Establishing World Class
Careers Education and Guidance
in Kent and Medway:
A literature review

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Foreword

This literature review is part of a larger project comprising various components that extend over the period March, 2007 to March 2008. The Institute for Employment Research at the University of Warwick is working with Kent and Medway Connexions on the design and implementation of an innovative approach to careers education and guidance (CEG) across the region. This project is designed to help the service prepare for the impartial information, advice and guidance (IAG) that will be required to support curriculum changes such as the new Specialised Diplomas and comply with the imminent national standards for IAG. It comprises four discrete, but inter-related work-packages:

- a thorough review of its CEG provision in secondary schools, using a qualitative, in-depth case study approach;
- designing, testing and recommending an approach for sustainable e-portfolio development for career education and guidance across the region;
- a feasibility study into the development of local labour market information for the region, available on-line; and
- a model of sustainable training support for the use of effective labour market information in the IAG process.

This literature review is part of the first component listed above – an in-depth review of CEG provision in secondary schools across the region.

It should be noted that views expressed in this report are not necessarily those of Kent and Medway Connexions or any of the schools in the Kent and Medway region.

Acknowledgements

Contents

Executive summary

- Throughout its relatively short history, the Connexions service has operated within a demanding and volatile policy context.

- Four main strands of legislation have driven the organisational structure and delivery of Connexions. They comprise: educational reform; the National skills agenda; curriculum reform; and youth policy.

- There is consistency in the growing body of research evidence into the impact of Connexions services regarding the overall positive impact on young people. Studies have been inconsistent, however, in their findings relating to which particular groups of young people Connexions serves best.

- Various recent policy documents have emphasised the importance of careers education and guidance in supporting young people in making successful transitions from education to the labour market.

- Although careers education and guidance is part of the statutory curriculum, it stands outside the national curriculum. Consequently, schools are free to design their careers education and determine the amount of teaching time allocated.

- There is evidence from studies over the past decade or so that indicates how the level of young people's career-related skills are an important factor in their successful transition at 16, with those possessing a high level of skill being less likely to modify choices or switch courses. Careers education and guidance appears to have a positive contribution to make, here.

- However, studies also indicate that there exists much unfulfilled potential in current provision, with indicators of how programmes can better meet the requirements of young people.

- Whilst schools have a statutory duty to provide appropriate careers education, it is recognised that it competes with other priorities. Partly as a consequence of this, the quality of schools' provision is very variable.

- Recent developments have provided clear frameworks for the development of effective careers education and guidance programmes. These promote an approach to careers that is fully integrated across the curriculum.

- The changed and changing labour market presents considerable intellectual and practical challenges to effective careers education and guidance programmes.

- To understand both the origins of careers education and guidance programmes and how they currently operate, it is necessary to understand the framework, or frameworks, of practice on which they are based. Five such theoretical frameworks are particularly relevant in this context: trait and factor; developmental; social learning; opportunity structure; and community interaction. New frameworks are available to inform the development of innovative careers education and guidance programmes.

- As well as frameworks upon which practice is based, existing research evidence relates to the way in which career decisions provide insights to how young people make their career decisions.

1.   Introduction

Over the past decade or so, career guidance services have undergone fundamental and rapid changes throughout the UK. These include devolution, which brought with it four different country models of delivery. The 'massification' of higher education has seen an increase in student numbers participating in education post-16, with a widening access agenda and the introduction of student fees (in England). Information was distinguished from advice and guidance for resource purposes by a policy framework for adults in England, with eligibility criteria for some services dependent on qualification level (that is, pre-level 2). A focus on the NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) group of young people became a policy priority with the introduction of the Connexions service in England, as part of the government's agenda around social inclusion. Finally, a fundamental re-organisation of careers education and guidance in compulsory education in England is in prospect. Many of these changes have brought with them extended periods or uncertainty and instability, followed by re-organisation and change (Bimrose, 2006), through which both organisations and individuals in the sector have been both expected, and required, to deliver a high quality service to their clients.

Kent and Medway Connexions service is committed to establishing a careers education and guidance system that is world class. The immediate purpose of this literature review is, therefore, to inform a subsequent scoping exercise into the current careers education and guidance (CEG) provision in secondary schools in the region, using an in-depth case study approach. It is, in summary, seeking to define the broader context within which Kent and Medway Connexions is operating.

1.1   Aim and objectives

The aim of this review is to provide an accurate account of the contemporary context in which Kent and Medway Connexions service is delivering CEG in the region. Specifically, its objectives are to:

- identify the external factors influencing and shaping CEG policy in the region;
- consider practice frameworks that underpin approaches to CEG;
- review relevant research into the career decision-making behaviour of young people;
- establish which critical success factors and strategies contribute to the delivery of coherent CEG services; and

- inform the design of the research protocols for data collection during the case study research.

1.2   Methodology

The methodology underpinning the review has involved making use of the extensive and varied information and data sources and networks available to the research team through the University of Warwick.   Extensive searches were undertaken of relevant research from varied sources. Specifically, secondary data sources have included:

- electronic academic databases of journal articles;
- paper-based journal articles and academic books;
- websites; and
- grey literature[1].

Full account has been taken of recommendations from relevant policy documents which represent the key drivers in the formulation of policy.

1.3   Report structure

The structure of this literature review comprises five sections. The first has presented its aims, objectives and methodology. The next section (section 2) examines the background to Connexions services, including the policy context in which services are currently operating and evidence of its impact on clients. The third considers CEG – statutory and operational frameworks, the broader context in which CEG is delivered and evidence of effectiveness.   Section four reviews frameworks upon which careers education and guidance programmes have been based and indicates how new frameworks for practice are increasingly available.   It also examines findings from studies of how young people actually make career decisions.   Finally, section five presents the conclusions from the review.   It is the conclusions that will inform the development of the research protocols to be used during the second phase of the research – the in-depth examination of CEG programmes in the Kent and Medway regions.

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[1] 'Grey' literature comprises work that is in the public domain, but which has not been published by an academic journal, or necessarily through a commercial publishing house for commercial gain (e.g. research reports published by DfES on their website).

2.   The Policy Context

The ultimate goal of the Connexions Service is to ensure a smooth transition from adolescence to adulthood and working life so that every young person has the best start in life.

(Weinstock, 2001, p.2)

2.1   Background

Connexions services were launched nationally on a phased basis across England from April 2001.   They comprise forty-seven partnerships, which bring together the services that were offered by the former careers services, together with a range of other agencies and are coterminous with local Learning and Skills Council areas.   Their purpose is to provide 'a support service for all young people' (Department for Education and Skills, 2000, p.4), with the following key aim:

To enable all young people to participate effectively in appropriate learning – whether in school, FE college, training provider or other community setting – by raising their aspirations so that they reach their full potential.

(Department for Education and Skills, 2000, p.32)

Two different models of Connexions partnership (direct delivery and Local Authority lead body) are identified by the House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts (2004, p.12, para. 15), which, it is claimed, reflect the former careers service arrangements in each area.   In operational reality, three models have emerged – direct delivery, Local Authority lead body and sub-contracted services (Hughes, 2005, p.11).   As a consequence, Connexions partnerships vary considerable throughout England, with 'wide variations in performance between partnerships' (National Audit Office, 2004, p.5).

