

**Establishing World Class
Careers Education and Guidance
in Connexions Kent & Medway:
In-depth case studies**

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Foreword

This report is part of a larger project comprising various components that extend over the period March, 2007 to March 2008. The Institute for Employment Research at the University of Warwick is working with Connexions Kent & Medway on the design and implementation of an innovative approach to careers education and guidance (CEG) across the region. This project is designed to help the service prepare for the impartial information, advice and guidance (IAG) that will be required to support curriculum changes such as the new Diplomas and comply with the national standards for IAG for young people. It comprises four discrete, but inter-related work-packages:

- A thorough review of CEG provision in secondary schools, using a qualitative, in-depth case study approach;
- Designing, testing and recommending an approach for sustainable e-portfolio development for career education and guidance across the region;
- A feasibility study into the development of local labour market information for the region, available on-line; and
- Developing a model of sustainable training support for the use of effective labour market information in the IAG process.

This report is part of the first component listed above comprising five in-depth case studies which focus separately:

- The language of CEG;
- The role of the Partnership Agreement and Delivery Plan in CEG provision;
- Delivery of CEG in the curriculum;
- Labour market information provision in CEG; and
- Re-introducing CEG.

Disclaimer

It should be noted that views expressed in this report are not necessarily those of Connexions Kent & Medway, or indeed any of the schools in the Kent and Medway region.

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Executive summary

- Five schools participated in this case study research and provided rich and deep insights to five particular aspects of CEG provision.
- A common language was generally used to talk about and/or describe CEG provision, but differences were highlighted in understandings of the terms used. Overall, an holistic understanding of CEG was evident with the term 'careers' a key concept.
- Much of the language of CEG is considered, by staff, to be too complicated for some young people. Younger students demonstrated early understandings of the language which would develop over time, compared to older students who demonstrated a broader and more mature understanding of particular terms such as 'career'. More complex terminology, such as 'careers education and guidance' and 'information, advice and guidance', tended to be restricted to the Connexions Partnership Agreement and Delivery Plan, and discussions between careers professionals.
- Effective partnership between Connexions Kent & Medway and schools in the region are likely to be developed and maintained through the Partnership Agreement and Delivery Plan. Key factors are: effective working relationships; continuity of staff in both organisations; reflective practice; together with clear and constant communication. Further, integrating a shared understanding and vision for CEG and embedding the ethos of IAG into the Schools Improvement Plan and Schools Evaluation Form documents will enhance any partnership agreement.
- A robust CEG model can accommodate, successfully, both curriculum integration and targeted, stand-alone elements, provided it responds to students' needs at different key stages, with targeted inputs for each year group. This, importantly, includes personalised and tailored activities for students with particular learning needs, and/or those disengaged from the curriculum. Optimally, the expertise of school staff will both complement and enhance that of Connexions Kent & Medway employees, for the benefit of students.

- Labour market information (LMI) is critical to the objectives of CEG provision, although time and resource constraints will determine how much LMI can be researched. Students should be supported and encouraged to undertake their own research in to the labour market in a way that is relevant to their needs and aspirations.
- Useful LMI includes: local labour market information; regional employment trends; employment areas of growing importance and in decline (locally, regionally and nationally); employment forecasts; skill needs and future requirements (skills that are valued by employers); earnings, including starting salaries for graduates; routes in to specific jobs; and career narratives.
- The socio-economic context in which any school operates needs to be taken into account in the provision of CEG services. Professional judgements by teaching staff of relevant provision will be strongly influenced by their perceptions of what will benefit students and what fits with the school ethos. Services provided by Connexions Kent & Medway should take account of the schools aims and objectives as well as its own.

1. Introduction

1.1 Project aim

The aim of this research is to provide an accurate indication of current careers education and guidance (CEG) provision in Kent and Medway. It was commissioned by Connexions Kent & Medway service, which is committed to establishing a careers education and guidance system that is world class across the region. Specifically, its objectives are to:

- Provide an in-depth account of elements of CEG provision in 5 schools from the perspectives of key stakeholders involved in its delivery; and
- Establish which critical success factors and strategies contribute to the delivery of coherent CEG services alongside the schools in the region.

1.2 Background to the project

This is the second of two research reports on CEG in the Kent and Medway region. General background information to the research is provided in the first report¹ (section 1.2).

1.3 Methodology

The methodology adopted for the five in-depth case studies of schools in the Kent and Medway region is defined in this section.

Research sample

Participation of five schools was secured for this second phase of research (see appendix 1 for descriptors of the participating schools). Four were drawn from the survey of 15 schools undertaken prior to this phase. The fifth school was included as it had recently undergone management changes and represented an interesting case study in which CEG activity was developing and growing in importance. The schools were located in different regional sites across Kent and Medway and represented different types of schools.

¹ Bimrose, J., Marris, L. & Barnes, S-A. (2007). Establishing world class careers education and guidance in Kent and Medway: Phase 2 – Scoping exercise. Warwick: Institute for Employment Research.

In the first instance schools were approached by senior management in Connexions Kent & Medway (that is, members of the project management team for the research), to invite participation. After the initial approach, a researcher continued the detailed negotiations with participating schools, taking advice from the initial contact regarding key personnel in the delivery of CEG (see appendix 2 for the school briefing note and individual consent forms). Staff within the schools identified those who needed to be interviewed to meet the research objectives and organised the schedule for the visit.

Each case study was unique as a different element of CEG provision was investigated. Case study protocols and interview proforma were developed for each case study (see appendix 3). In one case study school, a more flexible approach to interviewing was adopted, and the revised protocol and interview proforma in appendix 3.5 reflects the types of questions asked. A combination of research methods for data collection were used including: observation; informal interviewing; focus groups; and the examination of key school documents. In each of the participating schools key stakeholders (such as students, school-based CEG staff, other school staff, senior managers in the school and Connexions Kent & Medway staff) were interviewed. It was the aim of each case study to gain an in-depth understanding of one specific element of CEG provision in that school. It provided models of interesting practice which offered deep and rich insights to the challenges for Connexions Kent & Medway in working alongside schools to provide 'world class' CEG.

Data collection

Two researchers visited each school for a day to conduct the observations and interviews. In two schools focus groups were conducted with students. Protocols were developed for each case study and sent in advance to the schools to ensure a shared understanding of the aims of the visits. These were derived from the findings of a literature review on CEG provision in England and the scoping exercise examining CEG provision in 15 schools, both undertaken before this phase of fieldwork by the research team. In each of the five schools an in-depth case study of one element of CEG provision was undertaken as follows:

- The language of CEG;
- The role of the Partnership Agreement and Delivery Plan;
- Delivery of CEG in the curriculum;
- Labour market information provision in CEG; and

- Re-introducing CEG.

Agreement from all participants to participate was explicitly negotiated and their agreement recorded (see appendix 2).

Data analysis

Field researchers who visited each school wrote up their interview and observation notes, producing summaries of the themes emerging. These two researchers then worked closely together to ensure the accuracy of interpretation and understanding. Senior school staff involved in CEG provision (and where appropriate Connexions staff) were asked to scrutinise the report for their school to check for accuracy. Conclusions are based on both the case study summaries and emerging themes from the research findings.

1.4 Report structure

This report comprises seven sections, with the introductory section outlining the introduction, the aim of the project and the methodology adopted for the five in-depth case studies. Sections two, three, four, five and six present the main findings of the in-depth review which are organised around the investigated elements of CEG provision. Specifically, these are:

- The language of CEG;
- The role of the Partnership Agreement and Delivery Plan in CEG provision;
- Delivery of CEG in the curriculum;
- Labour market information provision in CEG; and
- Re-introducing CEG.

The final section of the report presents overall conclusions that have arisen from the findings of this research.

2. The language of CEG

The focus of this case study is the language used around careers education and guidance (CEG) within one school in the Kent and Medway region. The aim is to provide an understanding of what this term means in practice to different stakeholders, together with an exploration of the possibility of developing a collective language for careers related activities. It offers insights to how language is used in current practice, whilst recognising that policy changes to CEG provision have influenced what terminology is used and how it is interpreted. As such, it represents one model of how language is used in the area of CEG provision, highlighting some challenges and constraints for Connexions Kent & Medway in working with schools to provide 'CEG' that is understood by different stakeholders.

2.1 Case study context

The need for a common language around CEG in schools is a critical issue as a broad range of stakeholders (e.g. students, school managers, Connexions staff, school based CEG staff and parents) are involved. Recent research indicates that nearly two thirds of participants (n=21, 62%) emphasised the importance of clear, unambiguous terminology². An understanding of the terminology used by recipients of CEG and key stakeholders involved in delivering CEG is important to achieve an accurate understanding of current provision and potential need, together with expectations about what is to be delivered. Staff at the school used for this particular case study similarly emphasised that the language around CEG is critical as it conveys to users the provision that is available. Emphasis was placed on the importance of advice that was impartial, which broadened horizons and raised aspirations.

2.2 Understanding CEG activity and the language used

CEG provision is regarded by staff associated with this school as a programme of activities that enables young people (by giving them the tools) to make choices regarding future work. It is considered essential for young people comprehending their capabilities, available options and, more importantly, 'how to get there'. The school's aim is to enable its students to achieve self-awareness and independence in

² Bimrose, Marris & Barnes, Op Cit.

terms of: locating information; accessing information; and understanding who staff are and what they do. Language is seen as pivotal. Data on language were collected from key staff involved in CEG provision and two focus groups with Year 11 and Year 12 students.

CEG provision appears to be well embedded in school activities, starting in Year 8. Vocational courses, in particular, stimulate activities relevant to CEG. In addition, there are specific CEG programmes operating in the school with individualised and tailored support also available. Individual study time is occasionally used to convey CEG related information. However, some CEG activities are not clearly signposted as careers-related provision since it well integrated in to the curriculum. For instance, in vocational courses, students have to research different professions to understand the qualifications needed for different roles. These are distinct from sessions labelled 'careers'. The case study school adopts what was defined as a 'drip-drip' approach to careers guidance with the ultimate aim of raising aspirations. This approach is seen as appropriate as careers related activities and decision points are seen as 'natural' to the students. However, some staff indicated that despite existing provision, there were still gaps in knowledge with, for example, young people failing to understand sufficiently the differences between academic and vocational pathways.

Current CEG provision currently comprises the following. In Year 8 students are introduced to careers activities. The first 'high impact' event is a day centred on the *Real Game*³. This event is labelled as a careers activity and involves the Connexions Personal Adviser (PA) in its introduction. Students are told that it is about the 'world of work' and is seen as a positive method of stimulating students to start thinking about careers⁴. Year 9 students participate in decision making workshops run by the PA. Year 10 students have more frequent contact with the PA through group work sessions and where appropriate individual sessions. Year 10 students also spend

³ The Real Game is a lifestyle, learning and earning teaching resource for Key Stage 3 students. It is a flexible resource used to deliver the learning outcomes for CEG, Citizenship and PSHE and also supports the development of Enterprise education. The resource can be used cross curricular to deliver the personal development agenda. <http://www.realgame.co.uk/>

⁴ This event was particularly remembered by Year 11 students participating in one of the focus groups for the case study research.

approximately 10 hours a week on vocational courses, from which careers related activities naturally arise. A member of staff commented that careers is so well embedded it is just 'natural' for students. Further activities explicitly labelled as 'careers', include group sessions on 'how to make decisions', introductions to the careers software programmes, work experience, careers fairs, employer trips and Higher Education visits.

There is a strong emphasis on careers and future employment in sixth form lessons (Years 12 and 13), with students spending up to 16 hours a week on vocational courses. This inevitably stimulates discussion and activities around CEG themes such as the reality of the work place, entry routes and the changing nature of particular professions. As part of the sixth form offer there is support for completing university and employment applications, CV writing and interview skills. Higher Education visits are aimed at giving students an appreciation of possible opportunities and motivating them to achieve the required qualifications. Sixth form students, participating in one of the focus groups, valued Higher Education visits through which they gained an appreciation of what it would be like at university. Discussions with university 'ambassadors' enabled this understanding as students believed that they were 'speaking their language'. However, sixth form students identified that they would also value a similar emphasis on visits to employers. CEG activities in the school have, where possible, input from the Connexions PA, which helps signpost it clearly as 'careers'. Older students were thought to be more able to recognise careers-related activities, which was borne out in the focus group discussions.

