
RECOMMENDATIONS

THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS ARE ABOUT HOW SCHOOLS COULD MAKE CAREER GUIDANCE A HIGHER PRIORITY

6.1 HOW OUR RECOMMENDATIONS LINK TO THE BENCHMARKS

Our recommendations are detailed in section 6.4 below. The first recommendation, not surprisingly, is that these benchmarks should be used by schools, Ofsted and the National Careers Service in deciding what quality career guidance looks like. In Recommendation 1, however, we also have something to say about priorities among the benchmarks.

Our other recommendations are about how schools, and the systems that support them, could make career guidance a higher priority so they do better against these benchmarks.

The government has given schools the responsibility for determining their career guidance and we do not recommend reversing this policy. Schools are well placed to decide their own needs. But we believe schools need:

- The right incentives to prioritise career guidance;
- The right central and local support;
- Better access to employers where they do not have this already.

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6.2 THE PULL AND THE PUSH

The April 2014 Statutory Guidance from DfE gives guidance on schools' statutory duty to "secure independent and impartial careers guidance for young people in schools". It describes how "employers, schools and others will work together to inspire young people about the world of work, opening their eyes to the range of learning and career opportunities that are open to them", but it is for schools to determine the details of what they should do. Our study tells us that a combination of employer 'pull' and school 'push' is needed for good career guidance, and our recommendations are designed to create the conditions needed to bring about this balance.



6.3 PRINCIPLES BEHIND THE RECOMMENDATIONS

Principle 1

Minimise statutory requirements

Our starting point is that new statutory requirements on schools should be kept to a minimum, in the spirit of school autonomy. We would want to add as few additional requirements as possible, but we do recommend that there should be new requirements to publish a careers plan on the school website (Recommendation 2) and for schools to produce and publish their own destination statistics (Recommendation 3).

Principle 2

Optimise incentives

Where possible, we believe that change should be brought about by providing the right incentives for schools. Our survey suggests that most school leaders already recognise the importance of career guidance, but are not always giving it the priority it needs, because of all the other demands on them. Ofsted inspections and performance tables shape the behaviour of most schools, and this can marginalise activities that are not central to improving the indicators that preoccupy schools: results in external examinations.

So we need to think about how schools can be incentivised to do better with career guidance. Ofsted is a powerful influence on schools, and the inspectorate has said that career guidance will be explicitly checked in future inspections.⁴⁸ This will be a critical incentive, but it is important that the right things are checked. We commend these benchmarks to Ofsted as a basis for reporting.

Given the importance of employer 'pull', it is critical that Ofsted comes to a view on employer engagement as well as on the 'push' coming from schools. Ofsted's 2014 School Inspection Handbook talks in general terms about "independent information, advice and guidance to assist pupils on their next steps in training, education or employment", but goes into no detail about what this looks like when it is good.⁴⁹

Much more could be made of **destination measures** as incentives. In the university sector, comparative data on employment destinations is of great interest to prospective pupils, and the same could be true for school pupils and their parents. Our school survey shows that the majority of schools are already collecting some destination data for their leavers; our proposal is that this should become a *requirement* for all pupils for three years after their leaving date. If robust destination data are centre stage in school performance tables, this will be a powerful incentive for heads to make sure their pupils are fully informed about the range of options that could be right for them. There are other benefits from collecting destination measures, and these are described in Recommendation 3.

A further incentive for schools, which already exists, is the option to seek the award of a career quality mark.⁵⁰



UNIVERSITY TECHNICAL COLLEGES

University Technical Colleges (UTCs) in England were developed in response to repeated demands from industry for an increased number of well-educated, high-status technicians and engineers. UTCs are:

- New schools for 14-18-year-olds with around 600 pupils, and a longer school day;
- Sub-regional, implying travelling distances of up to one hour;
- Backed by a university and local employers, and sometimes further education colleges;
- Offering a curriculum focused on technical education. For 14-16-year-olds this is 60% general and 40% technical; for 16-18-year-olds it is 40% general and 60% technical.

