

Careers Education in Schools in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland - a briefing

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- This briefing:
- provides an overview of the current position in each country
 - makes a comparative analysis of the five approaches
 - reports the recommendations of the national working groups about further action and the shared recommendations of all five countries.

This chart presents a generalised picture: behind each statement is a range of practice.

	England	Northern Ireland	Republic of Ireland	Scotland	Wales
Statutory position	A programme of careers education compulsory in maintained schools for 13-16 year olds (Education Act, 1997).	One of six compulsory cross-curricular themes for 11-16 year olds (Educational Reform [NI] Order, 1989).	Guidance must be provided in second-level schools (Education Act, 1998). Expectation that this may include classroom guidance activities.	National Curriculum and PSE (including career education) recommended but not compulsory.	A programme of careers education compulsory in maintained schools for 13-16 year olds (Education Act 1997) and extended to 16-19 year olds in September 2001.
Curriculum guidance (non-statutory) learning outcomes based	National specification (framework) document due in 2002.	No national framework but guidance available in various national and local documents, e.g. on personal career planning (NICCEA, 1996).	Support materials published by the National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE). Software funded by DES (Qualifax), Career Directions (Gairm) and Careers World.	National framework for career education 3-18 (2001). Career education and guidance made an entitlement as part of Higher Still (1995).	National framework for CEG (ACCAC, 2001) to be implemented from September 2002. Also included in PSE KS1-4 and WRE 14-19 Frameworks (ACCAC, 2000).
Curriculum organisation	Mainly within PSHE, tutorial work and pastoral care. Some work-related aspects through timetable suspension, e.g. work experience. Limited provision through other subjects.	Mainly within subject schemes of work, at least on paper.	Guidance modules are included on the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA), Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and Transition Year Programme (TYP).	Mainly within PSE. Very few schools offer cross-curricular careers work.	Mainly within PSE and as part of pastoral/tutorial programme. Timetable suspended for activities such as work experience.
Resources, including ICT	Schools required to provide careers information (Education Act 1997). Connexions encourages the development and maintenance of careers/Connexions libraries in schools. National support programme for careers education being implemented – includes a website for careers teachers.	Northern Ireland Business Education Partnership co-ordinates links with business.	Every guidance counsellor in non-fee-paying schools has been given a computer with internet access to promote the use of ICT in careers information, guidance and counselling, including programs such as Qualifax and Careers Directions. More resources in Irish language needed.	Learning and Teaching Scotland and Careers Scotland will have joint role in the production of support materials for career education.	Careers library initiative funding. Careers Wales On Line under development – a bilingual interactive information, advice & guidance service. Provision of bilingual materials, although more resources in Welsh language needed.
Main specialist	Careers Co-ordinator (not compulsory to have such a post). Usually have little time out of the classroom to develop the role or the programme.	Most schools have a Careers Co-ordinator with a reduced teaching timetable.	Guidance Counsellor (qualified teacher). Government applies a formula, one guidance counsellor for every 500 students, approximately. (Evidence of under-utilisation of the guidance allocation). Recently additional posts have been allocated to 103 schools under the Guidance Enhancement Initiative.	Normally a Principal Teacher of Guidance with responsibility for co-ordinating career education (involves links with the careers service).	Careers Co-ordinator who is responsible for the management and delivery of careers education and guidance in the school.