Defining the work of Connexions in the school

The Connexions PA in the school is known by their first name and referred to as a 'careers adviser'. The PA is a trained careers guidance practitioner and works in the school as a 'Guidance PA'. Prior to the introduction of the Connexions service, the PA was employed as a careers adviser at the school, so their role is well established. The official term '(Connexions) Personal Adviser' is rarely used in the school. Several staff stressed that this job title is meaningless, not reflecting (or conveying) accurately the role and responsibilities of the Connexions PA. Commonly, the PA is described to students as 'someone to help with choices' and 'someone to help with what you can do after school'.

Students understand that the Guidance PA works for Connexions, so that they will understand from where branded information has originated and who to ask if they have queries about the information. Students also understand that although 'their PA' can help with a broad range of issues, other specialist PAs are brought into the school to support students with particular needs, such as housing, benefits, and social and emotional problems. Students are able to self-refer to the Guidance PA for help as an open door policy is in operation. The work of the PA is highly valued in the school receiving the same level of respect from both students as school staff, with the professional identity of the PA as a 'careers guidance' adviser valued. It is understood that the PA offers independent and impartial advice, and using their forename is a way of separating their role from school staff. In the focus group discussions with students in Years 11 and 12, their understanding of the PA's role was well articulated, demonstrating a clear comprehension of what support and information can be provided. The effective integration of the PA into the school and CEG activity may have helped this understanding.

2.3 Understandings of CEG terminology

As previously indicated, understandings of CEG terminology amongst the staff and student were captured through individual interviews and two student focus group discussions with Years 11 and 12. The following terms were discussed with staff and students to gain an understanding of what each conveyed in terms of provision and expectations.

Careers education and guidance

The term 'careers education and guidance' is utilised and understood by staff in the school, but is not necessarily used with students until the sixth form. This term was also used in Partnership Agreements and Delivery Plans. There were congruent understandings amongst staff regarding CEG provision and its aims within the school.

Students in Years 11 and 12 had a high degree of engagement with discussions concerning CEG reflecting the significance they felt the next transition point would have on their future. The Year 11 students spoke of starting to 'feel scared', understanding the increasing relevance of CEG. Reflecting on their own experiences, some students suggested that it would have been helpful to have had

access to some of the careers related activities earlier. However, others felt that in Year 9 they were not ready to recognise the importance of CEG and lacked interest.

Information, advice and guidance

The term 'information, advice and guidance' (IAG) was less likely to be used, but was considered essential terminology by both Connexions and school careers staff. There was some uncertainty regarding the definition of this term, but it was broadly defined as giving people the skills to make decisions and informed choices. There was some speculation that this terminology could be useful with sixth form students. It was also noted that this type of language is used in the guidelines for the new vocational diplomas, specifically the requirement for all students to have access to impartial IAG.

Careers

The term 'careers' was used by the majority of staff with responsibility for CEG spoken to in the school. Alternatives were terms such as 'aspirations', 'future' and 'pathways', and questions such as 'what do you want to do?'. For Year 11 students, 'career' was understood and defined as: part of their future life; what you want to do; work; 'the whole-thing' to do with money, job, bills, etc.; and 'how your life fits together'.

Sixth form students stated that the term 'careers' was used in discussions about jobs. When asked what the term 'career' meant, sixth form students related it to their own aspirations. Students equated 'career' with a job: to progress in (with occupational examples of teaching and medicine); to enjoy and to gain satisfaction from; and something you can see yourself doing for a long time. 'Stacking shelves in a supermarket' was regarded as a job, but not believed to represent a career. For sixth form students, careers activities were aimed at learning more than just about the 'world of work'. It was clear that their comprehension of 'career' was not just about one job in one industry. In this context, 'industry' was used to encourage students to learn about roles to broaden their understanding of opportunities available to them.

Connexions

The Connexions service has a well integrated role in this school's CEG activities. Participants found it difficult to differentiate between the services provided by Connexions and the role of the PA. The Connexions service is understood to offer impartial careers advice and guidance, plus some general advice for other problems.

Students with more complex issues can access specialist support from Connexions. Staff understood the role of the Connexions to be all encompassing and not just about careers. When asked why they may visit the Connexions office, sixth form students responded by listing wide ranging issues, from career guidance to housing issues to family problems. Year 11 students were, however, more likely to regard Connexions as offering more limited support with choices and opportunities.

Personal adviser

Within this case study school the term 'Personal Adviser' was not used for the Guidance PA, but those PAs with particular expertise who were brought in to the school to work with specific groups (such as young offenders and 'looked after children') were known, by staff and students, as 'Personal Advisers'. Students generally understood a 'personal adviser' to be from Connexions and not part of the school, helping with personal issues, family life and bullying. One member of staff noted that the title, for example, 'Personal Adviser (Looked after Children)' was helpful as it raised awareness amongst students of the specialist services available to them from Connexions. However, the same the member of staff also indicated sensitivity is required with some PA titles to avoid identifying students requiring specialist support in sensitive areas.

As indicated above, neither staff nor students used the term 'Guidance PA', preferring the label 'careers adviser'. In this context, the term 'careers adviser' had a broad remit. Sixth form students were explicit about this, stating the PA: shows concern; lets you make your own decision; shows respect; follows up conversations; and speaks to people for us even though (name) does not have to do it. There were mixed responses regarding help offered by the Connexions PA where a student is unsure about their future. The Connexions PA was described as someone to talk to, much like a 'Samaritan'. All students valued the PA's role as an intermediary and advocate. For example, the PA was identified as having helped one individual find a job including accompanying the student to an interview, as well as assisting in the completion of applications for Education Maintenance Allowance and helping with CVs.

Work experience

Expectations about work experience were fairly congruent amongst both staff and students. Amongst students, work experience was understood to be an opportunity to learn about a job and get a 'taste' of a career you might want to do. Staff

perceptions of work experience were broader, defining it as an opportunity for students to learn not just about one job, but to experience and learn about the 'world of work'. Staff view it as an opportunity to prepare students for the workplace.

2.4 Suggested language to convey CEG provision

The term 'careers' was considered as essential by the majority of staff and students to convey current and future CEG provision in schools. It was also regarded as most appropriate for use with parents, conveying the right information and creating realistic expectations regarding provision. An alternative perspective was the observation that the language used to describe the careers related activities was inconsequential, as long as a quality service was being delivered. In general, 'careers' encompassed a general programme of CEG provision aimed at engaging young people in connecting with future choices. More specifically, it conveys: the next transition point; a longer perspective on available options; the connection between school and work; and making explicitly the relationship between school learning and achievements with future options.

Future shifts in language might usefully encompass terms such as 'transferable skills' and 'flexibility' within CEG activities to reflect the need for current students to adapt to the changing world of work.

2.5 Conclusion

The language of CEG needs to be explicit and accessible to all. It should be part of the process of helping students: make informed decisions; gain an understanding of routes available; where routes could lead; and who will support students in making those choices. Staff reported that younger students require more explanation and clarification, and agreed that careers language and activities needed to be introduced earlier in the curriculum. It was recognised that with the integration of Connexions services in the school, students were generally better informed.

Years 11 and 12 students had very clear understandings about careers, choices and the role of the Connexions PAs. They were able to articulate what a career meant to them. Although some students were unable to identify any specific CEG activities, when prompted, these were positively remembered (e.g. Real Game).

Overall, specific terms used with students varied depending on perceived ability and levels of understanding. Consideration is given to the growing number of students with social and behavioural problems, English as an additional language (EAL) and those on the Autistic spectrum. For example, translators are required for EAL students using the Real Game to ensure that the purpose of this activity is understood. Sixth students were more likely to reflect on these terms in relation to their own experiences. Whilst, Year 11 students talked more in terms of future activities and actions.

2.6 Summary

Within the case study school, a common language was generally used to talk about and/or describe CEG provision, but differences were highlighted in understandings of the terms used. Much of the language of CEG is considered, by staff, to be too complicated for some young people. Younger students demonstrated early understandings of the language which would develop over time, compared to older students who demonstrated a broader and more mature understanding of particular terms such as 'career'. More complex terminology, such as 'careers education and guidance' and 'information, advice and guidance', tended to be restricted to the Connexions Partnership Agreement and Delivery Plan, and discussions between careers professionals. Overall, an holistic understanding of CEG was evident with the term 'careers' a key concept.

3. The role of the Partnership Agreement and Delivery Plan in CEG provision

An in-depth understanding of the relationship between one school and Connexions Kent & Medway formalised through the Partnership Agreement and the Delivery Plan is the focus of this case study. The Partnership Agreement represents the formal agreement between the school and Connexions, compared with the Delivery Plan, which sets out the daily operational arrangements of CEG provision to support the school's information, advice and guidance programme. Insights are presented into how the process of developing and agreeing the Partnership Agreement and Delivery Plan ensuring the mutual targets for careers education and guidance (CEG) are met. It, therefore, represents a model of interesting practice in which the relationship between the school and the Connexions service is effectively developed and maintained for both parties.

3.1 Case study context

A previous study⁵ suggested that the relationship between individual schools and the Connexions service is crucial in the ability of the Connexions service to deliver a consistently high level of service. The foundation of effective relationships between the Connexions service and the school is clear communication and mutual understanding of the offer of service provision. The majority of schools surveyed for the previous study indicated that they had both Partnership Agreements and Delivery Plans – and that they found one or both of these useful. The school under investigation in this context reported an effective and successful process in developing and agreeing both documents to provide CEG provision.

3.2 Developing and implementing the Partnership Agreement and Delivery Plan

Partnership Agreement

The Partnership Agreement is the formal agreement between the school and the Connexions service, setting out and formalising how Connexions will support CEG provision for the pending academic year by providing a framework (which is both

⁵ Bimrose, Marris & Barnes, Op cit.

flexible and adaptable) in which Personal Advisers (PAs) can work in the school. This framework also ensures that where more than one PA is working within the school because of specific PA's specialisms (for example, careers guidance, pre-vocational guidance and intensive support) their work complements, rather than duplicates activities also provided by the schools CEG programme. The agreement was described by school staff as formalising where the school sees itself in a year, reflecting the vision of the school and what it wants to achieve. It is this particular school's vision that every student should have the opportunity to break through educational barriers to achieve their goals. The CEG provision within the school is integrated across the curriculum involving several staff across the school. This is regarded as a successful model with the school reporting low NEET figures (students 'not in education, employment or training' after compulsory education), compared with other similar non-selective schools in the area.

The Partnership Agreement is initially written by Connexions management, developed within specified parameters (e.g. resources and time constraints). The Partnership Agreement meeting with school staff is led by the Connexions Local Manager with the Link/Lead PA in attendance. During the meeting, the agreement is discussed, reviewed and revised where appropriate for the forthcoming academic year. In this school, each party is well prepared for the meeting. The allocated Senior Leader collates school responses and documents, whilst the Lead/Link PA may feedback on the informal student evaluations of CEG provision, to ensure students have a voice in future provision. For example, students have highlighted the need for more careers work in Years 7 and 8⁶, which is starting to be addressed in the Delivery Plan. The Head of the Learning Support Unit also meets to discuss and review the Partnership Agreement and the Delivery Plan with the Connexions PA who works closely with the Unit. These particular discussions also feed into the more formal process. The Partnership Agreement itself is not normally reviewed until re-negotiation, unless there are particular issues arising which the Local Manager needs to address with the school. In this school context, progress is discussed informally between the allocated Senior Leader and Lead/Link PA at different points of the year with elements noted that need revising and/or updating with the school careers manager. For instance, the introduction of the New Diplomas to the curriculum will

⁶ However, others questioned the need and role of careers guidance for those in Years 7 and 8, or those with additional learning needs as some are not considered ready to make choices and for other choices are determined by other influences, such as ability.

need to be included in the next Partnership Agreement as each diploma stipulates the requirement for information, advice and guidance (IAG), which will be in the remit of Connexions.

The new Partnership Agreement is founded upon the previous document and its revised elements. The meeting to produce the revised agreement takes approximately 1-1.5 hours. A formal meeting is then held, at a later stage usually held in the summer term, between the allocated Senior Leader, Connexions Local Manager/Senior Locality PA and the school Lead/Link PA in which any further issues (such as attendance at transitional and inclusion reviews, the need for a confidential space, school/Connexions targets etc.) are raised and agreed upon before the document is signed by all parties. The role of Connexions Local Manager/Senior Locality PA are considered important as they are sometimes better placed to answer questions raised by the school, and represent organisational backup for the PAs working in the school. Participation of the senior Connexions staff provides confidence in what can be delivered and achieved by the PAs. Developing and agreeing the Partnership Agreement is not regarded as problematic, mainly as problems and issues encountered are usually addressed at the time. Both the school manager and Lead/Link PA reported that their ongoing dialogue was key to the process of developing and agreeing the Partnership Agreement. This dialogue is enhanced at school by email communication between the Connexions Lead/Link PA and school staff with immediate responses being available where necessary. Additionally, the Lead/Link Connexions PA is also able to forward relevant appropriate information to other PAs in the team at the school ensuring that all concerned are well informed supporting the delivery plan activities.

