

National Survey of School Leaders and Careers Professionals

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On behalf of Careers England

In association with NAHT and Jules White, Headteacher Tanbridge House School
& Leader of The Worthless? Campaign

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Introduction

The current government's Careers Strategy (December, 2017) set out a vision for a thriving careers system across England, widely accessible with a central focus on social mobility.

"Our careers strategy will support everyone, whatever their age, to go as far as their talents will take them and have a rewarding career." (The Rt. Hon Anne Milton MP Minister of State for Apprenticeships and Skills and Minister for Women)

The Gatsby Benchmarks were situated within a framework for action, with an expectation that every school and college use them to develop and improve their careers provision. This was followed by new statutory guidance setting out how to meet all of the Benchmarks.

Nearly two years on, this report draws upon 191 responses to an online survey (between 1st July – 9th September 2019) from head teachers, senior teachers/managers, careers professionals and enterprise co-ordinators working within secondary schools/academies in England.

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In 2008, Dr Deirdre Hughes OBE established dmh associates to encourage collaboration and fresh thinking in careers, education and skills policy, research and practice. The outcomes from the organisation's work are designed to inform and influence policies, research and practice in the UK, Europe and internationally.

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Executive Summary

The current government's Careers Strategy (2017)¹ set out a vision for a thriving careers system across England, widely accessible with a central focus on social mobility.

"Our careers strategy will support everyone, whatever their age, to go as far as their talents will take them and have a rewarding career" (The Rt. Hon Anne Milton MP Minister of State for Apprenticeships and Skills and Minister for Women).

The Gatsby Benchmarks² were set out within a framework for action, with an expectation that every school and college use them to develop and improve their careers provision. This was followed by new statutory guidance (2018)³ setting out how to meet all of the Benchmarks. How have schools responded and what are the key issues for these institutions?

The aim of this national survey was to find out to what extent schools were able to meet their regulatory requirements with regard to delivery of careers information, advice and guidance to young people and their ability to comply with their statutory duties and obligations. The main findings illustrate schools in England are struggling to find sufficient funds to ensure all young people received good quality independent and impartial careers provision.

- 84% of respondents either "strongly agree" or "agree" that careers provision in their schools is now a high priority
- 85% of respondents state that the reason for this is because of the Gatsby benchmarks⁴, while 80% also state that this is because of the "need to prepare students for the world of work"
- 61% of respondents "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that careers provision for young people has improved over the past 5 years
- 76% of responses indicated that their school employs a trained and qualified careers professional.

However,

- Only 10% claim they have adequate funding for careers provision in their schools
- 75% highlight they have either limited, insufficient or no funding
- 73% report a lack of funds as a reason they struggled to improve young peoples' careers support in their school.
- 18% receive less than £2K in funding per annum this equates to approximately £2 per student
- 30% of receive less than £5K per annum in funding
- 1% receive annual funding of between £50K - £100K
- 35% employ a trained and qualified careers professional for less than 8 hours per week
- 42% indicate the reason for not employing a full-time careers professional is due to lack of funding
- 16% indicate that employing a full time careers professional is "not essential"
- 9% of schools only employ a trained and qualified careers professional for less than 2 hours per week

¹ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/664319/Careers_strategy.pdf

² <https://www.gatsby.org.uk/education/focus-areas/good-career-guidance>

³ Department for Education [DfE] (2018) 'Careers guidance and access for education and training providers: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, school leaders and school staff', guidance document - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/748474/181008_schools_statutory_guidance_final.pdf

⁴ <https://www.gatsby.org.uk/education/focus-areas/good-career-guidance>

- 73% report a lack of funds as a reason they struggled to improve young peoples' careers support in their school.
- Only 18% receive less than £2K in funding per annum this equates to around £2 per student
- 83% cited "competing demands" as a barrier to progress to young peoples' careers support in their school

The overarching message from this survey is funding and competing demands for time and resource are major obstacles to delivering careers education, information, advice and guidance to all students in secondary schools / academies. Levels of funding clearly differ but are largely insufficient to enable schools to provide consistent and high quality careers support for all students.

Of those schools who do recruit trained careers staff, the service is again varied as the hours worked range from as little as 2 hours per week in some to full-time in others. Delivery is also varied from school to school - staff range from Librarians, Teaching Assistants to Assistant Headteachers and careers professionals delivering a variety of careers support services to differing cohorts and target groups.

Many school leaders have been proactive in prioritising careers education, information, advice and guidance for their students - they recognise the need to prepare young people well for the future. Some institutions have diverted funds from other activities to 'buy in' careers expertise and support e.g. Pupil Premium fund. In a few cases, schools report the Gatsby benchmarks are a diversion or 'a tick box exercise' linked to statutory requirements.

How come we have a National Careers Service for adults but not for young people?

