

Central Bedfordshire Council

CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE Date

Careers Education and Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) in Central Bedfordshire – Briefing (October 2017)

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This report relates to a decision that is Non-Key

Purpose of this report

1. This paper is intended to brief Members on the provision of Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) in Central Bedfordshire. It sets out the council's statutory duties, alongside the current national picture. It outlines the council's approach to supporting the CEIAG and skills agenda locally, evaluates the current offer and outlines a series of recommendations/next steps for the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to:

1. Comment on the breadth of CEIAG provision, the council's role as an enabler and facilitator, and what further support we can provide to schools/academies; particularly the role governors can play in supporting this agenda.
2. Discuss and agree the recommendations/next steps in paragraph 43.

Issues

Purpose

1. This paper sets out the council's statutory duties alongside the current national picture. It outlines the council's approach to supporting the CEIAG and skills agenda locally and evaluates the current offer and planned next steps.

National policy & statutory requirements

2. The statutory responsibility to secure high quality CEIAG for students up to 18 years old sits directly with schools/academies and FE colleges. The specific duties outlined in statutory guidance from the Department of Education (DfE), which was updated in April 2017, includes the following:
 - The duty on schools/academies to secure independent careers guidance for all year 8-13 pupils is intended to expand advice and guidance for young people so they are inspired and motivated to fulfil their potential. Schools should help every pupil develop high aspirations and consider a broad and ambitious range of careers.
 - Schools must have a clear strategy to secure careers guidance that includes consideration of how they will link with employers, work closely with the local authority to identify and support vulnerable young people and provide information on the range of options available to young people as they enter post-16 provision.
 - Ofsted will play a greater role in scrutinising the quality of CEIAG provision.
 - Schools/academies must widen access to advice on post 16 options.
3. The guidance also recognises that a young person receiving poor CEIAG is three times more likely to be not in education, employment or training (NEET). It states that whilst online tools have their use, they do not replace face-to-face guidance and do not meet the statutory duty.
4. A link to the guidance is provided in Appendix A, Careers guidance and inspiration for young people in schools and Appendix B Careers guidance for colleges.
5. Young people aged between 13 and 18 can also access online careers information through the National Careers Service website: <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/>
6. This provides online support to people on job hunting, interview techniques, CV writing and learning opportunities. It also provides a contact number for a web chat, but, given that responsibility for provision of CEIAG rests with schools, it does not deliver face-to-face contact for this age group and is not targeted towards young people. Adults aged 19 or older (or 18 or older, who have been referred by Jobcentre Plus or are in custody) are eligible for face-to-face advice and this service is contracted to area-based contractors and a national contact centre.
7. Alongside the change in statutory responsibilities, increased regulation and a shift towards 'employer led' CEIAG, the government has created several new initiatives outside the scope of local authorities to support schools/academies. The key initiative is the national Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC). The primary purpose of the CEC is to make links between young people, schools and the 'world of work'.

8. A key focus of the CEC includes the provision of Enterprise Advisors for schools to help connect them with local business and employer led mentoring schemes. Locally, the CEC operates at a SEMLEP level, but is actively supporting work in Central Bedfordshire. Further details on the CEC can be found via the link below:

<https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/enterprise-adviser-network>

9. In March 2017, the government also launched a Jobcentre Plus 'Support for Schools' initiative, whereby local Jobcentre Plus advisers will offer young people aged 12 – 18 years old insight into the world of work and advice on options like traineeships and apprenticeships. As well as offering advice on the labour market, the advisers also help schools to offer high quality work experience opportunities so that young people can gain direct insights into what potential employers are looking for.
10. In addition, the quality of CEIAG has recently been the focus of the Business, Innovation and Skills and Education Committee, July 2016. A link is provided in Appendix C to access further information.
11. This has made several significant recommendations regarding the future of CEIAG in schools, including a strengthened role for Ofsted, higher level qualifications for delivery staff and a new quality assurance scheme. However, the response and development of a new national careers strategy is currently on hold.
12. Local authorities hold a number of related or supporting statutory duties, including:
 - To secure sufficient suitable education and training provision for all young people aged 16 to 19 and for those up to age 25 with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan.
 - To make arrangements (maintain a tracking system) to identify 16 and 17 year olds who are not participating in education or training and/or who have left provision and put in place robust arrangements to offer support as soon as possible.
 - To make available support that will encourage, enable and assist young people participate in education and training.
 - To ensure that the provision of CEIAG is considered in the delivery and planning of all services for young people – particularly those with the most complex needs.
13. Despite having no direct control over practice, and a number of initiatives that support schools/academies having being transferred to external organisations such as the CEC, it remains a key priority for local authorities to ensure its residents have access to high quality CEIAG. A high-quality offer will promote longer term participation in learning, ensure young people are making informed decisions regarding their futures and provide the skills required to meet the needs of the local economy.

