Greater Manchester Careers Education and Guidance Survey Case Study Phase

Final Report

Paul Davies
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This report is based on visits to ten Case Study institutions which were conducted between February and May 2014. Paul Davies is based in the Department of Educational Research, Lancaster University

1. Introduction

The case study phase of the Greater Manchester Careers Education and Guidance Survey was undertaken to explore in more detail the trends and patterns which emerged from the questionnaire phase which was undertaken between September and November 2013. The questionnaire findings showed that 49% of schools disagreed with the Ofsted[1] conclusion that the new statutory duty for careers guidance "is not working well in schools", which suggested that the position of careers guidance in the Greater Manchester area was different from the national picture. However, 11 out of the 12 colleges who returned questionnaires actually agreed with the Ofsted conclusion, and from their perspective students were not as well informed about future career opportunities as they were in the past. Consequently, it was decided to pursue this interesting difference in perspective through a series of case studies with schools and colleges with the purpose of collecting the richer comments and explanations that tend not be given on questionnaires.

In addition to this, another theme, probably related to the first, was apparent in the questionnaire data. This was the role played by the Inspiring IAG Award in promoting and sustaining high quality careers education and guidance provision in schools and colleges. This was clearly an important factor which had enabled institutions to maintain their careers provision during a turbulent period for careers education and guidance which resulted from public sector financial cuts and the Education Act 2011 where the statutory duty for providing careers guidance was passed to schools. It was hypothesised that the Inspiring IAG Award, which had a high profile across Greater Manchester, might provide a partial explanation of why the Greater Manchester data was different from Ofsted's national data.

The original intention for the case study phase was to divide the school and college visits into two distinct strands, with the first strand focusing on agreements and disagreements with the Ofsted conclusion and the second addressing the role played by the Inspiring IAG Award. However, in practice it was obvious there was considerable overlap between the two strands, and what emerged from the case studies was a list of key factors, one of which was the Inspiring IAG Award, which created good careers provision. There was a considerable amount of agreement about the importance of these key factors with both schools and colleges concluding that if they were in place, schools' statutory duty to provide careers guidance would work well. However, it was also explained that it was increasingly difficult to supply all of the factors, and this situation was becoming even more challenging and complex because of changes to what students needed and how they engaged with their careers programmes.

1.1 The sample

The schools and colleges shortlisted for the case study visits were those which had strong careers education and guidance programmes. The visits were designed to be thorough, and a target sample of seven schools and three colleges were asked to provide access to the careers co-ordinator or manager, a member of the senior leadership team, other relevant staff such as special education needs co-ordinators and tutors, and groups of students. The

1 Ofsted (2013) 'Going in the right direction? Careers guidance in schools from 2012

plan was to interview groups of Year 12[2] students because they could comment on the careers education and guidance they had so far received (sometimes in a different institution) as well as that they were currently receiving. However, constructing the sample proved difficult because several schools and colleges were unable to provide the necessary level of access to their staff and students. Nevertheless, a sample of six schools and four colleges was eventually produced with nine considering themselves to have strong careers provision, whilst the remaining one believed their provision was on the point of developing following the appointment of a senior leader with a commitment to careers education and guidance. The schools were a mix of 11-16, 11-18, and a special school. The college sample included both traditional Further Education and Sixth Form Colleges. Seven out of the 10 Greater Manchester local authority areas were covered by the case studies.

The Interview Sample

Staff		**Students**	
Heads/Deputies/Assistants	6	Year 9	6
Section heads	2	Year 10	7
Careers managers	6	Year 11	16
Other staff	15	Year 12/13	42
Careers advisers (internal)	3		
Careers advisers (external)	4		

This report has the following structure:

- Staff interviews;
- Student interviews;
- Discussion;
- Conclusions and recommendations.

2. Staff Interviews

The staff interviews began with an explanation of why the case studies were being undertaken, particularly the need to shed more light on why there were differing levels of agreement with the Ofsted conclusion. The responses to this explanation were very positive as the current condition of careers education and guidance across Greater Manchester was something about which people had speculated but were not sure, for example,

> "It difficult to know what's going on at the moment it is so patchy. If schools employ their own staff they can say nothing else but that it is working. It's a question of how you define CEIAG and then determine the quality of it.
> *Careers Adviser College I*

2 The final sample contained 11-16 schools, so in these cases younger students were interviewed and not Year 12

Staff suggested that the value of such case studies would not be in quantifying what was happening across Greater Manchester (as this was the purpose of the earlier survey) but in understanding the factors which contributed to good quality careers provision in some schools and colleges, and sharing this with a wider audience so that others could learn from these examples of good practice.

Although the main and original focus of the study was on school programmes, data from colleges proved very useful. First, because college staff had gained a considerable amount of information about school programmes from their conversations with new intakes of students, and second, because the key factors applied to colleges too. This would suggest that the conditions and dynamics which produce a strong careers programme apply across different types of institutions. Hence, the college data played a dual role in adding to the understanding of the school situation and further validating the significance of these key factors.

The factors listed by staff are presented below and have been grouped into seven main categories with a brief discussion linked to each of them. They are:

- Leadership and a vision of careers as an investment;
- Status and motivation of careers manager;
- External facing;
- Internal structures: referrals and communication;
- Location and physical features;
- Managing change;
- Reflective and self-critical.

Although it was anticipated prior to the study that the Inspiring IAG Award might be a key factor[3], the interviewer did not ask a specific question about the role of the Award as it was felt that this needed to be raised by staff rather than suggested to them. The most notable feature of the data was the amount of agreement which existed across the case studies which emphasised the importance of school leadership and their decision to invest time and money in ensuring that appropriate external and independent careers guidance was bought in. It was also evident that robust careers programmes depended on appointing someone to be in charge of the careers provision who understood the role and who was capable and committed to fulfilling it.

2.1 Leadership and a vision of careers as an investment

This joint factor was considered to be the most important in determining careers provision in schools and colleges, with Head Teachers, Principals and other senior staff playing a pivotal role. For example,

> "The key thing is to have a leader who is passionate about it and can drive it forward"
> *Deputy Head School A*

3 This was based on previous evaluation undertaken by the author.

> "I have a vision – what I want to achieve for my school. I believe that without a good careers programme you won't get aspirations, and without aspirations you won't get good exam results. But I know that as a head I'm in a minority".
> *Head School C*

The leadership and vision that led to good quality careers provision rested on two main pillars, one philosophical and the other more pragmatic. The philosophical pillar was a commitment to social justice and the belief that all young people, and especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, had a right to careers education and guidance to prepare them for life. The pragmatic pillar was the argument that rigorous and robust careers programmes produced favourable educational outcomes because they encouraged aspiration, motivation and resilience. As one deputy head explained, whilst giving the "careers money" to the English or maths departments might result in some short term gains, investing in careers provision is a longer term, strategic decision which is more likely to boost overall levels of attainment. A similar explanation was provided in another school.

> "Careers is an investment in the child…. It comes from a view of education which takes in life beyond **** (name of school)…. It requires passion by the head and senior leaders. It is not about having a GCSE factory….. You can't be an outstanding school if you are just a GCSE factory"
> *Head and Assistant Head School E* (*Combined Response)*

One of the most significant points emerging from interviews with senior leaders was the references they made to their own life histories, education, and even previous roles and occupations. They had a positive predisposition to careers education and guidance which had been shaped by their own and their wider family experience.

A leadership vision which supported careers programmes manifested itself both in terms of decisions, for example the decision to spend money on buying in independent external careers advice and seeking the Inspiring IAG Award, and in terms of tone, for example, where apprenticeships were given the same status as university places and where the academic was not necessarily viewed as superior to the vocational.

2.2 Status and motivation of careers manager[4]

Careers managers had the responsibility for both contributing to the overall vision and for developing, and even protecting, careers provision in institutions where there was constant competition for scarce resources. Consequently, careers managers with high status were

4 The term careers manager is used in this report to refer to the member of staff (often a middle manager) with responsibility for running the careers programme. This role was given different titles in the case study institutions.

more likely to be successful than those whose position in the school formal (and informal) hierarchy was weak. In one school, the careers manager was described by the Head as "someone who I can trust to do the job and not just occupy the position".

To some extent, the role of careers manager appealed to teachers with a particular outlook on teaching, for example,

> "I love working with young people, to see them through and equip them for the next step"
> *Careers Manager School E*

In addition to this, careers managers needed to believe in the role and its importance within the institution, and the fact that this point was stressed by almost all of those interviewed suggested that this was not always the case within the teaching profession.

> "I got the job as an extra responsibility. I'm trying to make careers something, not just the usual, trying to think about what it requires. I take it seriously because of my own experiences of making the wrong choices"
> *Careers Manager School D*

This belief provided the motivation to press on in a job which was becoming more difficult to do because of financial and timetabling restrictions, plus the challenge of maintaining student morale at a time of economic difficulties. To a large extent, effective careers managers exploited outside sources of assistance to help them with their internal struggles. For example, the Inspiring IAG Award was used a set of standards which required resources to achieve. It therefore provided the careers manager with an argument to use when negotiating for additional resources, or at least maintaining the current level.

2.3 External facing

Careers provision was more likely to be good if institutions had an ethos which encouraged working with external partners from business and the wider community. Such external facing institutions believed that time spent on extra-curricular projects enhanced and enriched students' experiences, supported their academic achievement, and was not "wasted time away from lessons".

External facing institutions were more likely to value the following:

- External sources of expertise and assistance provided in the form of career practitioner network meetings and support in achieving the Inspiring IAG Award.

