Research Conducted by the
Institute for Education Policy Research,
Staffordshire University
for the
Lifelong Learning Network

Supporting Informed Decision-Making: Developing Effective Information, Advice and Guidance for Students in the West Midlands

FINAL REPORT

NOVEMBER 2013

Kim Slack, Amanda Hughes and Amelia Rout

Institute for Education Policy Research, Staffordshire University

Contact: k.b.slack@staffs.ac.uk / a.c.hughes@staffs.ac.uk

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This report, funded by the Lifelong Learning Network, presents an overview of the research literature on Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) for students in secondary schools. It also presents an analysis of data drawn from qualitative research with key stakeholders involved in the delivery of IAG in schools in the West Midlands.

Rationale for the project

The aim of the research was to explore the issues involved in supporting students to make informed decisions about their future pathways within the context of the recent changes to Government policy which have transferred responsibility for securing access to impartial, independent guidance from local authorities to schools from September 2012. This transfer of responsibility has not been accompanied by any corresponding transfer of funding.

Outline of the project

The specific research questions were:

- What are the perceived enablers and barriers to effective IAG practice within the two areas?
- What has been the impact of the changes to Government policy on practice within the two areas?
- What are the implications of the policy changes for effective practice?

The research project was divided into three phases: *Phase 1: Literature review; Phase 2: Initial response to IAG policy changes;* and *Phase 3: Response to IAG policy changes – one year on.*

Data collection

Phase 1: Literature Review

The review focused on research relating to IAG practice with young people published in the period between 2000 and 2011 (a number of published literature reviews have been included and these may refer to literature from an earlier date). The overall aim of the literature review was to identify the key factors in effective IAG practice with young people

Phase 2: Initial response to IAG policy changes and Phase 3. Response to IAG policy changes – one year on

The research focused on participants drawn from three different groups based in two areas in the West Midlands – Area A and Area B. These groups consisted of: external stakeholders (Local Authority representatives), school based stakeholders (representatives from secondary schools who have responsibility for IAG) and post-16 stakeholders (representatives from higher education institutions and further education colleges within the catchment areas which include the participating schools).

Interviews were conducted with 4 external stakeholders (one LA representative and one IAG provider from each of Area A and Area B) and 10 school-based stakeholders. Where possible each representative was interviewed twice: once prior to implementation of the new policy changes in schools (Phase 2), and again, following implementation of the policy changes (Phase 3). A further six interviews were conducted with marketing and liaison officers from three FE Colleges and two HEIs in Phase 3 of the project.

Phase 1: Literature review

The review identified a number of key issues which affect good practice in schools. These include: the status of IAG within schools, lack of appropriate training and/or qualifications for staff involved, the criticality of labour market information (LMI), monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of provision, personalised IAG, and ensuring impartiality.

Phases 2 and 3: Results

Research Question 1: What are the enablers and barriers to effective IAG practice within the two areas?

Lack of guidance from Government and levels of awareness of policy changes among stakeholders

- The majority of school interviewees opposed the policy changes particularly on the basis of the lack of any associated funding.

- At the time of the first interviews (March – July 2012), it was felt that the picture was unclear in terms of what the policy changes meant for schools. At the time of the second interviews (April – May 2013), LACPS/LACS interviewees remained unconvinced that all schools were fully clear on their new responsibilities, in part because of the perceived lack of clarity in Government guidance. Comments made by school interviewees indicated that they felt they were relatively clear on what their responsibilities were. However, comments also suggested that some schools were either disregarding or interpreting the guidance differently in relation to impartiality.

Multiple changes

- The multiple changes taking place in the sector were felt to complicate the situation, making it more difficult for schools to prioritise IAG. The impact of these changes was evident not only on IAG activities directly but on opportunities to network and share good practice among school staff with IAG responsibilities.

- The timing of the policy changes was said to be poor because schools were being asked to pay for something they had previously had for free, but without any direct accompanying funding.

Priority given to IAG provision and staff development in schools

- Of the 10 schools involved in this study, five had a very high priority towards IAG. All these schools were very aware of the policy changes and their new responsibilities and had responded by adapting IAG provision where required.

- Schools that awarded a high priority to IAG tended to have the following characteristics: IAG was discussed and supported by the SLT (Senior Leadership team), IAG had a dedicated budget, all staff were seen to have a role to play in relation to IAG, IAG was embedded in the curriculum in all departments.

- Some of these schools also prioritised staff development in IAG but this was not evident in all five schools. Funding was identified as the main barrier in this area. Although a need for staff training in relation to IAG was identified by external stakeholders, their comments suggest that this was seen as less of a priority by schools.

- In those schools which appeared to place a lower priority on IAG, other priorities or pressures were identified which took precedence (for example, staff redundancies and concerns about job security). External stakeholders felt that failure to prioritise IAG was not necessarily a conscious decision on the part of the school but a response to other pressures.

- Low priority schools also appeared to place less emphasis on all staff having a role to play in relation to IAG.

Barriers to effective IAG practice

- The majority of schools felt that there were significant financial barriers to providing effective IAG following the policy changes. Decisions about working with external IAG providers were based primarily on cost and achieving value for money. Because of this, schools were reassessing what LACPS/LACS did within the school and many were changing the way in which they worked with students. Changes included: fewer one-to-one sessions for students in Year 11 and avoiding increased buy-in by spreading provision more thinly across more year groups to include students in Years 8, 12 and 13.

- In a number of schools a reduction in buy-in from LACPS/LACS was placing an increased workload on the member of staff with responsibility for IAG.

- Under the new conditions, LACPS/LACS are reliant on schools identifying students who are at risk of making poor transitions and there was a perception among the PAs in LACPS (Area A) that they were not seeing the right students. This was particularly true in those schools where LACPS was less heavily involved because the school was only buying in a few days provision (these tended to be academies).

- Evidence from this study, therefore, suggests that schools are targeting the students they see as needing that additional input from LA Careers Services, i.e. those who are at risk of becoming NEET and those who have just not made any decision about their post-16 options. Those students who appear to have made decisions may not

get access to this professional advice and guidance and there is a danger that they may not be making informed decisions or the decisions that are the best for them.

Research Question 2: What has been the impact of the changes to Government policy on practice within the two areas?

Consistency of IAG offered to students across schools

- The LAs in Areas A and B had responded differently to the policy changes. Area A's traded offer was based on a daily rate which runs alongside a menu of activities. Area B had tried to protect their time in schools by basing their traded offer on a nominal charge for a day of a Personal Advisor's (PAs) time.

- Take up of the traded offer differed within the two areas.

- Overall in Area A, the majority of schools had traded with LACPS, but at a reduction in the number of days purchased. None of the schools had increased their buy-in or formed consortiums. There was also variation in the response across districts within Area A, e.g. one district had opted for a much more bespoke approach, while in a second district no schools had taken up the traded offer from LACPS or bought in services from any other external provider.

- All the schools in Area B had traded with LACS at the same level as their previous provision. However, while there had not been any reduction in the level of provision, the activities LACS were providing had changed in that they were working more with younger students in Years 8 and 9. None of the schools in Area B had formed consortiums.

- Overall, the FE College representatives felt there had been a reduction in the amount of work they were asked to do, although one noted a trend towards working with younger students instead of Year 11 students, particularly in academies. The HEI representatives felt that take-up had increased overall. This may relate to the fact that, unlike the FE Colleges, they are not in direct competition for students.

- The FE College representatives also reported a change in the nature of the activities they were being asked to provide: these included reduced access to students in school and more requests to provide tours/tasters to specific students identified by the school; access to students in school during assemblies rather than lessons.

Independence and impartiality

- There appeared to be a divide in how schools in the study interpret the terms 'independence' and 'impartiality'. Some schools interpreted this element as being something that is delivered by independent advisors. Other schools interpreted this as ensuring students have information on all post-16 options and a broader provision, and did not see this activity as necessarily being provided by someone who was external to the school.

- Depending on the decisions schools make in response to the policy changes about the nature of their IAG provision, some students may have access to independent and impartial *information*, but reduced access to impartial and independent professional *advice and guidance.* The issue for schools may be about maintaining balanced information, advice and guidance within a context where there may be a conflict between wanting to support students to make informed decisions and successful transitions, and other competing priorities and demands.

- There was a tension between pressure to retain students and provide IAG on alternative provision for 11-18 schools. Other school staff may raise objections to external post-16 providers coming in to the school because of the potential impact on job security if student numbers in the sixth form fall. Although impartiality is perceived as less problematic in 11-16 schools, there can be pressure from members of staff in these schools who are concerned with league tables and ensuring that high ability students progress to elite universities.

- Funding issues are acting as a constraint on impartiality in some schools, for example, through a reduction in one-to-one interviews with professional IAG providers for some students.

Quality, monitoring and evaluation of IAG provision

- Work was being initiated by LACPS and LACS to support the development of more effective monitoring and evaluation in schools. In Area A the Quality Kitemark was in the process of redevelopment and validation. The new award will have eight criteria, one of which will be monitoring and evaluation. Interest in the award had been expressed by schools based on the perception that it will provide evidence that they are meeting their statutory duty. The LACS in Area B used the Matrix Quality Standard which enabled schools to evidence the impartiality of their provision to students.

- A small number of schools in the study appeared to closely monitor and evaluate their IAG provision. In other schools, however, this activity appeared limited.

- Schools tended to use NEET figures, destination measures and students' performance as indicators of good/bad IAG provision. However, the perception was that it was a school's results and the league tables that they will be measured on, not their IAG provision. For many schools this acted as a disincentive to prioritise IAG provision, or monitor and evaluate this provision.

- The role of LACPS and LACS in this area had changed and the perception was that their ability to influence the situation within schools was limited, particularly in those schools which had only brought in a small number of days service. While both organisations were still able to audit the effectiveness of a school's IAG provision this service will now carry a charge as it lies outside their core offer. Ultimately, schools are unlikely to buy in this service because of funding issues.

<u>Research Question 3</u>: What are the implications of the policy changes for effective practice?

Labour market information (LMI)

- Providing comprehensive and consistent LMI is a key element of effective IAG practice and was perceived as such by the majority of the interviewees. Many of the schools in this study, however, were making very limited use of LMI and this appeared to be consistent whether or not a school had a high priority for IAG. The main barriers to the use of LMI were identified as a lack of capability in school staff and a perceived lack of availability of LMI.

- The need for staff development in this area was identified as a key issue. Emphasis was also placed on developing school–employer links and allowing staff time to visit employers.

- Comments made by interviewees suggested that although LMI was regarded as a key element of effective practice, resources were not allocated to staff to enable them to develop their capacity to use this information effectively.

Personalising IAG

- The importance of personalised IAG was seen as a key aspect of effective practice and many of the schools in this study employ this approach. However, comments made suggest that the recent policy changes are impacting upon the decisions schools make and without an increased budget personalised IAG may be reduced in some schools.

- Comments suggested that some schools may be adopting a 'tick box' mentality which prioritises quantity over quality and constrains a personalised approach.

Relationships between the LACPS/LACS advisors and schools

- Personal Advisors have an important and proactive role in terms of monitoring what goes on in schools and identifying gaps in provision or poor practice. As a result of the policy changes they reported having to negotiate to go into schools and provide activities rather than being able to carry out these activities as part of their regular work with schools.

- The perception is that the school-PA relationship is likely to be affected because the PAs presence will be reduced in those schools that have brought in at a lower level of service.

- It was stressed that the impact of these changes may not necessarily be negative; PAs may develop different but equally effective relationships with schools.

Accountability

- A significant number of interviewees raised the issue of accountability, particularly in relation to the role of Ofsted.

- More emphasis by Ofsted on progression and the role of IAG would support an increased prioritisation of IAG in schools.

- Interviewees expressed a lack of confidence that the current Ofsted framework would provide accountability. This was also evident in the decision made by the schools in one district in Area A not to provide any independent careers advice. Comments also suggested that other schools may be waiting to see how this issue is addressed before making any longer term decisions about changing their own provision.

Conclusions

The key issue identified by participants in the study was the lack of funding associated with the transfer of responsibility from Local Authorities to schools. This has been exacerbated by the multiple changes taking place within the sector which mean that schools have competing priorities which may take priority over IAG provision, regardless of the priority they attach to the area.

Evidence from this study suggests that this has influenced decisions they have made about both the level of buy-in and what they buy in from LA Careers Services which has led to some schools significantly reducing the number of days or activities they have bought in, with schools in one district buying in no external IAG provision.

Previous studies have highlighted discrepancies in 'who gets what' in relation to IAG. Drawing on the evidence from this study the response to the policy changes may act to exacerbate this situation in some schools; students who appear to know what they want to do post-16 may not get access to the type of professional advice and guidance to support them to make informed decisions.

Findings from this study highlight variation in how schools are interpreting the requirement for independence and impartiality. In some cases this appears to be a misinterpretation, but in others this appears a deliberate action on the part of some schools based on an attitude of wait and see if the legislation 'has teeth'. Little confidence was expressed by participants in Ofsted as a means of ensuring accountability.

Findings from this study suggest that there will be a lack of consistency in IAG provision between Areas A and B, between academies and LA schools and among schools generally. Schools where IAG is given a high priority appear to be using the changes to the policy as an opportunity to review their practice; to explore how they can 'work smarter' in terms of providing effective IAG and 'value for money'. Other schools appear to be spreading provision more thinly to cover their new responsibilities and/or adopting a 'tick box' mentality which prioritises quantity over quality. All of which may lead to increasing levels of variation between schools and districts in terms of the IAG provision in the future.

The status and priority awarded to IAG within the school is a critical factor in improving quality of provision and there is little evidence that the policy changes have impacted positively on this area in the schools studied. While some schools have retained a high priority for IAG, others schools appear to have a relatively low priority which in some cases has been reduced in the face of competing priorities for resources.

1 INTRODUCTION

This final report on 'Supporting Informed Decision-Making: Developing Effective Information, Advice and Guidance for Students in the West Midlands', undertaken by the Institute for Education Policy Research (IEPR), Staffordshire University, for the Lifelong Learning Network (LLN), presents an overview of the research literature on Information, Advice and Guidance for students. It also presents an analysis of data drawn from qualitative research with key stakeholders involved in delivering IAG in schools in the West Midlands. The overall aim of the project was to explore the issues involved in supporting students to make informed decisions about their future pathways within the context of recent changes to Government policy which is resulting in a refiguring of Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) and careers work[1].

0.1 Rationale for the Project

Effective IAG is critical in supporting all young people to follow the right education and career route and enabling them to achieve their full potential. However, recent research suggests that almost 25% of young people indicate that they have not received adequate information to enable them to make informed choices about their future (Hutchinson, Korzeniewski et al., 2011). The issues identified also have implications for retention in higher education (HE); research by Quinn et al. (2005) suggests that making the wrong decision about which course to study may be a key reason for withdrawal from HE. These authors found that participants frequently attributed withdrawal from HE to a lack of relevant advice and guidance while at school, with many stating a preference for more work-related subjects rather than a more general degree programme. Existing evidence also suggests that information for students on vocational routes or pathways to higher level qualifications is lacking and/or what information is provided may be given to those students perceived as non-academic and less able to progress to higher education (Slack, 2009). In addition, concern has been expressed, particularly in relation to highly ranking universities, that candidates may be taking the 'wrong' A Levels, effectively limiting progression options for some students (McCaig et al., 2008; Sutton Trust, 2011). More recently, policy changes have complicated the process of decision-making for young people. For example, the National Scholarship Programme, which will come into effect from 2012, will enable individual higher education institutions (HEIs) to offer a range of support for students; this adds additional complexity to the choice process.

These issues are further complicated by the recent changes to UK Government policy which is resulting in a refiguring of IAG and careers work. One effect of these changes will be to make securing access to independent and impartial careers guidance the responsibility of schools; a transfer of responsibility from local authorities to schools which has not been accompanied by any corresponding transfer of funding (Hooley and Watts, 2011). Concern over the changes has been expressed, for example, by the National Careers Services Advisory Group who state that the re-organisation of careers advice services in England could be potentially damaging to young people's lives, and that schools, rather than local

---

[1] Note that school representatives involved in the research tended to use the terms CEG (Careers Education Guidance) and IAG interchangeably.

authorities, will be expected to provide advice without adequate funding (cited by BBC News, 2011). In addition, Hooley and Watts (2011) suggest that there has been limited transition planning at a national level and this has resulted in considerable confusion at a local level. They argue that alongside the erosion of the Connexions service, which has been seriously damaged by these changes, schools have also experienced a reduction in support via the loss of Aimhigher and Education Business Partnerships. These authors summarise the responses of local authorities to these changes which include extreme cutting of services, focusing only on vulnerable young people, or a 'wait and see' approach. Many schools are also said to be unclear on their new responsibilities and how best to deliver these, or how many resources they are able and willing to allocate to this. According to the recent Select Committee Report (House of Commons Education Committee, 2013), Government policy guidance is very loose and it is up to schools how they interpret this. The report also recognises that there is a need for improved accountability.

Also of interest is students' access to the full range of IAG information. Recent research by the Association of Colleges has sought to establish how far students are exposed to diverse post-16 options beyond remaining in school (reported by Lee, 2012). This survey of marketing and liaison officers in colleges found that many schools with sixth forms obstruct colleges' access to their students thereby preventing them from having full access to IAG from other sources about alternative post-16 options. An earlier report (Exley, 2011) presents evidence of similar obstructive practice.

These issues are of relevance to the study locality where there are concerns about progression to higher education and where raising skills is a key part of the regeneration strategy for areas suffering from higher levels of deprivation. Evidence suggests, therefore, that further exploration of the issues involved in supporting students to make informed decisions about their future pathways within this changing policy context is extremely pertinent. In addition, given the recent nature of the policy changes, relatively little research has been conducted which explores these issues.

0.2   Aims of the Project

The overall aim of the project was to explore the issues involved in supporting students to make informed decisions about their future pathways within the context of recent changes to Government policy which is resulting in a refiguring of IAG and careers work. The research concentrated on two adjoining Local Authorities within the West Midlands – referred to as Area A and Area B.

The specific research questions were:

- What are the perceived enablers and barriers to effective IAG practice within the two areas?
- What has been the impact of the changes to Government policy on practice within the two areas?
- What are the implications of the policy changes for effective practice?

The research project was divided into three phases: *Phase 1: Literature review; Phase 2: Initial response to IAG policy changes*; and *Phase 3: Response to IAG policy changes – one year on.*

0.2.1   Phase 1: Literature review

Phase 1 focused on reviewing the research literature on key factors in effective practice in IAG for students. For the purposes of the literature review, the geographical area covered was wider than research undertaken in the West Midlands; this was to enable the review to draw on national evidence that has relevance to the research context. The specifics of the literature review are presented in *Chapter 2: Data Collection*. Drawing on the literature, a list of key factors in effective practice was developed and used to inform subsequent phases of the project.

The literature review is presented in *Chapter 3: Literature Review*. The review covers: key factors identified in previous research on effective practice (IAG provision within schools; the status of IAG within school; personalised IAG; sources of IAG; and impartiality).

0.2.2   Phase 2: Initial response to IAG policy changes

Phase 2 consisted of qualitative research with key stakeholders involved in delivering IAG and focused on the way forward in terms of developing effective IAG practice within the changing policy context. Two sets of stakeholders from Areas A and B were included in Phase 2 of the research: (1) external stakeholders – local authority representatives and IAG provider representatives; (2) school-based stakeholders – representatives from secondary schools in the two areas who have responsibility for IAG. These interviews focused on the initial response to the recent policy changes to IAG. The aim of this phase of the research was to develop a more nuanced understanding of these issues within the context of the two areas – a key factor in developing effective IAG practice.

Interviews were conducted by telephone/face-to-face; these were recorded with permission from the interviewees, and the data transcribed and analysed. Interviews were of approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour duration.

Interviews were conducted with 14 key stakeholders. Four interviews were conducted with local authority (LA) and IAG provider representatives (one of each from each area). In addition, 10 interviews were conducted with representatives from secondary schools who have responsibility for IAG (seven from Area A and three from Area B).

0.2.3   Phase 3: Response to policy changes – one year on

This third phase of the project involved further telephone/face-to-face interviews with seven of the 10 secondary school representatives previously interviewed in Phase 2. Further telephone interviews were also conducted with three of the four LA and IAG provider representatives previously interviewed. The aim of these interviews was to explore with participants the ways in which schools actually responded to the changes compared to the envisaged response outlined by them in earlier interviews.

In addition, we conducted six interviews with marketing and liaison officers at colleges and HEIs (i.e. post-16 stakeholders), within catchment areas which include the participating schools. The aim of these interviews was to investigate perceptions around access to students in schools.

0.2.4   Reporting findings from Phases 2 and 3

Interviews were, with permission from interviewees, recorded and transcribed. Findings from the analysis of the interview data are presented in *Chapter 4: Results.* This chapter is structured around the three research questions. Specific themes are identified and discussed within each of these questions; this includes discussion of themes identified within the literature as effective practice. The key points within each theme are summarised at the end of each sub-section. The results are drawn together in *Chapter 5: Conclusions.*

2 DATA COLLECTION

This section outlines the data collection and analysis procedures used in the research undertaken to date.

0.3 Phase 1: Literature Review

This consisted of a desk-based review of the research literature on IAG practice. Whilst the aim of the research was to examine the responses to the policy changes of stakeholders within Areas A and B in the West Midlands, for the purposes of the literature review, the geographical area covered has been wider; this has enabled the review to draw on evidence from national research. The review includes, therefore, key national reports and also research conducted in the UK and the West Midlands (e.g. LLN and Aimhigher funded reports). This literature review has focused on research relating to IAG practice with young people, drawing on a number of key reports and articles published in the period 2000 to 2011. However, a number of published literature reviews have been included and these may refer to literature from an earlier date. The overall aim of the literature review was to identify the key factors in effective IAG practice with young people.

The following questions were used to structure the review:

- What factors are identified in the literature in relation to effective practice?
- Do different stakeholders identify different factors (e.g. IAG staff, students and teachers)?
- Do factors vary across different groups (e.g. first generation students, minority ethnic students)?
- What are the barriers to effective practice?

The review is placed within the context of current changes to IAG policy.

0.4 Phases 2 and 3: Initial Response to IAG Policy Changes and Response to Policy Changes – One Year On

The two interview phases of the research focused on participants drawn from within the West Midlands – Area A and Area B. Data was collected from three different groups of participants:

- External stakeholders – LA representatives and IAG provider representatives working within Areas A and B.
- School-based stakeholders – representatives from secondary schools in Areas A and B who have responsibility for IAG.
- Post-16 stakeholders – representatives (marketing and liaison officers) from HEIs and colleges within catchment areas which include the participating schools.

