RESEARCH PAPER

# Evidence and Impact: Careers and guidance-related interventions

## Introduction to an online Professional Resource

Dr. Deirdre Hughes and Geoff Gration
DMH Associates

DMH Associates

CfBT Education Trust

# Welcome to CfBT Education Trust

CfBT Education Trust is a leading charity providing education services for public benefit in the UK and internationally. Established 40 years ago, CfBT Education Trust now has an annual turnover exceeding £100 million and employs more than 2,000 staff worldwide who support educational reform, teach, advise, research and train.

Since we were founded, we have worked in more than 40 countries around the world. Our work involves teacher and leadership training, curriculum design and school improvement services. The majority of staff provide services direct to learners in schools or through projects for excluded pupils, in young offender institutions and in advice and guidance for young people.

We have worked successfully to implement reform programmes for governments throughout the world. Current examples include the UK Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) Programme for Gifted and Talented Education and a nationwide teacher training programme for the Malaysian Ministry of Education.

Other government clients include the Brunei Ministry of Education, the Abu Dhabi Education Council, aid donors such as the European Union (EU), the Department for International Development (DfID), the World Bank, national agencies such as the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), and local authorities.

Surpluses generated by our operations are reinvested in educational research and development. Our new research programme – Evidence for Education – will improve educational practice on the ground and widen access to research in the UK and overseas.

Visit **www.cfbt.com** for more information.

# Contents

# Acknowledgements

We are grateful to CfBT Education Trust for their commitment and financial investment in supporting the production of this online professional resource. The development project has also resulted in a published literature review of research on the impact of careers and guidance-related interventions as well as this synthesis paper. We are indebted to the CfBT Education Trust Research and Knowledge Management and Design teams for their helpfulness and expertise provided to us.

We also wish to express our sincere thanks to Connexions representatives, local authority managers and software developers who gave us both time and practical materials that have informed much of the content of this professional resource. In addition, we are indebted to young people in London and those who participated from further afield, as part of the National Youth Panel Forum, for their honesty and frankness. The Supporting Children and Young People Group within the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) at Moorfoot, Sheffield, provided invaluable support in reviewing earlier drafts.

Several people have contributed a great deal of feedback and suggestions to this professional resource, especially Simon Bysshe, Nikki Moore, Aminder Nijjar, Joanna van de Poll, Keith Stead and Professor Mark Savickas.

Finally, Professor Jenny Bimrose, Principal Research Fellow, Warwick University was commissioned by CfBT to act as peer reviewer of this professional resource and associated literature review. We are grateful to her for the constructive feedback received.

# About the Authors

**Deirdre Hughes** is the Founding Director of the International Centre for Guidance Studies (iCeGS) (1998–2008) and a University Reader in Guidance Studies. She is a Visiting Senior Associate at iCeGS and an Associate Fellow at the Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick. She completed a PhD on 'Building the UK Evidence-base for Careers Work' in 2008 and is currently writing a book on this subject.

**Geoff Gration** is a Senior Associate within DMH Associates. He has extensive experience of researching guidance policies and practices in a range of pre-16 and post-16 settings. He is a college governor and was previously Vice Principal of a large Further Education College in Derby. Geoff is also a Senior Associate at iCeGS.

**DMH Associates** was established in August 2008. This Derbyshire-based organisation works to strengthen the inter-connectivity between career guidance policy, research and practice. Its research, consultancy and evaluation activities seek to inform and support the design and development of effective local, regional, national and international careers and guidance-related policies and practices.

# Executive Summary

The aim of this report is to provide an introduction to a new online professional resource designed to make available international and national research evidence on the impact of careers and guidance-related interventions. The contents of this synthesis report offer powerful insights into key facts, impact statements, strategies, tools and tips that can be used as a basis for impact assessment and continuous development for organisations, managers and practitioners operating within a youth policy context. The full version of the CfBT Education Trust online professional resource is available via the educational evidence portal (eep): **http://www.eep.ac.uk/**

This synthesis report highlights the rationale and methodology which has informed the design and development of the *Evidence and Impact: careers and guidance-related interventions* online professional resource. The contents provide a brief overview of key issues and challenges involved in measuring and assessing the impact of careers and guidance-related interventions.

Current economic conditions place greater emphasis on individuals and organisations being accountable for expenditure and investment made in public services. Issues of accountability, added value and effectiveness are inextricably bound within both public and private sectors.

Improving young people's access to careers facilities and resources through face-to-face, internet and telephone helpline services delivered in a variety of accessible locations is viewed as a key priority by government policymakers in contributing to the UK's social and economic prosperity. The goal is to design services that reach ever-increasing numbers of people in a cost-effective and efficient way.

These issues and challenges necessitate new knowledge and skills development, not only for young people and parents/carers, but also for those working in local authorities, Connexions/ careers services, schools, colleges, and with employers and training providers. To support this process a summary of key concepts and terms used in impact assessment is provided. In addition, a discussion about the nature of evidence and its robustness and some of the challenges involved in the interpretation of findings from research are offered to inform policies and practices at a local, regional and national level. A number of key challenges are highlighted such as:

- Can the true impact of public policy initiatives ever be realistically measured given the complexity of human behaviour and the interaction of so many variables?
- If so, what measures should be used to avoid any unintended or 'perverse' consequences of introducing a target-driven culture?
- How should the data be collected and interpreted to avoid or minimise any bias from the researchers themselves and from the policymakers?

To help address these issues, examples are given of 'ten key facts that career specialists know for sure' that have emerged from an adaptation of earlier work published by Dr. Mark Savickas, Professor and Chair of the Behavioral Sciences Department, Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine, Rootstown, Ohio. Within the 'ten key facts' linkages are made, where appropriate, to national quality standards in England to feed into quality assurance and inspection processes. In addition, examples are also given of fifteen 'impact statements' that summarise what research evidence tells us about the benefits of careers and guidance-related services in language that is both effective (i.e. persuasive, relevant, 'to the point' and useful) and circumspect (i.e. accurately reflects the weight of evidence and does not 'under-sell' or 'over-sell' any benefits).

A key challenge for anyone seeking to measure and assess the impact of careers and guidance-related interventions is to find a *good starting point or platform* for development work. A series of strategies and tools used by a number of Connexions and careers companies to gather evidence and assess impact are presented in the form of case studies, supported by additional material

downloadable from the online version of the professional resource.

It is argued strongly that services need to become more sophisticated in their approach to gathering useful data on the impact of differing forms of interventions. A five-level evidence-base model is provided as a framework for locating and assessing differing types of research evidence. From this, opinion studies particularly in relation to the customer voice are powerful drivers for change; therefore it is recommended this should be harnessed fully *alongside* other research findings so that the quality and range of careers and guidance-related interventions can be used to good effect.

