



Department for
**Innovation,
Universities &
Skills**



Shaping the future –

a new adult advancement
and careers service for England



I am very pleased to provide the foreword to this prospectus, which marks the start of a transformation. This Government has always been committed to changing lives, opening up opportunities and raising expectations. But we have never had a universal service that can help everyone in work advance, whilst also helping those out of work get the skills they need to get and keep a job.

This is a golden opportunity to change the way public services work. But we will only succeed if we draw on the most innovative practice from those who deliver, working with the widest possible range of partners. We are launching ten prototypes for the advancement service in the North West, West Midlands, South East and London. They will test a deliberately broad range of ways in which advice from different organisations can be brought together, and they will be the core from which we develop the advancement service in full. We will help them to learn together and help others learn from their experience – and we will support them every step of the way.

We want to learn too. We need to understand how to build a service that combines consistent, high quality information and support about training with other services in Government. We need to get the right balance between national systems and entitlements with local knowledge and expertise. And we need to know what kind of service will be of help to most people.

Getting on is not just a problem for the lower skilled or the unemployed. Most people I meet, whether they are 16 or 60, acknowledge that taking a course could improve their prospects. But they feel they can't manage the time; they can't get the information they need; and very often they may need encouragement. There are many specific examples – those with caring responsibilities, women seeking to return to work or change career, and agency workers whose circumstances can change from week to week.

This prospectus sets out the Government's plans to create an adult advancement and careers service for England. The service will be driven by local innovation and partnership working across services and organisations. It will, for the first time, combine skills and training advice with practical guidance on how to overcome the full range of barriers people face in getting on in life, such as finding suitable childcare, money worries, housing, health and disability issues and understanding employment rights. And it will treat all customers as individuals, providing a personal package of support that helps them overcome the barriers they face.

We would still be creating the advancement service even without the recent changes in the economic climate. But those changes make the role the service will play even more important. More and more people, with different levels of skills, will need help, support and encouragement to advance in their lives – particularly those facing redundancy. So both current careers advice services, and the new advancement service as it develops and takes over, will have a critical role to play in helping the unemployed find work and giving them the tools to progress.

This is a bold and exciting vision. I encourage all involved in the creation of the new service to help make that vision a reality.

John Denham

Introduction

The Government's intention to establish an adult advancement and careers service in England by autumn 2010, working in close partnership with Jobcentre Plus, was set out in Opportunity, Employment and Progression: making skills work (November 2007).

In *Work Skills* (June 2008), we also set out how the new service, together with Jobcentre Plus, would play a key role in supporting the integration of welfare and skills services across the country, alongside Skills Accounts (an online personalised account for individual learners).

The purpose of this document is to set out our plans for the new service, outline its key features and show how the service will be designed and implemented by and through innovators across the sector.

Skills make a fundamental contribution to social mobility and there has been considerable progress in helping people get the qualifications they need to progress in work. The 2010 PSA target to improve literacy and numeracy skills has been met two years early and the number of people with higher skills continues to rise. But people with low skills in work are still less likely to receive training from their employer than those with higher skills. Trends in earnings suggest that a sizeable proportion of the current workforce face relatively poor prospects for wage progression. Within three months of moving into employment from Jobseeker's Allowance, 21% of people return to benefits.

And although those with low skills face specific barriers to getting on, the evidence shows that people of all ages and at all skill levels also experience personal barriers. Some of these barriers are just difficult to overcome, such as getting hold of the right information about a particular course or provider; or finding out what funding support is available. Other barriers can feel as though they are further outside people's control, such as how to get time off from work, or find suitable childcare. The majority of those between 25-49 in the workforce cite "time due to work" as the biggest barrier to training and those between 50-69 say that it is access to the right information that holds them back.

Everyone – no matter what their position or personal situation – deserves the best chance to get on in work and in life; and that is why we are creating the adult advancement and careers service. Individuals need to receive advice on careers and skills which is tailored to their personal circumstances and accessible at the time and place they need it. Advice on careers and skills needs to be joined up with advice on childcare, employment rights, personal finance, disability and other issues. Individuals need 'just in time' solutions to help them overcome challenges in their lives – particularly at a time when economic conditions are becoming more difficult.

