are offered including one-to-one 'Quick Careers Advice' and 'Applications Advice' sessions, and longer pre-booked guidance consultations, as well as a programme of group based activities to develop career management skills and sector awareness. There is a programme of employer events and further work with employers is done through the EmployerConnect Team within the Careers Service. The Careers Service website provides further information, including destinations data relating to Warwick graduates.

2.3   Context reports for the further education case studies

Burton on Trent College

Burton on Trent College is a further education college which includes a new sixth form centre. The college has a wide choice of full-time and part-time courses from pre-entry to level 3. It also offers Modern Apprenticeships at Advanced and Foundation level. Student services at the colleges offer support on a range of issues including career guidance with an open door service to all. Student services employ six full-time and six part-time staff. Within the guidance service there are three Guidance Officers, a Welfare Officer and a receptionist.

The guidance service targets all ages of clients. Career guidance is available from two sources: the college has a comprehensive student service section which offers information, advice and guidance from its own Guidance Officers; and there is also support to students from Personal Advisers employed by the Staffordshire Connexions Service. The case study was undertaken by a Guidance Officer employed part-time by the college. The service offers pre-entry educational guidance, on course guidance which includes help with higher education applications, careers guidance, job search and exit guidance. These services are all offered free of charge.

Carlisle College

Carlisle College has around 1,000 full-time students and around three times as many attending part-time. Part-time students may be in employment and on day release or choosing to study part-time because of domestic responsibilities. The college offers a variety of courses with a strong emphasis on vocational training. There are a large number of mature students and the Access to higher education course is extremely popular.

The college employs 330 staff of which there is one full-time careers adviser and one part-time student adviser. The student adviser looks after the careers information in the library and concentrates on helping students with job search and applications. Students requiring more in depth guidance are referred to the careers adviser.

The service targets current and prospective students, full and part-time and is well used by the mature students of the college. All services are free and cover higher education advice, help with writing CVs and applications, course change and course choice.

City College, Coventry

City College today is the result of the 2002 merger of Coventry Technical College and Tile Hill College. It is located across three centres in Coventry: Butts Centre, Tile Hill Centre and Maxwell Centre. There are approximately 15,000 part-time and 3,000 full-time students at the college which includes both home and overseas students. Student services within the college offers help with finance, careers, childcare services, student welfare and counselling. Student Services is located at both the Butts Centre and the Tile Hill Centre employing about 15 people in total. The case study took place at the Butts Centre which employs 8 staff.

The College Careers Service offers advice and guidance, one-to-one careers interviews, information on a wide range of careers, help with higher education applications, access to job vacancies, information on training and educational opportunities and help with job hunting skills. All these services are offered free, appointments can be booked, there are drop-in sessions as well and quick queries can be emailed. It is targeted at existing, potential and past students (this can be up to a year after they have left and in some cases means they are potential students again) which can include both home and overseas students. The service is also provided for local members of the community.

Cornwall College

Cornwall College is actually a collection of colleges on different campus sites located across Cornwall. The case study took place where the Careers Guidance is sited at St Austell. It is set up to serve all aged 20 years plus as there is a separate guidance unit for young people. Currently there are 500 employees at the St Austell site, including two adult guidance workers.

The guidance service offers free: individual full guidance interviews by appointment; assistance with CVs; undergraduate applications; advice on course changes and job change (delivered individually or in small groups); general advice sessions about finance and balancing learning/domestic commitments and self confidence; together with seminars for Access students.

Doncaster College

Doncaster College is located in the heart of the city and has three main centres together with a variety of local learning centres in the community. It is in the top 15% of further education colleges and also within the top 13 further education colleges offering higher education. The college targets all sections of the community and there are over 34,000 students enrolled undertaking both part-time and full-time courses.

The information and guidance centre at the college has four members of staff with careers related qualifications. The centre offers free and confidential advice to potential, present and past students. There is both an appointment system and drop-in sessions operating. The services offered include: course information; careers and educational advice and guidance; access to computer aided guidance packages; internet access including careers and recruitment websites; information on job vacancies and voluntary work opportunities; education and training opportunities; opportunities abroad; help with job searches, CV writing and preparing for interviews. A Learning Resource Centre is located at each main college site which houses a comprehensive and up-to-date careers collection.

In addition the Information and Guidance team also signposts to other student services at the college. Pre-course information, advice and guidance is available for prospective applicants considering a course at the college. On course and exit guidance for all full-time, part-time and flexible study learners is available. All students in further and higher education can use the services provided.

Hull College of Further Education

Hull College is a large further education college, with four main sites in Hull plus Goole College within the East Riding of Yorkshire. The college offers a wide variety of courses including a number of higher education (HE) courses and HE access courses designed specifically for adults. In 2001/2002 Hull College had more than 4,000 full-time and nearly 32,000 part-time students drawn from Hull and East Yorkshire. Hull has a significant population of asylum seekers and the college has developed a range of courses specifically for them.

The college's guidance worker and the team of Personal Advisers (PAs) from The Humberside Partnership provide careers guidance. The team of PAs are all professionally qualified in careers guidance. The college's Connexions agreement provides the equivalent of two full-time advisers. In addition, the college funds a further post to provide guidance for current and potential adult learners. There is also a designated post, funded by the college, to provide a guidance specialist to work with asylum seekers.

Leicester College

Leicester College is located in the city centre and operates across four sites that specialise in certain subject areas. The college is one of the 10 largest Further Education colleges in England. It offers a wide range of courses and entry level up to Higher Education. The college employs approximately 1,600 staff and there are 43,000 learners annually at the college.

Advice and guidance is offered at all four campuses and at several outreach centres across the city. Advice and guidance is also given to the community at the Employment Education Training Access Centre, which is located on one of the college's campus. The service will see anybody and accepts referrals from Connexions (four personal advisers at the college) and the local IAG partnership. The free services offered by the centre include information, advice and guidance; pre-course, on-course and exit guidance; advice on employment, further courses, Higher Education and training; researching employment; job search skills; and help with CV, job applications and job interviews. Guidance interviews are available by appointment with one of the three qualified guidance practitioners. The service also offers drop-in sessions for quick queries. As part of the Overseas Qualification Development community based project, the service offers specialist guidance to overseas students who have a degree from another country.

Computer aided guidance packages are available including Adult Direxions, ECCTIS (information on university courses) and Kangaroo (guidance for younger people).

North Warwickshire and Hinckley Further Education College

North Warwickshire and Hinckley College operates from a total of ten sites within Warwickshire and Leicestershire. The college provides a wide choice of full-time and part-time courses, offering academic, vocational and leisure courses. The case study took place at the Nuneaton site.

The Nuneaton site has its own 'Learning Services' section which includes a number of support services such as counselling. The college has four guidance advisers who work principally on pre-entry. There has been a long relationship between the college and the local career guidance provider. Two Connexions' Personal Advisers, from the Coventry and Warwickshire Connexions' FE team, come into the college to do work with the target group being 16-19 year olds on courses with a tradition of high drop-out rates. A considerable focus of work in this setting is, therefore, exit advice for students wishing to leave a course and transition advice for students wishing to change courses. The practitioner who participated in the research is a Connexions PA.

Warwickshire Further Education College

Warwickshire College operates from three principal sites within Warwickshire. It offers a wide choice of full-time and part-time courses, ranging from leisure interests, Modern Apprenticeships, 'A' level and Access courses. The case study took place in one of the college's main urban sites. Within this site, career guidance takes place in three different ways: through outreach schemes aimed at 'hard to reach' learners operated by specialist project staff; a unit staffed by Personal Advisers from the local Connexions Service; and the College's own Student Services section. The case study took place in the latter.

Student Services includes a number of sections including the Welfare Team as well as the careers staff. There are four guidance practitioners (two full-time and two part-time). The main target client group is students of all ages at the College, but an 'open door' service is offered to anyone who seeks careers guidance. The service is completely free so adults, who may have to pay to see a Connexions adviser, often prefer to use the college service. The service finds that many ex-students return for career guidance. The service offers sessions on CV design, a reception service for 'signposting' to leaflets and information, a duty officer for advice and pre-booked half hour guidance interviews. Practitioners also engage with the local community by, for example, giving talks to

community groups and offering a 'Making Choices' ten week course aimed at people who are considering returning to work or retraining to change job, which includes a guidance element.

West Suffolk College

West Suffolk College is a Further Education College that is able to offer higher education courses via a partnership with Anglia Polytechnic University. At any one time the College employs around 1,000 permanent and fixed term staff. The Information, Advice and Guidance service has two guidance workers for adults. The IAG service is part of the Student Welfare and Guidance Service, but is not restricted to students of the College. Although guidance is offered at all the learning centres of the West Suffolk College, the case study was undertaken at the Bury St Edmunds site.

The guidance service aims to offer individuals free, confidential and unbiased information and advice to help with their education and training decisions which includes course choices, finance and occupational information. The service targets anyone aged 15 years plus and is seen as offering educational careers guidance. IAG is provided through responding to quick queries, drop-in sessions and booked interviews. Help may be given on CV writing, and completing course and job applications, but this information and advice is not formally offered as part of the service. Together with these services, guidance is given on study and training options, changing careers, development of new skills, broadening horizons, returning to work and making a fresh start.

2.4 Context reports for community/outreach and not-for-profit organisations

Manchester City Pride

Manchester City Pride is a wide-ranging initiative involving the local authority and local businesses aimed at encouraging participation in education. One element of the initiative aims at providing career guidance, and combines the IAG partnership and ESF co-financing. City Pride project workers are community-based, but if they cannot deal with queries they refer people on. Manchester and UMIST University Careers Service has a contract to provide guidance through the City Pride Project to graduates who are under-employed or seeking a career change. The case study took place at the Manchester and UMIST University Careers Service. Four careers advisers in the Manchester and UMIST University Careers Service do some work on this project (in addition to their usual duties). A requirement of the contract is that advisers must have a Diploma in Careers Guidance.