# 1. Introduction

*"The goal is to design services that reach ever-increasing numbers of people in a cost-effective and efficient way."*

Recent changes in the machinery of government are necessitating a major rethink in the strategic planning, funding and delivery of local services for *all* young people, adults, training providers and employers. Newly devolved arrangements from central to local government for the commissioning of 14–19 services, as outlined in the *Children's Plan*,[1] include requirements for a seamless universal and targeted support service with significantly improved career education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) in all schools and colleges.[2] It is within this context that integrated young support services in England will be expected by government to ensure the delivery of a new 14–19 entitlement for all young people as outlined in the government's report on *14–19 Reform: Next Steps* (DCSF, 2008).[3] Policy developments are unfolding at a rapid pace with new national information, advice and guidance quality standards and new legislation in place. Local authorities and their partner organisations are now required to give greater attention to the role of impartial careers education, information, advice and guidance.

The *Education and Skills Act* (2008) received royal assent in December 2008. The legislation specifies a rise in the participation age in young people's education and training from 16 to 17 by 2013 and from 17 to 18 by 2015. In the Government's 2009 Budget, an extra 54,500 places for 16 and 17 year olds in schools and colleges as well as 17,500 places allocated to expand 16–17 apprenticeships were announced. From this and other related developments, it is clear that services will become increasingly *accountable* for reporting on the *impact* of their services and provision. In this context, the Integrated Youth Support Service (IYSS) framework will be a major driver for change.

Given the raising of the compulsory participation age to 18[4] and the entitlement to access all four of the 14–19 qualification routes, including the 17 Diploma lines by 2013,[5] there is a renewed interest in Connexions and CEIAG outcomes and performance indicators i.e. the theory being that NEET (not in education, employment or training) figures at 16+ should 'technically reduce'; therefore new universal 'performance indicators' will be required to assess the impact of careers work in general.

Current economic conditions place greater emphasis on individuals and organisations being accountable for expenditure and investment made in public services. Issues of accountability, added value and effectiveness are inextricably bound within both public and private sector arenas. Improving young people's access to careers facilities and resources through face-to-face, internet and telephone helpline services delivered in a variety of accessible locations is viewed as a key priority by government policymakers in contributing to the UK's social and economic prosperity. The goal is to design services that reach ever-increasing numbers of people in a cost-effective and efficient way. This necessitates new knowledge and skills development, not only for young people and parents/carers, but also for those working in local authorities, schools, colleges, and with employers and training providers.

In October 2008, CfBT Education Trust commissioned DMH Associates to produce

[1] Department for Children, Schools and Families (2007). *The Children's Plan: Building brighter futures*. Norwich: The Stationery Office, December 2007.
[2] An 'end-to-end review' of careers education and guidance (DfES, 2005a) found that there was a significant problem over the priority given to careers education in schools, colleges and work-based training. It concluded that 'the greatest potential for improving careers education and guidance delivery lies in driving up the quality and relevance of careers education in schools'.
[3] Department for Children, Schools and Families (2008). *Delivering 14–19 Reform: Next Steps.* London: DCSF, October 2008.
[4] Op. cit.
[5] Department for Education and Skills (2005). *14–19 Education and Skills Implementation Plan*. Norwich: HMSO.

a professional resource designed to provide user-friendly and accessible research evidence on the impact of careers and guidance-related interventions. The development work offers powerful insights into key facts, impact statements, strategies, tools and tips that can be used as a basis for continuous development for organisations, managers and practitioners. Findings from consultations with various differing government agencies and provider organisations highlighted that the full version of this resource would be best made available online, rather than in hard copy format, via the educational evidence portal (eep): **http://www.eep.ac.uk/**

**Finding new ways of measuring and assessing the impact of careers and guidance-related interventions is a challenge which now needs to be met.**

# 2. Methodology

*"The literature review involved an extensive bibliographic search carried out through government department, university, research institution and professional association websites…"*

The development and production of the *Evidence and Impact: Careers and guidance-related interventions* online professional resource was carried out in terms of the following three phases:

- a literature review of published research into the impact of careers and guidance-related interventions to identify key findings and relevant material;
- fieldwork involving discussions with government agencies to identify emerging policy issues and visits to a variety of service providers to identify current impact assessment practices and gather relevant case study material; and
- the construction of the professional resource drawing upon findings from the literature review, the outcomes from the discussions with policymakers and service providers, and other additional relevant material.

The literature review involved an extensive bibliographic search carried out through government department, university, research institutions and professional association websites, particularly those most relevant to IYSS, CEIAG, Connexions and careers service departments. Bibliographies of the most relevant publications retrieved were also scanned for additional material. This process resulted in the identification of a total of 100+ sources which feature throughout the literature review, organised into the following five categories:

- Studies of factors influencing the decision making processes of young people's learning, attainment and progression
- Studies of information, advice and guidance services delivered remotely via the worldwide web and/or telephone helpline services
- Connexions user satisfaction surveys and related evaluations
- Studies of targeted support for young people, including those at risk of exclusion
- Other careers-related impact studies of generic relevance.

The fieldwork involving discussions with government agencies and visits to a variety of service providers resulted in the identification of current strategic issues and impact assessment practices currently in use. As a result of this, permission was granted to include within the online professional resource over 30 examples of instruments and approaches currently being used in differing Connexions services, local authorities, schools and colleges.

# 3. Evidence and Impact: key issues

*"There may be other benefits to customers that are not so easily quantifiable but are nevertheless just as valid and important."*

Much of the performance of IAG services is monitored in terms of targets that are often seen to be imposed 'top down' from policymakers and funding bodies, and are often restricted to those that are most easily observable and measurable such as volumes of delivery, qualification levels and employment statistics. There may be other benefits to customers that are not so easily quantifiable but are nevertheless just as valid and important. Indeed, it could be argued that measuring the impact of any public policy initiative is inherently problematic given the complexity of human behaviour and the difficulty in teasing out the many influences and factors involved.

The introduction of target-driven approaches to publicly funded services, in career guidance and in other areas such as health and the police, raises a number of challenges such as:

- Can the true impact of public policy initiatives ever be realistically measured given the complexity of human behaviour and the interaction of so many variables?
- If so, what measures should be used to avoid any unintended or 'perverse' consequences of introducing a target-driven culture?
- How should the data be collected and interpreted to avoid or minimise any bias from the researchers themselves and from the policymakers?