The adult advancement and careers service will be a single service, available to everyone, shaped by local partnerships and innovative ways of working. In each local area, partnerships of advice services and providers will deliver advice to individuals that brings together everything they need to know to advance in work and life. The partnerships will operate as a flexible network, sharing information and expertise to deliver a personalised offer of advice and ongoing support. Colleges – which already provide advice and support and act as powerful engines of social mobility – will be part of these arrangements. And together with national web and phone services, and appropriate referral arrangements through to local services, these partnerships will form the new adult advancement and careers service.

The advancement service will provide a universal offer – for all those in and out of work – and will also provide targeted support focusing on those with specific barriers to getting into and on in work: those seeking to return to work, for whom childcare is a barrier; those experiencing challenges, such as sudden redundancy; those who have worked hard for many years who are seeking to progress in their current job, or change career, but who lack the confidence or means to do so; or those at key transition points, such as reaching adulthood or retirement.

The service will work with Train to Gain skills brokers to offer advice to those in work, building on the new qualifications system we are creating to allow people to study for units and credits. And it will also be seamlessly integrated with support from Jobcentre Plus for those seeking work, as set out in *Work Skills* in June 2008. People looking for a job – whether long-term unemployed or those suddenly made redundant – need comprehensive support to help them improve their skills or acquire new ones, and move into sustainable employment. This will be particularly important as the economy works through the consequences of the current financial situation.

In addition, we will roll out Skills Accounts as an integral part of the new service, to ensure that the personalisation and integration of advice is mirrored by the personalisation and integration of funding support for skills, giving people greater control over how Government funding is used to deliver training. Skills Accounts will give people:

- early confirmation of how much financial support they could be entitled to and a voucher with which to request training from a provider;
- a record of their skills and qualifications that they can take with them through life; and
- a clear statement showing how much the State, employers and they are investing in their training.

These innovative new policies will be brought together to create a new adult advancement and careers service for England.

This document has five sections:

1. The new adult advancement and careers service – a brief summary;
2. Developing the service – prototypes;
3. Policy and operational issues;
4. Links to other advisory services in the education and training system;
5. Working together – innovation and collaboration.

Section 1. The new adult advancement and careers service – a summary

Our aim is to create a single service which people can use to help them get on in their careers or into work, and to help overcome challenges in their lives. It will sit at the heart of the Government's skills offer to individuals, alongside the creation of a unit based qualifications framework, the steps the Government is taking to help employers focus collectively on skills development and the ongoing integration of employment and skills services.

The new adult advancement and careers service will be the place to which people turn when they need advice and support on anything involved in getting on in learning, work and life.

The new service will:

- Offer joined up advice

Enable everyone to get personal, relevant advice on getting on in work and life, reflecting their individual needs and situation – this means bringing together advice on childcare, employment rights, health, housing, personal finance, disability, enterprise and self-employment and other issues.

- Provide a single access point for public funding

Provide a single access point for public funding to support learning and progression in work, through Skills Accounts – so people will not have to hunt for information on what funding is available and to help reduce the barriers to taking up learning opportunities. People will be able to find out how much funding they could be entitled to for learning, what other financial support might be available (such as the Adult Learning Grant, Career Development Loans and discretionary learner support funds) and will have greater choice about how that funding supports their development.

- Provide a range of tools - through different channels

Provide personal careers and skills diagnostic facilities, available online, by telephone or face to face in discussion with an adviser – including a universal diagnostic tool to help people assess their skills and abilities against their career aspirations, identify their opportunities and choices, and develop a personal action plan.

- Make wider sources of support accessible

Make wider sources of support on life issues accessible, including online mentoring and face to face support to help people manage change and think through their options at every stage in life.