Operating, as they do, within a volatile and rapidly changing policy context, isolating particular factors that have played a central role in the development and operation of Connexions services is challenging.   The next section reviews policy drivers which have exerted influence upon (and/or have the potential to influence) the development of links between schools and Kent and Medway Connexions which are critical to the delivery of an effective programme of careers education and guidance (CEG) across the region.

2.2 Connexions: the legislative framework

As a service, Connexions has been operational for a relatively short period of time: 'Connexions is a young organisation…' (House of Commons Education and Select Committee, 2005, para. 104). Yet radical changes to its structure, operation and delivery are already on the horizon. A summary of key influences on the life of Connexions services in England (Hughes, 2005, p.11-12) illustrates the consistently high levels of flexibility and responsiveness demanded of them during their short lifetime.

The threefold aim of government policy since 1997 for 13-19 year olds has been: greater social inclusion; higher standards; and economic relevance (Pring, 2005). Four clusters of policy and strategy developments have either exerted, or are set to exert, a significant influence on Connexions. The main drivers of organisational structure and delivery of services are briefly outlined below.

- *Educational reform:*
   Taken together, the educational reforms outlined below set the agenda and framework for improved educational provision in England. Schools are to be given more autonomy, parents and children are set to become the key drivers of change within the system, ICT will play an ever increasing role and the school leaving age is to be raised. CEG is designated a clear, but non-statutory role.

   The Education Act, 2005, received Royal Assent in April, 2005 (United Kingdom Parliament, 2005a). This makes provision for the necessary legislative changes for reforms designed to: simplify the school improvement process; improve data flows; and strengthen the accountability framework for schools. It sets out the framework for a 'new relationship with schools' to promote greater autonomy and guarantees three-year ring-fenced budgets for every school from 2006 onwards (United Kingdom Parliament, 2005b, p.1). This legislation also provides the option for the Secretary of State to transfer the statutory duty for careers guidance provision from Connexions services to schools (Hughes, 2005, p.12).

   In parallel with this legislation, the government published the e-Strategy, 'Harnessing Technology: Transforming learning and children's services' (Department for Education and Skills, 2005a). This outlines the digital and interactive technologies required to achieve a more personalised approach. The overall aim is to use technology more effectively within education and children's

services for the benefit of young people, so supporting the implementation of the Education Act, 2005.

Following the ratification of the Education Act, a White Paper[2] was published in October, 2005, entitled: 'Higher Standards, better schools for all' (Department for Education and Skills, 2005b). This sets out plans to improve the educational system by ensuring that parents and children are the key drivers of change and that schools do not suffer from restrictions which would prevent innovation. Proposed reforms focus on raising standards in the school system through greater autonomy for schools, diversity of provision, more innovation and choice[3]. The value of effective partnership working is emphasised.

More recently, a Green Paper[4], 'Raising expectations: staying in education and training post-16' (Department for Education and Skills, 2007), considers the

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[2] A White Paper is a document issued by a government department which contains detailed proposals for legislation. It is the final stage before the government introduces its proposals to Parliament in the form of a Bill. When a White Paper is issued, it is often accompanied by a statement in the House from the secretary of state of the department sponsoring the proposals. A White Paper is sometimes produced following the consultation process which is undertaken when the government issues a Green Paper.

[3] A study of experiences of school reform in other countries has recently been undertaken by the Department for Education and Skills to learn lessons from European and Anglo-Saxon countries that have introduced significant educational reforms over the past 20 years. Four criteria are identified and deemed necessary to ensure that choice-based systems are successful in raising educational standards. These are: providing parents with information, advice and guidance about options; help with the costs of making choices (e.g. travel); prevention of schools from 'cream skimming' (i.e. selecting the cheapest to teach or most able to learn); and taking early effective action to tackle failing or poorly performing schools and increasing the supply of good schools (DfES & Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, 2006, p.5).

[4] A Green Paper is a consultation document issued by the government which contains policy proposals for debate and discussion before a final decision is taken on the best policy option. A Green Paper will often contain several alternative policy options. Following this consultation the government will normally publish firmer recommendations in a White Paper.

issues related to increasing the participation of young people in education by raising the school leaving age.

- *National skills agenda:*

  The national skills agenda underpins the proposed educational reform. The White Paper 'Skills: Getting on in business, getting on at work' (Department for Education and Skills, 2005c) complements and extends the earlier Skills White Paper '21st Century Skills: Realising our potential' (DfES, Dti, HM Treasury and DWP, 2003a). In combination, these two White Papers contain the government's strategy for raising the skill level of the labour force and of ensuring the supply of skills in the labour force matches employer demand. Alongside the high priority given to the efficient functioning of the labour market, the importance of the personal fulfilment that can be derived from the skill development of individuals is emphasised, together with the key role for 'improved' IAG in supporting individuals make more effective choices.

  The Leitch Review (HM Treasury, 2006) similarly confirms that, in order to be economically competitive, the UK must 'raise its game' by increasing the skill levels of its labour force (p.1). The review identifies the importance of embedding a culture of learning in society and proposes that 'a new and sustained national campaign to raise career aspirations and awareness' will contribute to the achievement of the skills agenda (p.103), together with support to make informed choices (p 107). This Review recommends the establishment of a 'new universal adult careers service, providing labour market focused careers advice for all adults' (p.23). The importance of effective IAG in raising aspirations is stressed (p.106) to the up-skilling agenda, claiming this is equally important for young people as adults – since 'too few young people at age 14 are making the link between careers guidance and their personal decisions (p. 107)[5].

  Like the educational reforms outlined above, the skills agenda repeatedly emphasises the need for young people and adults to be better informed about

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[5] A press release on 14th June, 2007, indicates that the implementation plan for the Leitch Review will be published 'as soon as possible'. http://www.dfes.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2007_0104

their options and to raise aspirations. A third strand of legislation that similarly highlights the role of IAG in realising its ambitions relates to curriculum reform.

- ***Curriculum reform:***

The 14-19 Education and Skills the White Paper '14-19 Education and Skills was published in 2005 (Department for Education and Skills, 2005d). This followed the interim report (Department for Education and Skills, February, 2004a) and the final report (Department for Education and Skills, October, 2004b) published by the Working Group on 14-19 Reform (Chaired by Sir Mike Tomlinson). The overall aim of the White Paper is to improve the educational system in schools and colleges so that all young people achieve more, educationally. Three key targets are: increasing achievement in education; increasing participation in education; and increasing successful completion of apprenticeships. The White Paper set out proposals designed to: ensure that every young person acquires functional English and maths before they leave education; improve vocational education; stretch all young people and help universities to differentiate between the best candidates; re-motivate disengaged learners; and ensure delivery. Reforms set out in the White Paper designed to engage all young people (especially those with serious personal problems) included the provision of 'a tailored programme for each young person and intensive personal guidance and support'[6] (p.7). It emphasises a key role for impartial, high-quality information, advice and guidance for young people: 'to get the most out of their learning, to enable successful progressions from one stage to another and to inform the important choices that young people make between different options' (p. 42, para. 5.26). The White Paper was followed in December, 2005 by the pubication of the 14-19 Education and Skills Implementation Plan (Department for Education and Skills, 2005e).