**The Connexions and careers guidance community is not alone in the difficult task of showing that it makes a difference; trying to quantify the impact of most public policy initiatives can be like searching for the 'holy grail'.**

**For example:**

- Keep (2004) specifically cautions that trying to relate education and training outputs (such as participation rates and qualification levels) to their impact on wider social and economic outcomes is fraught with difficulty. 'The linkages between levels of education and training within the workforce or sections thereof and subsequent performance at the level of the firm, sector or national economy are extremely complex and subject to intervention by a very wide range of other factors' (p.17).[6]

**Many Performance Indicators (PIs) focus upon that which can be easily measured, i.e. counting that which can be measured rather than measuring what counts.**

**For example:**

- The Higher Education Funding Council for England (CHERI, 2008) highlights some of the presentational and interpretative difficulties associated with the publication of HE institutional data in the form of five major league tables. These include the perceived tension between league table performance and institutional and governmental policies and concerns (e.g. on academic standards, widening participation, community engagement and the provision of socially-valued subjects).

**'Chasing targets' can sometimes have unintended, often self-defeating or 'perverse' consequences.**

**For example:**

- Levitt and Dubner (2005)[7] report on some of the more unusual aspects of economic policies and some of their unintended and occasional perverse consequences. 'For every clever person who goes to the trouble of creating an incentive scheme, there is an army of people, clever or otherwise, who will inevitably spend even more time trying to beat it.' (p.24) They quote an example in education where a culture of accountability is

[6] Keep, E. (2004). *The Multiple Dimensions of Performance: performance as defined by whom, measured in what ways, to what ends?* Nuffield Review Working Paper 23. Available from: **http://www.nuffield14–19review.org.uk/files/documents 29-1.pdf**

[7] Levitt, S.D. & Dubner, S.J. (2005). *Freakonomics*. London: Penguin Books.

> *"In theory there are many possible outcomes of CEIAG, some of which may be more realistically achieved and more easily demonstrable than others."*

based upon examination results. 'In a recent study of North Carolina school teachers, some 35% of the respondents said they had witnessed their colleagues cheating in some fashion, whether by giving students extra time, suggesting answers, or manually changing students' answers.' (p.34)

Further underpinning evidence is available through the online professional resource that can be accessed via the educational evidence portal (eep): **www.eep.ac.uk/**

## Hard versus soft outcomes

**3.1** The term 'outcome' is commonly used to describe the effect that a service has had, either on the individual customer, or on the wider community, or for the economy as a whole. In this sense, 'outcome' is frequently used to describe the 'impact' of a service. 'Hard outcomes' are those that can be easily seen and measured in terms of simple quantities. For example, in the case of a training provider this could include a given percentage increase in the number of trainees gaining a recognised qualification. In the case of Connexions services it would include a percentage reduction in 16–18 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET). 'Soft outcomes' are those that are more subjective, more qualitative and often not so easy to quantify. For example, they could include positive changes of a personal nature such as increased self-esteem, self-confidence, motivation, independence, or decreased aggression and a better ability to cope positively with stress.

Because of the need for government and funding bodies to demonstrate value for money and the impact of their social and economic policies, it is clear that they will continue to set targets for IAG services that focus upon the 'harder outcomes'. For example, the new *National Indicators for Local Authorities and Local Authority Partnerships*, introduced for use in 2008/2009, provide numerical targets for the performance of 14–19 local partnerships that include: Level 2 and Level 3 attainment at 19 years of age; participation of 17 year olds in education and training; and the proportion of 16–18 year olds who are NEET. Despite the current emphasis on these kind of targets, much of the available research evidence suggests that it is not always easy to demonstrate the impact of IAG in terms of the 'harder' outcomes, especially those related to longer-term labour market outcomes. This is partly because of the methodological challenges in carrying out the necessary research with members of the public, and partly because of the complex nature of human decision-making and the difficulties in teasing out the many different interacting influences and factors.

In theory there are many possible outcomes of CEIAG, some of which may be more realistically achieved and more easily demonstrable than others. The full range of possible outcomes can be listed in terms of those that might be observed at or soon after the intervention, and those that might only be observed in the longer term, some time later. Refer to: *The Economic Benefits of Guidance*, Centre for Guidance Studies (CeGS) research report (p.9).[8]

## Some common problems

**3.2** A common problem associated with evidence and the interpretation of evidence is when two things are seen to be associated together and it is assumed or implied that the relationship is a 'causal' one, that is to say that one thing had caused the other to happen.

A topical example of this can be seen in a recent television advertising campaign where it is stated that people who successfully quit smoking are more likely to have received support from the NHS with the implication that if a smoker were to receive help in this way, he or she too would be more likely to stop. This association may be factually correct but in terms of causality it is potentially misleading; it could well be that those individuals who are motivated enough to actively seek NHS support are already pre-disposed to quit and may well have done so even without this external support.

[8] Hughes, D., Bosley, S., Bowes, L. and Bysshe, S. (2002). *The Economic Benefits of Guidance*. Derby: Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby. p.9

One way of helping with this problem of interpretation is to rely upon studies that use 'counterfactuals'; that is to say, studies that try to demonstrate the effect of an intervention by making a comparison with a situation where the intervention did not take place (the counterfactual situation). 'Before and after' studies fall into this category. Alternatively, comparisons could be made against a 'population parameter'; for example, the mean duration of unemployment of individuals after they had sought career guidance could be compared with that of an equivalent sample of individuals who did not seek this kind of support. Counterfactuals can be made stronger by the use of 'control by calculation' where 'multivariate' statistical techniques control and reduce retrospectively, as it were, the differences between two comparison groups other than the most important difference that one received guidance and the other did not. The strongest counterfactuals are those provided, not by retrospective control by calculation, but by the 'classical experimental study' approach. Here, individuals are 'randomly assigned' by the researcher to two groups: a group where the individuals go on to receive the intervention (the so-called 'experimental' or 'treatment' group) and a group that does not receive the intervention (the 'placebo' or 'control' group).

A five level evidence-base model is outlined below:

| Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 | Level 4 | Level 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Opinion studies involving small-scale qualitative in-depth interviews or larger-scale quantitive surveys | Outcome measurement studies with no counterfactuals | Outcome measurement studies with weak counterfactuals | Outcome measurement studies with control by calculation | 'Classical' experimental studies |

# 4. Ten Key Facts Career Specialists 'Know for Sure'

*"Where 'career' was once thought of as a single commitment to a lifelong occupational pursuit, it is now thought of as a lifelong journey whereby individuals participate in differing learning and work roles."*

Too many young people fail to see the relevance of their studies to future work and life roles. Many do not know how to identify suitable employers who may need their unique talents nor how best to select a suitable institution or programme of study that can enhance their learning and personal development. In essence, far too many young people are marginalised, unemployed or underemployed. Conversely, employers have no efficient mechanism to identify future talent in their own community. They lament that school, college and higher education systems are not delivering students with the employability and self-management skills, character and attitude they need. Essentially, the process of matching talents to opportunities is a 'hit-and-miss affair', and there are vast economic, social and human consequences. Also, occupations used to be relatively stable over time; now, old occupations are disappearing, new ones are being invented at a rapid rate, and the work that is done within an occupational title may be considerably different from what it was a few years ago (Savickas, 2000). Where 'career' was once thought of as a single commitment to a lifelong occupational pursuit, it is now thought of as a lifelong journey whereby individuals participate in differing learning and work roles.