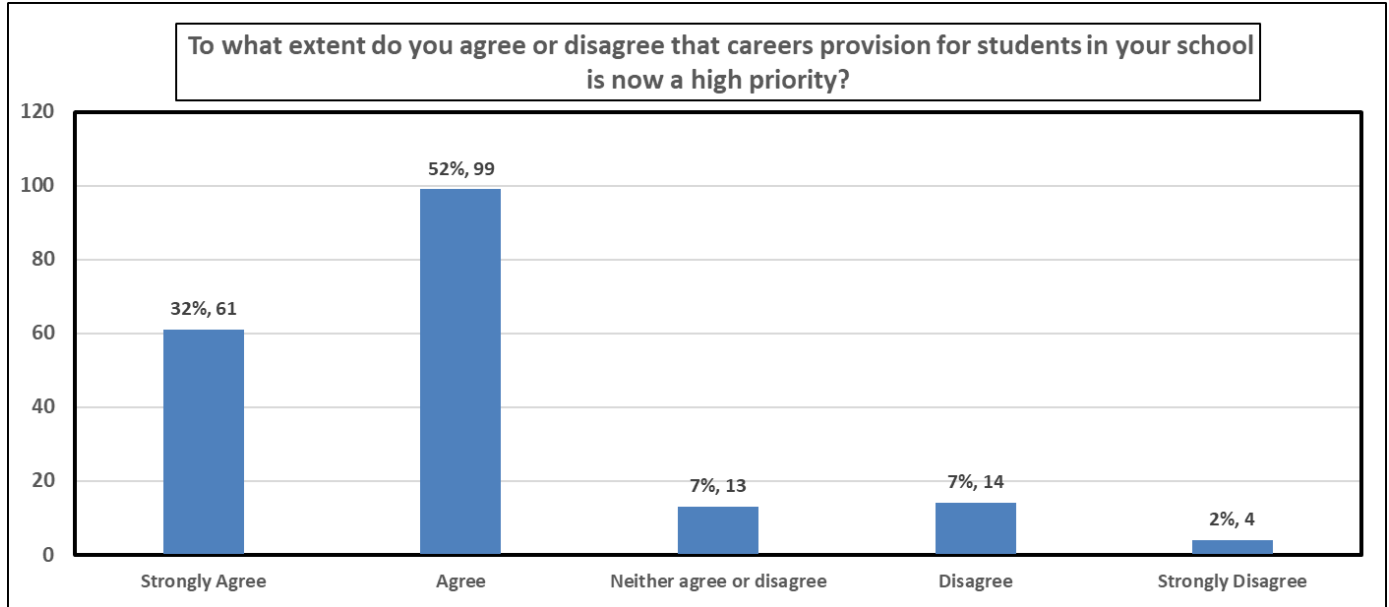
All young people get from the current government service is a telephone helpline. A generation of young people are missing out within a fragile and fragmented careers support system for young people in England. There is no consistent national or local approach as to who gets what level of service.

Teachers and employers cannot do the job alone. Schools are struggling to find sufficient funds to ensure all young people received good quality independent and impartial careers provision, from trained careers advisers. There is a need to properly fund all schools to ensure careers leaders have the resources to do their job well. There is a dedicated and motivated cohort of careers leaders and/or careers professionals who want to do significantly more to support teachers, young people, parents/carers and employers. Careers leaders can play a part, but students must have access to impartial and independent advice.

The main conclusion is that careers provision for young people is not in great shape across England. While there are Gatsby benchmarks setting out clear principles and are drivers for change through self-assessment and reporting, schools are struggling to universally provide good career guidance.

Survey Questions and Responses

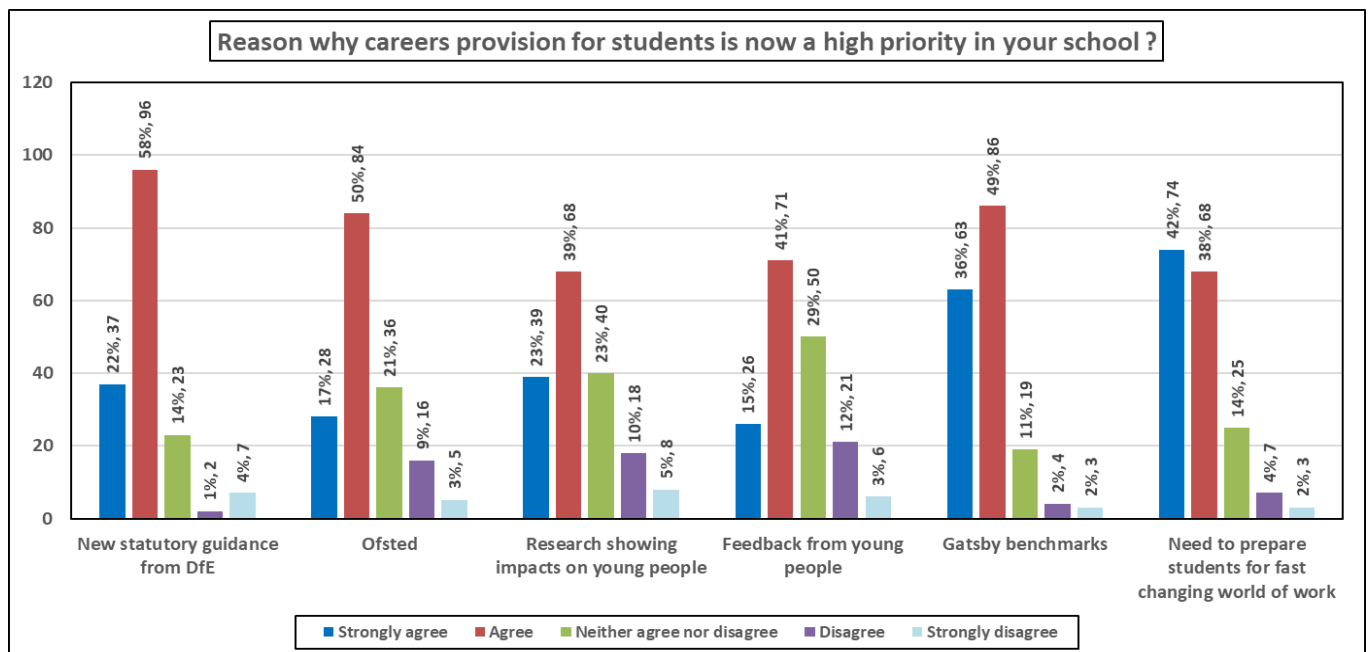
Q 1: To what extent do you agree or disagree that careers provision for students in your school is now a high priority?



All 191 respondents replied to this question. 84% (n=160) either agreed or strongly agreed that careers provision in their schools is now a high priority. Only 9% (n=18) disagreed with this point as illustrated in the chart above. This question led to the follow up question below.

Q 2: If careers provision for students is now a high priority in your school what are the reasons for this?

177 of the 191 (89%) respondents replied to this question with a series of optional answers. The respondents were also invited to offer their own ideas as to why careers provision is now a high priority in their school.



The highest response recording either “strongly agree” or “agree” was reported by 85% of responses (n=149) for Gatsby benchmarks as being the main reason. This was closely followed by 80% (n = 142) who indicated a “need to prepare students for fast changing world of work” and “new statutory guidance by DfE” 81% (n=133) responses⁵. The responses are illustrated in the chart below.

