**A Strategy for Career Leadership in Wales**

**Introduction**

Responsibility for the provision of careers information, advice, guidance and education in Wales is shared between schools and Careers Wales, with each having defined roles and responsibilities. Schools provide careers information, careers education and initial advice, and Careers Wales provide an ‘external’ careers guidance and curriculum support service, funded by government and delivered by professionally qualified staff. Careers Wales seeks to provide leadership across Wales in relation to careers matters and in this context is proposing a range of developments that will improve and enhance the support ultimately offered to young people in Wales.

The retention of a shared model in Wales is to be celebrated, but it is clear from various Estyn reports that there is much work still to be done to address the quality of careers education in schools. The most recent Estyn thematic into the implementation of the Careers and World of Work (CWoW) Framework in secondary schools again found that the majority of schools have not responded effectively to changes in the services offered by Careers Wales, however, the new strategic vision ‘*Changing Lives – A vision for Careers Wales 2017-20’* offers clear direction on the services to be delivered by Careers Wales and the support that could be offered to schools.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this paper is to build on the proposals contained within ‘*Changing Lives’* and to present a strategy for career leadership in Wales. Careers Wales believes that if these proposals are introduced they will lead to significant improvements in the delivery of careers support to young people across Wales.

**Context – the quality of CWoW delivery in schools**

In order to make effective career decisions and benefit from the support provided by Careers Wales it is imperative that careers education in schools is relevant, timely and high quality. In 2008, to support the delivery of careers education, Welsh Government published “Careers and the world of work: a framework for 11 to 19 year olds in Wales”, and later in 2010 took the decision that implementation of this framework should be inspected on a thematic basis by Estyn. However, the delivery of the framework has been variable.

In 2012, Estyn published *Informed decisions: The implementation of the CWoW framework* and found that:-

* while nearly all schools provided pupils with useful information to help them choose subjects in Year 9, they made limited use of labour market information to enable pupils to make informed decisions;
* nearly all schools did not track pupils’ progress toward the learning objectives in the CWoW framework in a consistent or systematic fashion;
* the amount of lesson time that schools allocated to CWoW varied too much;
* in most cases, schools did not evaluate their provision for CWoW robustly enough;
* the role of governors in supporting the strategic planning and delivery of CWoW was underdeveloped;
* in nearly all schools, Careers Wales made a valuable contribution to CWoW provision; however, in a few schools, recent reductions in Careers Wales services had put a strain on the capacity of schools to deliver CWoW.

In 2014, Estyn published *Learner support services for pupils aged 14-16*. This report examined the quality, consistency and impartiality of learner support services provided by schools to pupils before, during and at the end of key stage 4, including impartial careers advice and guidance. This report identified that:

* the provision of careers advice and guidance was the weakest feature of learner support;
* only a minority of schools offered all pupils the opportunity to discuss their careers plans in Year 9 or Year 11;
* the majority of schools did not provide pupils with up-to-date information on courses, career opportunities and progression routes;
* there was a bias towards retaining pupils in sixth forms in 11-18 schools;
* schools had not considered carefully enough how they should replace the services previously carried out by Careers Wales.

The most recent Estyn thematic survey would appear to show that there is limited evidence of any significant improvement in the delivery of the CWoW framework with very few schools having strengthened their CWoW provision since 2012. Some of the main findings include:-

* only a few schools ensure that all key stage 4 pupils have an interview to discuss their career options;
* 11-18 schools place too much emphasis on promoting their own sixth forms;
* whilst the time allocated to CWoW related provision has on average increased, in many cases this provision is planned around the requirements of the Welsh Baccalaureate;
* the proportion of pupils who participate in work experience placements has declined substantially;
* the tracking of pupils remains underdeveloped;
* self-evaluation and improvement planning systems for CWoW are insufficiently rigorous;
* the proportion of CWoW that is delivered via external partnerships has declined.

**What can be done to improve the delivery of careers education in Wales?**

1. **Introduce the role of Careers Leaders in schools**

An effective programme of careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) requires contributions from several different members of staff (e.g. careers teachers, subject teachers, tutors, ALNCO), and contributions from a range of external partners (e.g. representatives from FE and HE, employers, apprenticeship providers, Careers Advisers), all co-ordinated into a coherent, progressive and integrated programme of careers support from key stage 3 through to the sixth form.

