Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance Survey

Oxfordshire Results 2015

Emily Smith, IAG Development Officer
Youth, Engagement & Opportunities Team
Early Intervention Service
Acknowledgements

Thank you to the 1804 young people who filled in the on-line survey during May and June 2015 and to the school and college staff who enabled and encouraged students to take part. This was a fantastic response.

Additional thanks to staff and 145 young people at the following schools, colleges and groups who participated in focus groups:

- Abingdon & Witney College
- Matthew Arnold School
- Didcot Girls’ School
- Wheatley Park School
- Banbury Space Studio
- Chipping Norton School
- National Citizen Service – groups from Banbury and Witney
- The Early Intervention Service’s Oxford Job Club

Thanks also to the Early Intervention Service staff who made this survey happen, notably; Rosie Boyes who ran the Focus groups, supported by Hattie Partington and Fi Ridley and Lita Thornhill who along with Hattie Partington has analysed the data and collated feedback for schools and colleges who took part.
1. Background and Aims of the Survey

In 2012, the duty to provide impartial careers guidance for young people transferred from the local authority to schools and colleges. Since then, the Youth Engagement and Opportunities Team at the Oxfordshire County Council has been working with schools and colleges to share data, information about opportunities and to facilitate discussions and joint working to improve Career Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG).

Over the past three years the number of young people becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) after school has fallen and the quality of participation data received from schools has improved dramatically. The County Council have established excellent working partnerships and processes for data exchange which have been noted by the Department for Education who now use Oxfordshire as an example of good practice.

The introduction of the NEET scorecard and the publishing of Destination Measures by schools help Ofsted and parents judge how well a school is performing in terms of student progression. Destination data is also an indicator of how successful the CEIAG is in an educational institution. However, three years in to this new way of working, we wanted to find out what young people themselves think about the careers guidance they are receiving and how it could be improved.

The aim of the CEIAG survey was to get young people’s feedback and ideas about the CEIAG being delivered in Oxfordshire. Then, to give this feedback to schools and colleges to help evaluate current careers guidance programmes and ‘spark’ some ideas for improvement.

The findings from this survey will also be used to inform the agenda for Oxfordshire’s CEIAG Conference in February 2016 and guide the support that the County Council provides to schools, colleges and other learning providers in the coming years.
2. Methodology

The Oxfordshire CEIAG survey consisted of an online questionnaire and 13 focus groups, aimed primarily at Year 10 and Year 12 cohorts.

Online Survey

Survey Monkey was used to produce an online questionnaire that identified which school young people were attending or had attended previously, then asked them for feedback about the type of careers guidance they received, where else they could go for information about careers and what they thought of the quality of the information and advice they had received.

The questions used for the online survey were loosely based on a national survey by Youth Employment UK (www.yeuk.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/YEUK-Careers-Education-Report-2015.pdf) and designed to be used by individual schools in coming years so that further feedback from students can be gathered and monitored over time (see Appendix A).

The survey was open from April to June 2015 and was promoted via school and college CEIAG leads, Specialist NEET workers, Early Intervention Hubs, National Citizen Service and other partners working with young people in the target age group. It was also publicised on www.oxme.info and associated Facebook and twitter sites.

1804 young people responded to the online survey. 54% were female and 46% were male. 78% were in Year 10 and 22% were in Year 12 – either at school, college, NEET or employed. 27% of respondents self-declared at least one characteristic which may make them vulnerable to not transitioning to post-16 provision.
Focus Groups

145 young people took part in focus groups – 57 in Year 10, 25 in Year 11 and 63 in Year 12. Most of the young people were seen at their school or college but we held a focus group at a NEET Job club in Oxford and two groups with participants on the National Citizen Service program in Witney and Banbury. The focus groups were planned to ensure a geographical spread and schools in communities with a range of socioeconomic factors.

The sessions were run by Rosie Boyes, County Council’s Youth Opportunities Officer with support from Hattie Partington, Fi Ridley and Emily Smith from the Youth, Engagement and Opportunities Team.

Focus group sessions lasted between 60 and 90 minutes with 12 young people in each session (apart from the NEET group that had 3 participants). Focus groups were interactive and information was given verbally through group discussions and in writing – young people were asked write down their answers to some questions.

The questions worked through in each focus group included:

- Who would you go to for careers information and advice and to find out what jobs are around?
- What kinds of careers information, opportunities and activities at school/college have you experienced and which of these were the most useful?
- Do you feel your school gives impartial (neutral) advice?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percentage</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have a learning disability or difficulty</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a parent/pregnant</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have mental health problems</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am homeless</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am looked after/a care leaver</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a young offender/ex-offender</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a young carer</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am/was entitled to free school meals</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total who felt one or more of these options applied to them</td>
<td>27.2%</td>
<td>546</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of these apply to me</td>
<td>72.8%</td>
<td>1458</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Do you feel your school gives advice based on your best interests as individuals?
• Have you been offered work experience? If so, did you arrange a placement yourself or did school? Was the work experience worthwhile?
• What careers websites do you know of?
• Has anyone at school talked to you about the Labour Market and what types of jobs are available to young people after leaving school?
• What would you like your school to offer to help you learn more about the world of work and careers?

The Year 12 cohort were also asked:
• Was your school supportive of your post-16 choice?
• What are you doing now?
• Are you happy with the choice you made (i.e. to stay at school, go to college, get a job)?
• Did you have 5 or more contacts with employers during your time at school?
• Do you have clear career plan?

Responses were captured on flip charts, notes by the facilitator and the written responses young people produced.

**Analysing the data**

The online responses to each question were collated and turned into graphs and charts. The responses by young people who identified as having a learning disability and those who were Looked After or Care Leavers, were also collated separately, so comparisons could be made with the full cohort.

When considering the online survey results, there are a few factors that need to be taken into account:

• Responses did not come from all schools in the county, some schools only provided few responses and some schools provided over 100. There was a good geographical spread that included mainstream and special schools.

• There were some inappropriate and unusable comments made by respondents that were removed. Likewise a small number of returns were not used in the analysis as the answers were inappropriate throughout.

• Some young people with learning difficulties/disabilities had help from a parent or member of school staff to complete the online survey. These responses were looked at along with all the others.

The feedback gathered in the focus groups verbally, on sticky notes and captured on flip charts, was typed up after each session (these notes are available to the school, college or setting where the focus group took place).
3. Key Findings: Oxfordshire

Careers Experiences Currently Offered

There is a wide range of careers education taking place in Oxfordshire schools and colleges, for example: university visits; work experience; Apprenticeship Launchpad; Duke of Edinburgh Award; careers fairs; social enterprise activities; mock interviews and curriculum vitae (CV) writing sessions. What is available varies a lot between schools, with students at the Didcot UTC and Studio Schools at Banbury and Bicester reporting a lot of employer led activities and part time jobs outside of school that helped them to understand the world of work. Work experience was the most common experience reported. However, not all students had been given the opportunity to do work experience. Those who did were mostly positive about it, but some reported being on placements that were not well matched to their interests as well as a lack of preparation and reflection time in school before and after the placement.