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	England	Northern Ireland	Republic of Ireland	Scotland	Wales
Staffing organisation	Senior manager with overall responsibility. Delivery often by non-specialists (e.g. tutors). Some schools create a specialist team to teach PSHE and careers education.	Subject teachers have a role in the delivery of cross-curricular careers education.	Guidance Counsellors provide classroom guidance activities and group and one-to-one guidance and counselling dealing with personal, social, educational and career issues.	Senior manager with overall responsibility. Career education elements of PSE commonly delivered and managed as part of the guidance provision by guidance teachers and non-specialists (volunteer and non-volunteer).	Usually a senior manager with overall responsibility for PSE/ careers education and guidance/ pastoral work. Teachers involved can include specialist careers teachers, members of PSE team and form tutors.
Professional development	Funding for INSET channelled through Connexions/Careers Services. Range of certificates and diplomas in careers education and guidance available at post-experience and post-graduate level. Over a third of careers teachers have a qualification.	Short courses provided by Education and Library Board (ELB) careers education and guidance advisers. Both universities offer qualifications for careers teachers. About one-third of careers teachers do not have a qualification.	A teaching qualification and a post-graduate qualification in guidance mandatory for Guidance Counsellors. DES funds INSET for IGC members. Education centres also provide INSET. NCGE also supports the in-career development of guidance counsellors.	Small numbers hold the post-graduate qualification in careers education from the University of Strathclyde. Not all Post-graduate Certificate in Guidance courses have a module on career education.	Training for teachers provided by Careers Wales companies. GEST funding from LEAs. Accreditation – post-graduate certificates/diplomas/MA available. Current development establishing closer links between CWQA and Cert./Dip./MA course at the University of Glamorgan.
Professional associations	National Association of Careers and Guidance Teachers (www.nacgt.org.uk)	Northern Ireland Schools' Careers Association	Institute of Guidance Counsellors (www.igc-edu.ie)	Scottish Guidance Association	National Association of Careers and Guidance Teachers (www.nacgt.org.uk)
Guidance services	47 Connexions partnerships by 2003 providing guidance for 13-19 year olds (approximately 70% of existing careers companies will work for Connexions under contract; the rest will be subsumed). Careers guidance, support for careers education and other support negotiated through a Partnership Agreement.	Training and Employment Agency. Some staff shortages and high turnover. Service level agreement with each school.	None external to school.	Careers Scotland has been formed as a single organisation from the careers service companies, EBPs, adult guidance networks and lifelong learning partnerships (April 2002). Will offer all-age career guidance.	Careers Wales set up in April 2001 (seven companies – single branding). Offers all-age guidance. Responsible for careers services to schools and colleges, education-business links, Youth Gateway and information and advice to adults.
Quality assurance	Over 30 local quality standards and awards, e.g. Investor in Careers.	Self-evaluation encouraged through Evaluating a Careers Programme (ETI, 1996).	Through Guidance Inspectorate and revised Guidelines.	'How good is our school...?' is a national model for school self-evaluation. A publication in this series to support the new framework is now needed.	Careers Wales Quality Award: CEG (February 2002).
Inspection	Local education authority inspectors for careers education in some areas. Few HMI and Ofsted inspectors with careers education as a specialism. Patchy treatment of careers education in standard school inspections. Best evidence comes from surveys, e.g. 1998. Guidance for inspectors on how to inspect careers education due in 2002. Area-wide inspections of Post-16 learning report on the quality of CEG for transition into Post-16 provision. Ofsted inspects Connexions partnerships on a four-yearly cycle.	An adviser for careers education in each of the five regional ELBs. Joint DENI/T&EA review of careers guidance (1995). <i>Report of a Survey of Careers Education in Post-Primary Schools (ETI, 2000)</i> .	Two inspectors with practitioner backgrounds recently appointed to the restructured guidance and counselling inspectorate. The allocation of guidance hours will be monitored for compliance.	HMI published a report on guidance in 1996 and on Education for Work in 2000. HMI Care and Welfare inspections include evaluation of quality of learning and teaching in personal and social education.	Estyn reports on the effectiveness of careers education and guidance provided by schools (6-yearly cycle) and careers services (3'-yearly cycle). Estyn also undertakes periodic thematic inspections of CEG and an annual thematic inspection of guidance services.

A comparative analysis of careers education in the five countries

This section of the Briefing highlights areas of common interest and concern among the five countries.

Policy development

The similarities and differences between the career education systems of the five countries are the result of a kaleidoscopic pattern of traditions and influences. All the home countries, for example, have adopted a guidance model common in Europe, but in the Republic of Ireland the American personal counselling model remains a strong influence. Scotland's holistic approach to personal, educational and career development is closest to that of the Republic of Ireland although the latter operates a school-based guidance system whereas Scotland has a separate careers guidance service in addition to school-based guidance staff. The growing demands on school-based guidance staff in the Republic of Ireland and Scotland have opened the debate on whether or not these roles can continue to be combined with other teaching duties. England (now changing), Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales have external careers guidance services which work closely with schools. The main link in England, Northern Ireland and Wales is through a careers teacher, often with limited time to do the work, who specialises in this aspect of personal development and supports staff in their wider pastoral and subject roles. The replacement of careers services by Connexions services in England is beginning to encourage a more holistic approach to personal development and a re-think of staff roles, relationships and responsibilities.