Comments from respondents varied showing schools in England have adopted different approaches to the provision of careers information, advice and guidance.

Comments highlight a positive drive towards ensuring an improved careers offer:

“Our setting is an Alternative Provision and our drive has always been about securing quality work experience placements/careers advice in order to secure positive moving on outcomes for our pupils.”

“A headteacher is in post who has a genuine belief in the impact of strong careers work on the achievement, ambition and wellbeing of pupils.”

“It has always been a priority even before Gatsby Benchmarks and DfE guidance, the only difference is that we now get recognition that what we do is good.”

“Careers has always been a priority and highly valued by my headteacher, who is the driving force behind the success of our careers provision so far.”

“We don’t do anything just for Ofsted - but students knowing where they plan to go after school motivates them to do well.”

In contrast with the above there were some alternative comments:

“Gatsby are a diversion.”

“Most work in careers is done to fulfil statutory obligations only rather than to benefit the students.”

“It is about ticking boxes.”

“It is not high priority in our school.”

“Gatsby benchmarks seem to be the primary motivation, along with Ofsted checking up on them, in most of the schools I work in.”

“Careers support is virtually impossible to get and give to students due to funding.”

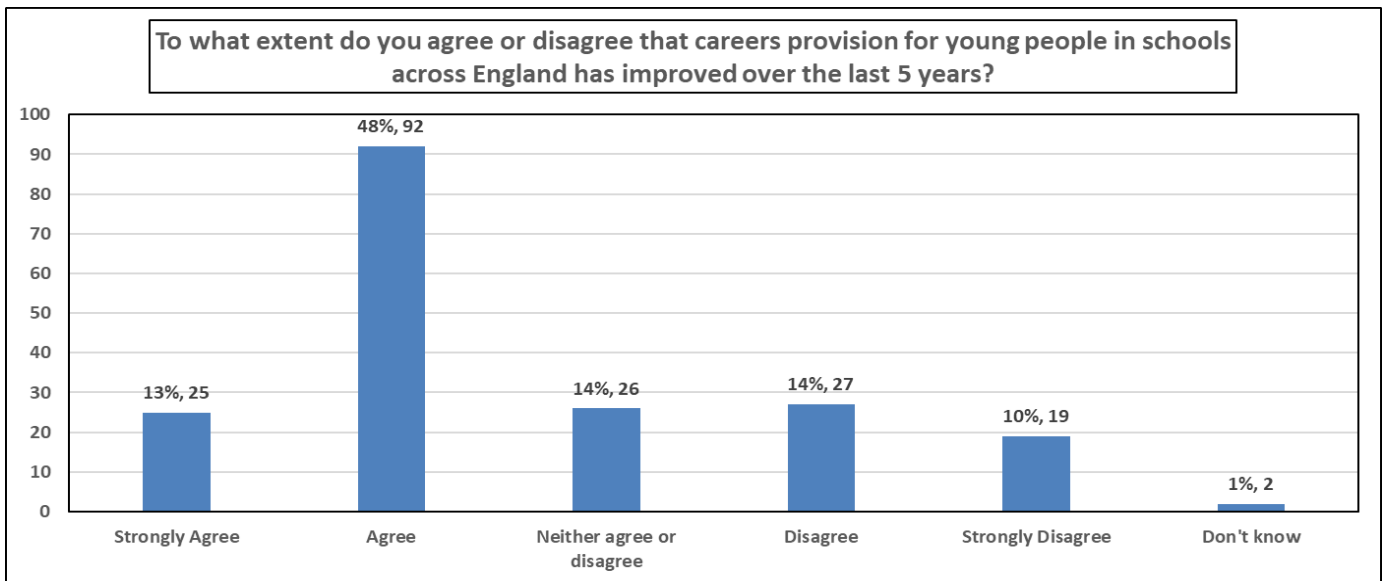
The response to the above questions both in terms of the data shown in the chart and the comments received indicate a difference of opinions as to why schools see the provision of careers information, advice and guidance as a priority. Some school leaders take the subject very seriously seeing it as preparing young people for the world of work and others simply see it as compliance with a statutory duty.

This variation in opinions indicates that service delivery to individual students may well vary depending upon the school they attend.

Q 3: To what extent do you agree or disagree that careers provision for young people in schools across England has improved over the last 5 years?

⁵ New statutory guidance by DfE

92 of the 191 respondents (n=61%) either strongly agreed or agreed that careers provision has improved across England in the past 5 years, while 34% (n=46) disagreed or strongly disagreed.



However, views again differ when respondents' comments are taken into consideration highlighting some contrasting views:

"With the advent of the Gatsby Benchmarks and new statutory guidance there is greater awareness of the need for careers provision."

"Lots more support available."

"Gatsby is demanding, but is focusing on the correct areas."

"Careers provision is improving now because of the introduction of the benchmarks, but in the past provision was patchy."

"I think that there are far more resources available and where a school is committed to putting careers high on the agenda then those schools will reap the benefits"

It was noted that improvement was inevitable, given the actual starting point following the government cuts and demise of Connexions⁶:

"Hard not to improve! With the sudden demise of Connexions in 2011, young people were left with absolutely no careers guidance or advice, so it is very good that things are moving in a positive direction."

"Because since Connexions was closed down there has been a shocking lack of independent professional careers advice across many schools, it is a true postcode lottery. It can't get much worse than making qualified careers staff redundant and saying access to a government "careers" website is all you need... So it has improved but only from a very low lever in some areas I would suggest."

⁶ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat/article/15359844/teenage-job-advice-is-cut-by-100-million-in-england>

“The end of Connexions and the responsibility being passed to schools, without funding was detrimental!”

Other comments suggest that improvements have only come about due to statutory requirements forcing schools to adopt careers guidance:

“But only since statutory guidance and requirement for careers leaders in each school.”

“Impact of making thing statutory.”

