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The Kent Model of Career Education and Guidance

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Publication information

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About the International Centre for Guidance Studies

The International Centre for Guidance Studies (iCeGS) is a research centre established in 1998. The Centre has particular expertise in career guidance and career development. The Centre conducts research, provides consultancy to the career sector, offers a range of training and delivers a number of accredited learning programmes up to and including doctoral level.

For further information visit the Centre's website at www.derby.ac.uk/icegs

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Foreword

Young people in Kent can look forward to working lives that will last fifty or more years. This means that a young person finishing school in 2014 may be in the workforce until 2064 or beyond. While it is impossible to predict what the future will hold, the last fifty years has taught us that change is inevitable and that the workers of the future will need to be flexible, willing to learn and open to these changes if they are going to lead successful lives.

Schools need to be preparing young people for this uncertain future. Our strategy is for young people in Kent to finish school having attained the best qualifications that they are capable of, with a strong awareness of their skills and how they might be used in the economy and with an active commitment to career development and lifelong learning. Career education and guidance has a critical role within schools in supporting young people to realise their potential.

This publication describes the excellent practice that exists within Kent's schools. It is designed to provide a benchmark and to show what good looks like in the context of the county and to set it in the context of current Government policy. The Government has recently set out its new statutory guidance: *Careers Guidance and Inspiration in Schools*. It outlines a range of responsibilities for providers, from the role of the Governing Body through to the process of tracking all young people to age 19.

The research in this publication shows that schools in Kent are already addressing the challenges highlighted in the statutory guidance through a range of locally developed solutions. We are particular proud of the way in which the Kent CEIAG Network has supported schools to develop and share good practice through face to face support at County and Local meetings and on line through www.KentChoices4u.com.

We believe that by working together schools, the local authority, employers and learning providers can ensure that all young people in Kent can successfully make the transition from school and realise their potential.

Patrick Leeson

Corporate Director of Education

Executive summary

This publication sets out the findings of an investigation into the development of careers provision in Kent's schools. It follows on from a previous paper (*Progression in Kent*) which examined how schools were dealing with the transition from a system of careers support based around Connexions to one which is based around the school. The current research returns to the case study schools from *Progression in Kent* and also includes data from a survey of 33 of Kent's schools.

While there remains considerable diversity in approach across the county, there seems to be a growing level of agreement about how best to organise a school-based approach to the delivery of effective career education and guidance.

The Government has recently published a revised version of the Statutory Guidance on "Careers guidance and inspiration for young people in schools". This supersedes the previous guidance associated with the Education Act 2011 and provides the statutory context within which careers work in Kent's schools will continue to grow. The new guidance requires schools to deliver career guidance to their pupils from years 8-13. It is framed in broad terms but emphasises the importance of giving young people access to employers and a range of post-secondary learning providers. It also stresses the importance of destinations as a measure of the effectiveness of these programmes.

The new statutory guidance follows on from a range of changes that have taken place in this area under the current government. These include the loss of the statutory duty to provide pre-16 work-related learning; the development of non-statutory guidance for post-16 work experience; the raising of the participation age; the loosening and clarification of health and safety regulations around work experience to enable, at least in theory, greater access to work experience; and the publication of the *National strategy for access and student success* which provides a new context for universities' participation in school outreach activities. All of these changes have had the potential to impact on careers provision in schools.

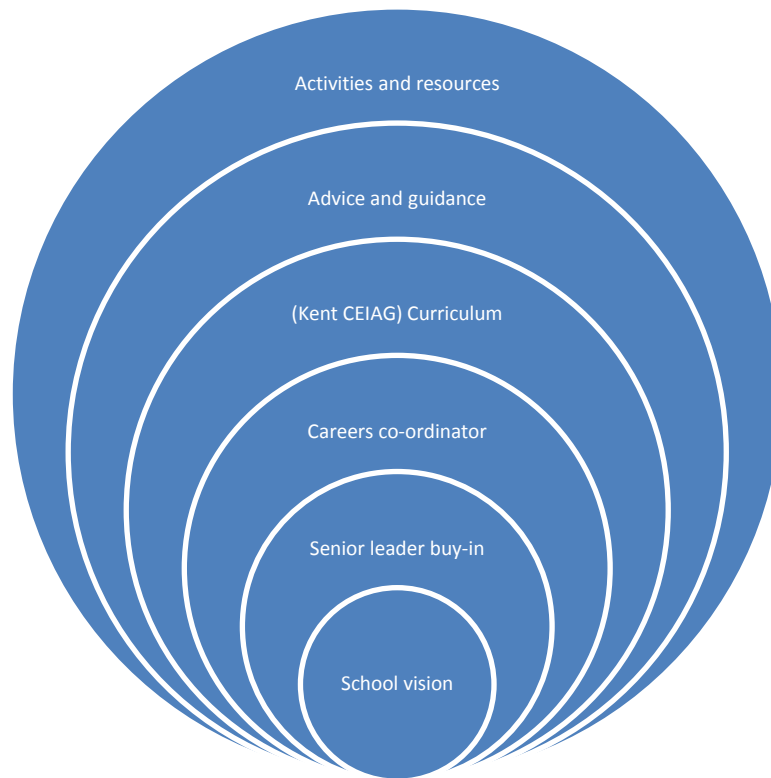
Kent County Council has developed a *14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy* which links different levels of learning and the world of work together. Underpinning this has been a county wide infrastructure that has been built to support careers work in schools through the provision and co-ordination of CEIAG networks, tools for schools, tracking of young people's choices and destinations, support for young people, Kent Choices and local labour market information.

The Kent careers system



The development of this underpinning system of support in Kent has allowed schools to develop a new model of career education and guidance. The Kent model of career education and guidance is school based. Schools have sought to build careers into their ethos and to build a strong internal infrastructure with appropriate resourcing to deliver. This infrastructure includes strong senior leader buy-in, a careers co-ordinator who takes the lead for the activity within the school, the delivery of career education drawing on the Kent CEIAG Curriculum, the provision of advice of guidance and a range of other supporting activities. The evidence from the case studies and the survey suggests that this model has spread throughout the County albeit with local variations depending on the nature and ethos of the school.