Devolution is having a considerable impact on policy developments in careers education. Neither Scotland nor Wales has followed England's approach to re-structuring its guidance services for 13-19 year olds, although both countries have adopted a quasi-Connexions social inclusion agenda. Devolution in Wales especially has provided the impetus for an exciting range of initiatives in careers education, helped by the fact that the policy chain is now shorter which makes it easier for those involved in careers work to gain access to decision-makers and gives them a greater sense of ownership of the new policies.

In all five countries the dynamic for change in the careers education system is strong and is accompanied mostly by feelings of optimism and confidence. However, it is often the case that careers education and guidance is initially sidelined or overlooked in policy initiatives which have a careers-related dimension, such as Connexions in England, the 'Education for Work' initiative in Scotland and the 'Employability and Enterprise' initiative in Northern Ireland. This suggests that the potential scope and value of careers education and guidance in schools is still not widely understood and that more needs to be done by careers professionals to promote the benefits of careers education to a wider audience.

Curriculum development

All five countries are at different stages in changing the focus of their careers education provision from an emphasis on punctuated inputs at key decision and transition points to an emphasis on continuous and progressive programmes to equip young people for lifelong learning, employability and career development. Scotland, for example, has symbolised this change by referring to 'career education' rather than 'careers education' and by publishing a framework for 3-18 year olds which acknowledges the need for earlier inputs on key issues such as counter-stereotyping.

Three countries have now identified desirable learning outcomes from careers education based on age-related expectations. Learning outcomes help to clarify the intended benefits of planned careers activities, although it is important that schools do not overlook students' informal and out-of-school learning experiences. All five countries have reservations about extending the assessment and accreditation of students' career learning, although some qualifications exist such as non-GCSE certificates in England, a modular GCSE course in Northern Ireland and SQA modules in Scotland.

Changing views about the role of careers education are reflected in the ambivalence and uncertainty regarding its positioning and location in the curriculum. There are two dimensions to the question of where careers education fits. Firstly, should careers education be designated a separate 'subject', perhaps linked with other aspects of personal development, or should it be an integral part of each subject? The danger with the former view is that opportunities to link learning in subject areas to careers education become limited, while the latter view can result in what in theory should be 'through the curriculum' becomes 'lost in the curriculum'. Secondly, should careers education be part of personal and social education or should it be part of work-related learning? In practice, it needs to be seen as linked to both but not fall between the two.

All countries share a common concern that the range of teaching and learning methods is too narrow and that differentiation strategies are not sufficiently well-developed, especially for gifted and talented students and those on post-16 courses. There are no official recommendations for how much time should be allocated on the timetable for careers education.

All countries recognise a tension between making careers education guidelines prescriptive and giving schools flexibility and autonomy over the design of programmes. Flexible guidelines allow schools to be more responsive to individual and local needs but may result in careers education being squeezed by competing priorities. Prescription of a 'core' can result in the minimum provision becoming the maximum.

Professional development

Awareness-raising and preparation in initial teacher training for staff to undertake specialist as well as non-specialist roles in careers education is less than satisfactory in all five countries. The situation is little better during the induction and early phases of new teachers' careers. Such is the grip of subject-based training that subject specialists are often under-prepared to take on pastoral care and support roles.

The training deficit is particularly acute for those in careers education specialist roles where there is no requirement to hold or work towards a qualification in careers education and guidance. Some of the home countries are keen to pursue the idea of establishing national frameworks for the continuing professional development of teachers involved in careers education. The situation in Scotland is currently unclear, given a lack of direction on the future arrangements for guidance within the re-organisation of school staffing structures proposed in the McCrone report.

As the workload for practitioners continues to grow in careers education and guidance, there are debates, for example in Scotland and the Republic of Ireland, about the pros and cons of having full-time specialists in guidance. In all of the countries, a live issue is how to achieve effective teams in schools that bring together all those with responsibilities for the personal, social and career development of young people.