Delivery Plan

The Delivery Plan sets out the daily operational arrangements of how Connexions will support the school's CEG provision based on the Partnership Agreement and how the school will support the provision required to assist the Connexions PAs to deliver their activities as outlined in the Delivery Plan. It is founded upon joint delivery targets outlined in the Partnership Agreement. The Delivery Plan is regarded as a development plan for the school year and feeds directly into the Schools Improvement Plan and Schools Evaluation Form. It defines the working relationship between the school and Connexions. It is discussed and agreed at a separate meeting from the Partnership Agreement and includes the allocated Senior Leader and all Connexions PAs working in the school when possible.

Each statement from the Partnership Agreement is translated as an 'activity' in the Delivery Plan. Activities include those that are standard, legally required and new activities, which have been identified throughout the previous academic year. For each activity an appropriate method of delivery for each year group is outlined, responsibility and timing in the school year are assigned, and finally, the school support required for Connexions to complete this activity effectively is defined. Overall, it offers a range of approaches to CEG delivery. The Delivery Plan is reviewed throughout the year when considered necessary by the team, but minimally in December and again at the new Partnership Agreement meeting in the summer term. The Delivery Plan is reviewed in terms of whether: activity is being delivered using the best possible method; which other staff should be involved in what activity; and whether additional activities need to be delivered within the time allocated to the school. A key element of the Delivery Plan review is to assess whether the activities agreed for CEG have taken place, whether there are any outstanding gaps, plus highlight priority areas for the remaining academic year. The Delivery Plan evolved over time in terms of both need and future planning.

The Delivery Plan for this school is, however, possibly unique since an Annex has recently been included to incorporate the work of one PA who is working in a specialist capacity in the school. This PA adopts a very tailored approach to their work with the students, which is difficult to plan and predict in the forthcoming year. Consequently, a practice has evolved in which an Annex is attached to the Delivery Plan estimating the activities they are likely to be engaged in throughout the year. Similar to the Delivery Plan, activities are outlined, year groups assigned and expected outcomes are summarised for each month of the forthcoming year. Through experience of past activities, this Annex will be reviewed and revised as part of the Delivery Plan as part of good practice.

3.3 The Partnership Agreement and Delivery Plan in practice

The Partnership Agreement plays a significant role in the school's CEG provision. It sets out and provides the parameters for the delivery of impartial IAG, which is regarded as essential for young people to broaden their horizons as their choices and aspirations can be influenced by peers and their family.

Within the school, there is a good understanding of what structures need to be in place to ensure that the Partnership Agreement is delivered. Part of the allocated Senior Leader's role was to maintain those structures. Planning and maintaining these structures involves: assessing which teaching and non-teaching staff need to be part of CEG provision; determining what staff and resources are required to ensure the effective delivery of CEG provision; appraising the delivery environment; and evaluating student opinions. Provision in the school and from the Connexions service is regarded as part of an holistic system of delivery with structures in place to ensure equality and impartiality. This aims to ensure that all students have access to the help and support they need and because of this, the provision is considered to be adaptable.

One element of the Delivery Plan, the work within the Learning Support Unit (LSU), not only represents an effective way in which the Delivery Plan is actually put into practice, but also illustrates the successful relationship between the school and Connexions PAs. Within the LSU, a more holistic approach to solving problems (including educational, socio-economic, emotional and behavioural) is required. Students referred to the unit are often disengaged from the curriculum, lack motivation and have low aspirations. To address this, they are offered the opportunity of personalised learning plans and support from appropriate external agencies. A panel at the school makes decisions on which students need to be referred, and to which agency, for support. However, there is a focus on delivery within the school, so referrals to the Connexions PAs are highly valued. One PA works intensively with the unit and has an active caseload of students who are seen on a regular basis. There was evidence of a shared understanding of the aims of the unit between the LSU team and the Connexions PA, which is supported by ongoing dialogue, shared targets and clear working practices. This working relationship, which is extremely effective, was described as a 'natural process', because it had evolved over time.

A further example of the effective partnership between the school and Connexions in practice is represented by the operation of the school careers library. The careers library staff receive highly valued support from the Connexions PA to identify resources. The careers library within the school has achieved the Connexions library certificate. Within the Partnership Agreement there are two aspirational statements regarding the careers library which represent clear guidelines for what has to be achieved in the school.

In practice, delivery can sometimes be adversely affected by students not attending their interviews with the PAs and lack of IT access for some PAs. However, effective communication with staff and students via the email system ensures that students are chased up immediately with positive effect. The only concerns expressed about the partnership related to impending changes to the structure and operation of the Connexions service, which may impact negatively on the work of the PAs in the school. More flexibility in the way PAs work in the future was considered to be of potential benefit to the school, as CEG related activities could undoubtedly be enriched by their input. Language used previously in the Partnership Agreement regarding the PA's role in raising student grades was felt to be inappropriate. The recent shift in wording around such targets, to include terms such as 'working towards' and 'influence', was welcomed.

3.4 Developing and maintaining the relationship

The partnership established between the school and Connexions staff is regarded as successful by key stakeholders. The foundation for this partnership is a clearly defined vision, forming the basis on which Connexions helps the school realise their overall vision. Within the case study school, there is evidence both of a strong educational pedagogy and a firm commitment to the philosophy underpinning the government document *Every Child Matters*⁷. Clear delivery structures are in place, and maintained, to ensure that there is more than sufficient support (such as staffing and resources) in place to enable Connexions to work effectively. These same structures not only support the school in taking responsibility for CEG provision where appropriate, but also release Connexions staff to work more flexibly with students.

The constructive working relationship between the school and the Connexions service is maintained by:

- Utilising the individual specialisms of the different Connexions PAs within the school to support CEG provision;
- Adopting a pragmatic and functional approach to reaching targets and using resources (for example, the requirements and targets of each organisation

⁷ Department for Education and Skills (2003) *Every Child Matters*. Norwich: Department for Education and Skills. Cmd 5860. Retrieved May 26, 2007 from: <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/files/EBE7EEAC90382663E0D5BBF24C99A7AC.pdf>

are taken into account during the development of the Partnership Agreement and Delivery Plan);

- Embracing process of reflective practice in which the Partnership Agreement and Delivery Plan are continually reviewed, evaluated and revised to adapt to the needs of the students, which feeds into the development of the next Partnership Agreement;
- Ongoing formal and informal dialogue (supported by IT) not only between school staff and the Connexions team, but also within the Connexions team, which ensures ideas and information are shared as well as providing peer support;
- Maintaining of professional identity, particularly for the PAs,; and
- Respecting for professional expertise and reciprocal trust in that expertise.

3.5 Conclusion

There is a shared understanding that the effective partnership working should not be taken for granted and that effort should be invested in its maintenance. The Partnership Agreement and Delivery Plan work well in the school, but are considered as 'work in progress' as improvement is always possible. However, questions need to be raised regarding the possible impact of staff changes on the current Partnership. In addition, forthcoming curriculum changes (i.e. the introduction of Vocational pathways) will require a review of how the partnership agreement is formulated and operates in this new challenging educational landscape.

The roles of the Partnership Agreement and the Delivery Plan in CEG provision are considered important by both the case study school and the Connexions staff working in that school. Innovative practices for including the work of PAs have been offered in the addition of an Annex to the Delivery Plan outlining the support of one PA working in a specialist capacity. Ongoing dialogue and reflective practice seem to be paramount in the effective partnership working and the delivery of the Partnership Agreement together. Within this particular school, the context of the agreement and plan are considered more important than the mechanics of developing the Partnership Agreement. This context is founded with continuity of staff, natural trust and professional respect between all parties.

3.6 Summary

This case study provides an interesting model in which the relationship between the school and the Connexions service has been effectively developed and maintained through the Partnership Agreement and Delivery Plan. It exemplifies a partnership, which is built upon effective working relationships between school staff and Connexions staff, continuity of staff in both organisations, reflective practice, plus clear and constant communication. This relationship has enabled a shared understanding and vision for CEG in this particular school by embedding the ethos of advice and guidance into the Schools Improvement Plan and Schools Evaluation Form documents that structures all working practices within the school. This has been achieved because the value of advice and guidance is the responsibility of a member of the school leadership team. Consequently, it highlights a process which is not, to a large extent, formalised except at the actual Partnership Agreement meeting in the summer term. The good relationship between school staff and Connexions staff means that the process of drawing up the Delivery Plan and its review can be less formal. The ongoing review and evaluation of CEG provision and services by the team ensures that the Partnership Agreement is constantly revised throughout the academic year.

4. Delivery of CEG in the curriculum

This case study provides an in-depth understanding of the operation and features of careers education and guidance (CEG) provision within one curriculum delivery model in the Kent and Medway region, together with an indication of recent changes implemented to improve provision and delivery. It represents a model of interesting practice which offers deep and rich insights both to the types of opportunities that exist for developing and enhancing CEG models of delivery, as well as highlighting some challenges and constraints for Connexions Kent & Medway.

4.1 Case study context

Although CEG is a statutory element of the curriculum in England, the fine details of careers education programmes located within particular models of delivery are currently determined by schools. Consequently, the role of CEG in the curriculum is constantly evolving in response to local conditions and the management priorities of schools. Change at this micro-level is occurring within the broader national context, which is also constantly shifting in response to changing educational policies. It is, therefore, perhaps unsurprising that no one CEG curriculum model prevails in schools. A previous report⁸ identified four distinct models of current CEG curriculum provision in the Kent and Medway region. These are: 'integrated', where CEG was embedded in various ways throughout the curriculum; 'stand-alone', in which designated CEG activities were delivered in specific, identifiable lessons; 'peripheral', where CEG was somewhat marginalised and *ad hoc*; and 'transitional', where CEG provision was in a state of flux because of changes within the school (e.g. re-location; new management; staff changes). The school under scrutiny for this particular case study described a model in which their current CEG curriculum model was transitional, according to this typology.

4.2 Developing and implementing a CEG curriculum model

From an exploration of this CEG curriculum model, it is possible to outline key features and recent processes which characterise its operation as 'transitional'.

⁸ Bimrose, Marris & Barnes, Op cit.

CEG in transition

This CEG model had recently undergone changes, with others planned. It had developed over a three year period during which there has been a shift from a curriculum model of Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and careers, to 'citizenship' and 'health'. Personal tutors deliver the citizenship element of the curriculum to their form groups, in which CEG is integrated. These tutors are teaching staff who have moved with their cohort of students up the school. Students (up to Year 11) have four tutor-led periods of 30 minutes timetabled each week. Just one of these is dedicated to citizenship with the other three periods used for: ICT, 'tutor time' (for school related administration activities) and a weekly assembly. Other curriculum elements (some delivered on an *ad hoc* basis) are included as part of citizenship, in addition to CEG, throughout the year.

In addition to CEG delivered as part of the citizenship programme, targeted elements are timetabled, such as: various enterprise activities; discreet vocational courses; and varied inputs from external agencies (e.g. local employers, Higher and Further educational institutions, East Kent Education Business Partnership, as well as Connexions Kent & Medway). Work experience for all Year 10 students and extended work related learning for some Years 10-13 are additional components with clear relevance to CEG.

Ultimately, the aim of this evolving, transitional model is to ensure comprehensive and effective CEG coverage for all students. Its status has recently improved in the school with the careers education programme becoming increasingly integrated within the core curriculum. The current model is characterised by the routine use of tutors in its delivery as an integral part of the curriculum, with strong external links to the world of work. It is underpinned by key school policies (e.g. teaching and learning; citizenship; work experience; equal opportunities; equality and diversity; health and safety; inclusion; gifted and talented children; and special needs) and a clear commitment from the school management is evident.

Learning from others

An interesting feature of the development of this particular CEG curriculum model is the way in which the process has been influenced by knowledge and understanding of practices in other schools, both nationally and internationally. At a national level, members of staff with responsibility for CEG have informal contact with other schools in the locality. This facilitates a cross-fertilization of ideas, with the potential to

enhance and enrich developments. Internationally, field visits to South Africa, Australia and India, undertaken as part of an ongoing programme of international exchange and collaboration, represent a rich source of stimulus for new ideas. Whilst recognising different levels of resources available in different countries, and national contexts, this collaboration had nevertheless resulted in the school scrutinising its own CEG curriculum provision, with ideas generated being 'blended' within the current curriculum and delivery model.