There were caveats:

“It has improved in some ways due to statutory guidance, Gatsby benchmarks etc. There is a wealth of material available to support schools, and web based resources are of an increasing quality. The ability of schools to commission high quality careers advice from a ‘marketplace’ gives schools the ability to choose an Adviser, and therefore secure the best quality input for their students. However, the impartiality and consistency of careers work has been undermined by transferring responsibility to schools.”

“Whilst I do agree it has improved it is still very fragmented nationally and many young people have either no careers advice and guidance or unqualified and not impartial advice and guidance”

“Careers provision is so fragmented across the country. Some schools have careers advisors that go in and deliver 1:2:1 guidance, other schools rely on IT based careers programmes. Quality from county to county is so different. There needs to be a service which is centralised so every school receives the same level of service, no matter what the school budget is.”

Funding and capacity to deliver were also raised:

“Lack of funding from government and schools can’t afford to buy in impartial careers advice.”

“Funding issues with careers service have destroyed it.”

“Less time available to mentor/talk to students 1-1.”

“There seems to be a lot more PR regarding career guidance and additional responsibilities, but without the additional funding for careers work, including recognition of a professionally qualified careers adviser/practitioner, this may fizzle out.”

“It probably couldn’t get much worse, with the cuts to careers services and responsibility being handed to schools, when most didn’t have sufficient resources or knowledge.”

“We have had to reduce paid support for advice due to funding and simply cannot deliver the necessary logistics for work placements without a much greater level of resource.”

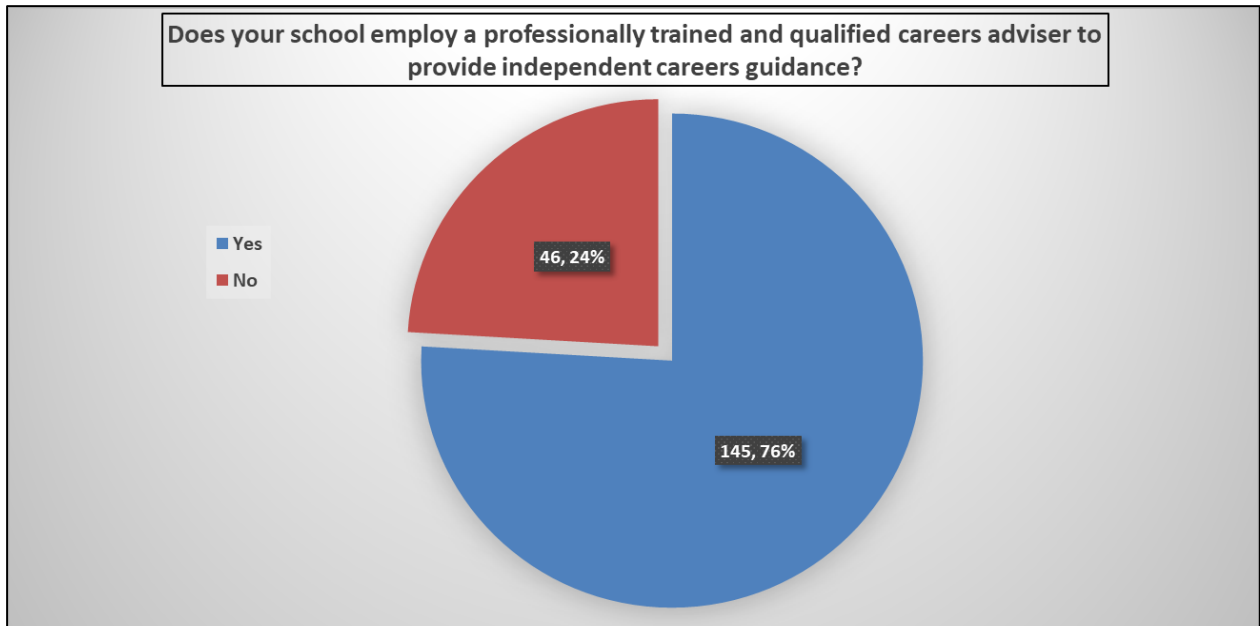
“The drive towards a relentless focus on exclusively traditional academic subjects and the rise in expectation around tests and curriculum content has squeezed this area of school focus alongside so many others.”

“It probably couldn’t get much worse, with the cuts to careers services and responsibility being handed to schools, when most didn’t have sufficient resources or knowledge.”

These replies again illustrate that some schools see the introduction of Gatsby and statutory regulation as a reason why there has been improvement.

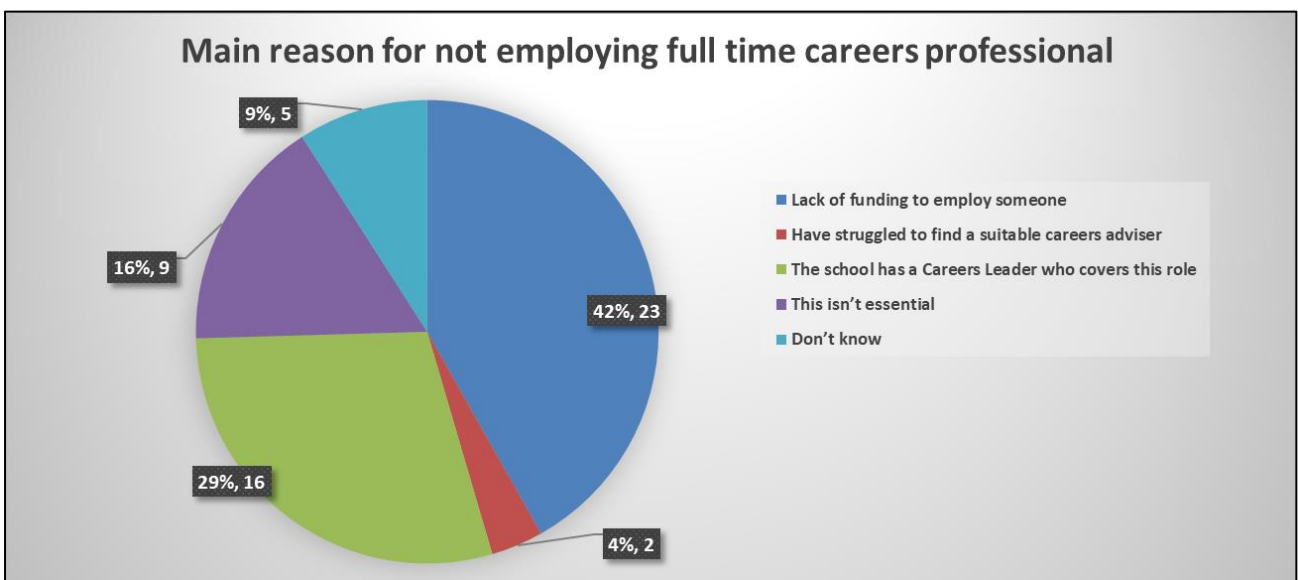
There are clear concerns regarding the capacity and funding that schools have (or do not have) to deliver but the main issue arising out of the feedback is the fragmented and patchy delivery on offer to students in schools.

