

# National Careers Show

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*iCeGS: Creative Solutions for the Careers Sector*

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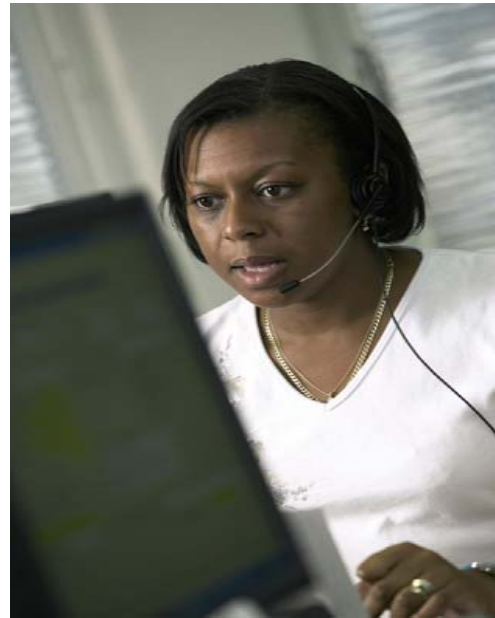
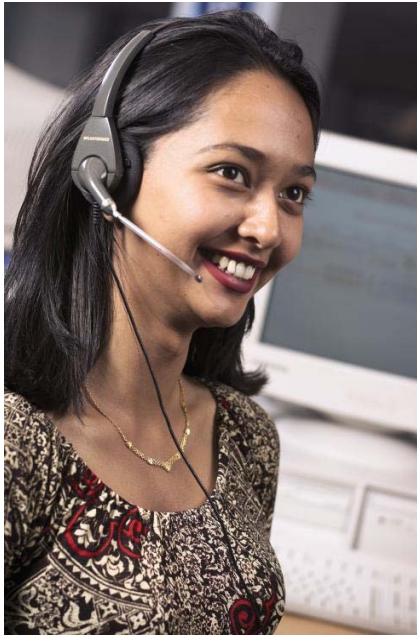
# What is distinctive about telephone guidance?



# Outline

In this seminar we are going to:

- Outline the current delivery of the telephone guidance service by the Careers Advice Service
- Consider briefly the wide range of potential differences between telephone and face to face guidance
- Focus on listening and speaking skills, the absence of body language
- Explore some of the issues concerned with hard to reach clients
- Summarise some of the similarities and differences between telephone and face to face guidance
- Conclude by taking a glimpse at possible future scenarios



# Telephone and face to face guidance: Some key areas of difference, or are there so many differences?

- Importance of listening skills
- No visual cues
- Tone of voice
- Use of silences
- Contracting with clients
- Supporting clients
- Using IT whilst talking with clients
- Knowledge of clients with special needs (for instance those who cannot leave home)
- Small current community of practice
- Confidence in dealing with a very wide range of adult clients
- Creativity
- Treating the client as [an unseen] individual
- Tailoring interview to meet individual needs
- Knowing limits and boundaries of role
- Measuring outcomes
- Ethical issues
- Critical reflection on practice

# Telephone guidance – working at a distance

- Welcoming the caller (warm tone of voice)
- Listening and responding
- Contracting to offset the expectation of instant answers, create a safe environment and agree ways forward
- Recognising and responding to feeling and understanding how this is conveyed via telephone (e.g. tone of voice, silence, ‘hearing’ emotion, conveying empathy verbally e.g. tone of voice, reflective statements)
- Time keeping
- Confidentiality
- Taking notes

# Telephone guidance – working at a distance

- The need to be verbally active (e.g. verbal nods)
- Actively structuring the interview
- Frequent and clear summaries and explanations of what is happening
- Using the voice to convey warmth
- Being aware of tone and pace when speaking
- Checking the client's understanding regularly, allowing the client space to talk, taking the client along with you (transparency), avoiding information overload.
- Ensuring the client is clear about their next steps following on from the call and checking their commitment and motivation.

# Telephone guidance – Harder to reach clients

The telephone:

- Can provide an ease and convenience of access
- It can serve a wide range of people including those from under – represented groups, for example those with basic skills issues or mental health difficulties
- It can sometimes provide reassurance and a first step towards accessing face to face services

And

- Some service users may be reluctant to engage in face-to face work, feel threatened by going into a centre or prefer the anonymity of speaking on the phone
- Some may be negatively influenced by the physical presence of the practitioner
- The absence of the ‘expert behind the desk’ can make the helping relationship more equal

# Little known things about telephone guidance.....

- One of the main ways in which clients find the CAS phone number is through the internet, indicating that clients (sometimes) undertake some prior research
- Despite this many clients do not know what to expect from the guidance interview, the 'unprepared client'
- The volunteer client versus the 'press ganged' client?
- Immediacy and intimacy of telephone interactions
- Labour and learning information is critical to many telephone guidance interventions, it is resource shared with clients
- The release of emotions tend to occur far earlier in a telephone interview than in similar face to face situations (Rosenfield, 1997)
- And the emotions expressed may be far deeper (Rosenfield 1997)
- Clients can hang up anytime leaving the adviser bewildered

# What's next

Will there be a decreasing gap between face to face advice and guidance and telephone guidance as,

- telephone technology becomes more sophisticated, skype etc;
- The Careers Advice Service and nextstep become part of the new aacs service;
- Knowledge and understanding of what makes excellent and effective practice increases?

# Some further reading

- Bobevski, I., and Holgate, A.M., (1997), Characteristics of effective telephone counselling skills, *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 25(2), pp. 239-250.
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- Rosenfield, M., (1997), *Counselling by Telephone*, London, Sage Publications.
- Watts, A. G. (2002) The role of information and communication technologies in integrated career information and guidance systems: A policy perspective. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*. 2(3), pp. 139-155.
- Watts, A.G. and Dent, G. (2008) The evolution of a national distance guidance service: trends and challenges, *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 36(4), pp. 455-465.

# Any questions?