4.3 Characteristics of the curriculum and CEG in practice

Characteristic features of this transitional CEG curriculum model, comprising integrated and targeted, stand alone elements are outlined below.

Tutor-led sessions

As indicated in section 4.2 above, CEG is an integral part of citizenship and delivered by personal tutors. CEG related activities are also delivered in tutor-led sessions other than those dedicated to citizenship. For example, in ICT tutor-led time, students are introduced to relevant CEG software packages. Additionally, targeted activities relevant to CEG (such as visits from the Connexions PA, work experience preparation, Area Prospectus training etc.) are delivered at relevant points of the academic year.

CEG activity in the core curriculum

In addition to CEG being undertaken in citizenship, it is also delivered within specific core curriculum subjects. For example, students are taught to prepare and write a 'Curriculum Vitae' in English classes and in Sport Studies students are encouraged to research a career in that occupational sector. Indeed, it seemed likely that other subject teachers may well be delivering CEG activities, but the precise nature and extent of this was unknown by school staff with responsibility for the delivery of CEG.

Vocational specialisms

All Year 9 students are able to start the BTEC in Vocational Studies, which is a two year course. This introductory qualification is accredited at Level 1 and enables students to undertake a combination of vocational units in different sectors, such as hair and beauty, child care, wood occupations and construction. They are taught by specialist tutors and linked to relevant employers. A CEG module is an integral part

of this provision and is delivered by the relevant subject tutor; together with links to the world of work that typically underpin vocational courses.

Work experience

The aim of work experience within this CEG curriculum model is to encourage students to build life skills, rather than decide on a career. All Year 10 students participate in a two-week work experience programme. This is managed by East Kent Education Business Partnership through an online application process, which both helps orientate students and explore different jobs. Placements can be difficult to secure because of competition with other schools, so students select up to four options, with those with particularly limited opportunities clearly indicated. Preparation involves completion of a workbook, with dedicated activities in tutor time on how to maximise learning from their work experience. Tutors visit the students during their work experience and complete a report, which is included in the student's 'record of achievement'. After work experience, students are comprehensively debriefed, including a discussion with the Connexions PA, with work experience certificates awarded at an assembly.

For those students (including Year 12 students) with greater learning needs, or who are considered disengaged from the curriculum, extended work experience is available which provides the opportunity to undertake a work placement for one day a week.

Work-related learning

Selected Year 10 and 11 students are offered work-related learning activities involving one day or half a day work placements respectively. Approximately 10 students from each year group whose needs are not being met by the school, or who may be disengaged from the traditional curriculum, are offered this opportunity. Eventually, students undertaking this option will gain a relevant qualification (e.g. a food hygiene certificate).

Young Apprenticeship Scheme

Year 10 and 11 students have the option of undertaking the Young Apprenticeship scheme. This allows students to study for vocational qualifications at college, with training providers and in the workplace. Students are based in the school and follow the core National Curriculum subjects three days a week, but for remaining two days (or equivalent) they work towards nationally recognised vocational qualifications

delivered by their local Young Apprenticeships Partnership. On successful completion, the qualification awarded is equivalent to five GCSEs. In addition to an accredited qualification, students will have gained employability skills. Apprenticeship schemes are currently available in this CEG curriculum model in motor vehicle studies and hairdressing.

Key skills

There are specific groups of students on tailored flexible curriculum programmes, such as the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN)⁹ group, which work with a particular emphasis on key skills. Like work experience, this particular programme incorporates elements related to CEG provision within their timetable.

Alternative curriculum weeks

Alternative Curriculum Weeks are timetabled for all students. These offer the opportunity for extended project work by year groups, with the potential for visits to, and from, employers. Projects examples include business and enterprise days, Japanese cultural exchange and intensive study days – so whilst there is potential for CEG related activities aligned with some of the weeks, this is not always the case. One clear example of where this feature of provision has aligned with CEG is the recent purchase of an online version of the Real Game, with the intention of using this as a basis for a week long project.

Year 12 and 13 CEG activity

CEG provision for students in sixth form (Years 12 and 13) is tailored to the needs of individual students. For example, the Kent Vocational Training Programme provides placements for young people (aged 14-19) within the care industry as part of an initiative to encourage entrants to the Health and Social Care profession. Year 12 and 13 students on a Public Services option also benefit from a programme of external speakers and events linked to the fire service, ambulance, armed forces, customs and excise, and the police. In addition, workshops are available with

⁹ ASDAN offers a wide range of Awards for young people of all abilities. They aim to recognise and reward their skills as they complete 'Personal Challenges' in such areas as sports, healthy living, community involvement, work experience, expressive arts, relationships, citizenship, personal finance and enterprise. <http://www.asdan.org.uk/>

AimHigher¹⁰ to help with UCAS applications. There are links to a local university with opportunities for students to continue with work-related learning.

Business buddy scheme

Every member of school staff has the opportunity to work with a 'business buddy' who helps with specific queries about their sector, knowledge and skills. Up to 80 staff have been paired with a colleague from outside the school environment. This was organised by the East Kent Education Business Partnership and has had significant benefits for the school, relevant to CEG provision, in terms of working with the wider community. For instance, business buddies help staff with organising employer visits and work experience opportunities.

External visitors

The school is committed to facilitating employer visits whenever possible. Recent visits had been made by the Royal Navy and the Army. External visitors may talk about career opportunities, but may also involve engaging young people in, for example, team building activities. East Kent Business Partnership has also organised and hosted sector specific days targeted at Year 10 students, such as a health careers day. Students are given the opportunity to talk to employers and employees in the sector to explore possible career options in the sector.

4.4 Future CEG curriculum model

As indicated above (see sections 4.1 and 4.2 above) the CEG curriculum model that has been the focus of this investigation can be regarded as transitional. Fundamental changes have been made recently to established provision and the school is committed to further improvements. This commitment to change has been stimulated, at least in part, by the recognition that students need support in making appropriate choices amongst increasingly varied study pathways (e.g. Vocational Diplomas). One priority within the process of continuous improvement is, therefore, to undertake an audit of careers related activities so that the precise nature of current

¹⁰ Aimhigher is a programme run by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) with support from the Department for Innovation, Universities & Skills (DIUS). Originally launched in September 2001, Aimhigher aims to widen participation in higher education (HE) by raising the awareness, aspirations and attainment of young people from under-represented groups. <http://www.aimhigher.ac.uk/home/index.cfm>

provision can be identified, together with potential gaps. It will seek to capture provision currently difficult to identify (because it is delivered, for example, as part of the core curriculum), therefore permitting more coherence between various strands of activities. This audit will be undertaken as part of the 'Investors in Careers' award.

One other recent initiative with the potential to have a positive impact on future CEG provision is the recent involvement of the Connexions Kent & Medway lead Personal Adviser (PA) in devising a scheme of work. The school requested Connexions Kent & Medway to develop an adaptable schema, encompassing all students. The resulting recommendations indicated three levels of activities: 'priority' (e.g., understanding the online application system used for post-16 choices for Year 11); 'desirable' (e.g. a session on identifying skills, strengths and preferred learning styles for Year 9); and 'best practice' that would enhance provision (e.g. a session on using labour market information to understand employment trends for Year 7). The resulting scheme of work was designed to meet criteria set out in the National framework for Careers Education and Guidance in England 2003, plus many of the requirements for the Investors in Careers Award. It is characterised by an inquiry-led, participative delivery style and its implementation was under review by the school at the time of writing.

The vision for a future CEG curriculum model comprises fully integrated CEG provision, regarded as a whole school responsibility, whilst maintaining high quality targeted inputs that support the broader curriculum. The continuing development of partnership working with Connexions Kent & Medway, together with an ongoing expansion and utilisation of the 'Business Buddy' scheme (see section 4.3, above) are seen as key to the realisation of this vision.

4.5 Conclusion

The extensive and varied curricula activities which have some relevance and overlap with CEG are illustrated vividly by this case study. The breadth of these activities indicates both opportunities and challenges for the development of efficacious CEG curriculum models. On the one hand, an increasing recognition that supporting the successful career progression and development of students requires a range of complex interventions presents opportunities for further enhancement of the status of CEG through imaginative partnership working. On the other, the integration of CEG

across the curriculum makes it increasingly difficult to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of provision on the learning outcomes of students.

A further challenge relates to the perceived differences between CEG and Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG). School based staff with responsibility for CEG in this particular case study regarded it as comprising those aspects of careers related activities delivered by the school as part of the educational curriculum. This was seen as quite distinct from Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG), regarded as those services provided by Connexions Kent & Medway. Whilst representing one understandable way of making sense of the terminological confusion that exists around this area of the curriculum nationally, the distinction does not reflect an altogether realistic representation of service delivery, since much 'IAG' activity overlaps and/or reinforces school-based 'CEG' and vice versa.

4.6 Summary

This case study provides a powerful illustration of a CEG model in transition, characterised both by curriculum integration and targeted, stand-alone elements. It exemplifies a developmental approach, which accommodates students' needs at different key stages, with targeted inputs for each year group. This, importantly, includes personalised and tailored activities for students with particular learning needs, and/or those disengaged from the curriculum. It demonstrates how a school, within operational constraints, can respond to the changing needs of its students more effectively by moving incrementally from one model of CEG delivery towards another. Importantly, it highlights how the expertise of school staff can both complement and enhance those of employees of Connexions Kent & Medway for the benefit of students.

5. Labour market information provision in CEG

Labour market information (LMI) is a key component of effective CEG. This case study provides an in-depth understanding of what LMI is available in one school in the Kent and Medway region and what more is needed for different stakeholder groups (such as school staff and senior managers in the school). It not only represents a model of how LMI is used in CEG provision and more broadly in the curriculum, but also offers insights into how it may be developed and used to enhance future provision. This section will highlight some key issues (such as resourcing and maintenance of information) which need to be addressed for Connexions Kent & Medway to provide 'world class' CEG.

5.1 Case study context

LMI is referred to variously as: occupational information, job information, career information, employment trends, employer information, educational, training and course information or just simply information. Recent changes in policy have reiterated the importance of LMI as a feature of effective practice. This was explored in recent research in which participants across 15 schools in Kent and Medway were found to be: knowledgeable about the locality of their school; the employment opportunities available to young people; and the current industries operating in their local labour markets¹¹. The majority, however, indicated how LMI is both limited and not readily available. It is also useful and valued when available.

The availability and type of LMI is constantly changing, so it is unsurprising that locating, resourcing and maintaining information is difficult. The participants in the school for this particular case study demonstrated a good understanding of their local labour market, knowledge of where to source LMI and, more importantly, felt confident in using LMI as part of CEG. However, participants also reported a lack of any formal sources of LMI coming into the school and identified particular types and formats of LMI that would be useful. As such, this case study provides an interesting model through which to explore future requirements for LMI provision and innovative applications of LMI in CEG provision.

¹¹ Bimrose, Marris & Barnes, Op cit.

5.2 Current LMI provision in the school

CEG activity in the school comprises a range of activities that are both embedded in the core curriculum and part of off-timetable sessions (i.e. non-core curriculum), including: PSHE lessons; careers fairs and presentations; dedicated workshops; mini-enterprise activities; work experience; Steps portfolio activities; and the 'Real Game'¹². Sixth form students (Years 12 and 13) take part in work shadowing and last year had a dedicated Personal Development conference (described in section 5.3). It is the aim of CEG provision in the school to: enable self-knowledge of strengths and weaknesses; ensure realistic goals; plus encourage realisation and maximisation of potential. There is a shared understanding in the school that CEG activity is about ensuring that students are prepared for their next transition in to adulthood and the world of work. The school considers it their responsibility to ensure that students have happy, well-informed futures and can lead meaningful and productive lives. An essential element feeding into that philosophy is LMI, as it enables students both to understand and develop awareness of the changing world for which they need to be open and flexible. LMI is considered intrinsic to CEG provision, embedded in the curriculum and critically important to student understanding of future opportunities. Understandings of local, regional, national and international labour markets are considered essential for students.

The term 'labour market information', or LMI, is not used as part of the everyday language of careers in the school. As a consequence, students would not understand this particular term, though sixth form students are likely to talk of job prospects and salaries. Currently, no statistical LMI is available in the school. Time constraints and competing priorities means that there is no time to research LMI and construct educational activities around data which would engage students. Within the careers team, there is local and regional knowledge of the labour market, supplemented with some understanding of broader national trends. Research for LMI on job opportunities, qualifications and skills is undertaken on an *ad hoc* basis and responds directly to specific student enquiries. Around 95% of students from this school go on to university¹³, so it is recognised that most emphasis goes on providing support to this majority cohort. Consequently, there is limited understanding, and few

¹² Op Cit.