Q4: Does your school employ a professionally trained and qualified careers adviser to provide independent careers guidance?



As is shown in the pie chart above 76% (n = 145) of respondents stated that their school employs a trained and qualified independent careers adviser, while the remainder do not, illustrating again that there are differences in CIAG delivery. This question then led to the two follow up questions (5 and 6) - In the case of those who do not employ a trained and qualified careers adviser, what are the reasons? and for those who do employ a qualified professional careers adviser, how many hours per week is that person employed?

Q 5: If you answered NO, can you please share the main reason for this?



The main reason given for not employing a trained and qualified careers adviser was insufficient funding to employ someone, which was stated by 42% (n=23) of those who replied. The second highest response given was that the school already had in place a Careers Leader who covered the role. 29% (n=16)

A further 16% (n=9) claimed that this was not essential. The chart below illustrates the response received to this question.

The above data is reinforced with comments volunteered by some of the respondents:

“They don’t employ someone, but get a free service for the most ‘at risk’ students from the local authority.”

“I am completing the questionnaire as the independent Careers Adviser.”

“Have a Service Level Agreement to cover what we need as cannot fund employing someone.”

“Struggling to fund level 6 training.”

“In my experience, some schools try to get away with the minimum or below, quoting lack of funding and shortage of money for the school in general. In at least one school the careers leader takes on the role of a careers adviser and is level 6 trained but he has lots of other roles to fulfil in the school, some of which conflict and all of which together don’t allow him enough time to fulfil his careers adviser role to sufficient extent. I have had feedback illustrating this from students.”

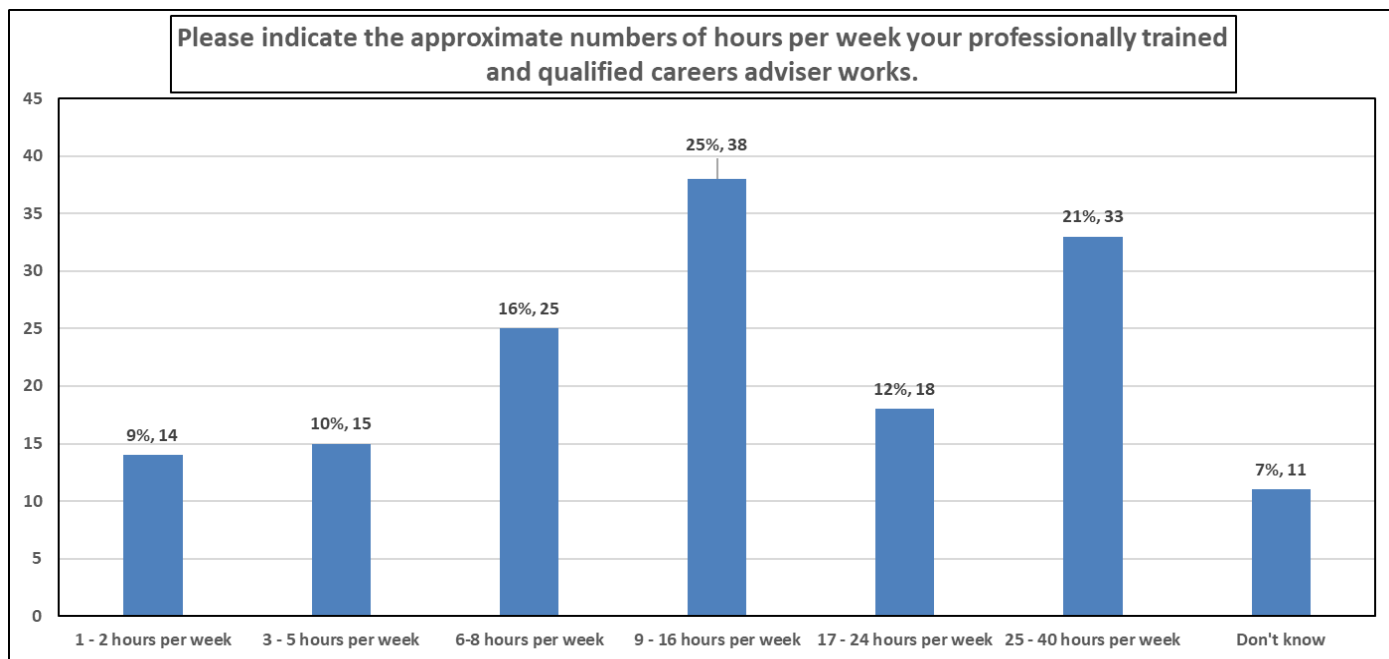
“Lack of funding is a close 2nd - but no one available with the skills.”

“We have had to stop working with our partner agency because we can no longer afford their services.”

“Not quite sure of the correct resource here. We certainly can’t afford to employ a careers adviser (and probably wouldn’t wish to if even we could), we do however commission [a company] to provide some input to Year 11s (individually for vulnerable students; small groups for the rest) over the course of the year.”

Q 6: Please indicate the approximate numbers of hours per week your professionally trained and qualified careers adviser works.