The Kent model of Career Education and Guidance



The model describes the core infrastructure that underpins the Kent offer of career education and guidance. In addition it is possible to highlight a number of important trends that have been observed in schools' provision of career education and guidance. Many of these trends relate strongly to the strategic direction that has been set out in the County's *14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy* and seek to ensure enhanced skills, labour market awareness, progression and participation in learning.

Trends observed in the research included the importance of tracking and data management around students' choices and destinations, the need to address a wide range of post-school destinations, the involvement of employers and the provision of work experience, the use of new technologies and the role of inter-school collaboration in the delivery of careers. Taken together these helped to define how the model was operationalised in schools across the county.

In conclusion, there is evidence to support the notion that there is much good practice in Kent. The development of this good practice has been supported by the development of a County wide infrastructure to support careers and through the emergence of a school-based approach to career education and guidance. The Kent model of career education and guidance is about embedding careers into the heart of a school, building an infrastructure for delivery and resourcing it appropriately. It is clear that this approach provides a strong model for satisfying the current statutory framework. It is also fundamental in supporting the County to achieve the underpinning ambition and aims of the *14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy*.

Introduction

Every year thousands of young people leave Kent's schools to continue their lives through work and further study. Every one of these young people has the capacity to contribute to the county, the country and the world. Some will be academic high flyers, going on to study in the nations' elite universities, others will go straight to work and still others will pursue vocational courses in workplaces, colleges or universities. Most will go on to pursue careers that would have been very difficult to predict while they were at school, but all will draw on the education and experiences that they gained at school throughout the rest of their lives.

This publication is interested in how Kent's schools prepare young people for the challenging, complex lives that they will lead. In particular it is interested in the elements of schooling that help to prepare young people for their next step and provide them with the skills, attitudes and interests that will allow them to progress throughout life. In schools these activities have a wide range of names, but here we will refer to them as career education and guidance to describe all of learning and advice that a young person can access to develop their careers. This might include career lessons, extra-curricular activities, work-experience, provision of career education, information and advice and guidance.

In 2012 Kent County Council published a paper entitled *Progression in Kent*.¹ This described the experiences of 10 organisations (8 schools, 1 Trust and 1 local consortium) in dealing with the changes that were happening to careers education and guidance following the Education Act 2011. *Progression in Kent* found a positive picture. Despite a challenging policy environment, the paper found that schools in the county valued career education and guidance and were continuing to invest in this area. Another study around the same time also highlighted Kent as an example of good practice for dealing with changes in career education and guidance policy.² The findings of both studies were clear; Kent was taking an active and strategic approach to managing the transition to the post-Connexions era.

This paper returns to the same schools to explore how things have changed since the publication of *Progression in Kent*. As will be seen, the national policy environment has continued to be fairly tumultuous in this area. Nonetheless, Kent's schools have managed this period of transition well. It will argue that a distinctive 'Kentish model' of career education and guidance is emerging out of this period of change. While there remains considerable diversity in approach across the county, there seems to be a growing level of agreement about how best to organise a school-based approach to the delivery of effective careers education and guidance. This paper will draw out this approach to help schools to benchmark themselves against best practice.

The paper is based on interviews with key staff in all of the organisations that took part in *Progression in Kent* and with key personnel in Kent County Council. It also draws on a survey of 33 schools which help to ground the findings from the more detailed case studies, in wider practice.

¹ Hooley, T. (2012) *Progression in Kent: Schools taking charge*. Maidstone: Kent Country Council.

² Filmer-Sankey, C. & McCrone, T. (2012). *Hidden Talents: Examples of Transition of Careers Guidance from Local Authorities to Schools*. LGA Research Report. Slough: National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER).

Understanding careers policy

Careers has been a constant political football under various governments. Professor Tony Watts has noted that careers policy has often been hijacked by larger Government agendas frequently to the detriment of the area itself.³ However, even by these standards the period since the election of the Coalition Government in 2010 has seen a lot of change.

Relatively quickly after the election a number of decisions were taken which resulted in the reduction of funding to Connexions.⁴ Although, the reduction of the Connexions service was carefully managed in Kent, this period saw the end of Connexions as a national service and the gradual decline in the availability of direct delivery of careers services for schools. Alongside this funding cuts and policy decisions resulted in the decline or closure of Education Business Partnerships and Aimhigher as a national service (although Kent has retained the Kent and Medway Progression Federation as a successor organisation to Aimhigher).⁵

By the end of 2011 the Government had passed the Education Act 2011 which included the following statements.⁶

The responsible authorities for a school in England within subsection (2) must secure that all registered pupils at the school are provided with independent careers guidance during the relevant phase of their education.

The Act also saw the end of a statutory duty to provide careers education. In summary the Act served to move responsibility for careers away from local authorities and give the responsibility to schools. During 2012 the Government issued both Statutory Guidance and a Practical Guide to implementing the Act in schools. These are discussed in more detail in *Progression in Kent*.

The Government's policy on careers was criticised by a wide range of organisations both on policy grounds (the transfer of responsibility to schools without additional funding was wrong) and because it was seen as contradictory and unclear.⁷ Consequently the Government has recently released a new set of statutory guidance which supersedes the previous guidance.

The new statutory guidance

The new guidance was released on 10th April 2014 and is entitled "Careers guidance and inspiration for young people in schools".⁸ The document was also accompanied by a non-statutory document entitled "Career guidance: advice for schools".

The new statutory guidance makes the following points.

³ Watts, A.G. (2013a). False dawns, bleak sunset: the Coalition Government's policies on career guidance. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 41(4): 442-453.

⁴ For further information about this period see Hooley, T. & Watts, A.G. (2011). *Careers work with young people: Collapse or transition*. Derby: International Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby.

⁵ For more information about the Kent and Medway Progression Federation visit <http://kmpf.org/>.

⁶ The relevant section of the Education Act 2011 can be accessed from <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/21/section/29/enacted>.

⁷ Probably the most important criticism came from the House of Commons Education Select committee and Ofsted (full details in the reference list).