## International and national perspectives: key facts

**4.1** In May 1999, Dr. Mark Savickas, Professor and Chair of the Behavioral Sciences Department, Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine, Rootstown, Ohio, delivered a keynote presentation at a major International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy held in Ottowa, Canada. He identified from literature reviews and longitudinal studies '14 key facts that career specialists know for sure' and could assert in debates about *public policy regarding workforce development and career guidance*.[9] Savickas' earlier work was deemed relevant to current youth policy developments in England; therefore, international and national research findings were reviewed and adapted, where necessary, to relate specifically to *public policy developments in England regarding careers and guidance-related interventions*.[10] See Table 1.

| TABLE 1: Ten key facts that careers specialists 'know for sure' | |
|---|---|
| 1. | Childhood socialisation influences adult work performance and job satisfaction. |
| 2. | The transition from school to work can be smoothed. |
| 3. | Knowing how the world of work is organised eases vocational decision making and job transitions. |
| 4. | Individuals who have a high level of decision-making capability and a low level of life complexity generally experience less difficulty in making choices. |
| 5. | Career interventions support occupational choice and enhance transitions into learning and work. |
| 6. | Congruence between the worker and the job improves performance. |
| 7. | Workers can learn to cope more effectively with occupational stress. |
| 8. | Conflicts between career aspirations, work responsibilities and family obligations can cause personal tensions and can result in lower productivity in the workplace. |
| 9. | Occupational segregation and skill shortages are major inhibitors to individual and workforce development. |
| 10. | Part-time and temporary work affects the socialisation and development of adolescents. |

[9] Available from ASK iCeGS email: **icegsenquiry@derby.ac.uk**
[10] Further work is planned to expand the research and translate the findings into a wider UK context.

## Illustration of 'key facts' underpinned by research evidence

**4.2** For brevity, a 'taster' or 'example' of *key facts* from the listing is presented below, underpinned by the research evidence cited to support this assertion and linked to the relevant national quality standard(s). The underpinning evidence for all 'ten key facts careers specialists know for sure' is available online through the educational evidence portal (eep): **www.eep.ac.uk/**

For example see Table 2:

**TABLE 2: Key Fact 3 – Knowing how the world of work is organised eases vocational decision making and job transitions.**

**We know that when individuals face an initial occupational choice or change jobs it helps tremendously to have a compact view of the world of work.**

**We also know that vocational exploration and information-gathering increases self-knowledge and awareness of suitable educational and occupational options.**

When individuals face an initial occupational choice or change jobs, they often must choose from among lots of differing options. Savickas (1999)[11] highlights that one of the best ways to determine the realism of a specific career choice is to assess the amount and relevance of information that an individual has collected about that choice. In addition to encouraging exploratory experiences, public policies should continue to support occupational information delivery systems, especially those that use computer technology and the internet to widely distribute services and products.

Dawis (1996)[12] highlights that vocational psychology has shown that it helps tremendously to have 'a more compact view of the world of work at a more manageable level of abstraction'. Of course this view can be socio-economic in terms of pay and fringe benefits or functional in terms of tasks and work conditions. Career interventions can also smooth job transitions by helping job changers learn which jobs are easiest for them to move into and what specific skills they need to acquire.

Based on 40 years of research, Holland (1997)[13] has provided a compact view of the work world in terms of psychological attributes. He organised all jobs into a hexagonal model of the world of work. Because jobs are mapped using personality traits, it is easy for individuals to identify how their own personality traits relate to jobs. By organising occupational information and personality types using the same language, career development specialists ease decision making by teaching clients that the work world has a meaningful structure into which they must fit themselves. Knowing how environments are organised is a transferable skill that individuals can use to adapt to many diverse life situations.

Bimrose *et al.* (2008)[14] reported on findings from a five-year longitudinal study in England which involved tracking the career trajectories of 50 adults over a five-year period to evaluate the role of guidance in the process of career development and progression. The findings showed that whilst career trajectories often shift, reverse, and/or remain static, adults moving between and within education, training and paid employment generally seek to better understand how the world of work is organised through a range of differing approaches to career decision making. The idea of simply matching their personality and traits to jobs is a small part of the overall process. In most cases, adults apply a pragmatic approach to the realities of the labour market based on differing sources of information to form a compact view of the availability or otherwise of appropriate work opportunities.

[11] Savickas, M. (1999). Career Development and Public Policy: The Role of Values, Theory, and Research, *International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy: International Collaboration for National Action.* Ottawa, Canada, May 2–4, 1999.

[12] Dawis, R.V. (1996). Vocational psychology, vocational adjustment, and the workforce: Some familiar and unanticipated consequences. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 2, 229–248. In Savickas, M.L. (2000). *Career development and public policy: The role of values, theory, and research*. In B. Hiebert & L. Bezanson (Eds.), *Making waves: Career development and public policy*. Ottawa, Canada: Canadian Career Development Foundation.

[13] Holland, J.L. (1997). *Making vocational choices: A theory of vocational personalities and work environments*, 3rd edition. Odessa, FL: Psychological Assessment Resources.

[14] Bimrose, J., Barnes, S-A. & Hughes, D. (2008) *Adult Career Progression and Advancement: A Five-Year Study of the Effectiveness of Guidance*. Coventry: Warwick Institute for Employment Research, Warwick University.

### Relationship to National Quality Standards for Young People's Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)

Adopting a *compact view of the labour market, vocational exploration and information-gathering activities* demonstrates an individual or organisation is being mindful to support young people on their journey to make well-informed and realistic decisions about learning and work. This approach is compliant with the national quality standards for young people's IAG, in particular, quality standard (QS 3) – evidence indicator 3.1; quality standard (QS 4) – evidence indicator 4.3; quality standard (QS9) – evidence indicator 9.6. See Table 3.

### Relationship to the QCA Framework: Career, work-related learning and enterprise 11–19

The QCA Framework: *Career, work-related learning and enterprise 11–19: a framework for supporting economic well-being* (QCA, 2008) provides guidance on the provision of learning opportunities which help young people to develop a *compact view of the labour market, vocational exploration and information-gathering activities* and thus contribute to successful transitions. See Table 4.