¹³ This figure includes those who stayed on at the school to undertake Years 12 and 13 (80%) and those who enrolled at other schools or colleges in the area to complete their Advanced Levels (15%).

occasions, to discuss opportunities for those seeking alternative pathways at 16, 17 (post AS level) or 18 years old.

LMI is available in the dedicated careers library, displayed on the careers notice board and accessed online through various careers related software programmes and websites. Students are able to access these resources during the school day. Sixth form students often undertake their own research online into different higher education courses and universities. Students are also able to speak to the careers co-ordinator, who will refer to the Connexions PA where appropriate. Local employers occasionally send information on local job and apprenticeship opportunities to the school, which are displayed on the notice board.

LMI is not assessed for quality by any formal means, particularly as statistical data is not used or readily available.

5.3 Perceptions and applications of LMI

Understandings and applications of LMI were consistent across the school staff interviewed. LMI is a vital element of student learning as they need to realise what job opportunities are available. It was understood that LMI helps students to comprehend which careers are in decline or growing in importance and where there is demand for particular skills. LMI also helps demonstrate how the current labour market is very different to that navigated by parents and how flexibility is required since students will most likely have more than one job in one sector across their lifetime. It is critically important that students are able to differentiate their own skills and abilities from others in an increasingly competitive and globalised labour market. However, within this school, there was felt to be limited awareness amongst students and parents, about the nature and scope of CEG activity. For example, a recent questionnaire regarding school activities suggested that many integrated careers related activities were not recognised by students as part of the careers programme. 'Careers' is considered to be limited to which jobs students want to do. CEG activities are understood more broadly in terms of specific activities, such as Kudos, work experience and Connexions.

LMI is considered intrinsic to many of these school CEG activities. It is discussed informally with students, particularly the local labour market and job prospects. LMI is evident in a wide range of activities in the school. In Year 7, the 'Real Game' gets

young people thinking about jobs, the cost of living, potential earnings in different occupations and the match (or mismatch) with their aspirations.

Year 10 students utilise Kudos¹⁴ before meeting with the Connexions PA, which can provide a useful focus for the interview. It provides information on numerous careers, salary data and LMI. During interviews and activities with the Connexions PA students gain greater knowledge about the world of work. This can be the foundation for independent research in to jobs and sectors in line with future career aspirations. A further activity for Year 10 students is a dedicated off-timetable period of 'mini-enterprise'. The purpose of this activity is to start students thinking about the world of work in terms of team working, communication, marketing, manufacturing and basic production processes. Overall, students are encouraged to connect ideas and link to the broader world of work.

Work experience and work shadowing engages young people with the world of work and raises questions about suitability for different occupations in terms of likes, dislikes, strengths and weaknesses. The aim of work experience is to develop some skills relevant to the workplace and more importantly gain an appreciation of the workplace. Work experience is regarded as a key learning event for students as it actively engages students to think about their future. For some, this is a pivotal period in which there is a realisation that they have to go to earn a living. This activity stimulates some students to research jobs actively, seeking out LMI. One student commented that, as a result of work experience, they had sought out information as they had become interested in what the job prospects were in that sector. For others, work shadowing opportunities in Year 12 were a catalyst to research jobs and sectors as part of a project they were required to undertake which involves researching a career. For example, students had to research information on: appropriate university and college courses; required qualifications; entry levels; job requirements; promotional prospects; and current vacancies. Sixth form students

¹⁴ Kudos, produced by CASCAiD, offers a flexible way of accessing careers matching and information, providing a personalised list of career suggestions and up-to-date information on over 1700 career titles. It is the aim of this programme to enable students to look at themselves in relation to the world of work.

http://www.cascaid.co.uk/home/main.do?section_id=143

are particularly encouraged and supported in careful scrutiny of different universities and courses.

A health sector event aimed at sixth form students was hosted by the school and was also open to students at other institutions. This included: external speakers from the medical profession; advice on making applications; and debates on ethical dilemmas within the profession. The focus of the event was on raising awareness about the reality of working within the medical profession and the diversity of careers within it. Similar events are planned for other sectors, including, for example, the legal professions.

Last year, a Personal Development conference for sixth form students involved approximately 30 external contacts who organised and ran a range of workshops on: interview skills; psychometric testing; team building; and deciphering job advertisements. LMI was an essential element of the day encouraging students to start thinking about what skills and qualifications would be required for certain occupations. Due to time and resource constraints the event has not been repeated, but it is hoped that this would be possible in the future.

As part of their courses, students studying business and economics at the school have the opportunity to undertake visits to Eastern Europe. This is used to generate awareness of the increasingly global and mobile workforce of which they will be part.

It is likely that LMI and CEG will also be incorporated into other curriculum subjects, though this had not been formally mapped. There is, therefore, a strong commitment in the school to undertake more CEG activities to support their students, but time constraints determine what activity can be organised each academic year. However, LMI will continue to play a vital role in those activities.

5.4 Future LMI

It was agreed that future provision of LMI would be greatly valued by the school. Ideally, this would consist of basic facts and figures, which are easily digestible, requiring little translation. LMI considered to be useful included:

- Local labour market information;
- Regional employment trends highlighting where the majority of jobs are located;

- Employment areas of growing importance and in decline (locally, regionally and nationally);
- Employment forecasts;
- Skill needs and future requirements (skills that are valued by employers);
- Earnings, including starting salaries for graduates;
- Routes in to specific jobs; and
- Career narratives.

LMI relating specifically to the labour market destinations of graduates is considered to be especially important, as such a high percentage of the school's students enrol on higher education courses after completing Advanced Level qualifications. Graduate destination data (both academic and vocational pathways), currently not readily available, was believed essential for supporting student career decision making. There was interest in receiving LMI on: employment rates for graduates; the advantages and disadvantages of vocational and academic degrees for occupational areas (such as journalism); graduate skill and experience requirements; and employer perspectives on graduates.

Support in the effective use of these data would be required by the school. Training in using LMI would have to cover: what it is; why it is useful; and how it can be used with students.

The most appropriate format for presenting LMI was considered to be paper – a folder that could be updated annually was judged to be most appropriate and of most value. Visual LMI, such as pie-charts and graphs, would be most useful as this would allow the data to be utilised within PSHE lessons, focused workshops and other CEG activities. In addition, posters and PowerPoint presentations would be useful as these could be easily incorporated into activities and/or displayed in the school. However, simple ideas that could be developed into discussions would also be considered valuable. For example, 'Ten Killer Facts' about a sector could be used to stimulate debate amongst students.

Future applications of LMI would be dedicated workshops for Year 10 students in which the number of jobs, prospects and key facts about sectors could be conveyed. This would support student learning about the world of work and encourage them to think about future opportunities. It was also suggested that, in the future, work

experience could be complemented by students required to complete a portfolio, which could include independent research on jobs. For sixth form students, field trips to organisations to talk to employees would be valuable opportunities to gain an appreciation of career pathways and skills needed to do certain jobs. Future LMI could play a vital role in encouraging students to consider what job opportunities are available for occupational specific and more general degrees.

The school is currently exploring possibilities of developing closer relationships with the local business community and is actively negotiating with three employers to look at ways of working in partnership to bring the school and local labour market closer together.

5.5 Conclusion

LMI is intrinsic to CEG provision and the broader curriculum in the school. It is highly valued and considered of critical importance to supporting student understanding of future job opportunities. However, LMI is often delivered indirectly, so messages about the changing world of work risk being lost as they are not necessarily made explicit to all students. The majority of students at the school are destined to go in to higher education, so within this school there is a significant interest in LMI on graduate employment. The future provision of LMI is challenging in that an extensive list of desirable LMI was produced by this one school, together with the need for this to be updated annually. Although some participants in this research were confident in using LMI, it was suggested that further provision would need to be supported by training on what LMI is and how it is useful to students. A further challenge is producing LMI in a format that can be easily digested and utilised in current, and future, CEG activities.

The case study school had a broad interpretation of LMI. The importance of transferable skills and qualities such as creativity, career resilience and self-confidence were emphasised as aspects of making sense of LMI. One challenge identified by the school was meeting the LMI needs of the minority of students who do not follow the Higher Education route. It was recognised that information on alternative pathways would be of particular value to cater for this group. In meeting the LMI needs of this institution, there is a preference for paper-based and PowerPoint materials that would provide useful stimulus for practical sessions within the school.

5.5 Summary

This case study provides a valuable illustration of how LMI is embedded within CEG provision and intrinsic across the broader curriculum. Whilst the term 'labour market information' may not be used in this context, it is evident that it is considered critical to the objectives of CEG provision in the school and student understanding and appreciation of the available opportunities. Although there are time and resource constraints on how much LMI can be researched, there is evidence of the pivotal part LMI plays in specific CEG activities. Students are well supported and encouraged to undertake their own research in to the labour market specific to their needs and aspirations. It exemplifies what LMI would be useful to support and enhance CEG activities and how it may influence and shape future provision for the benefit of students.

6. Re-introducing CEG

Some of the key challenges associated with re-introducing careers education and guidance (CEG) into a school are the focus of this particular case study. The scenario emerging from research data collected represents a vivid illustration of a school in transition – not only with regard to CEG provision, but also in relation to many fundamental aspects of its functioning and operation. Following a critical Ofsted inspection, this school had assumed a different identity under new management. Previously, the school had operated with minimal internal CEG provision, with external services withdrawn altogether from 2002. However, under the new system, this is destined to change, with senior management keen to restore a constructive working relationship with Connexions Kent & Medway. However, the school is going through a period of significant change, including the introduction of a new curriculum, timetables, partnerships, approaches to teaching, restructuring as well as the introduction of a distinctively different leadership culture. Thus, whilst the commitment to improve CEG in the longer-term is evident, many other priorities are pressing. This case study, therefore, provides powerful insights into the challenges of re-introducing robust, high quality CEG from what is effectively a ‘standing start’, into a school which is undergoing fundamental re-organisation, within the broader context of its location within a relatively deprived, rurally isolated community.

6.1 Case study context

The geographical and economic characteristics of the area in which the school is located are typical of many isolated, rural communities. Local transport is poor. The socio-economic profile for the area indicates significant deprivation with few employment opportunities. SMEs¹⁵ and self-employment dominate the local economy with a strong community value around aspiration and material achievement, though with little emphasis on education as a route to social mobility or economic success. There is only one major employer in the area (currently down-sizing), with the school itself being reported by one research participant as ‘probably the second largest employer’ in the region.

Students were identified by Ofsted as not realising their potential in all subjects, with significant difficulties experienced by the school in recruiting and retaining staff,

¹⁵ Small to Medium Enterprises

especially in shortage subject areas. Radical change was strongly indicated. Indeed, change is already clearly evident, with symbolic transformations (such as the introduction of a new school uniform and new signage) underpinning fundamental structural shifts. For example, curriculum changes include the introduction of new vocational Level 1 courses to provide the existing Year 11 with achievable goals in relation to qualifications. The new curriculum is 'stage not age related'. Key Stage 3 has been compressed to two years, allowing for three years in Key Stage 4. The rationale is to allow for more time to focus on preparation for exams.

A new tutorial system has also been implemented, reflecting the changed school culture. Tutor groups are now organised vertically, with a mix of up to 20 Year 7-13 students. Tutors are not necessarily members of the teaching staff, being drawn from the broad school staff community. This allows for smaller tutor groups, as well as sending out a strong message that all members of the school community can potentially make a contribution. Students meet with their tutor for 40 minute periods four times a week, and work on themes ('emotional intelligence' is seen as a priority). Tutor groups are also organised into four 'mini-schools' which have their own weekly assemblies, intended both to build a sense of a whole school community and also allow for exploration of life skills.

Additionally, disruptive behaviour is being managed differently. Previously, there was a high rate of exclusions, but the policy now is to keep young people in school. For this purpose, both a behaviour unit and a seclusion unit have been established onsite. This approach has dramatically reduced the numbers of fixed-term and permanent exclusions, though with the inevitable resource implications.

Overall, a major challenge is to demonstrate the school is an entirely different institution. Under previous management, the school operated as a 'closed community', with little involvement from external agencies, parents or carers. The school is now outward looking, involved in a wide range of new partnerships and activities involving the wider community.