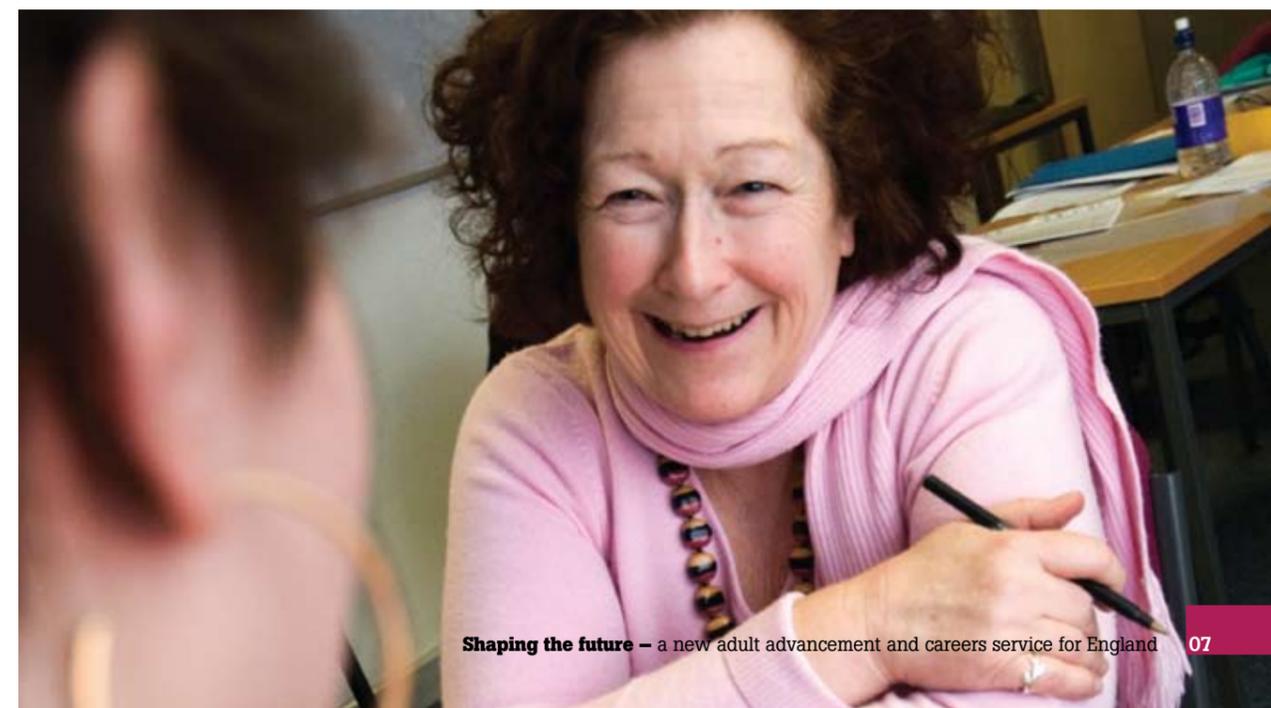
To suit people's individual needs and situation, the new service will be accessible on the web, via a national telephone service, text messaging, email and podcasts and via local face to face services. It will make the best use of current and future technology to create a seamless and personal service for everyone that uses it. This will include a customer relationship management system, with appropriate links to the Client Caseload Information System (CCIS) used by Connexions, to manage referrals within the service and with young people's information, advice and guidance services. And the new service will be supported by national marketing campaigns designed to reach all those who might need its help – whether high skilled or low skilled, in or out of work.

- Working closely with partners for a seamless service

The service will work in close partnership with Jobcentre Plus, as part of the integration of employment and skills services, to ensure that those seeking work receive seamless support to help them into sustainable employment through a skills health check and a skills action plan. It will also make clear links with the National Apprenticeships Service, Train to Gain brokers and union learning representatives so that those in employment receive appropriate advice, and to help individuals and employers focus collectively on skills development.

It will need service protocols with young people's information, advice and guidance services (Connexions) to ensure that young people get the support they need during the transition to adulthood. And it will also have strong links with all sources of advice on Higher Education, so individuals can find out about all their options in one place.

Colleges and learning providers will continue to play a central role in providing advice, outreach and support on learning and work. Informal adult learning providers in the public and voluntary sectors reach into communities with 'first steps' provision that can help people towards greater self-confidence, better skills and employment opportunities. And a whole range of other intermediaries also make a vital contribution in reaching individuals and helping them manage change – Citizens Advice Bureaux, housing associations, Primary Care Trusts, libraries and others. All these organisations will need to play a key role in the partnerships that the advancement service will create.