Although there were a wide range of careers activities happening, young people did not believe these activities were organised strategically. For example, some activities seemed to happen in isolation and not link back to what they were learning in lessons. Some schools did not have a way for the students to record all the careers education inputs they had received – which made it hard to remember what they had done.
In the survey results and the focus groups the year 12 students reported having more careers input that the year 10 students. This is interesting as the statutory duty to provide CEIAG starts in Year 8. This suggests that either: a) schools are not doing as much with students before Year 11 as they should, or b) the input provided is not understood by the students to be linked to careers and their long-term goals.

Young people mostly wanted more work experience opportunities and employer contacts.

**One-to-One Careers Guidance Interviews**

When asked ‘does your school/college provide you with a one-to-one careers guidance interview?’ 56% of year 12 respondents said yes. Year 10s seemed less aware of this offer. This data suggests that a significant number of young people are not given access to an individual careers guidance interview while at school or college and that year 9 and 10 students are not always given the opportunity to explore their options on a one-to-one basis. Some students who participated in the focus groups knew who to go to within their setting to request careers advice, some did not.

“I don’t know how to access 1-2-1 careers talks but I think they should be given to the students as appointments”

The focus groups showed that some settings are better than others at explaining the availability of a careers adviser than others. Students at colleges were clearer about how to access advice than Year 12 students in school sixth forms.

Of the young people who had received a one-to-one careers interview, there was mixed feedback about the quality and benefit of these interviews. While many of the interviews were informative, very few young people found the sessions inspirational. Young people generally did not feel these interviews covered all the post-16 options available to them or helped them decide what to do next.
This data suggests that while some careers interviews are good, the majority are not providing what young people want. This could be because of the way the interviews are being delivered but could also be the understanding young people have about options and labour market information ahead of their interview.

“More help should be provided at our age rather than just a short interview about career choices in year 10 and leaving it at that. Everyone should be interviewed, no matter what they say on a form given to them. More support and lessons should definitely be given.”

Young people in the focus groups felt that one-to-one careers advice should be available earlier, i.e. before students have to choose GCSEs courses and providers. They also believed the opportunity to learn about different sectors and career pathways was needed before the one-to-one session.

**Impartiality of Advice Received**

The survey results show 32% of young people felt the information and guidance they received in schools and college was impartial, 21% felt that it was not, and 47% were not sure (see graph on page 12). There was a similar response across both year groups. More negative than positive comments were made during the focus group discussions.

Where feedback was positive, students reported being told about all options and being listened to:

“I was thinking about just staying on at 6th form but they suggested college would be a better option. Very fair and very informative.”

“They take into account what you want to do, as well as what’s best for them, so you can get a good future. So they try to balance it out and make a good
option for you. They don’t expect you to take their option – they want you to choose.”

“They gave info about the 6th Form evenings and [a teacher] gave us information about Apprenticeships and colleges.”

Young people who said that their school was not impartial in the advice they gave talked about teachers and careers officers not knowing about all the available options and not exposing students to the full range of opportunities available to them:

“Schools only really focus on maths, science and apprenticeships not vocational or performing.”

“Send someone from Abingdon and Witney College to [my school] as they only had Henley College come in for a talk so people went there because the school said they can only go there”.

“Leaflets for [the UTC] came through the door – I saw it and was interested. [my old School] didn’t tell us about it – they didn’t know what it was.”

“Every time I asked him for advice, he told me how it would be so much better if I stayed here – he didn’t really know any options.”

There were a number of young people from a range of schools who felt they were pushed into sixth form or college courses for the wrong reasons:

“They tried to get me to stay on at 6th form, even though I didn’t want to.”

“They tried to convert me to go to college – they didn’t want me to go to 6th Form because they didn’t think I would be able to do it.”

“The school should do more for the individuals rather than trying to group us together. Also should be more considered what’s best for the students future, not trying to get more to stay at their own school for 6th form”
Question 11. How Strongly do you Agree with the Following Statements?

I know who to ask for careers support in school/college
I know about/ have used the Oxme website: www.oxme.info
I have a good idea of the type of career I would like
I feel confident about writing a CV
I feel confident about filling in application forms
I feel confident about applying for jobs
I feel confident about going to interviews
I know about the types of jobs and training that are available
I know about financial support to help young people stay in education
The advice I get from school/college is impartial (neutral) and based on what is right for me as an individual
Overall, my school/college provides (or provided) useful careers education, information, advice and guidance

Strongly Disagree - 1  Disagree - 2  Neither Disagree or Agree - 3  Agree - 4  Strongly Agree - 5
There were a few comments from ‘gifted and talented’ students saying that they felt pressured into academic routes and were not given enough information about apprenticeships and other vocational pathways. There were a number of comments about one ‘type’ of students being told about one set of options and other ‘types’ of students being told about a different set of options. Students felt that all young people should have information about all routes – both academic and vocational pathways – so that they can make informed choices.

“They tried to change our minds – i.e. wanting me to do bricklaying, when I wanted to do I.T. - they didn’t listen to lots of us.”

“Our school does nothing much to help intelligent students but only those with learning difficulties… we don’t get ANY special attention or guidance which isn’t right as everyone’s education and future plans should be important.”

“I felt they focused more on my grades, than on me as a person”

A number of young people talked about the need to have information about all post-16 routes and options and the desire to have more one-to-one advice provided so that individuals can explore what is best for them. Most reported having information about apprenticeships, schools and college courses but not about work or applying for jobs, traineeships and other work-based learning provision.

Confidence about Job Seeking and Understanding of the Labour Market Information

Less than 50% of survey respondents felt confident about applying for jobs, completing application forms, writing CVs and attending interviews. This was true of both Year 10 and Year 12 respondents.

57% of young people surveyed said they had a good idea of the type of career they wanted but only 37% felt they know what type of jobs and training are available. There was little difference between responses from Year 10 and Year 12 students to this question. There were a number of comments made at the focus groups about there being lots of information about university study and some about apprenticeships but not much about traineeships and other forms of post-16 study. One young person who was unemployed felt that their school should have done more to prepare them for life after school and offered more support to explore different opportunities available.

Only 22% felt they knew enough about the financial support available to stay in learning after Year 11 and beyond. There were a number of comments in the survey responses and in the focus groups requesting information about funding: including university loans; apprenticeship salaries and other financial support available to college students.
**Work Experience and Employer Contact**

In the survey and the focus groups, the high value young people placed on work experience and employer contact was clear. The 50% who had had the opportunity to do some work experience either found it very useful, or wanted to do another placement as the one they had done hadn’t been suitable for them. Many Year 12 respondents felt that work experience in Year 10 alone was not enough and that there should be multiple opportunities to try a variety of jobs.

When asked in the focus groups what the most useful careers input their school offered and what the school/college should offer more of, work experience was the most common response, followed by visits to and from businesses to learn about what they do. Young people liked Careers events – they mentioned one in Birmingham and the Oxford Careers Fest as a way of meeting employers and course providers.

Comments made during the focus groups about work Experience included:

- “I got a job out of it. I was so good at it, they just offered me a job – as a cooking assistant.”

- “It helped me know what I wanted to do”

- “It helped me realise how hard work is and how much you need team work and skills”

- “It helped build confidence”

There were a number of comments about the need to have more contact with employers to understand what jobs are really like, what qualifications employers want young people to have and how much you can earn doing different jobs. There was a desire to understand what roles are available that is not always being met and how to get into those career paths.