Findings from the national evaluation of the third year of the 14-19 Pathfinders initiative (which focused on funded 39 pathfinder partnerships and two un-funded partnerships) indicates the growing commitment to the concept of a coherent 14-19 phase and the identification and development of 14-19 progression routes (Higham and Yeomans, 2006). Additionally, a continued commitment to substantial collaborative working, local strategic leadership and the development

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[6] See the national evaluation of the 14-19 Pathfinders initiative (which focused on funded 39 pathfinders and two un-funded)

of collaborative infrastructure amongst a wide range of partners is evident. One key finding is how there is 'substantial activity in the provision of information, advice and guidance to young people' (p.1). Already, therefore, Pathfinders appear to be recognising the strategic importance of IAG to the new vocational educational system.

This legislation sets out the framework for fundamental vocational reform within the educational system, with specialised Diplomas to be developed in fourteen broad sector areas[7] at levels 1 (foundation); 2 (intermediate) and 3 (advanced) by 2013. These Diplomas will be designed to combine the best of vocational courses with A levels and GCSEs and the Advanced Diplomas will provide an alternative gateway to higher education or high skill employment.

The last policy strand relevant in this context relates to the Connexions services themselves.

- *Youth policy:*
  The Green Paper 'Every Child Matters' (2003b) specified five outcomes[8] for all young people to achieve and announced the establishment of Children's Trusts, to be placed at the centre of young people's services. Subsequently, the Youth Green Paper was pubished in July, 2005 (Department for Education and Skills, 2005f). This presented 'a new strategy for providing opportunities, challenge and support to young people…with services integrated around young people's needs…' (p.5). It addressed four key challenges[9] and specified minimum

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[7] Diploma Lines are: engineering; health & social care; ICT; creative & media; construction & the built environment; land-based & environment; manufacturing; hair & beauty; business administration & finance; hospitality & catering; public services; sport & leisure; retail; and travel & tourism.

[8] Being healthy; Staying safe; Enjoying and achieving; Making a positive contribution; and Economic well-being.

[9] How to engage more young people in positive activities and empower them to shape the services they receive; how to encourage more young people to volunteer and become involved in their communities; how to provide better information, advice and guidance to young people to help them make informed choices about their lives; and how to provide better and more personalised intensive support for each young person who has serious problems or gets into trouble (p.5).

expectations of the information, advice and guidance that each young person and their parents should receive: 'All young people should have access to good quality information, advice and guidance (IAG) to help them make better career and life choices' (p.44). Of crucial importance, the Youth Green Paper detailed how schools and colleges should have the right to commision IAG services directly: 'We would expect chilren's trusts, schools and colleges to work in partnership to commision IAG locally. But where schools and colleges believe existing provision is poor, they would have the right to commission services directly' (p.45). One proposal related to devolving responsibility to Local Authorities: '…we will devolve responsibility for commissioning IAG, and the funding that goes with it, from the Connexions Service to Local Authorities, working through the Children's Trust'[10] (p.47).

A period of consultation was followed by the government's response: 'Youth Matters: Next Steps. Something to do, somewhere to go, someone to talk to' (Department for Education and Skills, 2006), which contains proposals for delivering the vision for empowering young people. These proposals include the 'reform of advice and guidance, including integrating it further with other services for young people…' (p.20). Further, it is stated that the implementation of these proposals for information, advice and guidance 'will deliver the objectives set out in the 14-19 Education and Skills White Paper' (p.20). Implementation of this policy is underway at the time of writing, with funds already made available to the Children's Trusts for the introduction of the Youth Opportunity Fund (YOF) and the Youth Capital Fund (YCF).

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[10] Twelve case studies have recently been carried out into different Connexions partnerships to explore emerging issues in moving the delivery of Connexions towards the Children's Trust (Ecotec, 2006, p.4). This study was undertaken at an early stage of the transition process with one finding relating to the different pace of change across the 12 case study areas. Most were piloting different schemes, trying to establish how co-location would work in practice. Three key factors were found to influence the pace of change: the Local Area Agreement; children's trust pilots; and the Children and Young People's Plan. Where these were in place, a quicker rate of change was facilitated (p. 11).

Major structural changes to Connexions services are, therefore, currently underway. The climate of uncertainty in which CEG is currently being delivered is likely to make an impact on current provision.

2.3   Impact assessment

Connexions is at the heart of government policy to improve the skills base and increase participation in education and training.

(National Audit Office, 2004, p.3)

Given the importance attached to Connexions services by government in delivering their skills agenda and educational reforms, it is perhaps hardly surprising that the impact of the service has been under constant scrutiny from various agencies (Hughes, 2006, p.3). Overall, results from a number of evaluations have been positive. For example, a customer satisfaction survey found that 'over nine in ten young people who had been in contact with Connexions said they were satisfied with the service they received (93%)' (Brunwin, *et al.*, 2005). Similarly, a user satisfaction survey of Connexions Direct[11] found that 89% of respondents were either 'very' or 'fairly satisfied' with the service (Hall, *et al.*, 2006). The National Audit Office (NAO) carried out a survey of 1,000 schools and 150 Further Education colleges in 2004 to assess the quality of service provided by Connexions and found that good progress was being made both in improving the way young people receive advice and guidance and in forming strong partnerships with other agencies (National Audit Office, 2004, p.9). However, because Connexions was operating with fewer resources than originally intended, the NAO found that not all those able to benefit from the service were actually receiving it. Particular mention was made of the service that Connexions provided to schools, where a lack of the capacity to provide appropriate levels of CEG for young people was reported. This was attributed to a lack of resources (National Audit Office, 2004, p.7).

Findings from various evaluations are, therefore, generally consistent regarding positive impacts achieved by services. Inconsistencies emerge, however, when findings on the

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[11] Connexions Direct (CXD) was developed in 2001 to complement local delivery of information, advice and support to 13-19 year olds on a number of issues (e.g. careers, family issues, general and sexual health, finance, housing and drugs). National rollout was completed early in 2004. Information and advice is accessed via: telephone; adviser online; email; and SMS text.

groups of young people that benefit most from Connexions are scrutinised. For example, two research studies commissioned over the period 2003-2004 came to different conclusions about the particular groups of young people deriving most benefit. One found that Connexions was achieving positive impacts (albeit different types of positive impacts), across different groups of young people – including those at risk (Hoggarth and Smith, 2004, p.7). In contrast, the other found that the service was rather better equipped to meet the needs of young people with intensive support needs than those with fewer problems (Joyce and White, 2004, p.10). In this study, a gap in the provision of labour market information was identified – specifically information about university courses and jobs for young people (p.11). A third survey, the annual Ofsted report for the same period in which the two research studies were carried out (that is, 2003/04), found significant weaknesses in the services' work with young people leaving custody. Additionally, an inadequacy was identified in the careers information, advice and guidance provided to girls in prison (p.66, para. 324). Like other evaluations, Ofsted's general conclusions about the impact of Connexions were positive: 'Connexions partnerships generally carry out all aspect of their remit at least satisfactorily' (p. 61).

Part of the remit of Connexions services is to support schools and colleges in the delivery of CEG programmes. The next section examines the arguments for CEG, the parameters within which it is being delivered, current provision and the broader labour market context for which it aims to prepare young people.