Development of quality and standards

An effective system for careers education requires a way of measuring the impact of new policies, curriculum developments, INSET activities and the allocation and deployment of resources. The five countries approach this through a mixture of school self-evaluation and external inspection. Inspection survey reports are often used to encourage school self-review - for example, *Evaluating a Careers Programme* (DENI, 1996).

England and Wales have gone furthest in developing quality awards for careers education and guidance, but other home countries are also interested in this approach. An all-Wales quality award was launched in February 2002.

The effectiveness of leadership and support for the development of quality and higher standards in careers education is variable between the five countries. However, channelling support for the development of careers education through the reformed careers services in Scotland and Wales has started to promote consistency and improvement. Careers Scotland, for example, has appointed a development officer for the curriculum, including career education. Considerable support for careers education is provided through the careers services in England and it is expected that this will continue under Connexions. In Northern Ireland support is provided by advisers in the five Education and Library Boards.

The capacity of inspection agencies to evaluate the effectiveness of careers education has recently been strengthened in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

Professional associations (see chart) play a valuable part in promoting good practice and often have a productive working relationship with government.

National recommendations for further action to promote careers education

Each national working group recommended a number of actions based on their review of the strengths and limitations of careers education in the five countries. These are listed below in abbreviated form with indications of the organisations to which they are addressed.

The working group for England recommended that:

1. the proposed national specification for careers education and guidance should build on career-related learning in the primary school, support post-16 progression, identify learning outcomes and be relevant to students in all types of education and training (DfES)
2. a more coherent approach should be developed to careers education and guidance and other work-related activities (DfES)
3. national standards for the training of careers practitioners should be developed (DfES)
4. non-specialists involved in careers education and guidance should have opportunities to acquire relevant skills (schools)
5. ICT training related to careers education and guidance should be included in New Opportunities Fund (NOF) training (DfES)
6. modules related to career-related learning (primary education) and careers education and guidance (secondary education) should be included in Initial Teacher Training and Newly-Qualified Teacher Training (TTA)
7. a framework for quality standards should be developed against which areas can test their local awards (DfES)
8. research and training should be adequately resourced (DfES and research bodies).

The working group for Northern Ireland recommended that:

1. a careers education framework for ages 4-19 should be developed which provides the elements of a core programme with sufficient flexibility for schools to meet the needs of their pupils (CCEA, DE)
2. a statement of entitlement should be developed for pupils (DE, Education and Library Boards)
3. careers education should be part of the school development plan (schools)

4. the Training and Employment Agency should give greater support to careers education and guidance in schools (T&EA)
5. specialist advisory staff should be appointed at Board and Inspectorate level (Education and Library Boards, DE)
6. practitioners should be involved in the development of support materials (DE, T&EA)
7. minimum standards relating to careers accommodation and budgets should be developed (schools, DE, Education and Library Boards)
8. a review should be undertaken of service level agreements (DE, T&EA)
9. in-service training opportunities should include the possibility of accredited outcomes through the CAT scheme (Higher Education institutions, Education and Library Boards)
10. careers staff should hold a qualification or be in the process of gaining one (schools, DE, NISCA)
11. ICT training for careers practitioners should be included in New Opportunities Fund (NOF) training (DE)
12. a quality standard should be developed (NISCA, DE).

The working group for the Republic of Ireland recommended that:

1. an audit of guidance counsellors should be carried out to assess recruitment needs (IGC, DES)
2. further interactive ICT packages should be developed (DES, NCTE, FAS, IGC)
3. the balance between guidance in the junior and senior cycles should be changed to strengthen provision in the junior cycle (DES, NCGE, IGC)
4. guidance to support adults and lifelong learning should be developed further (NCGE, DES, IGC)
5. initial and post-graduate training should be continued (DES)
6. a review of in-service provision, including work experience, for guidance counsellors should be undertaken (DES, IGC, NCGE)
7. the skills of teachers and guidance counsellors should be updated (DES)
8. provision should be made in the primary sector which has implications for the training of primary teachers (DES, INTO)
9. learning support teachers should be trained to do the initial assessment of learning difficulties (NEPS, DES, NCGE)
10. schools should develop a team approach involving home school community liaison officers, learning support teachers and guidance counsellors (IGC, schools)
11. a quality award scheme should be developed and piloted (IGC).