0.4.1 External stakeholders – Phases 2 and 3

Interviews were conducted with four external stakeholder representatives: one LA representative and one IAG provider representative from each of Area A and Area B. Where possible each representative was interviewed twice: once prior to implementation of the new policy changes in schools (Phase 2), and again, following implementation of the policy changes (Phase 3). The characteristics of the interviewees and the timing of the interviews are shown in Table 1. Where a second interview was not possible, reasons for this are also indicated in Table 1.

Table 1   Characteristics of external stakeholders

Area	External stakeholder	Timing of Phase 2 interview	Timing of Phase 3 interview
Area A	LA[1] Representative	March 2012	April 2013
Area B	LA Representative	March 2012	Not re-interviewed[3]
Area A	IAG[2] Provider – Local Authority Careers and Participation Service (LACPS)	March 2012	May 2013
Area B	IAG Provider – Local Authority Careers Service (LACS)	March 2012	May 2013

Note: Stakeholder names have been changed or coded to preserve anonymity.
[1]Local Authority; [2]Information, Advice and Guidance; [3]Representative had left the organisation and the post had not been filled.

Phase 2 interviews focused on:

- The current situation in Area A/Area B following the policy changes, i.e. the LA and IAG provider response.
- Schools' awareness of their new responsibilities.
- Specific students currently targeted (e.g. Not in Education, Employment or Training; Looked After Children; low/high achievers) and perceptions on whether this is likely to change.
- The priority that IAG has within schools generally.
- Key aspects of good practice in IAG.
- Main barriers/enablers to good practice in IAG in schools in Areas A and B.

Phase 3 interviews focused on:

- Schools' overall response to the changes.
- The strategic decisions made by schools in relation to IAG as a result of the policy changes.
- Work LA representatives and IAG providers have done with schools to help them undertake/understand their new responsibilities.
- Whether schools are achieving impartiality and changes in the level of priority given to IAG.
- Key aspects of good practice in IAG.

0.4.2   School-based stakeholders – Phases 2 and 3

Interviews were conducted with 10 representatives from secondary schools in Areas A and B. Each representative was interviewed twice where possible: once prior to implementation of the new policy changes in schools (Phase 2), and again, following implementation of the policy changes (Phase 3). The characteristics of these schools and interviewees and the timing of the interviews are shown in Table 2. Where a second interview was not possible, reasons for this are also indicated in Table 2.

Table 2   Characteristics of school-based stakeholder representatives

School	Area	Type of school	Interviewees role	Timing of Phase 2 interview	Timing of Phase 3 interview
Robinwood Academy	Area A	11-16	CEIAG[1] Coordinator (with teaching responsibilities)	July 2012	April 2013
Malt Valley Academy	Area A	11-18	Assistant Vice Principal	July 2012	April 2013
Ladybower High School	Area A	11-18	Assistant Head Teacher	March 2012	April 2013
Briarmount High School	Area A	11-18	Assistant Head Teacher	March 2012	May 2013
Hammond Academy	Area A	11-18	Careers Advisor	April 2012	April 2013
Monkton School	Area A	11-18	Head of Sixth Form	April 2012	Not re-interviewed[3]
Fieldhouse High School	Area A	11-18	Head of Sixth Form	June 2012	April 2013
Hall Lane College	Area B	11-16	IAG[2] Coordinator (with other responsibilities, inc. teaching)	March 2012	Not re-interviewed[4]
Spikemore High School	Area B	11-16	CEIAG Manager	March 2012	May 2013
Abbeyside Academy	Area B	11-16	Head of House (with CEIAG specialism)	May 2012	Not re-interviewed[3]

Note: School names and interviewee roles have been changed to preserve anonymity.
[1]Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance; [2]Careers, Advice and Guidance; [3]Could not get into the school; [4]Representative was no longer at the school (role had been discontinued) and no other member of staff was willing to be interviewed.

Phase 2 interviews focused on:

- The school's awareness of their new responsibilities following the policy changes.
- What activities they are currently running and with which students.
- The strategic decisions the school has made to date about the type and level of services they will offer following the policy changes.
- The priority that IAG has within the school.
- What would support a higher priority for IAG.
- Practice within the school, i.e. monitoring and evaluation; ensuring impartiality; targeting specific groups; use of labour market information; work with parents/employers; organisational structure (vertical/horizontal).

- Key aspects of good practice in IAG.
- Challenges to providing effective IAG.

Phase 3 interviews focused on:

- Schools' overall response to the changes.
- Decisions made about the type and level of services they are offering.
- Changes in delivering IAG.
- How schools are ensuring impartiality.
- Priority given to IAG and whether/how this has changed since the policy changes.
- Aspects of good practice.
- Main impacts of the policy changes.

0.4.3   Post-16 stakeholders – Phase 3 only

Six interviews were conducted with representatives of five post-16 stakeholders; these were marketing and liaison officers at colleges and HEIs within catchment areas which include the participating schools. Each representative was interviewed once only. The characteristics of the post-16 stakeholders and the interviewees, and the timing of the interviews are shown in Table 3.

Table 3   Characteristics of post-16 stakeholders

Area	Post-16 stakeholder	Interviewees role	Timing of interview
Area A	HEI[1]	Interviewee 1: Recruitment Manager	April 2013
		Interviewee 2: Programme Delivery Manager	May 2013
Area B	HEI	Recruitment Manager	April 2013
Area A	Linkton FE[2] College	Head of Marketing	May 2013
Area A	Castlefort FE College	School Liaison Officer	April 2013
Area B	Brockton FE College	School Liaison Officer	May 2013

Note: HEI and college names and interviewee roles have been changed or coded to preserve anonymity.
[1]Higher education institution; [2]Further education.

The aim of the post-16 stakeholder interviews was to investigate perceptions around access to students in schools. Therefore the interviews focused on:

- Awareness of recent policy changes.
- Geographical area/schools that they work with.
- Kinds of activities they do with local schools.
- Response of schools since policy changes.
- Their view of the impact of the policy changes.

0.5   Analysis Procedure

The results of the analyses are given in the following sections. We first present the literature review. Next we present the findings from the external stakeholder interviews, the school-

based stakeholder interviews and the post-16 stakeholder interviews; these are discussed in terms of the research questions and themes arising from the literature review. Drawing on the literature and an analysis of the data from research participants, enablers and barriers to effective practice are also identified.

All participants involved in the research were assured that their responses to our questions would remain confidential, and to this end, in reporting the interview findings, stakeholder names and interviewee roles have been changed/coded to preserve anonymity.

3   LITERATURE REVIEW

The term Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) is defined in The Children's Plan as "…. an umbrella term that covers a range of activities that help young people become more self-reliant and better equipped to manage their own learning and personal career development" (DCSF, 2007, para. 5.16, p. 112). As outlined above, effective IAG is a critical factor in supporting all young people to follow the right education and career route. Morris (2004), for example, found that the quality and extent of IAG provision received before the age of 16 was a key factor in the development of a positive attitude towards higher education (HE). In a recent report for the Equality and Human Rights Commission, Hutchinson, Rolfe et al. (2011) also argue that high quality Careers Education and IAG (CEIAG), supported by measures such as mentoring, can play a key role in facilitating social mobility. However, as discussed in *Section 1.1: Rationale for the Project*, evidence suggests that not all young people receive adequate IAG to enable them to make informed decisions on future pathways and careers. As also outlined, from September 2012 schools will have a statutory duty to secure access to independent and impartial careers guidance for their pupils. Academies and Free Schools will be subject to the same requirements. Local Authorities (LAs) will retain their duty to encourage and enable young people's participation in education and training, being required to assist vulnerable young people and those at risk of disengaging with education or work. LAs will continue to track young people's participation in order to identify those at risk of not participating post-16 and schools are required to work with them to support them in recording young people's post-16 plans and offers received. Hooley and Watts (2011) identify two main challenges for schools arising from this changing context. First, understanding this changed context and their new responsibilities within this. Secondly, making strategic decisions about the type and level of services to provide or procure (and developing systems to facilitate this process). The authors argue that those schools which will continue to invest strongly in careers work are in the exception. This is also supported by Nicholls (2011) who suggests that schools are unlikely to buy in at levels of service anywhere near those previously provided. More recently, the Select Committee Report (House of Commons Education Committee, 2013) has raised concerns about variation in consistency of provision not only between local authorities but also between schools.

Responding to the transition of responsibility

Given the timing of the policy changes, little research has been conducted as of yet which has explored the response to these changes. One study, however, conducted in July 2012 (Filmer-Sankey and McCrone), suggests that LAs are supporting schools to meet their new responsibilities in three main ways:

- Providing young people and their parents with information on post-16 pathways via schools and online resources and targeting their own resources on supporting young people who are NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) or in danger of becoming so;

- Providing direct support to schools (e.g. policy updates, training on selecting external IAG providers if they are not providing their own traded offer) and encouragement to integrate universal careers guidance into their curricula;

- Supporting schools to commission careers guidance services from external providers through, for example, provision of a list of such agencies, and quality assuring them on the school's behalf.

The same study found that being well-supported and informed by the LA had helped schools to feel better prepared to respond to the policy changes. Other factors identified by schools were: being engaged in local partnerships; embracing the new legislation and carrying out their own preparation for the transition of responsibility; having a well-qualified Careers Coordinator with a significant time allocation for IAG on their staff; building on their existing, well-established careers guidance systems.

1.1 Existing Research on Practice in Schools: Key Issues Identified in the Literature

Schools clearly have the capacity to make a real difference to the educational decision-making of their students, supporting them to make informed choices about their post-16 pathways. Research suggests that those with good curriculum management, good student support and strong leadership, appear to produce young people who make choices they are happy with six months later. In addition, where students feel well supported they are more likely to be influenced by formal CEG (Careers Education Guidance) providers and teachers rather than by parents and friends (Blenkinsop et al., 2006). Similarly, while impact varies by group, there is evidence that teachers are influencers of choice (Smith et al., 2005; McCrone et al., 2005). In a review of the literature on the impact of careers education activity, Hooley et al. (2011) conclude that the most effective start early and are delivered by a mixture of professional guidance practitioners, teachers and other stakeholders supported by appropriate tools and technologies. However, research also suggests that there are concerns around IAG provision within schools and colleges. The OECD (2004), for example, has highlighted the limitations of a purely school-based model on the grounds of a lack of impartiality, weak links with the labour market and inconsistency. Student juries conducted by the National Union of Students (2008) have also expressed strong negative views on the impact of IAG, while only 28% of Year 8 and 10 students in a study conducted by Ofsted (2008) thought the IAG they had received on learning and careers was adequate.

1.1.1 Provision within schools

Quality of provision

A systematic literature review of research conducted during the period from 1998 to 2004 (Smith et al., 2005) suggests that CEG provision varies from school to school and that there are inconsistencies in the quality of that provision. In support of this they cite, amongst others, a report by the National Audit Office (2004) which found that schools themselves identified concerns around quality and consistency of provision, and many reported that they did not feel they had the capacity to provide appropriate levels of CEG for young people. Other research would appear to support this; Ofsted (2010) found that when

careers education was provided by the school, quality varied considerably and provision was perfunctory in some schools, while a small-scale study by Sherbert Research (2008) found that IAG relating to careers appeared ad hoc, with input varying both by geographical location and by individual student within schools. More specifically, issues have been raised about the extent to which services are regularly and systematically evaluated or sufficiently promoted within schools (Bimrose et al., 2008). Drawing on interviews with Local Authority Strategic Managers and Heads of the Connexions Services, McCrone et al. (2010) also found that participants had low levels of confidence in school and college IAG provision compared to external provision. Fewer than half the respondents believed that learners received a high quality programme of careers education, or that IAG was delivered consistently across the curriculum. Participants in this study also expressed a belief that schools and colleges were not taking responsibility for meeting or engaging with national quality standards (published by the DCSF in 2007).

Availability of specialist advice

There is also evidence of a reduction in the availability of specialist advice. Drawing on an analysis of Year 10 and 11 YELLIS data, Wiggins and Coe (2009) found that during the period 1997 to 2008, the number of students who took part in a formal Career Action Plan meeting with a careers advisor or teacher fell from 85% to 55%. Over the same period the number of personal interviews with a Careers Advisor or teacher fell from 49% to 25% while the number of talks by the same individuals fell from 45% to 22%. The authors suggest that this has been accompanied by a move towards the use of more informal sources of advice such as family and friends which, they argue, may be detrimental to students from disadvantaged backgrounds who do not have access to the same social networks that more advantaged students may have.

Timing

Smith et al. (2005) also found that there were inconsistencies in the timing of the delivery of CEG interventions arguing that earlier intervention would be more useful, particularly in counteracting strong peer pressure in Year 11 when choices of post-16 destination are being made. Drawing on their research review, they suggest that the timing of CEG needs to suit the requirements of young people; those planning to enter the labour market at 16, for example, may benefit from more intervention in Year 11 while those planning to remain in education may need it earlier. Although the majority of schools do not start any substantive CEG until Year 9, many studies emphasise the importance of much earlier provision: for example, Hutchinson, Rolfe et al. (2011) advocate starting in primary school; Bimrose (2009) in Year 7. Research conducted in local schools also argues that current provision is not only too little, too late, but also out of context, particularly in relation to lower achievers who need to have careers information embedded in order to become more aware of the value of learning (Customer Interpreter, 2005). A related point was made in research conducted for the Sutton Trust (Davies et al., 2008), which again involved schools in the West Midlands. Participants in this study were interviewed after they had made their choices about which HE institution to apply for. Although the cost of attending university varied through the availability of different bursaries, many students delayed looking into the financial costs until after they had made this decision (i.e. decisions were based on perceptions of cost

rather than actual cost). For a number of students, particularly those from more disadvantaged backgrounds, this involved deciding to remain in the family home, which restricted the options open to them. This situation was exacerbated by the schools providing information and guidance on finance issues *after* students had completed their UCAS applications, and in many cases, in the following spring term. Given the increasing complexity of the HE choice process with the introduction of the National Scholarship Programme, the timing of interventions becomes increasingly significant.

1.1.2   The status of IAG within schools

The provision of IAG in schools is affected by the status accorded to it by senior management, using mechanisms such as time allocation or teacher status (Bimrose et al., 2008). McCrone et al. (2010) also found that 58% of respondents (LA Managers and Heads of Connexions) agreed or strongly agreed that IAG was a low priority for schools; 53% that senior leaders do not buy into the IAG strategy or accorded it low status. Related to this is the issue of accountability; schools prioritise interventions that raise achievement. This issue is raised in the recent Select Committee Report (House of Commons Education Committee, 2013) which highlights the need for a performance measure that demonstrates the relevance and impact of good CEIAG and which would act as an incentive for schools to invest resources (time and money) on this area. Drawing on evidence from both the Government and Ofsted, the report states that there is a lack of clarity around the latter's role in this area and that currently they are unable to hold schools to account:

> We note the disconnect between the Minister's view of the role of Ofsted in enforcing accountability on schools through its inspection framework, and Ofsted's own view. The limitations which Ofsted set out to us—the fact that its inspections do not make a clear judgement on careers guidance provision in schools, that it does not inspect against statutory compliance in this area and that it does not routinely inspect all schools—means that the Ofsted framework is not a credible accountability check on the provision of careers guidance by individual schools. (House of Commons Education Committee, 2013, pp. 19-20)

The report also argues that Key Stage 4 and 16-18 destination measures, although a valuable tool, are not an effective method of ensuring that schools meet their statutory duty, or an effective means of demonstrating the quality of their CEIAG provision (p. 20).

Raising the status of IAG within schools is a key factor in improving the quality of provision and the need for a new qualification for Careers Coordinators has been called for to support this overall aim (Bimrose et al., 2008; McCrone et al., 2009). However, the circularity of this argument is evident, as the main barrier to completion of such qualifications is the school not releasing individuals to attend courses, particularly if IAG is not regarded as a high priority, or the individual has other subject teaching responsibilities which are given a higher priority for Continuing Professional Development. Funding is also clearly a barrier to completion (Bimrose et al., 2008).

Lack of appropriate training and/or qualifications

A number of studies have highlighted this issue in school staff delivering careers education. In a study involving 15 schools, Bimrose et al. (2008) found that of 18 school representatives responsible for CEG, 17 did not hold accredited CEG-related qualifications. In addition,

participants at eight of the schools have either very little or no awareness of the models underpinning their existing CEG provision. Similarly, Ofsted (2010) found that not all the staff teaching careers education had the necessary knowledge or experience and as a result could provide only limited advice, guidance and support. Indeed, some of those teaching Careers Education had been asked to do so simply because they had spare time in their timetables or because this was provided in tutorial time. A nationwide survey of staff and students (National Youth Agency and Local Government Association, 2011) found that only 20% of teachers indicated that they had received training to support them in the provision of careers-related advice, while fewer than half felt well supported in relation to providing this. However, 68% of respondents said that they felt confident about providing advice, although the majority (84%) indicated that this was in relation to academic options such as A Levels compared to vocational courses (49%). Research carried out in the same areas as those examined in this project also suggests that there may be limited knowledge of alternative routes among teaching staff in local schools (2006[2]). This is also supported by more recent research which has identified a need for teachers delivering careers education to be more knowledgeable about and dedicated to careers education in order to better support students to make informed decisions about their future pathways (McCrone et al., 2009).

Alongside the need for access to systematic training to keep up-to-date (Smith et al., 2005) specific recommendations for the necessary skills and/or training required by practitioners responsible for the delivery of IAG have been made:

- The criticality of labour market information (LMI) has been emphasised (c.f. Bimrose et al., 2008; Hutchinson, Korzeniewski et al., 2011). Useful LMI includes regional employment trends; employment areas growing in importance or declining; employment forecasts; skills needs and future requirements (skills valued by employers); earnings; routes to specific jobs; careers narratives. Barriers to working with LMI include a lack of confidence in this area alongside a perception that this was actively discouraged following the introduction of Connexions (Bimrose et al., 2008). Careers Coordinators need to be competent and confident on the use of LMI and undertake training on how to use this, particularly when it is used in the curriculum (Smith et al., 2005; Bimrose et al., 2008).

- Skills to help school staff challenge stereotypes and help young people widen their views of options (Smith et al., 2005; Hutchinson, Rolfe et al., 2011).

- Training on strategic management, e.g. preparing and advising senior leaders on IAG policy. Although this is not necessarily part of a coordinators role, strengthening this area may contribute to raising the profile of IAG in the school and obtaining senior level support; both of which are needed to underpin recognition of the area and the role of coordinators within the school (McCrone et al., 2009).

- Training on ways of monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness and outcomes of IAG (McCrone et al., 2009).

---

[2] Reference withheld to preserve the anonymity of this project.

1.1.3 Personalised IAG

The importance of personalised IAG is highlighted by a number of studies. MacDonald and Marsh (2005), for example, argue that a generic approach to careers guidance and a failure to listen to and consider the needs of individuals can explain why some young people fail to make sustained transitions. Hutchinson, Rolfe et al. (2011) also suggest that those young people facing the greatest barriers (e.g. disabled young people, teenage mothers, young people who want to follow a non-traditional route) may benefit from on-going support. There is also evidence that CEG tailored at those regarded as being at risk can have significant impact (Smith et al., 2005). Similarly, Spielhofer et al. (2009) call for the proactive targeting of young people who appear to have little idea of what to do post-16 in order to prevent them becoming part of the NEET group. Participants identified as 'sustained NEET' in this study were the least likely to have ideas about what to do after school and also the least likely to have spoken to an adult about their choices. Other participants, identified as 'open to learning NEET' and 'undecided and NEET' were more likely to have spoken to a professional about their choices at 16, but many had not found this useful. Where young people did seek advice they did not always choose an advice and guidance professional, choosing instead to speak to another adult, frequently a teacher. This was for both logistical reasons (e.g. could not get an appointment with a Connexions advisor) and personal reasons (e.g. wanting to speak to someone they trusted).

Trust

A number of studies drawing on the views of young people themselves have emphasised the issue of trust; young people want to speak to someone they trust, who knows them and with whom they have a good relationship, or someone who has spent the time getting to know them (National Youth Agency and Local Government Association, 2010). However, the same study also suggests that young people want well-informed advisors with up-to-date knowledge of the world of work. This dual need potentially creates a tension between the 'advice giver' having the right sort of relationship with the young person and also the right knowledge, i.e. wide enough and accurate enough. It raises the issue, therefore, of how all adults can be well-informed about available options *and/or* be aware of where this information can be found.

1.1.4 Sources of IAG

A number of studies highlight the importance of people in relation to IAG. As discussed above, school teachers are considered by some students to be an important source of advice, but others may have less positive relationships with staff and this may be a factor in their willingness to approach them for guidance (National Youth Agency and Local Government Association, 2010). Parents are an important source of information and influence (c.f. Smith et al., 2005; Customer Interpreter, 2005; Hughes and Grattion, 2009). However, some parents may have traditional perspectives on appropriate careers and pathways or lack information on alternative choices (Hutchinson, Rolfe et al., 2011) and some students may not seek IAG from parents because of cultural and societal changes which have taken place since they were young (National Youth Agency and Local Government Association (2010). There is a need, therefore, not only to work with parents

and carers to ensure they have access to up-to-date information and advice, but to do so in new and innovative approaches that connect to the informal social networks within which young people and their parents interact (Customer Interpreter, 2005; Hughes and Grattion, 2009; Hutchinson, Rolfe et al., 2011). However, McCrone et al. (2010) reported that this area scored some of the lowest expressions of confidence from Heads of Connexions and LA Strategic Managers.

1.1.5 Impartiality

The recent Select Committee Report (House of Commons Education Committee, 2013) identifies a conflict of interest between the school and the individual learner, suggesting that schools with their own sixth form provision may tend to restrict access to alternative providers. In support of this they draw on evidence from a survey of colleges which found that only 18% reported having significant access to students in schools while 74% reported that schools would not distribute their prospectuses (Association of Colleges, 2012a[3]). A second report by the Association of Colleges (2012b[3]), points to increasing tension between institutions which is caused by an increasingly competitive environment. The Association of Colleges found that 57% of the teachers they polled felt obliged to encourage students to remain in the school beyond 16, almost half of whom blamed this on overt pressure from school leaders. Similar concerns were expressed by LAs in recent NFER research (Filmer-Sankey and McCrone, 2012) who claimed that there is a tension between the need for 11-18 schools to retain students and remain competitive, and the requirement to offer impartial IAG on alternative post-16 pathways.

