

Equipping the young people of today for the career choices of the future: personal career guidance

Young people face lots of choice about their future careers. Many will become employed in jobs which do not yet exist and others will adjust to portfolio careers, changing jobs and career direction throughout their working lives.

Making the decision on what to do when they leave education is a daunting one and for which they will require a great deal of support.

Such support comes through the careers programme in their school/college at the core of which is personal career guidance.

In early 2018 the Government in England published [Careers guidance and access for education and training providers. Statutory guidance for governing bodies school leaders and school staff](#) and [Careers guidance: for further education colleges and sixth-form colleges](#). These state that every school/college should appoint a Careers Leader by September 2018 who is responsible for the careers programme which should meet the Gatsby Benchmarks by 2020:

1. A stable careers programme
2. Learning from career and labour market information
3. Addressing the needs of each pupil
4. Linking curriculum learning to careers
5. Encounters with employers and employees
6. Experiences of workplaces
7. Encounters with further and higher education
8. Personal guidance

Planned careers programmes will provide pupils/students with the opportunities to learn about themselves, different careers and the routes into these and begin the process of choosing a career path.

Faced with complex choices, pupils and students need access to a career development professional with whom they can discuss their choices on an individual basis and who can help them to develop the skills and knowledge to manage their future careers.

This is why personal career guidance is at the core of the Gatsby Benchmarks as it enables pupils and students to *personalise and contextualise* the range of information, advice and encounters with employers and learning providers provided as part of the careers programme in their school/college.

Individuals need more than careers information and CVs to make career decisions – they need a positive and resilient mind-set, the ability to network, seize opportunities, step outside their comfort

zone and the courage to change their mind if an intended work role is no longer available or suitable.

Personal career guidance not only enables pupils/students to discuss their current thoughts about their career ideas and career path and how this can be achieved, but to also look at their transferable skills and develop the curiosity to explore alternatives. These skills in conjunction with the ability to use labour market information confidently, equip young people with the knowledge to manage not only their immediate career plans but also any future changes in career direction.

Career Advisers who hold professional career guidance/development qualifications at a minimum of Level 6 (graduate level) have the skills and knowledge to provide this personal career guidance. Schools appointing career advisers and parents should also ask whether their careers adviser is on the UK Register of Career Development Professionals. Registered professionals abide by the CDI Code of Ethics and are required to maintain, develop and record their skills and knowledge by undertaking 25 hours of CPD every year.

The following case study shows how a school's careers programme and personal career guidance equips a young person for their future career.

Christine is a Year 11 pupil and as part of the careers programme in school attended a talk by the Fire Service and spent some time as an observer at the local fire station and has decided that she would like to be a firefighter. At the fire station she learned that entry is very competitive and that how you complete the application form is a key part of the process. She also went on a visit to the local FE College and attended a talk in school about Apprenticeships. (Gatsby Benchmarks 2, 5, 6 &7)

Back at school she requested some career information from her form tutor and was directed to the National Careers Service website, <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/planning/jobprofiles/Pages/firefighter.aspx> where she found information on the entry requirements and discovered that she will need to be 18 and be physically fit. She attended a career advice session where she learned how to complete application forms and write a CV. She then had a chat with her PE teacher about the fitness levels required for the Fire Service and the challenges of a career in a male dominated sector. (Gatsby Benchmark 2, 3 & 4)

Christine is predicted to do well at GCSE level but currently thinks that she will leave school and perhaps take a Public Services course at the local FE college, find some part time work, try and get fitter and then apply to the Fire Service when she is 18. Her parents are not keen on her joining the Fire Service, saying that this is a "man's job" and feel that her poor level of physical fitness will let her down and they would rather that she went to university like her older siblings.

Without personal career guidance she would be in danger of leaving school without the career management skills which would help her to realise her ambition or to find another route should her application to the Fire Service be unsuccessful.

Personal career guidance will enable her to:

- discuss what appeals to her about joining the Fire Service; where does the idea come from? Has she arrived at the choice by exploration of her interests and looking at a range of opportunities or has she just picked something obvious and familiar? How effective is she at making decisions?