**Getting careers information outside of school**

62% of young people responding to the survey knew where to go in school/college for advice. In the focus groups students talked about work experience coordinators, form tutors and subject teachers who they felt they could ask for careers information and support with subject choices. Some picked specific careers advisors working in the school, but these were not the only school staff members that students would approach for information.
Outside school, or after finishing school, only 18% knew where to go for information. The majority of young people surveyed were still in education so perhaps hadn’t needed to use other advice services, but if young people become NEET or get a job or apprenticeship after finishing mainstream education, they will need to know where to go for support and information.

“School should let me know where local support centres are. We should be asked throughout our time in school what our plans are, leaving it till year 10 hasn’t given us enough time.”

In the survey, as well as school/college staff, young people told us they are most likely to seek advice from their parents, ‘professionals’ and the internet – in that order. Year 12s were more likely to talk to professionals – perhaps they are more aware of one-to-one support available, as most of this seems to happen in Year 11, or they have spoken to a member of staff in the local Early Intervention Hub or NEET workers upon leaving school. Most young people in the focus groups also said that parents were the main source of advice. While in many ways this is positive, it highlights the need for schools and colleges to work with parents to ensure that they have up-to-date information about career pathways and that students are not being given mixed messages about what options are available and most suitable for them. College students were more likely to know who to go to for careers information than students still in school.
Although the internet is a favoured source of information, 72% of young people responding to the survey had not heard of Oxfordshire County Council’s website for young people [www.oxme.info](http://www.oxme.info). It could be that they had seen it and couldn’t remember, but this is a disappointing result. The website lists post-16 opportunities and links to a range of support and information that young people can access about careers, health, activities and learning. The website is a gateway to a wide range of information and support as well as access to professionals and careers advisers outside school. Those not aware of, or unable to access, the site risk missing out on a key information source when they finish school.

**What else could schools/colleges offer?**

Overall, 42% of survey respondents felt their school/college offered useful careers information. Only 21% disagreed and 37% said they didn’t know.

As well as more and longer work experience, employer contacts and more individualised guidance, young people in the focus groups and those who responded to the survey highlighted their need for ‘Life Skills’, particularly around finance, tax and self-employment.

“I just feel that schools should help us more with what we’re going to do after school. I feel that we should be given information presented in a simple and not complicated way about the opportunities, and about basic things that we’ll have to do once we leave full time educations (such as opening a bank account).”

“I think we should be taught more about the laws about working at our current age / vacancies for jobs open to us.”
“They didn’t really explain that you can get part-time jobs or that you could volunteer in certain places.”

“[School should] look at tax returns and things we’ll need to do in real life that we currently have no experience of”

“It would be useful to learn how to pay taxes and mortgages and stuff like that that.”

“Loans, APR and stuff – I only know about it because I take business, but others who don’t take it…I feel they wouldn’t know which loans are best to go for and stuff.”

“Tell me useful things about different careers and ways of setting up my own business and legal things.”

The comments made in the survey question ‘What else do you think schools/colleges should do to help young people get ready for their futures?’ were grouped by topic. Those highlighted in yellow below had the largest number of comments. The request for more input about finance and ‘life skills’ was the second most common response. ‘Life skills’ and careers education are different, but interrelated, especially in terms of self-employment and funding different study routes. Despite the survey not focusing on Life Skills young people from a variety of settings expressed the need for schools and colleges to do more to prepare them for adult life more generally and to provide support to budget and understand more about financial management.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Categories (Loosely categorised)</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>% of Answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. More Careers events</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Work Experience</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Visits to/from employers</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. More 1 to 1 support from School</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Help with Finance/Life skills</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Inspirational Speakers</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Careers experiences</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Unbiased Information and advice</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Anything at all</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Unusable or Inappropriate</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. No / N/A / Don't know</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1550</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Looked After Children and Care Leavers

The online survey was completed by 17 Looked After Children, their responses were analysed to see if there were any differences to their peers, but there was no significant difference. We also looked at the responses from young people with learning difficulties/disabilities and whilst most of their answers were consistent with the wider responses, there were a few interesting differences that are outlined in Chapter 4.

Poor Attenders and Those at Risk of NEET

Young people who are NEET that attended focus groups were particularly negative about the careers guidance they received from school and had not experienced as many careers events and interventions as other young people during their education. One reported leaving school at aged 15 and missing out on any careers input as his school didn’t provide careers activities until Year 11.

Whilst young people are enrolled at school, they have an entitlement to careers information and guidance, but our small sample suggested this is not always provided. Young people (from Year 8 upwards) who are on alternative education programmes or who do not attend regularly, risk being left out of careers provision provided by schools. These young people, who are at risk of NEET, need to be included in school career programmes so that they receive appropriate support and are informed about how to access support after statutory schooling.
4. Key Findings: Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

The online survey was completed by 146 young people who identified themselves as having a disability or difficulty. 80% of these were in Year 10 and they went to a mix of mainstream schools, special schools and colleges.

Like the bulk of survey respondents, the careers activity that young people with learning disabilities said they had received most was work experience, however, only 23% of respondents said they had had work experience. Those who had been on work experience found it very useful.

People with learning disabilities were less likely to have had a one-to-one careers interview at school or college. 31% had received an interview compared to 40% of the whole cohort. It is not clear whether this is because they are less aware of the sessions or that they are not available in the schools that young people with disabilities attend.

Young people with disabilities felt they were not getting enough information about university choices and places to study in Year 12. These young people seemed to be getting the same amount of information about apprenticeships and applying for jobs as the whole cohort, but less about academic pathways than their peers without learning disabilities.
Young people with special educational needs highlighted career and youth professionals as people they were most likely to ask for careers guidance. This is in contrast to the results from the mainstream cohort who highlighted parents as their main source of advice outside of school. This emphasises the importance for staff in special schools and those supporting students with special educational needs in mainstream schools to understand the full post-16 offer and to explain options and/or refer young people to careers professionals.

Additional comments made by young people with learning disabilities included:

“I feel like the future is either university or apprenticeships, this is limited.”

“More work experience because you should be able to do 3-4 weeks’ worth of it so you can change the job you tried to another if it’s just not for you. The 3-4 weeks should be scattered through the year of year 10.”

“No one at [my mainstream school] has sat me down and asked me what I want to do and then found information about the choices I want to make.”

“There should be more guidance for people who don't know what they want to do or even in the weeks work experience, if they were having trouble to find anything to do.”
5. Key Themes and Messages from Students

Young people have described some excellent practice in Oxfordshire schools and have given numerous examples of individual staff who have helped them understand and make decisions about post-16 opportunities and career pathways. There is a wide range of careers education activities happening across Oxfordshire schools and colleges with involvement from a range of employers and partners. However, some young people feel that they are not getting enough careers related input and the activities available vary from school to school and college to college. The survey results and focus group discussions highlight some key areas where young people think that provision could be improved.

1) **Year 11 is too late!** Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance provision needs to have more prominence from Year 8 upwards. While the statutory duty on schools to provide guidance covers Year 8 through to Year 13, the survey results and conversations we had while at schools suggests that there is most careers input towards the end of Year 10 and during Year 11. Young people talked about needing a clearer plan about where they were heading before they chose GCSE subjects to help with the decision making and have a sense of direction.