A lack of impartiality in the IAG provided by schools has been identified in a number of earlier studies. A 2006 study[4], for example, found that the general perception amongst participants (teaching staff and students) in their study was that the information provided to young people remained focused on the traditional academic route and there was less evidence that information on vocational routes was as widely available. Young people themselves have identified impartiality as a key factor in IAG (McCrone et al., 2009). A number of authors suggest that this may be a particular issue for 11-18 schools who may feel under pressure to retain students (c.f. the 2006 study previously mentioned; Blenkinsop et al., 2006). Ofsted's (2010) study, for example, found that students in schools with sixth forms were frequently unaware of the range of courses in further education (FE) or opportunities for work-based learning. However, the National Youth Agency and Local Government Association's research (2011) suggests that teachers themselves may be more confident that they are providing impartial IAG; 82% of respondents in this study indicated that they were confident that the advice they gave was impartial and 88% that alternatives to staying on at school were discussed with all students. Unfortunately, information on the type of schools the respondents taught at is not provided so comparison of 11-18 and 11-16 schools is not possible.

The issue of impartiality has particular importance in relation to equality. Research for the Equality and Human Rights Commission (Hutchinson, Rolfe et al., 2011) suggests that the

---

[3] Cited in the Select Committee Report on careers guidance for young people (House of Commons Education Committee, 2013, p. 28).
[4] Reference withheld to preserve the anonymity of this project.

relationship between impartiality and the promotion of equality and challenging stereotypes is not clearly understood. In particular, there is an assumption that impartiality is the equivalent to a neutral or passive engagement process rather than an awareness that traditional notions of suitable educational or vocational options by gender, race or social background could be challenged and changed through targeted IAG.

Shedding further light on the issue of impartiality of provision, some studies have investigated 'who receives what' in relation to IAG in schools. Specific findings include:

- Compared to a young person expecting to receive less than five GCSEs, a young person expecting to achieve a minimum of 10 A*-C GCSEs or equivalent is *more* likely to have experienced a teacher talking to the class about educational options and careers advice, a business person or a local employer coming into school or used the internet to research options. The higher achiever is also *less* likely to have received advice about vocational options (National Youth Agency and Local Government Association, 2011).

- Children with higher Key Stage 2 attainment receive less IAG on training and apprenticeships from teachers. Receiving this type of IAG is positively related to being a boy, living in a single parent household and having mixed ethnicity (Nicoletti and Berthoud, 2010).

- Young people who are NEET are less likely than those who have entered post-16 learning to have received formal advice or support or have attended a careers interview (Maguire and Rennison, 2005). Similarly, young people who are NEET or in jobs without training (JWT) may not be prompted to discuss all the options available to them. This was associated by some with having made the wrong choice and subsequently discontinuing learning. A number of the interviewees in this study also felt that they had received 'biased' information, particularly those categorised as 'open to learning NEET' who reported being encouraged to stay on in the school's sixth form due to their abilities, but then discontinuing and becoming NEET (Spielhofer et al., 2009).

- There is some evidence that some young people are not getting the IAG they need, particularly disabled young people, young people with special educational needs, high achievers and young offenders (Hutchinson, Rolfe et al., 2011). However, young people in the PRUs (pupil referral units) and special schools (both of which had closer links to Connexions) in Ofsted's (2010) study had good individual support and students there felt staff were interested in them.

- The quality of IAG for looked after children (LACs) appears to vary. For example, in Ofsted's (2010) study of 10 local authorities, staff in almost half of the homes visited had no awareness of post-16 options, young people were not encouraged to make use of the IAG available and many personal education and pathway plans were incomplete. Better outcomes were evident where LAs and support services worked well together.

4   RESULTS

As outlined in *Chapter 1: Introduction*, this research aimed to answer the following three research questions:

- What are the perceived enablers and barriers to effective IAG practice within the two areas?
- What has been the impact of the changes to Government policy on practice within the two areas?
- What are the implications of the policy changes for effective practice?

This chapter is structured around the three research questions. Specific themes are identified and discussed within each of these questions; this includes discussion of themes identified in the literature review as effective practice. The key points within each theme are summarised at the end of each sub-section.

2.1   Research Question 1: What are the perceived enablers and barriers to effective IAG practice within the two areas?

2.1.1   Lack of guidance from Government and levels of awareness of policy changes among stakeholders

The DfE (Department for Education) published their draft statutory guidance on IAG for schools in March 2012. The first interviews (Phase 2 of the research), were with LA and IAG provider representatives and school representatives and were held in the initial months following publication of this draft guidance (i.e. from March to July 2012). The second interviews with these participants (Phase 3 of the research) were held between April and May 2013, i.e. following publication of the DfE's full guidance for schools which was published in March 2013. Interviews with post-16 stakeholders were also conducted at this time. The full guidance extended, from September 2013, the duty on schools to provide independent and impartial careers guidance to all registered pupils in Year 8 (12-13 year-olds) and Years 12 and 13 (16-18 year-olds), rather than confining this to Years 9 to 11.

At the time of the first interviews with the LA/LACPS/LACS representatives, interviewees said that they were not aware that any full guidance for schools had been published but that draft guidelines were available. Overall, it was felt by these interviewees that the picture was somewhat unclear in terms of what exactly the policy changes meant for schools. The Area B LA representative felt that it was very difficult to locate information/documents, contrasting this to the previous government which they felt was more transparent:

> ....it is difficult with this government I think to find where things are, such as transparency that used to be, you know, the previous government, the sort of 14-19 agenda, regular newsletters, you had timelines, you had toolkits, and we're not getting anything like that. It's very much down to local solutions.... I think it's just the way they are, and you know it's like raising [the] participation age, there won't be a national campaign, again it's left to local areas to decide what to do. (LA Representative, Area B, Interview 1)

They returned to this point later in relation to school provision of impartial IAG:

> I think at the moment it's perhaps a little bit of a grey area. I think until it sorts of beds down exactly what it means about providing impartial IAG. I think they need more guidance from the government, but I don't think.... that won't happen.... not in the way we were used to with the previous government. (LA Representative, Area B, Interview 1)

Overall, at the time of the first interviews, comments from the LA and LACPS representatives suggested that while schools were generally aware of the changes which were coming into effect, some were less aware of the finer details involved. In Area A, the LA representative felt that there was a lot of confusion and a lot of unanswered questions.

> They seem fairly aware because you know through the [LA] website, through the e-updates that my colleague sends out, the 11-19 updates, you know we've been informing them, and we've invited staff and young people to those meetings to brief and update, so I think there's an awareness, but it's more about how on earth are we going to manage this in school? (LA Representative, Area A, Interview 1)

However, it was felt that this awareness was at the middle management and CEG practitioner level. These staff then had to go back into schools and ensure that senior managers knew and understood the implications of the policy changes.

The Area B LACS representative was less sure of the level of awareness although they confirmed that they had done work with local schools. In particular, they were not sure that schools fully appreciated what the policy changes would mean for them.

> RES: So you think they have got a pretty good idea what the new responsibilities are going to be?

> The schools? I don't know. We have tried to flag it up to them and try to illustrate what it means, I'm not certain of how aware of that they were before we started making them aware.... I don't know if they fully appreciate what it means. For example, in a couple of schools, the conversation went around that they were aware that it was changing, that the Connexions[5] service would no longer do that so they were aware that they had to make a decision. And I know that some schools were thinking about either employing someone directly or giving that responsibility to a member of school staff. It's very explicit that they are not able to do that, so they are more than welcome to employ somebody, but they can't employ somebody who works for the school. (LACS representative, Area B, Interview 1)

The LACPS/LACS representatives from both areas remained unconvinced that all schools were fully clear on their new responsibilities at the time of the second interviews. In part this was attributed to a lack of clarity in the Government's guidelines. For example, the Area B LACS representative referred to the DfE guidelines published in March 2013 by saying that even *'if you actually read it, I still don't think it explains it fully'*.

The first interviews with school representatives suggested that schools were indeed generally aware of their new responsibilities. However, one school felt that while they had studied the policy changes, these changed fairly regularly and keeping track of them was difficult. Some school interviewees also felt that there may have been a lack of awareness of the finer detail particularly at senior levels. For example, an IAG Coordinator in an 11-16 school in Area B (Hall Lane College) was of the opinion that the Head was unaware of what the changes would actually mean to them, thinking that they would be able to maintain the same provision. The Coordinator, on the other hand, thought that they would not get the

---

[5] Note: some of the school-based interviewees continue to refer to Local Authority IAG providers as Connexions.

same depth of provision, just the same number of days. A second school (Ladybower High School, 11-18, Area A) reported that while they were very aware of their new responsibilities they had *'absolutely no idea'* if they would be getting any funds from the Government to support these. A third school (Malt Valley Academy, Area A) felt that they too were very aware of their responsibilities but had concerns about their previous IAG provider's (i.e. LA provision) way of working and cost, and were far less aware of what the alternatives to this provision were:

> I don't think that we're very aware of what the alternatives are in terms of careers service, certainly in [name of county]. So I think that part of my remit for September will be to try and secure some alternatives. (Assistant Vice Principal, Malt Valley Academy, Area A, Interview 1)

A number of schools were also opposed to the changes which they felt had been 'sprung' upon them:

> To be honest, the overall feeling is that the Government are in effect trying to keep us doing the same service but they're not giving us any money. That's how it feels, because what they're basically saying is 'Yes you don't have to do it, but we're going to judge you on the outcomes so really you do'. I mean that's the way that quite a number of these things seem to be coming into schools at the moment, where you know, we technically have to deliver independent advice and guidance, how you do it is up to us. But you know in terms of what they want us to achieve at the end is, you know, we're going to have to fund quite a lot of it ourselves. (Head of Sixth Form, Monkton School, Area A, Interview 1)

> ....I completely object to what the Government's done.... I object to all the cuts that have gone on and the fact that they've really decimated an invaluable service. I think the students in some schools are not getting a very good deal and it's really going to impact on a lot of students. And it's not just students with SEN [Special Educational Need] who need the support, which as it appears is the way it's going so far as statutory duty goes and what's actually being provided from external agencies. I think in a lot of respects it's the high achieving students who perhaps need more support and more information and advice and guidance. (Careers Advisor, Hammond Academy, Area A, Interview 1)

In addition, while schools were aware of the changes and the need to provide independent and impartial IAG, they had other arguably more pressing priorities. This was evident in Hall Lane College (Area B) where the Head was said to be aware of the need for IAG but had other serious concerns relating to time and funding. The school was soon to lose a significant number of staff, one of which was the CEIAG Coordinator. Other staff gave IAG a low priority because they were concerned with retaining their jobs and so the transfer of responsibility to schools had not made a huge impact on them.

The second interviews with school representatives suggested that while the majority felt they were now relatively clear on their new responsibilities some schools were interpreting the guidance differently in relation to the term 'independent'. The March 2013 Guidance (DfE, 2013) states that schools have a role to play in supporting students to make informed decisions by:

> ....providing access to impartial and independent information and guidance about the range of education and training options that are most likely to help young people achieve their ambitions.' (DfE, March 2013, p. 3)

While a significant number of schools were not buying in any external IAG provision and/or employing someone within the school to provide IAG support, others expressed the opinion that it was clearly stated in the guidance that schools could not take this approach. It is not

clear, however, whether this difference is due to ambiguity in the guidance or as one interviewee commented, *'the ambiguity comes in terms of how we* [schools] *interpret* [the guidance]*'*. A number of schools, therefore, appear to have been aware of but disregarded the guidance on independence, while others appear to have misinterpreted it. This is discussed in more detail in *Section 3.2.2: Independence and impartiality*.

KEY POINTS

- The majority of school interviewees opposed the policy changes, particularly on the basis of the lack of any associated funding.

- Government guidance was said to be limited and lacking in clarity. It was also felt that the guidance changed regularly, making it difficult for schools to keep up-to-date.

- At the time of the first interviews (March – July 2012) it was felt that the picture was unclear in terms of what the policy changes meant for schools. Awareness was said to be higher among middle managers and CEG practitioners rather than among senior level staff in schools.

- At the time of the second interviews (April – May 2013) LACPS/LACS interviewees remained unconvinced that all schools were fully clear on their new responsibilities, in part because of the perceived lack of clarity in Government guidance. Comments made by school interviewees indicated that they felt they were relatively clear on what their responsibilities were. However, comments also suggested that some schools were either disregarding or interpreting the guidance differently in relation to impartiality.

2.1.2   Multiple changes

The policy change is taking place at a time when budget cuts are being made which affect schools directly and indirectly. The majority of interviewees, regardless of organisation or institution, identified as an issue the multiple changes taking place which they felt were complicating the situation and making it more difficult for schools to keep up-to-date on IAG-related issues, e.g. a move to academy status for some schools, raising of the participation age, loss of Aimhigher funding and other funding for partnerships/networks and Careers Coordinators.

> ....Nobody would listen to me but I think one of the best things you could do with education is just not do anything for 10 years... and then have a look at it (LACS Representative, Area B, Interview 1)

> I think one of the things that there's still a lot of concern about is the raising of the participation age. There are a lot of grey areas with it and whether or not we're giving the right advice based on that, or we're going to give the right advice because, you know, we don't exactly know what's going to happen in terms of students going off to other places, particularly with students who may be less enthusiastic about the raising of the participation age shall we say. (Head of Sixth Form, Monkton School, Area A, Interview 1)

> I think people are less confident... because there are so many changes now, and because you get one change from one minute to the next. You don't quite know where the legislation is going to start and where it is going to finish. You don't know if it is going to get put through and then

changed, with all of the other, you know government things that get changed on a biweekly basis. So I think staff are now a little bit lacking in confidence because they are not quite sure... particularly with A Levels, with the changes to academic courses and assessment. I think actually the biggest problem now is that staff are lacking confidence. Unless you are working in it day in and day out like myself, I think that every day members of staff are actually lacking confidence. (Head of Sixth Form, Fieldhouse High School, Area A, Interview 2)

If you gave me a list and said 'Are you aware of this, are you aware of this?' I would like to think I would be able to say most of them because we need to be aware, but I wouldn't be surprised if there were gaps simply because of the amount that is going on you know... ....I hope we are very well informed but sadly with... despite my best efforts I think things are moving so fast and things are so complex, and I think different schools are choosing to buy in different things, different Local Authorities are choosing to respond in different ways that I think the picture is so complex I think, for you to think you have got a complete handle on it. (HEI, Area B, Recruitment Manager)

They [schools] do feel like they are floundering a little bit. I think they miss the work of the partnerships such as Aimhigher. And there would be groups... of universities working together and I think that is what they miss. Because at the moment they can sort of get hold of one university to deliver this activity and another university to deliver another, but there is not that joined up approach as there once was. (Programme Delivery Manager, HEI, Area A)

Restructuring had also taken place in the LA in Area B and this had involved significant redundancies amongst Connexions staff. While the vast majority of schools in Area B had indicated at first interview that they would buy in the traded offer, the LA representative reported that they needed to know what capacity would be required before they could finalise restructuring plans. Without this commitment there was a danger of staff numbers being reduced further – which would also result in a loss of expertise. The timing of the policy changes was also said to be poor because schools were being asked to pay for a service they previously had for free without any direct accompanying funding.

You've got to get the demand to make it viable and I think some schools would be prepared to pay, but the problem is we've had the culture of getting things for free and because there's lots of external funding and grants, [schools] don't really understand what the true cost is. You know it's the same with Aimhigher and possibly the widening participation stuff. So it's understanding, well, what's the benefit for them [schools] you know? It's very gloomy really isn't it? (LA Representative, Area B, Interview 1).

This perception was evident in the school representatives' narratives. One Assistant Head Teacher (Briarmount High School, Area A) anticipated retaining their current level of IAG work but felt that this would be more difficult given that they would have to buy in activities and Aimhigher no longer existed. They were aware that activities they had previously had for free would now carry a charge (and those which *had* carried a cost now carried a higher cost) and that they would have to 'work smarter' to do this additional work in school. As mentioned above, in Hall Lane College (Area B) the CEIAG Coordinator's post was lost in September 2012; a post funded by 'left over' Aimhigher funding which had now run out. As a result there were no plans for a dedicated member of staff for IAG and there was said to be no budget for IAG within the school[6].

---

[6] Despite numerous attempts it proved impossible to return to this school to interview a member of staff responsible for IAG.

The impact of these changes was evident not only on IAG activities but on opportunities to network and share good practice among school staff with IAG responsibilities. The LAs in both areas have engaged in a range of activities aimed at raising awareness in schools. However, their ability to engage in such activity has been affected by recent budget changes which have impacted negatively on supporting infrastructure. The LA representative in Area A said that they while they were trying to keep people informed of the policy changes (e.g. via free e-updates), the CEG network that they were running for middle managers and CEG Coordinators, previously funded by the LA, now had to carry a charge to schools[7]. Attendance had fallen as a result and the perception was that *'...it's far more difficult to get colleagues out of school'*. Similarly, while the area used to have eight district CEG groups, they now run one for the whole of the county, and the district forums have disappeared following the demise of the 14-19 Partnerships which funded them.

> Well [what happens] is up to the district. I was a district coordinator and our roles were taken out because there was no funding and some districts said 'Well, we'll continue to meet'. But without that person to sort of facilitate the meetings, send out agendas, you know to bring people in to provide CPD... you know, organise the sharing of practice, they've just not continued to happen. (LA Representative, Area A, Interview 1).

This was also the case in Area B where the end of Aimhigher had resulted in restructuring and loss of staff. The LA representative from this area said that attendance at these sorts of meetings was now 'patchy' and the forthcoming imposition of a charge to schools would, they felt, be *'the kiss of death'* in terms of attendance.

The impact of the loss of Aimhigher, together with LA budget cuts, had also been felt by institutions working with schools in that many of the contacts they used to communicate with, or contacts they had in schools, were no longer in post:

> I think in the past when Aimhigher was around, particularly in this area, ourselves and [HEI, Area B] worked very closely together. We worked very closely with Connexions and there was that consistent message across the board. And the schools were on board with it, and the schools knew what they should be doing, and I think that is the key that is missing. (Programme Delivery Manager, HEI, Area A)

> I think it is not knowing or having to re-establish who our contact points are. Knowing how to disseminate information because, previously, if we were working with Connexions or Aimhigher, all those relationships were in place. And I think it is knowing that there is a kind of mixed market out there now.... I still feel we are working our way through that process to be honest. (Recruitment Manager, HEI, Area A)

KEY POINTS

- The majority of interviewees, regardless of organisation or institution, identified the multiple changes taking place as an issue, e.g. the move to academy status for some schools, the loss of Aimhigher activities and funding, and other funding for partnerships/networks such as 14-19 Partnerships. These were, they felt, complicating the situation and made it more difficult for schools to prioritise IAG. The impact of these changes was evident not only on IAG activities directly but on opportunities to network and share good practice among school staff with IAG responsibilities.

---

[7] As of summer 2011.

> - The timing of the policy changes was said to be poor because schools were being asked to pay for something they had previously had for free, but without any direct accompanying funding.

2.1.3 Priority given to IAG provision and staff development within schools

Schools where IAG has a high priority

Of the 10 schools interviewed, five[8] had a very high priority towards IAG. All these schools were very aware of the policy changes and new responsibilities and had responded by adapting IAG provision where required. These schools had IAG embedded throughout the school and decisions about IAG tended to be discussed and supported at senior leadership level. For example, at one school (Spikemore High School, Area B) decisions were taken to the Governors by a member of the Senior Leadership Team or the Head. The school had a very high priority for IAG and four years ago a decision was taken to deploy funds for a dedicated IAG person together with a full Connexions service. All staff had some level of involvement in IAG which was embedded into all departments (e.g. every science module delivers a careers element based around the scheme of work for the module).

At least one school (Malt Valley Academy, Area A) had a CEIAG Policy Framework and a member of the SLT was allocated to oversee this. IAG was heavily integrated into the Academy and the curriculum had been developed in a way to support effective IAG delivery. A budget was ring-fenced for IAG which sat within the school's transformation plan. The curriculum structure and effective IAG were seen as going hand-in-hand:

> You know our mission statement is learning for success, so that's about, you know, students being successful in every subject, and if you don't get the curriculum right you don't get your careers education and your guidance right, and that doesn't happen. So I think, well I don't think, I know, we're the third most improved school in the [name of region] over three years, we're the most improved school in [Area A] for the last three years running, ...so yeah we get, we kind of know that, we can't say that's the reason, well because it isn't, there's no one reason why we've been so successful and transformational, it's just lots of little things that all add up and, you know, CEIAG is a significant part of that. (Assistant Vice Principal, Malt Valley Academy, Area A, Interview 1)

IAG had a high priority at the Academy because of the concern that if students are on the wrong courses then they will leave the sixth form or swap courses half way through Key Stage 4, which will have a knock on effect on their results. It has not become less of a priority since the policy changes but it '*has become harder to give it the same credence now that there is an additional cost to it*' and they have had to re-evaluate their provision.

Issues other than funding also determined the priority given to IAG within the Academy which has been running a four-pathway system into Key Stage 4[9]. However, the school was looking at a three-pathway approach in response to changes at the Department for

---

[8] Spikemore High School; Malt Valley Academy; Abbeyside Academy; Briarmount High School; Ladybower High School.

[9] (1) ASDAN cohort: students looking to develop social skills and a higher proportion of SEN – lower ability students looking to get a Level 1 qualification; (2) COPE cohort: Certificate of Personal Effectiveness, equivalent to a GCSE, but more practical and develops skills for life – very hands-on at Level 2 but more vocational; (3) BTEC – for students predicted GCSE grades D, E, F; (4) GCSE.

Education level which are making schools more accountable on the 'best eight' measure, judging students in terms of achievement and progress. The school was concerned that this might affect IAG provision in that it will be BTEC or GCSE, with in essence, the pathway being halved.

