

# Consultation on the Demerger of Careers Scotland

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## Introduction

Before commenting on the consultation questions, it is important to recognise the uniqueness of Scottish systems of career education and guidance which place Scotland at the forefront of international development and to recognise that it is vital that whatever new arrangements for Careers Scotland are decided upon, they recognise and build on these unique Scottish strengths.

Scotland has an all-age publicly-funded career guidance service which plays a key role in both economic development and in social inclusion and which covers education-based clients as well clients in the labour market. Career education in Scotland has national guidelines that cover young people aged 3-18 and a nationally produced package of supportive materials to help schools deliver the learning outcomes in the national guidelines. In addition, Scotland has developed a system of enterprise education from primary age children upwards which seeks to promote enterprising approaches to teaching and learning and to make links between enterprising approaches and career development. This combination of activities is a unique strength of the Scottish system and one which needs to be preserved.

## Question 1: What do you think Careers Scotland's priorities should be?

### *A new priority of community regeneration*

Careers Scotland's three strategic priorities require it to operate across a number of policy dimensions: economic development; education and lifelong learning; and social justice and inclusion. It is challenging for an organisation to work across all these policy dimensions and to hold these in the appropriate balance, but it is critical that none of these priorities is dropped.

We suggest that one way of holding this balance is to add another strategic priority: that of *community regeneration*. This would have a number of advantages:

- 1 A community regeneration priority would bridge the existing three priorities
- 2 It would facilitate continued working with Careers Scotland within Highlands and Islands Enterprise which has community regeneration as part of its role. This, in turn, would keep open the possibility, if it were to be decided at some future point, of Careers Scotland staff in HIE joining the rest of Careers Scotland to create a fully national organisation;
- 3 It would assist working relationships with some other sectors of career guidance in Scotland which have strong community development roles (for example, the Local Development Companies and those Scottish Colleges which might be termed 'community colleges');
- 4 It would encourage locally responsive career guidance strategies within a national careers strategy.

### *Priority (i) investing in the workforce of the future (work with schools)*

Given the recognised importance of the social and personal context of young people's career decisions and the increasingly extended and protracted nature of their transitions into the workforce, we suggest that limiting this priority to 'work in schools' is no longer appropriate.

We suggest replacing ‘work in schools’ by ‘work with young people and their families’, and that ‘young people’ should be defined as up to and including those aged 25.

One practical implication of this extension is that tracking and surveying of young people’s movements would need to be conducted over a longer period – this would provide improved intelligence for policy makers on the reality of young people’s entry into the workforce and allow the impact of career guidance and related services to be identified, resulting in continuous improvement of career guidance systems.

Within the group of ‘young people’ we recommend that young people in jobs without training are named as being a key priority category. Research shows that these young people have poor long term outcomes and the Executive’s NEET strategy, More Choices, More Chances, recognises the link between being in a job without training and the risk of becoming NEET.

In addition, the engagement of Careers Scotland staff at a local level with these young employees and their employers will encourage direct links to the local labour market and help practitioners keep in touch with labour market information (without which career guidance is less effective).

*Priority (ii) reducing economic inactivity among young people (working with the NEET group)*

We agree that this is an appropriate priority for Careers Scotland, and would wish to note the value of its work in schools through the Activate programme as well as its post school activities.

*Priority (iii) improving productivity through personal career planning (working with all adults, employed and not employed)*

This is an appropriate priority although the client group is a very broad one, potentially presenting huge resource issues. A key issue is identification of client need and we discuss this issue below in 2 (i).