**TABLE 3: Quality Standards**

| | |
|---|---|
| **QS 3:** | **Young people have the information they need to make well-informed and realistic decisions about learning and careers.** |
| **Evidence indicator 3.1**<br>High-quality up-to-date and impartial information about the full range of learning and career options; the progression opportunities that they lead to, including pathways to higher education; the labour market and opportunities within it (including pay rates across different sectors) community, voluntary and other developmental activities; financial support, including the range of support available to higher education students is provided in a range of formats reflecting the different ages, needs and abilities of young people. | |
| **QS 4:** | **Young people have the advice and guidance that they need to make well-informed and realistic decisions about learning and career options.** |
| **Evidence indicator 4.3**<br>Careers advice and guidance is always impartial (e.g. independent of the vested interests of the person/organisation providing the advice). It is based on a young person's needs and on up-to-date labour market information and intelligence about opportunities available locally, nationally and internationally. | |
| **QS 9:** | **Programmes of career and personal development for young people are planned and provided collaboratively.** |
| **Evidence indicator 9.6**<br>Learning providers and external information, advice and guidance providers have strong links with local employers and understand their needs. | |

**TABLE 4: Guidance on the provision of learning opportunities**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Element 1:** | Recognise, develop and apply skills for enterprise and employability. |
| **Element 3:** | Develop an awareness of the extent and diversity of opportunities in learning and work. |
| **Element 4:** | Use their experiences of the world of work to extend their understanding of careers and work. |
| **Element 5:** | Learn from contact with people who work. |
| **Element 6:** | Learn about how and why businesses operate. |
| **Element 7:** | Learn about working practices and environments. |
| **Element 8:** | Undertake tasks and activities set in work contexts. |

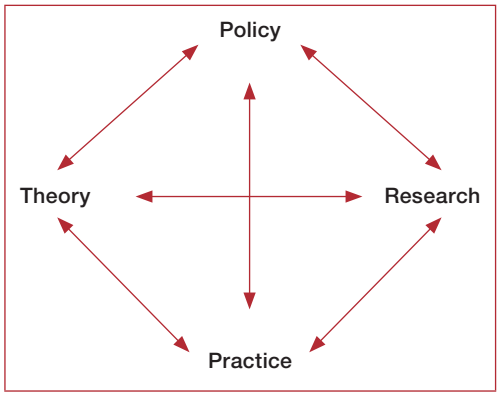
# 5. Impact Statements

*"…many of the managers and practitioners interviewed… indicated a desire to be able to say something about the impact of their work that could be expressed simply, and briefly…"*

**What can headlines in the media tell us about the current participation, attainment and progression issues?**

**Can research findings say something useful and memorable about the impact of careers and guidance-related services on participation, attainment and progression issues?**

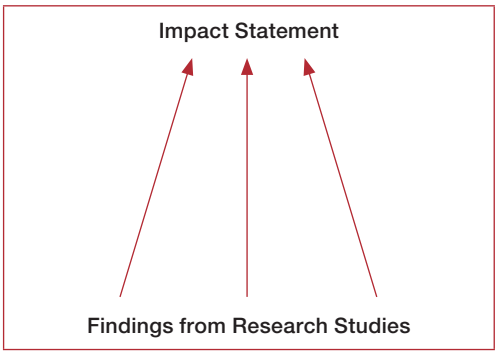
The inter-relationship between policy, research and practice is complex and dynamic and often subject to political bias, interpretation and other influences.




Headlines in the media about careers and guidance-related issues provide a 'window' that can help reveal the inter-relationship between government policies, research and practice, and help expose some of the political bias and other influences. Although most policy statements and assertions made through the media tend to be linked in some way to independent research findings, they are often subject to bias, which can be political, organisational and/or personal. It can be argued that no forms of human communication are free from bias of some sort or another, including research findings reported by 'independent researchers'.

## Impact and underlying issues

**5.1** Despite the many challenges and difficulties associated with measuring and assessing impact, many of the managers and practitioners interviewed in the development of this resource indicated a desire to be able to say something about the impact of their work that could be expressed simply, and briefly, whilst at the same time could be substantiated and underpinned by reliable research evidence. In response to this, a series of so-called '**impact statements**' have been drafted that attempt to summarise what research evidence tells us about the benefits of careers and guidance-related services in language that is both ***effective*** (i.e. persuasive, relevant, 'to the point' and useful) and ***circumspect*** (i.e. accurately reflects the weight of evidence and does not 'under-sell' or 'over-sell' any benefits).




The impact statements either directly say something about the impact of an aspect of careers and guidance-related interventions (as in '*Good careers education programmes have a significant and positive impact on the development of young people's career planning and decision-making skills*') or they say something significant about the underlying issues that need to be addressed to improve practice and effectiveness (as in '*The term NEET tells us only what young people are not; it tells us little about what they are and about their needs that should be addressed*').

The impact statements have been carefully drafted to try and reflect the availability and quality of the relevant research evidence in a way that takes into account the reliability of evidence. These impact statements are offered in the belief that they will be of interest and use to members of the careers and guidance community in articulating some of the benefits of the work they do and some of the underlying issues.

## The statements

**5.2** The impact statements are organised under the following three topic areas:

(i) Careers Education in Schools and Colleges;

(ii) Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET); and

(iii) Education, Employment or Training (EET). See Table 5 below.

| TABLE 5: The Impact Statements | |
|---|---|
| **Careers Education in Schools and Colleges** | |
| 1. | Young people with well-developed career-related skills are more likely to make successful transitions at age 16 than those with less well-developed skills. |
| 2. | Young people with clear career goals are more likely to out-perform those without clear goals in terms of educational attainment irrespective of the overall performance of the schools they attend. |
| 3. | Good careers education programmes have a significant and positive impact on the development of young people's career exploration and decision making skills. |
| 4. | Professional impartial careers education and guidance can help reduce course switching and drop-out from post-16 education. |
| 5. | A 'unique selling point' of specialist Careers Advisers working in schools and colleges is the reassurance that they provide young people and their parents with independent professional support and access to impartial information. |
| **Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)** | |
| 6. | The term NEET (not in education, employment or training) tells us only what these young people are not; it tells us little about what they are and about their needs that should be addressed. |
| 7. | NEET levels remain stubbornly high and resistant to change, and though there are regional differences the general buoyancy of the economy is probably the most significant factor affecting overall levels. |
| 8. | Many young people who are NEET feel alienated from formal education, and for participation and attainment to improve there is a need to develop more innovative and flexible ways of engaging young people in learning and employment. |
| 9. | At least ten critical success factors have been identified to help tackle NEET. |
| 10. | The cost of being long-term NEET is not only to the health and economic well-being of the individual but also to society in terms of increased social welfare expenditure and societal dysfunction. |
| **Education, Employment or Training (EET)** | |
| 11. | Careers guidance develops the skills, attitudes and motivation that enable people to progress to education, training and employment. |
| 12. | Unemployed people who get professional help and guidance in job search and job application skills move into employment more quickly than those who do not receive such support. |
| 13. | People who have received advice or guidance from professional sources are more likely to participate in learning than those who have not received such support. |
| 14. | Not only has the growth of online and telephone IAG services outstripped those provided by more traditional methods, it can also be of the same high quality, increasing self-confidence and leading to participation in learning and/or work. |
| 15. | The support from Connexions Personal Advisers increases the self-confidence of young people and can enable them to be more decisive and to do things they would not have otherwise considered. |