- consider personal information such as her skills, aptitudes and values which would make her suitable for the role but also identify what are transferable to a wider range of occupations;
- discuss what other ideas she has had and why she may have rejected these, perhaps through peer pressure or parental influence;
- learn about other sources of careers information relevant not only to her Fire Service idea but to other careers she may like to consider;
- learn information management skills required to effectively sift through information and what websites to trust;
- reflect on how confident, flexible, motivated she is to face the decisions ahead as well as taking personal responsibility and control for the research required;

If, having considered the above, the Fire Service is her chosen career then personal career guidance can also enable her to:

- learn where to find more detailed career information provided by the Fire Service which would explain what exactly the Fire Service is looking for from an application. (<http://www.fireservice.co.uk/recruitment>);
- discuss how she could develop the skills required over the next two years which would enable her application to be as good as possible;
- discuss the physical entry requirements and how she could address these e.g. referral to different types of sports activities;
- reflect on her existing network and networking skills and how these can be developed;
- discuss the features and benefits of all of the post-16 routes: staying at school, further education or an Apprenticeship and which of these would best suit her;
- discuss undergraduate routes into the Fire Service;
- look at labour market information on where firefighter vacancies may be and what the possibility is of working locally;
- look at alternative careers which may also suit her and which she could use as a back-up plan in case her application to the Fire Service was unsuccessful;
- ask the career adviser to meet with her parents to discuss all of the above which may help to alleviate their anxieties about doing a “man’s job”. ;
- receive guidance on how to complete the Fire Service application form once she is 18;
- learn where job vacancies are advertised for both the Fire Service and other jobs.

If, as a result of the above discussion, Christine decides that the Fire Service may not be a suitable option then she can discuss alternative ideas with the careers adviser and receive the same support in considering alternative career ideas.

Outcomes

The process of receiving personal career guidance as part of a structured careers programme will have helped Christine to develop career management skills which she can use both now and in the future. Her human capital will increase as she will have developed motivation for learning, job search skills and attitudes and behaviours that help when working efficiently and effectively. Her network will expand e.g. sports referrals, thus building her social capital and she will have developed the ability to make transitions from one part of her life to the next, which is a lifelong skill.

As a result of the personal career guidance, a successful outcome for both Christine and the school would be that at the end of Year 11 she progresses to a post 16 route (which she has to do due to

Raising the Participation Age), which could ultimately enable her to realise her ambition and develop the skills and knowledge required for a role as a Fire Fighter or in another career should her application to the Fire Service be unsuccessful.

The economic benefits of Christine receiving personal career guidance will be that she can pursue a post-16 route which is suited to her needs and be less likely to become unemployed or at risk of not using her skills and knowledge fully. Knowing how the labour market works and the fact that she may need to move to find employment as a fire fighter will also enable her to be part of a more mobile and flexible workforce.

Further Information

Good Career Guidance: <http://www.gatsby.org.uk/education/focus-areas/good-career-guidance>

Understanding the Gatsby Benchmarks <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/schools-colleges/gatsby-benchmarks>

What Career Advisers do [Blueprint of Learning Outcomes for Professional Roles in the Career Development Sector](#).

The Career Development Institute

The CDI is the UK-wide professional body for the career development sector, with a growing membership of 4,250; representing career leaders, careers advisers, career coaches and career managers working in the public, private, voluntary and community sectors.

Importantly we are responsible for the UK Register of Career Development Professionals; National Occupational Standards: Career Development; Blueprint of Learning Outcomes for Professional Roles in the Career Development Sector; Career Progression Pathway for the sector; UK Career Development Awards; CDI Academy providing the Qualification in Career Development, one of the post graduate professional qualifications for Career Advisers and the Level 6 CDI Certificate in Careers Leadership; Framework for Careers, Employability and Enterprise Education and a UK-wide programme of CPD. For more information: <http://www.thecdi.net/Home>