Another academy (Abbeyside Academy, Area B) where IAG had a very high priority, had Heads of House strategically leading IAG provision. This Head of House suggested that incorporating a vocational route into IAG provision was critical and the Academy was building up links with two local colleges to facilitate provision of a 'cradle-to-grave' level of IAG support and careers guidance for students. He suggested that:

> The whole studio school approach just feels right for some of our students, and we've had limited access to that until now, and I think that's something that could really take off for us being able to support students into a more positive destination. (Head of House, Abbeyside Academy, Area A, Interview 1)

The importance of a vocational route was also recognised by the Assistant Head Teacher at Briarmount High School (Area A); they have adapted the curriculum so that the vast majority of students have the opportunity to take the Baccalaureate but also offered vocational courses (Level 3 in Hairdressing, BTEC Construction, NVQs is Catering and Hospitality). They also had a foundation sub-group for raising career aspirations for students not likely to get C grades at GCSE, i.e. those most likely to be NEET; the school worked with them to provide different types of activities to help them find suitable career pathways. However, the school was concerned that they did not have expert knowledge about apprenticeships and were looking to develop that area. IAG had such a high priority because it related to achievement:

> It [IAG] does, yes [have a high priority]; it has a high priority because achievement is the goal isn't it? It's the goal of career progression or pathway progression to a lifestyle. We are very much aware that our school is one where students could very easily be trapped within the poverty trap and make very little social mobility, or social progress through social mobility, so raising aspirations is key to raising achievement. The two go hand-in-hand. (Assistant Head Teacher, Briarmount High School, Area A, Interview 1)

The Assistant Head at Ladybower High School (who had the strategic overview for IAG) reported that IAG was given such a 'massive' priority because of impartiality and providing what the student needs, even if that meant the school might lose out on funding:

> Because one thing we actually believe in is that it's got to be the right bums on the right seats and there's no point as a school us persuading our students to come back into the sixth form for them to leave halfway through or halfway through Y12. It does them no good and it does the school no good and we fundamentally believe in that. There's no point in persuading the students to come to the school if they fail because it's unfair on the student, which is daft on us because we probably lose out on the funding, but we are here to do stuff for the students' needs and not for our needs. (Assistant Head, Ladybower High School, Area A, Interview 1)

At some schools, a high priority for IAG went 'hand-in-hand' with a high priority for staff development. At Spikemore, in-service training days were available and staff were encouraged to go on any development opportunities that arose. Staff were also encouraged to have a '*wish-list*' of how they would like to see IAG incorporated into lessons; the CEIAG Manager would then go to external agencies to see how this could be done. At Abbeyside Academy one of the Heads of House was IAG trained to Level 3 and the school will be buying in more services to provide staff with extra training. At Ladybower High School, staff

development for IAG involved an 'updating exercise' for staff at the beginning of each academic year. Impartiality was stressed and staff were advised on what they should say and what they 'certainly shouldn't say'. Staff also attended student IAG events. The school tried to be creative in utilising staff time as this is finite:

> We have to be fairly creative in terms of providing training because clearly a school doesn't have endless minutes to sit staff down, so you have to be fairly creative in terms of how we do it. So for example, on the careers fair we will have an apprenticeship provider in and the staff concerned who are delivering the stuff about the apprenticeships, they will speak to that person on the day to get up-to-date information because we haven't got resources to be sending people out all of the time. (Assistant Head Teacher, Ladybower High School, Area A, Interview 1)

However, high priority for IAG provision does not necessarily translate into a high priority for staff development in IAG. Briarmount's staff take the training they can from Area A/B Education Business Partnership but external staff training was limited because of funding issues. Despite this, the school felt it had the expertise to respond to the policy changes and had not identified any new staff training needs. Training was given as and when it became relevant. Tutors at Malt Valley Academy did not get any formal, outside training but had varied information produced by the Assistant Vice Principal (who had responsibility for IAG). At first interview it was reported that formal training might be offered in the future if the school had an employee with a role dedicated to IAG (which would need to be a middle leader, not a senior leader as was currently the case). However, at second interview this was not part of the school development plan; future IAG training would be relative to what provision was bought in – the more they buy in, the less training tutors will need. Continuing professional development for IAG was not seen as a priority as the school was heavily involved in supporting staff with other types of professional development. These schools were consistent in that funding affected the level of external training that could be bought in.

Schools where IAG has a lower priority

Of the remaining five schools, one school (Hall Lane College, Area B) reported a very low priority for IAG, primarily because of issues around time and money; at the time of interview, the school was due to lose a significant number of staff because of redundancy. Much of the IAG provision was instigated by the CEIAG Coordinator (who was interviewed for this research). However, this role was due to go in August 2012 as part of the staff redundancies and it was anticipated that the IAG provision would be significantly reduced. Despite the school being very aware of its responsibilities in relation to IAG, the perception on the part of the interviewee was that other school staff did not give it a high priority and so the transfer of responsibility to schools did not seem to have impacted on them. Staff were said to be aware that this was happening but were more concerned about other issues (such as an impending Ofsted visit and keeping their job). Staff development was also not prioritised at the school. There had been no specific training and this was viewed as a problem by the CEIAG Coordinator; school staff tended to know about their own subject area and colleges to go to, but generic knowledge and knowledge of training providers was limited.

The remaining four schools[10] all reported that they were fully aware of the new policy changes and the responsibilities associated with them. However, the priority given to IAG varied across these schools. For two schools (Robinwood Academy and Fieldhouse High School), the level of awareness of the changes and priority given to IAG also varied within school (i.e. across different staff).

The CEIAG Coordinator at Robinwood Academy (Area A) reported that the their line manager, the SLT and the school Governors had a good awareness of the policy changes and were supportive, and this remained consistent throughout the project – they told the Coordinator to do whatever they could to '*make it happen*'. However, funding was an issue and as a result IAG was '*highly regarded if not highly funded'*. The school also experienced difficulty in keeping track of current policy because they felt that this changed fairly regularly. This indicates that there is a difference between awareness of the policy changes and being able to give IAG the priority it requires; whilst the school understood the value of delivering a good IAG service, constraints such as time and money were limiting their ability to do so. However, while other staff did not have this level of awareness, the CEIAG Coordinator questioned whether they needed to. This opinion was in direct contrast to those participants interviewed from schools that gave a high priority to IAG. The consensus of opinion in these schools was that IAG needed to be embedded within a school and all staff should have some level of involvement in its delivery. The profile of IAG was being raised within Robinwood Academy, however, as staff were becoming more aware of the very good employer links developed by the CEIAG Coordinator:

> ...it's now become 'What are all these companies doing coming to our school?' you know. People start looking round and think 'What's going on?' A lot more staff are more involved now because also when companies come, obviously you have to have staff accompanying the students, and they're going 'Wow, didn't know you were doing this'. (CEIAG Coordinator, Robinwood Academy, Area A, Interview 1)

There was a need for staff development at the school, but at second interview the CEIAG Coordinator felt that this was very unlikely to happen:

> I mean there could be, I mean any training.... and if I had an issue with Education actually is that it doesn't actually practice what it preaches, it doesn't teach its own staff what to do, and if it does, it teaches them really badly and you know if you mention training... 'Oh there is day off cover, blah, blah, blah' and all the rest of it, and it all goes a bit pear... so I would say yes [it is needed], but I would also say it is about as likely as hell freezing over. (CEIAG Coordinator, Robinwood Academy, Area A, Interview 2)

Within Fieldhouse High School (Area A), IAG was given more priority by established staff who had a better understanding of the system:

> ...obviously the things [IAG policy changes] that come in that make it slightly more difficult ......So I think the staff who are most, the most experienced staff who perhaps have got the most knowledge and experience previously, they're quite a bit more positive about it because they can see the flaws in the current system, whereas the newer tutors who perhaps don't know as much about it, they are the ones who are perhaps a little bit more reluctant to comment because they're not as confident about their own knowledge. (Head of Sixth Form, Fieldhouse High, Area A, Interview 1)

---

[10] Robinwood Academy; Fieldhouse High School; Hammond Academy; Monkton School.

The Head of Sixth Form at the school suggested that staff involved in providing IAG needed additional training on *'anything they don't feel particularly strong on'* to support the policy changes. But they also felt that this was an on-going issue that sat outside of the changes.

Both Hammond Academy and Monkton School (both Area A) had begun to make strategic decisions for IAG provision and were moving towards keeping this in-house. In support of this, Hammond Academy had put their Careers Advisor through a considerable amount of IAG training (although, at the time of the interview, the Advisor had not had time to cascade training to other staff in the school) and the Head of Careers and the SLT were up-to-date with the policy changes and what was required. The feeling of the Careers Advisor was that IAG had always been a priority but that the financial constraints of being an academy impacted on what the school was able to do:

> I don't know that the priority has [changed]; I think that has always been at the forefront as far as the school are concerned. I don't think they felt they [the SLT] were getting a particularly good service from [LACPS], in fact I know that they felt that they weren't, which was why I got asked to do the role. I think they really do recognise it [as a priority] but I think the financial constraints with it being an academy, with the fact that once again the academy funding has changed dramatically.... The formula that they use to provide the funding has changed so that has reduced it dramatically. I think they [SLT] would, if they could have done, extended my role as far as the careers but they just can't afford to. (Careers Advisor, Hammond Academy, Area A, Interview 2)

Monkton School had made IAG more of a priority by changing job descriptions in order to allow staff to dedicate more time to its provision. They were also recruiting a new staff member and IAG would be a major part of their role. Concerns about delivering personalised IAG without an increased budget were also echoed by Monkton School. This is contrasted with schools where IAG had a high priority (e.g. Ladybower High School where even though money was not ring-fenced it would be spent on IAG, '...*it won't go on history books, so to speak*').

The Head of Sixth Form at Monkton was also concerned that less enthusiastic staff may deliver less useful IAG:

> ...we've recognised that it is the weakness, when you bring people in they're experts, but it's whenever you're going outside people's subject areas. There is going to be a great range of abilities and interests and enthusiasm, shall we say. And some people do a very good job and some people do a less enthusiastic job, I think is the polite way of saying it. (Head of Sixth Form, Monkton School, Area A, Interview 1)

External stakeholders views on the level of priority given to IAG within schools

The LA Representative from Area B felt that the priority given to IAG varied by school. This supports the findings of the interviews conducted with school-based stakeholders. The priority given was largely related to funding: where previously they provided schools with whole days on IAG and a dedicated advisor they now only had the capacity and remit to work in this way if schools bought in the service. They also felt that IAG had a higher priority in 11-16 schools; 11-18 schools still had the mentality or ethos of keeping students with them in the school sixth form. This view was supported by the LA Representative from Area A (although it should be noted that Area A has few 11-16 schools):

> I think 11-16 schools in a sense are happier to provide that impartial Information, Advice and Guidance, because if the youngster doesn't stay with them post-16, they don't really have a vested interest. So they're happy to share all those opportunities, and I think that's possibly not quite the case with 11-18 schools. (LA Representative, Area A, Interview 1)

The LACPS Representative from Area A felt that schools did recognise the contribution IAG makes but ultimately the level of priority it is afforded comes down to finance. Some schools also lacked understanding of the legislation and some had been hit by redundancies, so different staff were taking on new roles they may not be familiar with. The low level of priority may not therefore be a '*conscious decision*'.

In relation to staff development for IAG, LACPS organises training for the new area prospectuses (it lists all post-16 opportunities) – this was free to schools but despite this they were struggling to get people to attend. The School Liaison Officer at Brockton FE College also reported low take-up of staff activities which are aimed at changing the mind-set of teachers; staff find it difficult to attend when they have lessons, but response to an evening session (including meal) was also low with only 19 out of 80 accepting. The college also ran information sessions in schools (for all teachers) but only one school had responded to their invitation to stage this activity. HEI, Area A also focuses events on '*the influencer*' (the teacher) but take-up was again said to be low with teachers and advisors frustrated that they are not able to get out of school to attend events and this was identified as a key barrier to working with schools. Taken together, this suggests that some schools are not seeing staff development for IAG as a priority.

The Area A LA Representative suggested that there was a definite need for IAG staff development in schools, but reduced budgets meant that accessing training was quite difficult. At second interview LACPS (Area A) reported that they were starting to work with schools to look at developing a support package for staff training in schools which could form part of the traded offer.

Finding time to look at what is available information-wise is also difficult and constrained by limited infrastructure:

> What we like to do at the [CEG] networks is give people a little time, for example to look at the area prospectus and look at what's out there, because when they're back in school doing their day job you know, they struggle to find the time to do that.
>
> RES: Yes, so it's giving that bit of space?
>
> Yes. When we did have the District CEG Forum they were great because they met every half term, we had a full morning or full afternoon, and you just had the opportunity to share good practice and to do some CPD [continuing professional development] as well.
>
> (LA Representative, Area A, Interview 1)

However, as discussed earlier, the District CEG Forums no longer run as they were funded by the now defunct 14-19 Partnerships. Following on from this, districts had been allowed to decide what will be funded and although some had opted to continue the meetings, without funding for someone to lead and organise these events they have fallen by the wayside.

Despite these points, many schools recognised the importance of IAG. However, as stated by the LACS representative from Area B:

> ...there's a risk that that support or vision can become diluted in the day to day priorities and the day to day timetable in school, so although the vast majority would understand and support [IAG], sometimes it's the next layer down in making sure that that is actually embedded in school and delivered at the front end. I don't think anybody would argue that it's not important.

Although they felt they worked well with most schools, it was more difficult in some:

> ...although we work well with the vast majority of schools there are always some, where for various reasons, doing our work is harder on the ground, more challenging... and one of the reasons for that is schools reorganise and people's responsibilities... and certainly [it is] the case that it's easier to have an impact in some schools than others because of the nature of the way the school works.
>
> RES: Do you mean the organisation, the ethos or...?
>
> I'd say it's more to do with [the] organisation. However, the understanding of IAG, careers agenda or guidance agenda would be greater in some schools than others.
>
> (LACS Representative, Area B, Interview 1)

This representative found it difficult to identify specific characteristics associated with these schools and why some might prioritise IAG more than others; historically, it had been a struggle with some schools to get them to engage with IAG and was viewed as something to do with how the particular school worked.

KEY POINTS

- Of the 10 schools involved in this study, five had a very high priority towards IAG. All these schools were very aware of the policy changes and their new responsibilities and had responded by adapting IAG provision where required.

- Schools that awarded a high priority to IAG tended to have the following characteristics: IAG was discussed and supported by the SLT, IAG had a dedicated budget, all staff were seen to have a role to play in relation to IAG, IAG was embedded in the curriculum in all departments.

- Some of these schools also prioritised staff development in IAG but this was not evident in all 5 schools. Funding was identified as the main barrier in this area. Although a need for staff training in relation to IAG was identified by external stakeholders, their comments suggest that this was seen as less of a priority by schools. FEC representatives also reported low take up of activities by school staff which they attributed in part to difficulties in getting time away from school to attend.

- In those schools which appeared to place a lower priority on IAG other priorities or pressures were identified which took precedence (for example, staff redundancies and concerns about job security). External stakeholders felt that failure to prioritise IAG was not necessarily a conscious decision on the part of the school but a response to other pressures.

- Low priority schools also appeared to place less emphasis on all staff having a role to play in relation to IAG.

2.1.4 Barriers to effective IAG practice

Financial barriers

The majority of schools had significant financial barriers to providing effective IAG. Ultimately, decisions about working with IAG providers (i.e. LACPS and LACS) were cost-related and based on whether activities provided value for money. The Assistant Vice Principal of Malt Valley Academy puts very well the issues they felt they were up against:

> Really I mean the bottom line is kind of what LACPS would be charging, or what LACPS would charge me. It would probably be the equivalent to a member of staff, but that's not a full-time service, so for me the key decision really is around if it's going to cost me. Let's just say, for example, LACPS wanted to charge me five grand for 18 weeks' worth of the year... well in actual fact I could probably get a 0.5 member of staff for that, or I could probably try and think of a creative way of getting somebody who's got that information and those qualities on a full-time basis rather than two days a week. So that's a big decision really.

> ...[it is] looking at what I think, you know, the priority around the services that we need, you know, and a lot of that stems around trying to get somebody in that can upskill other staff so that we develop capacity, so that it's not just one focal point, you know, one font of all careers knowledge that only one kid can access at any one time. Because you know LACPS like to do one-to-one interviews. Well if they're in for two and a half days a week that's not really cost-effective for me, I would be wanting a LACPS worker to be working with a class for an hour, and moving on, maybe doing a smaller cohort of those at risk and then maybe doing an assembly followed by some one-to-one. So it's just about trying to develop a more fluid flexible way of working which meets our needs really, rather than, 'This is the way we like to work'. So if I can get that in-house, then I can be much more creative around the programmes that I put on.

> (Assistant Vice Principal, Malt Valley Academy, Area A, Interview 1)

Their academy status meant that they were not given access to all the services that the Local Authority schools had:

> ....we're actually less well off as an Academy because the autonomy comes with the need to have to fund a lot of our stuff... Now we obviously need to get that balance right even more than we have done previously around value for money and, you know, whether the services that we buy into have got impact.... But then I think the knock on effect of that is now because we're having to pay for it I'm less inclined to want to tell them how to do the job that I'm paying them to do, if that makes sense to you, being nice about it. So I think, I mean ideally what I'd like to do would be to develop a team in-house, you know, that would be specifically giving a remit of going out, making sure that they've [students have] got the most up-to-date information around provision locally, regionally and making that reportable and accessible to students really.
> (Assistant Vice Principal, Malt Valley Academy, Area A, Interview 1)

There is therefore, a need to look at the cost of IAG in terms of best value and balance this against other services/resources schools could provide to students. This issue applied to all schools and was something that remained constant across the life of the study. At second interview, Malt Valley Academy once again referred to their relationship with LACPS (who they felt they had been supported by and with whom they had a good dialogue):

> I can't expect them to give me something for nothing ultimately... ....Well I mean ultimately ... they have a service to provide and in the past that has been free of charge, you know, and they have had, I suppose they have had the goal posts moved in terms of, they have had to fund themselves ultimately. So you know what has been a free service has now started to ... if we wanted to provide the same offer then I think there was a point at which Connexions as they

were, were saying you know, well they wanted to charge us like £150 a day for work, and I think from our point of view once that starts ... we start to think about rolling that out, out over a term or a year it just becomes very difficult to justify. I am not saying careers isn't a priority here but it isn't *the* priority… Within an 11 to 18 school, careers is just one element. (Assistant Vice Principal, Malt Valley Academy, Area B, Interview 2)

The CEIAG Coordinator at Robinwood Academy also referred to the restrictions experienced by the change to academy status. This had given them '...*freedom and also lack of entitlement, so it's a double-edged sword in some respects. Yes, you're free to do what you will, but then you're not entitled to things for free, so it's one of those swings and roundabouts really...*' The Coordinator felt that the IAG aspect of their role was going to become increasingly more important, in part because of the increased workload incurred through organising activities previously carried out by LACPS:

> I get two hours a week and £2500 a year to achieve it all…. and the rest of the time I'm a full time teacher, so there's not a massive amount of time and/or money to try and get all this [done]. You know you end up sending emails at bizarre times of the night to various people in different companies and colleges and stuff... ...because, although you can set it up, you've got to create all the resources and bits of paper. (CEIAG Coordinator, Robinwood Academy, Area A, Interview 1)

Having to now buy in services as a result of the policy changes had further impacted upon the amount of LACPS time they buy in. Because the Coordinator felt that LACPS were expensive, they had tried to be creative in developing ways they can get people in to speak to students about different careers and post-16 opportunities at no cost. The Academy had allocated some funding for LACPS to see those students who are completely undecided in what they want to do post-16 but not every student will be seen by them:

> It's just not worth…. I mean to say the vast majority of our students are fairly clued up and they may lack aspirations in certain circumstances we can deal with, but they do know roughly what they want and what they need and all the rest of it….   ….I want as much external influence as I possibly can and external input as I possibly can. I just can't pay for it….
>
> We have allocated a certain amount of funding, although a lot less than possibly [LACPS] would want us to spend with them, but a certain amount of funding for specific students that generally have no clue at all and potentially could end up NEETs on the back of that lack of knowledge. The vast majority of students are fairly clear about the direction they want to take, and they wouldn't necessarily benefit anyway. But for those that really do need it then we do, we would and will, and do provide [LACPS] service, type of thing.
>
> (CEIAG Coordinator, Robinwood Academy, Area A, Interview 1)

Financial pressures had clearly influenced the decision to buy in provision on a day-to-day basis and at a considerably reduced figure from previous years. When asked at second interview about the decision to reduce the spend on IAG, the Coordinator responded:

> Well it [previous provision] wasn't £21,000 [worth's of] helpful. This is the trouble; you know I'm not saying… I think the person we had [from LACPS] as an advisor was cracking, she did a really good job, but I would argue eight out of 10 students who she saw went 'Yes fine that is kind of what I thought anyway', and so you think you know, 'That is alright if she is coming anyway and we aren't paying', then it just focused the mind a bit didn't it? (CEIAG Coordinator, Robinwood Academy, Area A, Interview 2)

Like Malt Valley Academy and Robinwood Academy, Fieldhouse High School (exploring the possibility of change to academy status at the time of their interviews) referred to getting best value '*especially if we're going to be an academy where we're in charge of our own money*'. This 'value for money' requirement seemed to be even more of an issue for schools with academy status that have less entitlement overall. The Head of Sixth Form at Fieldhouse High referred to decisions regarding IAG being mainly top-down – it was the Head and Senior Management Team who made the strategic decisions, and also the school treasurer '*because ultimately it comes down to getting best value*'.

Responsibility for overseeing IAG in the schools involved in this study varied from senior management to learning support. LACPS suggest that a designated Careers Coordinator works most effectively. However, because of a lack of available finance, these roles have largely been lost:

> ...many, many years ago there was always a Careers Coordinator within the school that coordinated all of the careers and worked with us very closely. However, again due to financial restraints from schools... not all schools, some schools do still retain a Careers Coordinator, whereas other schools have to give it as an additional duty to a teacher.
>
> RES: Yes, have you got any sort of sense as to what works best?
>
> The Careers Coordinator most definitely [because they are] someone with specific responsibility who can liaise with you. Because you can plan the curriculum, you can help identify needs and you can work together to identify the real needs of the schools and deliver the service appropriately..... If someone has some dedicated time to it because that's the thing isn't it? If it's an additional responsibility for a teacher on top of their day job, it's not going to be their priority. Understandably. So yes, I think somebody that has some dedicated time to coordinate the IAG is ideal but in an ideal world...
>
> (LACPS Representative, Area A, Interview 1)

At time of first interview, Briarmount High School (Area A) also reported that funding and time were going to be the major issues for them; they were aware that they would need to '*work smarter*' in order to provide activities previously provided free of charge by external providers.. While it was envisaged that the current level of IAG provision would continue for the following year (i.e. in 2012-2013) it was felt that provision would be more difficult due to the loss of Aimhigher and the fact that LACPS time would have to be bought in – for example, they will have to work harder to keep LACPS in the work-related programme and either buy in the service or reduce the number of days.