The JCB Academy in Staffordshire was the first UTC, opened in September 2010 in a converted industrial mill. Its curriculum specialises in engineering and it has strong links to engineering companies including JCB and Rolls Royce.

UTCs have the potential to provide the kind of high quality technical education found in Germany and the Netherlands, but so far only 17 are open, with a further 33 in development. Their strong links to employers mean that they are in good position to give pupils multiple encounters with employers and the workplace, and to integrate career guidance strongly with the curriculum.



STEM AMBASSADORS AND STEMNET

STEMNET (the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Network) is a charity established in 1996 and funded partly by BIS and DfE. It works with thousands of schools, colleges and STEM employers to enable young people to meet inspiring role models and experience hands-on STEM activities that bring learning and career opportunities to life.

STEMNET's main programme is STEM Ambassadors, a network of over 27,000 volunteers from a very wide range of STEM occupations across engineering, digital and life sciences who promote STEM subjects to young learners in a range of practical and engaging ways. 40% of STEM Ambassadors are women and 13% are from minority ethnic backgrounds, with nearly 60% aged under 35.

Principle 3 Provide support through the National Careers Service

Under current arrangements (Section 2.1), schools make their own decisions on how they provide career guidance. This autonomy has advantages, but we think that many schools would benefit from greater central support. In its September 2013 review, Ofsted said that the NCS “made little contribution to careers guidance in the schools we visited”. We recommend that the NCS should be given a more explicit remit for career guidance in schools. More details are in Recommendation 4.

Principle 4 Improve access to employers, further and higher education

Employer-pull is probably the most important way that career guidance can be improved, yet in its September 2013 review, Ofsted reported that “links with employers were perhaps the weakest aspect of career guidance in the 60 schools visited”. Some schools do well in this area (for example, the University Technical Colleges), but most schools have a long way to go before they have anything like the rich variety of employer relationships that we have seen in our visits to Germany, Finland and the Netherlands. DfE's April 2014 Statutory Guidance gives schools a steer in this direction, which we welcome.

There is no shortage of schemes in England to link employers with schools and colleges. These include:

- STEM Ambassadors and STEMNET;
- ‘Inspiring the Future’ from the Education and Employers Taskforce;
- ‘Business Class’ from Business in the Community;⁵¹
- Career Academies UK;⁵²
- Initiatives run by local Chambers of Commerce or Local Enterprise Partnerships.

Potentially, all these programmes are capable of expansion. But when we consulted employers in England, we got the firm impression that the problem is at least as much one of demand as of supply. Employers in England told us of unanswered offers of help or unfilled vacancies in work-experience placements. The message was: ‘If the demand is there, the supply will come.’ The measures we are proposing to incentivise schools to address the ‘pull’ and ‘push’ of career guidance should increase schools’ demand for encounters with employers. However, we need to know more about coverage: how many schools are involved in engagement, what are the patterns and where are the gaps (Recommendation 7)?

School governors with knowledge of the local business community are often well placed to make introductions to employers, and we support the Confederation of British Industry’s proposal that there should be a member of every governing body with a remit to improve employer engagement (Recommendation 8).⁵³



INSPIRING THE FUTURE

‘Inspiring the Future’ is a free, online brokering service provided by the Education and Employers Taskforce, a charity. It puts volunteers into state schools and colleges to talk about their jobs and their employment sectors. Volunteers, who range from apprentices and graduates to senior leaders, offer to visit a local state school or college for ‘one hour, once a year’ to provide first-hand career insights. Teachers select volunteers in their area from a menu of job profiles and then contact them directly.

Inspiring the Future is easy to use and has had rapid growth since it started in July 2012. By March 2014 it had nearly 13,000 volunteers from 3,500 organisations, and 75% of state schools and colleges had registered, sending over 20,000 messages to volunteers.