2) **Impartiality: All students need to know about all the pathways available to them so they have real choice.** Students sometimes feel pushed down one route based on their grades and feel they are not told about options the school doesn’t want them to know about. Some young people who achieved high grades were advised to stay at school to do A Levels leading to university entry and were not given information about vocational routes to the same qualifications and careers – e.g. higher apprenticeships. Schools have a responsibility to understand the local and national labour market, vocational pathways and academic routes then inform all students about the breadth of opportunities available without favouring a particular route or location.

3) **Teachers and parents need to be better informed about GCSE and Post-16 options.** Students reported schools not telling them about University Technical Colleges and Studio Schools and also that teachers didn’t know about them when asked. Often the options given to Year 11 students about further learning concentrate on college, school and some types of apprenticeship. There are other opportunities for learning that young people are not aware of, perhaps because teachers do not have this information themselves. Young people told us they talk to tutors and subject teachers about jobs and pathways, not just the careers leads, therefore it is vital that all teaching staff are trained and understand the different routes.

   Given that young people are also very likely to ask parents for advice about their career pathways it is important that schools involve parents helping them to understand the options available and to ‘myth-bust’ any preconceptions about particular opportunities.

4) **Young people would like more one-to-one time with professionals to discuss what pathway is best for them as an individual.** These
conversations need to be with professionals who understand all of the options and pathways available and who are able to conduct the sessions in an inspiring and impartial manner.

5) **More work experience and contact with employers is needed.** We found that work experience is very popular and students would like two or three chances to go on work experience to try different work environments. Young people value the opportunity to speak to employers and visit a range of work places so they understand the range of careers that are possible and what employers require.

6) **Young people use the internet to find careers information but need guidance about which websites to use.** Young people were aware of some job sites and online career tools, but not many were aware of the National Careers Service site and few had used [www.oxme.info](http://www.oxme.info). Oxme is an important local tool for young people aged 13 upwards and signposts to local and national support and resources so young people would benefit from registering.

7) **Young people do not have enough information about the financial implications of them choosing different post-16 pathways.** Students did not feel informed about student loans, 16-19 bursaries and other financial support for them to access different types of learning. Not being aware of grants or loans available could limit choice as young people rule out options that could be available to them.

8) **Students leaving school do not feel prepared for being self-employed, dealing with tax, mortgages and loans.** Young people told us that schools should do more to prepare them for adult life more generally. Life skills such as applying for loans, setting up bank accounts and dealing with tax were all mentioned. Employment options available to young people include self-employment, but without knowing how to go about setting up a business and the range of advice and financial support available this option is not explored.

9) **Poor attenders need to be included in the school careers education strategy.** Students who are on school roll but not attending regularly and those attending alternative education need to be included in careers guidance activities and schools must ensure that this group have access to school careers provision as well as information about support available in the community.

10) **Young people need help to connect the careers activities schools and colleges provide with employability skills.** Students may be doing more careers activities in school than they told us about but don’t remember, or are not connecting what they have done with employability and the labour market. It is important that young people are able to understand and articulate the skills and experiences they develop in school to help them to plan a career path and to sell themselves when applying for jobs in the future.
6. Next Steps

The reason for doing this survey was to obtain feedback from young people about the Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance they have received in Oxfordshire schools and colleges and to generate ideas for improvements.

Schools and colleges are encouraged to make use of the CEIAG Briefings, conferences and the Youth, Employment and Participation Networks coordinated by Oxfordshire County Council and schools partnership groups to address issues raised by young people in this report. There is a lot of excellent work already happening and by sharing ideas and approaches good practice can be expanded.

The questionnaire and a lesson plan for the focus group sessions are provided in Appendix A and B. Schools and colleges are invited to repeat the survey, perhaps annually, as a way to monitor progress and continue receiving this type of feedback from students.

Ofsted, the DfE and parents, continue to monitor ‘Destination Measures’. These can be also used as a measure of CEIAG success, if schools are offering impartial and effective careers guidance, fewer of their ex-students who become NEET later on will become NEET post school.

If not already doing so, schools and colleges could consider working towards a careers quality mark to identify other gaps and help formulate a CEIAG strategy that can be communicated and understood by students, post-16 partners and parents.
Appendices
Please complete this survey only if you are in year 10 or Year 12, or if you left Year 11 in July 2014.

Oxfordshire County Council are really interested in what you can tell us about your experiences of careers guidance so far at your school or college, and your answers will help us learn more about the careers guidance offered to young people across Oxfordshire. The survey is anonymous, so please be as honest as possible and answer the following questions as fully as you can. Thank you very much!

(Please answer each question. You will not be able to move to the next page if you miss a box, and it will prompt you to answer in red text.)

Please tell us about yourself...

1. Are you male or female?
   - Male
   - Female

2. What school year are you in at school/college (even if you have left)?
   - In Year 10 – at school/college
   - In Year 12 – at school/college
   - In Year 12 – out of education

3. Please tell us which school/college you are currently at, or which one you went to (if you left in July 2014)? (Please complete 1 box only):
   - I currently attend: [ ]
   - I left school/college in July 2014, but I used to go to: [ ]

4. If you left school/college in July 2014, please tell us what are you doing now? (Working full or part-time, training, something else... or not doing anything? Or write N/A if this doesn’t apply to you):
   [ ]
5. Please tell us if any of the following apply to you? (You can select any/all that apply):

- [ ] I have a learning disability or difficulty
- [ ] I am a parent/pregnant
- [ ] I have mental health problems
- [ ] I am homeless
- [ ] I am looked after/a care leaver
- [ ] I am a young offender/ex-offender
- [ ] I am a young carer
- [ ] I am/was entitled to free school meals
- [ ] None of these apply to me
6. Do you/did you experience any of the following at school/college? (Please select any/all that apply):

- Careers events (Fairs, World or Work Challenges etc)
- Work Experience
- Visits from employers talking about the world of work and careers
- Visits to employers
- Enterprise Days (Young Enterprise, Dragons Den etc)
- Inspirational Speakers
- Careers experiences (CV writing, interviews, employability skills etc)
- None of the above

Other (please specify)

7. Which of the experiences listed above (in Q.6) do you think is/was the most useful? (Please only choose one, which can include anything you have listed in the 'Other' box):


8. How strongly do you agree with each of the following statements? (Please select only one answer for each statement):

I am being given/I was given the right amount of careers information at school/college on:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Places to study at in Year 12</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traineeships</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeships</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Qualifications</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Choices</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour market information</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starting your own business</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applying for and getting a job</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Training Colleges</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. Does/did your school/college provide you with a 1-2-1 careers interview to discuss your careers and education choices?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Not sure
10. How strongly do you agree with each of the following statements? (Please select only one answer for each statement, and choose the last column if the question doesn’t apply to you):

My 1-2-1 careers interview at school/college:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>N/A - I did not have a 1-2-1 careers interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Covered all options</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was inspirational</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped make next step choices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was informative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. How strongly do you agree with each of the following statements? (Please select only one answer for each statement):

Please also tell us about the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree or Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I know who to ask for careers support in school/college</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know about/have used the Oxme website: <a href="http://www.oxme.info">www.oxme.info</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a good idea of the type of career I would like</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel confident about writing a CV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel confident about filling in application forms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel confident about applying for jobs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel confident about going to interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know about the types of jobs and training that are available</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know about financial support to help young people stay in education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The advice I get from school/college is impartial (neutral) and based on what is right for me as an individual</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall, my school/college provides (or provided) useful careers education, information, advice and guidance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12. What else do you think schools/colleges should do to help young people get ready for their futures?