At second interview, the school was continuing with their current level of provision (two days) but felt that they had, as anticipated, '*worked smarter*', putting in place new systems to monitor the use of the LACPS Advisor, for example, and this had worked effectively. In 2013-2014, however, students will receive reduced time with the LACPS advisor because of the new statutory duty to extend impartial IAG to Years 8, 12 and 13. Because the school feels it cannot afford to buy in additional time they plan spread the existing provision across more year groups.

Other barriers

Although discussion around barriers to effective practice focused primarily on financial issues, two other issues were reported by the interviewees. These are discussed in turn below.

Target groups and access to students: The policy guidance on how schools interpret their new responsibilities is loose and the Government's general approach is to give schools '...greater freedom and flexibility to decide how to fulfil their statutory duties in accordance with the needs of their pupils' (DfE, March 2013, p. 6). This is based on the premise that schools know their students, and are therefore best able to identify what students need in order for them to make informed decisions about their post-16 options. However, a number of interviewees external to the school questioned whether they were seeing the right students.

The LACPS Representative (first interview) suggested that if vulnerable groups are not reached then, potentially, they may make poor transitions post-16; particularly in terms of a preventative role in ensuring young people are going to the right provision. Under the new conditions, LACPS were reliant on schools identifying the students who see them and there was said to be a perception among the organisation's PAs that they were not seeing the right students, particularly in those schools who were only buying in a few days, which, in Area A, tended to be academies.

> [T]here are a couple of schools where we feel on balance that perhaps we haven't seen... particularly schools that have bought [in], and that tends to be academies, but where they have bought a handful of days. So perhaps there is some concern about whether we see the right young people. But because we're not sort of heavily involved with the school, and we become more reliant on the schools referring people to us, and that goes back I suppose to the legislation that schools know their cohorts well and should therefore be making appropriate referrals. (LACPS Representative, Area A, Interview 2)

One of the main target groups for LA Careers Services in both Area A and B is students at risk of becoming NEET. Research conducted by Barnardo's and recently reported in the Guardian, however, suggests that the biggest losers may not be the NEETs but the 'in-betweeners' who may have fewer qualifications or be disengaged from school (Murray, 2013). Limited funding available for IAG meant that some schools were buying in limited services, and the requirement for schools to reduce the NEET figure was seen as a barrier to how they worked with LACPS and LACS in that students deemed at risk became the main focus:

> You know the illusion of LACPS and you know the engagement with LACPS has been, it's been okay this year, but we haven't necessarily bought into additional services outside of the statutory ones, so they come in and look at you know those at risk of NEETs and they'll look at primarily students, a lot of students are on the SEN register, so we haven't really bought into any services outside that, at the moment. (Assistant Vice Principal, Malt Valley Academy, Area A, Interview 1)

The Careers Advisor at Hammond High suggested that the concentration on students at risk and SEN students was challenging in relation to high achievers; who in some respects needed more support:

> I completely object to what the Government's done, I'd much prefer to be... yeah I object to all the cuts that have gone on and the fact that they've really decimated an invaluable service. I think the students in some schools are not getting a very good deal and it's really had an impact on a lot of students and it's not just the students with SEN who need the support, which is... it appears the way it's going as far as statutory duty goes and what's actually being provided from external agencies. I think in a lot of respects it's the high achieving students who perhaps need more support and more information and advice and guidance. (Careers Advisor, Hammond High, Area A, Interview 1)

Evidence from this study, therefore, suggests that schools are targeting the students they see as needing that additional input from LA Careers Services, i.e. those who are at risk of becoming NEET and those who have just not made any decision about their post-16 options. Those students who appear to have made decisions may not get access to this professional guidance, and there is a danger that they may not be making informed decisions or the decisions that are the best for them.

<u>Practicalities of working with young people</u>: The Area A LACPS representative suggested that change to academy status may result in a more complex working relationship as the academy may change the way they do things (more diverse timetables, etc.) and LACPS will have to fit in with this. They referred to one school in Area A (which was not included in this research) that was planning to change the times of school holidays; as a result LACPS will need to fit in with children being off school at different times and will need to offer an increasingly more bespoke service.

The LACS representative (Area B) suggested that a vertical school structure can be a barrier to group work (which LACS are increasingly trying to do); getting year groups or assemblies together is more difficult because it means splitting vertical tutoring groups. Ladybower High School (Area A) also reported that vertical year groups create a barrier to intensive careers work and have made some changes to deal with this: from 2013-2014 they will be giving a lesson from PHSE (Personal Health and Social Education) over to IAG in Year 10. The team delivering this will need more training as the work is more focused – but it is easier to train the six teachers delivering this than to train all 32 house tutors involved in the vertical tutor groups. This training will be from LACPS, the school's Assistant Head Teacher (who has responsibility for IAG), and other staff with the relevant expertise.

KEY POINTS

- The majority of schools felt that there were significant financial barriers to providing effective IAG following the policy changes. Decisions about working with external IAG providers were based primarily on cost and achieving value for money. Because of this, schools were reassessing what LACPS/LACS did within the school and many were changing the way in which they worked with students. Changes included: fewer one-to-one sessions for students in Year 11, and avoiding increased buy-in by spreading provision more thinly across more year groups, including students in Years 8, 12 and 13.

- In a number of schools a reduction in buy-in from LACPS/LACS was placing an increased workload on the member of staff with responsibility for IAG.

- Under the new conditions, LACPS/LACS are reliant on schools identifying students who are at risk of making poor transitions and there was a perception among the PAs in LACPS

(Area A) that they were not seeing the right students. This was particularly true in those schools where LACPS was less heavily involved because the school was only buying in a few days provision (which tended to be academies).

- Some schools felt that if they were buying in provision from LACPS/LACS the requirement to reduce the NEET figure meant that this group became the main focus of their work, to the possible detriment of other students.

- Evidence from this study suggests, therefore, that schools are targeting the students they see as needing that additional input from LA Careers Services, i.e. those who are at risk of becoming NEET and those who have just not made any decision about their post-16 options. Those students who appear to have made decisions may not get access to this professional advice and guidance and there is a danger that they may not be making informed decisions or the decisions that are the best for them.

2.1.5   Overview of enablers and barriers to effective IAG practice

Drawing on the literature review and analysis of the data generated in Phases 2 and 3 of the project a number of enablers and barriers to effective practice were identified. These are summarised in Table 4 below.

Table 4   Enablers and barriers to effective IAG practice

Enablers	Barriers
Raising the priority of IAG within schools	
Senior management mechanisms such as the allocation of time for staff and status of teacher with IAG responsibility.	Lack of clarity around the role of Ofsted – the framework is not a credible accountability check on provision of IAG.
Senior management buying into the IAG strategy and according it high status, e.g. discussed at meetings and clearly visible support.	Lack of a performance measure that demonstrates relevance and impact of good IAG.
Training on strategic management for IAG staff, e.g. preparing and advising senior leaders on IAG policy (contribute to raising the profile of IAG in the school and obtaining senior level support).	Lack of a clear rationale on the value of IAG – no shared sense of the role of IAG in achieving positive outcomes for students.
IAG embedded in the curriculum and in all departments (perception that all staff members have some involvement in delivery).	Lack of funding and/or competing priorities which take precedence over IAG.
Member of SLT[1] with IAG responsibility and strategic overview.	
Staff Development	
Support from senior management to enable staff to attend relevant training or off-site events (e.g. awareness raising events in further education colleges).	Lack of resources (time and funding) – other competing priorities which take precedence.
Access to systematic training to keep up-to-date with changes, e.g. attendance at CEG forums and networking events.	Lack of awareness of what training is required or would be beneficial.
Updating exercise for all staff at the beginning of each year and encouraging staff to attend student events.	IAG is given low priority within the school.

Enablers	Barriers
Access to, and effective use of labour market information (LMI)	
Access to regular training opportunities on LMI and how to use this effectively	Lack of confidence in use of LMI.
Allocation of resources to allow staff to develop good school-employer links.	Perceived lack of LMI resources.
Embedding LMI in the curriculum from Year 7 onwards.	
Raising awareness of existing school-employer links among school staff.	
Impartiality of provision	
Targeted IAG which takes a proactive approach to challenge stereotypes associated with social background, gender and ethnicity.	Lack of clarity on what is meant by the terms 'independent' and 'impartial' in the Government guidance.
Raising awareness of young people's options among carers and staff in residential homes.	Competition between schools (particularly 11-18 schools) and alternative post-16 providers.
Enabling staff to attend external events aimed at raising awareness of alternative post-16 pathways and updating knowledge (e.g. FE Colleges).	Emphasis on the traditional academic route.
'Working smarter' – looking at how brought in IAG can be used more productively and linked to desired outcomes	Lack of awareness of alternative post-16 pathways among school staff.
Dedicated IAG person (e.g. Careers Coordinator) within the school supports the development of clear communication channels with external agencies (e.g. further education colleges) and facilitates the dissemination of materials on post-16 opportunities etc.	Access to IAG which is based on assumptions about young people formed through expectations of high academic achievement, e.g. high achievers are less likely to receive advice on vocational options.
	'Tick box' mentality, e.g. quantity over quality.
Personalised approach to IAG	
Earlier intervention.	Young people want to speak to someone they trust – but will that person be up-to-date on IAG? Suggests a need for signposting.
Timing activities to suit the requirements of the young person, e.g. providing information on financial support for HE[2] before students make their decisions about progressing to university.	Lack of funding.
Pro-active targeting of those deemed most at risk of making poor decisions.	'Tick box' mentality, e.g. quantity over quality.
Providing opportunities for further education colleges to provide bespoke activities tailored to student need, e.g. work with students in smaller groups in lessons rather than assemblies.	
Work with parents and employers	
Undertake work with parents and carers that is based on new and innovative approaches which connect with the social networks within which young people and their parents/carers interact.	Lack of funding and resources to engage in this area, which is acknowledged to be difficult.
Member of staff responsible for IAG having previous experience or knowledge of industry/business, e.g. having previously worked outside the education sector.	Current economic climate which means some employers are reluctant to provide time/resources.
Monitoring and evaluation	
Access to training for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness and outcomes of IAG activity.	'Tick box' mentality – emphasis on quantity over quality.

Enablers	Barriers
Activities which capture the student voice, e.g. student council.	Disconnect between evaluation results and future planning.
End of year IAG assessments to examine what has been done well and what needs improvement.	Lack of resources – time and funding.
Embedded evaluation activities, e.g. snapshot questionnaires for Year 11 students; sixth form surveys.	Low priority for IAG.
Analysis of results fed into SLT[1].	Lack of performance measure to act as an incentive to improve quality.
Stronger role for Ofsted in picking up weaknesses in provision.	
Buying in provision may incentivise schools to monitor and evaluate this provision – 'working smarter'.	

[1]Senior Leadership Team; [2]Higher education.

2.2 Research Question 2: What has been the impact of the changes to Government policy on practice within the two areas?

2.2.1 Consistency of IAG offered to students across schools

The LAs in Areas A and B have responded differently to the policy changes. Area A's traded offer is based on a daily rate of approximately £150 which runs alongside a menu of activities. Schools then determine the number of days they want to buy in and what activities this will cover. This is based on the view that the school is the customer and LACPS will offer a tailored response to suit their needs:

> I think if you are a traded service... the school is the customer. So if the school wanted to go and work in Year 7 then it's like anything, if you buy a service then you deliver a service. So I think the statutory requirement is pretty much what we have to do. That's legislation and from a trading service, once you are trading and somebody is a customer then you can adapt what you are trading to meet their needs. And that is the point of giving the schools the responsibility isn't it? They know their learners best and they know what they need to meet their needs. So I think that the service will be a bespoke service at that school to meet the specific school's needs, be at any age range. (LACPS Representative, Area A, Interview 1).

However, this interviewee also felt that they would have a reduced presence in future because schools would not be able to buy in at their current level of service and that this would inevitably affect the way in which they worked within the school:

> I think what's worked so well before is that because you have had a consistent presence in the school you have been able to build up a really good working relationship with the school and the school staff. However, what the impact is going to be with the changes, I think that is one of the things we are going to have to see what happens... we will have a reduced presence because they won't be able to afford us at the current level of what they have and I think that goes without saying.... ....There have always been drop-in sessions in schools and things, but once schools are paying for a service then [LACPS] staff will be going in to do specific pieces of work and then walking back out again, whereas before they would have attended the team around the child meetings and meetings in schools about young people with a particular concern. They won't be [now]. Because they have always [previously] been part of the school staff – a visitor but included. They won't be attending meetings because the school will be paying for them to do guidance so you will lose some of that. (LACPS Representative, Area A, Interview 1).

In Area B the LACS have tried to protect their time in schools and have developed a traded offer based on a nominal charge for a day of a Personal Advisor's time:

> What we have consciously done is, we have taken great efforts... to protect the amount of time[11] that we have put into schools. So overall schools haven't seen any reduction in staff time because that's been prioritised and the plan is, as time goes on, is to do additional work further down the school.... Doing more in Year 10 and Year 9 and even Year 8 than we did in the past, so it's a conscious decision to protect the Personal Advisor time in school....
>
> ....We just said to our schools, sign up and we will work in partnership with you and we would maintain what you have currently got.
>
> (LACS Representative, Area B, Interview 1)

The response from schools in both areas was said to have been positive with LA careers services representatives indicating that the vast majority of schools had said they would be taking up the traded offer. While the school representatives said that final decisions had not yet been made, comments did suggest that many would be taking up the traded offer but that this would either be at a *lower* level than previously received or, if levels were to be maintained, the *type* of provision would alter (see Table 5). The key factor in this decision, however, and one identified by all participants, was the amount of money available.

The second phase of interviews explored the actual take up of the traded offer. Overall, in Area A the majority of schools had traded with LACPS but, as envisaged, at a reduction in the number of days purchased. LACPS recognised that there will be a drop in their income as a direct result of this (all districts have income targets – they get funding for the LA to deliver their statutory services, but they need to generate income from the trading service). The implication is that there is a lack of security about what the future will bring:

> ....[we] do have to manage that, and it might be that again if all districts can't meet their income target or the days traded, there might be other districts that can exceed theirs, so we are only at the start of the process at the moment, so we are not overly sure how it will all come together at this stage. (LACPS Representative, Area A, Interview 2)

None of the schools in this area had increased their buy-in. The response also varied across the districts in Area A. For example, one district had tended to opt for a much more bespoke approach which was predominately group-work based. This was attributed in part to the schools wanting to use their money more 'smartly' and in part to the approach taken by the Team Leader for this district who had looked at individual Ofsted reports and school outcomes and linked this to what the LACPS could provide, i.e. using their specific knowledge of the schools in the district to tailor the service. This is the approach that LACPS are now looking to develop for the future. Within this district all schools had traded at virtually the same level. However, in a second district no schools had taken up the traded offer from LACPS or brought in services from any other external provider. Three of the schools had employed an ex-Connexions advisor. As a result the schools in this district had no independent professional careers guidance. LACPS have had discussions with the schools about the fact that, in their view, they were not complying with the new policy but the perception was that effectively the schools did not fear the sort of reaction they might get to this; '*They think, well has the legislation got teeth?*' This district also had a higher number

---

[11] Based on the size of the cohort and historically what the school's experience of transition has been like.

of academies, and across the county as a whole, academies had traded less than LA schools, which generally appeared to be more open to trading.

Table 5 Schools' response to the traded offer

School	Interview 1: Envisaged response	Interview 2: Actual response and impact
Area A		
Robinwood Academy	Have received a quote for £21,000 from LACPS for individual interviews with all Year 11 students. Perception is that this is too expensive and they will try to keep buy-in to a minimum. Also some concern about quality. They are trying to be 'creative' and bring in other people for free which they think will provide a broader range of opportunities. Although they will be continuing with LACPS, they will only use them for the students who 'really need them', i.e. not everyone, only those who are completely undecided.	Significantly reduced their buy-in from LACPS. They buy in on a day-to-day basis. At the time of the second interview (April) they had brought in approximately four days (i.e. £600).

Buy-in used only for those Year 11 students who do not know what they want to do post-16 (approximately 10-15 students in total). |
| Malt Valley Academy | Decision will depend on the cost. If they can have a full time member of staff they would prefer to do this rather than buy in part time support. They do not think the LACPS focus on one-to-one sessions is cost effective for the school and want to develop a more flexible way of working with them which meets the school's needs. Also some concern about quality. Ensuring ready access is a key issue – may focus on upskilling staff or buying in more time. | Buying in at the same level as previously from LACPS but intend to review this in terms of best value and other services they could provide to students. Looking to develop an in-house team with a specific remit for IAG.

Ring-fenced budget of approximately £2,000 for IAG. |
| Ladybower High School | Think they will buy in at the same level but will be more strategic in how they use this time, e.g. focusing on those students who are undecided. | Buying in at the same level as previously from LACPS but focusing on a more personalised approach.
Buy-in time used for targeted work with younger students identified as being at risk of becoming NEET[1].
Budget for delivery of IAG of approximately £1,000 and the buy in from LACPS comes from the main school budget. |
| Briarmount High School | Will be buying in from LACPS but at less than their current provision. | Buying in at the same level from LACPS as previously but working much smarter as this now has to come out of the school budget. New systems have been set in place to monitor the use of the PA[2].
Because of the requirement to work with Years 8, 12 and 13, overall, students will receive reduced time with the PA because the school cannot afford to buy in additional days.
No ring fenced budget. |
| Hammond Academy | Not buying in from LACPS and moving everything in-house. Interviewee (a guidance professional with Level 4 qualification) will take on responsibility for this. | Discontinued the service from LACPS (in part because they did not think they were getting good service) and are not buying in any external provision. |

School	Interview 1: Envisaged response	Interview 2: Actual response and impact
		Existing employee now works 12 hours per week as a Careers Advisor for the whole school. The remainder of their time is used to provide cover for other staff members. As a result of the changes, students have more group work rather than one-to-one sessions.
Monkton School	Will be reducing the number of days they are buying in (to approximately £15,000) from LACPS. They intend to focus on bringing other people in (e.g. Student Finance England) and increasing the responsibilities of the current in-house IAG person. They are concerned about being expected to deliver IAG without an increased budget and fear that this may impact upon their ability to provide a personalised service.	Unable to arrange a second interview. Confirmation from LACPS that the school is buying in at the same level as previously.
Fieldhouse High School	Unsure what they will do as they are in the process of becoming an academy. May not buy in from LACPS.	Reduction in the number of days they buy in from LACPS. Ensuring impartiality through a blend of external professionals who they pay for, staff who have some IAG training and other people coming into the school. Because of the reduction in the time LACPS are in the school, students have to wait longer to see them.
Area B		
Hall Lane College	School is staying with LA provision but the level will be reduced compared to previous years.	Unable to arrange a second interview. Confirmation from LACS that the school is buying in at the same level as previously.
Spikemore High School	Decision has been made at SLT[3] not to take up the traded offer as the in-house IAG Manager has a Diploma in Career Guidance and there is some dissatisfaction with the service as a whole. However, interviewee felt they might eventually buy in some elements.	Buying in from LACS at a cost of £7,000 for three days per week with a view to possibly reducing this in future.
Abbeyside Academy	Hoping to buy in at the same level of provision and have an excellent relationship with LACS. However, the type of provision they buy is likely to change in that the school team will focus on one-to-one provision previously provided by the LACS.	Unable to arrange a second interview. Confirmation from LACS that the school is buying in at the same level as previously.

[1]Not in Employment, Education or Training; [2]Personal Advisor; [3]Senior Leadership Team.

All the schools in Area B had traded with the LA Careers Service (LACS) at the same level. This meant that all the schools in Area B received impartial IAG from LACS, which also carried out their statutory duty. The perception was that this provides economies of scale and more effective coordination, and is, therefore, better for the students:

> ....an example would be if a young person speaks to a careers advisor in school and then they subsequently see a college careers advisor. Because they work for the same organisation and have access to the same database it means they have got a joined up service. (LACS Representative, Area B, Interview 2)

In addition, this had allowed the service to make the requisite savings to their own budget.

No schools in Areas A or B had formed consortiums or brought in from other external careers providers, although Ladybower (Area A) and Spikemore (Area B) high schools had discussed forming a consortium with other schools. Ladybower also discussed sharing an advisor with another school, but did not go ahead as they were concerned that by employing someone they would no longer be seen as providing impartial IAG. Robinwood Academy (Area A) had also discounted banding together with others schools to employ someone because they felt that it would not solve the impartiality issue.

Although there had not been any reduction in the availability of LACS advice to schools within Area B, the activities they were providing had changed slightly in that they were working more with younger students in Years 9 and 8. This was attributed to recognition by schools of the importance of careers guidance for the whole cohort. The particular context of Area B had also helped in this respect in that there was said to be a high level of understanding within schools that local young people needed extra support to make a successful transition. For example, a bigger percentage of students in the area will not achieve Level 3 when they leave school and there are fewer school sixth forms, so students are forced to make a choice at 16.

The second interviews with school representatives also explored their actual response to the policy changes and this is compared to their envisaged response at the time of the first interviews (see Table 4 above). The impact of this on practice is discussed more fully in *Section 3.2.2: Independence and impartiality*.

A number of interviews were conducted with universities and further education colleges to ascertain whether the extent or nature of the activities they provide for schools had changed. The representative from one of the FE colleges felt that there had been a steady decline in the number of invitations from schools to provide activities over the last 10 years and a noticeable further reduction since the most recent IAG policy changes, with the exception of a session they deliver on apprenticeships which had been very popular. A second college noted a trend towards more work with younger students and a reduction in the amount of work they were asked to do with Year 11 students, particularly in academies. The university representatives, however, felt that take-up had increased overall, particularly in relation to project-based activity. This may relate to the fact that they are not directly competing for students in the same way that FE colleges are. Despite the perception that opportunities would open up for them as a result of the policy changes, one university representative expressed concern about what schools might ask them to provide in relation to IAG:

> ......I would be very, very nervous about what we are providing under that banner [of IAG] because I know what we should and shouldn't be saying that we can deliver.
>
> RES: So you think that you're going to get more requests to deliver stuff that you're not really supposed to be giving?
>
> I think we will and I think we will have to say we can't provide that, but what we can provide is course information, grade information, destination you know, all those sorts of things. But we would never package ourselves as careers advisors because that is a totally different kettle of fish to what we're doing.
>
> (Recruitment Manager, HEI, Area B)

The FE colleges felt that there had been a change in what they were asked to provide by schools. Some schools were said to no longer allow the college into school for general sessions but wanted them to deliver taster sessions or tours for specific students selected by the school. There was a difference in the delivery of sessions which had been very apparent in one college in particular during the 2012-2013 academic year. Whereas previously, college advisors had access to students in a lesson situation, this was now frequently reduced to a short slot in an assembly. This restricted their ability to provide bespoke activities tailored to individual student need. This issue was also raised by the representative from one of the universities involved.