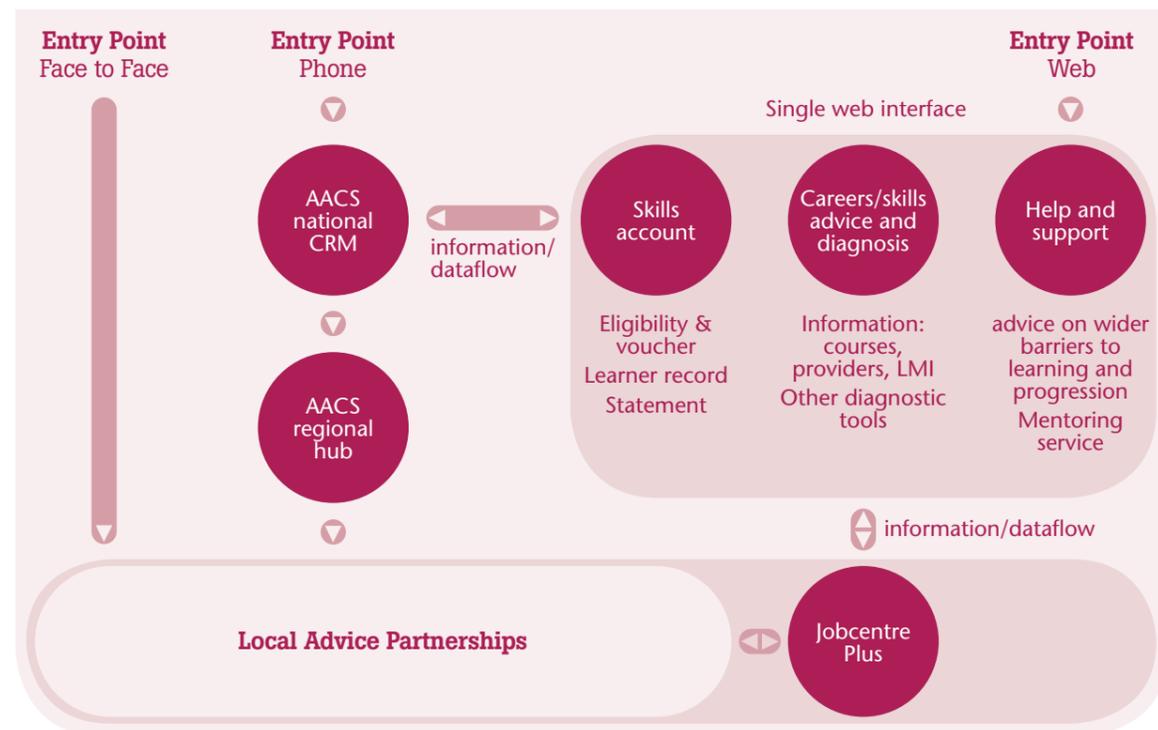
Section 2. Prototypes – developing the adult advancement and careers service

Bringing together different sources of advice so that people get a personal package of support that responds to their individual needs is the central principle of the new service. Making this happen will be challenging, and we need to put the power to do this in the hands of those who deliver the services.

The Government is providing £4 million up to 2010 to support ten 'prototypes' for the new service in specific areas. The prototypes will be the way in which local organisations test a range of different ways of delivering advice in an integrated way. We will learn from the prototypes, assess the pros and cons of alternative approaches and develop from this the final operating model for the new service.

At the highest level, the advancement service is expected to follow the broad structure set out in Fig.1 below. It will have a national telephone and web service building on the current Careers Advice Service, and local services based on a partnership approach which will vary from area to area to ensure the best fit with local structures.

Fig.1– One view of the potential “single interface” for the individual...



The advancement service will sit within the Skills Funding Agency (SFA), which will also be operational from 2010-11. We will take work forward to establish the service in tandem with the development programme for the SFA. The operating model and performance management arrangements for the new service will need to draw on local innovation and support local delivery, because these are vital for a dynamic and responsive operation in local labour markets.

Alongside the prototypes, over the next two years we will continue to

- strengthen the capability of local **nextstep** services and the links with young people's information, advice and guidance services;
- develop the national **Careers Advice Service**; and
- build referral systems to ensure that transfer between national and local services is seamless.

Reshaping nextstep services

We have already begun to reshape **nextstep** services by increasing their scope to deliver to new customer groups and provide a more flexible customer journey. All adults can access face to face information, signposting and referral activities, including group sessions and drop in workshops. There is a more differentiated and personalised service for for priority groups, which includes action planning, ongoing support for individuals and follow up contact targeted on those most disadvantaged in the labour market.

Customer-facing web platform at Directgov

We have also brought delivery of **learndirect careers advice** service into the LSC where it has become the **Careers Advice Service**; and we will move the web platform for the whole service (including Skills Accounts) onto the Directgov web platform as soon as is practicable. The new service will need an online platform building on the best of current and future technology.