> "I found it (IAG Award) a valuable process. I believe that if you know what you should be doing its better than muddling through. It confirmed and verified that we were

on the right track. In fact that we were doing some very good things and this is good for Ofsted"
Careers Manager College J

- Working with an external and independent careers adviser who was encouraged to immerse him/herself in the school and who was given ready access to staff and to student data. This person was viewed as being able to make a contribution which could not be made by an internal staff member because the external careers adviser possessed channels to networks and groups that an internal staff member would not have.

"One of the attractive things about****(name of external provider) is the fact they have the connections to other agencies. It's the external links that an external adviser can bring in that is valuable"
Section Head College I

Secondly, a teacher delivering careers advice would possibly put teaching responsibilities above career guidance responsibilities, for example in not setting aside enough time to keep up to date with changes in the job market [5].

"Careers adviser needs to be knowledgeable about the local labour market, schools need local labour market information"
Careers Manager School C

Finally, external facing schools did not assume that teachers were the only ones responsible for the education and welfare of their students.

"Having an external set of eyes is invaluable because one establishment cannot produce 100% of what a child needs. An external careers provider is a different set of eyes and a different voice, perhaps even providing an extra spin on things, perhaps even more objective"
Head School E

- Out of school learning such as work experience and enterprise projects. There was a strong belief that in school learning was enhanced when linked to 'real world' learning delivered either on employer premises or by employers visiting schools and colleges.

"I'd like to offer more work experience but this is not practical, so we do a lot of enterprise activities to offset

5 This is sometimes referred to as the "classroom press" and is an argument for having some roles in school which are not occupied by teachers. For example, see reference to Hubernam (1983) in Michael Fullan (1991) *The New Meaning of Educational Change*

this. These seem to work really well and are often better than the usual careers lessons"
Careers Manager School C

However, it was reported that strong leadership was needed to maintain an external facing position, since most of the current policies were making schools and colleges focus on internal teaching and learning issues.[6]

2.4 Internal structures: referrals and communication

Good careers provision had a clear centre (the careers manager with leadership support) with channels of communication reaching out into the institution. It was argued that a strong and active team at the centre would be relatively ineffective if the channels did not work. At the end of the channels were staff such as tutors and mentors who occupied vital positions as they had the most frequent contact with students, and it was the willingness of tutors and mentors to use these channels, and the degree of enthusiasm they showed for this aspect of their role, that was a key ingredient in making the provision work.

Information flowed two ways though the channels. Key dates, events, visit opportunities, and so forth, were passed down the system through tutors to students. Conversely, referrals for guidance were passed up the system from tutors to careers managers and careers advisers. These internal structures and channels of communication appeared to work reasonably well in all the institutions visited. Nevertheless, all had at least some concern about the effectiveness of this, the key worry being that there were some tutors who either did not take their role seriously enough, or viewed communication about careers as less important than communication about academic subjects[7].

For example, in one college there was a concern about variability in the engagement of tutors with the careers programme, and this had been noted by students as is evident from the following contrasting experiences,

"Tutors just read email messages out and we chat and socialise, nobody takes much notice of them"

"Tutors do try and develop the messages they have been given"
Students College J

This was an issue recognised by the careers manager who had eventually found an ally in the senior management team.

"I battled to make sure tutors deliver the programme, but I'm not on senior management. Then ****(name of

6 Recent guidance DFE (2014) *Careers guidance and inspiration in schools* was published as these case studies were being undertaken. However, staff interviewed did not think encouraging institutions to work more closely with employers would have a major impact on their careers programmes or overall ethos.
7 Concerns about tutorial systems were mentioned by both school and college staff.

> senior manager) said we need to do some training and then hold tutors to account. This has been a good outcome"
> *Careers Manager College J*

2.5 Location and physical features

Where the careers area was located was a reasonably good indicator of the importance attached to it by the institution, especially if this had received serious consideration during a period of new building or the refurbishment of existing premises. Examples were seen of very visible and very accessible careers areas located at the front of premises, or at points where students would automatically walk pass during the day. Several schools discussed the importance of "investing in" the external careers adviser, and one way of doing this was in the provision of good premises, for example,

> "When we planned the new building we gave a lot of thought to giving ****(name of careers adviser) an office with a nice space outside her door. It's got a nice feel in there as you'll see later when I show you around"
> *Head School B*

Not only were these career areas spaces which students did not have to seek out, they were also designed to encourage students to enter, browse and ask questions. It was explained that they reflected a change in approach to careers guidance, a departure away from the concept of a fixed careers appointment to one where guidance could be obtained in a less formal "drop in" manner.

2.6 Managing change

Institutions which had strong careers provision had been able to modify and strengthen this even though they had been presented with a number of recent economic and policy challenges. To an extent they recognised that reforms to careers education and guidance were part of more significant changes taking place in the wider educational world and the labour market, and whilst wishing to avoid clichés, they viewed the Education Act 2011 as an opportunity as well as a challenge. For example, whilst having decided to continue purchasing careers advice from an external provider, they recognised there had been a shift in the locus of power, and they now wished to reconstruct careers provision with them at the centre as the customer.

> "We tailor the service, we sit down termly and go through the service menu and buy the things we want"
> *Careers Manager School D*

In particular, as customer they wanted to exercise control over the external careers adviser bought in.

> "I only signed the agreement if I got****(name of careers adviser). ….. Important to have stability in terms of careers adviser. I might have changed the contract if there was a constant change of staff"
> *Head School B*

> "We have lost our long standing Connexions Adviser. We have got to have stability and the new one has got to understand the ethos of the school"
> *Deputy Head School F*

However, even though they were keen to use their new powers, they also felt they needed to exercise these within a regulated framework such as the one provided by the Inspiring IAG Award.

> "The IAG Award shows we have got provision in place for guidance. It's a good award for the school and goes across so many categories. It's good for auditing provision and the feedback we got was positive"
> *Careers Manager School D*

Others had recognised that in their institution traditional approaches to careers work needed to change and alternative methods of delivery were needed. A deputy head thought that in the current situation the most valuable attributes of a careers manager were "risk taking and resilience". In particular, the standard careers programme taught by non-specialist tutors was something that could possibly be seen to have run its course. For example, two schools had decided to switch from careers lessons to projects, events and off timetable days, and this was viewed as an improvement.

> "Not missing a careers programme so much because tutors are not always motivated"
> *Careers Manager School C*

> "All our careers lessons are gone, but what we now have is better than having careers lessons which can be a bit staid when not taught by a specialist and where students don't take them seriously"
> *Careers Manager School E*

There appeared to be four steps in this reconstruction:

- Step One – clarify what is meant by careers education and guidance at a time when students are no longer leaving education at 16. For example, even though most teenagers are making educational rather than occupational choices, they require careers guidance when the educational choices will have an impact on occupational opportunities.

- Step Two – decide whether the institution can provide careers guidance itself or needs to purchase it from an external provider. For example, who is best equipped to discuss occupational impacts with students?

- Step Three - if careers guidance is purchased from an external provider, what can they as the customer actually demand? For example, the ideal scenario was to be supplied with a careers adviser who will be attached to the institution for several years in order to build a relationship with it and share its ethos. If such a person was not supplied, then alternatives will be sought.

- Step Four – encourage and enable a strong partnership to be formed between the careers adviser and careers manager so they can identify priorities and map out an annual work plan, such as amending traditional approaches to careers education and introducing new elements such as organising a visit programme by former students.

2.7 Reflective and self-critical

There was a degree of irony in the fact that those staff who were most committed to and confident about their institution's careers provision were also self-critical of certain aspects of this, and they were as ready to discuss perceived deficiencies as well as perceived strengths. This suggests that a reflective and evaluative approach is another key ingredient in making good careers programmes.

> "We get a lot of feedback from parents and we make changes"
> *Careers Manager School D*

> "Do a lot of pupil voice here, do a lot of evaluation. What we do is student led"
> *Careers Manager School E*

> "It requires constant attention and hard work. We are always evaluating and evolving the curriculum"
> *Deputy Head School F*

A range of concerns were listed, and two of the main ones were the effectiveness of tutorial systems, especially problems associated with busy tutors and the importance they attached to their careers role.

> "Our experience with tutors is mixed but is getting better. We are monitoring tutors, we use lesson observations. We are getting to manage the tutors"
> *Careers Manager School D*

And a dominant academic ethos which prevented some careers messages from having an impact. For example, a prevailing view that academic post-16 courses were superior to

vocational ones, that higher education offered better prospects than apprenticeships, and that 'Russell Group Universities' were more desirable than 'Metropolitan Universities'. To an extent this concern were lessened if there was a supportive senior leadership team, but in large and complex institutions there were often embedded views which were difficult to change.

Reflective and self-critical staff were acutely aware of what were described as "major losses", such as the reduction in work experience opportunities. However, there was a common view that even when this was the case, strong careers provision could be built around the two main constituent parts of a careers programme, guidance and education. The guidance element depended on enabling as many students as possible to have access to independent careers advice supplied by a qualified person working for an external supplier. This was based on a partnership with the supplier where they would attempt to ensure stability in the attachment of the adviser to the institution, whilst the institution would enable the careers adviser to become part of the team and share in its ethos. The education element needed to have a central logic running through the programme which held the constituent parts, such as the tutorial programme, visits, enterprise activities, volunteering, and so on, together. Moreover, it was also important to map this provision against an external standard such as the Inspiring IAG Award which would enable the institution to ensure that important key components of a quality programme were in place.