## Illustration of impact statements underpinned by research evidence

**5.3** For brevity, three of these impact statements are presented below (one from each of the three categories above) underpinned by the research evidence cited to support them. The underpinning evidence for all fifteen impact statements is available online through the educational evidence portal (eep).

### Example 1

**Young people with well-developed career-related skills are more likely to make successful transitions at age 16 than those with less well-developed skills.**

Research by Morris *et al.* (1999)[15] examined the impact of careers education and guidance provision on young people's transition post-16. A key finding was that young people with more highly developed career exploration skills were more positive and confident about the choices they made post-16 and were more likely to make a successful transition. 'The key factor that seemed to underpin successful transition at 16 was the level of young people's career exploration skills. Those who demonstrated such skills by the end of Year 11 were the least likely to have made significant changes to their courses, post-16. They were also more likely than other young people to have made a transition that indicated progression; that is, to be working towards a qualification at a higher level than that which they attained at GCSE.' (p.3)

Morris (2004)[16] explores findings from a number of large-scale research studies on careers education and guidance conducted over the previous decade on behalf of the DfES, its predecessor departments, and a number of different careers services. The author argues that it is possible to identify the skills that promote successful transition and to trace some of the links between successful transition and programmes of careers education and guidance. In particular, the importance of career exploration skills are highlighted: for example, the skills that young people need in order to use computerised databases, paper sources or people, to enable them to find out about their career options or the courses they needed to follow. 'As indicated among the survey cohorts, effective and successful transitions in which progression was evident were most apparent in young people with good careers exploration skills and a sound factual knowledge of the courses and routes open to them.' (p.4)

In their literature review of research into the career decision-making behaviour of young people, Bimrose *et al.* (2007)[17] highlight the importance of career exploration and other career-related skills in making successful transitions at 16. '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.' (p.iv)

[15] Morris, M., Golden, S. and Lines, A. (1999). *The Impact of Careers Education and Guidance on Transition at 16.* RD21. Sheffield: DfEE.
[16] Morris, M. (2004). *The Case for Careers Education and Guidance for 14–19 Year Olds.* Slough: NFER. **http://www.nfer.co.uk/publications/other-publications/downloadable-reports/pdf_docs/MM483.pdf** [Accessed 15 January 2009]
[17] Bimrose, J., Barnes, S-A. and Marris, L. (2007). *Establishing World Class Careers Education and Guidance in Kent and Medway: A literature review.* Coventry: Warwick Institute for Employment Research. Available from: **http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/people/jbimrose/cxs_km_literature_review_final_25.07.07.pdf** [Accessed 12 November 2008]

**Example 2**

**The term NEET (not in education, employment or training) tells us only what these young people are not; it tells us little about what they are and about their needs that should be addressed.**

The Nuffield Review/Rathbone (2008)[18] report highlights the need for a more sophisticated understanding of the characteristics of those who are NEET. Not all are from a low socio-economic background; some are middle-class young people who have 'opted out' for various reasons. Many have little affinity with their community, some look to gangs for a sense of belonging and many struggle with multiple disadvantage but they often have aspirations even if they don't know how best to achieve them: *'want to have a job and nice family; don't want to be living in this hole'* (p.32). The Review also calls for a classification system that includes, in addition to the familiar 'long-term NEET' and 'transitional NEET', a further category for which no figures are available, namely that of 'prospective NEET' (i.e. those young people currently registered at school who are at risk of becoming disengaged).

Bysshe *et al.* (2008)[19] indicate it is clear too from the literature that the term NEET itself (as is currently being highlighted by the Nuffield Review of 14–19), although a well used piece of 'policy shorthand, tells us only what *young people are not*, rather than *what they are*. The review of research would suggest that the group are far from homogeneous and, as DfES have indicated, do not have many common characteristics. Previous research would indicate that individuals in the group range from those who are simply 'misplaced', following a 'false start', to those who are suffering from multiple disadvantage who are likely (without ongoing support) to be at risk of ongoing social exclusion.' (p.16)

The National Foundation for Educational Research (2009)[20] literature review for the DCSF explores the key characteristics of young people who are NEET. The underlying research suggests that: 'Two-fifths of young people who are NEET are generally positive about learning and are very likely to participate in education and training in the short term. A similar proportion face a lot of personal and structural barriers, and are likely to remain NEET in the medium term. A fifth was classified as 'undecided-NEET' – they do not face significant personal barriers to participating in education or training, but are dissatisfied with the available opportunities'. (p1). A key conclusion of NFER's research was that young people who become NEET need: 'Better information, advice and guidance pre-16, and more information about the range of options available to them, to ensure that they make a more appropriate choice at 16'. (p.6)[21]

[18] Nuffield Review/Rathbone (2008). *Rathbone/Nuffield Review Engaging Youth Enquiry: Final consultation report*. Oxford: The Nuffield Review of 14–19 Education and Training. Available from: **http://www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/files/documents196-1.pdf** [Accessed 17 November 2008]
[19] Bysshe, S. & Berry-Lound, D. (2008). *Work in Progress: A Review of Best Practice in Tackling NEETs*. Coventry: LSC.
[20] Department for Children, Schools and Families (2009). *Increasing Participation: understanding young people who do not participate in education and training at 16 and 17.* (DCSF Research Report No. DCSF-RR072).
[21] Op.cit. p.6.

**Example 3**

**Careers guidance develops the skills, attitudes and motivation that enable people to progress to education, training and employment.**

In their review of research, Killeen & Kidd (1991)[22] identify 17 studies that report gains on one or more measures of precursors to and correlates of rational decision-making and implementation; eight studies report gains in decision-making skills; 12 studies report gains in self-awareness; 13 studies report gains in opportunity awareness (and information search); ten studies report gains in certainty or decisiveness; and four studies report gains in transition skills. Only four studies report no gains, and a further ten report null results in addition to significant gains.