The ten prototypes

The prototypes will test a range of innovative approaches to establishing local partnerships – including networking arrangements, hub and spoke models, and “advancement advisers” embedded in communities who act as outreach points and sources of advice on wider barriers to learning and work.

The prototypes will explore how the voluntary and community sector can contribute to these approaches and work with partners; and carry out outreach activity in the community and in a wide range of settings. They will develop approaches which address the needs of those in work, particularly the low skilled and low paid, and those out of work needing advice and support to move into sustainable employment.

The prototypes in London will be able to draw on the ‘in work’ trial which is part of the London Skills and Employment Board's strategy for skills, with ‘advancement advisers’ providing support for people who have been helped into sustainable employment by Jobcentre Plus and nextstep services.

The prototypes are outlined in the chart below:

Area	Description
Greater Manchester	A 'hub and spoke' advancement network across the ten local authority areas with a common set of resources, referral mechanisms, protocols and standards. Partners involved include: Jobcentre Plus, nextstep, employers, employees and employer-facing intermediaries.
Greater Merseyside	A voluntary sector led network of advisory services across the six boroughs, complemented by an innovative web tool called 'myIAGspace' to make information available in one place on a wide range of advice services. Partners involved include: Greater Merseyside's Voluntary Community and Faith Sector Learning Consortium (VOLA), the nextstep regional prime contractor, Jobcentre Plus and City Employment Strategy partners and major employers.
Stoke on Trent and North Staffs	Targeted networks in primary care and social housing settings placing quality assured careers information and guidance at the heart of wider personal support, using a holistic wellbeing measure of progress. Partners involved include: Stoke-on-Trent City Council, East Staffordshire Borough Council, the Primary Care Trust [PCT] and nextstep .
Black Country	A targeted network of "advancement advisers" ensuring that individuals can quickly access a range of advisory services no matter which organisation they use as an initial point of contact. Partners involved include: Citizens Advice Bureau, Local PCTs, Local Involvement Network, Connexions, nextstep , local colleges, third sector training organisations and a cluster of Registered Social Landlords (RSL)
Brighton and Hove	A local authority led partnership implementing a "hub and spoke" model focusing on the development of people and organisations, tools to assist them and the co-location of a wide range of advice and support services. Partners within the prototype include Jobcentre Plus, VT Careers Enterprise, Sussex Partnership Trust (PCT Commissioners for Mental Health Services), Pathways to Work and European Social Fund programme providers, City College Brighton and Hove, Social Welfare Law Network (ASSG) and Brighton and Hove CVS Advice Services Network.
South Hampshire	A network of "advancement advisers" helping the low skilled into sustainable employment, with co-location of staff from key agencies in 'hubs' and satellites across the area defined by the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire. Partners involved include the local authorities in South Hampshire, Jobcentre Plus, nextstep, housing organisations, libraries, and employer-facing intermediaries.

Area	Description
Slough	A local authority led partnership with delivery through multiple access points within a range of generic and specialist, community, learning, health, social, housing, careers and business advisory settings. Partners involved include Slough Borough Council, Slough Council for Voluntary Services, the Wellness at Work Slough Group, nextstep, Jobcentre Plus and East Berkshire College and Thames Valley University.
Brent and Ealing	Housing, employment and skills staff will be brought together to develop an improved advice offer, testing some of the possible incentives that could be provided to tenants to encourage participation in skills and employment activities. Partners involved include Catalyst Communities Housing Association, Brent and Ealing Council with links to nextstep, Jobcentre Plus and the voluntary and community sector.
Lambeth, Southwark and Wandsworth	A network of advisers engaging parents on low incomes, both workless and in work, through Children's Centres and community settings linking with sub-regional and borough-specific provision to address barriers to learning and employment. Partners involved are Lambeth, Southwark and Wandsworth local authorities with links to nextstep, Jobcentre Plus and third sector skills and employability support organisations.
Islington, Camden and Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea.	An outreach driven approach, with 'advancement advisers' working within the community to offer a holistic solution to the multiple barriers faced by adults needing to upskill and progress into and within the labour market. Partners involved are Islington, Camden and Westminster, and Kensington and Chelsea Borough Councils building on outreach through housing offices, Jobcentre Plus, nextstep and Children's Centres.