3. Student Interviews

Data gathered from group interviews with students is presented under three headings:

- Prior experiences of careers education and guidance;
- Students' needs and dispositions;
- What a good careers programme would look like.

3.1 Prior experiences of careers education and guidance

The most notable feature of the students' responses was the variation in their experiences. It was clear that this variation occurred at every level of the local education system.

From local authority to local authority – students interviewed in colleges had attended schools in different Greater Manchester local authorities, and even though the numbers in this qualitative sample were relatively modest, it was possible to identify patterns of responses linked to different local authorities. This was a situation noted by teachers too. For example,

> "The main issue for careers is the quality of the buy back. The quality varies from LA to LA. We have kept our careers adviser who works well with the school"
> *Careers Manager School E*

From school to school – even within the same local authority there were variations in the experiences of students who had attended different schools, for example, in the proportion of Year 11 students who had an interview with an external careers adviser. For instance, the following students, currently at the same college but who had attended different schools with the same local authority, said,

> "The school said they had to pay for careers, so only some saw the careers lady…yea, only some. I saw the lady, but she just gave us prospectuses"

> "My careers advice was better than that. I had two sessions with the guidance counsellor – showed me exactly what to do"
> *Students College H*

From tutor to tutor – students who had attended the same school reported quite different experiences even though they were broadly similar types of students. For example, in one school a particular tutor referred a large percentage of his students to the external careers adviser whilst other tutors did not. Two students from the same school, and now on the same course at college, described the careers provision at their school as "a bit random" since one was offered a careers interview whilst the other was not.

> "A woman talked to some people individually and gave the rest of us sheets - list of websites. About a quarter saw this woman. I don't know why a quarter, I didn't know what was going on. I was OK though, I sorted it out online… I have the skills to get information online, it was easy for me"
> *Student College I*

However, although student reports of their prior experiences of careers education and guidance suggested that the overall system was fragmented, and even though the term fragmented is often used to describe a system with deficiencies, it was also the case that about half of the students interviewed thought that some of these fragments were working extremely well, and numerous examples of good practice were supplied including:

> "****(name of careers adviser) is a genius, she helps with drafting letters for work experience, she points out websites and she also puts up apprenticeship information. My family can't sort me out like ****(name of careers adviser) can."
> *Student School B*

> "I loved the careers adviser at my school. He was so friendly and helpful. We all got to see him, it was compulsory"
> *Student College J*

On the other hand, some of the fragments were of less good quality, and this was often due to students' perceptions that they were being merely processed by a careers system which was not capable of meeting individual needs.

> "Careers advice at school is poor, you need to find out more about a person and not just look at them academically. You need more information about a person"
>
> "To be better careers interviewers need to ask us more questions about US!. They just give us information".
> *Students College H*

Taking all of the students' comments into account, their experiences of careers education and guidance depended on the extent to which:

- There was interesting and relevant programme of visits, speakers and activities;
- The people delivering careers programmes gave the impression they cared about individual student's futures;
- An appointment could be made with an external careers adviser relatively easily;
- Advice and guidance was tailored to individual needs and was realistic but also encouraging. For example, one student remembered the guidance she had been given as "very pessimistic in tone", whilst another described it "as a boost when I thought my chances were slim".

An impression gained from the group interviews with students was their awareness of the pressure careers provision was under, especially in schools. This level of awareness was slightly surprising and was partly due to the fact that some had older siblings and friends who had benefitted from what was reported to be "better" careers programmes. There was also an element of self-selection as many in the Years 12/13 sample had volunteered to take part in the group interviews because of their interest in the theme of careers education and guidance. The main consequence of this pressure on careers provision was that a significant minority of the sample thought that although they had taken part in a careers programme, they had been processed through it in a rather superficial manner rather than having their individual needs and circumstances identified and discussed.

3.2 Students' needs and dispositions

A particularly interesting feature of the group interviews was that in addition to commenting on their careers experiences, students also commented on their student colleagues. They suggested that a large number failed to take advantage of careers education and guidance opportunities and either took little interest in career planning or left this until the last minute. They also noted that a sizeable minority of students (one estimate was about 20%) did not pay much attention to formal careers programmes because they felt capable of planning their future using their own skills and resources and those of their family. It was

suggested that these belonged to a generation of students who had gone through school at a time when careers education and guidance provision was being reduced, and consequently they viewed themselves and their family as primarily responsible for their career planning. It was argued that, overall, the very varied needs and dispositions of students made it difficult for institutions to supply a careers programme that met everyone's requirements and, as such, careers programmes were always vulnerable to criticism.

Students were asked to describe how contemporary young people made career decisions if they did not have access to, or chose not to use, formal careers programmes. Their responses have been condensed into four general 'types' of student.

- '*Type A*' – motivated, confident and resourceful students who would research options on-line and seek out the advice of family and family friends if necessary. For example, a student who discussed routes into legal careers with an aunty who was a solicitor, and another student who used a family friend to explore careers in child care before deciding to continue with A levels to become a nurse.

  "I'm a self-motivated person. I would not want to depend on school careers advice. I researched the Russell Group universities and talked to my family "
  Student College J

- '*Type B*' - the less motivated and confident who nevertheless made appropriate and informed decisions because their family played an active role in gathering information and advice. For example, a student whose mother took a day off work and drove her to several local colleges to collect prospectuses.

  "She doesn't do the internet, my mum, so we drove from college to college to pick up the information. We were able to find this course which is great"
  Student College I

- '*Type C*' – students who obtained partial information about opportunities, but whose final decisions were based on recommendations of friends. For example, a student who made a demanding journey across the region because a friend had recommended a college in another local authority as better than the local one.

  "I didn't know what to do after school so I searched on line for a college course. I knew people who came here so I applied. They said get into college and they will give you advice"
  Student College H

- '*Type D*' – students with very little idea of what to do and who often chose an inappropriate opportunity just to remain with a group of friends. For example, a student who initially decided to follow A levels at a college because his friends were

going there and who eventually transferred to a vocational course at a different college because he concluded he was unsuited to A level study.

> "I knew from the start that A levels would be wrong for me, but I just ended up at **** (name) with my mates. After a few weeks it was clear I was on the wrong course. I was lucky that I was able to come here"
> *Student College I*

There was a suggestion that some students entered 16-19 education to avoid making decisions about future careers. It was explained that for these, obtaining a place on any course was almost as useful as obtaining a place on the right course, because 16-19 education was seen increasingly as a time and a place to gain a clearer picture of future options, even if this involved switching courses in the first weeks or even after the first year.

> "So many students come to college as a stop gap to give them the time to sort out what they want to be"
> *Tutor College G*

3.3 *What a good careers programme would look like*

Students described programmes which when analysed had four main characteristics:

- Understandable;
- Balanced;
- Blended;
- Focused.

They needed to be understandable in terms of definition and how they operated. Students needed some assistance in understanding what careers education and guidance actually meant when so many of them anticipated staying in education for a considerable number of years. They felt comfortable with definitions which emphasised the occupational consequences of educational decisions, and which drew attention to gathering additional skills such as through enterprise activities. They also wanted to understand why the programme operated the way it did. For example, why some students were offered careers interviews and work experience placements, whilst others were not.

> "****(Name of carers adviser) is good at linking it all together – sort of stuff you could put on a personal statement for university…work experience, part time jobs, those sorts of things"
> *Student School B*

Careers provision was viewed as balanced if all the available options were given equal attention. For example, one group of students spoke of a hierarchy of options with 'Russell Group Universities' top, vocational courses at less good universities second, and

apprenticeships third. However, one student (in this all female group) thought this hierarchy might not be accurate because the group's knowledge of apprenticeships was not good because "they are mainly a lad's thing."

> " Careers advice is good but we know they care about university more than apprenticeships. They care about who goes to university, especially the good universities"
> *Student College J*

Careers information and advice needed to be bended in terms of being delivered in a variety of formats and in a variety of settings. This variety included lessons, speakers, on-line research, activities, work experience and individual interviews. Students explained that the strength of such a programme was that each element was likely to be more effective because if its links with the others. For example, lessons could suggest which websites to use, and work experience could be something to talk about during careers interviews.

> "The internet is expert……no there are too many different sources……..I can see a role for personal opinion from someone who knows you at school……yea better than your mum……my mum helped me!! ……my teacher is good……..I want to meet the careers adviser"
> *Fragments from discussion amongst students at School C*

Finally, careers programmes need to be focused on the individual. In essence, the traditional face to face careers interview was seen as valuable because it was only here that individual circumstances and aspirations could be discussed in detail. Individual interviews could be useful both for generating new ideas and for simply confirming the wisdom of pre-existing plans. Even those students who knew exactly what they wished to do, and who might not have sought an interview, were reassured that emergency interviews were available (such as after exam results) if a rapid change of direction was needed.

> "You need to talk to someone privately, not go online. Some people need persuading and pushing, need someone there to help them.
> *Student College H*

4. Discussion

4.1 Reflections on staff interviews

Contemporary careers education and guidance provision in England is often described as 'patchy', 'inconsistent' or a 'postcode lottery', and there is a concern that the Education Act (2011) is adding to this. The message arising from the Case Study Phase is that this is also the case in Greater Manchester with students reporting variation in provision at every level. Since the Education Act (2011) removed national structures and frameworks for careers education and guidance, much now depends on the commitment of individual schools and colleges, and there is evidence that this commitment is present amongst the case study

institutions who, in spite of their perceived short comings, are offering good careers programmes.