⁸ Further information on the new statutory guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-for-young-people-in-schools>. The non-statutory guidance can also be accessed from that page.

- Schools should help every pupil to develop high aspirations and consider a broad and ambitious range of careers. Key to this is ensuring that pupils understand the importance of achieving a grade C or above in English and Maths GCSE.
- Schools have a duty to secure independent career guidance for all year 8-13 pupils.
- Guidance should be impartial, include information on a range of destinations and be in the best interests of the young person.
- Guidance should also be embedded in a clear framework rather than simply being an ad hoc set of activities.
- Building strong links with employers and other stakeholders from the world of work and post-secondary learning should be central to schools activities in this area.
- Pupils should be provided with access to a range of activities and career informants (e.g. employers, mentors).
- Providing access to a website is not sufficient in itself to meet the statutory duty.
- Schools should work with local authorities to support the participation of all young people in education through both information sharing and the provision of targeted support.
- Schools can measure their effectiveness in this area both through Ofsted inspections and through the destinations of their pupils.

The new statutory guidance is designed to be an enabling document which sets a minimum standard. Schools are encouraged to innovate and develop their provision in a way that works for their students. It is clear that the case study schools referred to in this publication are already meeting the duty and frequently delivering programmes that are well in excess of this minimum standard.

There has been some criticism that the guidance does not stress the importance of having qualified career guidance practitioners and that it ignores the existing framework for quality assuring school based careers provision.⁹ However, despite any reservations the current statutory guidance is likely to be the Government's last word on this area until the next election. It therefore provides the framework within which schools are likely to have to operate.

Other key changes

The statutory guidance on career guidance is a key driver for schools. However there have been a number of other changes in the wider context that are also worth of note. These include:

- the loss of the statutory duty to provide pre-16 work-related learning;¹⁰
- the development of non-statutory guidance for post-16 work experience;¹¹
- the raising of the participation age;

⁹ See Watts, A.G. (2014). Revised Statutory Guidance and Non-Statutory Departmental Advice on Careers Guidance and Inspiration in Schools. Careers England Policy Commentary 27.

¹⁰ Work-related learning (WRL) was removed by statutory instrument in August 2012 in the Explanatory memorandum to the draft Education (Amendment of the Curriculum Requirements for Fourth Key Stage) (England) Order 2012.

¹¹ Department for Education (2013). 16 to 19 study programmes: work experience. Available from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-16-work-experience-as-a-part-of-16-to-19-study-programmes> [Accessed 21st April 2014].

- the loosening and clarification of health and safety regulations around work experience to enable greater access to work experience;¹²
- the publication of the *National strategy for access and student success*¹³ which provides a new context for universities participation in school outreach activities.

All of these changes impact on careers provision in schools in different ways. Of course a shift in policy does not always mean a change in practice in schools. The Government would at least claim to place school autonomy at the heart of its education policy. In practice, as can be seen from the above list, Government does get involved in providing guidance and direction for schools in a number of areas. However, not all of the Government's guidance is mandatory and schools are encouraged to develop their own response to many of these issues. Furthermore, as will be seen in the case of the Kent schools that this paper focuses on, many schools are already delivering in excess of what Government requires and are capable of accommodating new guidelines or requirements within the framework of existing practice.

The local context

As has already been stated, Kent has pursued a distinctive course in response to the maelstrom of national policies described above. Research has shown that schools' practice in this area is highly diverse across the country and dependent on a series of local decisions including the approach taken by the local authority.¹⁴ In Kent there are a number of stakeholders who are working together to create a strong response to recent policy changes. Key to this has been strong commitment and co-ordination from Kent County Council. This has been enshrined in the vision of the Council for education.

*In Kent we should have the same expectations for every child and young person to make good progress in their learning, to achieve well and to have the best opportunities for an independent economic and social life as they become young adults.*¹⁵

It has then been built on in the *14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy* which sets out a framework for realising the vision.

Our ambition is for all young people in Kent to become better qualified and more employable; to be able to participate and achieve success in education and work based training... We aim to achieve lower youth unemployment, put in place better systems for local employers and learning providers to work in partnership so that we secure the higher levels of skilled young people we need in the key growth sectors relevant to the Kent

¹² Health and Safety Executive (2013). Young people and work experience: A brief guide to health and safety for employers. Available from <http://www.hse.gov.uk/Pubns/indg364.pdf> [Accessed 21st April 2014].

¹³ Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (2014). National strategy for access and student success. Available from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-strategy-for-access-and-student-success> [Accessed 21st April 2014].

¹⁴ Langley, E., Hooley, T., Bertuchi, D. (2014). *A career postcode lottery? Local authority provision of youth and career support following the 2011 Education Act*. Derby: International Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby.

¹⁵ Kent County Council (2013a). Delivering bold steps for Kent: Education, learning and skills vision and priorities for improvement 2013-2016. Available from <https://shareweb.kent.gov.uk/Documents/education-and-learning/Bold%20Steps%20ELS%20Vision.pdf> [Accessed 21st April 2014].

*economy, and have every young person participating in high quality learning or training that is relevant to their needs, until the age of 18, with a good outcome.*¹⁶

This desire to link learning and the world of work together has been central to Kent's approach. The focus has been on building an enabling framework that supports all stakeholders to achieve their aims. The strategy describes this as being defined by "better systems for local employers and learning providers to work in partnership" and within this systems approach schools, the third sector and employers have been able to all work together to deliver on this vision.

Key to this has been the role of the infrastructure that supports careers. Careers work is crucial for a successful learning and work system because it supports the growth of informed individuals within the system. The Kent careers system realises the aims of the county's Learning, Employment and Skills strategy through the provision and co-ordination of CEIAG networks, tools for schools, tracking of young people's choices and destinations, support for young people, Kent Choices and local labour market information. Figure 1 shows how the different elements of the Kent careers model fit together to help young people to develop their career thinking, make informed choices and transition to appropriate destinations.

¹⁶ Kent County Council (2013b). 14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy 2013-2016. Available from https://shareweb.kent.gov.uk/Documents/education-and-learning/plans-and-consultations/strategic-plans/14_24strategy2013.pdf [Accessed 21st April 2014].