The working group for Scotland recommended that:

1. the structure of delivery of guidance, PSE, career education and education for work should be grouped together under a general heading such as 'pupil development and support' (schools, authorities, HMI, Scottish Executive, Education for Work Review, Higher Education institutions providing CPD for career staff and initial teacher training)
2. support materials should be developed by Learning and Teaching Scotland and Careers Scotland with active involvement of practising guidance career(s) specialist teachers from secondary schools and experienced teachers from primary and special schools) to help with auditing, preparing for inspection and delivering the learning outcomes in the national framework (Learning and Teaching Scotland, SGA, Careers Scotland)
3. career education should be part of school development plans, and the skill requirements for delivering career education be considered as part of the staff development and review process (schools)
4. appropriate training should be made available at school level for staff involved in the delivery of career education. This to be made available for all such staff including non-specialists and librarians (schools, local authorities, Scottish Executive, Careers Scotland)
5. school-level training should be made directly available to the staff delivering, not through a cascade model (schools, local authorities, Scottish Executive, Careers Scotland)
6. this training, and certificated training in career education, should be acceptable as part of the CPD framework for the implementation of the McCrone proposals (schools, local authorities, Higher Education institutions providing CPD, Scottish Executive)
7. initial teacher training for both primary and secondary teachers should introduce career education within the context of Guidance, PSD and Education for Work (Higher Education institutions)
8. career education should form part of the school-based learning for teachers during and following their initial probationary period (schools, local authorities, GTC, Scottish Executive).

The working group for Wales recommended that:

1. support and resources should be forthcoming at all levels to promote and sustain current developments including ensuring the coherence of the three ACCAC frameworks (CEG/PSE/WRE), the Careers Wales Quality Award, the 16-19 statutory requirement and Careers Wales On Line (Welsh Assembly Government, ACCAC, Careers Wales, schools)
2. careers companies should second experienced careers teachers from schools into their curriculum support

teams, on a fixed term, full-time or part-time basis, to undertake advisory work with the other schools (Careers Wales).

3. more Welsh medium/bilingual resources are required (ACCAC, Careers Wales, ELWa, Welsh Assembly Government)
4. training opportunities for careers teachers should be improved (e.g. by ring-fencing funding and providing supply cover) and promoted (e.g. by setting national targets for training, linking holding a qualification to the Careers Wales Quality Award) (Welsh Assembly Government, Careers Wales, schools)
5. teachers involved in a guidance capacity should be given the opportunity to participate in appropriate training, e.g. in one-to-one interview skills (LEAs, Careers Wales)
6. NOF training should include ICT training for careers work (Department of Culture, Media and Sport)
7. Initial Teacher Training and Newly Qualified Teacher Training should cover careers education and guidance (TTA)
8. a drive should be mounted to promote the benefits of NACGT and to increase membership (NACGT)
9. guidance should be produced for inspectors and schools on the inspection of careers education and guidance, including advice on self-evaluation (ESTYN).

Wider recommendations

This conference demonstrated the potential of home internationals to inform future policy, research and practice in careers education and guidance. The recommendations that extended beyond those specific to individual countries focused on four main areas:

Raising the profile of career(s) education

Participants recognised the value of raising the profile of careers education at the national level through well-targeted press releases, articles and other promotional activities. Professional associations have a key part to play in this.

Staying in contact

National working groups agreed to update each other on actions taken following the conference. Professional associations were encouraged to find ways of informing each other of new developments and initiatives in careers education - for example, through holding open sessions at each other's annual conferences and posting information on their websites.

Future collaborative activities

The conference supported the idea of an annual home international event facilitated by NICEC, with each country taking it in turn to host an event with a specific policy-related, practitioner or research and development focus around an issue of common interest and concern. Suggested topics included:

- sharing of models of good practice in the professional development and training of careers staff in schools.
- developing good practice in teaching and learning in careers education.

European links

The home countries recognised the value of further developing their European networks to share good practice and explore the possibility of carrying out research and development in careers education through an appropriate European Union programme.