A careers manager in one school, and a senior leader in another, both argued that very little has in fact changed. They explained that at the root of good careers provision is a trio comprising a head or deputy, a careers manager and a careers adviser. If the head is committed to careers education and guidance, and the careers manager and careers adviser are viewed by the wider staff as capable of fulfilling their roles, careers provision will be strong, and this was the case both prior to the Education Act (2011) and since it. This is what has not changed.

On the other hand, other staff suggested there have been significant changes. The change in the statutory duty has meant that there is less external pressure on institutions to provide careers education and guidance of a particular type. And even in the most committed institutions, careers managers reported having to constantly make a case for resources to protect provision. Having an external standard in the form of the Inspiring IAG Award is very useful therefore as it can be used to strengthen the hand of the careers manager in the negotiation of resources.

> "Careers will always be a struggle for me because I work in a school and it is not an examination subject"
> *Careers Manager School E*

> "We are going through a period of readjustment whilst Connexions providers put their house in order"
> *Tutor College H*

The two quotations provided above are illuminating in that they refer to both the current pressures and opportunities within the 'careers world'. Struggling for time and resources is arguably a given factor for careers education and guidance, and this stems from its non-exam status. Nevertheless, the careers manager who made this statement was very satisfied with her role, and from spending an entire morning with her it was clear that she had a pivotal role in school and excellent relations with her colleagues. However, she also explained that the current situation could change quite rapidly and that she would be forced to amend and adapt the programme at the school. It appeared that she possessed the resilience required to fulfil the role as was mentioned earlier by the deputy head in School A.

The second quotation was made by a very experienced college tutor who was able to take a historical perspective on careers education and guidance. She was optimistic because she believed that the current concerns about careers provision, as reported by Ofsted in the autumn of 2013, could produce some fresh thinking. In particular she argued that careers programmes needed to return to their traditional aims and objectives where the emphasis was placed on the economic imperative of providing the channel through which labour market information is passed into schools. She speculated that, in time, apprenticeships would increase in popularity and availability, and this would be the driver for enhanced careers programmes.

4.2 Reflections on student interviews

Approximately half of the Years 12/13 students interviewed thought they had good careers advice at school, and almost all of them believed they were currently benefitting from helpful careers programmes. However, they also reported that large numbers of students in their secondary schools (this number cannot be quantified accurately in a qualitative survey such as this) either did not receive what they needed or had become disengaged from formal careers programmes. This disengaged group consisted of those who either did not expect much help from school and who fell back on family support, and those who postponed thoughts of career planning until they reached 17 or 18 years of age. For many of these 'postponers' the key influence on their immediate 'post-16' decision was what their friends were doing.

The students had mixed thoughts about some of the main features of the modern 'careers scene'. Whilst acknowledging that this study is not based on a representative sample, it would appear from speaking to students that:

- Apprenticeships are not widely understood, and in some institutions are viewed as the poor relations of superior opportunities such as places at 'Russell Group' universities.

- On-line careers resources are viewed as reasonably useful in gathering background information, but not very useful in helping with actual decisions.

- Students think more visits to, and visits from, employers would be useful, but they doubt if enough of these could be organised in already busy timetables to provide them with a good cross section of available opportunities in the Greater Manchester region.

5. Conclusions

> "It (careers education and guidance) works when schools are proactive and know what they want from it. Most teachers are subject based and driven by results. They need to see the link between careers and results. If a school thinks its results are holding it back they are more likely to spend money on maths and English because this will have a short term effect. With careers it is a long lag time" *Deputy Head School A*

The 10 institutions were chosen because they had good careers programmes and, as such, disagreed with the Ofsted conclusion in as much as it applied to them. Seven factors emerged which enabled institutions to maintain and even develop their careers work at a time when careers provision generally was considered to be in decline. Not all of the seven factors were in place and functioning effectively in all the schools and colleges, but enough were to support a strong careers offering.

The purpose of presenting the findings in this report as a list of seven factors is to identify areas which could become the focus of the support required to help institutions develop their careers education and guidance provision. In essence, how can institutions be helped if these factors are not already present within them? The quote provided above by the Deputy Head in School A suggests that a challenge faced by some schools is that teachers are subject based and need to be convinced that a strong careers programme can boost results. It is also apparent from the quote that this can take time. Consequently, it could be argued that of the seven factors, leadership and vision is the most important, and whereas some schools are led by heads who have a positive predisposition towards careers education and guidance and a clear vision for this strand of the curriculum, this may not be the case everywhere. Therefore, it is likely that increased opportunities for dialogue between heads and external agencies such as New Economy would be useful, where those heads who are already committed to strong careers programmes can make a case for this provision, and where those who are less committed can air their issues and concerns. Furthermore, the value of external partnerships can also be emphasised as part of these dialogues. Especially the role played by the Inspiring IAG Award in providing both a template for good practice, and a renewed focus on careers education and guidance needing to take account of national labour market trends in general and Greater Manchester trends in particular.

In addition to the support which could be given to leaders, there are a number of other ways in which external agencies may be able to support careers education and guidance programmes, and these can be grouped into what can be placed *within* schools and colleges and what can be placed *around* them.

Placed within: the IAG Award; stability in terms of the external careers adviser; outside perspectives and labour market information

- Promoting and developing the Inspiring IAG Award. All of the 10 institutions valued this, and even though the current policy agenda rests on the premise that individual schools and colleges are the best judge of their careers education and guidance requirements, the data from the case studies indicates that an external quality framework can be very useful too.

- Whilst staff turnover is inevitable, a stable scenario where a careers adviser is attached to an institution for a considerable period of time and immerses her/himself in it does seem to be a very important contributory factor. It is significant that the Year 12 and 13 students in School B referred to their careers adviser by her first name, whilst students interviewed in Colleges H and G had less clear cut memories from their schools of a “careers woman” or “careers lady”. Measures taken to enable the same external careers adviser to be attached to an institution for as long as possible are likely to reap rewards.

- Institutions valued what they could not provide themselves from internal resources. External professionals linked to institutions provide an outside perspective, labour market information (especially in relation to apprenticeships) and a channel through

which schools and colleges can access wider networks. As the tutor in College I explained, this is the main asset possessed by an external supplier of careers guidance and its value needs to be continually emphasised.

Placed around: training opportunities/conferences; access to groups to reduce isolation

- The careers manager in School E described the struggles in her job, yet she was still enthusiastic about her role and had an optimistic outlook. She displayed a resilience (regarded as vital by the deputy head in School A) which was rooted in her reflective and evaluative approach to her work. She accepted that some traditional career practices, such as tutor delivered careers lessons, did not work in her school and devised alternative methods, such as suspended timetable days. Enabling experienced, resilient and resourceful careers managers and advisers to share their experiences and approaches through training courses and conferences could be beneficial. Utilising the expertise which exists within Greater Manchester is one way of disseminating not just good practice, but the reason why the good practice exists.

- The deputy head in School A also thought that "risk taking" was a useful quality to have as a careers manager, and the careers manager in School C was taking the 'risk' of ignoring some of the more innovative approaches to careers education and guidance, such as using ICT more extensively and building a programme around employers. Instead, her approach was to use the external careers adviser to provide a significant amount of face to face guidance to students in Year 9 and Year 11. However, although she was confident she had made the right decision, she also felt isolated and would welcome an opportunity to talk through her ideas and concerns. Similarly, a qualified careers adviser employed by College G (not previously discussed in this report) who used to work for an external supplier now regarded herself "as far more isolated than in the past" and would value meetings and events where she could gather information and discuss issues. Therefore, local practitioner network meetings could be one way of reducing this sense of isolation.

NEW ECONOMY ANNEX B

Greater Manchester Careers Education and Guidance Survey

Final Report

Paul Davies

2013

This report is based on a survey of schools and colleges undertaken between September and November 2013. Paul Davies is based in the Department of Educational Research, Lancaster University.

Introduction

Careers education and guidance provision for schools and colleges in England has undergone a number of substantial transformations over recent decades. It has, at various times, moved from local authority control to private companies, become integrated within the broader youth support service, Connexions, and since the Education Act of 2011 it has now become the statutory responsibility of schools, with local authorities required just to provide a service for students considered vulnerable and at risk. Whereas policy documents tend to present each reform as part of a strengthening process, other commentators have expressed concerns about these changes and the state of the current provision. [1]

The purpose of this survey of careers education and guidance within the Greater Manchester area is to obtain a better understanding of what is actually being offered in local schools and colleges, since some critics of current arrangements argue (perhaps being deliberately provocative) that it could be possible for institutions to fulfil their statutory duty for careers education and guidance by simply referring students to sources of web-based and telephone guidance.

The survey was commissioned by New Economy, Manchester,[2] and was envisaged as the first phase of a two part study, the second phase being based on a selected group of case studies of schools and colleges which would provide richer, qualitative data. The names of 205 schools and colleges were provided by key contacts from the ten local authorities within the Greater Manchester area. Questionnaires were distributed by post, most often with separate copies sent to Heads/Principals and named careers teachers, in order to maximise the chances of a response. In one local authority it was recommended that email was the preferred method of communicating with schools. By late November 2013, following a second wave of contact to encourage returns, 113 questionnaires had been sent back representing a response rate of 55%. Table One provides a breakdown of the type of institutions who replied.