13. Apart from school/college, do you know where you can go for careers support?
   - Yes
   - No

14. If yes, please tell us where/who? (Or write N/A if you answered 'No' above):

15. Do you have any other comments?

Thanks very much for your time!

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
## Appendix B: Example (90 minute) Session Plan for Careers, Education, Information, Advice & Guidance (CEIAG) Focus Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose:</th>
<th>Activity:</th>
<th>Possible answers/prompts? And/or further info:</th>
<th>R'sources:</th>
<th>Time:</th>
<th>Mins:</th>
<th>Who:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 0        | Arrival  | • Arrive and set up room  
• Get all sheets, flipcharts, pens, paper and dictaphone ready (to run throughout the session if YP are happy with this.)  
• Set up chairs in circle, and tables as needed. |  
• Dictaphone  
• Fl'chart + pens  
• Pens + paper  
• Colouring pens  
• Post-its | 8.45am | 15m | RB & HP |
| 1        | YP arrive  
Sign In  
Name badges  
Consent Group ‘Rules’ | • YP arrive and complete sign-in sheet & name labels  
• Complete/collect/give out Media Consent forms – as applicable  
• Elicit ‘working together’ group rules (respect/listening/confidentiality etc) |  
• Sign-In sheet  
• Media Consent Forms  
• Name-badge stickers | 9.00am | 5m | RB |
| 2        | Name Intro’s  
Intro to topic  
& En’giser | Introductions: Ask YP to say their name, age and what course they are doing  
Facilitators introduce themselves  
Explanations: Introduce topic of CEIAG. Explain purpose of focus group. (Explain how info will be used, check dictaphone use is ok, if YP are happy to be referred to by name, or be kept anonymous in results? Ask if they have all done the CEIAG survey?)  
Energizer: ‘Cornflakes’:  
Get all YP to sit in a circle with one less chair than there is people…extra person is in the middle. They make a statement, and everyone who agrees with the statement stands up, swaps chairs and sits down somewhere else (can’t be chair next to you). Game continues until facilitator ends it. If you get stuck, or if no one agrees with what you have suggested, then you say ‘Cornflakes’ and everyone has to get up and swap around. Make this game themed on topic of CEIAG: Please say things which tell us anything you’ve done or would like to do regarding, careers, training, jobs - e.g. “I want to go to university”, “I want to do an apprenticeship”, “My school had a careers fair”, “My careers adviser encouraged me to stay in my own school and do A-Levels” etc. (If YP are really struggling – then can be about anything – e.g. “I am wearing trainers.”) |  
• Chairs in circle with 1 removed | 9.05am | 2m | RB |

### Q.1 (Q.1a) (Q.1b)

1. Where/Who would you go to for careers information and advice and to find out what jobs are around (if anyone)?

   - Have you done this?
   - Why?

   **Write up responses on flipchart – once all up, ask YP to individually choose the main one they would use, and put hands up when it’s called out – record this, so have total nos. for the group’s preferences.**

   **Information for facilitators:** All evidence is that YP mainly ask/get advice from parents. We target career advice at YP, but are not so good at involving parents.

   **Possible responses:**
   - Schools
   - Parents
   - Friends
   - Internet
   - Oxme
   - Connexions
   - Don’t know
   - Other?
### Q.2 Energiser/Intro-game:

'1 thing in common' in pairs and then feedback to whole group. Think about the careers activities and opportunities on offer at your school/college. You have 1 min to find 1 thing that you and your partner have both experienced -- e.g. “Did Work Experience in Year 10.” (You can't use this as an example!)

- **En’giser (Q.2a)**
- **Energiser/Intro-game:**

#### (Q.2b) (Q.2c) (Q.2d)

2. What kinds of careers information, opportunities and activities at school/college have you experienced and which of these were the most useful? (So far, and any happening in future?)

**Possible responses (list from surveys):**

- Careers events (Fairs, World or Work Challenges etc)
- Work Experience
- Visits from employers talking about the world of work and careers
- Visits to employers
- Enterprise Days (Young Enterprise, Dragons Den etc)
- Inspirational Speakers
- Careers experiences (CV writing, interviews, employability skills etc)
- None of the above
- Other (please specify)

#### Background Info – testing the Guidelines:

**Guidance:**

- The governing body must ensure that the independent careers guidance provided:
  - Includes information on the range of education or training options, including apprenticeships and other vocational pathways
  - In good time before decision points (WHEN?) schools should ensure that pupils are informed about the options available, including:
    - **(YR 10)** Post-14: GCSEs; options offered by local university technical colleges10 and studio schools11; opportunities for 14 year old enrolment at local colleges
    - **(YR 12)** Post-16: A levels, advanced general qualifications, apprenticeships, employment combined with training, supported internships, tech levels and traineeships.
    - **(YR 14)** Post-18: further education courses, higher apprenticeships, undergraduate degrees.
  - **Also - see Guidance in Q. 5 below**

### Q.3 Check/Explain meaning (Q.3a)

**Check for understanding about impartiality (neutral) and explain as required:**

‘What does impartiality mean?’

Impartiality means that: “Decisions should be based on objective criteria, rather than on the basis of bias, prejudice, or preferring the benefit to one person over another for improper reasons.”

Neutral means: “Not supporting or helping either side in a conflict, disagreement, etc.; impartial, unbiased.”

#### Possible responses (list from surveys):

- Places to study at in Year 12 (& options for financial support to help YP stay in education)
- Traineeships
- Apprenticeships
- Vocational Qualifications
- University Choices
- Labour market information
- Starting your own business
- Applying for and getting a job
- University Training Colleges
- 1-2-1 careers interviews to discuss career and education choices?
3. Do you feel your school gives impartial (neutral) advice? Why?
(i.e. do they give advice on all options available, regardless of where/what they are – not just advising YP to stay on at same school and advising even if not in school's interests. E.g. giving neutral advice that is not given to help the school by getting YP to stay on, so they can acquire the funding for this, etc.)

Record on flipchart
(Questions for facilitators: What is impartial advice from schools? How can we tell? What examples are there of schools being impartial? Do schools look into/know about the other options students have? They need to provide all the other info too, as it is their responsibility.)

Background Info – testing the Guidelines:
Guidance:
- The governing body must ensure that the independent careers guidance provided:
  - Is presented in an impartial manner

4. Do you feel your school gives advice based on your best interests as individuals? Why?
(i.e. once YP have been given the information, how well are they advised on the most appropriate path to take for THEM as individuals?)

Write information from YP on flipchart
- Does your school listen to what you think is best for you, or do they tell you what’s best for you?
- Is prejudice shown towards any options (e.g. because they don’t understand about some options or make judgements about your choices – e.g. “you’re too clever to go to college!” with the idea that being a 6th former/doing A’ Levels is somehow better than going to college)
- What advice have you been given?
- Did you agree with it?
- Did you feel it was appropriate for you?
- Have you ever completely disagreed with careers guidance? Why was this?