3. Careers education and guidance

The need for a common language around careers education and guidance (CEG) emerged as an important issue in a recent study that was aiming to develop CEG programmes in schools. If found that careers staff who were involved in the delivery of CEG did not agree about the nature of careers work, its scope or its focus (McGowan, 2005, p.7). This, despite the following definition being provided by Department for Education and Skills in 2003:

> *Careers programmes have two components – education and guidance. They are interrelated and depend on each other for their effectiveness. Each is required to support and complement the other.* **Careers education** *helps young people to develop the knowledge and skills they need to make successful choices, manage transitions in learning and move into work.* **Career guidance** *enables young people to use the knowledge and skills they develop to make the decisions about learning and work that are right for them [emphasis in original].*
>
> (Department for Education and Skills, 2003c, p.5)

It is likely, therefore, that clarifying the language used by those involved in delivering CEG programmes will be crucial to an accurate understanding of current provision and potential gaps.

3.1 The case for careers education and guidance

> *Mounting evidence suggests that an individual's level of consumption, self-esteem, social-status, and even happiness depend to a large extent on not just income, but also social status, associated with occupational attainment.*
>
> (Brown, Sessions and Taylor, 2004, p.20)

Various recent publications, for example, the '14-19 Education and Skills Implementation Plan' (Department for Education and Skills, 2005e), the White Paper 'Skills: Getting on in business, getting on at work' (Department for Education and Sills, 2005a) and 'Youth Matters' (Department for Education and Skills, 2005f), have all identified CEG, or information, advice and guidance (IAG), as an important factor in supporting young people in making successful transitions from education into the labour market (see section 2.2 above). Indeed, a study which used data from the British National Child Development Study to explore the determinants of career expectations formed at the age

of 16, found that career expectations at 16 are an important determinant of human capital accumulation which, in turn, is a key determinant of actual occupational status (Brown, Sessions and Taylor, 2004). From this, it would appear, therefore, that the role of CEG in raising career expectations and aspirations of pupils is crucial. Additionally, an earlier review of evidence published in 1999 concluded that, in addition to helping pupils make and implement career decisions, CEG may have benefits in enhancing pupil motivation and attainment. It may, therefore, not only be of intrinsic value, but also enhance broader school effectiveness (Killeen, Sammons and Watts, 1999).

A systematic literature review of recent literature published from 1988 to 2003 focused on the impact of CEG on career transitions from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4 (Moon *et al.*, 2004). Overall, the evidence suggests that provision of CEG varies from school to school, depending on a range of factors that can be seen as indicators of quality, including: school policy and management; content and organisation of CEG programmes; qualifications of teaching staff designated to deliver CEG; standards of students' work; and library resources. The research implies that these factors affect the transition of young people. Where provision is good, the impact on young people in transition appears to be positive. Other influencing factors are parents, socioeconomic background and gender. One implication drawn from this review was that more research is needed. In particular, the current lack of differentiation between the management and delivery of CEG at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 should be addressed explicitly in future research reports. The study concluded that students have differing CEG needs at each Key Stage and that it was important that CEG should be promoted from Year 7 onwards. Variable standards regarding staff training were noted, together with the lack of suitably qualified teachers. The potential existed for parents' contributions to be more fully utilised and access to careers library resources required improvement. Overall, a coherent strategy across the key stages is lacking.

A second literature review which focused on a similar period (1988 to 2004), adopted a slightly different emphasis, examining the impact of CEG during Key Stage 4 on young people's transitions into post-16 opportunities (Smith *et al.*, 2005). Findings revealed how the level of young people's career-related skills seems to be an important factor in their transition at 16, with those possessing a high level of skills being less likely to

modify choices or switch courses[12]. CEG provision appears to have a positive impact on this. Many findings overlapped with the literature review on Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 provision (Moon *et al.*, 2004). It was concluded that provision of information about post-16 options is patchy and needs to be designed in a way that is relevant and appropriate to its target audience. Additionally, initiatives were found to be more effective when given a long enough timescale and sufficient resources.

Conclusions from a study of young people's perceptions of CEG not included in the literature reviews cited above, supports the notion that whilst CEG makes many positive contributions, it could achieve much more: 'there is much unfulfilled potential in current careers education and guidance provision and delivery mechanisms to make CEG more attractive and relevant to its young clients' (Stoney *et al.*, 1998, p.46). The young people who participated in this particular study greatly valued certain elements of their CEG programmes, but were critical of others. Overall, they were 'anxious to receive careers education and guidance that provided them with information, advice and experience which was both individual and specific' (p.31). They also wanted differentiated provision (according to individual need) and their CEG to be practical and unbiased (p. 25).

From various research studies over the past decade, therefore, the case for effective CEG in schools is strong. The parameters for CEG programmes in schools, within the broader context of the world of work, will now be considered below.

3.2   CEG: the legislative framework

Careers work is undergoing a massive change in policy and orientation…

(Law, 2001, p.3)

The statutory requirement for the provision of CEG is contained in Section 43 of the Education Act, 1997. This specified that CEG would be a statutory part of the curriculum for years 9, 10 and 11 from September, 1998 (United Kingdom Parliament, 1997). Subsequently, this statutory duty was extended to the first two years of secondary education (years 7 and 8) by an amendment to this Act in 2004, with schools mandated

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[12] Further evidence from research not included in this review supports the findings that learners who receive good quality CEG achieve better and are less likely to drop out of learning or change course after they are 16 (Martinex and Munday, 1998).

to provide a planned programme of careers education within the curriculum. Additionally, there are statutory requirements for all maintained schools, including special schools and pupil referral units to provide access to pupils to up-to-date reference materials, as well as access to personal advisers, so that Connexions services can fulfil its obligation to provide career guidance to all pupils aged 13-19. Since the Learning and Skills Act, 2000 (United Kingdom Parliament, 2000), Connexions services had the responsibility for CEG. In 2006, the government announced that children's trusts will take over this statutory duty from Connexions (Department for Education and Skills, 2006). At the time of writing, the Department for Education and Skills is developing high quality standards, to guarantee high quality and impartial guidance.

In addition to providing a planned programme of careers education within the curriculum, schools are required to give Connexions personal advisers access to students to provide careers guidance[13] and to provide personal advisers with information about students. Schools and colleges are also mandated to work with the statutory careers service provider (usually Connexions) to provide pupils and students with up-to-date information[14] on all opportunities for learning and work through their own resource centre or library. Although CEG is, therefore, part of the statutory curriculum, it stands outside the national curriculum. Consequently, schools and colleges are free to design their careers education programme and determine the amount of teaching time allocated (Bysshe, 2005)[15].

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[13] The extent to which PAs feel able to fulfil this remit is likely to depend, in part at least, on their own professional background. The establishment of the new profession of 'personal adviser' saw recruitment from a range of backgrounds, not all of which included careers expertise.

[14] A recent study of young people in jobs without training found that Connexions partnerships have only partial knowledge of the relevant employers in their areas and their staff have only limited experience of working with employers (Anderson *et al.*, 2006, p.3).