6.2 Previous CEG

Whilst there was no formal CEG provision timetabled for students in the precursor school, there were activities linked to work experience, together with specific input for sixth form students (Years 12 and 13) (e.g. attendance at summer schools and a

university visits programme). CEG may also have been integrated across the curriculum and therefore somewhat invisible, particularly on work-related learning and vocational courses.

Year 10 and 11 students on vocational courses spent one day a week out of school on work experience. These placements were supposed to link to courses studied, though in practice this was not always the case because of difficulties associated with securing sufficient numbers of suitable opportunities. As a result, many students obtained their own placements (through family and friends), with little or no formal integration of work experience to academic learning.

Students on academic courses had a two week work experience placement. After indicating possible career interests, relevant placements for students were found where possible. Students were required to produce a CV in advance of their placement and received some input from personal tutors to assist them with this process. This was regarded as 'patchy' since not all teachers had the skills or enthusiasm to carry out this role. An estimated 70 per cent of CVs had to be re-written as they were not fit for purpose.

Recognising the need for one-to-one support for students, the Aim Higher Co-ordinator and Deputy Head worked together to see all Year 11 students individually. They adopted their own system of prioritising groups of students. All sixth form students were encouraged to go through the UCAS application process to 'boost morale'. However, only seven per cent of students from the previous academic year successfully gained entry to Higher Education, two of whom have now dropped out. There was an active programme of summer schools, visits to local higher education institutions and opportunities to attend master classes through Aim Higher initiatives.

Despite being excluded from the school, Connexions Kent & Medway continued to provide a library grant to the school. A member of school management reflected on how Connexions had tried to maintain support to the school: 'They never gave up on us!' This money was used primarily to purchase careers software for students.

Overall, previous CEG provision was largely *ad hoc*, poorly integrated and somewhat reactive (for example, the weekly attendance on work experience placements for Year 10 and 11 students was largely a response to staff shortages).

6.3 Emergent CEG

Currently in a period of transition, CEG has not yet been formally structured into the curriculum. The school is, however, already beginning to incorporate various types of input from external agencies, in advance of introducing a planned and tailored programme of CEG for the next academic year. For example, the whole school took part in a carousel of activities on an Enterprise Day during the first week of its operation. Such events will continue to be offered, although possibly tailored for distinct Year groups.

Other examples include initiatives instigated by one of the school's sponsors, a multinational ICT company. Approximately 20 students are being trained as 'ICT Agents', to be involved in informing future ICT development at the school. To achieve this status, students were required to participate in a competitive selection process. One of their first responsibilities will be to run an INSET day for staff during which they will present their ideas of future developments. In a separate initiative also initiated by the ICT sponsor, disaffected Year 10 and 11 students have become ICT Help Desk Technicians. Approximately eight individuals have received company training and they are now assembling hardware for use in the school. Additionally, this particular sponsor has indicated a willingness to provide high quality work experience placements for students and has supplied learning materials on the changing labour market.

Other types of CEG related activities include: a workshop for Year 11 students aimed at preparing them for the challenge of examinations; and an assembly presented by the school language team which explored why languages are useful for work, life and future.

Many established CEG activities are continuing. Work experience for Year 10 and 11 students is ongoing. There is an area in the dedicated library space containing some hard copy careers information, including university prospectuses and occupational information. A suite of computers is also available to students on open access. Sixth formers continue to engage in a programme of Aim Higher¹⁶ initiatives including: visits to Higher Education Institutions; participation in summer schools; and attendance at a master class (e.g. 13 Year 12 students will shortly be attending a

¹⁶ Op cit.

workshop run by a local employer and if there is positive feedback from the event, whole year groups may be sent out subsequently).

A new Partnership Agreement with Connexions Kent & Medway has been agreed. This has resulted in four Personal Advisers (PAs) working in the school: two PAs (Guidance); one PA (Looked After Children); and one PA (Intensive Support). Although too soon to identify how well this is working, the renewed relationship with this external service provider is welcomed. From next September the school would, however, like to take part in a more detailed negotiation about the precise nature of service provision.

School management expressed the view that the school is just beginning its journey towards the establishment of robust, high quality CEG. Whilst all the activities identified above are valuable, provision continues to be somewhat *ad hoc*. An audit of CEG activities is currently underway. Within a year, it is expected that a robust and well documented CEG programme will be in place, informed by the findings of this audit, involving active partnerships with a range of appropriate external agencies, of which Connexions Kent & Medway may be but one.

6.4 Future CEG

In this particular school context, CEG was described in very broad terms as being about: raising aspirations; building self reliance; and developing problem solving skills. Its ultimate aim is regarded as enabling students to independently access the information and support required. As indicated in section 6.3 (above), a comprehensive audit of current CEG provision is in progress. Alongside this auditing process, the school is exploring the support available from various external agencies. Future CEG provision is expected to link closely to the five strands identified in 'Every Child Matters'¹⁷, with new schemes of work for all subjects identifying links both to careers and work-related learning.

Asked if the future CEG model was likely to correspond to an 'integrated' or 'stand alone' approach to provision, school management reserved judgement. However, there is an expectation that a blend of both may well be needed. CEG, for example,

¹⁷ Outcomes are: be healthy; stay safe; enjoy and achieve; make a positive contribution and achieve economic well being. Department for Education and Skills, Op cit.

might be built into the curriculum for Years 7 and 8 (the new Key Stage 3), whilst a different delivery model might be regarded as more appropriate for older students (perhaps falling within PSHE). As part of the process of developing CEG provision, the school intends to explore the potential of using major resources, such as 'The Real Game'¹⁸, either as integral part of the curriculum delivered by the new vertical tutor group structure, or as a 'stand alone', one day event for year 8. Work experience, which is currently more integrated into the curriculum, continues to be regarded as an important aspect of CEG provision, though adequate preparation and debriefing will be built into future provision.

The nature of the contribution from Connexions Kent & Medway was under consideration. One possible request could be for interactive group work for every Year group in Key Stage 3 and 4, possibly linking to occupational areas. Another possible element of provision suggested was one-to-one interviews with students. However, a degree of caution was expressed about all services on offer. One participant observed that, whilst welcoming input from Connexions, the service tended to operate with its own distinctive agenda and with targets that were not always compatible with those of the school. In particular, the service had a tendency to evaluate its work in relation to its own performance targets, rather than attempting to adopt a school perspective. For a robust partnership to evolve it would, therefore, be important for Connexions' evaluation activities to reconcile the school's objectives, priorities and opinions. Neglecting this issue would risk the development of parallel, rather than partnership provision, leaving the school somewhat 'detached'. Related to this point, the annual partnership agreement was regarded positively, partly because it left open the possibility of opting out from services. Ultimately therefore, future CEG provision was seen as the school's responsibility, albeit one that needed to be taken more seriously in the future than it had been in the past.

6.5 The student voice

As part of the case study visit, a focus group discussion took place with four Year 13 students on the academic pathway. Four key themes were explored: experiences of CEG provision; perceptions of work experience; higher education; and perceptions of ideal CEG provision.

¹⁸ Op cit.

Experiences of CEG provision

Previous CEG provision was not regarded by students as being adequate. Three of the four students recalled attending an assembly in Year 9, where a booklet was distributed outlining options for Key Stage 4, together with an overview of available subject choices. Its use was regarded as limited. Although a meeting could subsequently be requested for the purpose of clarification, students would have had to be either very self confident or proactive to have followed through. There was a strong sense that there had been little communication or discussion, with students left to 'get on with it', seeking advice through informal channels and family members.

All students recalled an interview with a member of school staff in Year 11. Although remembered positively, this support was regarded as most useful for those who had some sense of direction and in particular those wishing to progress to Higher Education. Interviews tended to focus on the provision of information, with the interviewer responding to questions. One student reported how this had proved to be a negative experience, eroding self-confidence, since they had been told what they were not capable of achieving. This feeling of 'not being good enough' had reinforced the sense of failure created by not gaining entrance to Grammar School. Others felt that the interviewer had simply not listened to them, and that they had been told what they 'should' do. Overall, these interviews were regarded as particularly unhelpful for students with poorly formed career aspirations. Important characteristics of effective careers interviews which emerged from these students were: impartiality; being 'listened to'; and the opportunity to explore options and possibilities.

Perceptions of work experience

Work experience for this student group had been a two week placement in Year 10. Their perception of its purpose was that it was a 'taster' for the career they were, at that time, considering. However, reservations about its value were expressed. Specifically, it had been too early to make the choice and sometimes it had not been possible to secure relevant placements. Sometimes there had been a mismatch between the ideal and the reality. Additionally, in preparation for their work placements, they were required to write a 'child's version' of a CV. The degree of assistance actually available for this process had been variable. Finally, whilst there was no formal debriefing, some had made oral presentations based on their work experience as a recent life experience for a project in humanities. This was not

regarded as adequate by students, with opportunities to discuss experiences in a more structured manner identified as necessary to consolidate learning.

Higher Education

The perception of this group of sixth formers was that there was a particular emphasis on higher education at the expense of exploring alternative options. Whilst university visits were valued, it was felt that too much emphasis was placed on local Higher Education Institutions. Information about open days at institutions in other parts of the country, together with up-to-date publicity would be valued.

One student who had been selected for the 'gifted and talented' group had benefited from attending two summer schools. Nevertheless, there was an acute sense that the label of 'gifted and talented' had dented the confidence of those not selected. One student felt that by Year 12, they should have a clearer sense of direction. Yet some of their peers were still questioning whether they had made the correct A level choices.

Perceptions of 'ideal' CEG provision

Students were clear about what they wanted from CEG. They saw 'better careers' (guidance) as crucially important. 'Good' CEG is something that should give confidence and raise awareness of all options, as well as raising aspirations. Careers was also seen as about exploration of possibilities. They suggested career interviews should be made available to all students at critical stages of their educational development, though a self-referral system might disadvantage those who lacked confidence to request an appointment. They all wanted access to a specialist 'careers officer' who was impartial and listened, but who also had specialist knowledge about various options. Careers needed to happen 'much earlier', with one participant suggesting that it should start about half way through Year 10.

The financial implications of choosing Higher Education were highlighted as an important aspect of career choice, which had been so far neglected. One student had not understood that they would be eligible for financial support until she had attended an open day at a university where this was covered. Financial understanding was clearly regarded as part of effective CEG.

Students also commented on resources available in the library. These were regarded as unappealing. They wanted a more attractive resource centre that was

up-to-date and contained materials appropriate for all users. Students had relied on the use of their own ICT to find out about careers and universities. These students also wanted better communication between the school and their parents about their academic progress to support their career development. It was felt that tutors, at parents' evenings, did not know enough about how they were performing academically across all subjects. Four students felt that high quality careers input was critical.

6.6 Conclusion

The establishment of a new school provides the opportunity for a considered approach to the design and introduction of CEG provision. However, the particular context in which any school operates will determine, at least in part, the capacity of the school to focus on CEG. In this particular case study, the scale of the challenge faced by the school to improve student performance is formidable. Whilst establishing high quality CEG provision is regarded as important, the implementation of a new curriculum, staffing issues, a shift in organisational culture and the management of change are, not unreasonably, being given priority. Many of these changes will have implications for the shape of CEG provision. For example, the curriculum changes for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 create the need for students to make subject choices earlier than before, whilst the new tutor group arrangements reduce the opportunity for stage specific input by tutors (e.g. on option choices). However, until these fundamental operational issues have been resolved, little capacity exists for taking forward the CEG agenda.

The school is acutely aware of the limitations of existing CEG provision. Students perceive CEG as of critical importance and they have a clear view of what they need. In moving towards a new model of delivery, the school recognises the potential value of input from Connexions, but will scrutinise the quality of provision on offer. Currently it is grateful for all available support. However, the extent to which Connexions is able to accommodate the objectives of the new school is likely to determine the nature and extent of involvement. There is clearly a mutual need to rebuild trust between the school and Connexions Kent & Medway.

6.7 Summary

In re-establishing CEG provision into a school where this had been largely absent for the previous five years, this school was exploring possibilities regarding available provision. Associated with the socio-economic context in which the school operated were complex challenges that needed to be addressed. Professional judgements were being made on an on-going basis regarding suitable CEG provision, including the precise nature of the relationship with, and provision from, Connexions Kent & Medway.