## **Question 2: What should Careers Scotland do differently to better realise its full potential?**

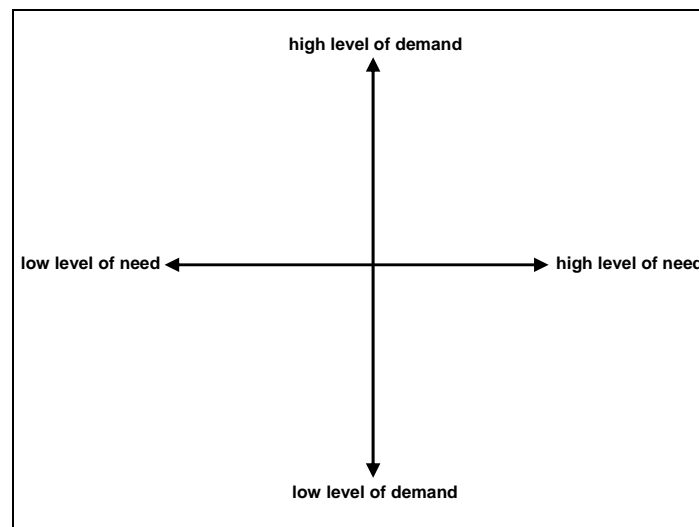
It is likely that this question includes the qualification ‘within existing resources’, and our response takes this into account. Our first point is that Careers Scotland has achieved an immense amount in the time it has been set up: it has brought together the different pre-existing organisations; it has kept a focus on its key role of assisting career development; it has tried to deliver services driven by client needs; it has improved the profile of career guidance in Scotland through its marketing and awareness-raising and the improved quality of its premises; and it has looked internationally for models and approaches to apply to Scottish systems. But providing all-age services to the Scottish community is an immense challenge, and keeping the balance across the policy dimensions is also difficult, so there remains much to be done. However, we believe that there are many strengths to be built on, and what follows should be read in that light.

### *(i) Identification of need*

There is the absolutely key issue of the identification of need: with such a large potential client group, it is important that resources are used to meet need. In trying to do so it is important to recognise that demand is not necessarily the same as need. Careers Scotland has

made considerable efforts to develop systems to do so but it is an immensely challenging task.

Figure 1 illustrates the dimensions of this; obviously, there are different levels of need and of demand but taking the extremes makes the issue clearer.



Clients who have *no needs and no demands*, and clients who have *needs and demands* are easy to deal with: services can be responsive to these clients. However, the important task in allocating services is to identify those clients with *needs but who do not demand* services, and those clients who make *demands but have no need* of services. (Obviously, there are levels of need and of demand, but taking the extremes makes the issue clearer). There are a number of questions relating to this:

- 1 When, and why, do clients need/demand services? These may be the result of personally prompted transitions (such as a recognition of the need for career change by an adult, or the increased vocational maturity of a school pupil that makes them wish for help in clarifying their career ideas). Or they may be the result of externally prompted transitions (such as redundancy for an adult, or the need to apply for a course at university by a school pupil). Externally prompted transitions are easier to manage and to predict the need for resources or for interventions, but personally prompted transitions are largely unpredictable at the level of an individual client. This means services need to be both:
  - *planned* to deal with predicted need/demand; and
  - *responsive* to deal with unexpected need/demand.
- 2 How easy is it for clients to identify and articulate needs? Such factors as levels of confidence, self-awareness, opportunity awareness, ability to articulate and maturity affect the capacity to separate out need from demand.

Looking at the list of factors begins to explain why the identification of client needs is so difficult, particularly with respect to young people where all these elements are still developing.

For resources to be appropriately matched to clients it is important that Careers Scotland continues to work on the development of strategies to identify need, but the bullet points above explain why this development is not yet complete and needs more work: it is a very difficult thing to do, and there is no perfect system yet developed.

#### *(ii) career planning*

‘Career planning’ is the model that Careers Scotland currently uses to organise and deliver its services to clients, but this model has important limitations because it takes insufficient

account of the research on how individuals make career decisions and does not fully reflect the implications of the rapidly changing opportunity-structure for learning and work in the global economy. We suggest that it is timely to revise the way in which Careers Scotland frames careers guidance.

The reasons for the use of this model are easy to understand: the notion of rational career planning helped Careers Scotland's work be understood within the Enterprise Networks (because this approach is based on economic models of choice whereby individuals weigh up costs and benefits of different routes resulting in a plan for future career development). And it is a term commonly used within human resource development and so would be easily understood in relation to workforce development services which Careers Scotland can potentially provide.