[15] Whilst there are no set time allocations for CEG, the following guidelines have been provided: Y7 – 6 hrs; Y8 – 12 hrs; Y9 – 15 hrs; Y10 – 24 hrs (excluding work experience); Y11 – 24 hrs (excluding work experience); Y12 – 20 hrs (excluding work experience); and Y13 – 20 hrs (excluding work experience) (Department for Education and Skills, 2004c, p12).

The House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts (2004) recommended that 'Connexions services should work with schools to help them deliver a good standard of careers education' (p.5). Whilst schools have a statutory duty to provide appropriate careers education, it is recognised that careers education has to compete with other priorities. As a consequence, the quality of schools' provision is very variable. Because of this, Connexions services were required to 'identify local gaps or weaknesses in provision and appoint a Personal Adviser to work specifically with schools on developing the careers curriculum' (p.5).

3.3   Current and future CEG provision

Programmes of CEG typically comprise four main components:
- *A planned programme of careers education in the curriculum;*
- *A full range of accurate and up-to-date careers information;*
- *Access to advice and guidance, linked to support for recording and reviewing achievement, setting targets and action planning; and*
- *Experience of work.*

(NICEC Briefing, 2000, p.1)

To assist schools develop effective programmes of CEG, the government launched its non-statutory framework in 2003 (Department for Education and Skills, 2003c). This framework contains the main national guidelines for both CEG and work related learning. It identifies: learning outcomes and suggested content for CEG programmes; provides advice on how young people can benefit from CEG from different sources; and suggests how both to quality assure CEG and develop a process of continuous improvement (p.3).

In 2005, CEG was the subject of an 'end to end' governmental review, because of 'a number of recent reports that have both identified the importance of good CEG, and raised questions about the adequacy of current provision' (Department for Education and Skills, 2005g, p. 4). Conclusions from this review included how Connexions partnerships did not have the resources to deliver both targeted support and CEG; how there is confusion over the respective roles and responsibilities of schools and Connexions partnerships; and how the greatest potential for improving CEG delivery lies in driving up the quality and relevance of careers education in schools (p.5). One of the recommendations was that 'Schools should be encouraged to adopt a "whole school" approach, incorporating CEG, student support and progression issues, starting in year 7' (p.19). The role of local quality awards for CEG in raising standards of delivery was also

acknowledged, with the Review indicating that schools should be encouraged to pursue them[16].

Subsequently, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) began to review the position of elements of the secondary curriculum that focussed on personal development learning, including careers education. Its aim was to support more integrated approaches to these inter-related curriculum areas. A consultation was launched on the secondary curriculum, including economic well-being, in the early part of 2007 (QCA, 2007). This particular non-statutory programme of study brings together careers education, work-related learning, enterprise and financial capability. Additionally, it provides principles on which programmes of work can be based. These are: aims of the learning; key processes; key concepts; range and content; and curriculum opportunities. Since they are relevant for all areas of the curriculum, links can be made between various subject areas. Law (2007) observes how the QCA is thus: 'handing up our biggest challenge in a generation. They start-up a process which will change the way we work – maybe forever' (p.1). In advance of the QCA consultation, Law (2006) submitted his LiRRiC proposals (life-role relevance in curriculum) on personal and social development to the QCA to inform the review. He describes the relationship between the two as follows: 'The review is a consultation on priorities for learning; LiRRiC is a tool for realising them' (Law, 2007, p.3). Three key elements of the LiRRiC are identified. First, it links together what school timetables separate; second, it expands learning opportunities; and third, it uses the concept of life-role relevance as a central organising idea. Central to this whole approach is integration – in contrast to the fragmented and marginal CEG that currently exists (Law, 2006b, p. 26)[17].

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[16] A survey undertaken in 2005 provides insights to the extent to which such quality awards are already being used (Andrews, 2005a). It found that a total of 25 different quality awards were offered across England, 24 of which were offered by Connexions partnerships (or in areas operating a sub-contracting model for the delivery of Connexions), with awards available in 41 of the 47 Connexions partnership areas (p.4). In the areas offering quality awards, the proportion of schools having successfully achieved one varied between 20 and 30 per cent (p.7).

[17] One other practical framework for implementing a 14-19 entitlement to IAG has been produced by the National Association of Connexions Partners, with input from the Institute of Career Guidance and the Association of Careers Education and Guidance, entitled 'Supporting Choices 11-19+' (undated).

If these are potentially the key influences of CEG provision now, what might shape future CEG provision? From a review of CEG provision in North London, McGowan (2006) identifies three existent models. These are: explicit, where CEG is clearly identifiable, often as discrete elements (e.g. CEG lessons; careers interviews); implicit, where CEG was embedded in the curriculum (e.g. job search skills in English lessons); and inferred, where CEG was being delivered in a range of settings, but its relevance was often unrecognised (e.g. science lessons developing skills of research; Saturday jobs). The organisational role for careers within schools also varies[18]. The same study identified three distinct ones: first, where there was a dedicated job role with a focus on careers work; second, roles where careers work was not the sole focus, but encompassed an element of careers; and third, where the primary focus of the role had nothing to do with careers but where a mutually beneficial collaboration between the primary role and careers existed (e.g. selection interviews in drama lessons) (p.5). A key finding from this study related to the three conditions which had to be met for CEG to develop effectively. Specifically, these were: where time was protected to enable staff to reflect on what the primary purpose of CEG was in their particular school; where staff had a strong infrastructure of support, including a strong Connexions partnership; and where staff had access to networks of influence that enabled them to achieve what was needed (McGowan, 2006, p.1).

The professional background of staff delivering careers is also thought to be relevant to future CEG developments. Andrews (2005b) observes how the replacement of management allowances for teachers with Teaching and Learning Responsibilities is resulting in an increase in the number individuals from professional background other than teaching being appointed to the role of careers co-ordinator in schools. Whilst this offers certain advantages, non-teachers find tasks associated with curriculum leadership for CEG challenging. There is also a question of capacity, with a shortage of staff with relevant expertise and of the training to prepare and support them (Maguire, 2004).

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[18] A historical review of the way the careers role has developed indicates a shift from the careers teacher to the careers co-ordinator, where the primary functions are a combination of organising, co-ordinating, networking, managing and leading (NICEC, 2004).

3.4 Broader context of CEG

Most people spend over 40 years working for a living. Some work until they drop. Imagine how it must feel to spend the whole time doing something that you dislike or even hate. That's where careers work comes in. Good careers education and guidance can give young people a flying start by helping them to get the basic knowledge and skills they need to begin navigating their way successfully through career choices and changes.

(Department for Education and Skills, 2004c, p.1).

A primary focus of CEG programmes in schools is to prepare pupils for working life. So what, exactly, are CEG programmes preparing pupils for? Predications of labour market change which were vigorously promoted in the 1980s and 1990s were based on the twin, related, assumptions that individuals could no longer depend on a job for life and that the bureaucratic career (where an individual typically entered an employing organisation and steadily progressed through the hierarchy) was no longer an option. A vision of a new world of work was promoted, emphasising the shift from an industrial to an information economy, which was global rather than national. This new order would demand a different approach. Organisations would increasingly have flattened hierarchies, employing smaller numbers of 'core' employees and with increasing numbers of out-sourced labour - portfolio workers. Career patterns would, consequently, become more fluid, more fragmented and more disjointed, with less dependence on skills relevant to particular organisations or occupations and more imperatives to develop core, transferable skills (like communication skills and team working). This predicated new order represented fundamental challenges for CEG in their preparation of young people for entering and participating in this radically changed labour market.