Figure 1: The Kent careers model



A new model of career education and guidance in Kent

Before 2010 careers in Kent was highly dependent on the provision by the Local Authority through the Connexions service. Connexions provided advice and guidance for most schools, and support for careers education and quality enhancement for all schools. There were many strengths to this arrangement, including the fact that a single organisation had the responsibility for gathering labour market information, destinations information and understanding policy in the area. This model is often called a “partnership model” because careers was a partnership between the schools and the Connexions Service.

Following the Education Act 2011 the partnership arrangement effectively ceased. Although the providers of the Connexions service continue, they are no longer “partners” with the schools in the same sense. Control has moved into the school and the relationship is inevitably a contractor/supplier one with external careers providers,. All of this has led to a range of new arrangements and new ways of working.

One important factor in the development of the new arrangements has been the fact that some schools did not receive much support from Connexions. Because of the way in which Connexions funding was organised, schools whose students were drawn from more affluent backgrounds (generally the grammar schools) received less funding. Consequently, there were a number of schools in Kent that had already developed an approach to careers that was not dependent on Connexions.

Connexions in Kent always placed a strong emphasis on networking and collaboration around careers. This has been continued by Kent County Council and currently takes the form of the CEIAG Network, CEIAG Briefings and Kent Choices. The networked nature of careers work has helped to spread good practice and has enabled the county’s schools to be more responsive to change. This is the beginning of as a distinctive model for careers work in Kent schools.

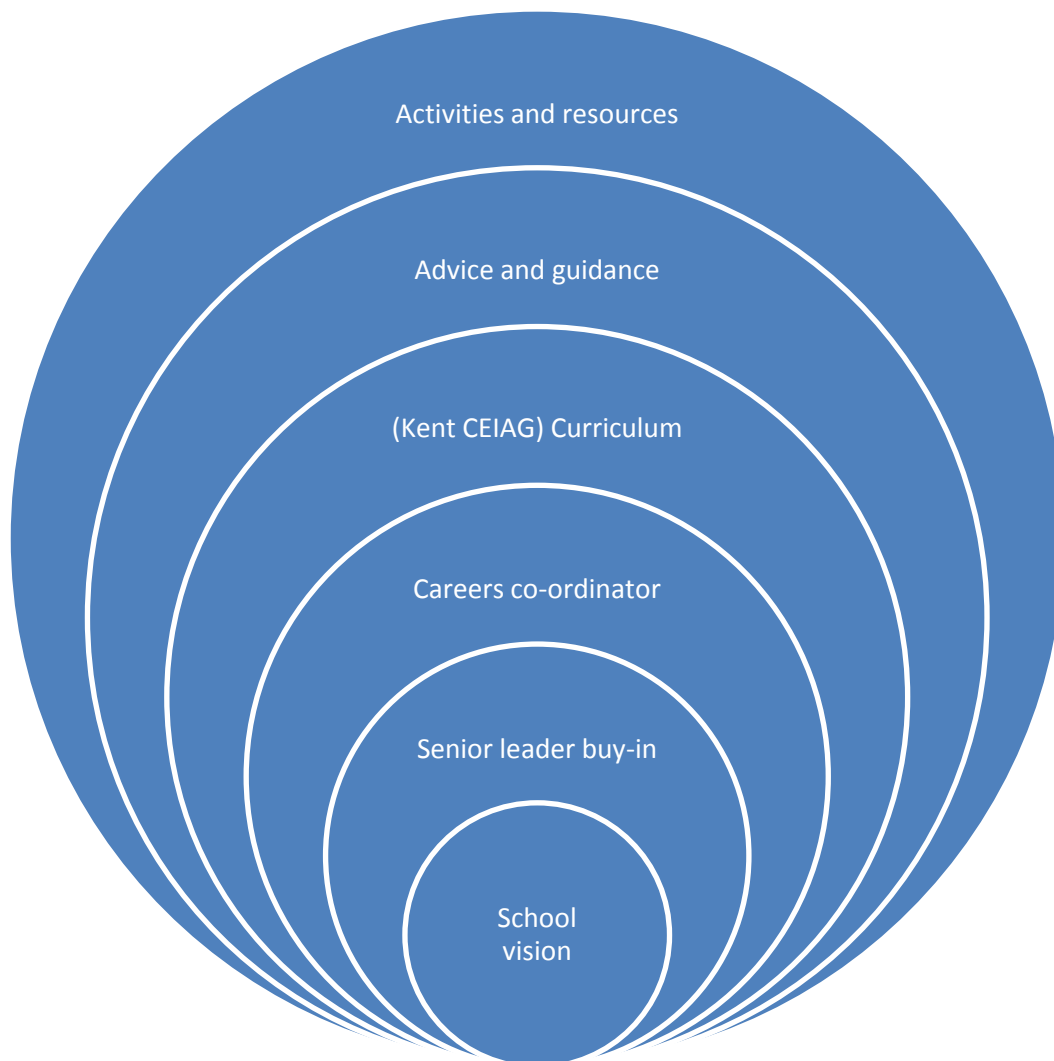
The Kent model of career education and guidance

The previous section highlighted the features of the county wide careers system. Figure 1 set out the main features of this model noting the existence of networking, resources and strategy. It is possible to go beyond this and to suggest that a model of career education and guidance has emerged in Kent’s schools which, while not uniform, shares a number of features and approaches. The 10 case study organisations that formed the basis of this research all shared most of these features, as did most of the respondents to the survey. There are schools in Kent that did not reply and it may be that they are dealing with CEIAG differently. Nonetheless, there is enough coherence here to be worthy of note.

The key to understanding the Kent model of career education and guidance is to recognise that it is a genuinely school based model. While the new statutory arrangement could be interpreted as a move from local authority funding to school funding of an external careers provider, for the most part, this has NOT happened in Kent. Rather schools have sought to (further) absorb careers and to build them into their ethos. While many continue to buy in support from external careers organisations the focus of control remains with the school. For many this has meant building up a strong internal infrastructure, with more strategic use of commissioned resources. All of the schools

featured in this publication have resourced careers appropriately as a mainstream activity. Figure 2 sets out some of the key features of this model.