The Manchester and UMIST University Careers Service has a contract to provide one hour guidance interviews (the service usually does half hour interviews) for 12 people per month. The target group is under-employed graduates living in Manchester and most clients under this project seem to be graduates in their mid 20s who are not doing graduate-level work/wish to do work more related to their graduate subject.

Parson Cross SRB5 Project, Sheffield

Parson Cross SRB 5 Project is run by Sheffield Futures. Parson Cross is an estate approximately half an hour from Sheffield city centre. It has high levels of unemployment and poverty. The guidance project was funded for three years as an SRB project, but is nearing an end. Replacement funding is being sought. The project leader is a New Futures practitioner who works full-time on the project. There are also two careers assistants who have been recruited from within the local community and trained to NVQ Level 3.

The project follows the same aims and service provision as New Futures, but within the specific Parson Cross locality. The target client group is anyone over the age of 18 years. The SRB contract sets out targets relating to volume of clients. The project provides a mixture of one-to-one interviews, which are scheduled for one hour, group sessions e.g. on interview skills, and outreach sessions such as at mother and toddler groups. However, longer appointments are also available and home visits are made where appropriate. There is a strong emphasis on being proactive and engaging with the community, especially hard to reach groups.

Prescriptions for Learning, Nottingham

'Prescriptions for Learning' is a community based initiative offering an information, advice and guidance service to members of a local community. It is unique in that it operates from GP surgeries, and offers patients help to cope with their illness and help to improve their confidence. The initiative began in 2000 and was developed by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education in partnership with the East Midlands Development Agency, Nottingham Health Action Zone and the Greater Nottingham Learning Partnership. Currently, there are 40 projects in operation across the country each employing one careers/learning adviser. These learning and health projects target hard-to-reach clients and aim "to break down barriers that stop individuals from bringing about positive change in their lives". Clients are referred by general practitioners, counsellors, health visitors and mental health practitioners, but can also telephone for an appointment.

'Prescriptions for Learning' in Nottingham operates from several city surgeries in areas of Nottingham that have high levels of unemployment, poverty and poor health. The Nottingham initiative has recently been taken over by Nottingham City Council. Funding for the initiative can be difficult as it sits between learning and health. However, the initiative receives funding from Pathfinder, Nottingham City Council, the European Social Find, the Greater Nottingham Learning Partnership and the Learning and Skills Council.

Rathbone Training for the National Probation Service, Cumbria

Rathbone Training is part of Cumbria's New Frontiers Adult Guidance Partnership and operates on a charitable basis. Most of their work in Cumbria is in providing high quality learning and training to adults and young people who suffer significant disadvantage. Guidance services are targeted at a similar group and, as well as being made available to Rathbone trainees, extends to other clients through arrangements with the National Probation Service and Job Centre Plus. Rathbone Training works from 61 centres and has 7 independent living projects with approximately 950 employees. The West Cumbria centre employs 28 staff, 7 of who are involved in guidance work. The case study took place at the Probation Office in Whitehaven.

The target group of the organisation is identified as those experiencing significant disadvantage which in practice means those who had attendance problems at school or were excluded from school; those with poor literacy and numeracy skills; those suffering from low self-esteem; those whose second language is English; the long term unemployed; and the homeless. Free services are offered to clients such as assistance with CV writing, job applications, issues relating to self-employment and the disclosure of convictions.

Royal National Institute of the Blind (Yorkshire and Humber) at Rotherham Job Centre

The Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB) is a national voluntary organisation, which is a registered charity. Within RNIB, the Education and Employment Centres provide a range of services to blind and partially sighted people, their families, professionals who work with them and other agencies. These include information, advice and guidance in relation to education, training and employment, assessment, advocacy and conciliation, job seeking support and advice and assistance with assistive technology. They also provide charged services such as assessment, consultancy and training to organisations such as schools, colleges, training providers and employers. There are 6 such Centres, covering the whole of England. Services are provided at the

offices, but also in a range of partner premises, such as in Job Centres, schools, colleges, on employers' premises etc.

The Leeds centre has a contract with Job Centre Plus in Yorkshire and Humberside for the provision of vocational guidance, employment assessment and workplace technology assessment. Clients are referred by Disability Employment Advisers and Access to Work Advisers. In practice most referrals are for vocational guidance and employment assessment, although this is not necessarily the case in other regional centres that have Jobcentre Plus contracts. Vocational guidance and employment assessment is undertaken by the employment officer.

Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB) South West Education and Employment Centre (see also the report on the RNIB, Yorkshire and Humberside, above)

The South West education and employment centre at the RNIB is located in Bristol and operates as a 'not for profit' organisation. Nationally, the RNIB employs approximately 3,200 staff. The organisation targets: people with sight problems who are in or seeking employment; staff working with a blind or partially sighted colleague; employers wishing to retain, recruit or train a person with sight difficulties; blind and partially sighted children and young people and their families; students and adults in FE, HE and continuing education; and those on the New Deal for Disabled People (NDDP).

The services offered by these centres are free of charge. A range of education, employment information and consultancy services are provided including: careers guidance, job search help, assessments, training courses, specialist information for teachers, advocacy services to help parents get the educational support their child needs, family events and vacation schemes. The employment services offered include information, advice, training and support; guidance to individuals seeking employment of a change in direction; professional assessments of specialist technology required to access working environments; support to organisations wishing to review employment and training policies and practices; training for individuals and IT departments in the use of specialist software and hardware; and job placement under NDDP. The education services include guidance, information, advocacy and conciliation services; training courses and conferences covering best practice, specialist subjects, curriculum and physical access to learning; and consultancy services.

Suffolk Community Education

The service is unusual in that it offers a full information, advice and guidance service within an LEA Community Education Service. Services are funded by the Learning and Skills Council and by Suffolk IAG Partnership, ESF and supported by Suffolk Libraries. The service is impartial, confidential and free, and available to all adults over the age of twenty years. It aims to help adults towards: "new skills; realistic options; increased confidence; relevant information; a personal action plan and a clearer sense of direction". Appointments for guidance interviews are available in libraries, learning resource centres and community centres all over Suffolk, and as well as information, advice and guidance, clients can have help with job search skills, interviews and CV preparation. Clients also have the opportunity to attend accredited, personal development courses. The whole service is an outreach service and a variety of venues are used, which aim to be convenient and friendly to the user.

Waltham Forest QEST, London

'Quest Employment Support Team' (QEST) is a guidance service within Richmond Fellowship Work schemes, a registered charity and a company limited by share. Richmond Fellowship, nationally, mainly provides housing and support for people recovering from mental illness. QEST is now a provider under the New Deal for Disabled People, so also gets some clients with other disabilities through this work although it often refers them on to other specialist providers. More specifically, the service is for clients within this group who are ready for change and seem ready to cope with it.

The case study interview was undertaken at the Waltham Forest offices of QEST. Funding for QEST comes through Waltham Forest Local Health Authority and Waltham Forest Social Services, to take referrals from the two local Mental Health Teams (from North and South of the borough). Under this arrangement they also take referrals from local GPs and self-referrals. This funding is renewed 3-yearly and QEST is just coming to the end of one of these blocks. The target for this contract is 50 clients annually (easily over-reached) of which a third should get employment and a third training (not so easy). The period of help is one year and this has to be demonstrated through start and stop dates. Clients attend an induction day for all recent applicants who then chose from a menu: rapid job search a through a 'Choices' group; detailed careers assessment; job preparation training; confidence building for the workplace; courses; accredited computer skills training; and work trials or supported placements. The service can be used for up to 12 months, and this can be extended in certain circumstances.

Working Actively to Change Hillfields (WATCH) Ltd, West Midlands

WATCH Ltd is a community based initiative responding to the continuing problems encountered by residents of Hillfields in Coventry. It was established as an independent social enterprise in 1996. It is the aim of the enterprise to improve local conditions with a particular emphasis on reconnecting the neighbourhood economy with the city as whole and tackling problems faced by residents in accessing training and gaining employment. The enterprise targets Hillfields residents, particularly refugees, asylum seekers and ethnic minorities who are suffering disproportionately high levels of unemployment. WATCH Ltd specialises in working with the local community including; minority groups, those with health related issues, the over 50s, the unwaged and women. It is funded by the Learning and Skills Council, learndirect, the European Social Fund, the Single Regeneration Budget programme, the European Urban Fund, the Neighbourhood Renewal fund and Go-West Midlands.

WATCH Ltd has a number of partnerships with local voluntary organisations to create a network of services. A number of connected programmes have been established by WATCH Ltd which include: WATCH Employment services; WATCH UKOnline Centre; WATCH Community Development; and WATCH Young Peoples Project. The WATCH Ltd Employment Project offers: information, advice and guidance; help with job searches; careers guidance; self-employment advice; benefits advice; interpretation of information (community languages are spoken); and access to the IT centre. There are also targeted training programmes on offer.

2.5 Context reports for private organisations and organisations offering guidance on a funded basis in the workplace

Calderdale and Kirklees Careers Ltd.

Calderdale and Kirklees Careers is a private, not-for-profit careers company, which is limited by guarantee. The company's board consists of representatives from the two local authorities (Calderdale and Kirklees), Business Link and the University of Huddersfield. Calderdale and Kirklees Careers operates from Connexions Careers Centres in Huddersfield, Halifax and Dewsbury. It provides its all age information, advice and guidance services in a whole host of partner premises and community settings across the area. It provides information and advice services to adults funded through the IAG partnership, in which it is the lead partner. The case study took place at Dewsbury Careers Centre.