Background Info – testing the Guidelines:
Guidance:
- The governing body must ensure that the independent careers guidance provided:
  - Is guidance that the person giving it considers will promote the best interests of the pupils to whom it is given.
Did you know?!
There is no statutory obligation for any school to offer Work Experience, and a few schools in Oxfordshire do not offer it. The majority of schools in the County offer at least one week in Year 10, and some may offer a week in Year 12 (or Year 11) instead, or as well. Some schools have a Work Experience Coordinator who will find placement options and offer a choice, but other schools leave it up to pupils to organise.

5. Have you been offered work experience? If so, did you arrange a placement yourself or did school? Was the work experience worthwhile? (If you’ve not done this, do you know if it’s coming up?)

Display prepared flipchart page, with written/numbered questions, and give YP post-its to number from 1 - 5, write on & stick up on board at the front. Then explore questions 4 and 5 in more detail and write up any info on blank flipchart page.

1. What did you do?
2. What school/college and which Year?
3. Was it useful for your future and why/why not?
4. What could have made it better?
5. Was there any follow up after? (By schools – e.g. school getting YP to do an evaluation or follow up some other way in school about what they did/how it helped etc. Could also be some kind of follow up to employers from schools and/or by YP.)

Information for facilitators:
Y10 - will have done W.E., will be about to, or might not do it at all
Y11 - usually don’t do it, but some schools/colleges might
Y12 - some may have done W.E. in Y10, and some do in Y12 (instead/as well)

Background Info – testing the Guidelines:
Guidance:
❖ Every school should engage fully with their local employer and professional community to ensure real-world connections with employers lie at the heart of the careers strategy. Different interventions will work for different schools and pupils, but it could mean in practice:
  ✓ Mentoring and coaching
  ✓ Speakers from the world of work in schools
  ✓ An insight from Jobcentre Plus, or the National Careers Service into the labour market and the needs of employers
  ✓ Workplace visits and work experience placements
  ✓ Work ‘taster’ events such as games and competitions
  ✓ Careers fair and career networking events
  ✓ Access to open days at further and higher education institutions
  ✓ Access to creative online resources and labour market intelligence
  ✓ Help with basic career management skills like CV writing, CV building, job searches and job interviews.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q.6 (Q.6a) (Q.6b)</th>
<th>6. What careers websites do you know of?</th>
<th>Examples of careers websites:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group discussion - write info from YP on flipchart</td>
<td>National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>See what YP know already, then ask:</td>
<td>National Careers Service (NCS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How do you know about these?</td>
<td>Plotr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you use them?</td>
<td>Oxme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have you heard of/do you use Oxme?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background Info – testing the Guidelines:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✷ See Guidance in Q. 5 above</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Q.7 (Q.7a) (Q.7b) | 7. Do you know what the Labour Market is? Has anyone at school talked to you about the Labour Market and what sort of jobs are available to young people after leaving school? | | |
|                   | Group discussion - write info from YP on flipchart | | |
|                   | Record how many know about it, and how many have never heard of it. | | |
|                   | Who told you? | | |
|                   | What was covered? | | |
|                   | Do you find this information useful/interesting? | | |
|                   | (Show YP the leaflet and say they’ll be given out at the end.) | | |
| Background Info – testing the Guidelines: | | |
| ✷ See Guidance in Q. 5 above | | |

| Q.8 | 8. What would you like your school to offer to help you learn more about the world of work and careers? | | |
| Group discussion - write info from YP on flipchart | | |
| Why? | | |
| What’s been missing? What happens elsewhere that works that you’ve heard of? | | |
| What have friends done elsewhere? Any ideas? What do your parents think?! | | |

| Q.9 | 9. Evaluation: CEIAG Point Of View Puzzle: | | |
| Next steps | | |
| Eval’tion | | |
| ✷ Thank YP for taking part | | |
| Explain when/how report will be available if they want to read it (October 2015 on Oxme) | | |
| Remind them to do the CEIAG survey if they have not yet (ask teacher/contact if not sure) | | |
| Give YP leaflet, flyer, wristband each before they go. | | |
| Give YP ‘Evaluation Puzzle’ | | |
| YP are asked to individually evaluate their CEIAG experience with 2 questions using a puzzle piece each, which fits into a bigger 12-piece puzzle - linking the whole group: | | |
| ☺ What is the most useful careers support, information or experience you’ve had at your school/college to help you prepare for your future? | | |
| (Explain: This could have been part of a careers interview, activity, lesson or something else that happened as part of your course, not necessarily in a specific careers session.) | | |
| ❓ What one thing could have helped you prepare for your future, that wasn’t offered to you by your school/college? | | |

Main Session Ends

|  | | |
| 10.06am | 5m | RB |
| 10.11am | 7m | RB |
| 10.18am | 5m | RB |
| 10.23am | 7m | RB |

Example (90 minute) Session Plan for CEIAG Focus Groups (Rosie Boyes - Youth Opportunities Officer - Youth, Engagement and Opportunities Team - August 2015)
### Need to bring on day:

- Flipchart paper, stands, pens
- Pens and plain paper
- Colouring pens, name badge sticky labels, post-it notes
- 2x clipboards and notepads
- Dictaphone, camera & batteries/memory card
- 2x Session Plans and Risk Assessment
- Media Consent Forms
- Sign-in Sheet
- Prepared flipchart page with questions for Q.5
- Prepared puzzle pieces (x12) & 2x printed A3 sheets for slot 11
- Labour Market Information leaflets for students
- Oxme postcards and wristbands for students

### Background information for session facilitators:

- March 2015 careers guidance for schools by *The Department for Education* (called ‘Careers guidance and inspiration in schools - statutory guidance for governing bodies, school leaders and school staff’) is available at:  

- The January 2015 *Youth Employment UK* report (called ‘Young People’s Experience of Careers Education’) is available at:  

### Extra Questions for Year 12

| Q.10 | Was your school supportive of your post-16 choice?  
(Was your school for or against your choice, did they put pressure on you to do something else in spite of, or because of, school’s advice/information etc?)
| Q.11 |
| Q.12 |
| Q.13 |
| Q.14 |
| Q.15 |

**For Y12 YP only, ask the following questions if there is time & write information on flipchart.**

**Additional Y12 questions: (for those aged 16+):**

11. **What are you doing now?**

12. **Are you happy with the choice you made?**  
(I.e. to stay at school, go to college, get a job, etc?)

13. **Did you have 5 or more contacts with employer during your time at school?**  
What were they, and if not 5, how many?  
(Some guidance says if you have 5 or more contacts with employers - e.g. working on a weekend, Work Experience, visit from an employer, mock interview, visiting a factory etc - you have a better chance of getting a job.)