Figure 2: The Kent model of career education and guidance



Alongside this structure schools in Kent clearly attend to quality closely. 27/33 schools that responded to the survey affirmed that they had a process for evaluating the quality of the guidance that was provided. 17 of those schools currently hold an official quality mark for their provision (mainly Investors in Careers).¹⁷

School vision

Central to engaging with careers has been the capacity of schools to build careers into the schools core ethos. The way in which schools have done this varies depending on the ethos of the school. For some this may be linking academic achievement to aspirational careers, for others it may relate to ideas about reflective and personalised learning and for others it is about the school's place in the community and the local economy. Careers are a flexible concept that can serve a range of different school outcomes.

¹⁷ See <http://www.investorincareers.org.uk/> for further information about Investors in Careers.

Lee Kane (Vice Principal of **Brockhill Park Performing Arts College**) says that the school “has placed careers at the heart of everything that we do...we are about making a difference for young people in Shepway. We’ve made use of the data pack sent out by Kent County Council about the local economy. We’ve looked at it and tried to develop our curriculum to produce the kinds of skills that the local economy needs.”

At Brockhill careers is reflected in the delivery of student support, in the curriculum and the schools whole mission and ethos.

Senior leader buy in

Following on from the importance of placing careers at the centre of the school vision it is also important to have senior management buy-in. It is clear that this needs to go up to the Head Teacher, as it is here that decisions about resources and ethos are made. However, in Kent, day to day supervision of the careers area is usually the responsibility of an assistant head. This person usually has responsibility for line-management of any directly employed careers staff or for liaison with external providers. 31 out of the 33 schools that responded to the survey said that the senior leadership team annually reviewed careers provision within the school.

Kay Keyte is an experienced careers co-ordinator (known as Career Progression Mentor) at **Castle Community College**. She notes “I report to Head of Sixth. We meet weekly and discuss where we are what we are doing. Head of Sixth is very much involved in the planning.”

Alongside the role of the Head Teacher and an identified member of the senior team with a responsibility for careers education, there was a trend in a number of Kent schools to have a clearly defined link Governor who was focused on careers. 25 out of 33 schools that responded to the survey had nominated a governor with responsibility for CEIAG.

Careers co-ordinator

Another key feature of the Kent model is the clear identification of a main point of contact for careers within the school. This is a role fulfilled by a teacher at the school or combined with another role. However, increasingly the role of careers co-ordinator is seen as a distinct role in the school. 26/33 schools that responded to the survey employ someone whose main job is to organise and co-ordinate careers provision within the school. Some schools have gone beyond this and employ more than one member of staff to undertake careers and related activities e.g. work experience.

In **Mascalls School**, Lynn Bayliss is employed as a Careers and Business Links Manager. The school has recently taken on an Apprentice to support careers work in the school. The Apprentice supports the schools careers work and plays a particularly important role in the time consuming activities related to supporting work experience.

The careers co-ordinator will usually work closely with a range of other professionals in the school including the senior leadership team, the data manager, learning support manager and the wider teaching staff. The connection with teaching staff is particularly important for the delivery of the careers curriculum, where the careers co-ordinator’s role may vary depending on their skill set from providing resources, to co-teaching or teaching the careers curriculum.

The importance of the careers co-ordinator was seen across all of the case study schools. Two of the case study schools had chosen to replace careers co-ordinators who had left since *Progression in Kent*. One other has moved the careers responsibility from being a fraction of a teacher's time to a full-time role. In some schools the careers co-ordinator role is part of the senior leadership team: for example Alison Rivers is an Assistant Head at **Invicta Grammar School** and Jacqui Watson is Director of Curriculum and Work-Related Learning at **Swadlands School**. These senior posts represent the central importance that is placed on careers in some schools.

Careers co-ordinators came from a wide range of backgrounds. While the Careers Profession Taskforce¹⁸ has recommended that careers practitioners should be qualified to at least degree level (level 6), practice on the ground in Kent suggests a fairly diverse workforce. Around half of the schools that responded to the survey employed staff with a careers qualification with only slightly more than a third at degree level or above. Some of this depends on the role that the careers co-ordinator is playing in the school. The role is broad and can potentially include curriculum development, teaching, delivery of advice and guidance, provision of more informal careers conversations, provision of information and a wide range of co-ordinating and administrative tasks. However, one case study school which previously did not include a qualified careers co-ordinator had appointed one in the last two years. Two other careers co-ordinators said that they were intending to qualify in the near future.

(Kent CEIAG) Curriculum

Despite the fact that the statutory duty for career education was removed in the Education Act 2011, the delivery of a careers curriculum remains central to the Kent model. 23/33 of the schools that replied to the survey say that they are devoting more curriculum time to careers than they were in 2011.

Maidstone Grammar School has continued to deliver a career education programme from year 7-13. The school organises this through a mixture of inputs into PSHE lessons and focus days. A recent innovation has been the introduction of fortnightly timetabled career education lessons in year 11.

The case study schools showed a strong engagement with a careers curriculum. Most drew on the Kent CEIAG Curriculum, but tailored it to their own needs and delivery style.

Maidstone Grammar School for Girls offers a careers programme starting in year 7. The programme is organised as a series of focus days. Deputy Head, Paul Harris said "We have taken a 'careers for all' approach. This is not just focused on the sixth form." The school has also been seeking to integrate careers more strongly into subject-based learning and the school's careers co-ordinator has been producing resources linked to key curriculum areas to facilitate this.