Careers guidance for adults is funded through a whole variety of funding, with the majority being LSC co-financed ESF funding. Although guidance is provided free to all clients, there are some services which are free only through particular project funding, but which are charged services for clients not eligible for them as a free service. These include CV production and Psychometric Assessment.

Careers Management Futures, London

Careers Management Futures is a private careers service company for six east London boroughs in partnership with London East Connexions and North London Connexions. The company employs approximately 225 staff. Careers Management Futures includes work carried out in partnership with Waltham Forest Further Education College under a Partnership agreement which is where the case study interview took place.

The company offers free, independent advice and guidance to adults (through specialist contracts), young people and their parents/carers, as well as providing a service to schools, colleges, local employers and training suppliers. The Connexions contract covers work with clients aged 16-19 years especially those at risk within Waltham Forest. The IAG contract covers work with people aged 20 plus living or working in the North London area. This includes a free Information, Advice and Guidance service which covers help with; career and job change, Further and Higher Education, CVs, application forms for jobs and universities, advice on job search and training. However, there is no job placement service for adults.

Central Careers Consultancy, London

Central Careers Consultants Ltd is a private organisation located in North London. It is a one woman company. She is both the practitioner and the company director. All the company's funding comes from IAGP.

The service targets employed or unemployed adults aged 20 years plus, living, working or studying in the boroughs of Barnet, Enfield, Waltham Forest or Haringey. The service offers both one-to-one career guidance and group sessions. Guidance interviews are one-hour and 'advice' sessions are in fact of a similar length. However, much of the work undertaken by the organisation is redundancy counselling for employers which is why it was recommended for the 'employer-based' context for the research project by the IAG partnership manager. There is also access to computer-aided guidance (Adult Directions), information and advice regarding relevant training and education opportunities, specialist services together with targeted and professional CV production

and interview skills. Personal development information and support is given with help to complete training application forms and information regarding Career Development Loans.

Family Learning Works Project, Warwickshire College

The Family Learning Works project is ESF funded and takes place at Warwickshire Further Education College. The project is in its early stages, although there is overlap with other more established outreach projects run by the college. The ESF contract sets targets in terms of client volume and there is pressure to get new employers involved in the project.

The aim of the project is to engage employed people in learning, with a specific target group of working parents who lack basic skills. Informal agreements are made with local employers to set up work with people in the target group, and the project worker then runs group and one-to-one sessions to help people identify their learning needs and how to address them. The principal focus of the project is on addressing basic skills and engaging employed people in learning, but the project worker does assist people with CVs and job applications, and liaises with the College's guidance service if necessary.

RightCoutts, London (N.B. the organisation re-wrote this report)

RightCoutts have been helping individuals successfully manage career transition since 1908 and are part of Right Management Consultants. They regard themselves as the world's leading career transition and organisational consulting business. Their core business involves three key dynamics, namely people, careers and change. RightCoutts provides a broad range of services to help organisations and individuals manage what it calls 'the Human Side of Change'.

Many of those that RightCoutts work with are experiencing redundancy/career transition for the second or third time. RightCoutts offers a complete range of career transition services for companies and individuals at all levels. Services are delivered on clients' premises, or at one of their 20 offices in the UK, either on a one-to-one or group basis. Career Transition Support includes: Planning and Preparation; Outplacement Support and Personal Career Focus.

Guidance Services Ltd.

Guidance Services is a private limited company, owned by its shareholders. It is a subsidiary of Guidance Enterprises, which operates across the country and abroad.

Guidance Services Ltd. operates from seven full-time Careers Centres across York and North Yorkshire, and the Wakefield District in West Yorkshire. Guidance Services Ltd. delivers services for all 13-19 year olds in its geographical area being funded through Connexions contracts and working in partnership with schools, colleges and training providers in the areas in which it operates. The organisation provides information and advice services to adults, funded through the IAG partnership, in which it is the lead organisation. Careers guidance for adults is funded through a whole variety of funding, with the majority being Local Skills Council co-financed European Social Funding. The case study took place at Selby Careers Centre.

The resources area covers a range of information relating to occupations, education and training. There are three computers, which have careers guidance packages, including Adult Directions, and one of them has Internet access. Any adult who comes into the Centre has access to information, and the use of the computers, either on a self help basis, or with assistance following discussion with the Centre's receptionist or information assistant. Internet sessions have to be booked in advance, although if there is no session booked a caller can use it immediately. Adults can also see an adult information and advice worker and discuss their needs. If the worker feels that the adult client needs guidance, a referral is made to a Careers Adviser.

skillsformedia, London (N.B. the organisation re-wrote this report)
skillsformedia is managed by Skillset, the Sector Skills Council for audio-visual industries and BECTU, the principal relevant trade union. Its head office is located in the Skillset office London, but operates the service throughout the UK. In its literature, skillsformedia describes itself as providing: "Independent, expert, confidential advice to help you get the media career you want." skillsformedia employs 22 experienced media professionals in its guidance work.

skillsformedia provides a number of guidance services including email and telephone advice, short 'express' interviews for graduates and new entrants in the sector, and longer one-to-one interviews described as 'individual in-depth career management advice for experienced media practitioners'. skillsformedia has also developed over a number of years referral arrangements with learndirect, for instance telephone calls to learndirect about media careers are passed to skillsformedia to contact the enquirer.

Most of the guidance is ESF funded for 2 years. The aim was to see 400 clients in 2003 (numbers fell just short of this) and 600 in 2004. Other service level agreements are in

operation e.g. with learndirect. The service is Matrix accredited. Clients have to pay £60 for full interviews and £30 for the express service. BECTU members and the unemployed pay half price, and there is some discretion to offer free interviews for people from groups under-represented in the industry.

Workplace guidance provided by GO4, Devon

GO4 is the local name of the Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) Partnership that covers Cornwall, Isles of Scilly, Devon, Torbay and Plymouth. The case study took place in the Plymouth Connexions office. Although the guidance interview took place within this office, this case study is considered to be a workplace context. The practitioner had previously met the client within their workplace, but the second interview, used for the case study, took place in the office as the practitioner wanted access to materials and information if required by the client.

Within this site, there are six adult guidance workers located. They deal with the Plymouth city area and 27 outreach areas within a ten mile radius. The service they provide is free and wide ranging including: help with CV writing and job searches; advice and information on job ideas including self employment; advice and signposting to funding for learning, improving job skills and job prospects; advice on applications to further and higher education; general careers guidance; and workshops and courses.

Workplace guidance provided by New Futures, Sheffield

New Futures is the recent renaming of the adult guidance team based at Sheffield Futures which is part of the Connexions service for South Yorkshire and is located within a modern city centre office. There are 59 staff in the New Futures team.

The guidance interview took place at a Sheffield organisation whose Human Resources department was concerned that some staff were worried about the organisational restructuring that was taking place, to help those facing job redeployment and job insecurity, and to help those with training needs. An ESF funded contract was agreed with New Futures to provide information, advice and guidance to the staff. The service is offered to everyone working at the organisation and was recommended to those who have been on long-term sick leave.

The service offers information, advice and guidance, ongoing support through New Futures, redundancy counselling, assessment of training needs and there is psychometric testing for those with a degree (a funding restriction is in place as there is

not enough funding for all to undertake the testing). All of the interviews are confidential and nothing is reported back to the employer. Action plans are agreed with each client and if training needs are identified then the HR department needs evidence from the practitioner that it is required before the training is approved.

Appendix 3: Defining guidance in the UK

An examination of relevant literature provides insights to the difficulties of trying to develop a consensus about the nature of guidance. For example, one of the major conclusions of a review of careers literature by Collin and Young (1986[60]) was that the area 'lacks rigorous definition and clarification of its basic concepts' (p.839).

In the UK, various attempts have been made to identify a definition acceptable to the broad guidance community (Miller *et al.*, 1983[61]; Oakeshott, 1990[62]; Watts *et al.*, 1994[63]; Watt, 1996[64]). However, such a definition has proved elusive. Even the (then) Lead Body for Advice, Guidance and Counselling reported on the inconsistency of definitions, referring to the way the task of identifying occupational standards for these professional activities had been 'haunted by difficulties with terminology and definitions arising out of a lack of clarity about the differences between advice, guidance and counselling' (1993[65], p.2).

This ambiguity has continued, exacerbated by the changing nature of 'career'. In the US context, it is argued that this concept has recently undergone a transformation, with a clear distinction now possible between career choice as a point-in-time 'event' and a

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[60] Collin, A. and Young, R.A. (1986) 'New Directions for Theories of Career', <u>Human Relations</u>, Vol. 39, pp. 837-853.

[61] Miller, J., Taylor, B. and Watts, A.G. (1983) <u>Towards a Personal Guidance Base</u>, London: Further Education Unit.

[62] Oakeshott, M. (1990) <u>Educational Guidance and Curriculum Change: A Project Report</u>, London: Further Education Unit.

[63] Watts, A. G., Guichard, J., Plant, P. and Rodriguez, M. L. (1994) <u>Educational and Vocational Guidance in the European Community: The Synthesis Report of a Study carried out on behalf of the Commission of the European Communities</u>, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

[64] Watt, G. (1996) <u>The Role of Adult Guidance and Employment Counselling in a Changing Labour Market: Final Report on EUROCOUNSEL: An Action Research Programme on Counselling and Long-term Unemployment</u>, Dublin: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.

[65] Advice, Guidance and Counselling Lead Body (1993) Networks, 1, March.

developmental 'process' over a longer period of time[66]. A simpler definition, limited to vocational behaviour and vocational development, is favoured: 'the evolving sequence of a person's work experiences over time'[67]. Others have come to similar conclusions. For example, in the international context, Young and Collin propose that: 'Overall, career can be seen as an overarching construct that gives meaning to the individual's life'[68].