In the South East, where universal Skills Accounts are being tested, the prototypes and the enhanced **nextstep** service will be used to test ways of giving people more flexible access to learner support funding. This may involve relaxing eligibility criteria for support where there is a demonstrable need. In the areas trialling the integrated employment and skills offer set out in Work Skills, we will test co-location of **nextstep** services with Jobcentre Plus, support to provide Skills Accounts for those out of work and a skills health check process for Jobcentre Plus clients.

Within the prototypes, we will also explore the scope for trialling a more flexible approach to bringing wider sources of funding together with adult learner support funding, in addition to the integration of advice services.

Section 3. Policy and operational issues

Local innovation will be at the heart of the development process for the new service. But some aspects of the new service will need to be scoped and, in some cases, developed by DIUS and its partners working with the sector.

Capacity – dealing with more customers

The new service will need greater capacity than current **nextstep** and national careers advice services – not least as our aim is to continue to raise demand for skills and learning from individuals as well as responding to the current economic situation. As more Learning and Skills Council (LSC) areas and Jobcentre Plus districts implement the integrated employment and skills offer set out in Work Skills, as Skills Accounts expand across the country, and as new web systems are developed, the throughput of customers needing advice will increase. Much of this demand will flow through the telephone and web channels of the new service, but a considerable amount will impact on face to face services. An additional £50m will be available from 2010-11 to fund increased capacity across the whole service and we will keep capacity under review in the meantime, particularly in view of the current economic downturn.

National branding with regional and local identities

We will develop a national identity for the advancement service, with the flexibility for regional and local identities to reflect local delivery arrangements. The brand identity will also encompass the role that Skills Accounts will play in the new service.

The national identity will also need to be recognisable as part of the continuing rollout of an integrated employment and skills offer across the country and as part of the LSC's successful 'In our hands' campaign. We expect to be able to phase in the new identity during 2009/10.

Quality and flexibility – developing the workforce

To succeed, the new service will depend on the quality and commitment of its workforce. We will focus attention on the advisory workforce in the following ways:

- we will review the **matrix** Standard for delivery of careers advice during 2009 and develop a set of common service standards for organisations providing advice on careers and skills to apply across the new service. In doing so, drawing on the experience within the prototypes, we will explore the contribution that different advice services can make to meeting those standards. These standards will cover quality, accessibility and flexibility, and will need to be as simple and transparent as possible. They will also need to complement light touch inspection activity and draw on feedback from customers;
- we will also develop a new workforce development strategy for professionals in the new service, taking account of arrangements to develop the young people's advice workforce. It is vital that careers professionals have the skills to work flexibly with a wide range of partners in delivering advice – including Jobcentre Plus and Connexions – and can keep up to speed with sector, occupational and workforce changes in the wider economy. We are working with the UK Commission for Employment and Skills, practitioners and other partners to review the qualifications framework and continuous professional development arrangements for careers advisers. The review will be completed and recommendations made by July 2009, to be taken forward during 2009/10.

Equality and diversity

Removing barriers that individuals face in getting into and on in work is at the heart of the vision for the new service. It will challenge stereotyping and support individuals considering opportunities in non-traditional areas. We will ensure that the language we use to position, deliver and promote the new service is appropriate for all. We will provide advice in a variety of languages, and ensure that services can be understood and used by those with learning difficulties and disabilities, as well as those less familiar with web-based technology. Equality and diversity will be integral to the development of the new service and we will monitor take-up of services – and the outcomes achieved – by these groups



Section 4. Links to other advisory services in the education and training system

As well as integrating sources of advice on getting on in work and life, the new service will need to operate flexibly alongside other key advisory services.

Embedded guidance in colleges and training providers

Learning providers are required through their current LSC contracts to provide advice and support to learners. They will need to be part of the local partnerships in the new service, in a way which helps them to continue to offer improved support to learners, including:

- pre-learning skills assessment to make the right choice of provider and course;
- expert on-course input from tutors and advisers; and
- further advice at the end of the course to support progression to job or learning opportunities.

Young people's information, advice and guidance services delivered through local authorities

Although every individual is different, adults and young people have different needs which demand different solutions.