6.4 OUR TEN RECOMMENDATIONS

Below we set out our ten recommendations. Each is followed by further explanation.

RECOMMENDATION 1: THE BENCHMARKS

To schools, government, Ofsted and employers

We recommend Benchmarks 1 to 8 as defining the elements of good practice in career guidance. Schools should be guided by them when setting their own careers programmes, and Ofsted should be aware of them when making judgements about the quality of career guidance in a school.

Prioritising implementation of the benchmarks

Our school survey shows that schools will not find it easy to implement all the benchmarks at once, and the costing exercise confirms that some will need more resource than others. This implies that schools will need to phase in some aspects of their careers plan, according to the resources available and where they already stand in relation to each benchmark.

The first priority is to have a well-organised and well-understood careers programme (Benchmark 1), because this subsumes all the other benchmarks. Closely tied to this is Benchmark 3 (*Addressing each pupil's needs*), although the measurement of pupil destinations, which is part of this benchmark, may take longer to put in place. Given what Ofsted has said about the weakness of employer links, many schools may need to address Benchmarks 5 and 6 (*Encounters with employers and Experiences of workplaces*) as a matter of high priority. Many schools will have elements of Benchmark 7 (*Encounters with further and higher education*) in place, but our school survey suggests they will need to do more to introduce pupils to the full range of learning opportunities, including both academic and vocational routes, if they are to meet the benchmark.

Most schools will already have something in place to give personal guidance to pupils (Benchmark 8), but our school survey suggests that most are well short of the benchmark. Similarly, many schools will have systems in place to provide career and labour market information (Benchmark 2), but most will need to extend its use to younger pupils, and to make more use of the growing availability of digital sources.

It is in Benchmark 4 (*Linking curriculum learning to careers*) that most schools have furthest to travel (and not only in England). Our costing exercise suggests that this is also the most costly to do well, because of the extensive training needed. This benchmark is one that most schools are likely to implement over several years.

RECOMMENDATION 2: THE SCHOOL CAREERS PLAN

To government and schools

Every secondary school should be required to have a Careers Plan, published on the school's website.

This recommendation relates to Benchmark 1.

Further detail on this recommendation

Publishing the Careers Plan is important to enable pupils, parents and employers to know what will be available to them, and as a basis for obtaining feedback from them.

RECOMMENDATION 3: DESTINATIONS DATA

To schools and government

Every secondary school should be responsible for publishing the destinations of all pupils for three years after their leaving date. The published destination data should be at an aggregated level, showing the main categories of employment, apprenticeship and further and higher education. The responsibility should be placed on schools, but they should have the support of HESA, NCCIS and other agencies that are currently involved in collecting destination data for the government.

This recommendation relates to a number of benchmarks, because it is about incentivising schools to raise the priority of career guidance – and it has additional benefits too.

Further detail on this recommendation

Publishing reliable destination data will help incentivise schools to prioritise career guidance. But there are other advantages in schools collecting and analysing their own destination data, as DfE's April 2014 Statutory Guidance acknowledges. It is an important part of self-evaluation: by looking at trends and patterns, schools can check how well they are succeeding in raising aspirations and challenging stereotypes (Benchmark 3). Collecting this data helps the school to maintain a comprehensive database of alumni to whom they may be able to turn when the school is running events such as those linked to Benchmark 5 (*Encounters with employers and employees*) and Benchmark 7 (*Encounters with further and higher education*).

At present, DfE compiles destination data (aggregated at the school level) for all state-maintained secondary schools. However, only data on 'education' destinations (universities and colleges) are currently published in the official school performance tables. Although data for employment and NEET destinations are compiled, they are currently published only as an 'experimental statistical release', buried in the DfE website. This is because DfE does not yet have confidence that the employment data – which is collated from a variety of sources (the School Census, Individual Learner Record, Higher Education Statistical Agency and National Client Caseload Information System) – is robust enough for full publication.