All these participants felt that their relationship with schools was changing. Staff within schools were regarded as key influencers, but interviewees felt that their ability to reach such staff had been reduced because of the high level of staff change, with potential implications for FE colleges in particular:

> .....we get them [school staff] changing part way through the year as well. It is very hard then to build up a relationship when the staff turnover is quite high, that is why I think the schools where the careers staff have remained the same are the schools where we are doing a lot of work with the Year 11's and we do get a lot of applications....

> ....I think ultimately it is a reduction in applications and enrolment... The relationship that we have with our school's staff and the careers advisors in schools I think is very important, I mean those are really your key influences with your students, and if we don't have a good relationship with them they could refer a student to another college, and if we are not getting access to those students that is ultimately what will happen.

> (School Liaison Officer, Brockton FE College, Area B)

In addition, most of this group of interviewees made contact with the schools through the Personal Advisor employed by LACPS/LACS working in the school. In a number of schools this point of contact had now been lost, thereby making communication and dissemination of information more difficult. This was particularly true in Area A where fewer schools had brought in from LACPS.

The general perception was that the change will be felt more in the future; schools were said to be 'nervous' of their new responsibility and had opted to stay within their comfort zone. As they become surer of what they can and cannot do, however, this situation is likely to change:

> I think what is happening now is not a true reflection of what will happen in schools... I think if I was a local authority I would be nervous that schools were going to stop buying from me as time goes by. But I am only basing that on the kind of feel for how people have reacted this year.... and if schools are going to start making tougher budgets... if they have got the choice, welfare provision, careers provision, then I think it might drop off. (Recruitment Manager, HEI, Area B)

It is clear that IAG provision is not consistent across the two adjoining areas, or within each individual area, and young people across the study area will have access to varying levels of impartial IAG:

> I think it is probably potential risk so although our service is not perfect. I feel as if we have got the opportunity to try and help our young people by working in conjunction with the schools more often and know that that opportunity is realised, and I feel very positive about [it], but that

only applies within the city boundaries. As soon as you walk over the city boundaries then that is not the case. …..across the country as a whole the whole thing is a dog's breakfast, and I am not saying you should have some sort of monolithic grand careers organisation but the current arrangements nationally are so fractured and so unsatisfactory and so ill-supported that I would feel… I feel very nervous about my son and his peers and the quality of guidance that they will receive in future years. That would be bad any time, but given the current economic environment and the fact that the country needs to invest in education to make sure the work force is suitably skilled to meet those challenges, I think it is very, very [worrying]. (LACS Representative, Area B, Interview 2)

KEY POINTS

- The LAs in Areas A and B have responded differently to the policy changes. Area A's traded offer is based on a daily rate which runs alongside a menu of activities. Area B has tried to protect their time in schools by basing their traded offer on a nominal charge for a day of a Personal Advisor's time.

- Take-up of the traded offer differs within the two areas.

- Overall in Area A, the majority of schools had traded with LACPS, but at a reduction in the number of days purchased. None of the schools had increased their buy-in or formed consortiums. There was also variation in the response across districts within Area A. For example, one district had opted for a much more bespoke approach which was attributed in part to schools' part to 'work smarter' and in part to the approach taken by the LACPS Team Leader for the district who had used their specific knowledge to tailor the service to the needs of the individual schools. In contrast, in a second district no schools had taken up the traded offer from LACPS or bought in services from any other external provider.

- All the schools in Area B had traded with LACS at the same level as their previous provision. However, while there had not been any reduction in the level of provision, the activities LACS were providing had changed in that they were working more with younger students in Years 8 and 9. None of the schools in Area B had formed consortiums.

- Interviews were also conducted with a small number of universities and FE Colleges to ascertain whether the extent or nature of the activities they provide with schools had changed. Overall, the FE College representatives felt that there had been a reduction in the amount of work they were asked to do, although one noted a trend towards working with younger students instead of Year 11 students, particularly in academies. The HEI representatives felt that take-up had increased overall. This may relate to the fact that, unlike the FE Colleges, they are not in direct competition for students.

- The FE College representatives also reported a change in the nature of the activities they were being asked to provide: these included reduced access to students in school and more requests to provide tours/tasters to specific students identified by the school; access to students in school during assemblies rather than lessons.

- Access to school staff (who are regarded as key influencers) was also said to have reduced because of the high level of staff change within schools. In addition, the point of contact with LACPS/LACS had also been reduced, particularly in Area A.

2.2.2 Independence and impartiality

As discussed in *Section 1.1: Rationale for the Project*, schools are now responsible for securing access to independent and impartial careers guidance for their students. In the statutory guidance on IAG it is stated that schools have a role to play in supporting students to make informed decisions by '...providing access to impartial and independent information and guidance about the range of education and training options that are most likely to help young people achieve their ambitions' (DfE, March 2013, p. 3). The guidance further states (footnote 3, p. 6), that 'independent' is defined as external to the school and that:

> Schools can retain any in-house arrangements but should supplement them with external sources of careers guidance – which could include an external careers provider, employer visits, mentoring, website and telephone helpline access. Taken together, these external sources should include information on the full range of education and training options, including Apprenticeships. (DfE, March 2013, footnote 3, p. 6)

Within the same guidance document 'impartial' is defined as '...showing no bias towards a particular education or work option' (DfE, March 2013, footnote 5, p. 6). Schools appear to have flexibility, therefore, in what they do within this guidance. The following section draws on the data to explore the way in which schools are interpreting these terms in practice.

Schools' view and interpretation of independence and impartiality

For the CEIAG Coordinator at Robinwood Academy, one of the biggest changes for schools seemed to be '*maintaining independence*'; Government guidance was regarded as '*terribly vague and terribly boring*' and unclear on how 'independent' should be interpreted:

> Yes it [Government guidance] is still changing and it's kind of annoying in some ways because you're not entirely sure about what independent means for a kick off, they use definitions that you think... so you know you try to be as independent as you possibly can in the sense that you don't have a fixed agenda when we are talking to anybody..... We expose all our students to every single avenue and we have people deliver apprenticeships, we have colleges, we have all sorts who come and talk to students, either one-on-one in certain cases specific colleges with specific courses, or as a whole year group or whatever it might be. But then the Government might say 'Well you know you haven't actually employed somebody to do it'. At the minute we are just trying to sort of not spend the money on employing somebody to do it because then it seems a bit daft really. [We do] expose them to lots of different opinion but the Government... it is such a vague thing... (CEAIG Coordinator, Robinwood Academy, Area A, Interview 2)

This was a quote given at second interview and indicates that there was still a lack of clarity about what independent and impartial IAG really meant. The Coordinator reported a divide of opinion in school about what providers should be invited in but they themselves had always stuck with '*you must invite everything that students could effectively access*' and thought that this '*covers those bases* [of independence and impartiality] *really well*'. As a result the Coordinator regularly arranged events/activities involving a range of businesses in addition to regular input from FE Colleges and HEIs.

The Coordinator was aware of the challenges in relation to providing impartial IAG and concurred that it would be in the school's interests financially if all students chose their sixth form. However, they did not want this at the expense of their students' futures. They suggested that many schools were '*quite closed shops*' and wary of people coming into schools and telling students something the school did not want them to hear. The

implication was that schools wanted to control the message given out to their students to fit their own ends, '*protect their own budgets and therefore drive kids in a certain direction...*'. In contrast, Robinwood Academy were not being '*protective about our own environment... because it means our students go to the best places that they should be going to... it just makes sense to be more open about it*'. Despite this, competition had influenced who was invited into this school to speak to students, and presentations by one of the parents who worked at a large local company had been cut because the school had lost 20 of their students to the company-sponsored academy following one such event.

In the terms of the Government guidance then, this Academy had taken the decision to bring in a high number of '*external sources of careers guidance*' which were providing information on a wide range of education and training options for their students. They had also significantly reduced the input from '*external careers providers*', in this case LACPS, because of financial pressures; opting for external sources they could get for free over input from a professional careers provider which needed to be paid for out of the school budget (see Table 5). Students appeared to have access to both impartial and independent *information* from a wide range of sources. However, they also had reduced access to a professional careers provider which suggests that the availability of *advice and guidance* was more limited. The issue then may be about achieving a balance within a context where there is a tension between schools wanting to support students to make informed decisions and successful transitions, and other demands and/or priorities which may influence the extent to which schools feel able to provide access to independent and impartial information *and* advice and guidance.

This play-off was evident in the different ways in which other schools were interpreting the phrase 'independent and impartial careers guidance' and the impact of this on their decisions about the nature of their IAG provision in response to the policy changes. Some schools interpreted 'impartial' provision as being something that was delivered by independent advisors. For example, Briarmount High School (11-18 school, Area A), wanted to retain as many students as possible and did not actively discourage other options but rather '*highlight all the options that are available*'. They were fully committed to providing impartial IAG, but saw this as something which was delivered by somebody external to the school and had opted to continue their same level of provision from LACPS. They talked about lack of impartiality in relation to consequences for the school (NEET figures):

> [We] talk about the advantages of going to college, and the advantages of staying in our sixth form. We try and make it quite clear what the advantages of both are because there is no... there is nothing in our favour of keeping students who are not suited to the right course. We might get the funding but we will get high drop-out rates and that then leads on to NEET and that will be more important with this raising participation age that comes into effect from this summer. ...I think the reasoning is if they were ill advised and when on the wrong course drop out, even though those students have dropped out somewhere else, they actually go on to our NEET figures in school so that I think is a back door way of saying you have got to get your IAG right so that these students don't then drop out at 17. (Assistant Head Teacher, Briarmount High School, Area A, Interview 2)

There was a perception that impartiality has been harder to achieve this year (2012-2013), however, this was because (1) within the curriculum, time was more limited as GCSE accountability meant that this had to be a priority, and (2) there was now a statutory duty to also provide independent and impartial IAG for Years 8, 12 and 13. As a result of this,

students would receive less time with the LACPS Personal Advisor as the school felt they could not afford to increase the spend in this area.

At first interview, the Assistant Head Teacher at Ladybower High School (11-18 school, Area A) said they were keen to ensure that IAG provision remained impartial and were investigating keeping LACPS in order to provide this, but this was tied up with funding issues and discussions around employing their own careers advisor:

> Certainly one thing we want to make sure is that the careers advice that the students get remains impartial and we are investigating keeping [LACPS] as part of our provision depending on how much it's going to cost us. Because we work collaboratively with other high schools in [Area A], we have been looking for an opportunity to employ our own careers adviser but then the concern is that when we employ them, then it stops becoming impartial..... so again we have gone back to [LACPS] because at the end of the day [they] are the ones who are kept up-to-date with all of the different changes and also they are ultimately impartial. (Assistant Head Teacher, Ladybower High School, Area A, Interview 1)

Although LACPS had, therefore, been bought in to fulfil the need for impartiality, the school insisted that every member of staff had a role to play in providing impartial IAG, whether they were a house tutor or leader. At second interview the Assistant Head reported that ensuring impartiality and continuing this had been the biggest issue with the policy change. However, because of the schools approach of '*right bums on right seats*' it had not been a major issue for them. Because of this, post-17 NEETs should not be a big issue either, although this would need to be monitored.

Because of limited funding, Abbeyside Academy (11-16 school, Area B) no longer involved LACS in one-to-one interviews with students. This activity was now carried out by Heads of House, which restricted impartiality and reduced student access to professional careers guidance:

> ...as it's going down the road, you know, we do need that impartiality desperately. But we also need that kind of value for money, so I want them [LACS] to be impartial but there's only so much money that we're being allowed to spend on that service. I'd love to have [LACS] do one-to-one interviews with all of my Year 11s and all the Year 10s, and below that, but that just isn't going to be a practical aspect from their point of view this year. (Head of House with CEIAG specialism, Abbeyside Academy, Area B, Interview 1)

In addition, the Academy had set up activities with a number of colleges in order to try and ensure impartiality, but sometimes questioned their ability to achieve this: '*...if you're sceptical... "Oh is it actually impartial?" I think it is, but that link with the college could be crucial*'.

In contrast, for Malt Valley Academy (11-18 school, Area A), impartiality could be achieved in-house by ensuring that students have information on all post-16 options and a broader provision. Although they had continued to buy in provision from LACPS at the same level as previously, they did not see impartiality as being produced by someone who is independent to the school but more about providing students with all the options and '*not pigeon-hol*[ing] *kids into following certain routes*'. However, there was a barrier around making sure that information was up-to-date and readily available and there was also the duality of making sure that students engaged with the school sixth form: '*I think if schools are honest, there will always be that issue around impartiality*'. Malt Valley promoted the school's sixth form but realised that this was not the right route for some students; although they might, if

necessary, look at remodelling the sixth form curriculum to retain as many students as possible, they recognised that this was '*not necessarily being impartial per se*'.

The approach at Fieldhouse High School (11-18 school, Area A) was to ensure independent and impartial IAG through a mixture of external professionals that they pay for, other professional organisations and agencies that they do not pay for, and staff who have had training in IAG. Their approach had been to reduce the buy-in from LACPS, involving them in the delivery of sessions where the school is unable to give impartial advice on alternative education and training options such as apprenticeships and Foundation Degrees. Providing impartial IAG was seen by the school as an aspect of overall good practice in IAG:

> I think it [good practice] is impartiality and making sure the students make the right decision, so it's not just uni for uni's sake, it's not just apprenticeship for apprenticeship sake, it's making sure that you're impartial, but that.... I think because we're a smaller sixth form, well relatively small sixth form, we can offer that because we know the students better, so it's knowing them well enough but still being impartial enough to sort of guide them in the right direction so that they don't make the wrong decision. I know there's obviously, you know things change with university fees and stuff and that's maybe what students reconsider, so it's just about making sure that you look at the whole picture and pointing them in the right direction... (Head of Sixth Form, Fieldhouse High School, 11-18 school, Area A, Interview 1)

However, competing priorities were also evident in the way some staff were said to have raised objections to external post-16 providers coming in to the school because of the potential impact on job security if numbers of students going to the school's sixth form were to fall: '*...we have... staff objections because obviously they* [other post-16 providers] *are in competition with us for student places, it impacts* [on] *our jobs*'. The Careers Advisor at Hammond Academy emphasised and insisted on impartial IAG provision but had also had clashes with other members of staff over this:

> ...when I came in to post I actually said 'Right I am impartial, I am not going to be a sales person for the sixth form, actually if you want me to do this role, I am going to have to do it in an impartial manner', which does put me... [and] I have had quite a few stand-offs with members of staff but I still stand by it ... (Careers Advisor, Hammond Academy, Area A, Interview 2)

Spikemore High School (11-16 school, Area B) was fully committed to providing impartiality and to ensure this they encourage students to apply for all local colleges irrespective of their initial preference (including going to all open days/evenings and tasters), and look at all vocational areas through training providers. The aim was to make '*all the options as transparent as we can for them, so that they're very aware of what each learning pathway opens up for them*'. In-house IAG was provided by the CEIAG Manager at the school who was professionally qualified in this area. The school had also maintained their level of buy-in from LACS but may review this in the future. Because Spikemore does not have a sixth form, the CEIAG Manager did not see impartiality as being too much of a problem, but the school strategy was for all staff to provide impartial IAG:

> I'd like to think that as a school we would put strategies in place where you know, we would be absolutely 100% impartial in the advice and guidance that is delivered through all our tutors, because we would say that all of our staff in this school delivers IAG. (CEIAG Manager, Spikemore High School, Area B, Interview 1)

At Hall Lane College (11-16 school with low priority for IAG who had maintained their level of buy in from LACS), the CEIAG Coordinator tried to promote impartiality but did not find

this easy. This was because some members of staff were more concerned about league tables, and that high ability students should go to Russell Group universities and should therefore not do vocational subjects: '*It's a constant battle which I'm not going to win at the moment*'. They gave the following example to illustrate the lack of impartiality: the school's 'Career of the Week' activity which included both top- and bottom-end ability jobs, had been criticised by the Head who felt it should only include aspirational jobs. However, the CEIAG Coordinator reported: '*I can't put high-end, high-level jobs down for everything because we don't have all high-level kids*'. The Coordinator interpreted impartiality, therefore, as trying to give students access to multiple education providers and advisors (colleges, work-based training advisors, universities, employers) and a range of IAG documentation in order to give them as much choice as possible.

External stakeholder and post-16 stakeholder views on impartiality

The Area A LACPS Representative suggested a tendency for maintained schools to be more open to external provision than academies. Similarly, the perception was that schools with sixth forms tended not to allow other providers in, whereas those that did not have sixth forms were more open to this. This perception was also shared by the Head of Marketing at Linkton FE College (Area A) who said there had been a noticeable reduction in invitations from 11-18 schools following the policy changes. This was attributed in part to a lack of funding and in part to a desire to retain their students. The School Liaison Officer at Castlefort FE College (Area A) also reported that sixth forms were less likely to be proactive in contacting them. This college worked closely with other colleges in order to try and maximise impartiality because '*at the end of the day, it is the students' education that is the most important thing*':

> In terms of attending the same sort of events and we see a student on an individual basis in terms of giving them the advice that is right for them, it is you know, if it would be far more beneficial for a student to do one particular course, if a college doesn't do it then we will tell them that, you know we are never going to be trying fudging them in to the wrong course just to suit our needs, it is all about the student... ...We all sort of have a look through each other's prospectus' and talk amongst each other and things like that, and because we see each other on the circuit, for want of a better word, you know, you tend to see the questions parents are coming up with and students and how the different liaison staff deal with it. (School Liaison Officer, Castlefort FE College, Area A)

The School Liaison Officer at Brockton FE College (Area B) also reported that their access is generally restricted in schools with sixth forms. While access had increased in the previous two years, they were not given blanket access: schools tended to handpick students for them to see who they did not consider to be 'A Level material'. Overall, there had also been a reduction with work with Year 11's and this had been most noticeable in academies.

KEY POINTS

- There appears to be a divide in how schools in the study interpret the term 'impartiality'. Some schools interpreted this as being something that is delivered by external careers advisors (in Areas A and B this is regarded as LACPS and LACS) and/or by representatives from FE Colleges, HEIs, business representatives and employers. Other schools interpreted this as ensuring that students have information on all post-16 options and a

---

broader provision. These schools did not see this activity as necessarily being provided by someone who is external to the school.

- Depending on the decisions schools make in response to the policy changes about the nature of their IAG provision, some students may have access to independent and impartial *information*, but reduced access to impartial and independent professional *advice and guidance.* The issue for schools may be about maintaining balanced information, advice and guidance within a context where there may be a conflict between wanting to support students to make informed decisions and successful transitions and other competing priorities and demands.

- There is a tension between pressure to retain students and provide IAG on alternative provision for 11-18 schools. Other school staff may raise objections to external post-16 providers coming in to the school because of the potential impact on job security if student numbers in the sixth form fall. Although impartiality is perceived as less problematic in 11-16 schools, there can be pressure from members of staff in these schools who are concerned with league tables and ensuring that high ability students progress to elite universities.

- Funding issues are acting as a constraint on impartiality in some schools, for example, through a reduction in one-to-one interviews with professional IAG providers for some students.

2.2.3 Quality, monitoring and evaluation of IAG provision

At time of first interview a number of schools[12] had the Quality Kitemark for IAG, and other schools[13] were looking towards applying for the Kitemark. By second interview the Kitemark for IAG was due to be re-launched: Area A LA was is the process of redeveloping it for validation by the National Quality and Careers Standard, in line with the national framework. It will be then be marketed by Area A LA Education Services to both Area A and B schools. The re-launched Kitemark will have eight criteria sections, one of which will be monitoring and evaluation (others include school leadership, impartial careers guidance, and ensuring careers advice is integrated into the school improvement plan). The Kitemark will also require schools to collect feedback from parents of the young people and evaluate this each year. There has been some interest from schools in the re-launched Kitemark because they think it will provide evidence that they are meeting their statutory duty, but at least one school (Robinwood Academy) was not aware of the re-launch which seems to be a result of the lack of contact with the LA since their change to academy status.

However, having the Kitemark did not always ensure that a school had a completely inclusive IAG programme. For example, Malt Valley Academy (Area A) reported that their PHSE programme had supported much of their IAG Quality Kitemark accreditation process and, while it was a good programme, it needed to evolve in relation to the current Government agenda and the Academy agenda, and in relation to emerging labour markets. Content and delivery of IAG at Malt Valley was quality assured through a series of tutor

---

[12] Malt Valley Academy; Briarmount High School; Spikemore High School; Monkton School.
[13] Abbeyside Academy.

meetings and 'learning walks' (i.e. knowing when the sessions are; being in the sessions to assess students' responses). It was less easy to monitor tutor input but this was done informally. Questionnaire analysis of students' response was undertaken around collapsed days and they had generic feedback on PHSE.

Two other schools closely monitored and evaluated IAG provision. Hammond Academy reported that they '*monitor and evaluate everything*'. They used snapshot questionnaires for Year 11's (for applications to sixth form, work-based learning, back-up plan, further help needed, etc.). Within this was an end of year assessment of IAG which examined what has been done well and what needed improvement. At Briarmount High, staff involved in IAG gave feedback annually and the school had an expansive Year 11 and sixth form survey; results were analysed and passed to the SLT. They also had a student council and events throughout the year that captured the student voice. Briarmount also had the Quality Kitemark for IAG and reported having a very high priority for IAG. Hammond Academy did not have the Kitemark and IAG priority seemed to be given less priority which seemed at odds with the level of monitoring and evaluation it was afforded.

