

Commentary on the statutory guidance (March 2012)

Status of this guidance

- Issued by the DfE on 26 March 2012
- Replaces 'The Education Bill – changes to the delivery of careers guidance' issued to schools in April 2011
- Schools 'must have regard' to statutory guidance when carrying out their duties.
- This guidance is for head teachers, school staff, governing bodies and local authorities
- It will be reviewed by March 2013
- It applies to secondary schools, special schools and PRUs. Academies and Free Schools will be subject to the same requirements through their Funding Agreements.

Where can I download the statutory guidance?

- It is on the DfE website.
<http://www.education.gov.uk/g00205755/statutory-guidance-for-schools-careers-guidance-for-young-people>

What does it say in a nutshell?

- The Education Act 2011 places schools under a duty to secure access to independent careers guidance for pupils in Y9-11, including those with special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities, from September 2012. It removes the duty to provide a careers education programme.
- Schools should fund careers guidance from their overall budgets, including the pupil premium.
- Guidance must be presented in an impartial manner (i.e. showing no bias or favouritism towards a particular work option) and promote the best interests of the pupils to whom it is given.
- Guidance should also include information on options available in respect of 16-18 education or training, including apprenticeships and other work-based education or training options.
- Supporting pupils to make informed decisions will become increasingly more important with RPA (the raising participation age).
- Schools must comply with the requirement to secure careers guidance from an external source but schools have the freedom and flexibility to decide on the most appropriate forms of independent careers guidance that will meet the needs of their pupils. They include individual and group activities carried out face-to-face or at a distance (including helplines and web based services) such as careers information provision, assessment and self-assessment tools, counselling interviews, careers education programmes, taster programmes, work search programmes and transition services.
- Schools should determine what level of provision to make based on the needs and circumstances of their pupils; but they should secure access to independent face-to-face careers guidance where it is the most suitable support, in particular for disadvantaged children and those with special educational needs, learning difficulties or disabilities.
- Schools are free to commission careers guidance from external providers, including providers engaged in delivering the National Careers Service, as appropriate. To help schools make well-informed decisions about which providers to work with, the guidance points out that holders of

the **matrix** Standard have met the national quality standards for careers guidance providers. Information about providers who hold the standard will be made available to schools.

- Schools may work individually or in consortia/partnership to procure face-to-face services.
- Schools should consider a range of wider careers activities such as engagement with local employers and work-based education and training providers.
- Schools should establish and maintain links with local post-16 learning providers, including further education colleges, university technical colleges, work-based training providers and higher education. Arranging visits and providing access to prospectuses will help schools to act impartially and enable pupils to make well-informed decisions.
- Pupils with special educational needs or disabilities should receive advice about all mainstream opportunities on offer as well as the full range of specialist provision that is available.
- Schools should work with local authorities to support them in carrying out their duties to:
 - provide SEN support services and section 139A assessments. Schools should ensure they know what services are available and how young people can be referred.
 - encourage, enable and assist young people's participation in education or training (Section 68 of the Education and Skills Act 2008)
 - assist the most vulnerable young people and those at risk of disengaging with education or work
 - check that 16 and 17 year olds have received an offer of a suitable place in post-16 education or training
 - track young people's participation through the local Client Caseload Information System (CCIS) in order to identify those who are at risk of not participating post-16, or are in need of targeted support.
 - record young people's post-16 plans and the offers they receive along with their current circumstances and activities. (Section 72 of the Education and Skills Act 2008. Legislation being put in place in 2013 to raise the participation age will place a duty on schools to notify local authorities whenever a 16 or 17 year old leaves learning).

What are the key actions my school should take?

- Check immediately with your local authority to find out what transition arrangements it has put in place to meet the careers guidance needs of your pupils from April to September 2012.
- Discuss with your local authority how you will work together to carry out the key responsibilities that you both have from September.
- Clarify your strategy for procuring and securing independent and impartial careers guidance, e.g.:
 - check whether the provider holds or is working towards the **matrix** Standard
 - check whether the careers adviser is professionally qualified and intends to go on the register of the Career Development Institute when it is established early in 2013 (This will provide evidence that the adviser is well-qualified, upholds the Institute's code of ethics and is committed to continuing professional development).
 - assess whether your proposed arrangements are robust and sustainable, provide adequate access (e.g. in the holidays)
 - explore your scope for acting in partnership with other schools and providers.

- Review arrangements for managing and delivering careers guidance and link this to your plans for developing and providing non-statutory careers and work-related education in the curriculum.
- Review your arrangements for the funding of careers guidance in 2012-13 school budget, if necessary.
- Review the annual programme of careers education to consider how these activities are best delivered and to ensure that they take into account the particular needs of your pupils.
- Review your links with local learning providers to ensure that all parties act impartially and in the best interests of the pupil and that pupils are aware of the full range of academic and vocational options.
- Plan how you will manage quality and standards. Consider gaining a quality award that meets the requirements of the Quality in Careers Standard.

What is missing from the guidance?

- The guidance is still unclear and open to interpretation on schools' duty to secure independent and impartial careers guidance from external providers.
- Parents/carers and young people are not offered an entitlement or right to careers guidance.
- It is not clear how schools will be held to account if the quality of the external providers they use is unsatisfactory.
- The guidance does not encourage schools to quality assure their careers education and guidance programmes by gaining an award endorsed by the Quality in Careers Standard.
- The guidance explains why schools need to work with their local authorities but not how to work effectively with them on careers matters.

You can read a political commentary on the statutory guidance by Professor Tony Watts on the Careers England website.

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