Careers Wales believes that two complimentary professional roles are required in Wales to deliver effective provision; the **Careers Adviser** (acting as an Account Executive), to take responsibility for providing impartial and independent careers guidance, and the **Careers Leader,** supported by a range of teaching colleagues, to take responsibility for the day-to-day leadership and management of CEIAG. The tasks involved in the leadership and management of CEIAG in schools can be specified under the four broad headings of: *co-ordination* (linking all the contributions from within the school); *networking* (linking all contributions from external partners); *management* (ensuring the delivery of careers education and initial information and advice and the efficient administration of CEIAG); *leadership* (providing strategic leadership and assuring quality).

The current picture in terms of the leadership of CEIAG in schools in Wales is varied. In their recent report *A National Ambition: Enterprise education, schools and the Welsh Economy,* FSB claim that “Very few secondary schools now seem to have a dedicated member of staff for careers education” (p16). In contrast, Estyn (2017) state that most schools have a designated member of staff who has overall responsibility for the delivery of CWoW. However, Estyn also concluded that:-

* there are more middle leaders, as opposed to senior leaders, with responsibility for CWoW since their last thematic inspection in 2012;
* only half of ‘CWoW Co-ordinators’ have specific performance management objectives for CWoW;
* in half of schools there is no job description for the role of ‘CWoW Co-ordinator’ or it has not been reviewed for a substantial length of time which limits senior leaders capacity to evaluate the effectiveness of the Co-ordinator.

The introduction of the **Careers Leader** role, as part of a strategic plan in response to the 2017 Estyn inspection, would help to address some of these issues. The role would bring clarity and consistency across schools, provide a key contact for work with Careers Wales and help to establish the leadership of CEIAG as a priority in all schools. In making this recommendation Careers Wales would make the following points:-

* The role is a middle leadership position as a minimum and needs to be located appropriately in the organisational structure of the school in order to be able to fulfil the tasks effectively. It should be recognised with an appropriate responsibility allowance and allocated time to undertake the tasks.
* Positioning the role as a middle leader is the first step in ensuring effective arrangements for the leadership of careers in the school. It is also a signal to senior leaders that to be effective in this role, the Careers Leader will require a level and breadth of CPD which is commensurate with this role.
* The Careers Leader should have the active support of a designated member of the senior leadership team (often an assistant head or deputy head) as their line manager. To be enabled to have the time to effectively lead and manage; the careers leader should also be able to delegate the more routine organisational and administrative tasks to a member of the support staff designated as the careers administrator.
* Careers Leaders do not constitute a new profession but the role is a professional role. Teachers who move into the role of Careers Leader already have a professional identify as a teacher, but have taken on an additional professional identity within the careers profession. The same would be true of other professionals who take on the role.

Careers Wales believes that this development is timely given that the most recent Welsh Government guidance on the respective roles and responsibilities linked to the delivery of the CWoW framework, entitled *Careers and the world of work: roles and responsibilities,* was published in 2012 and includes roles that are arguably less evident in schools today e.g. Learning Coaches, Work Placement Co-ordinators etc.

1. **Provide CPD support for Careers Leaders in schools**

It is unusual for teachers to train initially to be a Careers Leader. The majority of teachers who might come into the role would do so from different previous roles, be they teachers or from another job. It follows that if they are to take on this new professional role they should have access to appropriate CPD to equip them with the knowledge, understanding and skills to fulfil the tasks involved. The particular training needs will depend on the Careers leaders’ prior experience and will be different depending on their previous roles.

In ‘*Changing Lives – A vision for Careers Wales 2017-20’* Careers Wales identify ‘enhanced services to support other organisations to help young people develop their careers’ as a key priority, and already offer schools an extensive range of capacity building support and training opportunities.

In the context of the Careers Leader proposal, we are currently working in partnership with the Career Development Institute (CDI) to pilot the delivery of the Certificate in Careers Leadership, based on three of the optional units of the Level 6 Diploma in Career Guidance and Development (Further details can be found at: [www.thecdi.net/Certificate-in-Careers-Leadership](http://www.thecdi.net/Certificate-in-Careers-Leadership)). The first cohort of teachers from the ERW region started the qualification on September 26th 2017 with a proposed completion date of July 2018. This will subsequently be evaluated, but as a result of this pilot Careers Wales will have (a) the materials required to deliver the qualification in Welsh and English, (b) staff who have co-delivered with CDI colleagues and who could subsequently deliver the qualification to future cohorts of teachers.

