

3.4 Career guidance and counselling

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Career guidance and counselling services

National Careers Service

The [National Careers Service](#) provides free information, advice and guidance to help people make decisions about learning, training and work opportunities, including apprenticeships. It offers confidential and impartial advice, supported by qualified careers advisors. Whilst young people aged 13 to 18 have access to the National Contact Centre or the NCS website, individuals who are 19 years and over can access the service via all of its delivery channels. Local branches of the NCS work with employers, schools, colleges, charities and social enterprises to raise the aspirations of young people and provide them with the knowledge and awareness they need in order to pursue new opportunities and succeed in their chosen careers. Each branch does this by bridging the gap between the worlds of education and work, and encourages young people to develop a more positive outlook, alongside the motivation and resilience to succeed.

A [letter to post-16 education providers](#) explaining the funding for academic year 2019 to 2020 from the Education and Skills Funding Agency indicates some priorities for skills funding:

We are also continuing to invest in the institutions of the sector to ensure more high-end technical skills training delivery and overall stability. These investments include funding of £170 million to support new Institutes of Technology from academic year 2019 to 2020 to deliver higher-level technical skills, and the Strategic College

Improvement Fund of £15 million until 2020 to help weaker colleges improve.

The [Education and Skills Funding Agency](#) is responsible for the commissioning, contracting and performance of the National Careers Service. In addition to the telephone channel, face-to-face advice is delivered through eleven prime contractors in 12 geographical areas.

Careers guidance and counselling in schools and colleges

In line with the [Education Act 2011](#), all schools and colleges have a duty to provide pupils in Years 8-13 (ages 12-18) with access to independent careers advice. Although it is up to individual schools and colleges to decide how careers guidance should be delivered, it must:

- be impartial and independent
- provide students with information on all post-16 education and training options, including apprenticeships
- provide each student with guidance which is in his/her best interest.

In addition, in Year 8 (ages 12/13), careers guidance should include information about the options available at age 14 such as [university technical colleges](#), [further education colleges](#), [sixth-form colleges](#) and [studio schools](#). For those over full-time compulsory school age, information should include higher education and employment options post-18, including apprenticeships. These options are described in full in the chapter on [secondary education](#) in the Eurydice Network's descriptions of [national education systems](#).

Provision can include web-based and telephone services and/or face-to-face guidance from a specialist provider.

To support schools, the Department for Education (DfE) has issued statutory guidance [Careers Guidance and Inspiration in Schools](#) (2017).

The [Careers & Enterprise Company](#) is an employer-led organisation which supports careers education in schools and colleges and helps young people prepare for the world of work and. It has three main areas of work:

- discovering what help is needed and where
- offering information about the world of work to schools – increasing employer engagement with young people, enabling them to meet, speak to and understand employers of all sizes
- investing in locations that need support – filling gaps in the provision of careers and enterprise activities across the country.

Higher education

While higher education institutions (HEIs) are under no statutory obligation to provide careers information and advice, it is recognised as an important aspect of their overall provision for students. Indeed, the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) sets an expectation, as outlined in Indicator 6 of [Chapter 4B: Enabling student development and achievement](#), that higher education providers must:

have in place, monitor and evaluate arrangements and resources which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential.

All HEI's have their own careers service staffed by professionals who are trained in this area. The [Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services](#) (AGCAS) is the professional association for HE careers practitioners.

In many cases, students can still access their university careers service for several years after graduation. Some

universities allow lifelong access.

Funding

Funding for the National Careers Service is provided by the [Education and Skills Funding Agency](#) on behalf of the Department for Education. The document '[National Careers Service Area-based contracts funding rules](#)' set out the funding rules for area based contracts and form part of the terms and conditions between the Skills Funding Agency (the predecessor to the Education and Skills Funding Agency) and providers.

Schools, colleges and universities are individually responsible for funding the services they offer.

Quality assurance

Schools and colleges

Careers education and guidance provided by schools and colleges is examined as part of the school inspection process, carried out by [Ofsted](#). Details are set out in Ofsted's Education [inspection framework](#) document and the [Further education and skills inspection handbook](#).

The emphasis placed on careers guidance in the school inspection process has increased since September 2013. Since then, judgments on leadership and management have taken into account how well schools deliver careers advice and guidance to all pupils.

Data is collected on the education or employment destinations of students aged 14- to 16 and 16- to 18 years. It provides clear and comparable information on the success of schools and colleges in helping all of their students undertake qualifications that offer them the best opportunity to continue in education or training. [Performance measures](#) are increasingly being seen as a key tool in assessing how well schools and colleges prepare their pupils to make a successful transition into the next stage of education, training, or employment.

Destination data of students in Key Stage 4 (14 to 16 years) and Key Stage 5 (16 to 18 years) is regularly published in a [statistical release](#) from the Department for Education. These are also included in headline figures of school performance measures.

Higher education

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) carries out reviews to check whether higher education providers are meeting the expectations set out in [Chapter 4B: Enabling student development and achievement](#) of the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#). As noted above, the indicator most relevant to career guidance and counselling services is Indicator 6:

Higher education providers ensure all students have opportunities to develop skills that enable their academic, personal and professional progression.

This indicator is supported by examples of how it may be interpreted in practice, grouped under the following headings:

- developing academic skills
- developing employability skills
- facilitating career management.

Since the autumn of 2012, universities have had to supply information on the destinations and salaries of their recent graduates as part of the [Unistats data set](#) collection. This information allows prospective students to compare institutions by employability rates of graduates. Data on the employment of graduates is also included in the annual survey of [Destination of Leavers from Higher Education](#) (HESA, 2017).