Table One
Survey Institutions

	%	N
11-16 schools	49.6	(56)
11-18 schools	29.2	(33)
Special schools	8.8	(10)
Pupil Referral Units	1.8	(2)
Colleges	10.6	(12)
	100	(113)

1 For example, Herrman, K. and Watts,T. (2012) 'Submission to Education Select Committee Enquiry on Career Guidance'. Careers Sector Stakeholders Alliance

2 New Economy works on behalf of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and Local Enterprise Partnership in promoting economic growth and prosperity. It has a statutory duty to secure suitable education and training provision for all young people aged 16-19 and those up to 25 with LLDD.

The survey was based on a questionnaire (Appendix One) which was designed to cover a number of important themes identified by New Economy and expanded on by contacts within local authorities. The questionnaire consisted of four sections:

I. Independent Careers Guidance;
II. Careers Education;
III. Questions on Specific Groups and Issues;
IV. Developing a Future Careers Education and Guidance Strategy.

Following further consultation with a contact at a Greater Manchester College of Further Education, a modified version of the questionnaire was produced for Further Education and Sixth Form Colleges which are referred to from now on in the survey as ' Colleges' to preserve their identity. Since it is arguable that the position and experiences of Colleges are different from schools, and the data collected during this survey would indicate this is indeed the case, Colleges have been given a section to themselves in the report.

Data falling within each of the four questionnaire themes will be presented and analysed in separate sections of the report.[3]

1. Independent Careers Guidance

The Education Act (2011) transferred the statutory responsibility for providing independent careers guidance to schools, which meant that a range of independent careers guidance scenarios are now potentially possible depending on how schools decide to fulfil this responsibility. Table Two shows the sources of independent careers guidance being used by schools.

Table Two
Sources of Independent Career Guidance

	%	N
School teaching staff	29.7	(30)
Buying external careers advice	75.2	(76)
School-based careers adviser	19.8	(20)
Signposting to websites/ phone lines	24.7	(25)
Other	8.9	(9)

(More than one answer could be given)

Buying in external careers advice was clearly the most common practice, 75%, with relatively few, 20%, employing a school-based careers adviser. Schools were referring students to websites and phone lines, but just one stated this was the only source of guidance provided. (As mentioned above, it was speculated by some national commentators, that schools could interpret their statutory duty to supply independent career guidance simply by such

3 Data in the text consists of percentages which have been rounded up or down to make whole numbers. The data in Sections 1 to 4 is just based on the school sample of 101.

referrals). School teaching staff were being used to provide independent careers guidance, as opposed to careers education, in 30% of institutions. Although, as will be discussed later, it was not always clear whether the guidance these teachers provided was focused on specific vocational issues or more general educational choices. Furthermore, the degree to which teachers provide independent careers guidance in schools with sixth forms is also open to interpretation.

The vast bulk of this independent careers guidance was being purchased from career guidance organisations[4], with only 5% of schools using self-employed consultants. (A few schools described arrangements involving the sharing and rotating of staff). Therefore, there was very little evidence that a commercial guidance market had arisen in the Greater Manchester area. 76% of the people delivering guidance had a Level 6 qualification in careers guidance, which is the level recommended by professional bodies. However, 13% of them did not, and in 11% of cases schools did not know how qualified the person was.

1.1 Face to face guidance

Face to face guidance is generally regarded as a particularly effective method of enabling students to engage with career issues and make plans for their futures. Indeed, the amount of face to face guidance provided to students has often been used as a key indicator of the state of the careers provision within institutions.[5] In this survey, 89% of schools reported providing their students with individual face to face guidance, and 73% stated they provided face to face guidance using small groups.

Table Three (on page 4) illustrates the amount of face to face guidance being provided in schools and its distribution between year groups. It is important to note that the Year 8 to Year 11 sample, which is potentially 101, is larger than the year 12-14 sample which just contains those schools with sixth forms and special schools. A number of caveats are required when reading this data. First, from the information provided it was not always evident which special schools possessed a Year 12, 13 and 14, therefore the total number has been included in the calculation. Second, within the sample as a whole the data provided for this question was of variable quality, and it was not always clear what level of guidance was offered. For example, in Year 8, there were 32 missing answers which could mean that no guidance was given or that schools opted not to answer. Therefore, whilst the general trend reported below is interesting, the specific percentages used need to be treated with caution, especially amongst the Year 8 and 9 data.

Table Three shows that face to face guidance remains concentrated in Year 11, with the level of guidance increasing from Year 9 onwards. Most schools provided guidance to more than 50% of the Year 11 cohort, although this table does not provide details about whether the guidance was individual or group based, or was provided by a qualified guidance

Table Three

4 A degree of caution is needed with this data as some schools who had stated they were not purchasing external guidance actually stated they were in response to this question because they were confusing this with the free external guidance provided for vulnerable students.

5 For example, House of Commons Education Committee Report (2013) 'Careers guidance for young people: The impact of the new statutory duty on schools'. London: The Stationery Office, Ltd.

Number of Students Receiving Face to Face Guidance

	More than 50%		**Between 49% - 25%**		**Less than 25%**		**None**	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Year 8	7.9	(8)	5.9	(6)	22.7	(23)	31.6	(32)
Year 9	22.7	(23)	17.8	(18)	30.6	(31)	12.8	(13)
Year 10	46.5	(47)	26.7	(27)	16.8	(17)	1.9	(2)
Year 1185.1 (Sample 101)	(86)	4.9	(5)	1.9	(2)	0.9	(1)	
Year 1260.4	(26)	4.6	(2)	6.9	(3)	2.3	(1)	
Year 1351.1	(22)	6.9	(3)	9.3	(4)	2.3	(1)	
Year 14 (Sample 43)	11.6	(5)	2.3	(1)	2.3	(1)	0.0	(0)

practitioner or a member of the school teaching staff. It can also be seen from the sample that in schools with sixth forms and in special schools a substantial number provided careers guidance to over half of their Year 12 and Year 13 cohorts.

1.2 Levels of guidance provision

Table Four
Amount of Careers Guidance

	%	**N**
Remained the same	59.2	(58)
Slightly less	13.3	(13)
Considerably less	6.1	(6)
Virtually stopped	3.1	(3)
Other	18.3	(18)
	100	(98)

(No answer 3)

Table Four shows that 59% of schools reported the current amount of careers guidance as remaining the same as 2012, which is an interesting finding considering the general impressionistic view in the 'careers world', supported by the OFSTED report, that the amount of careers guidance in England has probably decreased. Furthermore, the 18% who gave the 'Other' response stated that the amount of careers guidance given in schools has, in fact, increased.

Taking into account other data supplied on the questionnaires, which included unprompted comments written in the margins of the questionnaires as well as the responses to open questions, it was clear that the picture regarding careers guidance provision in the Greater Manchester area is quite complex, and the following needs to be taken into consideration when interpreting the data in Table Four:

- the amount of careers guidance in some schools had been decreasing before 2012 and therefore an existing reduced level of guidance was, in fact, being reported as remaining the same;
- levels of careers guidance were being maintained through using school teaching staff as well as external and school-based career advisers;
- however, careers guidance was being interpreted in a broad way and often included general educational choices as well as more narrowly focused vocational decisions. This was possibly having the effect of boosting perceptions about levels of careers guidance by including a wider range of activities within this category;
- several schools reported that since they had assumed the responsibility for providing careers guidance, this was now better targeted and, therefore, from this point of view, the level of guidance had increased for those being targeted;
- there was an indication that some schools had maintained levels of provision in the short term but anticipated future decreases.

2. Careers Education

Although schools no longer have a statutory duty to provide a careers education programme, the survey showed that 87% schools still possessed one. 82% still employed a careers co-ordinator and 81% had a member of the senior leadership team responsible for careers education. Careers education took on many forms both within and between institutions:

- As a theme within a PHSE programme - 64%.
- As a group of lessons known as the 'careers programme' – 26%
- As themes which were touched upon in subject lessons – 25%[6]

However, the evolving nature of careers education was evident in the fact that 28% of schools supplied their own definitions and descriptions of their careers programmes which included visits, enterprise activities, mentoring and special events held at the school.

2.1 Levels of careers education

Table Five
Amount of Careers Education

	%	N
Remained the same	66.3	(63)
Slightly less	11.6	(11)
Considerably less	7.4	(7)
Virtually stopped	1.0	(1)
Other	13.7	(13)
	100	(95)

(No answer 6)

The data in Table Five shows there had not been a major reduction in the amount of careers education provided since schools no longer had a statutory duty to provide it. One of the important reasons for this (provided in other answers on the questionnaire) was the value

6 Schools were able to provide more than one answer to this question.

some schools attached to careers education and their determination to continue resourcing it. The data on the current levels of careers education is broadly the same as with current levels of careers guidance, and a similar interpretation can be applied. In particular, that levels of careers education had been falling before 2012 due the squeeze coming from other subject areas, and there had not been a dramatic 'cliff edge' decline since 2012. Furthermore, questionnaire comments indicated that the term careers education was frequently used in a broad sense to refer to general information about educational progression which may or may not have contained an explicit vocational theme.

Table Six
Location of Careers Education Programme in Years 7-11

	%	N
Year 7	42.0	(37)
Year 8	61.3	(54)
Year 9	88.6	(78)
Year 10	92.0	(81)
Year 11	97.7	(86)

(Data based on a total of 88 schools who reported having a careers programme)

As can be seen from Table Six, careers education took on a familiar format with the amount increasing from Year 9 onwards, and with it being most frequently found in Year 11. Data about careers education supplied from schools with sixth forms was less easy to quantify in percentages due to missing data and because of comments written on some questionnaires suggesting that university application information and careers information were viewed as one and the same thing. However, it appears that almost all of 11-18 schools have a careers programme in Year 12 and approximately 80% have one in Year 13. Nine schools, mostly those catering for students with special educational needs, reported providing careers education programmes in Year 14.