There was a variation in responses to this question with the majority of replies 25% (n=38) claiming that their employed careers adviser works between 9 and 16 hours per week. At either end of the scale 9% (n=14) stated that the careers adviser in their employ worked only 2 hours per week. 21% (n=33) indicated their employed careers adviser works between 25 and 40 hours per week. The bar chart below illustrates this spread of working hours per week indicated by the respondents.



Other answers given by respondents are as follows:

"She is employed for a number of hours over the year"

"I am the careers professional and work 30 hours a week - this is split as my title is Work Experience and Careers Co-ordinator. I have a very wide ranging job so careers interviewing is only a part of this."

"3 days per term."

"1 hour for all Year 11 students (180) and some provision for 6th form."

"<20 a year."

"I have only just been employed to work with the Year 10 students prior to their EHCP reviews in the autumn term. I am being given all the time I need to do that so far."

"A careers advisor comes in 2 full days per week."

"One school buys 34 days per year, the other 60."

"Full Time Contract - 5 days a week!"

"None - 10 days per year."

"We employ someone as above but for far fewer hours and for much reduced service. Basically, about 10% compliant on Ofsted requirements."

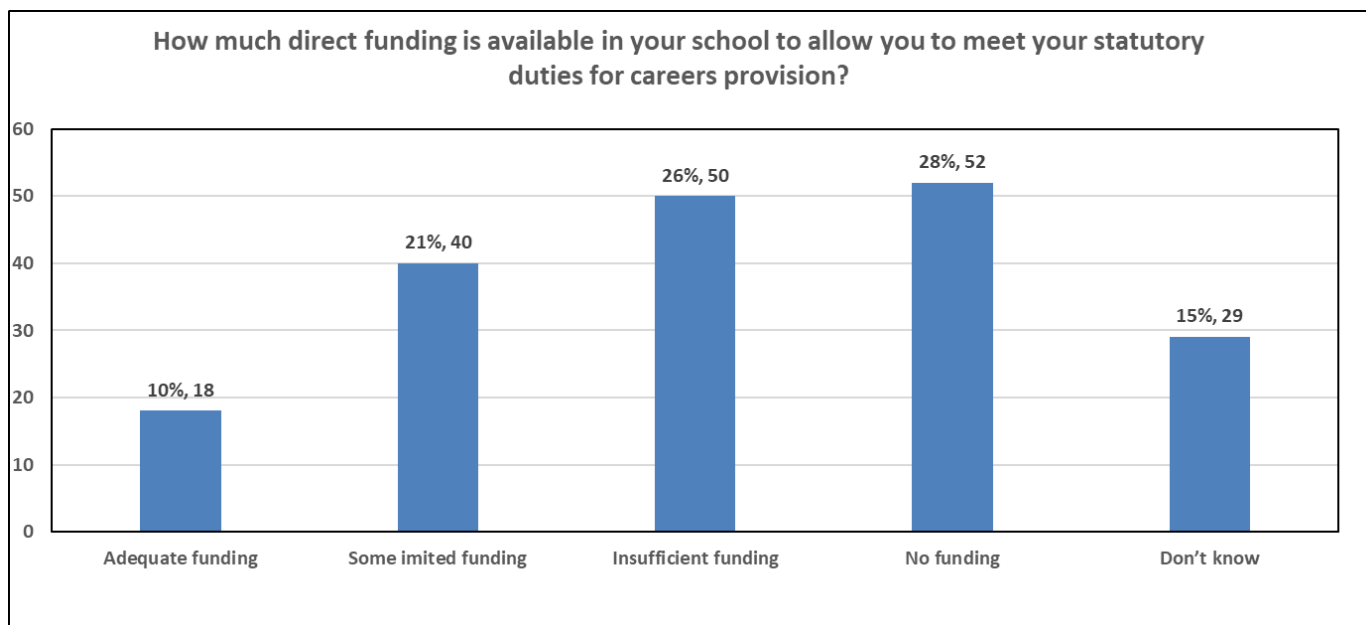
"Its difficult to quantify in hours. We buy in 'bundles' for Year 11 1:1, Year 12 1:1 and then events such as parents evenings, options evenings etc."

What is evident from the response to the above 3 questions is that there is a significant variation of delivery across the schools who have replied to this survey. This variation is both in terms of whether or not a

trained and qualified careers adviser is employed, how many hours he/she works and to whom that trained professional delivers CEIAG and what service delivery is actually provided. England has a patchy, pauperised and postcode lottery careers system in England compared to other home nations and European counterparts.

Q 7: How much direct funding is available in your school to allow you to meet your statutory duties for careers provision?

This chart illustrates again the variation in funding that schools enjoy with 54% (n=102) claiming that they receive insufficient or no funding and a further 21% (n=40) only receiving some limited funding. Only 10% (n=18) claim that they are in receipt of adequate funding to enable them to deliver careers provision in line with their statutory duties.



Some schools diverted funding from other sources:

“We chose to spend Pupil premium funding on it. We bid for additional funding. Some free things we access which will have been funded but no direct funding.”

“As far as I know, the schools I work in have to fund this out of their own budgets.”

“We use some of the NECOP funding”

The alternative solutions on offer are not considered sufficient to meet the needs of the school :

School budgets are extremely tight and everything is being squeezed. It is frustrating that money is being thrown at schools to plan/implement new initiatives ie RAP/virtual wallet when what most schools need is the funding for a full time L6 Career Adviser - this is where you would see impact!