We will continue to develop distinct advice services for young people and adults, but within an all-age strategy agreed jointly with the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). Through this all-age strategy, we will put in place arrangements to ensure that transitions between services are managed effectively for the young person, including direct contact between advancement service and Connexions advisers, where this is necessary and practical.

We will also make the new service available to 18 year-old unemployed Jobcentre Plus clients and all 19 year-olds, giving them the choice of moving from Connexions support to the advancement service. We will ensure appropriate and effective information exchange between the two services; this will include labour market information, and where appropriate, client level information.

A flexible workforce with transferable and appropriate qualifications will be important in developing links between the two services. DCSF and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) will ensure that the review of the qualifications framework for careers advisers includes an assessment of whether there are elements of the careers advice skillset that are discrete to the youth sector. It will then make recommendations which draw out the differences between the needs of the youth sector in England and the combined careers offer in other parts of the UK.

DCSF will ensure that the recommendations of this review are fed in to the programme of reform of the youth workforce being taken forward by the Children's Workforce Network.

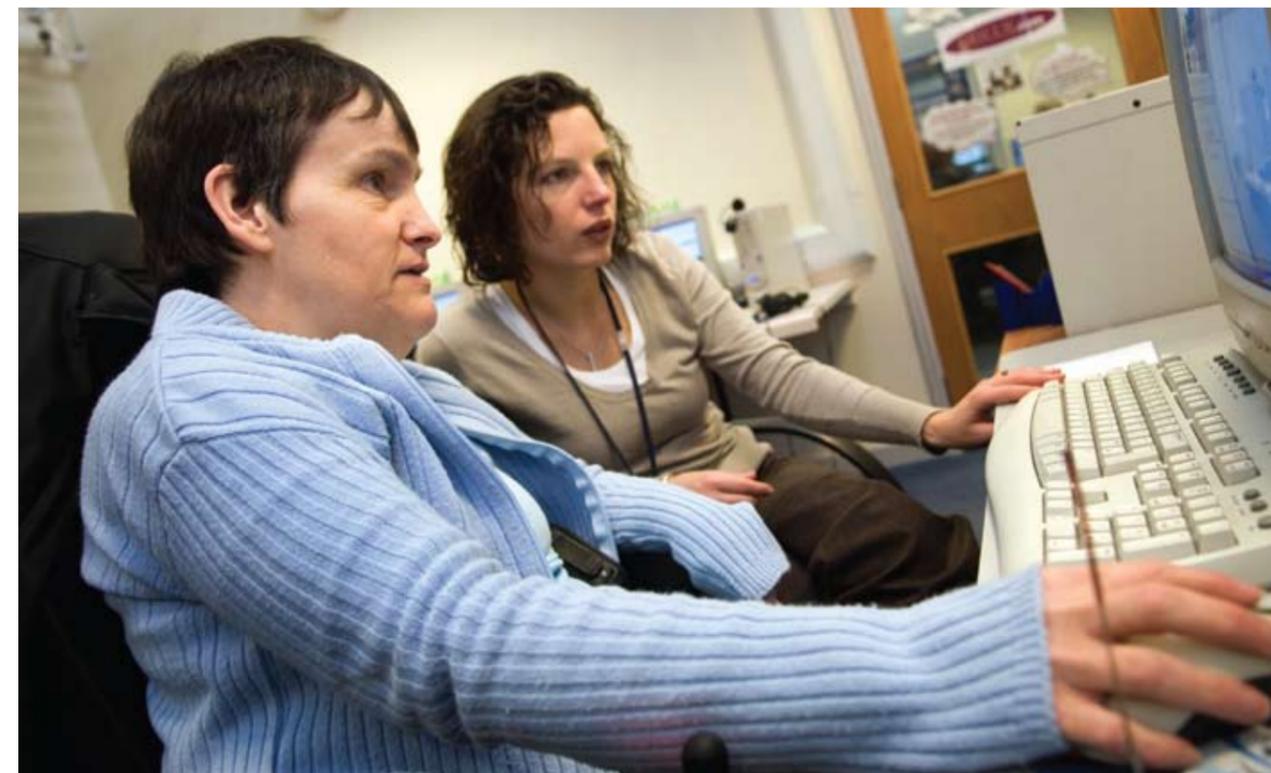
Higher Education careers support:

As we develop the new service we will work with the Higher Education (HE) sector to ensure the service addresses the needs of adults considering an HE course and graduates who have not yet found an appropriate place in the labour market.