We recommend that schools should be required to collect and publish **their own** destination data, for three years from the date of each pupil's leaving. Schools would collect the data at the individual pupil level, but publish it in aggregated form. They would be assisted in doing this by DfE supplying to them directly the data that are currently collected as above. DfE would send schools the data, and schools would then check it and add additional detail beyond the broad categories used by DfE. This arrangement would shift the responsibility to schools, which would often be in a position to provide more nuanced and accurate data than the automated processes used by DfE.

The obvious objection to this switch of responsibility from DfE to schools is that it could be open to abuse. Institutions could be tempted to 'massage' the data to make themselves look better. But the data provided by DfE would make this much harder to do, because the official data would calibrate that of the school.

We appreciate that this is an additional burden for schools, not only because they have the onus for collecting and collating the data, but also because we are proposing that it should be done for three years after leaving. The rationale for three years is that it is difficult to tell from a one-year follow-up how the pupil's future career has settled. Pupils' lives are in flux after leaving school, and gap years, indecision and wrong turns add to the instability. But after three years, most pupils will have completed their education or apprenticeship and you can get a more realistic picture of where they have settled.⁵⁴

One concern about using destination data for accountability purposes is that it is heavily dependent on contextual factors: schools in deprived socioeconomic areas will find it much harder to look 'good' than those in well-off areas. But this is true of most school performance measures. If parents and inspectors can take account of contextual factors when judging exam results and absence rates, they can do so with destination measures too.

Finally, the process of collecting pupils' destinations is increasingly helped by social media. Setting leavers up as a LinkedIn group, for example, gives a ready-made medium for schools to keep up with pupils after they have left. 'Future First' has also developed a database management system that allows schools to manage their alumni networks nationally.

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RECOMMENDATION 4: THE NATIONAL CAREERS SERVICE

To schools, government, Ofsted and employers

The remit of the National Careers Service (NCS) should be extended to give it unequivocal responsibilities towards schools. It should:

- Significantly expand its work with schools, young people and parents;
- Develop and extend its online services targeted at schools, young people and their parents, and support training in their use;
- Provide a channel for live labour market information from the ‘LMI for All’ data source;
- Disseminate good practice in career guidance to schools;
- Collaborate with employers organisations to broker employer encounters with schools;
- Support schools in creating their Careers Plan.

To make it more responsive to employers, the NCS should be reconstituted as an independent agency with its own board on which employers are strongly represented, alongside schools and colleges.

This recommendation relates to a number of the benchmarks.