1. **Introduce a new CWoW framework, based on career management skills, as part of the *Successful Futures* curriculum**

As noted earlier, the existing CWoW framework was introduced in 2008, but there is clear evidence from Estyn that the framework now needs to be reviewed and refreshed in order to provide renewed impetus to the provision of careers education in schools.

Firstly, whilst in principle the framework has provided learning institutions with greater clarity and manageability than previous versions through clear range statements and accompanying skills, unfortunately the Estyn thematic inspections in 2012 and 2017 both showed that;

* there is evidence of insufficient tracking of pupil’s progress toward the learning objectives in the framework;
* many schools do not evaluate their provision for CWoW robustly enough.

As such, the impact of the current framework is open to question and indeed one of the recommendations from the most recent Estyn report is to ‘r*eview the CWoW framework and update guidance in light of the principles of curriculum reform identified in Successful Future’.*

Secondly, the framework is nearly a decade old and whilst the overarching principles remain current, the content requires updating. For example, there is little in the current framework about digital skills and their relation to employability. Furthermore, some of the key range statements e.g. to create a CV, need to be replaced with modern applications e.g. manage digital profiles, experience digital applications like Skype interviews etc.

Finally, Careers Wales believes that the importance of effective careers learning in schools has never been more important. This view is supported by FSB who state ‘…it should be made mandatory for schools to provide careers education as part of the new curriculum arrangements and that Estyn should be asked to inspect against this requirement’ (p25). More importantly, in February 2015, ‘Successful Futures’ was published (Donaldson, 2015) and the report identified that ‘children and young people….would like to see greater focus on….careers guidance’ (p17). Subsequently, one of the four purposes of the proposed curriculum, which has been fully supported by Welsh Government, is to create ‘enterprising, creative contributors who…..are ready to play a full part in life and work’. As such, the proposed new curriculum should provide the ideal platform for the improvement of careers education in schools.

However, Careers Wales is concerned that currently the plans to include or embed careers learning in the new curriculum are not robust enough. In *Qualified for Life (*2015), Welsh Government set out 8 building blocks for the development of the new curriculum, one of which was the development of cross-curriculum responsibilities. Within this building block the report states ‘there are three key competencies and skills which are the foundations for almost all learning and are essential to being able to participate successfully and confidently in the modern world. These are literacy, numeracy and digital competence” (p16). Whilst we wouldn’t disagree with this statement, Careers Wales believes that career learning is also fundamental to participate successfully in the modern world and should therefore be a cross curricula theme.

We have worked proactively with local consortia to develop some ideas for ‘careers modules’ that could support the teaching of the 6 *areas of learning and experience,* however, at a strategic level this is unlikely to lead to consistent adoption of the key principles of careers education. In addition, it is our understanding that the existing CWoW framework will essentially cease to exist in 2022 which would seriously affect our ability to address the concerns raised by Estyn around impact and evaluation of CWoW provision.

Our proposal is that Careers Wales, through a secondment to the curriculum team at Welsh Government, leads the development of a ‘new’ CWoW framework, but based on career management skills. This approach has been adopted very successfully by major developed nations like USA, Canada and Australia, and closer to home in countries like Scotland who use their *Career Management Skills Framework for Scotland* to support curriculum delivery in schools. In Wales, the framework would be based on the following career management skills:-

* Motivation – to engage in the planning process;
* Self-awareness – developing an understanding of skills, abilities, strengths etc;
* Opportunity awareness – developing knowledge of the labour market;
* Decision making – the ability to make effective career related decisions;
* Resilience – being able to overcome barriers and setbacks;
* Application – the skills to apply for opportunities in a range of ways;
* Digital – the use of digital tools and applications to support career decision making.

These skills describe a series of overlapping skills, attitudes and capabilities that support an individual’s life chances. They have been described by the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network as follows; ”Careers management skills refer to a whole range of competencies which provide structured ways for individuals and groups to gather, analyse, synthesise and organise self, educational and occupational information as well as the skills to make and implement decisions and transitions” (p8 – Career Management Skills Framework for Scotland).

The framework would:-

* Define and describe career management skills so individuals can more easily recognise and articulate their skills;
* Support self-reflection so decisions are considered and appropriate, and
* Recognise existing skills, strengths and areas for development.