7. Conclusions

- The case study methodology has provided valuable insights to five particular aspects of CEG in schools in the Kent and Medway region. Specifically, the language of CEG; Partnership and planning; CEG curriculum models; labour market information for CEG; and re-introducing CEG into schools.
- The language of CEG needs to be explicit and accessible to all. It should be part of the process of helping students: make informed decisions; gain an understanding of routes available; where routes could lead; and who will support students in making those choices. Younger students require more explanation and clarification, and agreed that careers language and activities needed to be introduced earlier in the curriculum. Years 11 and 12 students had very clear understandings about careers, choices and the role of the Connexions PAs. They were able to articulate what a career meant to them. With the integration of Connexions services in the school, students were generally better informed.
- Effective partnership working should not be taken for granted and that effort should be invested in its maintenance. The Partnership Agreement and Delivery Plan work well in the school, though improvement is always possible. Staff changes may impact on the operation of Partnerships and curriculum changes (i.e. the introduction of Vocational pathways) will require a fundamental review of how the Partnership Agreement operates.
- The extensive and varied curricula activities which have some relevance and overlap with CEG provide both opportunities and challenges for the development of curriculum models. On the one hand, an increasing recognition that supporting the successful career progression and development of students requires a range of complex interventions presents opportunities for further enhancement of the status of CEG through imaginative partnership working. On the other, the integration of CEG across the curriculum makes it increasingly difficult to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of provision on the learning outcomes of students. A further challenge relates to the perceived differences between CEG and Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG).

- LMI is intrinsic to CEG provision and the broader curriculum in the school. It is highly valued and considered of critical importance to supporting student understanding of future job opportunities. The future provision of LMI is challenging in that an extensive list of desirable LMI was produced by this one school, together with the need for this to be updated annually. Although some participants in this research were confident in using LMI, it was suggested that further provision would need to be supported by training on what LMI is and how it is useful to students. A further challenge is producing LMI in a format that can be easily digested and utilised in current, and future, CEG activities.
- The establishment of a new school provides the opportunity for a considered approach to the design and introduction of CEG provision. However, the particular context in which any school operates will determine, at least in part, the capacity of the school to focus on CEG. In moving towards a new model of delivery, schools are likely to recognise the potential value of input from Connexions, but will scrutinise the quality of provision on offer. The extent to which Connexions is able to accommodate the objectives of schools is likely to determine the nature and extent of involvement.

Appendix 1: Participating school descriptors

1.1 Maidstone Grammar School for Girls

Website: <http://www.maidstonegirlsgrammar.kent.sch.uk/>

Maidstone Grammar School for Girls is a selective secondary school using the 11 plus entry system since 1993. It also incorporates a mixed sixth form (Years 12 and 13) for continuing students and applicants from other schools in the area. The school aims to create 'an atmosphere of learning which is friendly, supportive and challenging'. The school was founded in 1887 and since the 1944 Education Act it has been a Voluntary Controlled Grammar School maintained by Kent County Council.

The school is designated a science school specialising in science and mathematics. The school curriculum is a broad-based programme, which enables students to develop their intellectual and personal skills. CEG is considered important and is part of an on-going process from Years 7-13. For Years 7-9 careers involves: self-assessment; decision making; career demands; and subject choices. The Year 10 programme provides Enterprise activity enabling students to gain experience of the world of work. The Year 11 programme aims to help students make choices about possible future careers and courses. After GCSE examinations, students are able to undertake work experience. Sixth form students are assisted with career decisions, including the choice between Higher Education and employment after Advanced Levels. Work shadowing is also available together with opportunities to work in hospital departments and local primary schools

The Maidstone Grammar School team involved in delivery of careers related activities includes: careers co-ordinator (combined with his role as assistant director of sixth form and subject teaching responsibilities); Deputy Head who lines manages the careers co-ordinator; mini-enterprise co-ordinator (combined with subject teaching responsibilities); a Connexions Personal Adviser; and cover supervisor, who was new to post, with a remit to support the careers, mini-enterprise and work experience activities in the school. The team operate with a shared understanding that CEG is about ensuring students are prepared for adult life.

1.2 Marlowe Academy

Website: <http://www.marloweacademy.co.uk/>

Marlowe Academy is a coeducational secondary school housed from 2006 in a purpose-built facility. The school is an 'all-ability community school' drawing students from some of the most socially and economically deprived wards in Kent. It hosts the local public library, sports facilities, adult education and youth services, dance, drama and music recording studios and a theatre. The Academy is open to students from 7.30 am to 5 pm with assembly at 8.30 am and the remainder of the day divided into four learning periods. The Academy has dual specialism in performing arts and in business enterprise. One learning period a day is dedicated to independent study with learning mentors available to help and regularly review progress. There are over 200 computers in learning bays plus PCs and laptops in the classrooms.

The curriculum has been adapted in the school to meet the needs of students offering additional subjects and opportunities for young people. This system aims to encourage students to progress and develop at their own pace, more able students are encouraged to take examinations early. Years 7 and 8 have greater opportunities for more practical subjects such as PE, Performing Arts, and Art and Design. Vocational courses are a major part of the curriculum for sixth form (Years 12 and 13) students, with similar opportunities for Years 9 and 10 students.

Staffing at the school has changed significantly since the opening of the academy. There are nine senior team leaders with subject leadership responsibilities across the academy. Careers activities are embedded in the curriculum and overseen by the Support & Guidance and Individual Study leader. Two Connexions Guidance PAs are based in the school (adding up to one full-time person) with other PAs working in a specialist capacity brought in to support students requiring additional help. A variety of CEG programmes are operating in the school with individualised and tailored support when required. A key aim of the CEG programme is to raise student aspirations.

1.3 Marsh Academy

Website: <http://www.marshacademy.org.uk/>

Marsh Academy opened as a new school in September 2007. It is a co-educational, non-selective secondary school for students from 11-18, with approximately 1,100 students on its roll, of which approximately 160 are in the sixth form (Years 12 and 13). The Academy has 400 computers, with all staff allocated laptops and writing tablets. Interactive whiteboards are in use across the school, and the whole school is wireless connected. Both academic and vocational pathways are offered. Sponsors are Microsoft, Tonbridge School and Kent County Council. It has a Business and Enterprise Specialism and welcomes the involvement of a wide range of external agencies.

The Academy is located on the site of its predecessor school, Southlands Community Comprehensive, which closed in August, 2007. The last Ofsted report for Southlands Community Comprehensive, dated October 2006, identified the school as requiring significant improvement and issued a 'Notice to Improve'. Consequently, there have been changes in the leadership team, including the appointment of a new Principal. Many of the teaching and support staff have moved across from the predecessor school. At the time of the fieldwork visit for this research, Marsh Academy was in its first term of operation. Future plans include the opening of a Vocational Centre; the establishment of a formal link with Folkestone School for Girls (allowing sixth form students wider access to an academic curriculum than is available at present); and a major refurbishment of buildings.

The opening of the Academy is seen as an opportunity to review and improve provision in many areas, including CEG. This currently falls under the remit of the Vice Principal, who has responsibility for implementation of the 'Every Child Matters' agenda. Connexions Kent & Medway now provide four Personal Advisers: two guidance PAs, a PA with a remit for working with 'Looked After Children' and an Intensive Support PA. So, whilst CEG is now on the agenda, it is at a very early stage of development.

1.4 Northfleet Technology College

Website: <http://www.ntc.kent.sch.uk/>

Northfleet Technology College is an all boy secondary school. It is non-selective and the majority of students are from the local area. It has specialist technology college status, placing particular emphasis on science, mathematics, design and technology, engineering, and information and communication technology. At Key Stage 4 students can study GCSEs and IT qualifications, together with vocational BTEC qualifications in Engineering, Science, Sport, Performing Arts and Art and Design. From 2007, the school offered a Young Apprenticeship in Engineering and are also taking part in Young Apprenticeships in Sport, Construction and Retail at partner schools. Some students attend other local vocational centres to learn valuable qualifications at Level 2 City and Guilds in construction motor vehicle mechanics. In the sixth form students (Years 12 and 13) can study a combination of vocational and academic subjects. New Diplomas (namely the Construction Diploma from 2008, and the Engineering and Creative Media Art Diploma from 2009) will form part of the future curriculum.

The team at Northfleet Technology College involved in CEG provision includes the Assistant Head Teacher with responsibility for overseeing careers and the Learning Support Unit Manager. Other staff in the school are also involved in CEG provision, such as the Learning Resource Centre Manager, Aim Higher Learning mentor and SENCO. Due to the nature and type of school and the needs of its students, there is a range of Connexions PAs working within the school. There are mainly three Connexions PAs working, each of whom has a specialist role:

- A PA supporting the school on careers guidance;
- A Pre-Vocational PA working with the school to support students who need specific guidance on the specialist vocational options, as the school offers specialist engineering courses and students also access other vocational options at other local vocational centres; and
- A PA working more intensively in both one-to-one and group settings to offer support on a range of issues (including bullying, self-esteem, motivation, re-engagement into education, preparing young people for active involvement in education, training or employment).

In addition, a small amount of targeted guidance support is given to the school where a specific need is identified, as a priority to support the CEG programme. This type of support allows the Connexions PAs to work well as a team within the school, to avoid duplication of activities and to follow the agreed Delivery Plan activities with the school. The school careers team and Connexions staff are well-established operating with a shared understanding of targets and aims of the CEG provision in the school. It is the aim of CEG provision within the school to ensure that all students get the required help and support to make informed and realistic choices.

1.5 Sandwich Technology School

Website: <http://www.sandwich-tech.kent.sch.uk/>

Sandwich Technology School is a co-educational secondary school. The school offers three specialisms and has been designated Vocational College, Technology College and Training College status. The school offers a broad range of vocational courses alongside academic provision for students, which has wide implications for the curriculum delivery model in operation. Technology is an integrated element of the curriculum ensuring enhanced ICT facilities and enabling a modern educational culture. Enhanced learning opportunities are available in Maths, Science, Technology and Information Communications Technology. With the new vocational status and the introduction of Vocational Diplomas, CEG is likely to play an important role in the curriculum. As a designated training school, it is actively engaged in supporting Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) and those studying towards a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), and offers ongoing professional development for internal and external staff.

The team at Sandwich Technology School involved in delivery of activities relating to careers are all relatively new to post (from one month to just over three years) though not necessarily new to the school. This team includes the Assistant Head with responsibility for careers and the sixth form (Years 12 and 13); the Careers and Work Related Learning Co-ordinator/Key Stage 5 Manager; the Director of Vocational Specialism; the Vocational Support Assistant and the Head of Citizenship. The team expanded when new roles were created as a result of the school acquiring its specialist vocational status early in 2007. As such, ideas for future CEG provision are still evolving. The team operates with the shared understanding that effective

careers education can provide an essential underpinning for young people to help prepare them for the career decisions they have to make at various transition points during their school lives and beyond. Careers education should include 'simple' information provision, and extend to thorough engagement with, for example, increased self awareness and realisation of their own strengths and weaknesses. With this programme of support in place, it was felt young people would be better placed to maximise the potential of the more personalised information, advice and guidance provision that is accessible through the one-to-one interviews provided by Connexions Kent & Medway.

Appendix 2: School briefing note and consent form

SCOPING CAREERS EDUCATION GUIDANCE (CEG) PROVISION IN KENT & MEDWAY: ABOUT THE PROJECT

Project Aim

The aim of this research is to provide an accurate indication of current CEG provision in Kent and Medway. It has been commissioned by Connexions Kent & Medway service, which is committed to establishing a careers education and guidance system that is world class across the region. Specifically, its objectives are to:

- Provide an in-depth account of CEG provision in up to 15 schools, overall, throughout the region, from the perspectives of key stakeholders involved in its delivery; and
- Establish which critical success factors and strategies contribute to the delivery of coherent CEG services in the region.

Background to the project

Various recent publications, for example, the '14-19 Education and Skills Implementation Plan' (Department for Education and Skills, 2005), the White Paper 'Skills: Getting on in business, getting on at work' (Department for Education and Skills, 2005) and 'Youth Matters' (Department for Education and Skills, 2005), have all identified CEG, or information, advice and guidance (IAG), as important in supporting young people in making successful transitions from education into the labour market. However, although CEG is part of the statutory curriculum, it stands outside the national curriculum. Consequently, schools and colleges are free to design their careers education programme and determine the amount of teaching time allocated. As a consequence, the nature [and quality] of schools' provision is very variable. Because of this, Connexions services are required to 'identify local gaps or weaknesses in provision and appoint a Personal Adviser to work specifically with schools on developing the careers curriculum'¹⁹.

This research has been designed to provide Connexions Kent & Medway service with information on the strengths and weaknesses of current CEG provision, so that it can ensure that services offered to schools complement and enhance those that already exist. There are two phases to the research (the first is underway):

- 15 schools have been contacted and telephone interviews with between 2 – 4 key stakeholders in each school involved in the delivery of CEG in each school has been conducted;
- Second, in-depth case studies will be carried out in five schools.