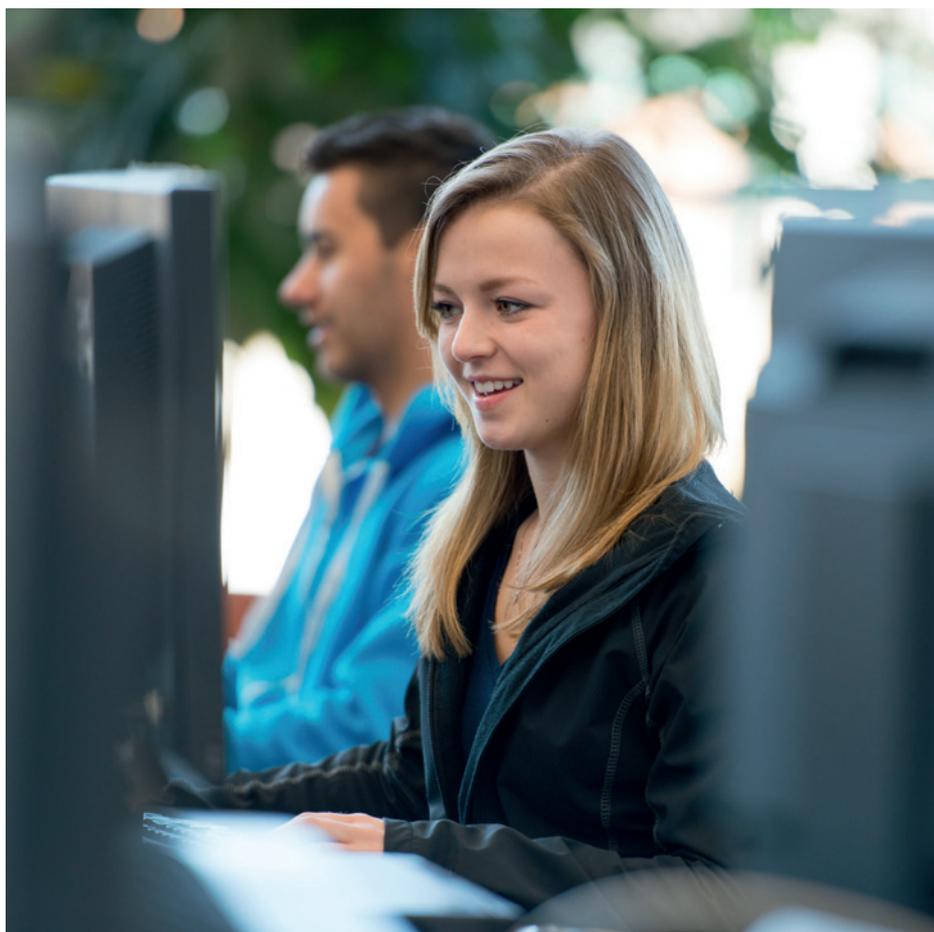
Further detail on this recommendation

In its report ‘An Aspiration Nation’, the National Careers Council made a number of recommendations relating to the NCS.⁵⁵ We have drawn on these in making our own Recommendation 4.

We believe there is a compelling case for making the NCS more independent as a separate body with its own board and with strong employer, school and college representation. At present, the NCS is not a ‘service’ in any independent sense. As a part of the Skills Funding Agency (SFA), it has no independent board and its main role is to commission contracts for ‘area-based contractors’ who deliver sub-regional services for personal advice to adults. As part of the SFA (which is itself a part of BIS), the NCS has a low national profile and, crucially, there is no direct way for employers or other stakeholders to influence its policies and activities. A possible model for its future status would be the Education and Training Foundation (ETF), the government-funded organisation responsible for supporting the professional development of teachers in further education. Although it receives government funds, ETF is an independent charity with its own board.

Both Ofsted and the Education Select Committee have pointed out how little direct support the NCS provides for schools, despite being an all-age careers service. This is not the fault of the NCS, but of its remit and funding, which is mainly directed towards guidance for people who are beyond school age. We believe that this needs to change, so that the NCS provides leadership and support for career guidance in schools as well as for adults.

With its extended remit for schools, the NCS would be able to support schools in reaching other benchmarks, relating to programme planning, labour market information (LMI), record keeping and employer encounters.



RECOMMENDATION 5: CAREER AND LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION

To schools, government, Ofsted and employers

Alongside career information, live labour market information should be available to all schools through the 'LMI for All' service. This should be accessible through the NCS website as well as other outlets. Those involved in career guidance should be trained in its use.

This recommendation relates to Benchmark 2.

Further detail on this recommendation

Career and labour market information takes many forms and includes information about what current and future jobs exist, what they are like and the skills and values that people need to succeed in them, as well as other factual information about entry qualifications, wages, promotion and location. LMI is found in many places but it is difficult to keep up-to-date and accessible.

The government, through the UK Commission on Employment and Skills, has made excellent progress in developing the 'LMI for All' service.⁵⁶ This draws on existing surveys such as the Labour Force Survey and the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, to provide live data on such LMI as pay, vacancy rates and qualifications for entry. These data are available for anyone to access, but need to be made available to schools and their communities in a form that is attractive and intelligible to young people.