“Wish we could afford to buy Growfar. ‘Free’ CEC product looks inadequate”

“please note I am Assistant Head: Sixth Form and have responsibility for delivering KS5 Careers but have no specific funding for this”

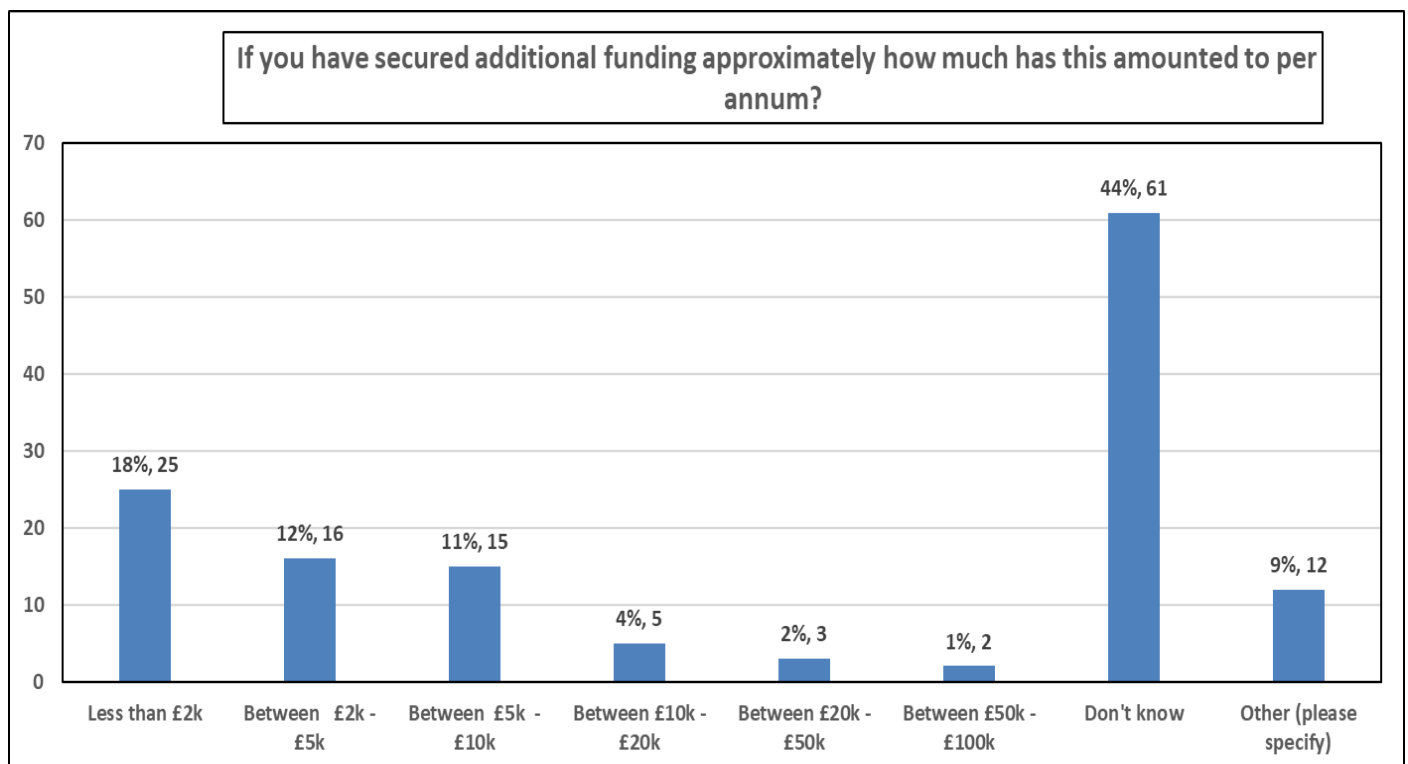
“There is lots of funding that covers the same things, but lacking where it's realistically needed, such as to support work experience and qualified careers advice”

“Every year it is a battle to cover the cost of the expected independent and impartial guidance.”

Q 8: If you have secured additional funding approximately how much has this amounted to per annum?

The range of additional funding available to the respondents is highlighted above. 139 of the 191 (72%) replied to this question of which 18% (n=25) received less than £2k per annum of additional funding to help them provide careers advice and guidance to meet Gatsby benchmarks and their statutory requirements. A further 125 (n=16) received up to £5k of funding and 11% (n= 15) received up to £10k of funding. 44% of respondents did not know the answer to this question.

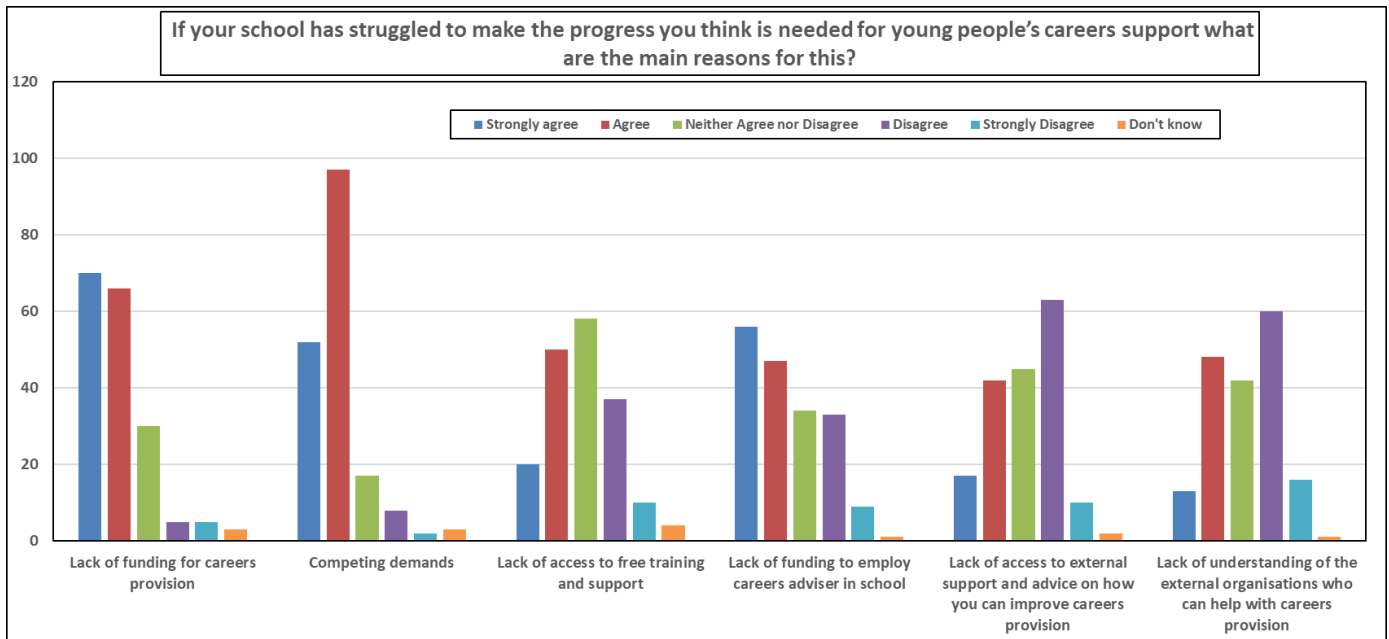
Of the 9% (n=12) that replied “other” the responses ranged from “zero” from 6 respondents, 1 who received £500 and another who received £800. This effectively indicates that of the 78 respondents who did know the level of additional funding received that 55% (n= 68) claimed to have received less than £10k of funding per annum, while 3% received in excess of £20k per year.