2.2 Work experience

Capturing what was happening in Greater Manchester schools in relation to work experience was problematic, and many teachers added comments suggesting that their responses given to the questions did not necessarily reflect the more complex situation which now prevailed. In general terms, work experience programmes still exist, but many were now just targeted on particular groups of students, and the term work experience has been expanded to cover such activities as enterprise projects and volunteering. Therefore, because a school indicated that it organised a work experience programme in Year 10, it did not necessarily mean that the whole of Year 10 took part in the traditional two week experience on employers' premises. Nevertheless, one significant trend which is evident is the proportionately higher numbers of Year 12 and 13 students who undertake work experience,

which was explained in terms of changing needs in the light of the rising participation age[7]. For example, whilst 38% and 20% of schools reported a work experience programme of some type in Years 10 and 11 respectively, the numbers for Year 12 and Year 13 were 58% for each year.

Table Seven
Amount of Work Experience

	%	N
Remained the same	41.4	(41)
Slightly less	10.1	(10)
Considerably less	6.1	(6)
Virtually stopped	25.3	(25)
Other	17.1	(17)
	100	(99)

(No answer 2)

What is interesting from the data presented in Table Seven is that more schools reported reductions in the amount of work experience than had been the case with the reductions in careers guidance and careers education. For example 6% stated it was now considerably less, and in 25% of schools it had virtually stopped. A small number who circled the 'Other' category reported reinstating work experience for specific types of students after previously stopping it, but most of the 'Other' responses were explanations of how work experience had transformed into other forms of programme where students learned about workplace situations. Pressures on curriculum time, the removal of central organising bodies, and the cost of health and safety checks were listed among the reasons for decreases in levels of work experience.

3. Specific Groups and Issues

The third section of the survey questionnaire asked for data about a number of specific groups and issues:

- The support offered to vulnerable students;
- Awareness of the apprenticeship route;
- The use schools were making of data such as destination statistics;
- How confident schools were that their careers provision would be able to support students as the participation age increased.

3.1 Vulnerable young people

7 This resonates with one of the findings of the Wolf Report. Alison Wolf (2011) 'Review of Vocational Education'. London: Department for Education and Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Using a classification of vulnerable groups suggested by those working in this field, schools were asked which groups were targeted for local authority support.

Table Eight
Vulnerable Groups Targeted

	%	N
SEN/LLDD	90.7	(88)
Looked after children	85.5	(83)
Risk becoming NEET	74.2	(72)
Risk of Exclusion	59.7	(58)
Non-Attendees	54.6	(53)
Care leavers	52.5	(51)
Others	30.9	(30)
(No answer 4)		

Table Eight presents data on the vulnerable groups of young people most frequently targeted. The difference in numbers, for example between the 91% in the SEN/LLDD category compared to the 55% in the Non-Attendees category, can probably be explained in terms of socio-economic factors associated with catchment areas and types of institutions, as non-attendance was an issue which affected some schools more than others.

Students in the 'Others' category included: young parents/teenage pregnancy (6); pupil premium (5); students receiving free school meals[8] (3); and young offenders (3).

Schools were also asked to describe how vulnerable students were supported, and this open question had a mixed response with some schools providing a considerable amount of detail, some providing a very short response, and a small minority not answering it at all. (The illustrative quotes below provide examples of the range of detail provided).

> "Home visit, ***(name of external careers organisation) interviews, in school service, alternative education provision, mentor scheme in school, ***(name of a support organisation) liaison with other services e.g. social workers, care providers, targeted students for college visits, workshops"

> "In addition to face to face interviews in school and additional support with visits off site and completing applications, they receive a face to face interview with a careers advisor from***(Name of external careers organisation)"

> "SEN – supported with weekly meetings with CEIAG professional who has input into weekly team meetings"

> "Early guidance in Year 10"

8 Some of those in the FSM category might also have additional needs.

"One to one support"

Table Nine is a summary of the qualitative responses provided by schools to this question, and since this data required interpretation and categorisation it is presented as numbers rather percentages.

Table Nine
Nature of Support Offered to Vulnerable Students

	N
Interviews and meetings with external careers adviser	44
Prioritised interviews and meetings with an unspecified person	27
Mentoring	10
Special/alternative curriculum	9
School special needs teacher	8
Multi-agency network of support	6
Customised visits to education/training providers	4
Liaising with parents	2
College transition package	1
Speaker programme	1

(Some schools described more than one type of support)

Interviews and meetings with an external careers adviser was the most frequently mentioned form of support, with prioritised interviews and meetings with an unspecified person (who may have been an external careers adviser) being mentioned on 27 occasions. Mentoring played an important role in 10 schools, and although the term 'school mentor' was used on a few occasions, it was not always recorded whether the mentor was a member of staff or an external person, such as a local employer or community representative.

Nine schools made reference to a special or alternative curriculum which sometimes included a work experience placement. Six schools indicated that vulnerable students were supported through a multi-agency network of relevant professionals.

3.2 Apprenticeships

All of the schools who answered this question reported supplying information about apprenticeships to their students through a number of channels. Table Ten shows that careers lessons and assemblies were particularly popular methods of doing this, but 59% of schools also stated they used visits from training providers for this purpose. The data suggested that students in Greater Manchester were receiving a substantial amount of information about apprenticeships.

Table Ten
Sources of information about Apprenticeships

	%	N
Careers lessons	59.5	(59)
Assemblies	61.6	(61)

Apprenticeship Fairs	48.4	(48)
Borough wide Events	38.3	(38)
Visits by training providers	59.5	(59)
Other (please write in)	15.1	(15)

(No answer 2)

3.3 Raising of the participation age

With the raising of the participation age to 18 (or 25 with those with LLDD) in 2015, schools were asked to assess how confident they were that their current careers education and guidance provision was adequate for this change. 87% of schools stated they were either confident or very confident.

Table Eleven
Level of Confidence

	%	**N**
Very confident	33.0	(31)
Confident	54.2	(51)
Not confident	9.6	(9)
Not confident at all	3.2	(3)
	100	(94)

(No answer 7)

3.4 Use of data

Table Twelve shows how schools were making use of data (such as destination figures, participation rates in 16-19 education and training, numbers identified as NEET, etc) to inform the careers education and guidance provided for current students. This data has been taken from an open question on the questionnaire and reduced into a smaller number of categories. Some schools provided quite comprehensive answers to this question and their data has been included in more than one category.

The category which stands out is the use of data to inform future provision and practice which was mentioned on 25 occasions. Whilst these 25 referred to general provision and practice across the whole school, a further nine specifically mentioned using data to inform the content of future careers lessons.

Data was also being used to assist schools in targeting. This included offering additional support to vulnerable groups such as those likely to become NEET, targeting particular routes such as promoting apprenticeships, and in the case of one 11-18 school, in encouraging sixth form students to consider applying for a wider range of university courses. The data was also useful in enabling schools to follow up students who were a particular cause of concern. In addition to this, seven were using data to identify potential links with

opportunity providers, five as a means of evaluating current provision, and two for staff training.

Table Twelve
Use Made of Data

	N
To inform future provision and practice	25
To target specific groups such as potential NEETS	11
To follow up students, especially NEETS	9
To inform content of future careers lessons	9
To produce school reports/use at events	6
To create closer links with opportunity providers	7
As evidence of effective careers provision	5
To promote particular routes such as apprenticeships	4
To improve retention	3
Staff training	2
Do not currently use/not applicable	10
Not sure	6

Ten comments indicated that data was not used or was not applicable. In the latter cases it was indicated that the institutions had a stable record of successful outcomes and as such had little need of this data. The not sure category was mostly used by staff who were either new to the school or the post and were in their first term in this new role.

4. Developing a Future Careers Education and Guidance Strategy

The method used in the survey for gathering data about developing future careers education and guidance strategy was to ask schools whether they agreed or disagreed with the recent Ofsted report[9] conclusion that the statutory duty on schools to provide careers guidance "was not working well enough" and then invite them to put forward their reasons for this view.

On the original questionnaire schools were provided with a simple Yes/No answer, but 15 schools wrote in a Not Sure response, so this has been included in the data analysis because it is significant.

Table Thirteen
Agree with Ofsted Conclusion

%	N

9 Ofsted (2013) 'Going in the right direction? Careers guidance in schools from September2012'

Yes	36.7	(36)
No	48.0	(47)
Not Sure	15.3	(15)
	100	(98)

(No answer 3)

As Table Thirteen shows, 37% of schools agreed with the Ofsted conclusion whilst 48% disagreed with it. 15% were not sure, mostly because whilst the situation in their school was working well, they believed this was not the case in the other schools with which they were familiar. For example,

> "Our own experiences remain OK…some schools appear to struggle"

The supplementary question asking them to provide the reasons for their answers worked extremely well, and a rich collection of data was gathered. This data has been grouped into a number of discrete categories, although to an extent, many of the responses were both interlinked and overlapping.

4.1 Yes – those who agreed with the OFSTED conclusion

One factor stood out above all others explaining why 37% of schools agreed with the Ofsted conclusion and that was finance. For example,

> "Lessening of funding for careers!!"

> "Major loss was work experience – Cost Prohibitive!"