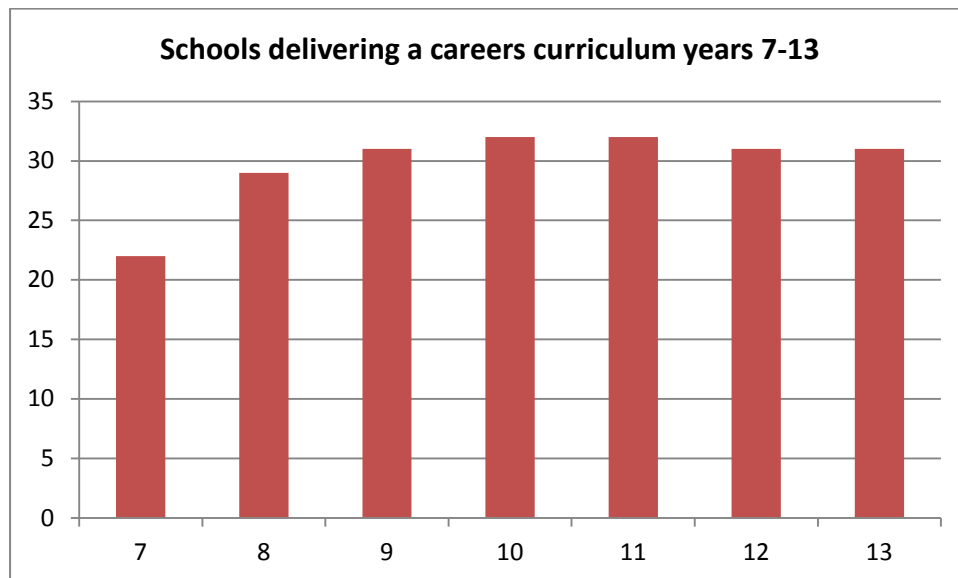
The Kent CEIAG Framework¹⁹ was developed in 2009 and has been revised subsequently to keep pace with developments in practice and policy. A new version is planned for September 2014. Most of the case study schools made use of the Framework, although many had long since embedded it

¹⁸ Careers Profession Task Force (2010). *Towards a strong careers profession*. Runcorn: Department for Education.

¹⁹ The Kent CEIAG Framework is available from <https://shareweb.kent.gov.uk/Documents/KELSI/Curriculum%20and%20pupil%20learning/Skills%20and%20employability/CEIAG%20Framework.doc>.

and developed it to meet local needs. Some schools delivered their careers curriculum through a series of “off-timetable” days, while others delivered it as part of a weekly PSHE lesson. Most schools began delivery of a careers curriculum in year 7 with delivery rising in year 8 and then remaining fairly consistent through to year 13 (see figure 3).

Figure 3: Number of schools responding to survey delivering a careers curriculum in years 7-13 (n=33)



Advice and guidance

The overwhelming majority of survey respondents and all case study schools provide students with access to advice and guidance. Advice and guidance was offered in all of the case study schools because it connected with the school ethos and met pupil needs. So, while all schools have attended to the fact that they are satisfying the statutory guidance, it is not compliance that is driving the resourcing of advice and guidance. Most of the case study schools and those that responded to the survey go considerably beyond offering “access” to advice and guidance and ensure that all students receive at least one advice and guidance interview. Often this is delivered through a mix of in-house provision and strategic use of an external service.

Liz Wynn-Owen is the employability and careers co-ordinator at **Hillview School for Girls**. She has an MA in career guidance and is able to provide guidance to the school’s students. However, she also provides access to an external career guidance provider. “I see anyone who walks into the office. Usually they come in to see me about work experience. I use this as an opportunity to talk to them about careers. I will also talk to the sixth form in the common room. I also pick up difficult cases e.g. people who leave mid-year. I use the external careers adviser to see all year 11s. So that everyone has the opportunity for one-to-one.

Other schools have developed sophisticated systems to manage the targeting of advice and guidance.

At **Swadelands School** Jacqui Watson explains “we contract an external provider for 10 days to run 30 minute guidance interviews. We identify vulnerable students in year 11 and target interviews for

these students. We also try and provide targeted interviews for year 8, 10, 11, 12 and 13. Some of these are delivered through group guidance. All of our students have access to guidance if they want it, but we proactively identify some and allocate interviews to them.

Schools were generally developing innovative blends of targeting, internal advice and guidance, external advice and guidance and other more informal career conversations to ensure maximum coverage of their cohort.

Brockhill Park Performing Arts College has developed an innovative approach to the delivery of guidance. The school uses an external provider to deliver one day a week of career guidance. The adviser initially sees students for 45 minute sessions in groups of 8. From these group guidance sessions, one-to-one advice sessions are booked where appropriate. The adviser alternates between one week of group work and one week of one-to-one. This approach enables them to offer guidance support to every student in the school ever year from year 7.

All case study schools provided access to some external professional career guidance. However, the level of service contracted varied considerably with school strategies, in house skills and student need. In general schools utilised external resources for two main reasons: (1) to provide students with access to an external/non-school source of support; (2) to provide the school with additional capacity to meet student demand for one-to-one guidance.

Activities and resources

The rest of this section provides an overview of the core features of the Kent model of career education and guidance as it has been observed in this project. In addition a wide range of other activities were in evidence in schools that participated in the case studies and survey.

The publication *Careers 2020* sets out taxonomy of school-based careers work organised under eight headings.²⁰

- Information provision
- Career assessment and tests
- Professional career counselling
- Career advice delivered by a non-careers professional
- Curricular interventions
- Further study learning/work-related learning
- Other extra-curricular activities
- Frameworks for reflection

Examples of all of these activities were identified in Kent's schools. Some will be discussed in the next section. However, it is the coherent and embedded nature of careers provision in Kent's schools that is most worthy of note.

²⁰ Hooley, T., Marriott, J., Watts, A.G. and Coiffait, L. (2012). *Careers 2020: Options for Future Careers Work in English Schools*. London: Pearson.

Trends in schools' delivery of career education and guidance

The previous section identified the core infrastructure that underpins the Kent model of career education and guidance. This section builds on this by highlighting a number of important trends that have been observed in schools' provision of career education and guidance. Many of these trends relate strongly to the strategic direction that has been set out in the county's *14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy* which seeks to ensure enhanced skills, labour market awareness, progression and participation in learning. The raising of the participation age and the associated destinations measures have heightened the importance of schools attending to these areas.

Tracking and data management

The increasing importance of post-school destinations has seen many of Kent's schools focus far more on managing student planning and monitoring destinations. Typically schools are identifying and monitoring students' plans about their next destination. Most schools have developed some kind of system to do this. The schools careers co-ordinator is usually key to this process.