However, this grand vision of labour market change has not been realised. Recent research reveals how:

One job per person has stayed the norm – permanent, full-time employment remains dominant, workers are not moving often from one employer to another and the 'career' – as a way of viewing work – has triumphed.

(Moynagh and Worsley, 2005, p.93)

Rather than the concept of 'career' becoming out-moded and out-dated, the proportion of employees seeing themselves as having a career increased from just under half to 60 per cent between 1985 and 2001. This trend extends to young people, with research

evidence indicating that they are 'firmly wedded to careers' (Moynagh and Worsley, 2005, p.96). Moreover, opportunities for realising career ambitions continue to exist. In a recent survey, the majority of managers said their organisations had well-defined career ladders and many said they tried to provide their employees with the understanding that they should see their current job as part of their longer term career progression (Taylor, 2003, p.12).

However, whilst long-term, full-time jobs will be far more typical than portfolio working, there will be dramatic changes in the ways that people work – working from home or as mobile workers. New products, processes and technologies will transform work as Britain moves up the value chain into activities that earn more revenue. Jobs will become more complex and individuals will be given more responsibility, encouraging 'smart' forms of work (Moynagh and Worsley, 2005, p. 183). It is also predicted that there will be an increasing polarisation of workers who are highly skilled and those who are not. An image of an hour-glass economy is used to convey how this trend towards the polarisation of the workforce is strengthening: '…islands of high skill (geographic clusters, sectors and a few occupations…) set amidst a sea of low skill (and often very poorly paid) service work' (Keep and Brown, 2005, p.14).

This changed and changing UK labour market represents considerable intellectual and practical challenges for CEG programmes in schools, which require at their centre a vision that reflects current realities and possible trends in the labour market. Additionally, they need to be based on firm theoretical foundations which provide both clear frameworks for delivery and an evidence-base for practice. The next section will outline selected options.

4. Frameworks underpinning CEG

To understand how careers education and guidance (CEG) programmes operate, it is necessary not only to understand the policy and labour market context in which they are delivered, but also the framework, or frameworks, of practice on which they are based. Further, it has been argued that to understand new ways of thinking about CEG, it is essential to understand its origins (Law, 2001, p.28). As well as frameworks upon which practice is based, research evidence relating to the way in which career decisions are made is relevant. This section, therefore, reviews briefly models for CEG and examines what we know about how young people make career decisions.

4.1 CEG Frameworks

Like other professional activities, the frameworks informing CEG practice have been developed over time, with each reflecting the socio-economic conditions at the time of its inception. There are various conceptions of which frameworks have been most significant for career practice. One proposed, specifically for CEG in the UK, reviews theoretical developments over three time periods. The first is of these is from 1900 to 1960, during which vocational guidance became established and started to develop. Approaches associated with this phase are 'trait and factors' and 'self-concept'. The second is from 1960-1980, associated with 'opportunity structure', 'social reproduction' and 'community interaction' approaches to CEG. The third is from 1980-2000 – with 'social learning', person-environment match, constructivist, pragmatic-rational-choice approaches emerging (Law, 2001, p.28). Providing a comprehensive review of approaches that are relevant CEG programmes is beyond the scope of this paper. Additionally, research into frameworks that actually influence CEG provision is sadly lacking. Selected frameworks from the more established and traditional approaches to careers most likely to have had an impact will, therefore, be summarised below.

Trait and Factor

Talent matching theory, subsequently known as 'trait and factor', is based on a rational model of decision-making. This so-called 'matching' approach to CEG has been, and continues to be, a dominant influence on current career guidance practice. Its originator (Parsons, 1909) postulated that career decisions are made when people have achieved first, an accurate understanding of their individual traits (abilities, interests, aptitudes); second, acquired knowledge of jobs and the labour market; and third, made a rational and objective judgement about the relationship between these two groups of facts. The

significant and continuing influence of this approach on the practice of careers guidance was noted by Krumboltz (1994) who suggested that most current practice was 'still governed by the three-part theory outlined by Frank Parsons (1909)' (p.14). Savickas (1997) concurred: 'Parson's paradigm for guiding occupational choice remains to this day the most widely used ...' (p.150). From a longitudinal study into effective guidance, it seems likely that career practitioners in England are still heavily reliant on this approach (Bimrose, *et al.*, 2004; Bimrose and Barnes, 2006).

Developmental approaches

Another influential framework is the developmental approach to CEG. The general principles underlying developmental approaches to careers guidance are that individual development is a continuous process; the developmental process is largely irreversible; these processes can be differentiated into patterns called stages in the life span; and that the result of normal development is increasing (vocational) maturity. Names most closely associated with this theory of vocational choice are Eli Ginzberg and Donald Super. Super continued to develop his thinking for over forty years, with the life-career rainbow (1980, p.289) representing a significant advance. It emphasised the importance of different roles that individuals assume at different stages of their life (specifically child, student, leisurite, citizen, worker, homemaker), the concept of life space and life cycles. The life cycle assumed an increasingly central role in more recent versions of Super's theory (1980, 1990 and 1994) and the development of his ideas about self-concept and vocational adjustment resulted in a redefinition of vocational guidance as:

> *the process of helping a person to develop an integrated and adequate picture of himself and of his role (sic) in the world of work, to test this concept against reality and to convert it into a reality, with satisfaction to himself and benefits to society.*

<div align="right">(Super, 1988, p.357)</div>

It was not until his archway model that Super formally conceded the importance of contextual influences operating on individual choice, and acknowledged the contributions from a range of academic disciplines to our understanding of vocational choice (Super, 1990).

Social learning

Originating from behavioural psychology, social learning theory has been adapted by John Krumboltz and associates (for example, Mitchell, Jones and Nicols) into a

framework for career practice. The Social Learning Theory of Career Decision-Making (SLTCDM) was designed to address the question of:

> *why people enter particular educational programs or occupations, why they may change educational programs or occupations, and why they may express various preferences for different occupational activities at selected points in their lives.*
>
> (Mitchell and Krumboltz, 1996, p.237)

The initial version (Krumboltz *et al.*, 1976, Mitchell and Krumboltz, 1990) was more recently developed into the learning theory of careers counselling (LTCC) (Mitchell and Krumboltz, 1996). This more recent version attempts to integrate practical ideas, research and procedures to provide a theory that goes beyond an explanation of why people pursue various jobs. The key concept of the theory is learning, and the focus is on teaching clients career decision-making strategies. Within this theoretical framework, career practitioners operate more in a teaching support role, helping their clients to identify and then rectify inaccurate beliefs. Methods central to this process are reinforcement and modelling, used to help clients unlearn inaccurate and/or incorrect beliefs and relearn correct ones.

Krumboltz *et al.* (1976) identified four categories of factors that influenced career decision-making. The first refers to inherited qualities such as race, sex and physical characteristics. The second set focuses upon environmental conditions and events (generally outside the control of individuals). Third, individual learning experiences, including both instrumental and associative, are crucial. Fourth, skills (like work habits and standards of performance) are influential (Krumboltz, 1976). It is the interaction of the first three groups of influences that result in the development of the fourth. Furthermore, people develop beliefs about themselves and the world of work which represent their own reality as a result of a complex interaction of these four sets of factors.