Monitoring and evaluation of IAG provision across other schools seemed to be limited and was often evaluated alongside other aspects of provision. For example, at both Spikemore High and Fieldhouse High it formed part of the PHSE evaluation although it did include student voice feedback. At Spikemore, IAG provision was reviewed every year in relation to the needs of the specific group but the level of monitoring/evaluation seemed disproportionally low when balanced against the fact that they have the Quality Kitemark. Fieldhouse High ran an exit evaluation on students' views of their IAG provision, all IAG activities were monitored at Robinwood, and Ladybower High School asked students to report on the most useful activities and checked whether particular career paths had been over emphasised. However, depth to the monitoring and evaluation seemed to be lacking at Fieldhouse, Robinwood and Ladybower. Furthermore, at one school where IAG provision was not seen as a priority (Hall Lane College), monitoring and evaluation was not done at all because of time constraints. The effectiveness of IAG provision there was usually determined through verbal feedback from students:

> You see it would be okay if I was just responsible for IAG or just post-16, but I'm in charge of also... Head of Performing Arts, I've also got BTEC Diplomas. You name it I seem to do it! So it is just time.... it's usually through verbal feedback from the kids really, if the kids seem interested and the fact that they keep coming up to us and saying 'Look can you tell me about this?', you know, 'When is my college interview?', etc. So they're deemed to be taking responsibility for what they want to do. Apart from that, no [they do not monitor IAG], because again it just comes down to time. (CEIAG Coordinator, Hall Lane College, Area B, Interview 1)

Schools had a tendency to use NEET figures, destination measures and students' performance as indicators of good or bad IAG provision. For example, at Ladybower High School, destination measures were examined to see whether anything was '*top heavy*' or had changed. At Robinwood Academy, the rapid reduction in NEETs was regarded as evidence of impact, but although they had given more structure to monitoring and evaluating IAG by asking students what they found most useful, they did not necessarily know what was actually useful. At some schools, emphasis was placed on low numbers of students who wanted to change their options which was seen as an indicator of good IAG provision.

Abbeyside Academy suggested that monitoring could take place on two levels: (1) by high-level LACS working, and (2) by school Heads of House or anyone in school who delivered IAG working together *'from the same kind of script..'*. They reported, however, that working out how to monitor IAG as an organisation moving forward will be difficult and they had not investigated how to do this outside of keeping a basic check on their own practice to ensure that it was as impartial as possible. The Head of Sixth Form at Monkton School (who have the Quality Kitemark) suggested that monitoring and evaluation was not being adequately dealt with at their school and this had impacted on the quality of provision (although at the time of first interview the school was recruiting a new member of staff and monitoring and evaluation will be an important part of their role[14]). The Head of Sixth asserted that monitoring and evaluation should be part of the school's CEIAG Statement:

> ...at the moment we don't do enough of it, and it's one of the things that we put into the new job description, if we are... how can I put it, previously because we've had like, for example, your careers, your sixth form stuff free, in all honesty we just accepted it, but it's very much changed now. If we're going to be buying people in then yes, it's a big part of the job description that we need to ensure that what [IAG] we are getting, or what the students are getting is of a high enough quality and it's definitely been, I'll fully admit it [IAG monitoring/evaluation] is something which I don't think has happened enough here in the past and which we are very much aware that we need to do, and we should be doing anyway, but somehow we need to increase [it]. (Head of Sixth Form, Monkton School, Area A, Interview 1)

Using LACPS or LACS to audit the quality of provision may also be problematic, more generally. Area A LA reported that whilst they can undertake an audit on how effective a school's IAG provision is, they will now have to charge for this as it is outside their core offer. Ultimately, schools are unlikely to buy this in because of funding issues following the policy changes.

Reducing the NEET figure seemed to be seen as a way of assessing quality of provision and one school (Abbeyside Academy) was working collaboratively with LACS to see how the NEET figure could be further reduced. The CEIAG Coordinator at Hall Lane College (where IAG appeared to have a very low priority) suggested that if students are not getting as much IAG and the careers provision is centred on Year 11 only, then the NEET figure will go up in future, which may then be the driver for change:

> ...they'll get some [IAG provision] in terms of Year 11, but I would imagine the level of IAG will go down and therefore possibly the number of NEETs will go up. And I think until that happens, because obviously the schools report on it, possibly also with raising of the participation age and it'll get reported on when they leave school as well, they may be the drivers to therefore saying 'Right we need to do something about this'. I don't think... until you actually get the figures in, nothing will happen. (CEIAG Coordinator, Hall Lane College, Area B, Interview 1)

The CEIAG Coordinator at one 11-16 school (Robinwood Academy, Area A) suggested that schools were now a lot more accountable for what happened to students after they leave:

> I think the political shift to a degree is not just focussing as I say on academic competence; it's a lot more about preparing students for life and employability skills... [We've] got employers kicking off saying they [students] can't do the basic things, they can't work as a team, they can't follow instructions, they can't this and they can't do x, y and z. So as a school and within the IAG

---

[14] It was not possible to re-interview this school and so we cannot determine to what extent this was successful.

remit you've got to sort of provide all of that. (CEIAG Coordinator, Robinwood Academy, 11-16 school, Area A, Interview 1)

However, they also felt that whilst the IAG aspect of their role was going to become increasingly more important and was valued within the school, it was results and their position in the league tables that the school was ultimately measured on, not IAG provision:

> I mean ultimately it doesn't put us up in the league tables. Ultimately it still means parents can take their kids somewhere else because... if you just set up a league table and choose between this school and say another school that's got better results, the parents will send their student there. They won't, say, necessarily look behind the whole thing and think 'Well actually if I go there my son will be a much better team player, much better problem solver, a better communicator, more confident, blah, blah, blah... [and] make a better choice you know, won't become a sixth form drop out...' They don't tend to look at that sort of thing. (CEIAG Coordinator, Robinwood Academy, 11-16 school, Area A, Interview 1)

The view of the LACPS Representative in Area A (second interview) was that their ability to change the situation in schools was limited. They had an end-of-term meeting within each school to discuss process and progress which should be one of the mechanisms whereby issues such as seeing the wrong students can be addressed. However, '*there is a bit of concern that schools who have brought a small amount of days are actually looking at quantity* [i.e. in terms of the number of students overall] *rather than quality*'. Schools needed to be thinking longer-term in terms of outcomes and progression – not just first destination but do students drop out? Have they gone on to their second or third choice? These are the sorts of conversations they needed to be having with schools. As discussed above, in Area A they were opting for a much more bespoke approach in 2013-2014 to working with schools which involved using their knowledge of the school to tailor the service (i.e. looking at Ofsted reports and school outcomes to demonstrate how they can support the school to achieve these outcomes and prepare school development plans).

In Area B, the LACS had the Matrix Quality Standard[15] which enabled them to provide a consistent service to schools. They have received excellent feedback from Matrix on their provision which emphasises personalisation:

> ....we have now got the Matrix Quality Standard and some of the feedback from Matrix particularly..... was [that they were] incredibly impressed about the impartiality of the advisors and also the fact... that the service did what it needed to do but without a one size fits all approach, because you have got different schools, different characteristics..... But our service, our advisors go in and support both [these different] schools to meet their needs whilst still carrying out the statutory functions, and still making sure that from an Ofsted point of view they can evidence that the young people have got access to impartial guidance. (LACS Representative, Area B, Interview 2)

---

[15] The Quality Matrix Standard is the unique quality standard for organisations, which enables them to assess and measure their advice and support services, which ultimately supports individuals in their choice of career, learning, work and life goals. See Matrix Standard website: http://matrixstandard.com/ [accessed 26th September 2013]

> **KEY POINTS**
>
> - Work was being initiated by LACPS and LACS to support the development of more effective monitoring and evaluation in schools. In Area A the Quality Kitemark was in the process of redevelopment and validation. The new award will be marketed to schools in Areas A and B and will have eight criteria, one of which will be monitoring and evaluation. Interest in the award has been expressed by schools based on the perception that it will provide evidence that they are meeting their statutory duty. The LACS in Area B used the Matrix Quality Standard which enables schools to evidence the impartiality of their provision to students.
>
> - A small number of schools in the study appeared to closely monitor and evaluate their IAG provision. In other schools, however, this activity appeared more limited.
>
> - Schools tended to use NEET figures, destination measures and students' performance as indicators of good/bad IAG provision. However, the perception was that it was the league tables that they will be measured on, not their IAG provision. For many schools this acted as a disincentive to prioritise IAG provision, or monitor and evaluate this provision.
>
> - The role of LACPS and LACS in this area had changed and the perception was that their ability to influence the situation within schools was limited, particularly in those schools which had only brought in a small number of days service. Where both organisations were still able to audit the effectiveness of a school's IAG provision, this service will now carry a charge as it lies outside their core offer. Ultimately, schools are unlikely to buy in this service because of funding issues.

2.3 <u>Research Question 3</u>: What are the implications of the policy changes for effective practice?

2.3.1 Labour market information

Providing comprehensive and up-to-date labour market information is recognised in the literature as a key element of effective IAG practice and was perceived as such by many of the interviewees. On the whole, many of the schools in the study were making very limited use of LMI and this seemed to be consistent whether or not a school had a high priority for IAG. What was also consistent, however, was that schools were aware that this limited provision was '*not enough*', particularly given the recent policy changes. So there was awareness within and across schools that providing LMI information was a good thing, but overall there seemed an inability to actually provide this either through lack of capability within school staff, or in Area B, a perceived lack of provision through LACS at the time of the first interviews.

The Careers Advisor at Hammond Academy reported that they '*definitely do*' use LMI; they searched online for relevant information and attended networking meetings aimed at accessing this information. They also referred students to the National Careers Service website, because in their opinion it has very good LMI. However, the academy had an IAG Level 4 qualified member of staff responsible for this area with the expertise to use LMI effectively.

At Malt Valley Academy (Area A), the recent policy changes had impacted upon students' access to effective LMI. The school reported at first interview that they needed to review their use of LMI with the intention to be more responsive to its use within the curriculum:

> As far as we're aware at the moment, you know, the emerging markets are in the Health sector, so you know, having a specialism of Health with looking at what the Health, what a Health curriculum looks like… so every student does PE, does an accredited PE course… We have personal and social and health education for every student every week. We'll be looking at other viable courses at post-16 and linking in with [name of local university] really on things like you know Health Sciences and Paramedical Studies and other things like that, because I know that you've got a unit over at [name of university site] I think it is, and there's one at [name of university site] as well. So that's kind of like the next phase really of, you know, sort of like a three or five year plan around the curriculum. (Assistant Vice Principal, Malt Valley Academy, Area A, Interview 1)

By second interview the use of LMI had not been reviewed, however, and the plans to link to the curriculum had not been taken forward. Elements of LMI were still delivered through PHSE lessons but this was coming off the timetable in 2013-2014 which has implications for how LMI can be delivered.

Changes were also apparent at Ladybower High School (area A). At first interview, LMI provision was delivered through LACPS but the school viewed this as an area where they needed to do more work, particularly in relation to the local area. They did, however, see providing LMI as a joint activity between the school and LACPS. The school also identified a need for staff development in this area. By second interview, LMI conversations were said to be '… *happening at a different level now rather than just* [LACPS] *looking at it*'. The school was also developing links with local employers, some of which were developed through their link with the local MP; a specific course was developed in response to what was identified as a local skills gap, for example.

Within Area B, comments indicated some dissatisfaction with the provision of LMI from LACS. Abbeyside Academy, for example, said they used existing Connexions material up until the policy changes came into place but at time of first interview were '*desperate*' to start using more '*live*' material and were looking to a local college to help with this. The reasons for this were not made explicit but the indication was that LACS were not providing the requisite information. Similarly, the CEIAG Manager at Spikemore High School indicated that up-to-date LMI was regarded as important by the school but LACS were seen as failing in providing opportunities, in part as a result of what the CEIAG Manager saw as a de-skilling process within the service following the demise of Connexions:

> Up-to-date labour market information to me is intrinsic to giving good IAG, and this project the hospital have brought to our school [an apprenticeship project with 14-16 year-olds in Health and Social Care] …, is about giving information out to students which is labour market based… I used to be a careers manager and I have to say that if I found out a school had been approached by our local hospital to do this project rather than the careers service had been approached by the hospital to deliver that project, I would have been appalled.. But the hospital… we're not the only school, they go into one other, which is a school with a sixth form, but they've come here not because of the convenience of the location but [because] they feel as though they need to be proactive given the demise of Connexions. (CEIAG Manager, Spikemore High School, Area B, Interview 1)

At the time of second interview the CEIAG Manager at Spikemore reported that some LACS staff had now been invited to upgrade their qualifications because of a requirement for Level 6 training (one of the units of which is bespoke LMI training). This was confirmed by the LACS Representative who was keen to develop this service. They also reported that they trained school staff to deliver LMI as part of their package. The interviewee at Spikemore advocated contacting Blue Chip accountancy firms as a source of LMI, '...*because they are the first to see the improvement in the financial market, and where you get changes in the financial market you get changes in the labour market, so they can actually, you know, track trends and labour market movement*'. They also argued that schools need to allow their staff to visit employers and get the information themselves but '*as yet that hasn't happened*', which suggests that although schools may indicate that LMI is regarded as important, resources are not allocated to staff to allow them to develop their capacity to use this information effectively.

This would appear to be confirmed by comments made by the Area B LA Representative who suggested that while LMI data needed to be used more in schools, they regarded this as a staff development issue and the culture to support this did not exist in some schools. For the LACS representative in Area B, LMI is about making local students aware of what is available; this information needs to be presented over the long term, not just the short term:

> Young people need to be much more aware of what labour market information tells them..... So a classic example would be, you speak to someone in Year 9, Year 10 or 11 and they tell you 'I want to be a photographer'. What you need to be able to tell them is 'Well you may want to be a photographer but the reality is in [the local area] there aren't any professional sports photographers. There might be someone who works in a studio who is a photographer and it is being able to translate that for them'. Journalism would be another perfect example, 'There aren't any jobs. If you look in the paper, nobody is wanting to recruit a journalist.... There may be some journalists working in the city, there wouldn't be very many and you need to be aware of that when you are planning what you want to do. So you may chose to go to university...... You may choose to do a journalism course. But you need to be aware that the likelihood of that turning into your career in journalism is small.....' It is just trying to develop that conversation.... ....It's important that this is a long term continuum and not just a snap shot, because you want to start that conversation as soon as you can, well ideally in lower years, but then keep revisiting it. (LACS Representative, Area B, Interview 2)

2.3.2   Personalised IAG

The importance of personalised IAG is highlighted in the literature discussed earlier in this report. Personalised IAG was also seen as a key aspect of good practice in IAG by interviewees and many schools employed this approach. However, comments made by some interviewees suggested that the recent policy changes were impacting upon the decisions schools could make about their IAG provision and delivering this without an increased budget may restrict access to personalised IAG in some schools.

Monkton School (Area A) had made a decision to fund the majority of independent IAG but money was an issue:

> Money, when we come down to it [is an issue]. Like I said, we've made the decision for this year that in effect we are going to be funding the majority of the independent IAG, you know the careers people coming in, where it used to be funded for us free. There's no more money

coming into school for that, but we could have just decided to go down the route of saying 'Okay, I mean careers are still going to be dealing with certain hard to reach groups for us, but that's only small numbers'... ...but the biggest thing is we want to give students that individual service, it's just that [the] money has got to come from somewhere and you know it's a lot of money. So that's the biggest thing. It's not... you know we put the time into the curriculum to deliver it well, we've got enthusiasm of teachers, we've got dedicated people here who want to be involved and do it well, that [money] is the biggest thing. (Head of Sixth Form, Monkton School, Area A, Interview 1)

For this interviewee, one-to-one interaction between student and tutor/advisor was the most important aspect of personalised IAG provision and their decision to invest funding was based on this:

> ...I just don't think anything tops somebody sitting there with a student and talking through their options one-to-one with them, and you know that's why we're investing the best part of 15 grand next year, which we've had to find from our internal budget to keep on bringing that service in because we know that we can provide good, you know, talks to students and in terms of the resources we use, in terms of tutorials and we put them on NEET, and that's the best IAG you can get, is sitting there and talking to our student where they're asking the questions. (Head of Sixth Form, Monkton School, Area A, Interview 1)

Briarmount High School outlined their Year 9 transition as an aspect of good practice for personalised CEAIG: the students start off by considering with their form tutor where they are at, what their strengths are and their areas for development, barriers to learning, etc. They use internet resources and also have access to a Personal Advisor if needed. From this, a thorough booklet is created which students can take away and use to make their option choices:

> It's a full set up which builds up over the course of the term into the child having a holistic picture of where they stand... ...[It is giving them] the tools to make the decision... It's all discussed, it's not just a matter of what they like, they then have to think of post-16 as well, so they are encouraged to look at career pathways not just a pathway. (Assistant Head Teacher, Briarmount High School, Area A, Interview 1)

However, for Briarmount, funding issues stopped IAG becoming more personalised because there were now fewer opportunities for students to go out of school. Time constraints for employers, particularly given the current economic climate, also impacted on the level of personalisation: '*...whereas in the past we may have been able to approach an employer about a certain group or certain child, etc., the employer just hasn't got the time*'.

Robinwood Academy (11-16 school, Area A), who had significantly reduced their spending on LACPS provision, also appeared to employ a targeted personalised approach which included asking local colleges and industry representatives to speak with specific students, providing in-house skill-based training (e.g. CV workshops), monitoring younger students via SLT/form tutors, and bringing in LACPS for students that were '*absolutely clueless*' about what they wanted to do. This school appeared to be effectively developing good links to a wide range of employers; something many schools struggle to achieve. However, it is important that such activity complements advice and guidance activities rather than replacing them.

Ladybower High School also reported (at second interview) that they were now moving towards a more bespoke, personalised approach to CEAIG provision. While it was unclear whether this was as a result of the policy changes, it did appear to indicate that they were

striving to 'work smarter' by '*responding to individual need rather than just giving every student the same thing and hoping we hit the right button with the right student*'. Rather than '*making everybody do it* [group activities]' they were '*find*[ing] *the students that need it*', and using House Group Coaches and Learning Mentors to facilitate this.

Comments made by one of the colleges interviewed (Brockton FE College, Area B) pointed to recent changes within schools which had impacted negatively on the college's ability to deliver a more personalised approach within the sessions they provide. Schools had reduced the amount of time the college has access to students. As a result they were less able to personalise the information they were giving out. Previously they had access to students in a 'lesson situation' but now only had 10 minutes during an assembly; one school had said this was because they could not find time for all providers to go in to school so an assembly environment was easier and quicker:

> ....there is a difference in the delivery. Generally how we offer college presentations, we would go in and see groups of maybe 25 or 30 students who are sat in form groups or in a lesson situation and we would go in over maybe three or four weeks in to the school and we will get to see all of the year group, whereas you have a few schools who will now have you in to deliver an assembly rather than coming in on a weekly basis and seeing a group of students at a time so the way in which you're delivering your information has changed in the schools.... also [the] time that you get with the students.... in a lesson situation you can have up to an hour with those students and personalise your session to what students are interested in whereas an assembly situation we may be given ten or fifteen minutes in an assembly and it has to be obviously a very, very generic........ there are quite a few schools who like who have changed that this year. (School Liaison Officer, Brockton FE College, Area B)

It is not clear whether this is as a result of the policy changes in relation to IAG or a response to other demands upon schools which rendered them reluctant to release students from lessons. However, as one interviewee suggested, it may be an indication that some schools are adopting a '*tick-box*' mentality which prioritises a '*quantity over quality*' approach to impartiality in IAG provision. Concern that some schools may be adopting this approach was expressed by other interviewees:

> ...there is a bit of concern that schools who have brought a small amount of days are actually looking at quantity rather than quality. (LACPS Representative, Area A, Interview 2)

> ....it will come down to some schools will say 'You know what, if I stick these on [name of computer careers guidance programme] for half an hour in the ICT class, done, I haven't got to worry about it anymore.' And there will be schools that think that will be done but we can't possibly allow that to happen, it is too important, we need to put more in place and that is to do with resources, the pressure the school is under, the pressure the staff are under. (Recruitment Manager, HEI, Area B)

The LACS representative (Area B) argued that one of the biggest barriers was getting access to students and getting schools to move beyond a 'tick box' mentality:

> The biggest barrier is probably the practicalities on the ground and it's probably getting access to students, effective access to students, and that's probably the biggest challenge and it's trying to make the most of the opportunities and there is also a danger for us... is that partners perhaps and members of staff in school perceive that if you have seen someone once, that that's it and you don't need to see them again and almost just a sort of tick so you get a list, you know, 'Have you seen them all, have you spoken to them all? Or the other nightmare scenario is that sometimes schools with the best [students] will have a timetable that allows young people to make an application... so the fact that they are making that application in November, the fact

that they haven't really thought things through sometimes doesn't matter, and it's the fact that they have ticked the box, so they have sent off an application and therefore we don't have to worry about them anymore.

RES: An application to college?

Yes. So we have got to fight against that and we really need to say that the process is not that simple, it's not a tick box exercise because we know that if we don't follow up and check and handle, the likelihood is that that will be a poor decision and we won't follow it through.

RES: Yes, so it's not, 'Have they made a decision?' but 'Have they made an informed decision?'

Exactly, very much so, and there is a danger, in sometimes the way schools operate that they do this sort of tick box exercise and that's not sufficient.

(LACS Representative, Area B, Interview 1)

2.3.3   The relationship between LACPS/LACS advisors and schools

The relationship between the external IAG providers and the school is clearly important in terms of developing effective practice. This was emphasised by Briarmount High School (Area A), for example, who identified this as a specific aspect of their own practice relating to a team of professionals within and external to schools who were able work well together to deliver a personalised programme for each student.

In Area A, LACPS emphasised good practice generally to schools they worked with but now had to try and get this message across rather than being able to enforce this. PAs have an important and proactive role in terms of monitoring what goes on within schools and identifying gaps or poor practice. While LACPS needed to be flexible in terms of the traded offer to schools, an inherent problem is that they now had to negotiate to go into schools and provide activities (e.g. staff training) rather than just being able to go in and carry out these activities as part of their regular work with schools. This suggests that there is a changing relationship between the advisor and the school and that this relationship is critical.