The majority of individuals receiving support from 'Scottish All Age Guidance Projects'[23] reported that Careers Scotland advisers had influenced their career plans and felt that they now had more confidence to make career development decisions. The majority of clients believed that the support had provided a significant enhancement to their career prospects. Where clients had moved from unemployment to a job, or had changed jobs, 66% overall thought that career guidance had been of some influence.

In a follow-up of adults who had received guidance from Careers Wales,[24] as well as reporting the help they received in finding employment or training, respondents also reported 'softer' outcomes, reflecting the added value of guidance in terms of confidence, encouragement, sense of purpose, and greater focus.

From a large-scale national survey of adults of working age who received information and advice services (IA),[25] it was found that the most immediate benefits of receiving IA take the form of helping users find and make best use of relevant information (79% of respondents) and increasing their awareness of learning and job opportunities most relevant to them (72% of respondents). Increasing an individual's self-confidence was identified by 68% of respondents which is 18 percentage points greater than the equivalent 2006 survey.

A study of over 4,000 adults[26] known to have received publicly funded information, advice and guidance (IAG) services found that in-depth support (advice and/or guidance) is positively associated with three attitudinal work related outcomes: satisfaction with current job; confidence in gaining desired job; and increases in confidence over time.

[22] Killeen, J. and Kidd, J.M. (1991). *Learning Outcomes of Guidance: a Review of Research.* Research Paper No. 85. Sheffield: Employment Department.

[23] SQW with TNS (2005). *Evaluation of the All Age Guidance Projects.* Edinburgh: Scottish Executive Social Research, Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning Department. Available from: **http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/37428/0009701.pdf** [Accessed 11 November 2008]

[24] Reed, K., Mahony, K. and Gration, G. (2005). *Career Guidance for Adults in Wales: Making a Difference.* CeGS Occasional Paper. Derby: Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby. Available from: **http://www.derby.ac.uk/files/icegs__career_guidance_for_adults_in_wales_making_a_difference.pdf** [Accessed 14 November 2008]

[25] Milburn Trinnaman LaCourt (2008). *The Impact of nextstep Adult Information and Advice Services: National Analysis 2007*. Coventry: Learning and Skills Council. Available from: **http://www.nextstepstakeholder.co.uk/NR/rdonlyres/1BC48256-952A-4344-A483-8DC39B7033E7/0/LSC_IAimpact0708National07May08.pdf** [Accessed 25 November 2008]

[26] Pollard, M., Tyers, C., Tuohy, S. and Cowling, M. (2007). *Assessing the Net Added Value of Adult Advice and Guidance* DfES Research Report. RR825A. London: DfES. Available from: **http://www.employment-studies.co.uk/pdflibrary/rr825a.pdf** [Accessed 19 November 2008]

# 6. Strategies, Tools and 'Tips' for Measuring and Assessing Impact

*"In total, the resource provides over 30 examples of instruments and approaches currently being used in differing Connexions services, local authorities, schools and colleges."*

The online professional resource offers additional information on strategies, tools and 'tips' for measuring and assessing the impact of careers and guidance-related interventions in England. In total, it provides over 30 examples of *instruments and approaches* currently being used in differing Connexions services, local authorities, schools and colleges. Some of these examples are summarised below.

## Soft outcomes – a hard call?

**6.1** Within the context of CEIAG, soft outcomes, such as increased self-esteem, self-confidence, motivation and independence, are considered important because they can be seen as intermediary and necessary stages (or 'precursors') towards achieving a longer-term, harder outcome, such as gaining employment after a significantly long period of unemployment. Though important, soft outcomes can prove difficult to quantify because of their subjective nature – hence a 'hard call'. A technique often used to quantify soft outcomes is to assess an individual on at least two separate occasions, typically before and after intervention, to see what progress has been made, the so-called 'distance travelled'.

Within many sectors, in education, guidance, counselling, and the voluntary and community sector, a variety of systems and techniques have been developed to measure soft outcomes. When guidance practitioners are asked about approaches used to measure and assess a client's state of readiness for IYSS interventions in a general sense, the most commonly cited example of an intensive support approach is the Common Assessment Framework (CAF). This, and several other soft outcomes assessment approaches that have actual or potential application within the context of careers guidance and related interventions, are presented as case studies in the full online version of the professional resource. The case studies include:

- The Common Assessment Framework (CAF)
- The Rickter Scale
- The SOUL Record
- Dare to Ask?

## Strategic approaches to gathering evidence and reporting on impact

**6.2** A key challenge for anyone seeking to measure and assess the impact of careers and guidance-related interventions is to find a *good starting point or platform* for development work. The strategies and tools used by a number of Connexions and careers companies to gather evidence and assess impact are presented in the form of case studies, supported by additional material downloadable from the online version of the professional resource.

The following examples of *strategic* approaches adopted by some Connexions services and their partner organisations help illustrate key anchor points for their work, namely, activities based on a:

- *drivers for change model* embedded within a fully integrated company impact performance strategy;
- *quality assurance management model* rooted in impact assessment and/or supported by differing quality assurance frameworks;
- *destinations and client caseload information system (CCIS)* management model linked to reporting on client progress – including NEET performance and other KPIs; and
- *customer voice model* designed to involve young people in the design of services and/or in sharing their learning journeys.

The four models or approaches mentioned above are not mutually exclusive.

For brevity, a sample of these case studies is included below to highlight some *strategic* approaches to impact assessment. In each case further details, including the downloadable additional material, can be accessed via the online version of this resource.

### Case Study 1: A drivers for change model

Through the EFQM model, Careers South West (formerly Connexions Cornwall and Devon) has used a series of performance driver questionnaires as part of its annual self-assessment and planning process. By using these 'Drivers' they are able to get constant feedback on the services they are delivering, from key customers such as young people, parents/guardians/carers, employers and employees.

### Case Study 2: A quality assurance management model

Connexions Nottinghamshire has introduced a quality assurance 'Impact Assessment Framework (IAF)' which forms part of their *overall performance management strategy* to ensure that:

- standards are set for one-to-one and group work interventions undertaken by Connexions Advisers;
- managers gain information on how effectively their staff are working with young people and relevant partner agencies to achieve the company targets. This includes making best use of resources i.e. staff time;
- contract requirements are met which require the practice of Connexions Advisers to be assessed as competent;
- continuous quality improvement is promoted by managers identifying with staff where they may need further training and development opportunities to enhance their skills; and
- staff have the opportunity to reflect on and develop their practice with young people and partner agencies.