Opportunity structure

The opportunity structure model was proposed by Roberts (1968, p.176) as an alternative to development theories of career decision-making. Roberts (1968) does not suggest that his theory has universal validity (p.179). Rather, he argues that entry to employment in different social contexts requires different explanatory frameworks and that entry into employment does not take place in a similar manner amongst all groups of young people, even in the same society. The determinants of career decisions were

originally identified as: the home; the environment; the school; peer groups and job opportunities. He thus challenged the relevance of the concept of choice embedded in psychological theories, emphasising the structure of constraints: 'An adequate theory for understanding school-leavers' transition to employment in Britain needs to be based around the concept not of 'occupational choice', but of 'opportunity structure'' (Roberts, 1977, p.183). This sparked considerable controversy in the UK guidance community on the relative role of choice versus constraint in career behaviour.

Like many theorists, Roberts has modified his views over a thirty-year period. In 1995, he argued that the debate about 'choice versus opportunity' was never won decisively by either side (Roberts, 1995, p.111). He argues that the importance of this debate has now subsided for various reasons including an increasing acknowledgement that the opportunities for choice have always varied between groups of young people. Additionally, the transition period for young people between the time they leave education and training and enter employment is now so extended that all young people are able to exercise some degree of choice at some stage of this process, even if this is limited to a choice about the type of subject or qualification taken in education or training.

Roberts (1995) suggests that 'choice versus opportunity' has now been replaced by a new set of debates, despite the fact that the main routes to good jobs are not fundamentally different (1995). This is because of the changes that have occurred like economic restructuring, higher unemployment, as well as pressure from young people and their parents who want qualifications that will get them decent jobs. New concepts are needed, Roberts argues (1995 and 1997) to understand the process of transitions into employment.

These include 'individualisation', referring to the notion that life patterns have become more unique than ever before, because of shrinking social networks and changed social behaviour. People are far less likely to share events and experiences with as many people as previously. Uncertain destinations are another feature of transition because of economic, social and educational change, and career transitions are likely to involve risk:

> *It is as if people nowadays embarked on their life journeys without reliable maps, all in private motor cars rather than the trains and buses in which entire classes once travelled together ... these 'cars' in which individuals now travel don't all have equally powerful engines. Some young people have already accumulated*

advantages in terms of economic assets and socio-cultural capital. Some have
to travel by bicycle or on foot. But everyone has to take risks.

<div align="right">(Roberts, 1995, p.118).</div>

'DOTS' & Community interaction

A highly influential framework for CEG is one that was developed approximately three
decades ago (Law & Watts, 1977). It elaborated a framework included in a government
publication (DES, 1973) which identified three elements (based on the trait and factor
approach): an understanding of self, thinking about opportunities and making considered
choices. The DOTS model comprises self awareness; opportunity awareness; decision
learning; and transition learning. It has been, and continues to be, highly influential in
informing the design and delivery of CEG, despite growing criticisms of its adequacy
(Law, 2001b).

Subsequently, Law (1981, 1996) developed his community interaction theory from
secondary research sources. He suggests:

> *The way in which who-does-what in society is decided is the product of a plurality*
> *of interpersonal transactions conducted in local settings, and on the basis of*
> *interaction within and between groups of which the individual is a member - the*
> *community ...The evidence gives significance to the personal exchanges which*
> *occur between individuals and the people with whom they are in community*
> *contact – notably family, neighbourhood, peer group, ethnic group and teachers*
> *at school.*

<div align="right">(Law, 1981, p.218)</div>

Thus, Law suggests that events occur in the context of 'community interaction' between
the individual and the social group of which she or he is a member. A number of modes
or sources of community influence are identified, specifically: expectations, from an
individual's family and community groups; feedback, referring to the varied messages
that individuals receive about their suitability for particular occupations and roles;
support, relating to the reinforcement of young people's aspirations; modelling, referring
to the process by which people are influenced by example; and finally, information, which
is defined as young people's observations of other people's work habits and patterns.

In 1996, Law extended his theory to include additional propositions relating to the roles
of innate abilities, more advanced abilities and feelings in career choice. He identifies

the processes linked with these abilities as understanding, focusing, sensing and sifting, arguing that the more developed capacities cannot be engaged unless some basic capacities have been successfully developed to support them. These are all crucial for career development, though Law (1996) suggests that like all other forms of learning, individuals can acquire the necessary skills through education.

Law has influenced programmes of careers education and guidance in schools more than one-to-one careers guidance. For example, a distance learning pack used nationally in the training of careers teachers (Open College/DfEE, 1995).

New frameworks for practice

Whilst these are the types of frameworks that have exerted influence on the shape and form of CEG provision, there is an emerging consensus regarding some of their inadequacies[19]. In response to this growing dissatisfaction with existing frameworks, two distinct trends in theory development (which sometimes overlap) are emerging. One is towards developing theories that attempt to meet the needs of specific disadvantaged client groups, such as minority ethnic groups or girls and women. Traditional theories tend to assume choice and autonomy for the individual, whereas some question this as a reasonable assumption for particular client groups. For example, Osipow and Littlejohn (1995) discuss serious weaknesses in applying theory to minority ethnic groups. A major problem is the manner in which all theories use concepts which 'assume cultures that are relatively affluent and have good opportunities for education, upward mobility and family support and encouragement' (p.255), because many members of minority ethnic groups do not have access to these privileges. Progress has been made in developing frameworks that address the particular issues associated with these client groups.

The second trend in career theory development is towards those characterised by a post-modern approach (Collin and Watts, 1996, Savickas, 1993). Savickas (1993) discusses the general move away from 'logical positivism, objectivist science, and industrialism' towards 'a multiple perspective discourse' (p.205), summarising key differences between the modern and post-modern era (p.209). Embryonic career theories are thus being developed which focus more on meaning, invention and construction, and move towards 'co-construction or social construction of meaning'

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[19] For a critique of current theories, go to:

http://www.guidance-research.org/EG/impprac/ImpP2/critiques

(p.213). For these frameworks, there is a distinct shift away from objectifying clients by measurement to a preference for autobiography and meaning-making[20].

4.2   Career decision-making

Alongside frameworks for practice that inform the overall approach, an appreciation of how young people make career decisions is also relevant to an understanding of how CEG programmes do, and could, operate. An evidence base exists which helps to make sense of how young people make their career decisions in 14-19 education and training, though it should be noted that this is not strong (Wright, 2005).

A literature review into pupil choices at key stage 3 identifies six factors that influence the process of decision-making. These are: the intrinsic value attached to certain subjects (i.e. enjoyment of the subject); the extrinsic value (i.e. their usefulness to future careers); pupil self-perception of their ability at any particular subject; careers education and guidance; home background (though the literature is divided on just how much influence parents may exercise); and teachers (McCrone *et al.*, 2005). Many of these factors overlap with findings from a different review of literature on young people's decision-making in 14-19 education and training (Wright, 2005).   This review identifies the following factors as significant: social class; gender; ethnicity; locality (that is, the local labour market) and the condition of the labour market more generally; academic attainment; educational institutions; IAG '…there is strong evidence that many schools provide slanted and partial evidence on post-16 options' Wright, 2005, p.23); marketing (i.e. of courses); advice from teachers; institutional culture; organisation of the curricula and examinations (i.e. where 'hidden' or 'disguised' processes of differentiation emerged, which sorted pupils into certain groups following certain routes); family; peer group; attitudes and perceptions (i.e. what is appropriate); and timing (i.e. when individuals start to consider pathway options, etc.).