This type of all-inclusive definition is reflected in more recent attempts to define the term, like the OECD (2004) and Council of the European Union (2004), referred to in Section 1.2.

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[66] Osipow, S.H. and Fitzgerald, L.F. (1996) <u>Theories of Career Development</u> (4th edition), Needham Heights, Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon.

[67] Arthur, M.B., Hall, D.T. and Lawrence, B.S. (1989) <u>Handbook of Career Theory</u>, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.8.

[68] Young, R.A. and Collin, A. (2000) 'Introduction: Framing the Future of Career', in Collin, A. and Young, R.A. (Eds) <u>The Future of Career</u>, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.5.

Appendix 4: Models for evaluating effectiveness

Four contrasting models for assessing and measuring effective guidance are briefly outlined below:

1. An *economic* perspective, as described by Mayston (2003[69]), provides a model of 'Identifying Ideal Practice' that involves making the best use of information within a well-considered information management strategy. He presents twelve key stages that are pre-requisite to describing impacting IAG services. Mayston argues that if each of the stages is performed well, the overall effect can be to maximise the benefits which come from IAG provision. This model provides an opportunity for adult guidance services to identify strengths and deficiencies within their current arrangements. Opponents argue that the framework describes 'utopia', but this can be counteracted by arguments for a framework that makes explicit what ideal practice should contain.

2. A *managerial* perspective, as outlined in European Quality Awards EFQM Excellence model[70] (1999), was originally designed by 14 major European companies to achieve continuous improvement in their business results. In the UK, the EFQM model is increasingly becoming popular in both youth and adult guidance organisations. The key strands involve:
   - leadership driving people, policy and strategy, partnerships and resources; through
   - processes to achieve people, customers and society results; leading to
   - excellence in key performance results.

For some managers and practitioners the language of this process gives meaning to their work. Therefore, it could be argued that assessing and measuring the impact of effective guidance should be linked to the managerial frameworks that influence service planning and delivery. However, performance indicators and benchmarking linked to measuring successful 'results' are currently underdeveloped in the field of IAG for adults.

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[69] Mayston, D.J. (2003) Identifying Ideal Practice in Measuring and Maximising the Effectiveness of Information, Advice and Guidance Provision for Adults: Centre for the Performance Evaluation and Resource Management, York: University of York.

[70] www.efqm.org

3. A *social science* perspective as outlined by Pawson and Tilley (1997[71]) offers a conceptual model for evaluating the impact of services based on three critical domains, such as context, mechanisms and outcome configurations (CMO). This approach provides flexibility for the research practitioner to examine aspects of the environment that are relevant to ways in which programmes produce effects. Interventions are inextricably linked to programmes and client interactions; central to this is identifying the triggers that affect change under certain circumstances, but not others. The outcome is the difference made in terms of establishing, patterns in which outcomes attributable to IAG result from interventions, where mechanisms have been triggered in particular contexts. Critics argue that this approach increases explanatory power, but its main weakness lies in the consistent application of new hypotheses i.e. at what point does hypothesis-testing end? Within IAG for adults, this model offers a framework for identifying patterns linked to impact[72].

4. A *psychological* perspective as described by Sampson *et al.* (2003[73]) offers five key components of effectiveness. The authors argue that the effectiveness of an intervention depends on (a) a diagnosis of client needs, (b) a prescription of activities to help the client address such needs, (c) the documentation of plans and activities that describe the process of intervention, (d) the outputs or primary effects of the intervention, and (e) the outcomes or effects of the primary changes. 'Once the costs for career service intervention are determined, they can be related to the gain in knowledge and skill – that is, to the outputs.' In England, the current National Learning and Skills targets focus primarily on 'outcomes' i.e. percentage numbers into employment and learning opportunities, rather than 'outputs' linked to assessing the new skills and knowledge that are acquired that lead to successful attainment and retention in learning and work.

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[71] Pawson, R. and Tilley, N. (1997) <u>Realistic Evaluation</u>, London: Sage.

[72] De Montfort, Bristol and Derby Universities are currently undertaking a national study to enhance understanding of the impact of Connexions Services on young people.

[73] Sampson, J.P., Reardon, R.C., Peterson, G.W. and Lenz, J.G. (2003) <u>Career Counseling and Services: A Cognitive Information Processing Approach</u>, Florida State University: Wadsworth, Thomson Learning.

The above-mentioned four perspectives are not mutually exclusive, nor is it being suggested that one is superior to others. In evaluating effective guidance, it is, however, necessary to make explicit the theoretical and operation basis on which evaluation is being carried out.

Appendix 5: Framework for investigating the interview

The questionnaires completed by the clients, the practitioners and the 'expert witnesses' about the guidance interview gathered data about relevant content (e.g. information provided, whether the practitioner had understood what was important to the client) and the processes of the interview (e.g. introduction, exploration, negotiation of an action plan).

The framework that informed the design of the questionnaire was derived from research into guidance and counselling interviews. A review of relevant approaches used for evaluating effective guidance and counselling was undertaken. Initially, the potential of using audio recordings of guidance interviews with a range of clients to capture stories about guidance and using interpersonal process recall (IPR) as an analytical technique (Elliot, 1986[74]) was explored. However, time needed for this technique was considered to be a major problem. Both clients and practitioners would have to be persuaded to listen to the audiotape of their interview and comment on significant events. At a conservative estimate, this would take at least an hour each for client and practitioner after the guidance interview. Additionally, this recall process would need to take place immediately after the guidance interview. The logistics and resource implications of using this technique within the professional context of guidance eventually ruled this out as an option. Difficulties experienced in negotiating access to participants, described in Section 2.3.3 above, justified this decision.

Cummings *et al.* (1992[75]) and Booth *et al.* (1997[76]) both adopted an interpretative approach focusing solely on clients' perception of important events in the counselling intervention and used an analysis of theories of change. Cummings *et al.* (1992[77]) asked

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[74] Elliot, R. (1986) 'Interpersonal Process Recall (IPR) as a Psychotherapy Process Research Method' in L. Greenberg and W. Pinsoff (Eds) The Psychotherapueutic Process: A Research Handbook, New York: Guilford.

[75] Cummings, A.L., Hallberg, T. and Slemon, A. (1992) 'Templates of Client Change in Short-Term Counselling', Journal of Counselling Psychology Vol. 41, No. 4, pp. 464-472.

[76] Booth, H., Cushway, D. and Newness, C. (1997) 'Counselling in General Practice: Clients' Perceptions of Significant Events and Outcome', Counselling Psychology Quarterly Vol. 10, No. 2, 9, pp. 175-187.

[77] Cummings, A.L., Hallberg, T. and Slemon, A. (1992) 'Templates of Client Change in Short-Term Counselling', Journal of Counselling Psychology Vol. 41, No. 4, pp. 464-472.

clients to respond to Cummings *et al.'s* (1990[78]) Important Events Questionnaire (IEQ) which identified five elements in counselling, as follows:

a. exploring what the most important thing was for the client;

b. establishing why this was important;

c. thoughts and feelings that the client recalled experiencing during the event. These same three lines of enquiring were pursued for the next most important event;

d. any relevant thoughts and feelings between counselling sessions; and

e. any change experienced by the client.

Booth *et al.* (1997[79]), used Llewlyn *et al.*'s (1988[80]) Helpful Aspects of Therapy questionnaire, asking clients to rate helpfulness on a three point scale. Whilst there was certain potential in these approaches, restricting the investigation to the client's perspective was considered too limited.

Burnett (1999[81]) undertook a study with thirty-five participants using a narrative approach. Client participants were asked to describe counselling outcomes, in the form of a letter to a friend. Analysis measured results within a learning paradigm. The aim of the study was to investigate not only the immediate benefits of counselling (behaviour change), but also to identify learning at a higher level of cognitive understanding and to assess outcomes in relation to longer-term integration of learning. The narrative approach and examination of longer-term outcomes has potential for adoption in the later stages of the current study.

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[78] Cummings, A.L., Hallberg, E.T., Martin, J., Slemon, A. and Hiebert, B. (1990) 'Implications of Counsellor Conceptualisations for Counsellor Education', <u>Counselor Education and Supervision</u> Vol. 30, pp. 120-134.

[79] Booth, H., Cushway, D., and Newness, C. (1997) 'Counselling in General Practice: Clients' Perceptions of Significant Events and Outcome', <u>Counselling Psychology Quarterly</u> Vol. 10, No. 2, 9, pp. 175-187.

[80] Llewelyn, S., Elliot, R. and Firth-Cozens, J. (1988) 'Clients' Perception of Significant Events in Descriptive and Exploratory Periods of Individual Therapy', <u>British Journal of Clinical Psychology</u> Vol. 27, No. 9, pp. 105-114.

[81] Burnett, P.C. (1999) 'Assessing the Structure of Learning Outcomes from Counselling using the SOLO Taxonomy: An Exploratory Study', <u>British Journal of Guidance and Couselling</u> Vol. 27, No. 4, pp. 567-580.

Research into careers guidance offered a promising alternative framework. Miller and Brotherton (1996[82], 2001[83]) examined the client's perspective of their guidance interviews by adapting Wolf *et al.*'s (1978[84]) investigation of a medical interview satisfaction scale to the career context. Wolf *et al.*'s (1978) scale measured cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions using scale ratings:

- **Affective** was described as the relationship between professional and client, including feelings of trust and confidence.
- **Cognitive** referred to the explanations and/or information given by professionals and the clients' understanding of these.
- **Behavioural** described the professional's behaviour and conduct as well as the implementation of treatments and procedures.