Local need

14. There is a clear aspiration in Central Bedfordshire's Children and Young People's Plan to:

'Provide early high quality independent career advice and work experience opportunities so that young people understand what their career options and choices are'

15. This aspiration is also reflected in the Partnership Vision for Education, which makes a commitment that 'young people should have the skills to be work ready'.

The views of young people

16. In 2103 Central Bedfordshire Council was the first local authority in the country to carry out an audit of its Youth Offer by young people. The Youth Audit identified that the quantity and quality of careers education in schools across Central Bedfordshire was patchy, inadequate and inconsistent. It was subsequently agreed with young people and schools that we would develop a set of minimum standards for CEIAG. These standards provide a framework for both secondary and upper schools and enable all to assess and benchmark progress against what is deemed nationally to be 'best practice'.
17. In 2014, 5,976 young people (23.76% of the youth population of 13 – 19 years olds in Central Bedfordshire) were supported to participate in the national 'Make your Mark' campaign. This enabled young people to vote on their priorities for their local communities and identify specific campaigns that would form the focus of Central Bedfordshire's Youth Parliament. One of the three key priorities identified by young people in Central Bedfordshire was the provision of high quality work experience.
18. The work of Central Bedfordshire Youth Parliament and the 'Better Work Experience' campaign led to a survey of 270 young people to establish their understanding and experience of work experience. This highlighted that:
 - 61% had been able to participate in work experience.
 - 59% found their work experience to be useful.
 - 68% of participants believed work experience should be 'mandatory' at statutory school age.

CBC's Offer

19. In 2010, in line with the change in statutory responsibilities, the decision was taken in Central Bedfordshire to devolve the day to day delivery of CEIAG to schools and academies. This placed the onus on schools/academies to secure impartial information, advice and guidance for their pupils in order for them to make informed decisions regarding their future careers. This excluded work with special schools, support for young people with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) and our looked after children, which has remained the responsibility of the

Youth Support Service (YSS). The YSS has a small team of Level 6 qualified careers staff who are highly experienced in working with vulnerable young people.

20. YSS also commissions high quality CEIAG for young people who are NEET aged 16-19 years old as part of their duty to support young people to participate under 'Raising the Participation Age'. CEIAG is also offered to those young people aged 14+ whom are identified as at significant risk of NEET and who are known to children's services.

21. This approach to targeting resources has been very successful; currently the participation in Education, Employment and Training (EET) figure in Central Bedfordshire is above the national and regional averages and the number of young people who are NEET is at its lowest ever level. The key to our success is in part due to the tenacious, holistic and young person-centred approach taken by experienced, committed and qualified personal advisors.

Feedback from a parent on behalf of a young person: *"Thank-you for everything you have done, V said last week that out of everyone you had helped the most. She said you listened and understood, and always did what you said you would. We're really grateful, a year ago we thought she would never leave the house again, let alone go back to school!"*

22. Since the change in council responsibilities, the YSS has re-focused its support for schools/academies and the general skills agenda. This offer now includes the following:

- Working with schools to set and implement benchmarks around the quality of CEIAG – including the adoption of CEIAG minimum standards.
- Building a network of professionals and schools in order to share best practice, ideas and updates on national policy around CEIAG (including from Ofsted) and Labour Market Information.
- Brokering relationships with national, regional and local organisations that can work with schools to support their CEIAG – in particular the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC).
- Promoting and delivering specific campaigns for and with schools – including significant support for National Apprenticeship week.
- Communicating regular updates around local careers and labour market information, local provision, college open evenings/skills events to young people, schools and the communities including use of social media (www.facebook.com/cbcyouthsupport), town council magazines, Central Essentials and "parent mail". We also produce flyers and business cards which advertise our Facebook page.
- Working with the Regeneration and Business team and Central Bedfordshire College to deliver a local careers and skills event – "Find Your Future" on 2nd November 2017.
- Working alongside the Human Resources team to develop an improved work experience offer at Central Bedfordshire Council.

23. This work is supported on a day to day basis by the YSS 14-19 Partnerships Officer who holds responsibilities around engagement and marketing of services to young people.