The framework would support organisations in Wales responsible for the planning, management and delivery of careers information, advice and guidance services and career related learning. As such, the framework would address a key Estyn recommendation, embed career learning within the new curriculum and bring Welsh Governments strategic approach to career learning in line with major developed nations.

1. **Formally adopt the Gatsby benchmarks as measures of the different components of CEIAG**

Lord David Sainsbury’s Gatsby Charitable Foundation commissioned Sir John Holman - Emeritus Professor of Chemistry at the University of York, senior education adviser and former head teacher – to identify what career guidance in England would be like if it were ‘good’ by international standards. In 2014 Sir John Holman’s ‘Good Career Guidance’ report (for Gatsby) was published.

Eight benchmarks of ‘Good Career Guidance’ were identified based on international research and evidence of what works. The benchmarks are as follows:-

**1. A stable careers programme**

**2. Learning from career and labour market information**

**3. Addressing the needs of each pupil**

**4. Linking curriculum learning to careers**

**5. Encounters with employers and employees**

**6. Experiences of work places**

**7. Encounters with further and higher education**

**8. Personal guidance**

Each of the benchmarks has key characteristics that make it up. To fully achieve a benchmark, a school must fully achieve all of its key characteristics. As part of the original research, a survey of 10% of schools in England found that no school fully achieved more than five of the eight benchmarks, with the majority of those schools surveyed fully achieving between zero and two benchmarks.

Following the publication of the Gatsby ‘Good Career Guidance Report’, the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) was asked to lead a national pilot to demonstrate how schools and colleges, from different starting points, can reach the high standard of the benchmarks. The pilot started in September 2015, involving 16 schools and colleges, with intensive activity taking place until summer 2017.

Results to date have been extremely encouraging. Interim reports show the following indicative estimates of progress:

* Average progress in year one was *+ two*, that is fully achieving two further benchmarks compared to starting point
* Average progress in year two is likely to be *+ four*, that is fully achieving four

further benchmarks compared to year two starting points

* Average progress from start year one to end of year two is likely to be *+ six*, that is fully achieving six further benchmarks compared to starting points.

Interim evaluation of the pilot indicates that the benchmarks demonstrate impact in a number of key areas:-

* The usefulness of the benchmarks as an auditing tool for schools/colleges to report on their own career guidance provision and to ‘action plan’ specific, measurable improvements.
* The results demonstrate that it is possible to make significant and rapid progress - using the benchmarks as a framework - to carefully target improvements in schools/colleges of every type, size, location and structure.
* New, strategic, relationships with employers now exist and schools/colleges have clear plans for engagement and systems in place to measure quality and impact. This includes an increase in the number of ‘careers’ or ‘business’ governors.
* New strategic and new delivery structures have also emerged in schools/colleges, maximising the impact of the benchmarks, including the re-allocation of existing resource towards careers provision.
* Curriculum integration – joint CPD, teacher/career leader placement in industry, digital delivery.
* The pilot has inspired collaboration and pioneering thinking in the approach to delivering good career guidance.

Careers Wales believes that the time is right to consider formally adopting these benchmarks in Wales. We believe that the benchmarks would complement the introduction of the career management skills framework i.e. the framework would guide schools in terms of learning and curriculum whilst the Gatsby benchmarks would provide clear direction for the delivery of CEIAG programmes within the new curriculum. Together these would form the basis of a new approach to evaluating the delivery of CEIAG by schools. Careers Wales would take on a role in evaluating the impact of these two approaches.

NB The North East pilot also concluded that “Analysis of evidence, emerging data and observations within the school / college visits over the duration of the pilot also suggests that progress against the benchmarks (and therefore improved careers provision for all young people) is greater and more rapid when the careers leader is either a member of the senior leadership team (SLT) or when they have a dedicated and active SLT link responsible for the strategic leadership and quality of careers provision” (p5). This further supports our view that the role of ‘Careers Leader’ should be formally adopted across schools in Wales.

1. **Introduce a new Careers Wales ‘Mark’ or ‘Excellence in Careers Education Award’ combining the new career management skills framework and Gatsby benchmarks**

Based on feedback from stakeholders in education at the time of its development, the current Careers Wales ‘Mark’ was designed to focus on continuous improvement rather than an assessment of the standards of CWoW delivery. Schools and colleges are required to undertake an audit against the CWoW framework and the Estyn common inspection framework, produce a development plan and then evidence commitment to achieving the plan.