Career advisers need to have detailed knowledge of the available sources of LMI, especially the channels for 'LMI for All' and they need to be trained in their use.

RECOMMENDATION 6: CURRICULUM LEARNING AND CAREERS

To the National Centres and their funders

The National STEM Centre, National Science Learning Centre and National Centre for Excellence in Teaching Mathematics should lead exemplary work to show how curriculum resources for science, technology, engineering and mathematics teachers can more effectively showcase career learning opportunities.

This recommendation relates to Benchmark 4

Further detail on this recommendation

Our international visits showed that, attractive though the idea may be, it is difficult in practice to consistently embed career awareness in the regular curriculum. The National STEM Centre, National Science Learning Centre (NSLC) and National Centre for Excellence in Teaching Mathematics (NCETM) are in a good position to take a lead in developing exemplary resources to show how this could be done. The NSLC, for example, already includes STEM careers awareness in its programmes. NSLC could go further and systematically include careers awareness into its training modules to show teachers how such resources can be embedded in their teaching. This opportunity should be explored on a broad front, to include assessment materials as well as resources for teachers to use in the classroom.

Unlike most of our recommendations, this one is directed specifically towards teachers of STEM subjects rather than more generally across all school subjects. This reflects the Gatsby Charitable Foundation's specific interest in STEM as a driver for economic growth, but the principle of relating the curriculum to careers extends across other subjects too. Note that engineering teachers are included here, although in reality engineering is very much a minority subject at school level.



RECOMMENDATION 7: A REVIEW OF ENCOUNTERS WITH EMPLOYERS AND THE WORKPLACE

To employers and business
link organisations

Employers, their representative organisations and organisations promoting business links should cooperate in a comprehensive review of what they offer. The review should focus on what could be done to make sure every school has enough employer links to meet the benchmarks in this report.

*This recommendation relates
to Benchmarks 5 and 6.*

Further detail on this recommendation

Both our school survey and Ofsted's September 2013 review suggest that employer engagement is the area where schools have the longest distance to travel, yet employer 'pull' has as much potential to transform career guidance as school 'push'. The NCS has begun work to see what additional support it can provide for school-employer engagement, but in the end this will work best if it is led by employers.

It needs to be easy for schools to find employers who are willing to engage and who meet their needs. 'Inspiring the Future', with its 'dating agency' approach, has the potential for high capacity. But with a bewildering array of national schemes to choose from, there could be a more coordinated approach to organisation and communication with schools: for example, the 'single point of entry' called for by the Education and Employers Taskforce.⁵⁷ But before committing to any such actions, we need more quantitative data about coverage: how many schools are involved in engagement, what are the patterns and where are the gaps?

There is an extensive literature on what makes for effective encounters between employers and schools: for example, publications by the Education and Employers Taskforce.⁵⁸ But we have not seen any work that describes quantitatively the degree of employer engagement with different schools, which would make it possible to assess geographical patterns, gaps in coverage and types of engagement. Before going further, such information is needed. Once the quantitative data is available, it should be easier to see what needs to be done to radically improve the quantity and quality of employer engagement in English schools.

Employers and employer organisations should take the lead – perhaps in partnership with third-sector funders – in a wide-ranging review of education-employer engagement, to answer the questions:

- Who are the main agents on the employer side? Individual employers? Business link organisations? Local Enterprise Partnerships?
- What is the involvement of large, medium and small employers?
- What motivates employer and employee involvement with schools, and what networks do they utilise to facilitate that involvement?
- What is the frequency of employer encounters as defined in Benchmark 5? What are the variations between types of school and between regions?
- What types of encounters have the greatest impact on pupils?
- Where are the major gaps (by geography and by school type) in coverage?
- What could be done to give more consistent coverage?
- What would need to be done to (say) double the proportion of schools reaching Benchmark 5 (*Encounters with employers*) from 39% to 80%?