Current picture

24. Knowledge and insight from our existing relationships with schools/academies and an analysis of local data/information has enabled the YSS to form a strategic overview of CEIAG in Central Bedfordshire. A summary of the current position is as follows:

CEIAG minimum standards

25. 11 secondary/upper schools have signed up to the CEIAG framework along with the Academy of Central Bedfordshire (ACB). We have two secondary schools pending. We have evaluated the standards with schools/academies and feedback suggests they are a useful benchmarking tool and provide evidence for Ofsted. These have now been refreshed and plans to evaluate the impact of the standards are being developed.
26. In terms of benchmarking, it continues to highlight the following themes in Central Bedfordshire schools:

Strategic:

- All schools have a member of their senior leadership team leading on CEIAG, but their capacity to lead this work varies quite significantly.
- Schools routinely use destination data and Risk of NEET Indicators provided by YSS to assess the impact of their offer.
- Operating models vary quite significantly - from in-house provision to externally commissioned models.
- None have achieved a quality kite mark for CEIAG, although one school is actively working towards the "Investors in Careers Award".

Impartial IAG:

- Those who are at risk of NEET are prioritised by services.
- All students are offered at least one face-to-face careers interview with a trained advisor.
- School Information events are not always routinely attended by other providers of education and training.

Education & Curriculum:

- Young people are not always clear on how to interpret Labour Market Information to help them make informed decisions.
- Careers education is not routinely embedded as a cross curriculum theme.
- Careers inspiration starts at Year 7 in most secondary schools, but it is unclear how this transitions into middle and upper schools.

Employer Engagement:

- Work experience is not routinely offered at Key Stage 4 or 5.

- Employers support subject specific events or talks in most schools.
- Schools attend or host a range of careers events that have good engagement from employers.
- Employers have not been routinely used by schools to mentor or inspire young people. However, 14 have now signed up with the CEC.
- Develop EBP has been awarded the CEC contract to deliver mentoring to young people in schools across Luton and Central Bedfordshire.
- The CEIAG network group is now recognised as a professional study group by Central Bedfordshire's Teaching School and is very well attended by local schools and those from surrounding local authority areas. Sharing of Labour Market Information is a regular agenda item and this is delivered by a member of the Regeneration and Business team.

Engagement with the CEC

27. 14 schools/colleges had engaged with the CEC and signed up to participate in their employer engagement scheme. A further two have agreed to sign up in principle.
28. A total of nine schools had an Enterprise Advisor linked to their school and we anticipate engagement will continue to grow. Both the Regeneration and Business team and the YSS have promoted recruitment to the Enterprise Advisor role with a view to ensuring a majority have Advisors at the earliest possible opportunity.
29. CBC is a key member of the SEMLEP CEC board and has offered support as well as challenge to its delivery. This included highlighting feedback from schools regarding the need for the scheme to have greater momentum, to keep schools fully engaged with progress and to develop an action plan of what work is taking place. This relationship will continue in the current academic year.
30. There is potential for schools to pool resources with the YSS to procure CEIAG services. This would be more cost-effective and ensure a high-quality model that is consistently applied across Central Bedfordshire for all our young people. However, when this was raised at the Head Teachers and Partners Reference Group in January 2016, it did not receive support from schools.

Employment and Skills Board

31. Following feedback from employers through the Employment and Skills Board, YSS and the Regeneration and Business team planned a local skills event – "Find Your Future" on 2nd November 2017 at the Incuba. This enabled employers to share inspiring information on career pathways within their industries, promote their sector and market any vacancies. The daytime event was targeted towards teachers and young people and the evening event was targeted towards parents and those who are NEET. If successful this may become an annual event.

Evaluation

32. The low NEET figure demonstrates that our approach is effective. There are also strong networks and partnerships between CBC and schools which are driving up standards of CEIAG and helping schools understand their responsibilities and make effective use of new government initiatives. However, the market is fragmented and schools have to work with a number of different agencies. As operational models vary significantly, there is not a uniform service or consistent delivery of messages from schools.
33. We understand that it is difficult for schools, young people and their parents to keep up to date with the education landscape, qualification framework and Labour Market Information as it is constantly changing. There is a plethora of online tools and information available, but it is unclear if young people and their parents are always aware of these.
34. On the Youth Support section of CBC's website there is basic information and some links to national sites, but the format is not comprehensive nor particularly attractive to young people. We are currently working with Youth Parliament members to develop a young person's website. This also has the potential to act as a portal to national sites and downloadable tool kits as well as local careers related information to young people and their parents/carers.
35. The National Careers Service provides an All Age online careers service, but it is not targeted specifically at young people, nor does it have local information.
36. In response to a Member enquiry we have recently commissioned a piece of research to explore the merits of a digital solution; our vision is to provide:
- a neutral and highly credible, online information source and single access point for young people, their parents and adults (either seeking employment or skills development within employment);
 - a resource for employers to encourage them to promote their learning (skills development) and job opportunities and act as a source of advice on employing people with additional needs; and
 - a resource to enable schools and other learning providers to better inform and motivate young people to achieve a positive outcome and participate in education, employment or training.