> "Less funding = less provision = more NEETS"

Although the responsibility for providing careers guidance was transferred to schools, no additional funds were passed over to them to pay for this. Consequently, 21 schools listed this as the main factor and explained that without additional finance they were either having to reduce the amount of guidance they purchased from external providers, or stop it altogether and find other ways of supporting students, such as using existing members of school staff. Schools with no or little finance also found it difficult to appoint and pay the salary of their own qualified careers practitioner.

A second factor was the lack of status careers education and guidance had in some schools, and the consequences which stemmed from this vulnerable position. Twelve schools mentioned this as an explanatory factor and discussed how timetable pressures were squeezing careers provision from the timetable because management teams felt there was more of a pressing need to address other issues. Careers education was vulnerable in some schools because there were those who doubted whether it contributed to the academic criteria by which schools were increasingly being judged. For example,

> "Time is limited…pressure on schools to keep pupils in lessons and not allow off timetable"

> "Focus on academic success. IAG not seen as important by some colleagues. 'A' level being seen as the gold standard"

A third factor can best be described as lack of strategy, and this was mentioned twelve times too. This covers a number of points, such as lack of certainty about the future of the curriculum, reforms to the examination system, and too many changes to careers education and guidance having taken place in too short a period.

> "The issues and uncertainty of the new curriculum"

> "We are trying to put together a proper strategy to pull all our activities together. What we are doing is good…but too reactive and not proactive enough"

Comments suggested that without the link to an external supplier of careers guidance, there was not enough experience in schools to develop a careers education and guidance strategy. Some respondents argued that this lack of strategy could be addressed, but it required a senior member of staff to make an explicit case for careers work and then do something about it.[10]

4.2 No – those who disagreed with the Ofsted conclusion

48% of schools disagreed with the Ofsted conclusion and offered several major reasons for this. The first was possessing an established, successful careers programme which was securely embedded in the curriculum.

> "The school is committed to providing excellent careers advice and guidance, it has achieved the Gold Award in IAG – big buy back from ***(name of external careers organisation)"

> "There is no difference in our school as we have chosen to sustain the same stance as always"

Such programmes were robust enough to make a successful transition to the post-2012 world, unlike those which were already vulnerable and which were more likely to be damaged by cuts in finance or changes in statutory responsibility. Fifteen schools listed the quality of their provision as the main factor why they disagreed with OFSTED on this matter, with the Inspiring IAG Award being a key factor in explaining why teachers thought their schools were committed to strong careers education and guidance programmes. Of these fifteen, eight schools made specific reference to the important role of the Inspiring IAG

10 This tends to be a common theme in Ofsted reviews of careers education and guidance provision.

Award. (Others discussed the importance of benefitting from a careers template, auditing provision against this and establishing an action plan. They did not specifically mention the Inspiring IAG Award, but had clearly been influenced by its framework and general approach).

The second reason, and probably linked to the first, was the view that having senior management support was more vital than ever since 2012. Thirteen schools put this forward as a reason, and three added that governors also played a key role in this, with one giving a detailed example of how staff had worked with a governors working group on maintaining the careers provision in the school.

> "The Head and Governors of the school have made careers guidance a high strategic priority"

A third reason was continuing to use the services of an external provider of careers guidance, and this was a point made by thirteen schools too, for example,

> "We have bought the services of ***(name of careers organisation) and included more careers in Year 9 to ensure students are more thoroughly informed about their choices post-16"

Not only did this make schools confident that good quality guidance was being provided to their students, but they were also able to benefit from regular conversations with careers practitioners which helped school-based teachers keep up to date about changes in employment and other opportunities.

A range of other factors were presented, which although not numerically large, are interesting in the sense they suggest innovative ways of developing future careers provision. Five had appointed internal staff to contribute to their careers programmes. Interestingly several of these were described as 'assistant' staff and were providing organisational and administrative support. A further five explained how they had deliberately fostered links with local opportunity providers, such as local further and higher education institutions, and were using staff from these partners to support their own students. (In one case schools and colleges had established what was termed a local "guidance hub"). Three believed their careers programmes had survived the change in legislation because of a widespread belief in the schools that good careers education and guidance was integral to learning. Another three argued that their current careers provision was now even more effective because as purchasers of external support, they were able to target provision where it was most needed. For instance,

> "We have worked well with ***(name of external careers organisation) to improve the service we expect for our money"

> "Once I had to start buying into ***(name of external careers organisation) I stated more clearly what support my young people need"

Two were using digital technologies in a creative way, for example.

> "We have created a careers blog which students sign up to via email. Whenever any careers related blogs or notices are posted then this is directed directly through to their email account. The careers blog also has links to colleges, training companies, ***(name of external careers organisation), Kudos, UCAS, apprenticeship sites and a number of career information sites"

5. Colleges

In this section the views and experiences of colleges are reported separately. There are several reasons for doing so:

- The Education Act (2011) applied to schools;
- Colleges tended to appoint their own careers advisers before 2012 alongside the advisers working for external providers;
- To an extent, as post-16 providers, colleges are recipients of the careers education and guidance effects generated by schools;
- The views of the 12 colleges who returned questionnaires were different from schools in some interesting respects.[11]

Because of the small numbers involved, the following data is presented simply as numbers of colleges and it has not been converted into percentages.

5.1 Independent careers guidance

The colleges tended to provide independent careers guidance by blending together different sources:

- 10 employed college-based advisers;
- 6 used members of the college teaching staff;
- 5 bought in the services of an external career guidance organisation.

Nine reported careers guidance staff being qualified to Level 6, two stated this was not the case, and one was not sure of the qualification level. Every college stated that all of their students were able to access face to face careers guidance, and seven concluded that the amount of career guidance had remained the same since 2012. One thought it was slightly

11 Of course, the relatively small number of colleges compared to schools in the sample means the data needs to be treated with a degree of caution.

less, one thought it was considerably less[12] and three thought it was now increasing. For example,

> "By employing an extra advisor we have continued to provide an appropriate service for college students. We now have an adviser from ***(name of provider) who comes in and looks after those needing extra support"

There was the view that careers guidance provision needed to increase in colleges to compensate for a perceived decrease in guidance amongst Years 11-16 students in schools. Amongst the comments supplied were,

> "Anecdotally, it would seem that some of our feeder schools are struggling to provide significant IAG. However, in college we are responding to this by focusing on improving and expanding our own services to ensure students fulfil their potential"

> "Students enrolling with us seem to have less idea about careers and opportunities to support them in reaching their goals"

5.2 Careers education

Ten of the colleges had careers education programmes. Two said they did not but added that careers information and work related skills formed part, in differing amounts, of the whole student college experience.

> "All students are offered this – it's not course based, it's a general entitlement"

Eight reported levels of careers education remaining the same since 2012, two that levels had increased, one that it was considerably less and one did not answer.

5.3 Work experience

Eleven of the colleges provided work experience programmes, with seven stating the amount of work experience had remained the same since 2012[13], whilst two thought it was now slightly less. Three stated that the amount of work experience had increased. For instance,

> "Due to the removal of compulsory work experience in school, work experience support in college has been

12 The data this college supplied was slightly out of line with the others and their answers suggested they did not have the resources to continue with the previous levels of careers education and guidance offered.
13 Includes one who had stopped work experience prior to 2012.

> enhanced and strengthened with the appointment last year of a manager who deals with work experience"

A theme which occurred throughout the college data was their attempts to enhance their careers education and guidance programmes as a consequence of what they perceived to be cut backs to such programmes in school. This, according to the colleges, had resulted in students arriving at college with lower levels of knowledge and awareness than had been the case in the past.

5.4 Specific groups and issues

Colleges reported working with local authorities to provide careers guidance for vulnerable groups of young people. All of the suggested target groups suggested on the questionnaire were supported. The most frequently mentioned targeted groups were:

- 'Looked after children' - 11
- 'Those at risk of becoming NEET' - 9
- 'Those with special education needs' - 6

Other groups falling in the vulnerable student category included young people who had become estranged from their families.

5.5 Destination data

Eleven out of the twelve colleges answered the question on the use of destination data. (Some gave multiple answers). Of these, seven were mainly using data as a means of developing their curriculum and the other services they offered. Two were using it to assess the quality of their provision, and another two to identify the changes which they sensed were taking place in what students chose to do after leaving college. For example,

> "There has been an increase in the number of students not progressing to HE. We have altered the programme to look more at other routes"

5.6 Raising of participation age

Interestingly, there was some caution expressed about whether their current careers education and guidance provision was adequate enough to support the raising of the participation age. Three were very confident, four were confident, but another four were not confident and one was unsure. Taking into account other information supplied on their questionnaires, which suggested colleges were satisfied with their overall careers provision, this was an interesting finding. The explanation lay in the fact that four colleges were concerned about the level of guidance their new entrants had received at school and whether they had the time and resources to compensate for this. One explained,

> "Difficult to answer this. I think our support is good. However, the issue is the effect of limited guidance in schools. Pupils are coming into the college less informed so more input is required at college"

5.7 Developing a future careers education strategy

Eleven out of the twelve colleges agreed with the Ofsted conclusion that the statutory duty resting with schools to provide careers guidance "is not working well enough", and as the following comments illustrate, they were aware of the difficulties schools were facing,

> "Lack of external support for 16-18 year olds. The landscape for this age group is extremely confusing. They can only access web and phone support from NCS (National Careers Service) and unless they are vulnerable have no access to***(Name of external guidance provider). There is a massive hole which our staff try to plug…"

> "It is in our feeder schools where IAG is very variable in quality. Students applying to college are not as well informed as previously"

Therefore, the vast majority of colleges agreed with the Ofsted finding because of:

- Their recent experience that students entering their colleges were less well informed about opportunities and were further behind in their decision making process;
- Their perception that careers provision in schools had become variable;
- The fact they felt they had to provide additional careers education and guidance because new entrants had less knowledge about career paths;
- Their acknowledgment of the financial difficulties faced by schools in purchasing external specialist guidance services. For example,

> "Most notable in those schools which have not bought back ****name of (external provider). The issue for us is additional resources needed for pre-entry guidance"

6. Overall Conclusions

Although the Education Act (2011) represented a major change in the legislative framework within which careers education and guidance was organised and delivered in England, it could be argued that the careers landscape was already in a process of change due to new

patterns of post-16 destinations and the influence which the post-1997 'Social Inclusion Agenda' was having on which students were prioritised for careers guidance. Therefore, to an extent, this survey reports on a complex and still fluid situation where not all the changes which have taken place are attributable entirely to the 2011 Act. Furthermore, it was apparent that some schools were in a provisional holding position and had not completed the change process. Thus, it could be argued that the full repercussions of the Act had not yet worked through the system. As one school stated,

> "This year we have extra funding to buy in extra advisor time, next year who knows?"