These descriptions seemed apt and can be readily applied to the guidance context. Miller and Brotherton (1996[85]) derived their own categories within these three dimensions, also using scale ratings. They devised an eighteen item questionnaire with five scale ratings to identify the extent to which a particular feature was present in the interview. The five ratings were: yes, the careers adviser did this (5); yes, the careers adviser did this to a fair extent (4); I'm not sure if the careers adviser did this (3); only very slightly (2); no, the careers adviser did not (1). A second, similar study (Miller and Brotherton, 2001[86]) set out to compare both client and practitioner expectations of their interviews with a retrospective assessment. Comparisons were made about similarities

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[82] Millar, R. and Brotherton, C. (1996) 'Measuring Clients' Experience of Careers Guidance Interviews: Exploratory Studies', <u>Counselling Psychology Quarterly</u> Vol. 9, No. 4, pp. 419-428.

[83] Millar, R. and Brotherton, C. (2001) 'Expectations, Recall and Evaluation of Careers Guidance Interviews by Pupils and Careers Advisers: A Preliminary Study', <u>British Journal of Guidance and Counselling</u> Vol. 29, No. 1, pp. 97-110.

[84] Wolf, M.H., Putman, S.M., James, S.A. and Stiles, W.B. (1978) 'The Medical Interview Satisfaction Scale', <u>Behavioural Medicine</u> Vol. 1, pp. 391-401.

[85] Millar, R. and Brotherton, C. (1996) 'Measuring Clients' Experience of Careers Guidance Interviews: Exploratory Studies', <u>Counselling Psychology Quarterly</u> Vol. 9, No. 4, pp. 419-428.

[86] Millar, R. and Brotherton, C. (2001) 'Expectations, Recall and Evaluation of Careers Guidance Interviews by Pupils and Careers Advisers: A Preliminary Study', <u>British Journal of Guidance and Counselling</u> Vol. 29, No. 1, pp. 97-110.

and differences drawing on the different perspectives. They used the original eighteen categories from their previous research, adding two more.

This approach, adapting an analytic framework derived from three categories (cognitive, affective and behavioural) was considered, for the research presented here, to offer most potential for investigating the perspectives of the client, the practitioner and an 'expert witness'. These three dimensions were used to generate stem questions. In the two pilots (see Section 2.3.1 above), data was collected from client, practitioner and expert witness about their perceptions of the guidance event by asking them to select one of paired sentences, and to undertake a sentence completion task (Raffaelli, 2001[87]; Valaitis, 2002[88]). This measure has the advantage of offering respondents sufficient scope to express their viewpoints whilst providing a structure for researchers to compare and analyse data (Hill *et al.,* 1997[89]). However, feedback from participants in the pilots informed changes for the protocols used for the first phase of the data collection. Specifically, paired questions and sentence completion was replaced by a 'yes/no' question (see Section 2.3.5 above).

Additionally, inductive analysis of data will be undertaken for the second report, using transcriptions of digital recordings of the guidance interviews and field notes - using open coding to capture themes emerging. Emphasis is being given to the identification of good practice, client achievements, and the strategies and skills used by guidance practitioners, so that issues can be identified that are relevant to the development of theory for practice.

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[87] Raffaellli, R., Koller, S.H., Reppold, C.T., Kuschick, M.B., Krum, F.M.B. and Bandeira, D.R. (2001) How do Brazilian Youth Experience 'The Street'? Analysis of a Sentence Completion Task, London: Sage Publications.

[88] Valaitis, R. (2002) '"They don't Trust Us: We're Just Kids." Views About Community From Predominantly Female Inner City Youth', Health Care for Women International Vol. 23, pp. 248-266.

[89] Hill, C.E., Thompson, B. and Nutt Williams, E. (1997) A Guide to Conducting Consensual Qualitative Research, The Counseling Psychologist Vol. 25, No. 4, pp. 517-572.

CLIENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you for taking part in this study, which is exploring your view of different parts of the interview that you have just had. Please note that what you said in the interview will not be commented on in any way – it is your views of the interview that are important.

Over the page are 14 questions about the interview. Each of these questions:

- first asks you to answer 'yes' or 'no', and
- then give an example of what you mean.

If you find it difficult to understand any of the questions, please ask the researcher to explain.

At the end of the questionnaire, there is one general question about the interview and an opportunity for you to add any further comments.

All your responses will be treated in the strictest confidence. Only researchers helping with this study will know your answers to the questions.

PLEASE JUST ASK FOR HELP FROM THE RESEARCHER IF YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND ANY OF THE QUESTIONS.

Jenny Bimrose
Warwick Institute for Employment Research
University of Warwick
Coventry
CV4 7AL

Tel: 024 76524231
Fax: 024 765 24241
E-mail: J.Bimrose@warwick.ac.uk

PLEASE CIRCLE 'YES' OR 'NO', THEN GIVE YOUR EXAMPLE(S) IN THE BOX.

1.   Did the interviewer make you feel welcome?   Yes   No

If 'yes', please say how she/he did this: If 'no', what made you feel unwelcome?

2.   Did the interviewer help you to understand
          what was going to happen in the interview?   Yes   No

If 'yes', please say how she/he did this: If 'no', what could she/he have done to help you understand?

3.   Did you feel comfortable telling the
          interviewer personal information?   Yes   No

If 'yes', how did she/he do this?   If 'no', what do you think caused this?

4.   Did the interviewer help you to explain
         what you wanted to get out of the interview?   Yes   No

If 'yes', how did she/he do this?

If 'no', what would have helped you to do this?

5.   Did you feel the interviewer listened to you
         carefully?   Yes   No

If 'yes', please give an example:

If 'no', please give an example of something you said that was ignored:

6.   Did the interviewer show she/he understood
         how you felt about things that mattered to you?   Yes   No

If 'yes', how did she/he do this?

If 'no', what could she/he have done?

7.   When the interview moved to a new topic,
did you know why?   Yes   No

> If 'yes', please give an example:
>
>
>
>
> If 'no', what would have helped you see why you were discussing a new topic?

8.   Did the interviewer help you get a better
understanding of yourself and your situation?   Yes   No

> If 'yes', how did she/he do this?
>
>
>
>
> If 'no', please comment:

9.   Did the interviewer show that she/he understood
what information you needed?   Yes   No

> If 'yes', please give an example:
>
>
>
>
> If 'no', please comment:

10.   Did the interviewer change your thinking in
         any way?   Yes   No

If 'yes', please give an example:
If 'no', please comment:

11.   Did the interviewer help you set out a clear
         plan of action to carry out after the interview?   Yes   No

If 'yes', how would you expect this to help?
If 'no', would an action plan have been useful?

12.   Looking back, did you feel respected by the
         interviewer?   Yes   No

If 'yes', what did the interviewer do to make you feel respected?
If 'no', how would you have liked the interviewer to behave differently?

13.   Sometimes an interview can help you understand
         the importance of something you hadn't understood
         before Did this happen in this interview?   Yes   No

---

If 'yes', please give an example(s):

If 'no', please comment:

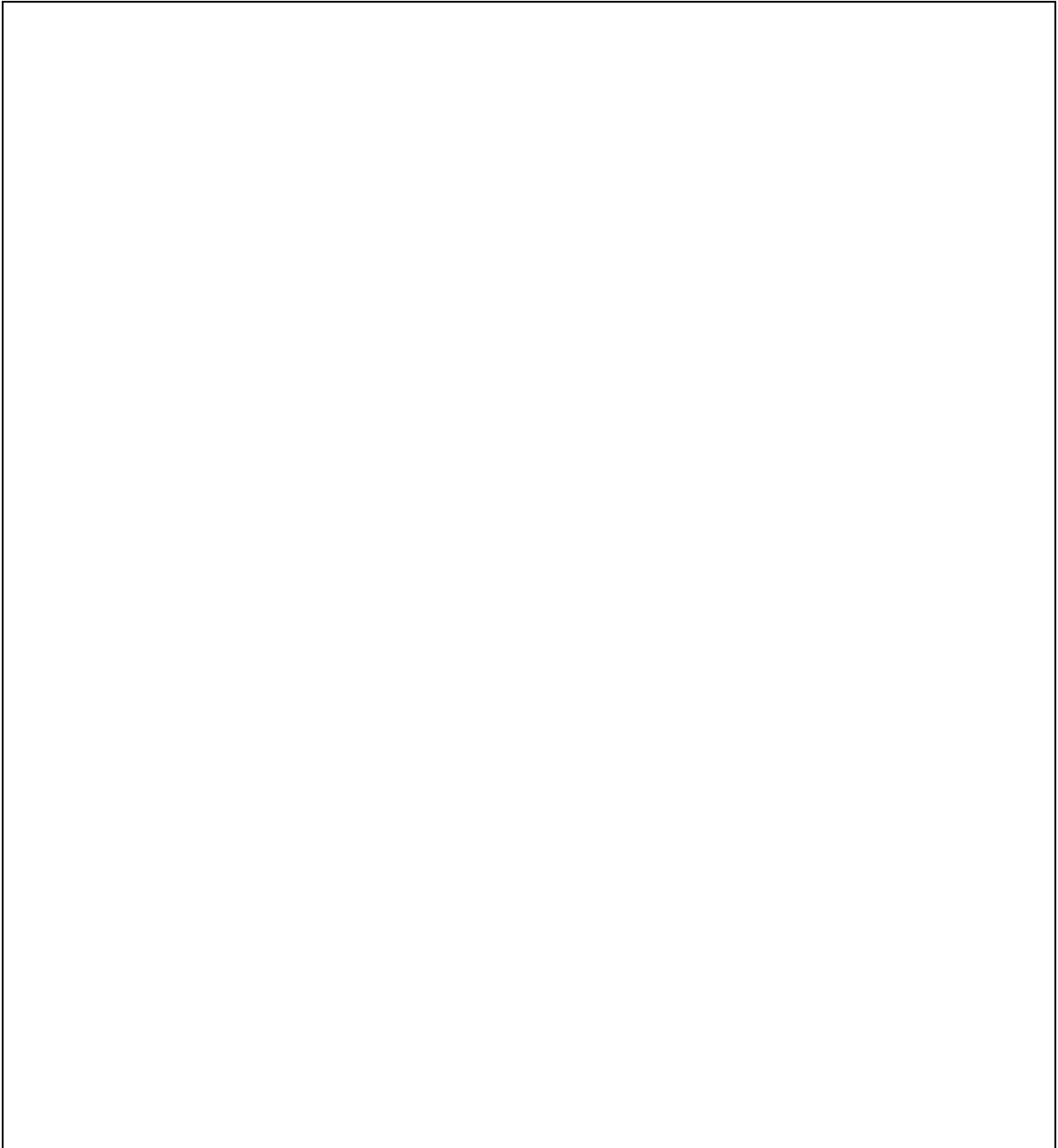14.   Was the interview useful to you?   Yes   No

---

If 'yes', in what way(s) has it been useful?