However, there are a number of important limitations that follow from basing career practice on this approach. There is little in the research to suggest that individuals (particularly young people) actually do make their career decisions through mainly rational strategies and processes. It is common for those reflecting back on their career path to recognise that 'planning', if it happened at all, in practice proved to be very flexible and responsive to (what is termed in career theory) 'happenstance'. Secondly, 'planning' runs the risk of failing to take into account the multiplicity of influences on career decisions and the reality of the social and personal context in which individuals make choices. Thirdly, 'planning' assumes that the opposite of 'rational' decision-making is 'irrational', but it is more appropriate to consider its opposite as 'intuitive'. Effective work with clients requires a recognition of both the intuitive and rational aspects of individuals' career decision-making. And lastly, it assumes that careers can be 'planned' and assumes a level of control of the results of decision-making that is not the case for many clients. While 'planning' is a key tool within career guidance, it is only one element, given the requirement for flexibility required by the ever-changing nature of the education, training and employment structure locally, nationally and internationally.

The de-merger of Careers Scotland from Scottish Enterprise creates the appropriate situation in which the re-framing of its services can take place: more appropriate terms for its services would be 'career guidance' or 'career development'.

In summary, it is important for effective practice that Careers Scotland uses an approach to its services which

- 1 reflects the reality of how individuals make decisions and is grounded in career theory;
- 2 is recognisable to clients of all ages; and
- 3 reflects the complexity of the career choice process and the changing and uncertain nature of career paths and opportunities.

### *(iii) Engagement with LMI and employers*

Our third point relates to engagement with LMI and employers. Evidence indicates that LMI is highly valued by career guidance clients. Careers Scotland's alignment with the Enterprise Network has allowed easier access to its labour market intelligence: it is important that this continues. However, its demerger from Scottish Enterprise provides the opportunity to increase careers advisers' direct engagement with local employers and with the local and national labour market to ensure that their professional understanding of LMI is up to date and that they remain in touch with changes in occupational and educational demands.

### **Question 3: Which of these [five] options do you favour, and why?**

First we note the principles which we feel require to underpin this decision, taking account of the original Duffner principles and evidence on the effectiveness of careers services. We have used these as a basis for our recommendation on the best option for de-merger.

Identifiers of an effective career guidance service:

- Is impartial
- Is client-centred
- Is available lifelong
- Allocates service provision on the basis of identified client need
- Deals with both personally and externally prompted transitions
- Deals with extended transitions
- But is not only a 'transition' service
- Helps clients develop the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to be effective in their career development
- Uses ICT effectively
- Makes effective use of LMI
- Operates in a broad based policy context ie should not be too strongly located within a single policy area
- Is capable of challenging its host/or managing organisation's priorities
- Is responsive and accountable to stakeholders
- Locates its work in professional disciplines and evidence-based practice, and in career research and theory
- Has both a national and an international focus

It is also important to note that the positioning of Careers Scotland needs to be considered in the light of the rest of the career guidance sector in Scotland. Exact figures are not available, but the staff of Careers Scotland make up an estimated two-thirds of the specialist career guidance staff in Scotland. A further third have specialist career roles in other organisations such as FE, HE and local agencies. In addition, school pastoral care and teaching staff also have a role in helping pupils consider their future career ideas, and individuals with a support role in other organisations (such as training providers or charitable organisations) have a career guidance role as one of their duties. How Careers Scotland relates to other services, and how these may complement and support each other, are issues that need to be taken into account in deciding the most appropriate structure and location for Careers Scotland.

*Executive Agency:* There are a number of negatives about this option: stakeholders would be less involved (a very important point for career guidance since services operate across so many agencies and groups); because it is so closely tied to government, it may not be seen as impartial; and for the same reason it may find it difficult to challenge government policy on behalf of clients. Career guidance works across a number of policy dimensions but this model would tie career guidance services to one government department.

*Subsume into Local Authorities:* The research on the effectiveness of careers services which we undertook for the Scottish Executive following the move of careers services out of local authority control found little evidence to support a move back to local authorities, and there is no reason to think this is now different. Key issues related to budgets, resources and status. Furthermore, this is likely to fragment the national role of Careers Scotland.

*Our recommended model:* We recommend a stand-alone non-departmental body. This would be independent, allow a strong identity for career guidance and be more responsive and

accountable through its board members representing a range of stakeholders and policy interests.