What was very apparent from the comments written on the questionnaires was that with the increasing number of young people moving on to both post-16 and post-18 learning, the differences between educational and vocational guidance were breaking down, which meant it was becoming increasingly difficult to have a simple measure of the level of careers education and guidance provision in schools and colleges and the extent to which it might have altered in recent years.

Nevertheless, and taking the above into account, it can be concluded that the survey data shows that the position of careers education and guidance in the Greater Manchester area is not a simple mirror image of the national position as reported by Ofsted. The key data which supports this view is:

- 59% of schools where levels of careers guidance is same as 2012;
- 66% of schools where levels of careers education is same as 2012;
- 87% of schools who were confident or very confident they can support the raising of the participation age;
- 48% of schools who disagreed with Ofsted conclusion that the statutory duty "is not working well"

On the other hand, it is also apparent that there was significant evidence suggesting that the level of careers education and guidance in a proportion of institutions has diminished. This evidence includes:

- 37% of schools who agreed with Ofsted conclusion that statutory duty "is not working well";
- An additional 15% of schools who stated they could neither agree nor disagree because, although the statutory duty was working well in their school, they were aware that it was not in others they knew;
- 31% of schools where the amount of work experience was considerably less or had virtually stopped;
- 11 (out of the 12) colleges who agreed with the Ofsted conclusion mainly because of the increasing numbers of students joining them who did not appear to have received sufficient careers guidance.

In terms of formulating future careers education and guidance strategy, the data supplied explaining why schools and colleges either agreed or disagreed with the Ofsted conclusion is particularly useful. It was apparent that whereas in the pre-2012 situation the level of good quality careers education and guidance was shaped, to a large extent, by the amount of curriculum time allocated to it, in the post-2012 world the key fact appeared to be the amount of money schools were able and willing to invest in it. The decision to buy in an external source of careers guidance, or appoint a qualified careers practitioner to the staff, was a crucial factor.

A second, and probably related factor, was the state of careers provision pre-2012. Robust programmes which enjoyed senior management support, and which were firmly embedded in the curriculum, were more likely to make a smooth transition to the new situation than were fragile programmes which were not seen as central to the institution's main mission. In the former case, careers education and guidance was more likely to be regarded as integral to students'combined academic and vocational development. Conceptualising the academic and the vocational as two inter-linked halves of a whole which needed to continue in tandem, rather than two discrete entities which required choosing between, was a factor which went a long way to explain why some programmes survived into the post-2012 world, whilst others did not.

There was some evidence of new patterns and practices emerging within careers education and guidance. Whilst, these were quite small in actual number, they were nonetheless reported as making a significant contribution in the institutions involved. They included:

- Schools who were only able to purchase a reduced level of service from an external guidance provider but who believed they were making very effective use of this because, as a commercial purchaser, they were able to better manage the guidance than had previously been the case;
- Schools where the governing body was being used to monitor provision and comment on its quality and outcomes;
- Schools which had forged partnerships (at various levels of formality) with training providers, FE, and HE, and who were benefitting from the expertise and resources which flowed from such partnerships;
- Schools which were maximising the use of digital technology in order to make students aware of opportunities. (This was very different from simply signposting students to websites).

Appendix One

Greater Manchester Careers Education and Guidance Survey

Completion Guidelines

Most of the questions can be answered by circling the number alongside the response you wish to give. For some questions you may wish to circle more than one number because the situation in your school is not so clear cut - *please do so*.

For the sake of simplicity the term 'career guidance' is used to describe those activities which help students choose their individual routes. The term 'careers education ' is used to describe the general awareness raising and information giving activities.

The questionnaire is confidential. The following details are asked for in order to monitor responses and send out reminder letters if necessary.

Name of School..... Age Range (e.g. 11-18).....

Local Authority..... Contact Person (and role in School).....

Section One: Independent Career Guidance

1. How is your school providing students with independent career guidance?

Using a member of the school teaching staff	1
Buying in the services of an external careers adviser	2
Appointed a school-based careers adviser	3
Signposting students to external sources of guidance such as websites and phone lines	4
Other.... please add details below	5

2. If you are buying in the services of an external careers adviser, is this adviser

A member of a career guidance organisation or Local Authority?	1
A self-employed consultant?	2
Other.... please add details below?	3

3. If you are using a person (either school based or external) to provide career guidance, does this person have a Level 6 qualification in career guidance?

Yes	1
No	2
Not sure	3

4. Does the school provide students with any of the following

Face to face individual career guidance	1
Career guidance delivered in small groups	2

5. If face to face individual career guidance is provided, approximately how many students receive this in each year?

	More than 50%	Between 49% - 25%	Less than 25%	None
Year 8	1	2	3	4
Year 9	1	2	3	4
Year 10	1	2	3	4
Year 11	1	2	3	4
Year 12	1	2	3	4
Year 13	1	2	3	4
Year 14 (Special Schools)	1	2	3	4

6. Which statement best describes the change (if any) to the school's career guidance provision since September 2012?

The amount of career guidance has remained the same	1
The amount of career guidance is slightly less	2
The amount of career guidance is considerably less	3
Career guidance has virtually stopped	4
Other – please write your own statement below	5

Section Two: Careers Education

7. Since September 2012 careers education in schools is not mandatory. Do you still provide a careers education programme?

Yes	1
No	2

8. Does the school have a named Careers Co-ordinator and Senior Management Team Lead?

	Yes	No
Careers Co-ordinator	1	2
Senior Team Lead	1	2

9. Which years are offered a careers education programme?

Year 7	1	Year 11	5
Year 8	2	Year 12	6
Year 9	3	Year 13	7
Year 10	4	Year 14	8

10. Careers education programmes take many forms, which statement best describes the situation in your school?

A group of lessons known as the 'careers programme'	1
Lessons with a careers theme as part of the PHSE programme	2
Careers themes are touched on in subject lessons	3
Other – please write your own statement below	4

11. Which statement best describes the change (if any) to the school's careers education programme since September 2012?

The amount of careers education has remained the same	1
The amount of careers education is slightly less	2
The amount of careers education is considerably less	3
Careers education has virtually stopped	4
Other – please write your own statement below	5

12. Does the school provide a work experience programme for ?

	Yes	No
Year 10 students	1	2
Year 11 students	1	2
Year 12 students	1	2
Year 13 students	1	2
Year 14 students	1	2

13. Which statement best describes the change (if any) to the school's work experience provision since September 2012?

The amount of work experience has remained the same	1
The amount of work experience is slightly less	2
The amount of work experience is considerably less	3
Work experience has virtually stopped	4
Other – please write in your own statement	5

Section Three – Questions on Specific Groups and Issues

14. **Local authorities are responsible for providing careers guidance to vulnerable young people in schools. Will you please describe who are the targeted groups of students in your school and the support they receive.** *(This is potentially a long list – some suggestions are given but please add others if relevant)*

Please circle targeted groups – Looked After Children At Risk of Becoming NEET

SEN/LLDD Persistent Non –Attendees At Risk of Exclusion Care Leavers

Others – please specify

How are they supported?

15. **How are students made aware of, and advised about, the apprenticeship route?**

Careers lessons	1
Assemblies	2
Apprenticeship Fairs	3
Borough wide Events	4
Visits by training providers	5
Other (please write in)	6

16. **Would you please describe how the school is using data (such as destination figures, participation rates in 16-19 education and training, numbers identified as NEET, etc) to inform the careers education and guidance it provides for current students?**

17. **How confident are you that your current careers guidance and education provision is adequate enough to support the raising of the participation age to 18 (25 for those with learning difficulties and disabilities) in 2015?**

Very Confident	1
Confident	2
Not confident	3
Not confident at all	4

Section Four –Developing a Future Careers Education and Guidance Strategy

18. **The recent OFSTED report concludes that the new statutory duty for careers guidance "is not working well". Do you agree with this conclusion?**

Yes	1
No	2

19. **If you answer to question 18 is YES, what do you think are the main factors which account for this situation in your school? If your answer is NO, what has your school done to make it work well?**

20. **Would you be prepared to take part in either a brief phone or e-mail follow up? If yes please write in an email address or contact number**

21. **Would you be interested in taking part in the second stage of this survey – the Case Studies?**

Yes 1 No 2

Thank you for completing the questionnaire