Many of the studies featured in this particular review are underpinned by models of decision-making. At one end of the continuum are those that stress the autonomy of the individual in a process of choice. These models are essentially rational, regarding decision-making as comprising evidence gathering, followed by an assessment of the

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[20] For summaries of new frameworks for practice, go to: http://www.guidance-research.org/EG/impprac/ImpP2/new-theories

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costs and benefits of alternative courses of action. At the other end of the continuum are those that emphasise the dominance of external, structural factors in determining, and constraining, individual destinations. They regard choice as either irrelevant, or having only marginal relevance, emphasising emotion rather than rationality. Depending on which model of decision-making was informing the research, different factors are likely to have been identified as influential (for example, attitudes and perceptions as important factors emerged from a study espousing a belief in the role of autonomy in decision making, whilst factors like family and peers, are more likely to have emerged from studies placing a higher level of importance to structural influences. This is also likely to be the case for career co-ordinators. Their beliefs about the influences of decision-making are likely to affect, fundamentally, their design of any CEG programme for which they have responsibility. These will, inevitably embed assumptions about human behaviour (for example, an individualised, rational model or an approach that recognises a number of equally valid approaches).

A new study of young people's careers choices at 14 and 16 has found that schools can make a real difference to how young people make decisions[21]. When learners felt supported in their decision-making by their school, they are more likely to be influenced by school factors (e.g. CEG provision) and less reliant on external sources (e.g. family and friends). The same study found that not only do young people value having sufficient time to make their choices, but they make these decisions in different ways. The quality of decisions made vary, partly according to the IAG available (Blenkinsop, *et al.*, 2006).

Research undertaken in Wales (Webb, 2006) which examined how CEG could be developed to support young people's access to a wide range of academic and vocational courses and training found that four categories of 'success factors' played a key role in combating barriers to choices young people made about progression. These were: information (the need for higher quality, comprehensive labour market information); support (that is, from significant adults in the lives of young people, like parents and tutors); development of decision-making skills (as preparation for post-16 choices); and transition pathways (institutional collaboration increased the range of options for study available to young people).

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[21] This supports findings from earlier studies (see Foskett, 2004a and Foskett *et al.*, 2004b).

It is interesting to note that an assumption is implicit in much of the literature on decision-making is that the decision to leave schooling at the end of compulsory schooling is an inferior one, compared with staying on in education or training for as long as possible. This is, however, not necessarily true for all young people (Wright, 2005, p.6).

Overall, available evidence suggests that career decisions are influenced by a range of factors, with the importance of these factors varying according to individuals, time and context. The scope and nature of meaningful decisions that are actually available to certain individuals also differ, with those who are marginalised in society typically having fewer options than those who are not.

5. Conclusions

This literature review set out to research factors that influence the operation of careers education and guidance (CEG) programmes in schools in England, now and in the future. Its primary purpose is to provide the evidence base which will inform the development of a research protocol to be used in an in-depth study of CEG provision in Kent and Medway. The protocol will provide the framework through which researchers will examine provision in 15 schools in the region. It will be designed to scrutinise relevant aspects of CEG services currently in place, so that a better understanding can be developed of what further provision is desirable, feasible and possible.

Key conclusions from the review to inform these protocols are as follows:

It is necessary to understand the **legislative frameworks** in which Connexions and schools operate. Four relevant policy strands are evident: educational reform; the National skills agenda; curriculum reform for the 14-19 age group; and youth policy. In combination, this legislation prescribes how Connexions services operate and specifies their obligations to schools. It also provides insights to the requirements placed on schools to deliver CEG and co-operate with Connexions.

Detailed guidelines for the structure and content of CEG programmes in schools exist to help schools frame their CEG provision in a way that is relevant to their particular context.

A number of key variables for the successful delivery of CEG programmes in schools can be identified from the research which relate to the **organisation and management of relationships with schools.** These include:
- Clear knowledge and understanding of the social and structural conditions in the Partnership area.
- Investment in establishing and maintaining a robust, functional relationship between the schools and the Connexions partnership. (For example, Connexions partnerships need to understand the general orientation of the school, negotiate what is realistic and achievable; and (importantly) ensure delivery of services promised).

- Protocols and service agreements which are most likely to be effective when understood, valued and regularly reviewed by all parties. Partnership arrangements should clarify the PA role.
- Involvement of senior managers in schools in the partnership arrangements.

The **professional conduct of the Personal Adviser** in schools emerged as key to delivery of successful CEG programmes:

- The quality of relationships young people are able to establish with their Personal Advisers (PAs) are crucial. Relationships characterised by a high level of trust, and continuity, are most likely to result in positive outcomes for the young people.
- The extent to which the PA demonstrates commitment to the school and is flexible in their ways of working. For example, the willingness of Connexions PAs to adopt an advocacy role when necessary – so that provision can be negotiated that may not currently exist.

Support structures for PAs, which enable them to operate within schools on a day-to-day basis are also significant:

- Access given to Connexions services to relevant information, including pupil data, will be significant. The better the level of access, the better the quality of services delivered.
- Effective promotion of the service offered by Connexions. Do young people understand exactly what is on offer? A strong service branding that conveys an accurate message is desirable.
- Full integration of Connexions services within the life of the school is the ideal. Related to this is the extent to which PAs feel supported in challenging decisions within the partner relationship.
- Positive referrals from peers and/or adults to the Connexions PA are particularly powerful.
- Possible tensions between PAs offering a universal service and a holistic service need careful management.

Other factors contributing to the success of CEG programmes which emerged from the literature include:

- The recruitment, training and professional development of careers co-ordinators.
- The status (teachers or non-teachers) and commitment of career co-ordinators within schools is important. Additionally, the extent to which they may feel isolated from the mainstream activities.

- The language used around CEG provision, clarification of which may well be necessary to avoid misunderstanding and misinterpretation.
- The use of soft (e.g. developing self-confidence, etc.) as well as hard outcomes (e.g. placement into education, training or employment) in measuring the success of CEG programmes.
- Avoidance of the use of what may be construed, by the schools, as intrusive assessment procedures.
- Take up of Quality Awards for CEG.

The **changed and changing labour market** within which CEG is delivered and for which CEG is preparing young people needs to be fully understood. The extent to which labour market information (LMI) is available and (more importantly) the confidence with which PAs and/or career co-ordinators feel able to use LMI will be significant.

The extent to which CEG programmes are based on **frameworks for practice** is important (i.e. the extent to which they are evidence-based). A clear knowledge of the principles underpinning practice enhances the professional status of the subject within schools.

Knowledge of the factors that influence the **decision-making processes of young people** at different stages of their educational careers will assist staff in the effective execution of their professional roles. These include: family, peers; self-perception of ability; gender; ethnicity; social class; labour market conditions; educational institutions; and academic attainment.

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