It may be worth considering a linkage with the Scottish University for Industry which through LearnDirect has a strong brand appealing particularly to adults and those in the workforce. This, plus its telephone guidance service, is likely to complement the less developed elements of Careers Scotland's provision. A stand-alone non-departmental body could be created to incorporate SUFI and Careers Scotland. This could be named 'Career Development Scotland' to recognise that this is not a 'take-over' but a merger, and to signal the change in approach we suggested earlier in 2 (ii). The new organisation would have the potential to create better links with other organisations which would complement and develop provision, such as Continuing Education Gateway, whose website and e-guidance could contribute strategically to the development of more effective career guidance in Scotland.

**Questions 4, 5 and 6: How would this preferred option for Careers Scotland achieve these stronger links to our schools? Should Careers Scotland staff become part of the complement of school staff?**

**How would your preferred option for Careers Scotland best achieve an all-age national guidance service?**

**How would it assist Careers Scotland to balance better these stronger links to schools and the delivery of an all-age national guidance service?**

#### *Increased guidance requirements*

The role of careers advisers in schools is an increasingly important one, given the move to more flexible individualised curricula in which a range of vocational options are included. It is important that careers advisers, with their greater knowledge and links to the labour market, are involved as impartial advisers when school staff are helping pupils to choose routes that combine academic and vocational options.

#### *A comprehensive approach*

We recommend a comprehensive approach to the delivery of services, one which integrates school and adult work in such a way that one can reinforce the other, providing advantages for each client group through 'joined up' career development activities. This would provide a more effective use of resources. An all-age guidance service with a strong profile in adult guidance and information, and with an effective website would be able to develop approaches to school work which involve school staff and the broad community more effectively in career development. Examples of possible strategies include:

- 1 Family-friendly guidance. Marketing of all-age guidance to families, beginning with school pupils and moving on to parents, older brothers and sisters and the extended family would be a method to plan the extension of services, create family networks that understood and had experienced career development, and access those otherwise difficult to engage in career development (including family members who were NEET). Working with the community through families could also help to develop workforce development services through those family members engaged in the workforce as employees, managers and employers.
- 2 Offering career development services to school staff and their families. The similar principle of developing synergy through ensuring key individuals understand and have experienced career guidance and career development services applies to the involvement of school staff in career development workshops and discussions.

The delivery of all-age services to communities through schools would retain a focus on adult guidance, strengthen work with school pupils and provide a base to increase understanding of career guidance in the broader community beyond the school. However, to allow those not

connected to career guidance through the school to access career guidance it would be important that careers advisers were not part of the school staff and had a community base which ensured their links to the labour market were equally strong as those to education and learning.

#### *Career education and enterprise education*

We suggest that it is appropriate for Careers Scotland to continue with its current role in respect of career education but that it is timely to reconsider its role in the full range of Enterprise in Education provision.

While responsibility for career education belongs to schools and local authorities, supporting career education is an appropriate role for Careers Scotland since effective, consistent career education is an essential underpinning for career guidance and the development of young people's career management skills. Careers Scotland should retain its key role in career education development and support.

It is also important that enterprise education and work-related learning continue to be linked in to career education at policy level (as in Determined to Succeed) and at the level of practice: pro-active, enterprising young people with a 'can do' approach will take their career ideas and plans forward more effectively. As we noted in the introductory section of this response, this combination of activities is one of the unique strengths of the Scottish system.

However, since Duffner recommended that Education Business Partnerships be included in Careers Scotland there have been a number of changes which impinge on the role that Careers Scotland might be expected to play in respect of Enterprise in Education. Local authorities retained an interest (and a number of staff) focused on work-related learning and enterprise: the allocation of the vast majority of Determined to Succeed monies to local authorities has changed the balance between authorities and Careers Scotland significantly. This is an appropriate point to consider whether Careers Scotland's curriculum support role is not more appropriately focused on career education rather than the full range of Enterprise in Education provision.

#### **Question 7: How would the links with Careers Scotland in the Highlands and Islands area be maintained in this preferred option?**

The board of the NDPB would include one or more representatives of Careers Scotland (HIE) and HIE. The addition of a strategic priority concerning community regeneration as we suggest under Question 1 would make the maintenance of links easier.

The Board would also allow for representatives of other parts of the career guidance sector in Scotland to assist in policy formation and encourage integration and synergy of provision where appropriate.

#### **Question 9: Additional comments**

While a robust system of performance management is important, independent evaluation of the effectiveness of career guidance provision is also necessary.