Online information on HE provision needs to be of the best possible quality, directing individuals towards further sources of information as necessary. Professionals in the new service need to be equipped to deal with queries about HE and graduate employment and we believe that there is already much good practice in the provision of support to potential HE learners and HE leavers to build on.

Advice services for prisoners

Local **nextstep** services and the national careers advice service are not currently available to prisoners. Separately funded careers information and advice is delivered through the Offenders Learning and Skills Service (OLASS). The new service will become the way in which prisoners also access information and advice, drawing on the resources already available through OLASS. The OLASS re-tendering process will ensure a transition from traditional information and advice delivery to a service that delivers – and is then integrated with – the advancement service offer, ensuring the new service draws in current knowledge and expertise about what works best in delivering to this group.



Section 5. Working together – innovation and collaboration

Consultation with stakeholders from across the sector has shown that there is a clear common vision for the new service and a shared commitment to making it happen. This is a major strength. But we will only be able to develop the new service by working with and through others – a huge range of experience and expertise already exists across the country, and we need to tap into that every step of the way.

The new service will be developed 'bottom up', driven by innovation in the prototype areas. But to build effectively on the prototypes, we need a national development framework that allows us to draw together that learning and check back the conclusions with the sector as we go. The range of interested parties is wide and includes other Government Departments and agencies, the Devolved Administrations, local authorities, **nextstep** contractors and careers advisers, Sector Skills Councils, Regional Development Agencies, HE institutions, the Trades Union Congress, professional bodies within the sector, the Museum Libraries and Archives Council, The Age and Employment Network (TAEN) and the wide range of partners involved in the prototypes such as housing associations, Citizens Advice Bureaux and the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB).

We will therefore:

- **set up a learning network for the prototypes by November 2008**, so that they can learn lessons from each other and so we can learn from the prototypes;
- **set up a web-based mechanism for opinions and feedback**, using an "Ideas Tree" approach, which will support the learning network for the prototypes and connect it to input from wider organisations and from individuals. This will be hosted on the IAG review website, and will be open to collect feedback at least until the end of January 2009;
- **establish a national stakeholder group for the new service by December 2008** – to ensure the development process is informed by professional expertise and the experience from the full range of trials (including Skills Accounts and the integration of employment and skills services), to inform commissioning of any necessary research and to keep everyone in the sector informed as we develop the service. This group would meet quarterly with a secretariat provided by DIUS, and will include Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS), Association of Colleges (AoC), Association of Learning Providers (ALP), Careers England, Institute of Careers Guidance (ICG), National Association for Educational Guidance for Adults (NAEGA), National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE), **nextstep** contractors and the TUC.
- **work with smaller groups of interested parties from November 2008** to develop our approach to the range of specific issues set out in Section 2 – capacity, branding, quality assurance and workforce development, equality and diversity, and links with other advisory services within the education and training system – to ensure we capture the full range of views from professionals as we work through these issues.

Through the Ideas Tree we would welcome your comments on issues raised by this document and your suggestions for other key issues which you would want to see debated as development is taken forward.

Annex A – timetable

Activity	By When
	2008
Contracts for enhanced nextstep services for 2008/09 and 2009/10 started	August
Integrated employment and skills (IES) trials, including skills health checks for JCP clients, co-location of nextstep with JCP, for JCP JSA client group started in West Midlands	September
Web and telephone based national services move to 'Careers Advice Service' within LSC Announcements of advancement network prototypes	October
Commission brand research for new identity for service First meeting of national Stakeholder Group Coverage of IES trials, including skills health checks for JCP clients, co-location of nextstep with JCP, for JCP JSA client group expanded.	December
	2009
Further expansion of IES trials, including skills health checks for JCP clients, co-location of nextstep with JCP, for JCP JSA client group.	February/March
Refine detailed operational design for 2009/10 for expanded trials of new service	April
Nextstep evaluation report	May
Recommendations on qualifications strategy for workforce and quality assurance received	July
Launch further trialling and enhancements for development of the new service in 2009/10	August
Finalised universal diagnostic facility available Agree qualifications strategy and quality assurance arrangements for new service Issue Invitation to Tender for services for 2010/11 – 2012/13	Autumn
	2010
Contract for services for 2010/11 – 2012/13 awarded	February
New service operational	August



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