14. **Do you have clear career plan?**

15. **Do you know where to go for info about careers and employment if needed in future?**
Appendix C: Survey Participants by School/College and Year group

Focus Group Participants by School/College/Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School/College</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Year Group</th>
<th>No of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abingdon &amp; Witney College</td>
<td>Mon 8th June</td>
<td>Y12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew Arnold School</td>
<td>Fri 12th June</td>
<td>Y10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didcot Girls' School</td>
<td>Tues 16th June</td>
<td>Y10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didcot Girls' School</td>
<td>Wed 17th June</td>
<td>Y12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheatley Park School</td>
<td>Thurs 18th June</td>
<td>Y12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheatley Park School</td>
<td>Thurs 18th June</td>
<td>Y10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banbury Space Studio</td>
<td>Thurs 25th June</td>
<td>Y10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chipping Norton School</td>
<td>Tues 7th July</td>
<td>Y12</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chipping Norton School</td>
<td>Tues 7th July</td>
<td>Y10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banbury Space Studio</td>
<td>Thurs 9th July</td>
<td>Y12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCS - Banbury</td>
<td>Friday 17th July</td>
<td>Y11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCS - Witney</td>
<td>Mon 20th July</td>
<td>Y11</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEET group - City</td>
<td>Tues 28th July</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On-Line Survey Responses by School/College

**Question 3. Which School/College are you currently at?**

**Question 3. Which School/College did you attend if you left in July 2014?**
Young People’s Experience of Careers Education

A Youth Employment UK Report

January 2015

Foreword by Laura-Jane Rawlings CEO of Youth Employment UK CIC

It is time for the voices of young people to be heard in the hotly debated topic of careers education. For too long it has been the sole preserve of adults in organisations and political parties without serious consideration of the views of the ultimate young consumers at the heart of the debate. This report is a snapshot of what some young people in our networks experience and the changes they would like to see.

A plethora of research has been conducted into the need of careers education, what good practice looks like and how many schools are delivering good quality Information Advice and Guidance. Reports and manifestos have been submitted by many organisations including The British Chamber of Commerce, National Union of Students, The Sutton Trust, Association of Colleges, Association of Employment and Learning Providers, Confederation of British Industry, The Recruitment and Employment Confederation and others who unanimously have called for an improvement to careers education in our schools.

Youth Employment UK CIC understands that for young people the lack of quality careers education, advice and guidance is a barrier to education and employment. Since our formation in 2011 young people have shared with us their experiences and concerns about careers education. Our young people have a first-hand knowledge, a current account of what is happening in education and the impact of youth unemployment, and they also have some pretty smart ideas on fixing things for their generation.

Youth unemployment is often talked about as statistics and in depersonalised information. At Youth Employment UK we do not see young people as statistics but as individuals who all need to be listened to and supported. There must be genuine consultation with young people when putting forward recommendations on policy that have an impact on them. Qualifying as an adult does not qualify us to speak on behalf of, or in fact know what is best for, each young person in the UK. The world has changed since our own time and experience of education and life as a young person. We must put their voices first to understand what is needed for today’s young people.

Young people have been talked about and had policy done to them. This does not work. The time to engage, empower and work with our young people is now and is the only recipe for success: let them be heard. We will continue to champion young people and ask you to do the same.

---
2 Available from http://www.nusconnect.org.uk/resources/open/adviceandguidance/When-IAG-Grow-Up/
3 Available from http://www.suttontrust.com/researcharchive/advancing-ambitions/
## Contents

- Foreword by Laura-Jane Rawlings CEO of Youth Employment UK CIC ........................................ 2
- Summary and key findings ........................................................................................................ 4
- Introduction .................................................................................................................................. 5
- Background to Youth Employment UK .................................................................................. 5
- Careers Education in the UK .................................................................................................... 6
- Our research ............................................................................................................................... 6
- What young people said ............................................................................................................ 7
- Conclusion .................................................................................................................................. 9
- Appendix – Survey Responses .................................................................................................... 10
Summary and key findings

Youth Employment UK CIC wanted to understand more about the current careers education experience of young people. A survey was conducted among 16-24 year olds who had a current or recent experience of careers education services (full results are in the Appendix).

The key findings of the survey of 131 young people are:

1. 58% were provided with an interview with a professional careers advisor whilst in school or college. However, only 1% received advice about all of their options.
2. Of those who had interviews, 22% disagreed that all options were covered, 24% strongly agreed that they were given sufficient information on university courses. 28% disagreed that the interviews were inspiring and of those 6% agreed that the interview helped them make decisions.
3. None of the young people who took part were advised about traineeships, 24% were given advice about university courses, 9% were advised on post-GCSE study placements outside their current institute. 11% were given CV and application advice, 7% were advised on apprenticeships, 2% were given labour market information.
4. Only one young person out of the 130 was undertaking an apprenticeship and that young person undertook A Levels first before seeking out their own apprenticeship.
5. 58% took part in careers events, 70% took part in work experience and 51% had visits from inspirational speakers in their college or school.
6. All 131 young people who took part in the survey felt that the education system needed to do more to support young people.
7. The recommendations from young people taking part in this survey include:
   - Making careers education and work experience compulsory;
   - Ensuring that all pathways are covered including apprenticeships and vocational learning;
   - Including enterprise education;
   - Providing more opportunities to meet with employers at school and in an employer setting.

   These young people certainly feel the need for a greater understanding of the world of work and careers available, a realistic expectation of what to expect and job hunting skills.

The Youth Employment UK research indicates that young people are still not receiving adequate support despite the changes and revision to the statutory duty upon schools to provide careers education and inspiration. It suggests the wide range of options available are not being discussed with young people and so critical decisions are being made without a full understanding of the options and labour market.
Introduction

YEUK has attended events across the UK speaking with young people about their experience of careers education and what their biggest barrier is when transferring from education into the world of work.

What has become clear to YEUK is the lack of understanding young people have of the routes that are available post 16 such as apprenticeships, work based training, vocational study and traineeships. The advice young people are given in order to make important GCSE subject choices in years 9 and 10 is limited. Not all young people receive careers education at this critical juncture.

It is also apparent that not all young people know that they can step out of education into work based training and that if they wish, they could step back into education at any time during their working life.

In this report, we share the responses of a short survey we ran from October 2014 to January 2015 from some of our young members about their experiences of careers education while still in education.

Young people were asked questions based on the advice they had been given, what that advice was, employer engagement, work related learning and the importance of a good careers education.

The views, experiences and recommendations of the young people included here helps decision-makers to reflect on the impact and delivery of current policy. Our report makes vital reading as it takes account of the end user of this service and the direct impact the service has on outcomes.

Background to Youth Employment UK

Youth Employment UK CIC (YEUK) is a national campaigning and membership organisation. It is the only organisation solely campaigning on issues concerning youth employment. When we started as an organisation in 2011, the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) exceeded 1 million.

As a membership organisation YEUK invites all of the stakeholders invested or affected by youth employment to join us. Our membership includes employers, educators, youth organisations, charities and young people - the voices of youth employment.

On behalf of our members YEUK lobbies government to address the barriers to youth employment. Members also benefit from our events, webinars, networking and information services that focus on our core principles:

- Youth voice
- Creating opportunity
- Recognising talent
- Fair employment
- Developing people
YEUK is home to the Youth Friendly Badge, recognising UK employers who support young people in some way as part of our campaign to tackle youth unemployment.

Careers Education in the UK

Educating the UK’s future workforce and ensuring that young people can transition from education into work has been on the political agenda for decades. The responsibility for that journey has been inconsistent.

The Connexions Service provided statutory careers education from 1999-2002. The service was primarily introduced to prevent social exclusion and was set up within education institutes. However, this was then withdrawn and became a body in its own right open to contract, creating a non-uniformed approached to careers education across local authorities.

In 2011 the coalition government removed funding support for the careers service model and placed the onus on schools to determine and provide a careers service based on their needs. This left schools with the choice of outsourcing the service or in-house delivery, and yet demanded little accountability for provision⁴.