Q 9: If your school has struggled to make the progress you think is needed for young people’s careers support what are the main reasons for this?

Several options were offered to respondents to record their level of agreement or disagreement. It can be seen that the two main obstacles to success in delivering support to young people in schools is lack of funding, either for careers provision or to employ a carers adviser in the school and capacity to deliver arising from competing demands upon the teaching staff.

83% (n=149) cited competing demands as the main barrier to progress, followed by 76% (n=136) claiming that lack of funding for careers provision was the next highest reason. The third highest reason was again funding related as 57% (n=103) stated lack of funding to employ a careers adviser as a reason.



This data was further qualified:

"We have made progress but all of the above still apply."

"Conflict of timing for students with other activities. Lack of time for extra time for my role on top of a pastoral leader role. No work experience."

"All left to one person to juggle leading careers, one to one guidance, work experience and careers events. No admin support and only part time. Just not a priority to anyone."

"I don't think we've struggled - we've made a lot of progress in this area over the last three years - but school money spent on this is obviously taken from somewhere else in our budget.!"

"Again access to good value courses like the LIBF courses. They do a good module on careers but it is not funded any more."

"Issue is always time and money."

"Lack of an Enterprise Adviser. No official employer support for strategy or delivery."

"There needs to be more recognition for the careers profession. It is great to see the work of careers guidance being given more importance, however, qualified careers practitioners are needed – status and pay increases across the UK."

"Local corporates offer support to school students (e.g. mentoring, mock job interviews) through their community involvement programmes, so the school accept this. However, it doesn't form a complete careers programme, of course, nor does it cover a comprehensive range of sectors (mainly finance)."

“It still falls to schools to access training & information. In my small school it is a capacity issue when there are so many other things that have come back to schools to deliver. We only have so many staff and we only have so much time on the curriculum.”

The overarching message is that schools are experiencing a capacity issue to deliver a comprehensive package of careers support to their students, exacerbated by competing demands upon their time. This is compounded with insufficient funds being available to recruit support staff or purchase additional resources to supplement careers provision or increase the capacity of the existing delivery staff.

2.0 Conclusions

The aim of this national survey was to find out to what extent schools were able to meet their regulatory requirements with regard to delivery of careers information, advice and guidance to young people and their ability to comply with their statutory duties and obligations. This builds upon an earlier Parliamentary debate in December 2018 - <http://dmhassociates.org/our-careers-support-fails-to-provide-social-justice-economic-opportunity-or-value-for-money-its-time-for-change>

Statutory regulations and Gatsby benchmarks were seen as means of motivating schools to take more seriously the issue of delivering careers support services to students.

- Some school leaders had already been doing so in the belief that it is their responsibility to prepare their students for a rapidly changing world of work. Others took on the responsibility in response to new regulations and Ofsted. However, it is clear young people's exposure to and experience of careers information, advice and guidance is very inconsistent.
- 84% of respondents either “strongly agree” or “agree” that careers provision in their school is now a high priority.
- There is significant variation in the number of hours schools employ trained and qualified careers professionals - from no trained and qualified careers professional working in the school at all, to a few hours per week, with a large minority employing someone full time. There is a postcode lottery in the delivery of careers support evidenced by the type of support and to whom (which year group) this is delivered.
- Obstacles to achieving progress or success in providing good quality careers support to young people include significant variations in the levels of funding and capacity to deliver. This combined with competing demands on the time allocated to those employed in England's schools as Career Leaders.
- Despite schools having recognised the vital importance of careers provision they are unable to deliver due to a lack of funding. Only 10% report they have adequate funding for careers provision in their schools. 75% have no funding, insufficient or limited funding and say this is why they struggle to improve young people's career support in their school.
- Some schools have found small pockets of funding, in some cases, diverting funds from other activities. A few (less than 3 %) have received significant levels of funding (greater than £50k per annum), while the majority (55%) receive less than £10K of funding.
- Around a 5th of secondary schools/academies receive less than £2k in funding for careers provision per annum. Given the average size of a secondary school is slightly less than 1000 students this means £2 spent per student. A third (30%) receive less than £5k per student.

How come we have a National Careers Service for adults but not for young people?

All young people get from the current government service is a telephone helpline. A generation of young people are missing out within a fragile and fragmented careers support system for young people in England. There is no consistent national or local approach as to who gets what level of service.

Teachers and employers cannot do the job alone. Schools are struggling to find sufficient funds to ensure all young people received good quality independent and impartial careers provision, from trained careers advisers. There is a need to properly fund all schools to ensure careers leaders have the resources to do their job well. There is a dedicated and motivated cohort of careers leaders and/or careers professionals who want to do significantly more to support teachers, young people, parents/carers and employers. Careers leaders can play a part, but students must have access to impartial and independent advice.

The main conclusion is that careers provision for young people is not in great shape across England. While there are Gatsby benchmarks setting out clear principles and are drivers for change through self-assessment and reporting, schools are struggling to universally provide good career guidance.

The time has come to support young people, address social mobility, fairness of opportunity and expand their horizons. This report should stimulate further dialogue and action for all those involved in careers, employability and enterprise strategies in England.

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