Options for consideration

N/A

Reason/s for decision

N/A

Council Priorities

37. The role of the Youth Support Service in enabling and supporting the provision of CEIAG and the All Age Skills agenda directly contributes to the following strategic priorities of Central Bedfordshire:

- **Improving education and skills**

Young people are supported to learn and improve their educational attainment, make progress and achieve their goals. They will have appropriate knowledge and skills to enter and succeed in their careers.

- **Protecting the vulnerable; improving wellbeing**

Evidence points to a direct link between quality and timely CEIAG and participation in Education, Employment and Training. Local research shows that young people whom are NEET are more likely to suffer from mental health difficulties amongst other complex issues. Every NEET young person adds £56k additional costs to taxpayers over their lifetime (national data).

38. CEIAG contributes to young people having higher aspirations and feeling more positive. With support, they will be able to make informed choices and understand the impact of the risks they take

Corporate Implications

Legal Implications

39. There are no specific legal implications associated with this report. The document outlines the council's statutory duties in paragraph 12.

Financial and Risk Implications

40. There are no specific financial or other risks associated with this report. The report sets out how the council delivers its obligations within existing resources.

Equalities Implications

41. Central Bedfordshire Council has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

- It is important that all children and young people have access to high quality independent and impartial careers information advice and guidance. This will enable all young people and their parents/carers to be able to make informed choices at key life stages. There is also a need to ensure that this includes challenging gender stereotypes in subject choice and careers advice. Gender stereotyping sometimes prevents some boys engaging with schools, and can also limits girls' and boys' ability to pursue their interest and talents and maximise their earning potential.

- The CBC Youth Support Service work with special schools, support for young people with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) and our looked after children, helps ensure that the needs of some of the most vulnerable groups are fully identified and addressed.

Conclusion and recommendations

42. The fundamental belief is that all young people should have high quality careers information, advice and guidance as early as possible. In schools, this should be independent, consistent and delivered to national standards. Children will be happier and more productive at school if the work that they are doing has a clearer purpose and direction towards a career or career options.
43. The recommendations / next steps are to:
 - Develop a new 14-19 offer with schools/academies, colleges and other partners to strengthen our role as an enabler and facilitator of best practice around CEIAG and clarify what can be delivered within existing resources.
 - Actively support the CEC and the expansion of dedicated enterprise advisors for each school. These advisors will be crucial in being able to foster stronger links between schools/academies and local employers.
 - Provide a regular analysis and distribution of labour market intelligence to schools and young people that highlights the needs of the local economy in Central Bedfordshire. The key point for this distribution will be new All Age Skills partnership that will provide a further opportunity for schools to work collaboratively with employers, colleges and training providers.
 - Explore the introduction of an accredited employment award for young people going through schools. This would enable the development of key employability skills (e.g. communication, punctuality), help strengthen CV's and address employers' key concerns regarding the readiness of students to work.
 - Build on the school improvement model to enable peer to peer support to improve the quality of CEIAG.
 - Explore whether CEIAG minimum standards can be used to prepare schools/academies for quality marks such as 'Investors in Careers'.
 - Explore how the CEIAG minimum standards can be adapted for use by area special schools.
 - Lead by example and offer a high-quality work experience programme to young people who go to school in Central Bedfordshire.
 - Conclude the research to explore the need and feasibility of a digital careers portal and make recommendations on this.
 - Work with Youth Parliament to develop a user-friendly website that provides up to date and relevant information that is accessible, comprehensive and able to direct users to local and national resources.

Appendices

Appendix A: Careers guidance and inspiration for young people in schools

The following Appendix is attached/ provided through an electronic link:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-provision-for-young-people-in-schools>

Appendix B: Careers guidance for colleges

The following Appendix is attached/ provided through an electronic link:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-for-colleges--2>

Appendix C: Business, Innovation and Skills and Education Committee Paper (July 2016):
<https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmese/205/20502.htm>

Background Papers

None

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