What is involved?

Since you have agreed to participate in one of the five case studies, this will involve:

- A visit by one or two researchers from the University of Warwick to collect data from the appropriate people about the school and more specifically a particular element of CEG provision.
- With the permission of participants, interviews will be digitally recorded.
- It is expected that interviews and focus groups will take between 30 minutes to an hour.

¹⁹ House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts, 2004, p.5

**STUDY INTO CAREERS EDUCATION & GUIDANCE PROVISION:
PARTICIPANT CONSENT**

You have been invited to participate in an in-depth case study into careers education and guidance (CEG) provision in Kent and Medway. In total, only five schools across the region have been asked to participate in this phase of the investigation. Your willingness to help will involve:

Answering some questions about the CEG provision in the school in which you are involved in the delivery of CEG. This will involve meeting with a researcher face-to-face for about 30 minutes.

Possibly having your interview recorded. This is so that a researcher can ensure your account of CEG provision is accurate. Nothing you say will be directly attributed to you, however, we would like to acknowledge your participation in the report for this study. If you have an objection to this, please notify a researcher.

Possibly being contacted by telephone or email after the interview, to clarify any issues that arise in the transcription of your interview. For this purpose, please give contact details below (this information will not be used for any other purpose).

All the information you provide will be treated in strictest confidence, in conformity with the requirements of the Data Protection Act, 1998. No information that could identify individuals will be passed to any third party.

Name:.....

School:.....

Telephone numbers:

.....

.....

Email (if available):.....

Please sign below to confirm that your involvement in the study has been explained and that you have agreed to take part.

Signature:.....

Appendix 3: Case study interview protocols and proformas

3.1 The language of CEG protocol and interview proforma

Case study protocol

The need for a common language around careers education and guidance (CEG) in schools emerged from recent research as a critical issue. It is not unreasonable, therefore, to assume that clarification of the terminology used by those involved in delivering CEG programmes is likely to be important in gaining an accurate understanding both of current provision and potential need. The importance of clear, unambiguous terminology was emphasised by two thirds of the respondents (n=21, 62%). This in-depth case study aims to investigate the different understandings and meanings given to the language of CEG and explore the possibility of developing a collective language.

Aim of in-depth case study:

To explore the language used around CEG provision in schools and what it means to different stakeholders, in particular, students.

Objectives:

- To investigate the language around CEG provision and what it means for different stakeholders (including students, school managers, Connexions staff and school-based CEG staff).
- To examine individual stakeholder understandings of CEG.
- To explore expectations about CEG provision in respect of how the language is used and understood.
- To generate ideas for a collective language which is effective/ useful/ understandable for multiple stakeholders.

During the school visit:

To undertake two focus groups (one with students and a second with Connexions staff and school-based CEG staff) to explore:

- How CEG is understood;
- What language is used in CEG provision; and
- What language could be used to convey CEG provision.

Focus group interview proforma

1. Understanding CEG

- Check what is understood to be CEG provision.
- Is CEG embedded in the curriculum or is it independent activities?
- Is the term 'career' important for young people?

2. What language is used in CEG provision?

- What is understood by the term – careers education and guidance?
- What language is used to define/identify CEG provision and activities in school?
- What is understood by 'information, advice and guidance' (IAG)?
- What is the relationship between these two activities (CEG and IAG)?
- How is this language used to describe careers-related provision in the school?
- Is the use of language important in this area and if so to who and why?
- Has language changed over the last few years?

3. What language should be used to convey CEG provision?

- Using your own language describe what CEG would comprise, ideally.
- Do you think this conveys current CEG provision in this school?
- Do you think different stakeholders would be comfortable using this language? Explain.
- What language do you think should be used in the future?

3.2 The role of the Partnership Agreement and Delivery Plan in CEG provision protocol and interview proforma

Case study protocol

The relationship between individual schools and the Connexions service is likely to be crucial in the ability of the Connexions service to delivery a consistently high level of service. Clear communication and mutual understanding of the offer of service provision from the Connexions service to schools lays at the foundation of effective relationships.

The partnership agreement represents the formal offer between the school and Connexions. The delivery plan, in contrast, is regarded as dealing with the daily operational arrangements. The majority of schools indicated that they had both partnership agreements and delivery plans – and that they found one or both of these useful. This case study aims to understand the partnership agreement and delivery plan within one school to identify its role in developing CEG provision.

Aim of in-depth case study:

To explore the role of the partnership agreement and delivery plan in developing CEG provision within the school.

Objectives:

- To examine the partnership agreement and delivery plan (plus any related documents) for the school.
- To explore the relationship between these two documents.
- To understand how the partnership agreement and delivery plan are developed and implemented within the school.
- To investigate individual stakeholder (including staff, PAs, Lead PAs and Connexions local area manager) understandings of the documents, their implementation and effectiveness in helping to develop and design CEG provision.
- To develop recommendations on future operation of partnership agreements and delivery plans.

During the school visit:

1. To examine the partnership agreement and delivery plan (plus all related documents) specific to the school.
2. To interview key stakeholders (including senior managers in the school, school staff responsible for CEG and Connexions staff) on the development and implementation of the partnership agreement and delivery plan, its operation and influences on CEG provision.

Interview proforma

1. Developing and implementing the partnership agreement and delivery plan
 - Who is involved in the development of the partnership agreement and delivery plan?
 - When and how does this process start?
 - Who is responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of these plans?
 - How is the partnership agreement maintained? (i.e. reviewed by who and when)
2. Operation of the partnership agreement and delivery plan
 - How do these plans work in practice? (What role does it play in CEG provision at the school?)
 - How important are these documents in developing and influencing/guiding CEG provision within the school?
 - How are the partnership agreement and delivery plan distributed/communicated to colleagues?
 - How is CEG provision agreed and implemented?
3. What works?
 - Has the implementation and operation of these documents been successful? Explore.
 - What has not been so successful or requires more work? Explore.
4. Improving the process and recommendations
 - How could this process be improved or done differently?
 - How might you advise others when engaging in this process?
 - What support or information (if any) is needed to undertake this process?

- What more is needed to help CEG provision within the school to develop effectively?

3.3 Delivery of CEG in the curriculum protocol and interview proforma

Case study protocol

Aim of in-depth case study:

To explore the curriculum delivery model in operation at one school and explore whether and how CEG activity is embedded or integration into the curriculum.

Objectives:

- To understand and explore the curriculum delivery model in operation at the school.
- To investigate where and in what ways CEG activity is embedded or integrated in to the curriculum.
- To investigate individual stakeholder (including school staff, PAs and Lead PAs) understandings of the curriculum delivery model and its effectiveness in helping to develop and design CEG provision.
- To identify innovative practice in curriculum delivery and CEG provision.

During the school visit:

1. To examine the curriculum at the school.
2. To interview key stakeholders (including senior managers in the school, school staff responsible for CEG and Connexions staff) on the delivery of the curriculum and elements related to CEG activity.

Interview proforma

1. Developing and implementing the curriculum delivery model
 - What curriculum delivery model is in place in the school and how did this come about? [Was scheduled to change a the beginning of 2007/08]
 - Who is involved in the delivery of the curriculum?
 - What role does CEG play in the delivery of the curriculum?
 - What constraints operate on the CEG curriculum model in practice?
2. The curriculum in practice
 - What does the curriculum look like?

- How does the curriculum operate in the school?
- How role does CEG play in the curriculum?
- How much time is dedicated to CEG activity?

3. What works?

- Has the implementation and operation of the model been successful? Explore.
- What has not been so successful or requires more work? Explore.

4. Improving the process and recommendations

- How could the curriculum be improved or changed?
- In what ways can CEG activity be further embedded/integration into the curriculum?
- Are there any examples of innovative practice in integrating CEG into the curriculum? (what works?)

3.4 LMI provision in CEG protocol and interview proforma

Case study protocol

In the initial scoping exercise across 15 schools interviewees were asked about the local labour markets in which they are operating. All of the interviewees were knowledgeable about the location of their school, the employment opportunities available to young people and the current industries operating in their local labour markets. However, 19 interviewees (54%) indicated how labour market information (LMI) is both limited and not readily available. Twenty interviewees (57%) reported that LMI is useful, valued and that access to more information would be beneficial. This in-depth case study aims to understand what LMI is available in schools and how it is used, as well as exploring what more is needed for the different stakeholder groups.

Aim of in-depth case study:

To explore what labour market information (LMI) is available in the school and how it is used in CEG activity.

Objectives:

- To examine individual stakeholder (including students, staff, PAs and, where possible, parents/carers) understandings of LMI and what is needed in CEG provision.
- To determine what LMI is available in the school for student use.
- To investigate how LMI is located, resourced and maintained.
- To examine exactly how LMI is accessed and used by different stakeholder groups.
- To understand the nature of any gains that stakeholders (students, parents/carers, staff, PAs) believe users/students make from having access to LMI.
- To explore future requirements for LMI provision.
- To identify innovative applications of LMI in CEG provision.

During the school visit:

1. To examine LMI available in the school (i.e hardcopy and electronic) and to clarify what and how LMI is distributed across the school and to whom.

2. To interview a group of students about:
 - their understandings of LMI;
 - where they locate and access LMI; and
 - what they would find useful in helping them making career decisions.
3. To interview the school Lead PA/PA about LMI provision, requirements and maintenance, and also record any personal training needs relevant to LMI.
4. To interview staff using LMI in teaching and CEG provision.

Interview proforma

1. Current LMI provision in the school (staff/PAs)

- Check what LMI is available in the school/careers library for use as part of CEG.
- How is LMI received and distributed in the school.
- How is it used in the curriculum and in CEG activity?
- How has LMI provision changed over the last few years?
- What future changes are expected/planned?
- How is LMI resourced, maintained, presented?

2. Staff/PAs understandings and applications of LMI

Understanding and provision of LMI

- What do they think LMI is?
- What LMI is available in the school and how is it used in the curriculum or CEG activity?
- How is LMI assessed for quality?

Reflections on the use of LMI

- Do they think that LMI is an important part of student learning? Explore.
- What do they think students need to know in terms of LMI? Explore.
- Do they think parents/carers need an understanding of LMI? Explore.
- Do they think knowledge of the national, regional and/or local labour market is important for themselves, students and parents/carers? Explain.
- What role do they think LMI could play in the curriculum and CEG activity?

Future applications and resourcing of LMI

- What LMI would they like?

- How would they like LMI to be presented (i.e. hard copy, electronic, presented face-to-face)?
- What support is needed to understand, use, resource and maintain LMI in the school?

3.5 Developing CEG provision protocol and interview proforma

Case study protocol

Aim of in-depth case study:

To explore the development of CEG provision within a new school.

Objectives:

- To investigate the current planned model for CEG delivery in broad terms, together with the emphasis given to impartiality in its delivery.
- To investigate what CEG provision is, and has been, available to students in the school.
- To understand the nature of any gains that stakeholders (e.g. students, staff, PAs) believe students gain in accessing CEG.
- To explore how CEG provision might be developed in the future from the perspective of key stakeholders.
- To identify innovative CEG provision development.

During the school visit:

1. To interview key members of staff in the school involved in the delivery and development of CEG provision.
2. To discuss, and observe where appropriate, CEG related activity.
3. To interview the school Lead PA/PA about CEG provision.

Interview proforma

1. Context setting

- Current school curriculum model.
- State of CEG now – who is involved, what takes place.

2. Past and current and future CEG (staff/PAs)

- How has CEG provision changed over the last few years?
- What future changes are expected/planned?
- If any, what model of provision is planned?

3. CEG related partnerships (staff/PAs)

- Explore the partnerships (e.g. Connexions Kent & Medway, East Kent Education Partnership, etc.) with the school which support CEG and CEG related activities in the school.
- What future role can these partnerships play in CEG provision and how might they be developed?

4. Users' perceptions CEG activity (students)

- Check what is understood by CEG.
- Explore student perceptions and experiences of CEG provision.
- How important do they believe CEG to be to their future decisions?
- What would they like CEG in the school to look like in the future?

5. Reflections on future CEG provision

- Explore expectations about the future role of CEG provision in the curriculum.
- How will future CEG provision be developed and re-established in the school?
- In what ways are CEG activities useful or ineffective in: broadening students' understandings of options available; developing career ideas and plans; helping with career decision-making; and developing understanding of local opportunities?

6. Impartiality and CEG

Explore the perceptions and value of impartiality in current CEG provision model and discuss how this may impact on future provision.