Maidstone Grammar School for Girls has developed a strong approach to tracking students' decisions about their future. Careers co-ordinator Abigail Rhodes notes "In a large school you've got a lot of students to deal with. Our destinations analysis is a complex undertaking which involves a range of people in the school. It is becoming more sophisticated which now means that we track students aspirations throughout their school life and can use this to input ideas like the importance of taking "facilitating subjects"²¹ for those who might be on track for a Russell Group University."

Once students leave schools, schools are sharing data with the local authority to track students for the purpose of destinations statistics. Some schools are starting to think in more long term ways about how to track students, to encourage them to become active alumni and to think about how best to use such alumni in career provision.

Alison Rivers at **Invicta Grammar School** explains that the school uses alumni as part of its programme of employer talks. "We've been developing the alumni association over a number of years. We write to them three or four years after they've left us and we've developed a database. I'm also in charge of the alumni because the careers programme has driven the alumni activity. This area has developed a lot in the last couple of years."

The use of destinations data and alumni to support the careers programme has the potential to develop a virtuous circle of provision, evaluation and tracking. Many schools are starting to consider the potential of this kind of approach and it seems likely that practice in this area develops further over the next few years.

Addressing the range of post-school destinations

Case study schools showed a general awareness that post-school destinations were becoming more complex. Relatively few students leave school directly for work without training and there are an increasing number of possible options for young people. This means that the provision of information and advice about post-school options is vitally important. Schools noted that most

²¹ See Russell Group (2013). *Informed Choices*. London: Russell Group for further information about about facilitating subject.

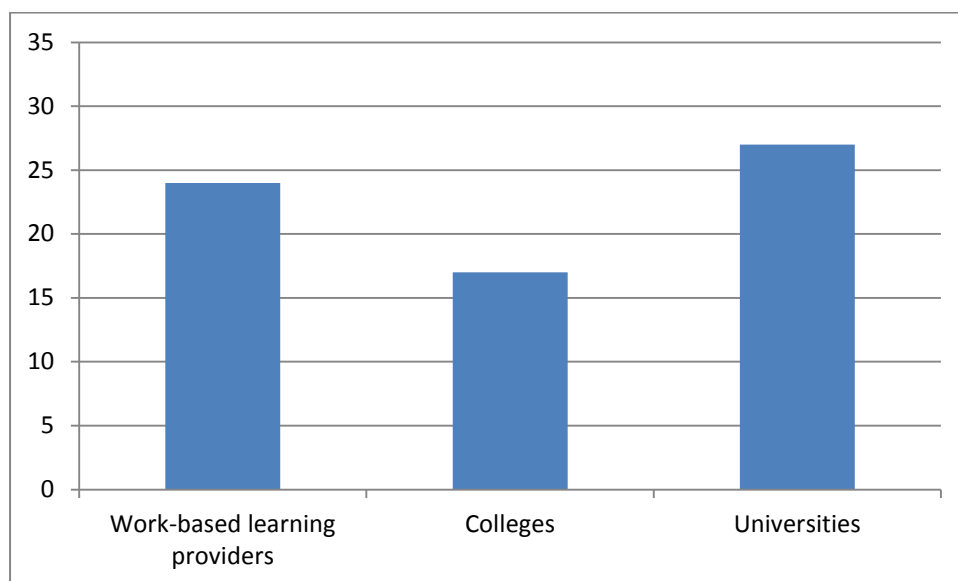
young people still focused their thinking around university or local colleges, however, many schools were actively trying to provide more options.

School staff noted increased opportunities for apprenticeships and felt that students were beginning to get more interested in them. **Brockhill Park Performing Arts College** has actually begun to offer apprenticeships and traineeships through the school to provide students with more options.

Simon Langton Girls' Grammar School engages with a range of different post-school learning providers. Careers co-ordinator Michele Semlyen says "we have employers and universities coming in. These include aspirational universities like Oxford University. We have also started to talk to students about overseas universities and have brought in Maastricht University. We open students' eyes to the opportunities other than university including Higher Apprenticeships and School Leaver programmes as they are really worthwhile opportunities with great prospects. The students are increasingly interested in these, especially in the Higher Apprenticeships..

Most schools were active in inviting a range of post-school learning providers into school. Figure 4 demonstrates the level of engagement with different types of provider.

Figure 4: Number of schools responding to the survey who invite post-school learning providers in to the school



Most schools make use of the Kent Choices website to support young people in making post-16 choices. In 2014 82% of Kent's Year 11 cohort accessed their Kent Choices account.

Employers and work experience

Many schools work closely with local employers to support their careers curriculum. 30/33 schools who responded to the survey said that they bring employers into the school. However, some acknowledged that this process of employer engagement was not always straightforward for the school.

Castle Community College runs a programme of employer talks as part of its careers provision. The programme is broad, but usually reflects the local economy and likely destinations for students e.g. .

the police, primary teaching, engineering, navy and law. The school has also recently been trying to promote international employment opportunities and has brought in a speaker about the possibility of becoming an apprentice in Germany.

Many schools make use of parents and alumni to deliver careers talks and to provide other kinds of career support.

At **Maidstone Grammar School**, Sharon Acaster (Careers and Enterprise Manager) says “We have an Old Maidstonian network which is really useful for bringing employers into the school. We tend to have ex-students ringing us up and offering us talks. We probably have half a dozen employer talks in a year. We also involve employers in careers days and ask them to provide work-shadowing opportunities and mentoring to our students.”

Most schools have also continued to provide work-experience. Changes in health and safety legislation have served to make this easier for some schools. Other schools have reported that these changes have made less difference than anticipated to the institution’s ability to convince employers to provide placements.

In Gravesham a group of schools have worked together to establish a central database of work experience opportunities through the **Gravesham Consortium**. This database allows for the sharing of employer information and helps to reduce the administration associated with health and safety checks.