This would need to be a major study, providing robust data from a representative cross-section of English schools.

RECOMMENDATION 8: EMPLOYER GOVERNORS

To employers and schools

Every school should have a member of their governing body who has a remit to encourage employer engagement and to take a strategic interest in career guidance.

This recommendation relates to Benchmarks 5 and 6.

Further detail on this recommendation

Governors are well placed to act as brokers between schools and employers. Many schools already have one or more governors who take an interest in employer engagement: we recommend that this should be the case for every secondary school. We would stop short of saying it should be made a statutory requirement, but recommend that it should be something that Ofsted would look for when they inspect a school.



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RECOMMENDATION 9: ENCOUNTERS WITH YOUNG AMBASSADORS

To the National Apprenticeship Service, further and higher education and employers

Employers and further and higher education institutes should investigate the potential for greatly expanding existing programmes for sending young ambassadors into schools from apprenticeships, colleges and universities.

This recommendation relates to Benchmark 7.

Further detail on this recommendation

We have seen the evidence, from our overseas and school visits, of the power of young people to inspire their peers towards particular careers or courses of study. When a young person meets another who has come from the same background and has gone on to success, that can motivate them in a way that encounters with older people cannot. There are good examples of this kind of ‘ambassador’ approach in the outreach work that many universities are already doing with schools.

The best way for schools to find young ambassadors is from their own alumni, but we also see value in a ‘Young Apprentice Ambassador’ programme that would give schools access to young role models who can visit schools and explain from their own experience what being an apprentice involves. This might be of interest to the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS), though it is a very different concept from the existing NAS ‘Apprenticeship Ambassadors’ programme, whose members are senior business leaders who promote apprenticeships to other businesses.



Similarly, there is potential for a ‘Student Ambassador’ programme to bring students on vocational and undergraduate courses into schools. Again, this is best done through alumni or through partnerships with local colleges and universities, but there is a case for considering some kind of national network, perhaps through an extension of the remit of STEMNET or based on the ‘Undergraduate Ambassador’ programme.⁵⁹

Universities are required to engage in school outreach through their access agreements with the Office for Fair Access (OFFA). Schools should make the most of this both to provide opportunities for curriculum enhancement and to give their pupils opportunities to meet student ambassadors.

RECOMMENDATION 10: CAREER ADVISERS

To government and schools

The government’s guidance for schools should be amended to make it clear that personal guidance can be provided by both internal and external advisers. Advisers can be a member of school staff, provided they are trained to an appropriate level to give advice that is in the best interests of the pupil.

This recommendation relates to Benchmark 8.



Further detail on this recommendation

From September 2012, schools have had a duty to “secure independent and impartial careers guidance for young people in schools” (Section 2.1). The emphasis on independent and impartial career guidance is important. Career guidance needs to be given in the interest of the young person only – while this may seem obvious, it is possible for advice to be biased in favour of a particular institution. For example, in 11-18 schools there is an incentive to keep pupils (especially high-achieving ones) in the school, even if it might be in their best interest to go to a college or an apprenticeship. Hence the emphasis on impartial advice that is in the interest of the young person alone.

But in interpreting ‘independent and impartial’, there has been a tendency to assume that advisers have to be external to the school. Indeed, this is reinforced by the April 2014 Statutory Guidance which defines ‘independent’ as “external to the school” (though the associated non-statutory advice states that “schools can retain in-house careers advisers”).⁶⁰ While it may be appropriate for some schools or for some pupils, we do not think that external advice is necessary in every case. In all the countries we visited, it was normal practice for guidance to be provided by a trained member of school staff (though sometimes, as in Germany, augmented by external advisors). We see no reason why that should not apply in England, provided the member of staff has appropriate training (as assured by membership of the Career Development Institute register, for example) to ensure that their advice is impartial, well-informed and in the interests of the pupil alone, and that the principle of impartiality is affirmed by the school.