### Case Study 3: A quality assurance management model

Aspire-I (formerly Careers Bradford Ltd) has developed impact measures related to quality improvement and self-assessment which forms part of their *overall performance management strategy*. This complements key performance indicators (KPIs) and use of a balanced score card to help assess organisational performance, monitoring and improvement.

The report *Maximising Potential, Improving Lives* illustrates how some of the data is presented to external funders and local partners, including parents/carers and young people.

### Case Study 4: A quality assurance management model

Connexions Cheshire and Warrington has developed a schools matrix management information tool which forms part of its *overall performance management strategy.* This is used by the Chief Executive and his management team to provide rich data on inputs, throughputs and outputs relating to overall performance in a particular geographical area.

By using an Excel spreadsheet, information is stored for systematic review and analysis to inform strategic discussions and formal presentations on the Connexions services' added-value contribution to local youth support service developments and achievements. The information is also used regularly within and across the company to negotiate and agree the appropriate allocation of resources.

### Case Study 5: A destinations and client caseload information system (CCIS) management model

Connexions Central London has developed systems and procedures for gathering destinations and client caseload information which forms part of its *overall performance management strategy*. They are working towards delivering a common application process with direct read-across to 14–19 Area Prospectuses. Preliminary discussions are under way for scoping the potential for better data exchange linking *Choice*, the *London Schools Admissions System* and the *Connexions Client Caseload Information System* (CCIS). At this stage information systems are being tested in terms of their potential connectivity with one another to improve the quality and range of data on young people's learning and career trajectories.

An example of a *Central London Connexions quarterly report* demonstrates the multi-faceted nature of its impact monitoring and reporting approach. Outside of London and the surrounding area, it is interesting to note that different Connexions services report on their destination data in many differing ways. Aspire-I (formerly Careers Bradford Ltd) provides an example of a strategic 'macro report' summarising *school-leaver destinations in Bradford and the surrounding district.*

### Case Study 6: A customer voice model

Connexions Coventry and Warwickshire has embedded within its *overall performance management strategy* plans for involving young people in the design of local services and mechanisms for gathering data on young people's learning journeys, including the use of a *common application process* so that every young person has an opportunity to register his or her interest in taking up education and labour market opportunities.

## Operational approaches to gathering evidence and reporting on impact

**6.3** Within the online professional resource, ten examples of specific impact assessment activities and reports are presented. These are drawn typically from *managers and practitioners*, through their work with young people, parents/carers, schools and college leaders and staff, including governors, and other 14–19 partners. A selection of these examples are briefly summarised below. *In each case further details, including the downloadable additional material, can be accessed online via the eep website.* **http://www.eep.ac.uk/**

- *Annual Review School and Connexions Partnership Agreement (Sept 2007 – July 2008)* – Careers South West (formerly Connexions Cornwall and Devon)
- *Year 11 Activity Survey 2007 Connexions Report for School Governors* – Connexions Coventry and Warwickshire
- *Evaluation of Careers Interviews in School – 2007/2008 Survey template and Annual Report* – Connexions West London
- *Designed symbols for customers to record feedback on careers and guidance-related interventions and template for evaluation of group work sessions* – Connexions Coventry and Warwickshire
- *'Tell us what U think' – Customer survey template* – Connexions Cheshire and Warrington
- *Year 11 survey – Student questionnaire template* – Aspire-I (formerly Careers Bradford Ltd).

## Young people's voices

**6.4** At its simplest level, the customer voice approach in the Integrated Youth Support Service (IYSS) is mainly about involving young people, parents/carers, employers and training providers. Capturing the 'customer voice' is crucial in terms of gaining a better understanding of what constitutes effective careers and guidance-related services. Findings from a recent literature review highlight a paucity of research that specifically relates to the customer voice. Yet, how can services ensure they are accessible and meaningful to differing client groups in the absence of robust research and evaluation?

Here are some examples of a few young people's perceptions of careers and guidance-related interventions. The quotes (see Tables 6 and 7 on page 24) are taken from some ongoing research in the London area designed to find out how young people measure and assess the impact of careers work and findings from the National Youth Panel. Six themes emerged as a reminder of young people's general expectations:

1. For advisers to be in school more often
2. Finding out more about job opportunities
3. Making more explicit routes and pathways for learning and work
4. Having better access to work experience and/or career exploration activities (in some cases, with money)
5. Finding more part-time work opportunities
6. Better access to services at a time and place relevant to their needs.

**TABLE 6: What criteria do young people tend to use to rate the quality and effectiveness of careers and guidance-related interventions?**

Often, the basic criteria translates into:

**Q.** Did they enjoy the session(s) and how did this help them?

**Q.** Did it seem relevant to their circumstances, interests and future goals?

**Q.** Did it help improve their confidence and self-esteem?

**Q.** Did the adviser/teacher follow through and action what was promised?

**Given individuals, schools and colleges differ, the above criteria can be used as a 'general rule of thumb' to start the process of rating customers' perceptions of quality and effectiveness.**

**TABLE 7: A few examples of young people's thoughts and ideas of careers and guidance-related interventions**

*'We would like information on activities we could take part in from Year 9 which would count towards UCAS points.'* **(Female, Year 10)**

*'Work experience briefing at the end of Year 10 would be useful.'* **(Female, Year 10)**

*'Discussions were more fun than worksheets and work books.'* **(Male, aged 17)**

*'Information on Year 11 options and more detailed information on A Level subjects that were new to us would be helpful e.g. psychology.'* **(Female, Year 11)**

*'My Choice London helped – but need a person too.'* **(Male, sixth form)**

*'Some worksheets and work books are pointless – easy to do and learnt nothing I can remember.'* **(Female, Year 9)**

# 7. Conclusions

It is argued strongly that services need to become more sophisticated in their approach to gathering useful data on the impact of differing forms of interventions. The customer voice is a powerful driver for change; therefore we recommend this is harnessed fully alongside other research findings so that the quality and range of careers and guidance-related interventions can be used to good effect.

**A final thought…**

Sir John Sulston, the Nobel Prize Winning Scientist who decoded the human genetic sequence stated:

> *'To find out you must be obsessed with knowing a part; to understand you must see the whole.'*
>
> (Sulston, 2002)

Learning more about a part of the careers and guidance-related interventions is a good start on the journey to understanding more about Integrated Youth Support Services (IYSS) – we hope you uncover some hidden gems along the way!

CfBT Education Trust


CfBT Education Trust
60 Queens Road
Reading
Berkshire
RG1 4BS

0118 902 1000
**www.cfbt.com**

PMS 4922 07/09 ISBN 978-0-86160-079-3