If 'no', how could it have been made useful?

---

15.   When you think back on the interview, what stood out for you?

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16.   If there is anything further that you wish to add, please do so below:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP

STUDY INTO CAREER GUIDANCE: CLIENT CONSENT

You have been invited to participate in an important study into career guidance. In total, fifty adults in various parts of England have been asked to participate. If you are willing to help, this will involve:

- Answering some questions about your interview on a questionnaire immediately after the interview has taken place. A researcher will be able to help or answer queries with this, if necessary.

- Having your interview recorded. This is so that a researcher can study the variety of approaches taken to guidance interviews. *The researcher will be interested in the approach taken to the interview by your interviewer.* Your identity will be treated in the strictest confidence by the research team.

- Probably being contacted 4 times by telephone, post or email over the next 4 years to find out how you are getting on with your plans. So that we can contact you, please give details below (this information will not be used for any other purpose).

All the information you provide will be treated in strictest confidence, in conformity with the requirements of the Data Protection Act, 1998. No information that could identify individuals will be passed to any third party.

Name:

Address:

Telephone numbers:

Email (if available):

Please sign below to confirm that your involvement in the study has been explained and that you have agreed to take part.

Signature:

WARWICK INSTITUTE *for*
EMPLOYMENT RESEARCH

IER

PRACTITIONER QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you for taking part in this study, which is exploring your views of a guidance interview you have recently completed. ***Please note that we are not assessing or judging your competence as a practitioner in any way.***

Over the page are 14 questions that ask you to reflect on different aspects of the interview. Each question:

- first requires a 'yes' or 'no' response, and
- then asks you to give an example of what you mean.

If you find it difficult to understand any of the questions, please ask the researcher to explain.

At the end of the questionnaire, there is one general question about the interview and an opportunity for you to add any further comments.

All your responses will be treated in confidence. Only researchers helping with this study will know your answers to the questions.

PLEASE JUST FEEL FREE TO ASK FOR HELP FROM THE RESEARCHER IF YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND ANY OF THE QUESTIONS.

Jenny Bimrose
Warwick Institute for Employment Research
University of Warwick
Coventry
CV4 7AL

Tel: 024 76524231
Fax: 024 765 24241
E-mail: J.Bimrose@warwick.ac.uk

PLEASE CIRCLE 'YES' OR 'NO', THEN GIVE YOUR EXAMPLE(S) IN THE BOX.

1.   Did you make your client feel welcome?   Yes   No

If 'yes', please say how you did this: If 'no', what could you have done differently?

2.   Did you help your client understand
        what was going to happen in the interview?   Yes   No

If 'yes', please say how you did this: If 'no', what could you have done to help your client understand better?

3.   Do you feel your client felt comfortable
        telling you personal information?   Yes   No

If 'yes', how did you manage this?   If 'no', what do you feel caused this?

4.   Did you help your client explain
        what s/he wanted to get out of the interview?   Yes   No

If 'yes', how did you do this:

If 'no', what could you have done differently?

5.   Did you feel you showed the client that you
        were listening carefully throughout the interview?   Yes   No

If 'yes', please give an example:

If 'no', can you give an example of something you may not have picked up on:

6.   Did you show you understood how your client
        felt about things that really mattered to him/her?   Yes   No

If 'yes', how did you do this:

If 'no', can you say how you might have done this?

7.   When the interview moved to a new topic,
        do you think your client knew why?   Yes   No

If 'yes', please give an example: If 'no', how might this have been achieved?

8.   Did you help your client get a better
        understanding of themselves and their situation?   Yes   No

If 'yes', how did you do this?   If 'no', please comment?

9.   Did you show your client that you understood
        what information s/he needed?   Yes   No

If 'yes', how did you do this?   If 'no', please comment:

10. Do you believe that you changed your client's
thinking in any way? Yes No

> If 'yes', please give an example:
>
>
>
> If 'no', please comment:

11. Did you help your client set out a clear
plan of action to carry out after the interview? Yes No

> If 'yes', how would you expect this to help him/her:
>
>
>
> If 'no', would an action plan have been useful?

12. Looking back, do you think your client felt
respected by you? Yes No

> If 'yes', what did you do to make your client feel respected?
>
>
>
> If 'no', what might you have done differently?

13.   Sometimes an interview can help a client understand
        the importance of something s/he hadn't understood
        before. Did this happen in this interview?   Yes   No

---

If 'yes', please give an example(s):

If 'no', please comment:

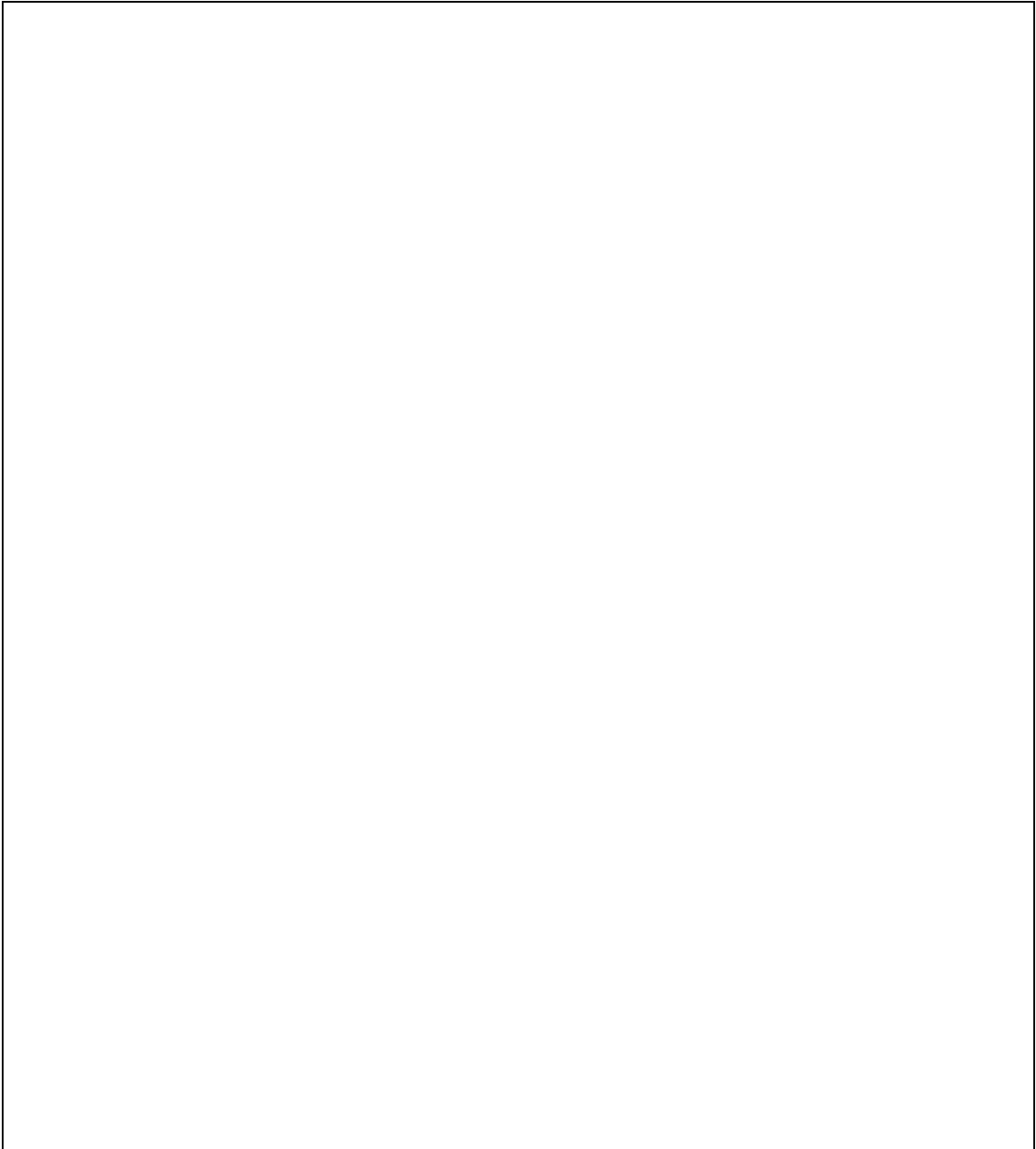14.   Do you think your client found the interview
        useful?   Yes   No

If 'yes', in what way(s) was it useful?