An Ofsted thematic review of careers guidance in 2013 found that only 1 in 5 schools were ensuring that pupils were receiving the level of information, advice and guidance they needed to support decision-making⁵.

It is widely reported by the business community, including The Confederation for British Industry and British Chamber of Commerce, that the UK education system is failing to provide young people with the information they need to progress, such as failing to develop work skills and how to apply effectively for jobs.

A high level of university applications and certain vocational courses indicate that the advice given to young people does not take into account labour market information and is not aligned with the skill demands of the UK economy.

Our research

Between October 2014 and January 2015, we ran an online survey with an active web link that was shared via social media platforms (Twitter and Facebook) and through member newsletters. All young people who took part did so anonymously, all that was revealed was the ISP of each respondent which enabled any duplicates to be removed.

The 131 young people who took part were aged 16-24:

- 68% respondents were still in education
- 32% respondents were no longer in education (left between 2010-2014)

All respondents were asked what level of education they had obtained or were currently working towards to date:

- 47% undertaking A levels,
- 29% had studied to graduate level
- 12% undertaking GCSE’s
- 7% undertaking vocational based qualifications
- 2% studied at post grad level and carried on to masters
- >1% had studied an apprenticeship

What young people said

“Do you think careers education is important for young people?”

“Careers education is very important to young people, as they need to be aware of the many different options on offer to them. Parents don’t always know the many different paths that their children may want to take, so it is important for there to be a variety of enriching training programmes etc on offer to young people.”

“Young people need to know the options that are available to them and be given a realistic representation of the challenges and difficulties they may face and we are led to believe that going to university and graduating with a good result is a guarantee of employment which does not reflect reality and can be a big shock and quite damaging to the confidence of a young person.”

“Yes, because it helps us to understand what we need to do in order to get where we need to be.”

“As a young person, having a clear path for the future can be difficult and knowing where to start with this is hard. Having guidance and inspiration in this is extremely useful especially when offering possible career paths.”

“When it’s useful - I was given way too much information concerning irrelevant apprenticeships and little on how to succeed in an interview or what paths to take to start a career in the area I was interested in.”

“Yes - gives much needed knowledge to young people and shows them what is expected of/from them.”

“Yes, it opens our minds to opportunities we didn’t know about that we could pursue.”

“Yes because university level education is not for everyone. However, I feel we are pushed in that direction to the point we are unsure what else to do but go to university, with fear that without a degree we will not get a good paid job.”

“It’s a big world out there and I still don’t know what to do as a career. There are jobs out there that I have never heard of so school should give you more options.”

“Yes - gaining employment is crucial for the economy and for the best interests of each person yet the focus only seems to be on university.”
“Yes - it helps young people consider what direction their further education or training should take. It also helps young people understand the careers market, recruitment, industry growth/decline etc.”

“At school, I was pushed to going to university as I am ‘intelligent’. Looking back, I would have liked more information on higher apprenticeships.”

“Do you think schools should do more to help young people prepare for the world of work?”

“I think the full range of options should be explored as opposed to purely advertising the traditional route of sixth form followed by university. Volunteer opportunities should be advertised to help young people build up their skill sets and confidence. Young people should also be given a more realistic representation of the world of work instead of being shown a generic CV which will supposedly get you a job”

“Yes, I believe more work experience opportunities should arise when young people are in school/college- despite the one or two weeks that is offered to people at school, and some people finding work experience of their own, not all young people have the knowledge or connections and need to be offered it, and the different options explained in detail to them by a qualified careers guidance counsellor.”

“More focus on the arts, small businesses, tax returns, information on being a freelance worker.”

“Tailored and regular support, less pressure by stigmatising not getting top grades/e.g. apprenticeships.”

“Make it more fun and challenge and also bring lots of inspirational speaker.”

“More personalised advice.”

“More advice in year 10.”

“More careers advice on how to become whatever it is a young person may want to do as a job and the sort of grades needed to get that job.”

“Work experience and more career events should take place.”

“More days focused on how to get jobs and how to prepare for interviews etc.”

“More information about different training options and all the different sorts of careers you could go into with the subjects you are studying and enjoy.”

“More employment fairs and someone to take the time to listen to your interests. Work experience should be mandatory.”

“More diverse help, less mainstream. Cater for everyone not just those who want to go to uni or get an apprenticeship.”

“I would like creative jobs to be encouraged more - I work in Fashion now but I was never encouraged to follow it, in fact, I was often told it was a waste of time. I only got to be where I am
through doing my own research and placements, not because I was given direction earlier on. There
are so many types of jobs (e.g. marketing, visual merchandising) that recruit lots but are never
mentioned before, as creative areas are just written off by most teachers.”

“Jobs clubs, looking at different industry sectors, where jobs are available, vocational routes.”

“More events, inspirational discussions, enterprise days, trips out, presentations, more opportunities
that engage different cultures.”

“More qualified careers and/or recruitment experts speaking to pupils. Pupils made aware of the
wide range of options available rather than being pushed toward one option e.g. university.”

“Yes - I was forced into university by my head of sixth form which led me into choosing a course
which I hated and ended up leaving. I am now on a different course, but wish I was able to have had
a year out in order to think things through. I am now in extra debt and won't get any further funding
from student finance because of the year I quit. I think students definitely need more help deciding
but also need support in other options that don't involve education - I truly believe it’s not for
everyone and some teachers force students into this anyway. I felt very much in a pressured
environment during my sixth form years.”

“School is nothing like 'the real world' so we need as much information as we can get because we
have no idea what we're in for.”

Conclusion

Our view is that provision has been inadequate since the government changed responsibility for the
statutory duty of careers education. The Youth Employment UK survey of young people supports the
evidence presented to the Education Select Committee in their review of the changes to the
statutory duty and the Ofsted thematic review.

Young people are not being given the advice they need to make informed decisions. As a result, they
are either taking a costly route post 16 or having to step back into education at their own cost to
gain the qualifications they need to proceed on their career path.

In respect of accountability, currently young people are being held responsible for the mismatch in
skills and behaviours, for not being career savvy or not doing enough to attain the experience they
need for employers. Yet it is clear from the survey that young people are not receiving the
information or support they need to develop their work skills or experience.

Young people feel that school should do more to prepare them for the world of work and that
careers education is essential to help make informed choices at key decision times. Young people
feel that better careers education would help them to progress successfully into the world of work.

Each young person is the consumer of careers education. They are the ones who pay a price
financially and socially when they are not properly advised. The UK has a duty to ensure every child
can progress and we are currently failing in that duty.
1. Did your school or college provide you with an interview with a qualified careers professional to discuss your careers and education choices?

Yes – 57.03%
No – 42.97%

2. If you had a careers interview, did you find it:

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

[Bar chart showing responses to the second question]
3. Do you feel that you were given sufficient careers information on the following

- Places to study at Year 12...
- Traineeships
- Apprenticeships
- Vocational Qualifications
- University Choices
- Labour market information
- Starting your own business
- Applying for & getting a job

4. In your school or college did you experience

- Careers Events (Fairs, World or Work challenges etc)
- Work Experience
- Visits from employers talking about the world of work and careers
- Enterprise Days (Young Enterprise, Dragons Den etc)
- Inspirational Speakers
- Careers experiences (CV writing, interviews, employability skills etc)
5. Do you think careers education is important for young people?

6. Do you think schools should do more to help young people prepare for the world of work?