

Delivering effective
careers guidance
by maximising support



As we educate our students to achieve their academic potential, how do we also ensure they leave equipped with the right skills to manage their career and deliver the best outcomes for their futures? Critical to this is their ability to understand the paths that are both available to and suitable for them, and subsequently to help them with creating aspirations. Giving students the support to create their own plans and dreams creates a sense of purpose in their studies. Furthermore, sharing these aspirations with teachers will have a positive impact on learning outcomes, with research showing that students are 18 times more likely to be motivated to learn if their teachers know their hopes and dreams (Dr Russ Quaglia, 2016).

Careers guidance is an integral part of education for students. It plays a huge role in supporting their aspirations, identifying their strengths and creating their perfect futures by planning how to get there. But how can we support students through this process?

Information is critical

They need information on the opportunities and pathways available to them, such as apprenticeships, FE or University. They need information on how subjects across the entire curriculum can support them to achieve their ambitions and, crucially, they need information on how to develop themselves to achieve their goals. However, in a world of information overload, with many sites dedicated to providing this advice, how can you help the students see the wood for the trees?



Employers



There is much to champion about getting employers involved with careers activities in schools:

- They represent what is actually happening in the labour market
- They can inject a professional, 'this is what we expect when we employ' agenda
- They can relate real experiences and showcase the routes into employment.

However, there are also areas where schools need to be cautious when seeking employer engagement. Ask:

- Are employers reflective of opportunities available (locally and wider)?
- Are they up to date? Beware the 'when I started out' talk may not be relevant for the current generation as requirements might have changed
- Can the students relate to them?
- How engaging are they for young people?
- Are they able to illustrate a broad range of careers to be reflective of the available options?

Employers can support your career activities in a number of ways including talks, visits, mock interviews, workshops, mentoring, work experience and much more. While most of these activities have no price tag attached to them, (unless you are contracting a third party to engage employers for you), there is a resource overhead in terms of time to engage and co-ordinate activities.

Local Enterprise Partnerships - LEP

LEPs have an interest in linking employers and schools; local schools provide the talent pool that the growth of local businesses will depend upon in the future. Therefore, in order to avoid future skills and aspirational gap that could harm an area's economic prosperity, LEPs want employers to engage with schools, and vice versa. Many LEPs co-ordinate a range of activities to support this, find your local LEP by visiting, www.lepnetwork.net

Colleges and training providers



Local colleges and training providers are usually more than happy to support your careers activities. Colleges and training providers usually have the correct environment, equipment and access to knowledge and expertise that more closely reflects careers that your students will be used to. This can be used to your advantage with opportunities to expose students to different occupations in a safe, controlled way without the overheads often associated with interactions in actual workplaces. Many providers have working restaurants, nurseries etc. along with realistic training environments including dental surgeries, offices, building sites and more in which they are happy for schools to observe or get involved.

Colleges and training providers are matrix accredited for advice and guidance provision.

You can develop a partnership agreement with colleges and training providers, (many already have a standard template for this that they will have established with other schools), that sets out expectations.

Universities



As part of their 'Access Agreements', higher education institutions commit to engage with more young people encouraging them to consider higher education, particularly young people from under-represented groups.

Most universities have Widening Participation, Outreach or School Liaison Teams who focus on engaging with schools to highlight opportunities that higher education offers. Each university will have its own program of activities however; some do work collectively on a regional basis to co-ordinate outreach work.

Typical activities include visits to schools to talk about specific subjects and careers or student life in general, student ambassador led activities when university students work with school students on projects, advice on topics like finance and HE applications, mock interviews, alumni visits, taster days and much more.

A growing number of universities are also setting up networks for local school staff that have responsibility for careers with the aim of sharing knowledge, expertise and best practice. Alongside this they are also producing newsletters and other resources which can be a helpful and free source of up-to-date information and CPD support.

While some university led activities will be linked to recruitment for their courses, they will offer more general support that can make a valuable, low cost addition to your careers provision. Contact your local universities to find out about what activities they offer.

Local authorities



Local authorities have a legal responsibility under the Education and Skills Act for the participation in education, employment or training of 16 and 17 year olds. As part of this duty they have responsibility for young people not in education, employment or training (NEET).

Some local authorities offer what effectively equates to a 'universal service'. They consider that all young people could, potentially, be at risk of not participating so will provide broad services which may include access to careers advisers, resources and other support. In a few cases this is offered to schools free of charge, most will ask for a financial contribution from the school.

Most local authorities will aim to work with schools to get information which helps to determine which students are at risk. Local authorities have 'Risk of NEET Indicators' or RONIs. Attendance records, achievement and progress measures as well as the student's personal circumstances and home life will act as indicators. Local authorities will usually offer targeted support which includes engagement and progression support to schools for those students who are indicated as at risk.

Local authorities also aim to track intended destinations of students at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5. In order to do this, most offer resources and other support to schools which enable them to capture this information effectively.

Each local authority has a slightly different offer so it is advisable to check what support, advice and resources they offer to support careers work. This can be done by contacting the Young People's Service within your local authority.

National Careers Service

Local National Careers Service providers can be a useful source of support with careers related activity. Most can provide everything from a fully managed careers programme bespoke to your school through to one-to-one advice interviews and/ or specific workshop topics. Some providers do make selected information, particularly in relation to local opportunities, available free of charge. Examples of this include local LMI booklets, posters etc.

Harnessing internal potential

Curriculum delivery/teaching



While some argue the case that careers are not a curriculum deliverable, by aligning careers learning with the teaching of subjects it is possible to enhance your careers activities at little cost while also increasing engagement with subjects.

If teachers can link what students are learning in different subjects to how that knowledge is applied in the workplace, students will understand the importance of that knowledge and place greater value on it. At the same time, they will grow their confidence in exploring options as they are exposed to information about different workplaces.

Professional bodies linked to subjects such as the Institute of Physics provide free resources which will help subject teachers introduce careers learning into their subject delivery.

In addition, staff will need training to enable them to respond to students' detailed queries on careers, and most importantly, where to signpost students for more support.

PSHE, SMSC and Citizenship

While not compulsory as timetabled activities, there is an expectation that schools will make provision for supporting students with Personal, Social and Health Education, Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development and citizenship.

There is the potential to 'piggyback' this type of provision with careers activities that help young people to develop their understanding and appreciation of the role of work in society and its relation to personal and economic wellbeing.

Careers staff

Careers staff are a source of abundant resource. Their core benefit is their ability to provide dedicated advice to individuals. To make this resource as effective as possible, other resources should be utilised to get students to a position where their time with an adviser is most effective.

For example, if an adviser has a 20-minute interview with a student and the majority of that time is taken up with the gathering information from the student about their interests and progress, valuable adviser resource is wasted. If diagnosis of situation is carried out by a resource that is less restricted in its access, the value of the time that the student gets with the adviser is much higher.

Resources such as those produced by CASCAID can analyse each student ahead of human intervention and create reports so that each student and adviser get the chance to explore as many opportunities as possible during their interview.

Other suggestions for enhancing your careers provision

Take your students to free skills events. The Skills Show is the UK's largest skills and careers event. It gives students the opportunity to explore hundreds of different careers and get hands-on practice in many vocational areas. The national show is usually held in Birmingham in November. There are also similar regional events throughout the year.

Utilise useful websites for careers advisers and teachers, they include a wide range of resources designed to help save you time, case studies, sharing best practice to policy updates to keep you abreast of the latest issues.

Free lesson resources as well as useful guides for parents and school governors are free to download from the CASCAID website visit

www.cascaid.co.uk/resources