If 'no', please comment:

---

15.   When you think back on the interview, what stood out for you?

---

16.   If there is anything further that you wish to add, please do so below:

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP

STUDY INTO CAREER GUIDANCE: PRACTITIONER CONSENT

You have been invited to participate in an important study into adult guidance. In total, fifty practitioners in various parts of England have been asked to participate. If you are willing to help, this will involve:

- Answering some questions about a guidance interview on a questionnaire, as soon as possible after this has taken place. A researcher will be available to help with this, if necessary.

- Having one guidance interview recorded. This is so that a researcher can compare their views about the interview with yours and those of the client's. Your identity will be treated in strict confidence by the research team.

All the information you provide will be treated in strictest confidence, in conformity with the requirements of the Data Protection Act, 1998. No information that could identify individuals will be passed to any third party.

Name:

Address:

Telephone numbers:

Email (if available):

Please sign below to confirm that your involvement in the study has been explained and that you have agreed to take part.

Signature:

'EXPERT WITNESS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Jenny Bimrose
Warwick Institute for Employment Research
University of Warwick
Coventry
CV4 7AL

Tel: 024 76524231
Fax: 024 765 24241
E-mail: J.Bimrose@warwick.ac.uk

PLEASE CIRCLE 'YES' OR 'NO', THEN GIVE YOUR EXAMPLE(S) IN THE BOX.

1.   Did the practitioner make the client feel welcome?   Yes   No

If 'yes', how did s/he do this?   If 'no', what could have been done differently?

2.   Did the practitioner help the client understand
         what was going to happen in the interview?   Yes   No

If 'yes', please say how she/he did this: If 'no', what could have been done to help the client understand better?

3.   Did the client feel comfortable telling the
         practitioner personal information?   Yes   No

If 'yes', how was this managed?   If 'no', what could the practitioner have done?

4.   Did the practitioner help the client explain
       what she/he wanted to get out of the interview?   Yes   No

> If 'yes', how did she/he do this?
>
>
>
>
> If 'no', what could you have done differently?

5.   Did the practitioner show the client that she/he
       was listening carefully throughout the interview?   Yes   No

> If 'yes', please give an example:
>
>
>
>
> If 'no', can you give an example of something not picked up on:

6.   Did the practitioner show she/he understood
       how the client felt about things that really
       mattered to him/her?   Yes   No

> If 'yes', how did they do this?
>
>
>
>
> If 'no', how might this have been achieved?

7.   When the interview moved to a new topic, did
the client understand why?   Yes   No

If 'yes', please give an example:

If 'no', how might this have been achieved?

8.   Did the practitioner help his/her client get a better
understanding of themselves and their situation?   Yes   No

If 'yes', how did she/he do this?

If 'no', how might this have been achieved?

9.   Did the practitioner show his/her client that they
understood what information she/he needed?   Yes   No

If 'yes', please give an example:

If 'no', please comment:

10. Do you think the practitioner changed his/her
client's thinking in any way?   Yes   No

If 'yes', please give an example:

If 'no', please comment:

11. Did the practitioner help his/her client set out a clear
plan of action to carry out after the interview?   Yes   No

If 'yes', how would you expect this to help him/her:

If 'no', would an action plan have been useful?

12. Looking back, do you think the client felt
respected by the practitioner?   Yes   No

If 'yes', how was this achieved:

If 'no', please comment:

13. Sometimes an interview can help a client understand
the importance of something she/he hadn't understood
before. Did this happen in this interview?   Yes   No

If 'yes', please give an example(s):

If 'no', please comment:

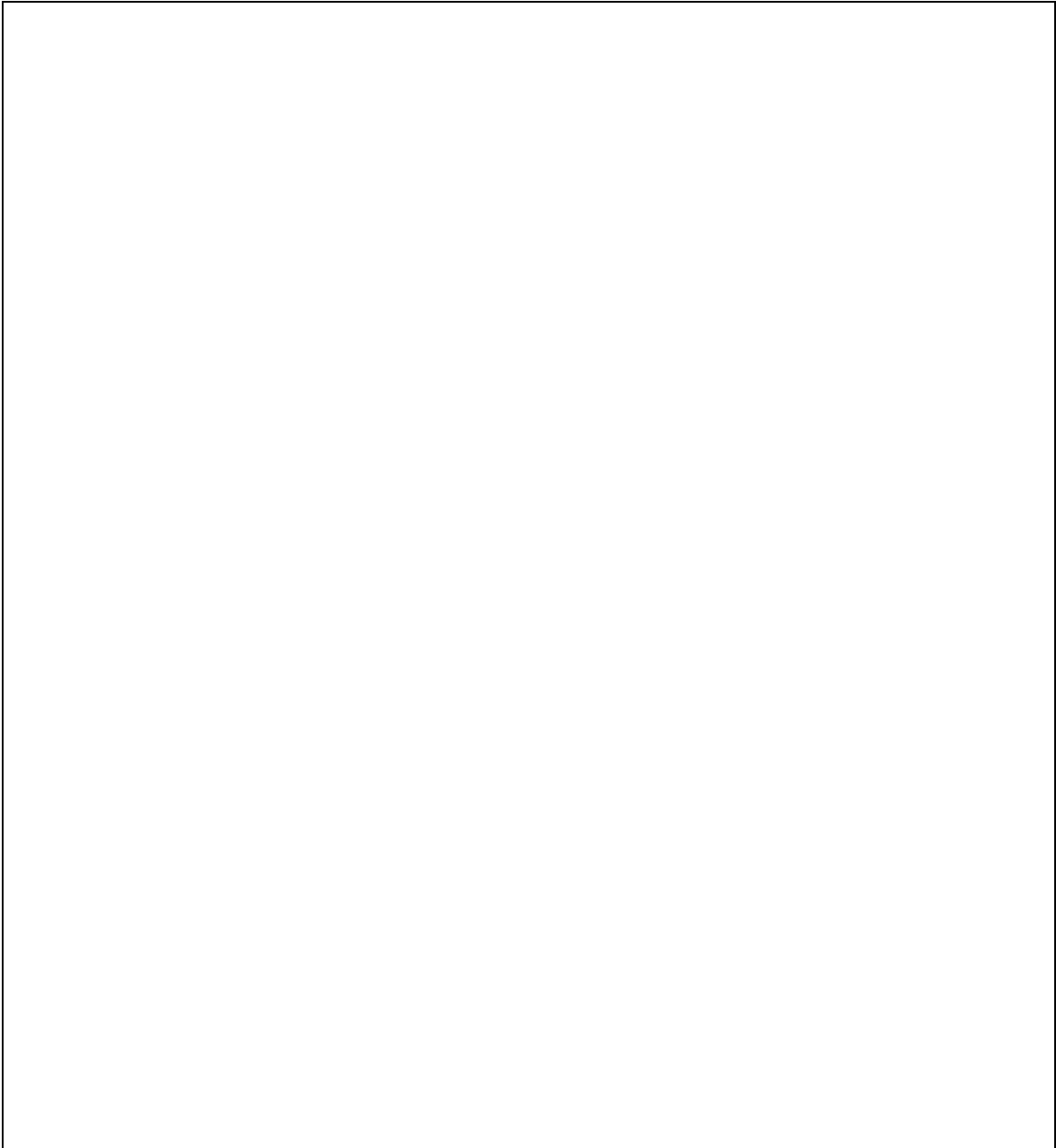14. Do you think the client found the interview useful?   Yes   No

If 'yes', in what way(s):

If 'no', please comment:

15. When you think back on the interview, what stood out for you?

16.   If there is anything further that you wish to add, please do so below:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP

Appendix 9: Baseline data proforma for client

Client

Sex: Male/Female

Age

Ethnic origin: (self-report, i.e., 'What is your ethnic origin?')

Any disability:

Any experience of previous information, advice or guidance interviews? Yes/No
If 'yes', please give details:

Highest qualification(s) gained by client:

What prompted the client to come for the interview?

Appendix 10: Baseline data proforma for practitioners

Practitioner

Sex: Male/Female

Age:

Ethnic origin: (self-report, i.e., 'What is your ethnic origin?')

Experience (in years) as an active guidance practitioner:

Professional context(s) in which this experience was gained:

Previous information/knowledge about the client:

Training – initial and continuing professional development:

Which qualification(s) are held that seem relevant to the practitioner's current job (please indicate rough date when qualification(s) awarded):

Appendix 11: Baseline data for organisational context

Name of organisation:

Name of researcher:

1. Type of organisation (i.e. FE; HE; Jobcentre Plus; Voluntary/Charitable status; Private; Workplace, etc.):

2. Geographical location:

3. Aims; Objectives; Mission statement:

4. Size of organisation (i.e. total number of employees):

5. Quality standards:

Does the organisation operate to quality standards?   Yes   No

If 'yes' are these:
      Internal   Yes   No
      External   Yes   No

If 'yes' to external standards, please indicate which standards are operated:

6. Target client group for the organisation:

7. Service level agreement(s):

8. Service offers (e.g. help with CV; Job applications; Job Change; free or charged, etc.):

9. In-service training support:

10. Organisational requirements and/or pressures (e.g. income generation/targets):

11. Other information:

(e.g. working environment – office space; facilities available to offer client; confidentiality etc.)

Do you give permission for your organisation to be acknowledged in the final report?

                                         Yes   No

Name:

Designation:

Appendix 12: Guide to questionnaire for field researchers

Question 1: Affective

Warm welcoming greeting

Putting client at ease

Start of rapport/relationship building

Prompt questions for client:

Did you feel welcome? Were you put at ease? Did you feel you had a good relationship with the interviewer from the start?

N.B. note to researcher: check that language isn't an obstacle.