The shift in emphasis in the policy sphere from pre-16 work experience to post-16 work experience does not seem to have impacted very much on practice in Kent. Although a few schools have moved the focus of their work experience programmes from year 10 to year 12. However, many schools seek to provide a range of opportunities for work-experience for students of different age groups.

Invicta Grammar School encourages students to undertake work experience in year 11 and offers an OCR qualification (Certificate of Employability Skills) for those who undertake this work experience and complete a reflective assessment. The school has also arranged its timetable so that students have a free afternoon every week in year 12 to undertake a work placement.

The way in which the Kent model of career education and guidance has developed has emphasised the importance of face-to-face contact between students, teachers, advisers, employers and post-school learning providers. However, alongside this strong face-to-face provision many schools are also making extensive use of new technologies.

Maidstone Grammar School for Girls has invested strongly in the development of online resources which they host on the Fronter (VLE).²² They have created a comprehensive internal site which includes information, links, embedded videos and short multi-media talks and lectures. The school’s VLE also hosts a range of booklets covering topics such as CV writing, soft-skills and cover letters. The careers co-ordinator sends a regular email bulletin to all 6th formers.

²² See <http://uk.fronter.info/>.

Collaboration

Collaboration has also been an important feature of careers provision in Kent. The CEIAG networks have already been discussed as a key mechanism for sharing good and innovative practice around the schools in the network.

Sharon Acaster of **Maidstone Grammar School** says “The CEIAG networks are very good. They help to keep the profile of careers work up and have given us considerable continuity since the end of Connexions. It is good to meet up with other schools and to share practice as there is a danger that you can get isolated.

In some areas deeper kinds of collaboration have been developed to share employer contacts, careers staff and resources or to provide a mechanism for contracting with external providers of career advice and guidance.

The **Gravesham Consortium** is a diverse consortium of schools in Gravesham comprising of Gravesend Grammar School, Ifield School, Mayfield Grammar School, Meopham School, and Northfleet School for Girls, Northfleet Technology College, Saint George’s C of E School, St John’s RC Comprehensive School, [the Ebbsfleet Academy](#), Thamesview School and NWK College. These schools have worked together both to provide a community of practice and to engage with providers of work experience and advice and guidance. By working together there have been considerable efficiency savings.

Conclusions

Schools in Kent, like their equivalents across the rest of the country, have a challenging job supporting young people to develop career management skills and make positive transitions. The range of options at key transition points can be challenging, the youth labour market is very limited and changes in fees and qualifications make decisions about further learning highly complex. In many cases it is very difficult to predict what will be the best decisions for young people. However, it is clear from this research that schools in Kent are developing strong systems to support young people in thinking about their futures and their careers. Despite a turbulent national policy environment, the careers system in Kent has proved remarkably resilient. In times when school-based careers provision has seems fragile across the country a new, sustainable and robust approach to careers has developed in Kent.

The new system has been strongly supported by a well-developed and strategic infrastructure that exists in the county. The enabling framework developed by Kent County Council has allowed careers work to thrive. Key to this has been the county's CEIAG Network which has allowed practice to be shared and a common model to emerge. Consequently many schools in Kent have evolved a similar model of school-based careers provision. The model is strongly embedded in the ethos of the schools, appropriately resourced and highly flexible.

Each of the case study schools has developed its provision since the publication of *Progression in Kent*. Some have travelled further than others, but for all of the schools in this research careers provision continues to improve and develop.

Without wishing to minimise the distinctive nature of many of the schools that participated in this research, it is possible to talk about the development of a Kent model of career education and guidance. At the present time, this model seems to offer one of the strongest pointers for the future direction of careers work in England.

Schools in Kent are focused on supporting young people into sustained positive destinations and providing them with the skills that they need to build successful lifelong careers. The nature of the careers programmes that are being developed in schools varies according to the needs of the students, but all of the case study schools shared similar features.

The Kent model of career education and guidance is focused on embedding careers into the heart of a school, building an infrastructure for delivery and resourcing it appropriately. The schools who participated in this research were all focused on doing this because it was the right thing for their students and not out of a desire to comply with the statutory guidance. Nonetheless, it is clear that this approach does provide a strong model for satisfying the current statutory framework. This approach will also be fundamental in supporting the County to achieve the ambition and aims of the *14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy*.

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Appendix 1: Useful links

Career Development Institute <http://www.thecdi.net/>

Fronter <http://uk.fronter.info/>

International Centre for Guidance Studies <http://www.derby.ac.uk/icegs>

Investors in Careers <http://www.investorincareers.org.uk/>

Kent CEIAG Framework is

available <https://shareweb.kent.gov.uk/Documents/KELSI/Curriculum%20and%20pupil%20learning/Skills%20and%20employability/CEIAG%20Framework.doc>.

Kent Choices <http://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/college-sixth-form-and-training>

Kent Education Learning and Skills Information (KELSI) <http://www.kelsi.org.uk/>

Kent Integrated Adolescent Support Service

(KIASS) http://www.kelsi.org.uk/pupil_support_and_wellbeing/targeted_support/inclusion/kiass.aspx

Kent and Medway Progression Federation <http://kmpf.org/>

Kent Training and Apprenticeships <http://www.kenttrainingandapprenticeships.co.uk/>

Russell Group - Informed Choices <http://russellgroup.org/InformedChoices-latest.pdf>

Appendix 2: Schools that responded to the survey

Brockhill Performing Arts College

Canterbury College

Castle Community College

Cornwallis Academy

Dover Grammar School for Girls

Enterprise Learning Alliance

Fulston Manor

Gravesend Grammar School

Hartsdown Academy

Harvey Grammar School

Hayesbrook School

Hillview School for Girls

Homewood School and Sixth Form Centre

Hugh Christie Tech.

K College

Leigh Academies Trust

Maidstone Grammar School

Maidstone Grammar School for Girls

Maplesden Noakes School

Mayfield Grammar School

Norton Knatchbull School

Orchards Academy

Pent Valley Technology College

QE Grammar

Simon Langton Girls Grammar School

St John's Catholic Comprehensive

St Simon Stock Catholic School

Swadelands

The Abbey School

The Charles Dickens School

The Judd School

The North School

Weald of Kent Grammar School