The success of the Careers Wales Mark has been documented in reports to Welsh Government over many years, and it has received considerable support from stakeholders. For example, in the 2016 Welsh Government report *Talented Women for a Successful Wales* one of the recommendations is that all schools should commit to achieving the Mark at the earliest opportunity. In addition, numerous local authorities have included achievement of the Mark in their school improvement plans and in some authorities the take-up has been impressive, for example, in Vale of Glamorgan all secondary schools have completed the Mark.

Careers Wales is delighted that over 135 schools and colleges in Wales have achieved the Mark, and one of the recommendations from the 2012 Estyn thematic was for Welsh Government to encourage more schools to engage in the Mark process. Whilst we support this, and our own internal evaluation clearly supports a correlation between schools that have achieved the Mark and excellent Estyn inspection results, we are proposing a new approach which we believe will further improve the impact of such a process.

Careers Wales believes that we should introduce a new, 2-part ‘Excellence in Careers Education Award’. We would want to work with colleagues in Estyn to design the award (given their interest in measuring the impact on learner outcomes), and would also look to explore major employer support as well as formal accreditation, but as a starting point the award could be based on the following structure:-

**Stage 1** (branding to be agreed, but could be described as intermediate or silver award):-

* Based on the principles of continuous improvement as is the case with the existing Careers Wales Mark;
* Achievement of this stage would require schools to (a) audit against the CWoW framework (which will be skills based if the proposals in this paper are accepted and progressed), (b) audit against the new Estyn inspection arrangements, (c) produce a development plan outlining how the school will improve its current delivery of CWoW.

Structuring stage 1 of the award in this way would allow schools who require significant support to start the continuous improvement journey and not be ‘put off’ by an award which focused purely on evidence based standards.

**Stage 2** (branding to be agreed, but could be described as advanced or gold award):-

* For schools that have already completed stage 1;
* Achievement of this stage would be dependent on schools achieving an agreed number of Gatsby benchmarks e.g. 6 out of 8 benchmarks fully implemented. However, the benchmarks could also be used to further categorise the award based on realistic expectations;
* The achievement of the full award should be based on rigorous assessment. In that sense, there may be scope for Estyn to be involved in any form of accreditation.

An award of this nature would maintain current approaches to quality CWoW provision, but the addition of a stage based on standards (which in turn would be based on the Gatsby benchmarks should they be formally adopted in Wales) would serve to drive up standards and enhance the aspirations of schools to deliver far better CWoW learning. In line with proposals set out in *Changing Lives,* the Curriculum team within Careers Wales would provide schools with capacity building support to facilitate achievement of the award.

**Conclusion**

In summary, our proposals to enhance the delivery of CWoW in Wales include:-

* The introduction of the Careers Leader role in schools with clearly defined roles and responsibilities;
* The provision of formal CPD to support the implementation of this role;
* The development and introduction of a new career management skills framework to drive the delivery of careers support in schools;
* The formal adoption of the Gatsby benchmarks in Wales;
* The introduction of an ‘Excellence in Careers Education Award’, developed by Careers Wales and backed by Estyn and employers, to drive up standards.

**Recommendations**

Welsh Government colleagues should review these proposals and discuss in more detail with Careers Wales as part of remit negotiations for 2018/19.

**References**

Careers Wales (2017) - Changing Lives – A vision for Careers Wales 2017-20

Donaldson, G (2015) – Successful Futures

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Estyn (2014) – Learner support services for pupils aged 14-16

Estyn (2017) – Careers: The implementation of the careers and world of work framework in secondary schools

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Gatsby Charitable Foundation (2014) – Good Career Guidance

North East Local Enterprise Partnership (2017) **–** Making Good Career Guidance Great. An Update on the Good Career Guidance Benchmarks national pilot

Skills Development Scotland (2012) – Career Management Skills Framework for Scotland

Welsh Government (2008) – Careers and the world of work: a framework for 11 to 19 year olds in Wales

Welsh Government (2012) – Careers and the world of work: roles and responsibilities

Welsh Government (2015) – Qualified for Life: A curriculum for Wales – a curriculum for life

Welsh Government (2016) – Talented Women for a Successful Wales