Question 2: Behavioural

Scene setting

Introducing the purpose of the interview

Indicating time boundaries

How to access further help

Prompt questions for client:

Did the interviewer explain who he/she was? Did the interviewer help you understand what the interview was about? Were you clear about things that could be dealt with during the interview and those that couldn't? Was it explained that you had a certain length of time for the interview? Was it explained that sources of help for issues that could not be dealt with in the interview would be identified?

Question 3:   Affective/Behavioural

Establishing issues of confidentiality

How information will be used

Conveying genuineness and personal integrity

Prompt questions for client:

Was the interviewer clear that things you said during the interview would be treated in confidence? Did he/she explain what would happen to notes/summary from the interview and who would be able to read these? Did you feel safe telling the interviewer personal information?

Question 4: Behavioural

Enabling client to state needs and expectations of the interview

Clarifying and establishing joint understanding of these

Negotiating and agreeing an agenda for the interview

Prompt questions for client:

Did the interviewer ask you what you wanted or expected from the interview? Was there an opportunity to discuss and agree with the interviewer what, exactly, you would talk about in the interview?

Question 5: Affective

Listening accurately to client's responses

Picking up cues from client and developing an understanding of issues from client's point of view

Prompt questions for client:

Did you feel that the interviewer listened properly and understood, fully, what you were saying in the interview?

Question 6: Affective

Empathic understanding of how client has experienced events/issues

Prompt questions for client:

Did you feel that he/she was sympathetic to your point of view on important things that you discussed? Did you feel he/she really knew what things were like for you?

Question 7: Behavioural

Introducing a topic and explaining the relationship to the discussion

Identifying an issue and explaining how it relates to the original contract

Prompt questions for client:

Did you always understand why the interviewer moved on to a new topic in the interview? Were the new topics that were introduced by the interviewer relevant to your agreement with the interviewer of what would be discussed?

Note to field researchers – in the literature, this is referred to as 'signposting' – introducing a new topic in a way which helps the client feel that they are participating in the interview process and can understand the order and progression of topics, rather than being 'led by the nose' through a maze of seemingly unrelated topics.

Question 8: Cognitive

Developing coherence between different parts of the discussion

Helping client to understand the relationship between different factors

Prompt question for the client:

Did the interviewer help you to understand the links between different parts of the Discussion in a way that helped you to make better sense of your situation? Discussion in a way that helped you to make better sense of your situation?

Question 9: Behavioural

Explaining how information relates to client's needs

Explaining the relevance of information

Prompt questions for client:

Did the interviewer find out what information you needed? Did she/he tell you where to find it?

Question 10: Cognitive

Encouraging the client to evaluate events/experiences

Challenging assumptions

Developing an understanding of the consequences of decisions

Prompt questions for client:

Did the interviewer help you to think about things discussed in the interview differently? For example, something that has happened to you, something you've done or something you believed?

Did he/she help you to understand that something happened because of decisions you've made in the past?

Question 11: Cognitive

Enabling the client to develop planning process

Helping client establish short and long term goals

Helping client establish priorities

Prompt questions for client:

Did the interviewer agree a plan of action for you to carry out after the interview? Did this involve agreeing some steps you could take within the next few weeks and/or within the next 6 months or a year? Did you agree some goals? Did you want an action plan? Did it seem relevant to you?

Question 12: Affective

Acknowledging the client through verbal and non-verbal behaviour

Acknowledging difference (in the broadest sense)

Prompt questions for client:

Did the interviewer's behaviour and the things he/she said to you during the interview persuade you that s/he respected you/rated you highly?   Did you feel completely accepted, as a person?

Question 13: Cognitive

Broadening client's perspectives

Generating alternative approaches

Prompt questions for client:

Has the interview helped you to think about things you hadn't before and/or given you some different ideas about what you could do in the future?

Questions 14, 15, 16 – type depends on what the client identifies

Appendix 13: The use of QSR NVivo 2

The main function of this package is to allow the coding and retrieval of data. The number of interviews or passages coded could then be counted which enabled the identification of different elements of guidance across the 49 'useful' interviews.

The questionnaire responses and interview text was categorised using codes that were drawn inductively from the text. These codes or categories highlighted activities of the guidance process. To create a meaningful and coherent understanding of 'what was going on in the interview' and to address the criticism that coding using a software package can only signpost data as it breaks up the text (Seale, 1999[90] and Kelle, 1997[91]), care was taken to code sections of text. Therefore, rather than breaking up the text and coding specific words or phrases, large sections of text were coded using the most meaningful code. For instance, sections of an interview in which the results of computer-aided guidance were discussed at length were coded under one category. Where sentences could be categorised using more than one code, the most meaningful code was used to ensure an accurate representation of the interview process and its various elements. For example, the following quote could have been coded as an opinion that conveyed a personal judgement or as a challenge. It was actually coded as a challenge, since this was its most significant feature:

> *Practitioner: Um, when you came in at the beginning, you were saying, 'Is*
> *what I'm asking for pie-in-the-sky?'…No, I don't think it is pie-in-the-sky. I*
> *think it's perfectly achievable.'*

To ensure a 'closeness' to the data needed in the analysis of qualitative data, the interview transcripts and questionnaire responses were initially coded on paper (Gilbert, 2002[92]). QSR NVivo was used as a means of storing the coded text and retrieving specific coded texts as required.

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[90] Seale, C.F. (1999) 'Using Computers to Analyse Qualitative Data', In D. Silverman (Ed) Doing Qualitative Research: A Practical Handbook, London: Sage publications.

[91] Kelle, U. (1997) 'Theory building in Qualitative Research and Computer Programs for the Management of Textual Data', Sociological Research Online, Vol. 2, No. 2. Available online: http://www.socresonline.org.uk/socresonline/2/2/1.html.

[92] Gilbert, L.S. (2002) 'Going the Distance: 'Closeness' in Qualitative Data Analysis Software', International Journal of Social Research Methodology, Vol. 5, No. 3, pp. 215-228.

Appendix 14: Aspects of 'useful' guidance

Aspects of 'useful' guidance emerging from question 14, 15 and 16 questionnaire responses.

Code	Code description
1a/3b	increased self-confidence/self-awareness, positive attitude, confusion reduced
1b	new awareness of learning and employment opportunities
2a	developed new skills (for example job search strategies, ways of researching a job/course)
2b	knowledge/information communicated enabling client to progress
3a	developed understanding, increased awareness and broadened ideas (for example about range of options available)
4a	provided an opportunity for reflection and an in-depth discussion with an interested professional in a respected and understanding environment
5a	access to/advised of relevant information and networks, feeling of being better informed
6a	questions/concerns were answered
7a	explored/challenged perceptions, ideas and understanding of own situation and of wider environment
8a/9b	motivated, inspired and encouraged
9a/4b	Identification of next steps/future plan, given direction/focus, advocacy
12	not sure/unsure whether useful

Appendix 15: Key features of 'useful' guidance

Key features emerging from questions 14, 15 and 16 questionnaire responses.

Code	Code description
5b	knowledge of practitioner – range, quality and quantity of information given by practitioner
6b	skills of practitioner – for example listening accurately, supporting, inspiring confidence and respecting
7b	practitioner's understanding of wider aspects which affect individual's education and employment opportunities (for example barriers, influences and constraints)
8b	balance of communication between the client and practitioner
10b	allowing for reflection and discussion
11b	transformative power for guidance (implicit need for guidance)
12b	explicit need for guidance, client can return if need to, recommendation of guidance service by client, understanding of the support which is available
13b	examples of reflective practice (practitioner only)
14b	complexities of guidance (practitioner and expert witness only)
15b/10a	positive validation of service
17b/11a	different approaches to guidance (including comments on the use of computer aided guidance packages and internet resources) (practitioner and expert witness only)
18b	practitioner's reflections on client (practitioner only)
19b	effects of research (for example comments of the digital recorder)

Appendix 16: Activities emerging in guidance interviews

Code	Code description
1	Note taking – explained/pre-interview information (name, role, research process)/time/welcome/documentation explained and completed/possible FU/boundaries/client data collected.
2	Confidentiality – explained and made explicit
3	Probe – work history/selection experiences/work experience
4	Probe – education/training history
5	Probe – career/employment/educational interests/leisure pursuits
6	Probe – finance/location
7	Contract – implicit
8	Contract – explicit
8a	• contract assumed
8b	• contract negotiated
9	Encourager – rapport/relationship building and maintenance
10	Opinion expressed (judgemental)
11	Opinion expressed (reinforcer)
12	Advice – applications and CV/job search strategy/how to approach CAG
13	Advice – finance
14	Information – resources (CAG/websites/CAG results/interest inventories/reference texts/networking organisations)
15	Information – options
16	Information (educational routes/adult learners/useful contacts/sources of vacancies/job vacancies/job requirements/possible employers/timing of applications/recruitment policy and practices/benefits/childcare/course fees/CV)
17	Reinforcer – confirming behaviour/attitudes
18	Summary – intermediate
19	Summary – final
20	Self-disclosure
23	Advocacy – acting on behalf of the client/getting information/arranging interviews/speaking on behalf of client
24	Action plan
25	Challenge – thinking/attitudes
26	Follow-up

27	Sympathy
28	Probe – motivation
29	Clarifying – feelings
30	Clarifying – preferences
32	Advice – skills
33	Self-efficacy (confirming achievements or giving positive feedback on abilities/potential)(sometimes also a summary – 19 – e.g. RH42)
34	Referral
35	Probe – influences/constraints (including home/family circumstances/health)
36	Probe – skills/general ability
37	Probe – personality
38	Checking – accuracy or understanding of what client said or did
39	Probe – awareness: job requirements/self-awareness/transition strategies/job search/resources/Worktrain/course requirements/confidence/problem-solving ability
40	Summary of previous interview (in FU interview)/or referral
41	CAG interpretation