> I think where you have a good advisor, good advisors have always done that and get themselves involved in the school and know what is going on, but I think we have got to get cuter about that with all staff, and also it is about giving staff the confidence to be able to say 'Well actually this is what I'm finding out', and having the confidence to raise it [with the school].' (LACPS Representative, Area A, Interview 2)

The LACPS representative from Area A suggested that what had worked so well in the past was having a consistent presence in schools; as a result they had been able to build up good relationships with schools and staff. The perception was that this was likely to be affected by the policy changes in that LACPS' future presence in schools will be reduced because schools will not have enough funding to buy in the same level of service:

> I think what's worked so well before is that because you have had a consistent presence in the school, you have been able to build up a really good working relationship with the school and the school staff. However, what the impact's going to be with the changes, I think that is one of the things that they are going to have to see what happens. ….we will have a reduced presence because they won't be able to afford us by the current level of what they have, and I think that goes without saying.

....there have always been drop in sessions in schools and things, but once schools are paying for a service then [LACPS] staff will be going in to do specific pieces of work and then walking back out. Whereas before they would have attended the team around the child meetings and meetings in schools about young people with a particular concern, they won't be [now]. Because they have always been part of the school staff, a visitor but included. They won't be attending meetings because the school will be paying for them to do guidance so you will lose some of that. But whether that's a negative or not I don't know because I think it's far too early at the moment to... I wouldn't want to assume or second guess what the impact would be.

(LACPS Representative, Area A, Interview 1)

Comments made by schools suggest that the loss of this 'consistent presence' was being felt. The interviewee from Robinwood, for example, spoke of the extra workload incurred in 2012-2013 through trying to increase the input from externals in order to maximise students' exposure to different sources of information. Malt Valley Academy (Area A) also reported that the policy change had had a big impact in terms of time; they have had to find information themselves which as non-experts had been time-intensive, whereas in the past they had just rung their LA Careers Service PA for this information:

I think the impact really has been that we have had to put lots of time in to finding things out for ourselves... it is the hours that we need to spend that we wouldn't have in the past because I could have phoned somebody up and said 'Can you find me, get me, fetch me, bring me the stuff on this?' You know, it is just that general navigation around 'Well what information is out there, where do I get it from?'...

...a lack of being able to have somebody to come in and look at the resources that we're using and say, 'Yes, that is good, or I would change that, or that's a bit old now, or have you seen the latest thing on this'. It is just having that liaison with people from outside of things.

(Assistant Vice Principal, Malt Valley Academy, Area A, Interview 2)

This situation was exacerbated because there was also no-one in the school with an overview of what they delivered in relation to IAG or the way in which it was delivered in the school.

Overall, the LACPS representative felt that it will take one or possibly two academic years to find out the impact of the changes. However, it was stressed that the impact may not necessarily be a negative one; they may develop different, but equally effective relationships with schools. This was echoed by the Area B LACS representative who suggested that the impact will be felt more in the long term when the effect of not having that level of support and consistent presence in schools will be visible. However, the perception was that this could be a negative impact, particularly in Area B which was felt to be particularly vulnerable in this respect as ensuring successful transitions had traditionally been difficult. If the service is disrupted, the negative impact would be felt more quickly and more deeply in areas such as this:

I suppose it depends where you're starting from because if you are in a nice Shire county and there is not much of an issue then the impact may be less. We know that in [Area B] it is a struggle to have successful transition anyway, and if you withdrew that service or it became fractured then you would see negative affects much more quickly to a greater extent. (LACS Representative, Area B, Interview 2)

Similar sentiments were expressed by the Recruitment Manager from the HEI in Area B:

I think there will be much more impact in the next two or three years and I am concerned greatly... I cannot see how it will not be to the detriment of the provision of young people's IAG. I think it is insane that they are not getting absolutely solid guaranteed, robust, good advice and I think that we might pick that up in universities in two or three years' time, in terms of the destinations. We might pick it up in young people who are NEET post-18, in terms of the decisions that they have made, in terms of their careers." (Recruitment Manager, HEI, Area B)

2.3.4 Accountability

A significant number of interviewees raised the issue of accountability: how and who will be picking up on whether schools are providing independent IAG? The role of Ofsted was frequently brought up in relation to this. For example, the Area B LA Representative mentioned a lack of guidance from the Government and implied that more emphasis by Ofsted on progression and the role of IAG would help to prioritise IAG in schools (a critical element of effective practice):

> Well I think if it's a key sort of Ofsted requirement you know, it depends how much the focus on progression and the link with IAG comes out as I think in Ofsted inspections, because I think that will help... I think at the moment it's perhaps a little bit of a grey area, I think until it sort of beds down exactly what it means about providing impartial IAG, I think they need more guidance from the Government, but I don't think... that won't happen. (LA Representative, Area A, Interview 1)

The LACS representative from Area B felt that both Ofsted and the publication of destination measures would help increase the profile of IAG within schools[16]. It is critically important that schools have confidence in the transition arrangements for their students because the destination measures will pick up on drop out at 17.

> ....from a parental point of view [they will] be able to look at these two schools, they are next door to each other, and get broadly the same GCSE results. However, School A and its students in a year or two years' time have 4% NEETs, and the school next door has 24% NEETs. (LACS Representative, Area B, Interview 2)

This interviewee felt that IAG would be expected to be part of the management area of a thematic inspection by Ofsted. As part of this, a school would need to evidence how they had met the requirement to provide impartial IAG and inspectors would need to speak to individual students about their options/choices and how aware they are of alternatives. LACS are also subject to Ofsted inspection to assess the quality of their arrangements with the school. If schools had not made any external provision then the perception was that *'they would have a problem'*. However, because LACS were working with all the schools in their area, it was not an issue they have had to address, therefore the LACS Representative was not sure in reality how this would be picked up if it became an issue. The LA Representative from Area A also suggested that making the assessment of IAG provision statutory would make it more important to teachers, i.e. by having a particular measure for Ofsted to use as part of their inspection:

> I think to be honest... although an individual Head might see the intrinsic value; I think you do need something, some sort of external measure that sort of directs them [schools] to deliver on it [IAG]. (LA Representative, Area A, Interview 1)

---

[16] The Government guidance (DfE, March 2013) states that schools will be held to account through the annual publication of their destination measures which will be published from Sept 2013.

They hoped that the future publication of destination measures would act as this external pressure and have a positive impact in that schools will have to be concerned.

While the above comments represent an expectation and/or hope on the part of these interviewees, a number of interviewees clearly shared the concern expressed in the recent Select Committee Report (House of Commons Education Committee, 2013) that the current Ofsted framework is not a credible accountability check:

> .....there's nowhere for it on the form anymore either. IAG doesn't appear on an Ofsted form, it's just a throw away paragraph really. It doesn't determine the school's grade....
>
> ....I think, personally I think the whole Ofsted thing is a mess.... and the problem with Ofsted is that nobody regards it highly.
>
> RES: What within the school?
>
> Within education, because they just think it's a shambles, you know. I think the schools should be inspected and I think there should be no-notice inspections. They should look at typicality and see what they're doing and all the rest of it..... And it's based entirely on results, you know, you can't give a school a 'good' if their results are average, even if what the school is doing is brilliant.
>
> (CEIAG Coordinator, Robinwood Academy, Area A, Interview 2)

The need for a stronger role for Ofsted was also mentioned by the Careers Advisor at Hammond Academy, the implication being that Ofsted inspections would facilitate greater priority for IAG provision:

> ....if they [Ofsted] had been given some teeth, I think that would have been a push in the right direction for me being able to justify more time but they are not [inspecting IAG] so I can't. (Careers Advisor, Hammond Academy, Area A, Interview 2)

As discussed earlier, a number of schools in Area A have taken the decision not to provide any independent careers advice, opting instead to wait and see whether '*the legislation has got teeth*'. Comments from other interviewees suggests that many other schools may be waiting to see what pans out in the short term before making any longer term decisions; which in turn suggests that how the issue of accountability is addressed could have a major influence on this decision-making process.

KEY POINTS

Labour market information (LMI)

- Providing comprehensive and consistent LMI is a key element of effective IAG practice and was perceived as such by the majority of the interviewees. Many of the schools in this study, however, were making very limited use of LMI and this appeared to be consistent whether or not a school had a high priority for IAG. Schools were aware that this limited provision was inadequate. The main barriers to the use of LMI were identified as a lack of capability in school staff and a perceived lack of availability of LMI.

- The need for staff development in this area was identified as a key issue. Emphasis was also placed on developing school–employer links and allowing staff time to visit employers.

- Comments made by interviewees suggested that although LMI was regarded as a key element of effective practice, resources were not allocated to staff to enable them to develop their capacity to use this information effectively.

- There was a perception that support from LACS in relation to LMI had been lacking and this issue was being addressed by the organisation who said they were able to train school staff to deliver LMI as part of their traded offer. Staff within LACS were also required to have a Level 6 qualification, one of the units of which was bespoke LMI training.

Personalising IAG

- The importance of personalised IAG was seen as a key aspect of effective practice and many of the schools in this study employed this approach. However, comments made suggest that the recent policy changes are impacting upon the decisions schools make and without an increased budget personalised IAG may be reduced in some schools. For example, through fewer opportunities for students to go out of school and a reduction in the amount of one-to-one sessions for some students. Comments made by the FE Colleges involved in the study also indicated that they had reduced time with students in some schools and as a result were less able to personalise the information they gave out.

- Comments suggest that some schools may be adopting a 'tick box' mentality which prioritises quantity over quality and constrains a personalised approach.

Relationships between the LACPS/LACS advisors and schools

- Personal Advisors have an important and proactive role in terms of monitoring what goes on in schools and identifying gaps in provision or poor practice. As a result of the policy changes they now had to negotiate to go into schools and provide activities rather than being able to carry out these activities as part of their regular work with schools.

- A 'consistent presence' enabled PAs to build up good relationships with the schools and its staff. The perception is that this relationship is likely to be affected in future because the PAs presence will be reduced in those schools who have brought in at a lower level of service. Comments made by school staff interviewed indicated that the loss of this consistent presence was being felt through, for example, increased workload of those staff with responsibility for IAG, and also other staff who may have to search for information previously provided by the PA as an expert in the field.

- It was stressed that the impact of these changes may not necessarily be negative; PAs may develop different but equally effective relationships with schools.

- Overall, the perception was that the full impact of not having a consistent presence in schools may only be felt in the long term. Area B was perceived as being particularly vulnerable in this respect because ensuring successful post-16 transitions had

traditionally been difficult in the area, and any negative impact would be felt more quickly and more deeply because of this.

Accountability

- A significant number of interviewees raised the issue of accountability, particularly in relation to the role of Ofsted.

- More emphasis by Ofsted on progression and the role of IAG would support an increased prioritisation of IAG in schools. For example, IAG would be expected to be part of the management area of a thematic inspection by Ofsted and as part of this schools would be expected to evidence how they were meeting the requirement for independence and impartiality.

- Interviewees expressed a lack of confidence that the current Ofsted framework would provide accountability. This was also evident in the decisions made by the schools in one district in Area A not to provide any independent careers advice. Comments also suggest that other schools may be waiting to see how this issue is addressed before making any longer term decisions about changing their own provision.

5 CONCLUSIONS

This study has explored the issues involved in supporting students to make informed decisions about their future pathways. It has been conducted within the context of the recent policy changes which have transferred responsibility for securing access to independent, impartial careers guidance from local authorities to schools. This transfer has not been accompanied by any corresponding transfer of funding. The study has focused on a specific area in the West Midlands and sought to investigate the response of schools in this area to the changes and the impact of this on effective practice.

There was little evidence of support for the changes among the participants in this study; only two of the interviewees felt that this was a positive step. The key issue identified was the lack of associated funding. Even those in support of the policy felt that it would not be successful without provision of additional funding. The multiple changes that have, and are, taking place within the sector mean that schools have competing priorities and, regardless of how highly they value IAG, they may consider other concerns as more pressing. Recent research (Filmer-Sankey and McCrone, 2012) has found that those schools who are engaged in local partnerships are better prepared to respond to the policy changes. Evidence from this study suggests that the multiple changes taking place were a barrier to schools' ability to engage in such partnerships, through loss of capacity to engage and reduced opportunities to engage, for example, through the demise of partnerships and networks funded by Aimhigher.

The policy guidance given to schools is relatively loose, giving them more flexibility to decide how to fulfil their new statutory responsibility in a way that best fits the needs of their students. The emphasis, therefore, is on schools knowing their students and basing decisions upon this knowledge. However, schools are under other pressures which may influence the decisions they make about IAG provision. Evidence from this study suggests that these pressures have influenced decisions schools have made about both the level of buy-in and what they buy in from LA Careers Services. This has led to some schools significantly reducing the number of days or activities they have bought in, for example, by reducing the number of students who have access to one-to-one interviews with external careers guidance advisors, a reduction in time with PAs for some students or no independent careers guidance provision at all. A number of previous studies (see, for example, National Youth Agency and Local Government Association, 2011; Nicoletti and Berthoud, 2010) have highlighted discrepancies in 'who gets what' in terms of IAG. Drawing on the evidence from this study, the response to the policy changes may act to exacerbate this situation in some schools; students who appear to know what they want to do post-16 may not get access to professional advice and guidance to support them to make informed decisions.

Hooley and Watts (2011) argue that understanding the changing context and their new responsibilities will be a challenge for schools. Evidence from this study supports this in that there is variation in how schools are interpreting the requirement for independence and impartiality. However, in some cases this appeared to be a misinterpretation while in others it appeared to be a deliberate action on the part of some schools based on an attitude of wait and see if the legislation 'has teeth'. Little confidence was expressed in Ofsted as a

means of ensuring accountability, thus offering support for the recent Select Committee's conclusion that the Ofsted framework is not a credible accountability check.

Concern has also been raised about variation in consistency of provision not only between local authorities but between schools (House of Commons Education Committee, 2013). Findings from this study suggest that there will be a lack of consistency between Areas A and B, between academies and LA schools, and among schools generally. A number of schools in Area A have reduced their buy-in and in one district discontinued this completely. Schools in Area B have, for the time being, continued to buy in at the same level. Between-school variation was also apparent. Schools where IAG was given a high priority appeared to be using the changes to the policy as an opportunity to review their practice; to explore how they can 'work smarter' in terms of providing effective IAG and 'value for money'. Other schools appeared to be spreading provision more thinly to cover their new responsibilities, e.g. extending this to younger students but reducing access to professional careers guidance interviews among Year 11 students. Other comments suggest that some schools may also be responding by adopting a 'tick box' approach which prioritises quantity over quality. All these factors may lead to increasing levels of variation between schools and districts in terms of IAG provision in the future.

The status and priority awarded to IAG within the school is a critical factor in improving quality of provision and there was little evidence that the policy changes have impacted positively on this area in the schools studied. While some schools have retained a high priority for IAG, others schools appeared to have a relatively low priority, which in some cases had been reduced in the face of competing priorities for resources. Clearly, the full impact of the policy changes will be felt more in the long term. However, the findings from this study suggest that the short-term impact on practice in some schools has been a negative one. Effective practice seeks to ensure that all students have access to the type of information, advice, and guidance which will enable them to make informed choices about their future direction in order to achieve their full potential. The response to the policy changes to date indicates that there will be a lack of consistency across both districts and schools in Areas A and B. Students in these areas will have access to different levels of IAG and within this, different sorts of activities and access to independent professional careers guidance; all of which are likely to impact upon the decisions they make about their future pathways. Comments made by participants in this study suggest that there may also be variation in the longer term impact of these changes which may be felt more strongly in those areas, like Area B, where there are high levels of deprivation and long standing problems in transition of students to post-16 education and training.

6 REFERENCES

BBC News (2011). *Careers service at risk of 'destruction' warning* [Online], 9th August. Available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-14446649 [accessed 11th November 2011].

Bimrose,J., Barnes, S. and Marris, L. (2008). *Careers education and guidance in Connexions Kent and Medway: Summary of scoping exercise and in-depth case studies.* Institute for Employment Research: Warwick University.

Bimrose, J. (2009). *Careers guidance, identity and development. Beyond Current Horizons publication.* Available at: www.beyondcurrenthorizons.org.uk [accessed 11th November 2011].

Blenkinsop, S., McCrone, T., Wade, P. and Morris, M. (2006). *How do young people make choices at 14 and 16?* (DfES Research Report 773). London: DfES

Customer Interpreter (2005). *Stimulating demand for learning among 14-19 year olds in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. Final Report.* London: Customer Interpreter.

Davies, P., Slack, K., Hughes, A., Mangan, J. And Vigurs, K. (2008). *Knowing where to study? Fees, bursaries and fair access.* Available at: http://www.suttontrust.com/reports/Staffordshire ReportFinal.pdf [accessed 11th November 2011].

DCSF (Department for Children, Schools and Families; December 2007). *The children's plan: Building brighter futures.* Cm 7280. Norwich: HMSO. Available at: http://webarchive.nationalarchives .gov.uk/20130401151715/https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/ The_Childrens_Plan.pdf [accessed 24th January 2013]

DfE (Department for Education; March 2012). *Statutory guidance for head teachers, school staff, governing bodies and local authorities.* Department for Education. Available at: http://www.ukipg.org.uk/meetings/further_and_higher_education_working_party/statutor y_guidance_for_schools_on_careers_guidance.pdf [accessed 24th January 2013]

DfE (Department for Education; March 2013). *Statutory guidance: The duty to secure independent and impartial career guidance for young people in school. For head teachers, school staff, governing bodies and local authorities.* Department for Education, Reference DFE-000362013. Available at: http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/s/careers%20 guidance%20for%20schools%20-%20statutory%20guidance%20-%20march%202013.pdf [accessed 24th April 2013]

Exley, S. (2011). *By hook or by crook.* Times Educational Supplement, 9th December. Available at: http://www.tes.co.uk/article.aspx?storycode=6149256 [accessed 11th November 2011].

Filmer-Sankey, C. And McCrone, T. (2012). *Hidden talents: Examples of transition of careers guidance from Local Authorities to schools* (LGA Research Report). Slough: NFER.

Hooley, T. and Watts, A. G. (2011). *Careers work with young people: Collapse or transition? An analysis of current developments in careers education and guidance for young people in England.* University of Derby: International Centre for Guidance Studies (iCeGS).

Hooley, T., Marriott, J. and Sampson, J. P. (2011). *Fostering college and career readiness: How career development activities in schools impact on graduation rates and students' life success.* University of Derby: International Centre for Guidance Studies.

House of Commons Education Committee (2013). *Careers guidance for young people: The impact of the new duty on schools.* Seventh Report of Session 2012-13, Volume 1. House of Commons

London: The Stationery Office Ltd. Available at: http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ cm201213/cmselect/cmeduc/632/63202.htm [accessed 24th January 2013].

Hughes, D. and Grattion, G. (2009). *Evidence and impact: Careers and guidance-related interventions.* CfBT Education Trust.

Hutchinson, J., Korzeniewski, R. and Moore, N. (2011). *Career learning journeys of Derby and Derbyshire NEETs.* University of Derby: International Centre for Guidance Studies (iCeGS).

Hutchinson, J., Rolfe, H., Moore, N., Bysshe, S., and Bentley, K. (2011). *All things being equal? Equality and diversity in careers education, information, advice and guidance.* Equality and Human Rights Commission, Research Report 71.

Lee, J. (2012). *Schools resort to guerrilla warfare on FE access.* Times Educational Supplement, 30th March, pp. 50-51. Available at: http://www.tes.co.uk/article.aspx?storycode=6202947 [accessed 11th November 2011].

McCaig, C., Adnett, N., Bowers-Brown, T. and Slack, K. (2008). *Fair admissions to higher education: A review of the implementation of the Schwartz Report principles three years on.* Cheltenham: Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA).

MacDonald, R. and Marsh, J. (2005). *Disconnected youth? Growing up in Britain's poor neighbourhoods.* Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Maguire, S. and Rennison, J. (2005). Two years on: the destinations of young people who are not in education, employment or training at 16. *Journal of Youth Studies, 8*(2), 187-201.

McCrone, T., Gardiner, C., Southcott, C. and Featherstone, G. (2010). *Information, advice and guidance for young people* (LG Group Research Report). Slough: NFER.

McCrone, T., Marshall, H., White, K., Reed, F., Morris, M., Andrews, D. and Barnes, A. (2009). *Careers coordinators in schools.* DfES Research Report No. DCSF-RR171.

McCrone, T., Morris, M. and Walker, M. (2005). *Pupil choices at Key Stage 3 – Literature review.* London: DfES.

Morris, M. (2004). *The case for careers education and guidance for 14–19 year olds.* Slough: NFER.

Murray, J. (2013). *Young people left to sink or swim.* The Guardian, 27th August 2013, p. 26.

National Audit Office (2004). *Department for Education and Skills: Connexions Service: Advice and guidance for all young people.* Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General HC 484. London: Stationery Office.

National Union of students (2008). *Recommendations for a new approach to Information, Advice and Guidance.* NUS.

National Youth Agency and Local Government Association (2011). *Into the Future: Young peoples' and teachers' views on career advice.* Local Government Agency.

Nicholls, A. (2011). *Uncertain futures: the impact of cuts to the careers service on the futures of young people.* Stourbridge: Institute of Career Guidance.

Nicoletti, C. and Berthoud, R. (2010). *The role of information, advice and guidance in young people's education and employment choices.* DfE Research Report RR019.

Ofsted (2008). *TellUs3 National Report.* London: Ofsted.

Ofsted (2010). *Moving through the system – Information, advice and guidance.* Manchester: Ofsted.

OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development; 2004). *Career guidance and public policy: Bridging the gap.* Paris: OECD.

Quinn, J., Thomas, L., Slack, K., Casey, L., Thexton, W. and Noble, J. (2005). *From life disaster to lifelong learning: Reframing working class 'drop-out'.* York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Sherbert Research (2008). *Plain English Wave 9. Executive Summary.* London: Sherbert Research.

Slack, K. (2009). *Exploring influences on post-16 choices and destinations of young people in Stoke-on-Trent: A life history approach.* Unpublished doctoral thesis.

Spielhofer, T., Benton, T., Evans, K., Featherston, G., Golden, S., Nelson, J. and Smith, P. (2009). *Increasing participation: Understanding young people who do not participate in education and training at 16 and 17.* DCSF Research Report RR072.

Sutton Trust (2011). *Degrees of success: University chances by individual school.* London: The Sutton Trust.

Smith, D., Lilley, R., Marris, L. and Krechowiecka, I. (2005). A systematic review of research (1988–2004) into the impact of career education and guidance during Key Stage 4 on young people's transitions into post-16 opportunities. In *Research Evidence in Education Library.* London: EPPI-Centre, Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education.

Wiggings, A. and Coe, A. (2009). *Careers guidance and participation in education: Findings from the YELLIS dataset.* Durham University: Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring.