

The Economic Benefits of Guidance

Deirdre Hughes

Sara Bosley

Lindsey Bowes

Simon Bysse

This report presents the results of a literature review undertaken by the Centre for Guidance Studies (CeGS) on behalf of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), Adult Opportunities Unit. It offers an initial assessment of the level of available evidence in relation to the economic benefits of guidance. Due to the limited timescale of the project, it does not represent an entirely comprehensive review; however, it does provide an analysis of relevant historical and contemporary data. Six key recommendations are made to inform policy developments at national, regional and local levels. In the final chapter, over forty research report summaries highlight the main focus of particular studies, key findings and additional comments.

Deirdre Hughes is Director of CeGS, Sara Bosley is a CeGS Associate, Lindsey Bowes is a full-time CeGS researcher and Simon Bysshe is a Senior Associate of CeGS and Independent Consultant.

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 UNIVERSITY
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CeGS Centre for
Guidance Studies

Promoting research & informing practice

Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby
Kedleston Road, Derby DE22 1GB
Tel: 01332 591267 Fax: 01332 622726

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Deirdre Hughes

Sara Bosley

Lindsey Bowes

Simon Bysse

Centre for Guidance Studies
University of Derby

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Executive Summary

To secure resources in any field it is necessary to assess what is the likely return on investment. Assessing the economic benefits of information, advice and guidance is increasingly important for a number of reasons, not least to justify current and future levels of funding. Being able to identify quantifiable beneficial service achievements is also relevant to the processes of performance review, best value and the setting of quality targets for guidance providers.

Aim and objectives

The project reported here provides a summary analyses of current evidence on the economic benefits of guidance. It offers 'definitions' of guidance and 'frameworks' to help contextualise the inter-relationships that need to be considered when assessing information, advice and guidance (IAG) outcomes.

The specific objectives were:

- to identify key sources of information within agreed parameters;
- to summarise key messages from existing research and identify gaps in knowledge/evidence;
- to collate and analyse the research data and present it in a clear and accessible format as a basis for future action.

Research scope and methodology

The research was commissioned by DfES on 20th August 2001 and the deadline for the project was 21st September 2001. The research team undertook the following:

- a review of bibliographic and web-based sources to identify relevant research studies;
- a review of relevant summary reports were completed to identify key sources of earlier research on learning and economic outcomes;
- contacts were made with leading researchers in the field to ask them to identify key pieces of research from the above;
- contacts were established with a number of organisations to identify current research. These included the National Learning & Skills Council (LSC), the Learning & Skills Development Agency (LSDA), the Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS), the National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) and the National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling (NICEC).

Definitions of guidance

Guidance can be defined as a *helping process* operating in three main domains i.e. personal, vocational and educational. The process is informed by five main principles: user-friendliness, confidentiality, impartiality, equality of opportunity, and accessibility. It is provided in a variety of different contexts and delivered through a range of methods. Figure One (page 9) provides a model of the relationships that need to be considered when assessing information, advice and guidance (IAG outcomes).

The evidence

Killeen et al (1992) highlight the complexities of measuring the economic success of guidance. They explicitly state that attitudinal change and learning outcomes are important 'precursors' to the economic benefits of guidance.

- *Motivational and attitudinal change* include studies that examine the levels of self-confidence, more positive attitudes, greater motivation to seek employment, increased motivation and interest in education and training. Guidance is reported to be associated with, or perceived to be associated with, positive change in individuals set within a range of different contexts.
- *Learning outcomes* include studies that examine career learning outcomes which are defined as the

skills, knowledge and attitudes which facilitate informed and rational occupational and educational decision-making and the implementation of such decisions.

- *Participation in learning* include studies that focus on young persons and adults' participation in 'informal' and 'formal' education and training. Distinguishing the role of guidance is complex and problematic. However, most studies suggest that high quality guidance makes, or is perceived to make, some positive contribution.
- *Student retention and achievement* include studies that refer to further and higher education contexts. The findings from our review show that further and higher education institutions and 'quango' agencies consider guidance to be highly important. However, it is clear that there is a lack of research evidence and closer scrutiny of the benefits and outcomes of guidance is required.
- *Job search/reduced employment* include studies that based on quantitative and qualitative research, most of which are based on the experiences and perceptions of those receiving or delivering guidance. The evidence shows that quite intensive, multi-method guidance intended to support the job search of non or unemployed people does reduce mean job search time and enhance re-employment rates over the short-to medium term.
- *Employment* include those studies which refer to the benefits of guidance for individuals, employers and organisations. Generally, there is very limited evidence on the economic benefits of guidance in companies.
- *Economy* include those studies which relate to the wider social benefits of guidance and its potential contribution to the economy. At present, estimation of the UK macro-economic benefits of guidance can only be as good as our estimates of its net impact on these and other relevant variables. This is one of the reasons why a strategic approach to guidance evaluation research is required.

Conclusions and recommendations

The quality of research and of the evidence it can provide is multi-dimensional, but as 'a rule of thumb', the kinds of evidence available fall into three main categories:

- 1) Opinion studies;
- 2) Outcome measurement studies with no or very weak counterfactuals; and
- 3) Controlled studies.

In the main report, an illustration is provided to summarise the levels of evidence available, set against the anticipated outcomes of guidance. There is a need to identify level of evidence required to inform public policy debate in relation to levels of future investment for guidance In particular:

- A *co-ordinated strategy* is required to (a) consider relative effectiveness, cost effectiveness and cost-benefit in a degree of detail which realistically captures the diversity of guidance; and (b) examine the associations between effects of these kinds, which can be produced and demonstrated with relative ease, and their subsequent educational and career benefits.
- *Short-term evaluation studies* should be extended where appropriate, to include client research and to enable longer-term analysis of key findings and trends.
- A robust *research programme* is required that builds on current studies taking account of findings from evidence-based practice.
- A *systematic review of discrete and integrated interventions* is required to take full advantage of the current diversity in UK provision.
- A *national research database* is required to capture main findings from research in a systematic way and to help disseminate good and interesting policies and practices.

Bibliography and research report summaries

References and brief summaries of over 40 research studies are highlighted in the main report.

Preface

This research report from the Centre for Guidance Studies (CeGS) at the University of Derby builds on a range of activities designed to examine traditional and new methods of measuring the economic benefits of guidance. We hope it will inform current and future debate on approaches that can be effectively used to capture the processes and outcomes of the economic and wider benefits of guidance.

We are grateful to John Killeen (NICEC Fellow) who acted as consultant to the project and contributed a paper on 'Meta-analyses of US controlled-trial evidence' (Appendix 1). We would also like to formally thank Sue Stone (DfES), Wendy Hirsh (NICEC Fellow), Charles Jackson (NICEC Fellow) who shared invaluable research information with the team; and Millar Mac Donald (DfES) and Adrian Tolson (DfES) who provided continuous support throughout the project. Finally, we wish to express our appreciation to the CeGS Administration Team for providing invaluable administrative and secretarial support for the project.

Feedback

CeGS would be happy to receive feedback on this literature review, and hope the findings prove helpful to interested parties:

Centre for Guidance Studies
University of Derby
Kedleston Road
Derby
DE22 1GB

Tel: 01332 591267
Fax: 01332 622726
E-mail: cegsinfo@derby.ac.uk

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The project reported here provides a summary analyses of current evidence on the economic benefits of guidance. It offers ‘definitions’ of guidance and frameworks to help contextualise the inter-relationships that need to be considered when assessing information, advice and guidance (IAG) outcomes. It highlights the complexities involved and offers commentary on the key issues arising from the findings from relevant research studies.

Aim & objectives

- 1.2 The aim of the project was to conduct a literature review to locate evidence on the economic benefits of guidance and where appropriate, to make recommendations to inform policy developments.

More specifically, the objectives were:

- 1) to identify key sources of information within agreed parameters;
- 2) to summarise key messages from existing research and identify gaps in knowledge/evidenc;.
- 3) to collate and analyse the research data and present it in a clear and accessible format as a basis for future action.

Research scope and methodology

- 1.3 The research project was commissioned by DfES on 20th August 2001 and the deadline for the project was 21st September 2001. The research team undertook the following:

- (i) a review of bibliographic, and web-based sources to identify relevant research studies;
- (ii) a review of relevant summary reports were completed to identify key sources of earlier research on learning and economic outcomes;
- (iii) contacts were made with leading researchers in the field to ask them to identify key pieces of research from the above;
- (iv) contacts were established with a number of organisations to identify current research. These included the National Learning & Skills Council (LSC), the Learning Skills Development Agency (LSDA), the Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS), the National Institute for Adult Continuing Education NIACE) and the National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling (NICEC). The team reviewed the available evidence, and produced a summary report. Due to the timescale of the project the literature review is not fully comprehensive. There are many other relevant studies which would benefit from being reviewed and analysed more fully.

Background

- 1.4 Guidance can be defined as a *helping process* operating in three main domains:

- (i) personal
- (ii) vocational
- (iii) educational

The process is informed by *five main principles*: user-friendliness, confidentiality, impartiality, equality of opportunity, and accessibility.

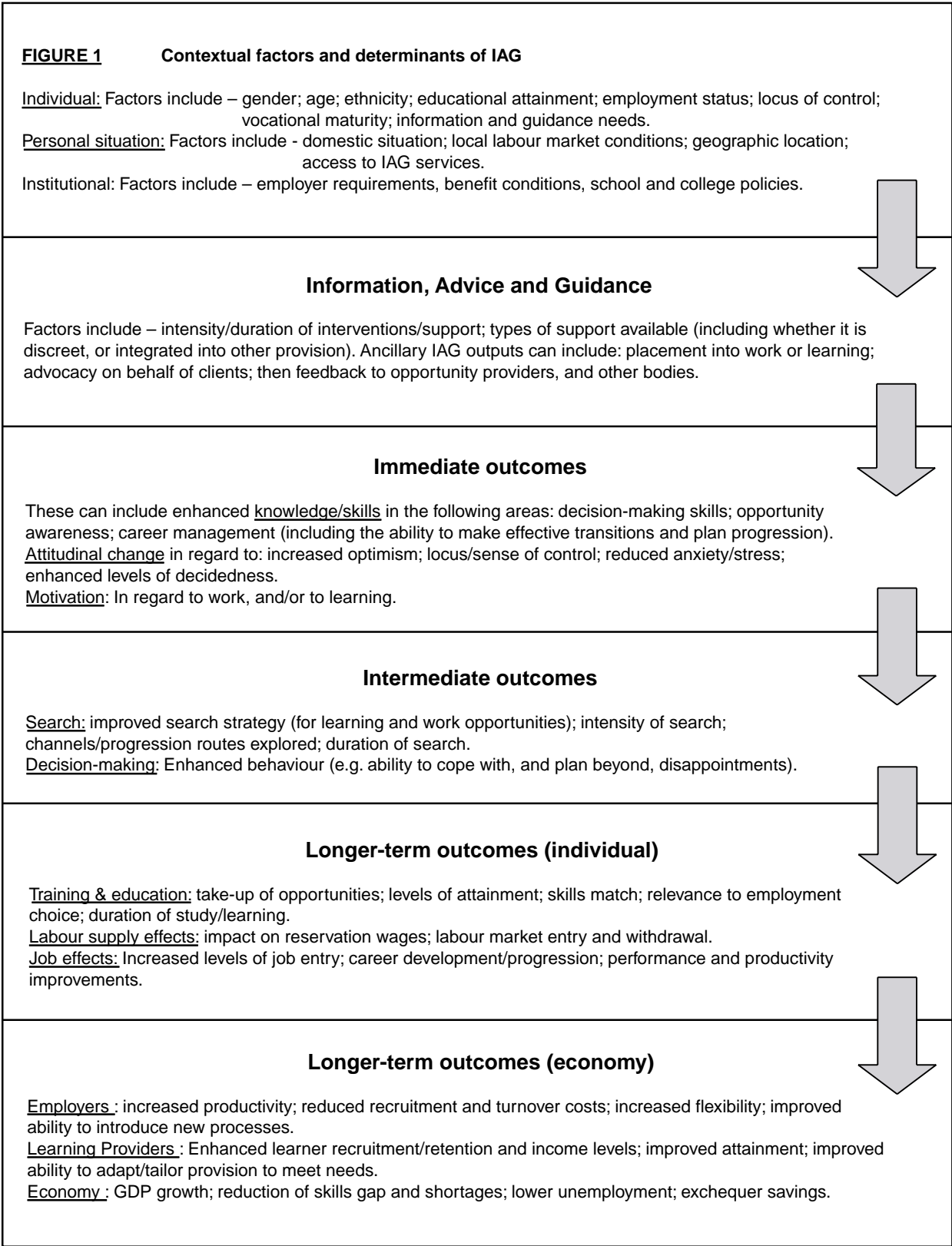
In 1986, the Unit for the Development of Adult Continuing Education (UDACE) defined guidance as one or more of seven activities; *informing; advising; counselling; assessing; enabling; advocating; and feeding back*. The UDACE typology continues to have relevance in the 21st century. Further amendments and additions have been made in an attempt to clarify the true meaning of guidance, for example, the UK Guidance Council produced a code of principles which outlined the implications of providing a good quality service (NACCEG, 1996). Nonetheless, the UDACE definition underpins much of the work of guidance practitioners in the UK.

1.5 Guidance is provided in a variety of *different contexts* as indicated below:

- *Schools*: Mainly in a secondary school setting (though careers education and guidance programmes also feature in some primary schools). Delivered by external advisers (career advisers/personal advisers from a career service company or Connexions partnership) working in co-operation with Career Co-ordinators or Personal Tutors and other pastoral/support team (e.g. Year Head, Learning Mentor, Youth Worker.)
- *Further & Higher Education institutions*: Mainly in colleges and universities delivered either in-house or through Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) partnerships.
- *Community settings*: Mainly in statutory and non-statutory voluntary and community organisations which provide local IAG services to individual's with a diverse range of social and economic needs. This includes vocational rehabilitation with disadvantaged young people and adults working through specific programmes (ONE/Job search plus) and ESF-funded projects.
- *Workplace settings*: Mainly in private and public-sector companies, working with employers, employees, vocational training providers, outplacement agencies and Human Resource Departments (HRD).

1.6 Guidance is delivered through a *range of methods* e.g. one-to-one discussions; in workshops; by e-mail/telephone helplines/websites; and/or by importing 'one-off' or process interventions, whereby integrated support is provided over an extended period. Access to guidance services largely depends on local policies and availability of provision. In some cases, guidance is a *statutory entitlement* (e.g. for all young people); for others it is *voluntary*, or in the case of the Government's 'return to work' programme, guidance is a *mandatory element* e.g. ONE and the New Deal initiatives.

1.7 Figure One (opposite) - adapted from Killeen (1996) is a useful, if simplified model of the relationships that need to be considered when assessing information, advice, and guidance (IAG) outcomes. Measuring the economic benefits of guidance is problematic mainly because guidance effectiveness research in the UK is usually short-term and focused on immediate effects. Killeen (1996) argues that "there is plentiful evidence for the learning outcomes of guidance, although a high proportion of this evidence is either attitudinal, or based upon measures *other than* objective tests either of skills or of knowledge."



Source

Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby
Economic Benefits of Guidance Review, 2001

2 The Evidence

Introduction

2.1 In this chapter, the economic benefits of guidance are considered using a set of categories, many of which are inter-related. Killeen et al (1992) highlight the complexities of measuring the economic successes of guidance. They explicitly state that attitudinal change and learning outcomes are important ‘precursors’ to the economic benefits of guidance. Consequently, this report begins by assessing the evidence for guidance influencing motivation and learning outcomes.

Motivation and attitudinal change¹

2.2 This category includes studies that examine increased levels of self-confidence, more positive attitudes, greater motivation to seek employment, increased motivation and interest in education and training. Hawthorn & Watts (1992) in their research suggested that careers education and guidance had a positive impact on student motivation that in turn, leads to academic performance. Guidance is reported to be associated with, or perceived to be associated with, positive change in individuals set within a range of different contexts. Some examples include:

- Byshe and Parsons (1999) reported changes in self-confidence in ‘callers’ to Learning Direct
- James (2001) found that patients who consulted a ‘Learning Adviser’ based within health centre settings reported that their motivation and self-esteem had improved.
- Morris et al (1999) highlighted that access to good quality careers guidance was a critical key factor in raising young people’s levels of awareness and positive attitudes towards vocational training.
- Barham, Hughes and Morgan (2000) in their study of New Start pilots found that some young people were thought to have made significant gains in terms of self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Hasluck (2000a) found that young people (18-24 year olds) on New Deal reported improved motivation and self-confidence.
- Winterbotham et al (2001) reported on the impact and effectiveness of the New Deal 25+ for long-term unemployed. They indicated that those who had participated in courses in job search skills as part of the ‘Gateway’ had gained confidence.
- Coopers and Lybrand (1995) evaluated the ‘Skill Choice’ programme for adults and concluded that participants had improved their attitude towards training, becoming more qualified, and their own career development.

Skills Task Force (2000) Skills for All: Research Report from the National Skills Task Force. DFEE, Sheffield:

‘A significant proportion of adults have no interest in further learning. This lack of demand is likely to act as a barrier to future development for people with low levels of skill as much as it is for those lacking basic skills. Pressures from work and family were quoted by one in five of those reported in NALS as reasons for not participating in learning. However, a lack of confidence related to age and ability, and ignorance about opportunities were quoted by similar proportions. This suggests that better guidance or counselling could persuade some of these adults about the merits of further learning’.

¹ Demand for IAG/individuals valuing IAG: Evidence of this was not specifically sought however, some literature indicated that there was a demand for guidance that was not currently being met. Those individuals who had received guidance valued this. Relevant studies include: SWA (1999); Bosley et al (2001); James (2001); Sims et al (2001); Hasluck (2000b); Allen et al (1999); MORI (2001); and Connor et al (2000).

Learning outcomes

2.3

This category refers to career learning outcomes which are defined in Killeen and Kidd (1991) as “the skills, knowledge and attitudes which facilitate informed and rational occupational and educational decision-making and the implementation of occupational and educational decisions.” The authors classified these outcomes as:

- attitudes;
- decision-making skills;
- self-awareness;
- opportunity awareness;
- certainty of preference;
- transition skills.

These could be further classified in terms of ‘immediate’ and/or ‘intermediate’ effects. Some studies including Killeen, J. and Kidd, J.M. (1991) made a systematic comparative review of the most robust experimental and quasi-experimental evidence, a large proportion of which was of US origin. It concluded that in experiments and field trials, gains have been shown across all categories.

Other studies have tended to confirm this, for example; Bysshe and Parsons (1999); James (2001); Brooks (1998); Sims et al (2001); Killeen (1996); Hasluck (2000a); Davies and Irving (2000); Winterbotham et al (2001); Van Reenen (2001); MORI (1996); and Killeen and White (2000) indicate that guidance has positive effects in terms of positive learning outcomes. A proportion of this evidence rests on appropriate objective tests but, due to the difficulty and cost of their construction, a substantial proportion of it is based on subjective measures (client self-report; self-efficacy and confidence measures, etc.). Whereas, in the US, the trend is towards the use of standardised measures of known reliability and validity, in the UK ad hoc measures of unknown reliability and validity still predominate.

- Oliver and Spokane (1988) conducted a meta-analysis study combining the results of 58 good quality US controlled trials. They concluded that guidance has a beneficial effect and they examined the factors that contributed to client gain. The authors specified that increasing the number of hours, or sessions, for an intervention increased the favourability of outcomes and that individual discussions were the most effective (but the most costly), whereas workshops (or structured group sessions) were the least expensive but were less effective.
- Whiston et al. (1998) replicated and extended this analysis by considering a further 47 studies conducted in 1983-1995. They distinguish sharply between effectiveness irrespective of duration or number of sessions, and client gain per hour or per session. In their view the most important conclusion concerning these broad categories of provision is that ‘The effects of individual counselling seem to occur quickly’ (p. 160). They join a succession of reviewers who have cautioned that ‘process-outcome interactions’ are little understood and who warn that judgements of relative effectiveness should take into account factors such as client characteristics, circumstances and intentions and the type of outcome pursued. They demonstrate statistically that ‘career interventions are not one uniform activity producing one uniform effect, but rather, diverse interventions producing diverse effects’ (Whiston et al., p.153). It is now widely accepted by all reviewers that the ‘general case’ is sufficiently established with respect to learning and associated outcomes (however named).

Participation in learning

2.4

This category refers to young people's and adult's participation in 'formal' and 'informal' education and training. Killeen et al (1992) - could not find evidence for guidance affecting participation in learning; subsequent multivariate analyses of YCS data (Howieson & Croxford

1997; Witherspoon, 1995), which show a small additive effect of professional advice to continue in education post-16, were defeated, mainly by the crudity of input measures and lack of adequate data. More recent studies have shown that guidance contributes to participation, some examples include; Killeen (1996); MORI (1996); Coopers and Lybrand (1995); Killeen and White (2000); and MORI (2001). Studies that show the relationship between specific issues related to link between guidance and participation are as follows:

- Beinart and Smith (1997) & La Valle and Finch (1999) identified a lack of information about learning opportunities as one factor discouraging participation in learning.
- Bysshe and Parsons (1999) found that as a result of contacting Learning Direct many users had subsequently started a course of study or training.
- James (2001) conducted a small-scale study which showed the success of a Learning Adviser approach in attracting people who would not otherwise have participated in learning.
- Barham, Hughes and Morgan (2000) identified a high percentage of New Start leavers entered education, jobs and/or training as a result of support given by Personal Advisers.
- Park (1994) reported on deficiencies in learning information although the vast majority of those who received 'specialist advice' found it useful.

Disentangling the role of guidance is complex and problematic. But most of these studies suggest that high quality guidance makes or is perceived to make some positive contribution. There is now reasonably strong UK quasi-experimental evidence that voluntary exposure to guidance increases the probability of adult participation in continuing education and training, relative to similar individuals not exposed to guidance.

Student retention and achievement

2.5 This category refers to findings in relation to student retention and achievement within a further and higher education context. Killeen, White and Watts (1992) reported that UK studies which include educational attainment as an outcome of guidance were “methodologically flawed, inadequately reported, or both” and consequently, there was a lack of evidence in this area. Earlier studies also show evidence is weak in this area. Most of these are American and focus on interventions where guidance is one of several components. A few studies do show a positive association between exposure to counselling and academic attainment. For example, Brown (1965) showed gains of 25-50% on academic performance measures. Killeen & White (2000) in their study found that employees who had received guidance had achieved a higher rate of qualification than a comparison sample, but this was approximately in-line with the increased rate of participation and their analysis was not extended to consider relative wastage. MORI (2001) reported that of the adults who accessed guidance in the last year around 50% reported learning new skills, or updating skills, and around a third gained qualifications.

More recent studies focus primarily on 'student retention'. These suggest that guidance has an important role to play in terms of reducing student drop-out rates. For example;

- SWA Consulting (1999) reported an association between low drop-out rates for those who had received specialist career advice.
- Sargant (2000) proposed that a lack of information and advice for students affected drop-out rates.
- McGivney (1996) suggested that a lack of pre-entry/on-course information and advice is associated with increased drop-out rates amongst mature students on further and higher education courses.
- Morris et al (1999) had similar findings to McGivney in relation to young people's experiences in further education.

Researchers (e.g. McGivney, 1996) caution against assuming that all 'drop-out' is negative. Some young people or adults may leave their studies in order to:

- enter the labour market;
- pursue other more relevant learning;
- assume caring responsibilities.

It was also noted that some apparent 'drop-out' is actually temporary suspension of study.

Although there is limited statistical evidence which directly relate to student retention and achievement, the findings from our review show that further and higher education institutions and agencies consider 'guidance' to be highly important in terms of student retention and achievement levels e.g. Higher Education Quality Council (1994) and the Quality Assurance Agency (1998). The research team were unable to access other useful studies such as; Martinez (1995), Martinez & Munday (1998) which may provide evidence of a link with guidance.

The Skills Task Force (1999) Second Report of the National Skills Task Force: Delivering Skills to All. DfEE, Sheffield highlighted:

'An essential precondition for the operation of effective markets is informed demand; for the labour, and education and training markets, this means accessible, timely and relevant labour market and skills information.'

'Even if only a relatively small proportion of students change their choices as a result of better information, the gains in terms of wasted investment are likely to far outweigh the costs.'

It appears likely that guidance to adults raises their probability of participation without raising their rate of subsequent wastage or failure: that is, it seems likely that it draws-in more people without encouraging risky behaviour. Studies of post-16 participation and attainment paint a confusing picture, not least because of the role guidance has played as a source of information about unfamiliar routes and options and thus for young people who may most need to find-out about them. For example, Witherspoon (1995) found that being advised by professionals is associated with entry into courses with vocational qualifications. Amongst those remaining in full-time education, Croxford and Howieson (1997) found a similar effect for Careers Service interviews and also an effect upon qualification above NVQ2 at 18/19. But these are details from a larger canvas. At present, the 'general case' is insufficiently established and more sophisticated scrutiny is needed.

Job search/reduced unemployment

2.6

This category refers to the role of guidance in supporting the development of job search skills and/or its impact on reducing unemployment. Many studies on the impact of guidance in relation to adult job search are based on quantitative and qualitative studies, most of which are based on the experiences and perceptions of those receiving or delivering guidance. However, there are some notable exceptions.

For example, in the US, the Job Club method has been experimentally evaluated with a variety of client groups. Azrin et al (1975) formed matched pairs of job seekers by means of an index of employability. These were randomly assigned to intervention and control groups. The median period elapsed before entry into full-time work was reduced from 53 days (control group) to 14 days and after 3 months 93% of the intervention group were in full-time employment compared to 60% of controls.

In the UK, Pearson's (1988) study of a "bridge" programme for unemployed managers and professionals which emphasised group guidance reached similarly positive conclusions – a re-employment rate of 92% at 6 months which significantly exceeded the re-employment rate for the unemployed in general (although this is a weak comparison). Killeen et al (1992) found

evidence for guidance reducing the duration of jobsearch, unemployment, increasing job retention and reducing floundering behaviour. Killeen and White (2000) concluded that large-scale services for adults are needed to provide sufficient samples to assess the guidance effects on earnings. Other studies such as:

- Allen et al (1999) found that effective job search activity help unemployed people to find work and integrated packages of support (which included advice, training and job search support) in particular were more effective in enabling people to retain work after leaving.
- Gardiner (1997) concluded that job search programmes which preceded New Deal assisted return to work, although additionality was estimated at 4% or less. More specifically, Restart interviewees found work more quickly than the control group.
- Hasluck (2000a) reported that the New Deal (18 – 24 year old unemployed adults) included support from Personal Advisers (PAs) and this helped with new job search techniques and supported participants into work.
- Hasluck (2000b) in a separate study on New Deal for Lone Parents highlighted that PAs helped participants to find and start jobs although they noted that many would have found jobs anyway. The report indicated that the jobs found through New Deal for Lone Parents were more likely to be full-time and permanent.
- MORI (1996) reported on the outcomes from vocational guidance and counselling schemes (Choice and Access) and indicated that one in five participants (22%) got a job and over one-third improved their job search skills.
- MORI (2001) found that most users of guidance (86% - of the 300 sample) reported a positive outcome resulting from information, advice and guidance. Specifically, 30% found a job or entered the labour market.
- Van Reenen (2001) reported that overall participants in New Deal were estimated as 20% more likely to find jobs. The job assistance element accounted for between 5.3% & 8.15% of flow into employment. Social benefits were estimated at between £25m and £50m, excluding more indirect benefits such as social inclusion effects and enhanced employability and productivity.

The evidence to date is that quite intensive, multi-method guidance intended to support the job search of non- or unemployed people does reduce mean job search time/enhance re-employment rate over the short-to-medium term. In short, the general case for intensive methods applied to welfare claimants seems reasonably secure and it is now time to investigate differential effectiveness by type of guidance, type of client and labour market context in order to refine public policy. As the economic arguments concern the economy as a whole over the longer term and are not confined only to current welfare savings, there is inadequate information concerning the effects of less intensive guidance, of guidance on non-claimant samples, and over a somewhat longer time scale.

Employment

2.7 This category refers to the benefits of guidance for individuals, employers and organisations. There is very limited evidence of the economic benefits of guidance in companies, with a few exceptions such as a study on *'Effective Career Discussions at Work'* (Hirsh et al, 2001). Hirsh et al found that company staff perceive the benefits of internal career discussions in 'indirect' terms such as; improved morale and attitudinal change, rather than productivity gains. Staff viewed career discussions as bringing long-term benefits; small retention effects were also noted.

Coopers and Lybrand (1995) in their study of the *National Evaluation of Skill Choice* reported that 30% of the clients surveyed achieved training outcomes and 9% achieved employment outcomes. It is difficult to determine the extent to which this may be attributed to guidance as the Skill Choice programme included a broad range of interventions.

The experts in this field of research suggest that the reason for a lack of strong evidence is that employers have not undertaken or commissioned any cost-benefit analysis in relation to guidance and/or career development work.

Potentially information, advice and guidance (IAG) have benefits for employers in terms of volume and nature of labour supply. For example; if the supply of labour is increased by IAG, it could be argued that this increases the probability that employers will be able to recruit employees who have made well-informed decisions about their career plans. Moreover, if IAG encourages individuals to up-skill and invest in learning, it could be argued that this may reduce the employer's share of training costs. If job search decisions are enhanced, employers will benefit from increased suitability of applicants, reduced recruitment costs, and wastage of training and labour turnover costs. Finally, some employers view public guidance (as distinct from that made by employers) with distrust. This is because in a well-informed labour market they may be losers, either to increased post-compulsory education or to other market sectors.

Economy

2.8

This category refers to the wider social benefits of guidance and its potential contribution to the UK economy. This includes issues related to the direct costs of unemployment and GDP. Evidence on guidance and its impact on 'unemployment' is discussed in paragraph 2.6. In summary, guidance may reduce unemployment in three ways:

- 1) Re-stimulating 'discouraged workers' to become active in the labour market.
- 2) Matching to ensure better alignment of 'demand' and 'supply' of labour.
- 3) Increased efficiency of job search so that duration is reduced and vacancies fill more quickly.

Economy studies have been carried out focussing on reduction in welfare payments and the net benefits in terms of increased levels of income tax deductions and contributions. The following studies focused on projects aimed at getting adults back into work; Allen et al (1999); Hasluck (2000a); Hasluck (2001b); Winterbotham et al (2001); Van Reenen (2001).

Although it could be argued that cross-national studies would be helpful, in reality, such studies have been merely descriptive and, at present, the assumption of public benefit rests upon basic economic contentions about both the private and public benefits of better-informed labour and human capital markets.

For example, guidance effects on continuing education and training participation are assumed to confer public (GDP) benefit. There are examples of major public policy concerns to which guidance evaluation research is linked, but which it can scarcely be left to be addressed in isolation. At present, estimation of the UK macro-economic effects of guidance can only be as good as our estimates of its net impact on these and other relevant variables and this is one of the reasons why a strategic approach to guidance evaluation research is required.

3 Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

- 3.1 In this chapter we summarise the key findings from the review of literature sources we identified for this research, and provide recommendations to support public policy development in this area.

The Evidence

- 3.2 In assessing the economic and wider benefits of career guidance, a key area for consideration is the depth of research evidence that is available currently to substantiate its outcomes.

- 3.3 The quality of research and of the evidence it can provide is multi-dimensional but, as a rule of thumb, the kinds of evidence available are in the following approximately ascending order of robustness:

1. **Opinion studies:** This kind of evidence is usually gathered from the beneficiaries or clients of guidance, who provide feedback in a systematic way on the services they have received. Two main kinds of information are gathered: *satisfaction or utility ratings and attributed effects* (e.g. that the individual believes that the guidance led to a specific outcome, from raising confidence to entry into learning or work). These kinds of information are gathered in two main ways through:

- *qualitative research* including in-depth interviews and/or focus group sessions;
- *quantitative research*, including large sample representative follow-up surveys. Much less commonly, the judgements of other participants or of expert external observers are gathered.

2. **Outcome measurement studies with no or very weak counterfactuals:**

These studies are *quantitative* in character. Outcome variables are measured and these may be the:

- attitudes
- knowledge
- skills

commonly called ‘learning outcomes’. In this case, knowledge or skill is sometimes measured by an objective test, but often through *self-report*. In the latter case, standardised measures (in a purely technical sense, called ‘tests’) of known reliability and validity are at a particularly high premium. But the range of measures is as broad as the objectives of guidance, so that they include search behaviour, securing employment, job satisfaction, entry to continuing education and training and course completion. The simplest form of study merely assesses these by follow-up at some point following guidance. This leaves open the question of the effect guidance may have had. This implies a comparison. Common weak comparisons are:

- *to the same variable measured prior to guidance*; but even where gains are made, these may be due to other factors.
- *to a population parameter*, such as officially recorded mean duration of unemployment. Econometric studies to assess programme impact and outcomes, including, in some cases, additionality and deadweight, and - in a minority of cases - cost benefit analysis (CBA) may fall into this category if the information is not available through which to construct a reasonably challenging ‘counterfactual’ (estimate of what happens in the absence of the programme). Studies of populations such as employees or participants in learning in which relationships are found between aspects of employment or learning and exposure to or satisfaction with guidance in the past commonly fall into this category for the same general reason.

3. Controlled Studies: This evidence includes those studies that have adopted a complex, and often experimental, methodology to test research hypotheses (e.g. that unemployed adults who attend job-search programmes find work more quickly than those who do not). The methodologies employed often include the use of:

- *control groups* (classically and most powerfully by random assignment to guidance or to a no-guidance or placebo control group, otherwise by comparison to a non-randomly selected control sample, called a ‘non-equivalent group’). The adequacy of control achieved in such studies is a matter of degree. A ‘meta-analytic’ study is one in which the results of a large number of such studies are combined so that new estimates may be made which, inter alia, benefit from greatly increased sample size.
- *control by calculation* (either using general samples including individuals who have and have not been exposed to guidance, or by constructing the ‘counterfactual’ in other ways, applying multivariate statistical techniques to calculate effectiveness controlling for prior differences between those who are and are not exposed; econometric studies are a specialised member of this family). Whether this form of control is ‘weak’ or ‘strong’ is a matter of degree.

Sometimes, these two methods are combined. The use of statistical methods is common to both.

3.4 Figure Two overleaf contains a summary analysis of the levels of evidence available, set against the anticipated outcomes of guidance (as indicated in Figure One).

The table provides CeGS’ initial assessment of the level of available evidence based on the literature surveyed (as set out in Chapter 4), and indicates the confidence that might be placed on this, in terms of providing a correlation or linkage between career guidance, and the broad outcomes indicated. It is probably true to say, only in the case of the highest level of evidence available, that the research literature would indicate casual linkage.

Figure Two: Levels of available evidence to substantiate the outcomes of career guidance

Levels of Evidence

Outcomes	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Immediate Outcomes (Learning, Motivational and Attitudinal)	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓
Intermediate Outcomes (Behaviours)	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓* ¹
Longer-term Outcomes (Individual)	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓
Longer-term Outcomes (Economy)	✓✓✓	✓✓	✗

Key

✓✓✓	High level of confidence in outcomes — based on good level of evidence within research literature.
✓✓	Moderate level of confidence in outcomes — based on our assessment of the available evidence — both qualitative and quantitative — within research literature.
✓	Poor level of confidence in outcomes. Based on limited and/or incomplete evidence within research literature.
✗	Lack of research evidence means it is not possible to assess/ascribe outcomes with confidence.
Notes	*1: The principal evidence base for these outcomes mainly rests on US research, with only limited evidence being available from UK or EU studies.

Source

Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby
Economic Benefits of Guidance Review, 2001

3.5 In terms of reviewing this evidence, it is clear that the highest level of confidence can be put in those studies which (in different countries and contexts), have demonstrated, as previously defined, the ‘learning outcomes’ of guidance.

As indicated, a substantive review of these outcomes is set out in Killeen et al 1991, and a recent review by Killeen of the reliability of a number of the studies quoted is set out in Appendix 1.

3.6 There is evidence too of the *motivational* effects of guidance in a number of contexts. These are noted in a range of studies (refer to para.2.2), and are important in the context of assessing the actual and potential contribution of guidance to the social inclusion agenda. Similarly, in terms of increasing the effectiveness of job search activities – of which individual and group-based guidance is an important element - there is evidence in a number of studies (refer to para. 2.6) of enhanced individual effectiveness in this area. Furthermore reviews of UK practice (such as Gardiner K., 1997) show small - but significant gains in terms of additionality, which are supported by US studies.

3.7 A key point that there is an indication in studies (particularly of Personal Advisers and similar staff) that the *quality of staff* (and presumably therefore of their inputs), has a direct impact on participants’ perceptions of the programme, and is therefore likely to impact on outcomes from it. Further work is undoubtedly needed on this topic, and on the wider impact of the introduction of quality assurance on delivery outcomes.

3.8 It is quite clear from the available evidence that evaluating the overall impact of career guidance provides a range of challenges. These include that:

- there are a wide range of factors which influence individual career choice and decision-making, and/or which can impact on outcomes²;
- career guidance is frequently not a discrete input, but rather is embedded in other contexts, such as learning provision, employer/employee relationships, and or within multi-strand initiatives³;
- comparing the evidence available in different studies is problematic when the nature of career guidance, the depth of work undertaken and client groups, vary considerably. For example, it may also be unreasonable to expect a significant effect to occur on the basis of a single brief intervention, although the evidence from some studies (e.g. Bysshe and Parsons, 1999) indicates - on a self-report basis - that clients can indicate a wide range of economic and learning benefits arising from a single telephone discussion with a trained adviser;
- there is not an agreed set of outcome measures for career guidance, or common methods of collecting output, or outcome data, except in the case of a limited number of discrete programmes/areas of work.

3.9 The lack of evidence - based on recent UK practice - to substantiate the economic benefits of career guidance is in large part due to the fact that this dimension was not the main focus of relevant research or evaluation studies. Identified recent exceptions include: Coopers and Lybrand, 1995; Gardiner, 1997; Hasluck, 2000; Killeen and White, 2000; Van Reenen, 2001.

3.10 A number of programmes in the past have sought to test economic benefits of guidance. For example, the Gateways to Learning (GTL) Programme (launched in 1992) had as a key objective, to ‘*demonstrate the benefits (including the economic benefits) of guidance to employers, individuals and training providers*’.

² Some studies (such as Van Reenen (2001)) have attempted to isolate the effects of guidance from other sources (e.g. in the case of that research the effects of learning experiences, instituting benefit sanctions, and using other incentives).

³ A number of studies (e.g. Allen et al, 1999) indicate that integrated programmes, and intensive one to one support, for certain client groups show clearer positive outcomes than other forms of guidance (though this could in part be a product of research design). Such effects do require further examination, and may be able to be tested as different forms of provision are adopted in different parts of the UK.

In part this objective was achieved, in so far as the interim economic outcomes were assessed (Killeen J, 1995). However, as the final evaluation report⁴ noted, necessary follow-up studies were not undertaken, the local evaluations were insufficiently co-ordinated, and common data sets were therefore not available to provide necessary evidence. Such problems have been avoided through the carefully planned - and intensive - research effort evident for programmes such as New Deal, but is yet to become clear in other key areas (e.g. Connexions).

Recommendations

3.11 This brief literature review has highlighted a number of key issues for government policy-makers, researchers, managers and practitioners. The following recommendations are made:

- (i) There is a need to identify *level of evidence* required to inform public policy debate about appropriate level of guidance investment.
- (ii) A *co-ordinated strategy* is required to (a) consider relative effectiveness, cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit in a degree of detail which realistically captures the diversity of guidance and guidance objectives, and (b) examine the associations between effects of these kinds, which can be produced and demonstrated with relative ease, and their subsequent educational and career benefits.
- (iii) Short-term *evaluation studies should be extended* where appropriate, to include client research and to enable a longer-term analyses of key findings and trends.
- (iv) A robust *research programme* is required that builds on current studies taking account of findings from evidence-based practice. This should actively involve policy-makers, researchers and practitioners in the guidance field, covering a 3-5 year period to seek evidence of outcomes.
- (v) A systematic *review of discrete and integrated interventions* is required to take full advantage of the current diversity in UK provision and to use this as an opportunity to test out and evaluate models of working in different parts of the country.
- (vi) A national *research database* is required (as proposed by the UK Guidance Council) to capture the main findings from research in a systematic way and to help disseminate 'good and interesting' policies and practice.

⁴York Consulting (1994) National Evaluation of Gateways to Learning 2 (GTL2) Employment Department, Sheffield

4 Bibliography and Research Report Summaries

Introduction

This chapter provides more detailed information and key findings in relation to historical and contemporary research reviewed as part of this project. An extended bibliography is also included for the reader.

4.1

Historical Literature

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4.2 Contemporary Literature

Allen J., Hansbro J., Mooney P. (1999) *Pathways to Employment: The Final Evaluation of ESF Objective 3 in Britain (1994-9)*. London: DfEE

Focus of Study: This report by the DfEE Financial and Analytical Services, considered the achievements, overall effectiveness and impact of the European Social Fund (ESF) Objective 3 programme between 1994-9 in helping young people and other unemployed integrate more effectively into the labour market. The report draws on a range of different sources of information and research tools, including the ESF Final Claims Database. A key element of the evaluation was also a follow-up survey of leavers approximately six months after leaving their Objective 3 project.

The 1997 Leavers' Survey carried out on behalf of the Department had responses from over 4,500 participants (a 40% response)⁵.

Key findings: Around 750,000 people took part in some form of ESF-funded activity under Objective 3 in 1997. Overall just over 70% of participants achieved some form of positive outcome (i.e. job, self-employment, further education and training), with around 30% of them finding work.

Effective job search activity and some form of wage subsidy appear to have strong and positive effects on the chances of an ESF participant finding work. 81% of leavers indicated that they were very, or fairly satisfied with their project, with leavers with positive outcomes being more likely to be satisfied than those without.

The research identified a number of significant benefits from offering *integrated packages* of support (e.g. including advice, training, job search support, as well as training)⁶. These benefits included: higher levels of participant satisfaction; lower incidence of early leaving; and greater success in terms of both labour market outcomes and qualifications, recorded on 'integrated' programmes.

Sophisticated modelling of the factors influencing job outcomes, suggested that - after controlling for a range of personal characteristics - those on more integrated programmes are also more likely to be in work 6 months after leaving (65%, compared with 55% of those not on an integrated programme). Interestingly they were also found to be more likely to gain a qualification (60%, compared with 32% of those not on an integrated programme). Positive effects recorded appear to be greatest for single parents, those over 50, people with a disability, and in particular, the long-term unemployed.

Barham, L., Hughes, D., and Morgan, S. (2000) *New Start - Paving the way for the Learning Gateway: Final evaluation of the personal adviser pilot projects*. London: DfEE.

Focus of study: To identify good practice from New Start pilots where Personal Advisers were working with 'at risk' young people aged 16-17 years.

Six out of the seven pilot areas were studied. Data were gathered using questionnaires sent to project managers and to 18 New Start Personal Advisers, and from discussions with managers, advisers, staff from other relevant agencies and some of the young people on New Start.

Key findings: Research found that 63% of the 240 young people who had left New Start achieved a 'positive' destination, whilst 37% dropped out. Of those who had achieved positive outcomes 34% entered full-time or part-time education and 57% entered training or a job with training. Personal advisers felt that clients had progressed in a range of different ways; over 30% of clients were thought to have made significant progress in terms of esteem and self-confidence.

⁵ Full details of this research are contained in Finch S., and Charkin E. (1999) What Happens To The People Who Go On ESF Objective 3 Projects? Research Report 109, DfEE. Under the definition used by the researchers just under three-quarters (71%) of leavers received an 'integrated' package of support.

⁶ The research concluded that - at time of writing - the best performing welfare to work measures in the UK assisted one in four participants find work, with at worst this reducing to one in fifty.

Additional comments: New Start involved intensive work with 'hard to help' young people. This level of guidance and support is not typical of IAG provision, neither is this a typical client group. It is perhaps inappropriate to compare findings from this study with others where client characteristics and needs, and guidance provision are significantly different.

Beinart, S. and Smith, P. (1997) *National Adult Learning Survey. Research Series No. 49.* London: DfEE.

Focus of study. The NALS gathered data from 5,653 adults (aged between 16 and 69 years old) who were asked about their participation in, and attitudes towards taught and non-taught learning the three years prior to the survey. Both vocational and non-vocational learning were included. Questions about advice and guidance were included.

Key findings: The survey identified lack of information about learning opportunities as one factor in discouraging participation in learning. 20% of respondents said they knew very little about the learning opportunities available to them locally and 11% that they would like to do some learning but could not find the right opportunity. NALS also indicated that lack of knowledge about sources of IAG was also a deterrent, with 13% of non-learners saying they would not know where to go for information and advice if they decided to do some learning.

Around one-third of learners and 6% of non-learners had received careers or educational advice or guidance in the past 3 years. They had used a range of sources with employers, colleges/universities and Jobcentres being most frequently identified. 85% of learners found the advice and guidance they had received to be useful, whilst only 57% of non-learners were of the same opinion.

Additional comments. NALS highlights the difficulty of evaluating guidance when no distinction is made between different aspects information, advice and in-depth guidance or between different guidance providers.

Bosley, S., El-Sawad, A., Hughes, D., Jackson, C. and Watts, A. G. (2001) *Guidance and Individual Learning Accounts. Report.* Derby: Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby.

Focus of study. This report is based on case studies of 3 pilot ILAs, an employee development scheme and a careers service with good links with the TEC and local businesses. Twenty-five learners were interviewed. The study was conducted prior to the national launch of ILAs.

Key findings. Interviews with learners, careers advisers and trade-union representatives suggested that guidance could be helpful in overcoming barriers to learning, encouraging progression, raising aspirations and exploring career issues. A few learners rated the guidance they received highly and identified benefits such as increased confidence, career focus, and help towards more appropriate work.

Researchers had difficulty in gathering data because, with one exception, ILA pilots had not focused significantly on guidance or other forms of help to learners. Data had not been collected from learners or not collated; learners' progress had not been tracked and evaluation of guidance had not been built into the design of the pilots.

Additional comments. Direct evidence from this study is limited because of the absence of data about guidance. The report highlights the need to include mechanisms for collecting relevant data in order to evaluate the effects of guidance.

Brooks, R. (1998) *Staying or leaving? A literature review of factors affecting the take-up of post-16 options*. Slough: National Foundation for Educational Research.

Focus of study. UK literature published between 1988 and 1997 was reviewed in order to identify the impact of education and economic systems on young people's post-16 choices. The main focus was young people in secondary education and those who had recently completed compulsory schooling. *Key findings.* The studies reviewed did not demonstrate that careers education and guidance has a direct impact on post-16 destinations, but recent research indicates that *good* careers education and guidance gives young people more confidence in their decision-making abilities, high levels of career-related skills and increased satisfaction with post-16 choices.

Additional comments. This study identifies the need to consider quality of provision when guidance is being evaluated. Some useful references are included if further studies focus on young people.

Bysshe, S. and Parson, D. (1999) *Evaluation of Learning Direct*. London: DfEE

Focus of study. This study evaluates Learning Direct (now learndirect) in its first year of operation. Methods used in the study included a baseline survey of 6,000 users and a follow-up survey of those who had responded to the first survey.

Key findings. Three out of four callers reported using the information provided by Learning Direct, and 57% had started a course - generally a vocationally-oriented one - as a result. About one in six callers used the information obtained to help improve their job prospects or move into work. Over half of those callers who had been unemployed at the time of their enquiry but had subsequently move into work, attributed this change at least in part to information provided by Learning Direct. One in four of those who moved back into the labour market perceived the effect of information provided as substantial.

Less tangible effects identified by callers included improved self-confidence (39%), contributing to career planning (55%) and raised awareness of education/training opportunities (73%).

Additional comments. Individuals associate attitudinal, learning and economic benefits with guidance. We do not know the characteristics or views of over half of the callers who did not respond to the baseline survey and over half of those in the baseline study who did not respond to the follow up. Nor is it clear whether respondents would have taken the action they did without Learning Direct.

Connor, H., and Dewson, S., with Tyers, C., Eccles, J., Regan, J., and Aston, J. (2001) *Social Class and Higher Education: Issues Affecting Decisions on Participation by Lower Social Class Groups*: Sheffield. DFEE.

Focus of the Study: This study was commissioned by the Department for Education and Employment to explore the factors that influence the decisions of individuals from lower socio-economic groups to participate in higher education. The study was designed to build on previous research that suggests that educational factors, family background and perceptions of costs have the greatest impact on the decision-making process. A total of 223 potential students from 20 schools and colleges took part in focus groups. A further 1600 undergraduates from 14 institutions in England and Wales returned a postal questionnaire and 20 respondents took part in follow up interviews. Finally, 112 individuals from lower social class groups who had decided not participate in higher education were also interviewed over the telephone.

Key Findings: A wide range of factors influence the decision to go to university including: potential career prospects, earnings and job security; the desire for self-improvement; financial concerns; the necessity to work while studying; academic pressures; and gaining the entry requirements.

No single factor affects the decisions taken by students from lower social class groups. However,

these students tend to consider a broader raft of issues than their counterparts in higher social class groups.

Students from lower social class groups tend to lack confidence in their abilities and therefore need positive encouragement. Various people have important roles to fulfil in encouraging students to consider higher education including FE college tutors, friends and family members.

Information on higher education is largely regarded as too general and complex. Three quarters of those surveyed did not feel that they had sufficient information on cost. More needs to be done to support students from lower social class families, but particularly in relation to guidance on the financial support available and the cost of studying.

It was noted that mentors or HE Champions should be used to help students who have had no or little contact with those who have recent experience of HE. These mentors could be careers staff.

Coopers and Lybrand (1995) *National Evaluation of Skill Choice - Final Report*. Employment Department.

Focus of Study: The 'Skill Choice' programme was launched in 13 English, and subsequently 4 Scottish and Welsh LEC/TEC areas, in 1993. Its primary focus was on enabling people (mainly employed adults) to take stock of their existing skills, plan their future developments, and acquire qualifications. The report indicates that some 94,500 individuals received guidance as part of the programme between 1993/5, and that 87% of Skill Choice users were employed.

The national evaluation undertook in-depth work in 12 TEC and LEC areas, and alongside visits, undertook an analysis of MIS data, and four telephone surveys of clients (over 3,000 interviews) to assess effectiveness.

The follow-up surveys (typically undertaken one year after initial contact with Skill Choice) were the primary source of information on the economic impact of the programme, and covered some 1,335 predominantly employed clients.

Key findings: The main reason for employed clients using Skill Choice through their employer was to achieve improved skills or qualifications, though about one in ten did so because they expected to be made redundant. Most employed clients using Skill Choice - other than through their employer - wanted career or job change, though a secondary aim was often skills improvement.

30% of the clients surveyed achieved training outcomes, and 9% achieved employment outcomes. The research applied an 'additionality factor' of some 37% to these findings, and estimated that Skill Choice raised the proportion of these clients gained training outcomes by 11 percentage points, and the proportion gaining employment outcomes by three percentage points. The outcomes achieved by unemployed clients (32% training outcomes; 11% employment outcomes) were slightly higher than for those in employment.

The total cost of the programme (capital, fixed, and variable) was estimated to be £126 per client on average. Using this figure and data generated by the client survey - given certain stated caveats - the cost of additional Skill Choice outcomes was estimated to be £837. The research recognises this calculation does not include an estimate of intangible (e.g. learning outcomes), and prospective outcomes (e.g. unemployed clients taking training courses which subsequently lead to jobs).

The research concluded that client surveys indicated significant proportions of participating individuals have been persuaded of the benefits to them of training and development, and that it helped employers to allocate human resources more effectively through better knowledge of employees' skills and training needs. 37% of interviewees reported that their attitude towards training had improved as a result of Skill Choice. 51% of interviewees reported their attitude towards becoming more qualified had improved as a result of Skill Choice.

53% stated their attitude towards career development had improved as a result of Skill Choice.

Copeland, R. (2001) Student retention: problems and solutions. *AUT Briefing Paper*. www.aut.org.uk/pandp/briefings/studentretention.html

Focus of the study: This briefing paper examines the issue of student retention and how it can be improved. The paper outlines the scale of the problem and the main reasons why a considerable number of students are leaving university without completing their studies. In particular, the paper focuses on the staff role in student retention.

Key Findings: The most recent figures (1997-98) suggest that 17% of students in the UK fail to complete their higher education programme. The cost of non-completion to the public purse is estimated to be £200 million per year. Non-completion rates are much higher in inner-city, post 1992 institutions than research-intensive universities.

The AUT indicates that there are two key factors that contribute to the problem of student retention: growing student hardship and the reduced time available for staff to provide academic and social support to students.

AUT highlight that supporting students throughout their academic careers is important in ensuring that they complete their studies. Information, advice and guidance is provided by student unions, university welfare services as well as academic staff.

Student numbers have expanded dramatically in the past three or four decades with 34% of young people entering HE in 1997/98 compared with 5% in the 1960's. However, the increase in academic and academic-related staff has not kept pace. Between 1980 and 1999 the student to academic staff ratio (SSR) virtually doubled from 9:1 to 17:1 in the UK.

Students from non-traditional backgrounds, in particular, are most 'at risk' from dropping out and are often in greater need of support and guidance than middle class students. However, the informal support role of academic and academic-related staff is being undermined by current inadequacies in funding, pay and conditions. If these students in particular do not receive the guidance they need this will have implications for widening participation.

Davies, V. and Irving, P. (2000) *New Deal for Young People: Intensive Gateway Trailblazers*. Research and Development Report ESR50. Sheffield: Employment Service.

Focus of study: This qualitative evaluation sets out to assess whether the Intensive Gateway Trailblazers (IGTs) were more effective in helping young people find work more quickly than existing Gateway provision.

A total of 145 young people were interviewed: 86 IGT clients and 59 control group clients. Most interviewees were aged 18-20 years.

Key findings: The main difference between IGT and the regular Gateway is a mandatory course of job search and work preparation activities involving employers.

Of the activities provided on the mandatory course, clients identified the practical and tangible aspects such as CV writing and interview techniques as most useful. Clients appreciated the involvement of employers who helped them to gain experience of how companies recruit and select staff.

Many respondents reported positive benefits such as increased self-confidence, team working ability and knowledge of the labour market. Increased motivation and more positive attitudes towards work were also discernible from responses.

The IGT also involves more contact between client and their PAs than the existing Gateway. Many clients felt that PAs did not understand their aspirations and were solely interested in getting them into work. Respondents frequently described their PAs as 'pushy' which was helpful to some but experienced as pressure by others. Positive reactions to PAs were often associated

with help in realising aspirations through an unknown or unexplored route. Increased contact with PAs helped with jobsearch. Special needs issues were often not identified and/or adequately addressed. The authors suggest this is a reflection of the relationship between clients and their PAs.

For the majority of clients it is too early to say whether they will get jobs or not. Those in the control group and on IGT who gained employment at early stages in the Gateway tended to have focused job aspirations.

Additional comments: This evaluation suggests that guidance to help focus aspirations is helpful in securing early employment outcomes. The report also highlights the importance of the relationship between client and PA, and of the latter considering each client's individual needs and aspirations.

Gardiner, K. (1997) *Bridges from benefit to work: a review*. York: York Publishing Services Ltd.

Focus of Study: This research was funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. The aim of the research - coming as it did at the time of the advent of the incoming Labour Government - was to take stock of what had been learnt from prior experience of welfare to work programmes, and in particular to consider evidence arising from programme evaluation. The area of research that is most relevant to guidance relates to the assessment of the relative effectiveness of job-search programmes.

Key findings: Job-search programmes - prior to the introduction of New Deal - were subject to evaluation by the Employment Service, and other sources. The review considered these studies and concluded that the average unit cost of provision (at some £94) was about a third of the next lowest (transitional financial assistance).

However, in terms of the programmes impact in getting people into work, additionality estimates for such programmes were 4 per cent or less, meaning that the cost of getting people into work - for example through Jobplan Workshops, Jobclubs and 1-2-1 were in the range £3,000-£6,000⁷.

Although additionality evidence is not available, positive outcomes are also recorded for Restart Interviews, with research quoted indicating that in terms of the time taken to find a job, a control group took 25% longer to enter their employment than Restart Interviewees.

Additional comments: The review indicates that pilots and evaluations of welfare to work measures are expensive to undertake, but provide crucial information. It argues that if these costs are to be justified there is a need for a greater integration into the policy-making process, and a requirement to standardise methodologies and data collection. In particular, efforts should be made to record systematically short and longer-term impacts in a form that enables meta-analysis.

Harmon, C., and Walker, I., (2001) *The Returns to Education: A Review of Issues and Deficiencies in the Literature*. DfEE Research Briefing No. 254. Sheffield: DfEE

Focus of Study: This study focuses on the individual and social returns of education.

Key Findings: Evidence from large UK datasets suggests that an individual who undertakes an additional year of full-time education can expect to earn between 7-9% more than some who does not.

The evidence in the UK on the net benefits of education for the economy is limited in the main to the higher education sector. The evidence demonstrates a positive net benefit, but the extent of the benefit is dependent on degree subject, with the highest return captured by medicine, non-biological sciences, social sciences and computing graduates.

Additional comments: No mention of guidance specifically, but demonstrates the benefits of

⁷ The review concedes that some research (e.g. Longstone J (1989) Supplementary Analysis of Jobclub Value Added Survey, ES Research Report 43) gives additionality for Jobclub participants at between 6% and 9%, but in the interest of caution, uses lower figures in their analysis. The review goes on to point out that the Jobclub research showed that the greatest impact was for those aged over 40 with no qualifications, and for some groups (e.g. those under 25 and unemployed for less than nine months) no positive additional effect on employment chances was identified.

continued participation in learning to the individual and society.

The study does touch on the notion of overeducation / underemployment in relation to graduates and explicitly states that planning is required to ensure that the supply of graduates qualified in specific fields does not exceed demand.

It could be inferred from this that graduates, and indeed those entering higher education, need information, advice and guidance on the nature and extent of the labour market and the skills they will need in addition to their degree to successfully secure appropriate employment.

Hasluck, C. (2000a) *The New Deal for Young People: two years on. Research and Development Report ESR41. Sheffield: Employment Service.*

Focus of study: This report provides an overview of the NDYP evaluation programme and covers the Pathfinder period (January 1998 to April 1998) and national programme from April 1998 to November 1999. Data sources include the New Deal Evaluation Database, qualitative and quantitative research with individuals and employers, and case studies. Analysis covers the Gateway and intermediate outcomes.

Key findings: Evidence points to the “absolutely pivotal role” of New Deal Personal Advisers who work with young people to help them improve their employability. The relationship between client and PA is crucial in shaping young people’s experiences of NDYP. Many young people reported that the Gateway had changed or intensified their job search. They mainly attributed this to support received from their PA which led to new job search techniques and improved motivation and self-confidence

Although long-term outcomes could not be assessed at this stage, early results suggest that the programme has had a significant and positive impact on helping unemployed 18 to 24 year-olds to enter jobs. By October 1999 slightly over 50% of young people left the Gateway for unsubsidised jobs, supporting young people’s positive views of the PA’s role. The report highlights the need to enhance the scope and quality of the PA advisory role.

Additional comments: Suitability and sustainability of employment need to be considered in evaluating the Gateway. References include some US and European studies.

Hasluck, C. (2000b) *The New Deal for Lone Parent: A review of evaluation evidence. Sheffield: Employment Service.*

Focus of study: Qualitative and quantitative methods were used to evaluate the prototype programme which began in July 1997 and the national programme which commenced in October 1998. The key feature of NDLP is advice and guidance provided by a Personal Adviser.

Key findings: Almost half of those who participated in the prototype found jobs during the prototype period. Of these, around half said that NDLP had helped them find and start their jobs, mainly by encouraging a positive attitude. However, the majority (68%) felt that they would have found jobs anyway.

The majority of participants in the national programme who were interviewed for the evaluation felt that their chances of finding work had improved to some extent as a result of NDLP, although a significant minority felt it had not made a difference. 30% of participants covered by the Client Satisfaction Survey left NDLP for a job but only 12% had found their job through an NDLP interview. However, jobs found through NDLP were likely to be full-time and permanent (45%) than those found independently by clients (19%).

After 18 months 3.3% of lone parents had left Income Support (IS) in NDLP prototype areas compared with comparison areas. After the national roll-out 35% of NDLP leavers left Income Support for employment, although 43% continued on IS. It is too early to assess longer term impacts such as sustainability and job quality. NDLP produced public financial returns that covered its operational costs and a positive gain in terms of wider economic value.

Participant satisfaction was high. Attitudes to the Personal Adviser were extremely positive, emphasising the centrality of the Personal Adviser role to the success of the process. Participants generally appreciated the information they received, and encouragement and boost to their self-confidence. Criticisms centred on failure to provide adequate information especially about benefits and help with childcare.

Some felt that advice and guidance was too general. Participants had mixed views on the effectiveness of NDLP on job search.

Additional comments. Participation in NYLP was voluntary (unlike the New Deal programmes) and the evidence indicates a large proportion of lone parents choosing to enter the programme were already seeking work and were job ready. Consequently, additionality of advisory help participants received is difficult to assess.

Hawthorn, R., and Watts, A.G., (1992) *Careers Education and the Curriculum in Higher Education*. Cambridge: Hobsons Publishing on behalf of CRAC.

Focus of the Study: This report is based on a two-year NICEC project on guidance aspects of the Enterprise in Higher Education Programme (EHE). The EHE Programme was concerned with the ways in which teaching departments in higher education institutions could integrate careers education into the curriculum.

This report focuses on the impact the EHE Programme had on the support offered to students in relation to their career planning through an analysis of the development of careers education and guidance within teaching departments and its implications for the role of higher education career services.

Phase one of the project involved three visits to five institutions that participated in the second round of the EHE Programme. During the visits semi-structured interviews were conducted with staff involved in the management of EHE, careers service staff and departmental staff involved in EHE.

In the second phase, follow-up interviews were conducted with the EHE managers and careers service staff. Senior managers in the institutions were also interviewed.

Key Findings: The attitudes of academic staff towards Careers Education and Guidance vary depending on the area of study. Those teaching more vocational courses generally regard CEG as irrelevant or a shared responsibility between the teaching staff and careers service staff. Those involved with non-vocational courses such as history tend to believe CEG is the sole responsibility of the careers service.

Although teaching departments can make an important contribution to CEG, they have a different and more limited perspective than specialist careers advisers whose role is to assist with career decision-making and transitions.

The role and importance of the Careers Service is viewed differently by policy-makers from different institutions. Some regarded CEG as an integral part of the core activity, others saw it as an additional service, the value of which must be assessed in terms of costs and benefits.

Careers services were developed to assist students and raise their awareness of the range of vacancies open to graduates of any discipline.

Vocational aspirations are the motivating factor behind most students' decision to enter HE. If HE institutions can assist them to realise their aspirations, this reflects well on the institution and has a positive impact on recruitment.

Although there is no firm evidence to substantiate this claim, it is suggested that CEG has a positive impact on student motivation that in turn leads to enhanced academic performance. It is agreed that CEG helps graduates to realise their potential, talents and abilities which not only enriches their own lives, but the lives and livelihood of their community.

The introduction of modularisation has increased the need for continuous access to impartial guidance from outside the teaching system on the implications of choosing different modules.

Additional Comments: CEG makes good business sense as 'employment success stories' - if you go to this institution you will get a job – encourages more students to apply to the institution which brings in additional revenue. Students who are helped to recognise their strengths skills and abilities are more likely to move into appropriate employment. Direct benefits to communities to students in terms of enhanced academic performance, increased motivation and enhanced work readiness and job prospects

Higher Education Funding Council for England (1999). *Widening Participation in Higher Education: Funding Decisions. Report 99/24. London: HEFCE*

Additional student-related funding was made available to support proven success in widening participation. Although the HEFCE did not wish to prescribe how the funds should be allocated, the Council expected to observe increased activity in certain areas as a result of the widening participation initiatives and the additional costs associated with this activity. These areas include academic support and counseling and retention schemes such as mentoring.

Higher Education Funding Council for England (2001). *Strategies for Widening Participation in Higher Education: A guide to good practice. Report 01/36. London: HEFCE.*

Focus of study: Section two of this report presents a number of case studies on widening participation initiatives. The role of information, advice and guidance is evident, although not always made explicit, in each of the studies.

Key findings: The report suggests that guidance has a particularly significant role in supporting students as they move through their course and make decisions about option choice and the consequences of their choices. Guidance clearly has an important function in helping students make the transition into employment.

Information has a vital role to play in helping to raise potential students' aspirations. For example Widening Participation in Leicestershire and De Montfort University, University of Leicester and University of Loughborough collaborated to produce an information pack for parents to help parents advise their children about further study.

The Further and Higher Project is a partnership between the University of Durham and local further education colleges. Some of the aims of the project were to raise aspirations and reduce dropout through adequate preparation for study. The aims specifically for pre-access students were confidence building, realisation of abilities, empowerment and the promotion of learning as a route to a better quality of life. For post access students, a programme has been developed to offer information and support as well as practical advice on university systems, procedures and terminology.

The National Mentoring Pilot Project: aims to pilot and evaluate a mentoring scheme whereby higher education students offer support, encouragement, guidance, information, technical expertise and personal direction to identified pupils in secondary and middle schools Education Action Zone.

The University of Central Lancashire has developed an on-line approach to CEG. Careers planning tools are available over the university IT network and careers education is offered over the internet. New careers education initiatives have been developed within the curriculum and a staff development pack has been produced to help non-specialist staff deliver careers education programmes.

Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC), (1994), *Guidance and Counselling in Higher Education*. London: HEQC.

Focus of the Study: The project aimed to assist higher education institutions in their response to changes in the student population by the development of co-ordinated guidance provision for both students and potential students, including a staff development function and the development of feedback mechanisms. A total of 65 institutions participated in the project, submitting information about their guidance activities and six institutions undertook development work to bring about change and improvements in guidance provision.

Key Findings: The project demonstrated that the quality of guidance offered to students before, during and at exit from higher education was closely related to the quality of their learning experience.

The development of Access Courses brought about an increased awareness of the value of guidance both at entry and within the HE curriculum. Without guidance learners could undertake courses that are unnecessary or unsuitable.

The 65 institutions deemed that guidance about the following was necessary: admissions, induction and familiarisation; course choice; course completion; personal development and well-being; survival; and careers issues.

Guidance activity produces access, curriculum and management outcomes for the institutions as well as guidance outcomes for the learner. Guidance is not just concerned with learner interests, but institutional interests also. For example, guidance can make a significant contribution to the process of feedback from learners, in gauging student satisfaction and identifying unmet demands. It concludes that a mass system of higher education must be underpinned by comprehensive, effective and impartial guidance and learner support systems.

Additional Comments: Although institutions identified that guidance was necessary at a number of stages in an undergraduate programme and that there were some clear benefits for both the student and institution to be gained from guidance, institutions were not able to articulate their rationale for the provision of guidance.

Hirsh W., Jackson C., Kidd J. (2001) *Straight Talking: Effective Career Discussions at Work*. Cambridge: National Institute of Career Education and Counselling.

Focus of Study: The project set out to examine good experiences of career discussion at work as a means of discerning how more employees might receive effective career support. Research was undertaken with the support of five major organisations, and gathered information from some 250 conversations with givers/receivers.

An analysis of sources of guidance indicated a diverse range was used. Over half took place with managers, though only a fifth were with the individual's line manager, and the majority were outside formal appraisal. Interviews with specialists, such as external advisers, accounted for 12%, with discussions with HR (generalists and development specialists) accounting for a further 11% of positive discussions analysed.

Key findings: The most relevant area of this study relates to the perceived impact of effective guidance on those who had had an effective career discussion. About three-quarters of positive career discussions led to practical action of some kind, ranging from follow-up meetings to a job

move or development activity. Over 60% indicated that a positive outcome had included clearer future career direction, and self-insight.

Over half indicated that the discussion enhanced their sense 'feeling good' (e.g. by feeling reassured, and valued).

Additional comments: Although a limited study this research builds on other recent work in HRD field of the benefits to organisations and individuals (e.g. Hirsh W. and Jackson C. (1996) *Strategies for Career Development: Promise, Practice and Pretence*. Institute for Employment Studies, Report 305), and previous research - which includes some limited data on benefits (e.g. Jackson C. (1990) *Career Counselling in Organisations: The Way Forward* Institute of Manpower Studies Report No 198).

Jackson, C. Watts, A. G., Hughes, D., Bosley, S. and El-Sawad, A. (2001) *Careers Service Work with Adults: A Survey*. Occasional Paper, Derby: Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby.

Focus of study: Based on a postal survey of 45 (67%) careers service companies (CSCs) in England.

Key findings: This report suggests that clients of adult guidance services are seeking employment, or more appropriate or improved employment prospects. About two-thirds of companies reported that over half of their adult clients were unemployed. Amongst employed clients, the main reasons for using guidance services were a wish to change career direction or to re-enter education and training.

Careers Service Companies work with employers showed considerable variation between companies. Over half had worked with fewer than 10 employers in the previous year, compared with eight companies which reported working with 100 or more employers. The report suggests that adult guidance work, and work with employers is shaped as much by funding patterns as by the demands of clients.

Approximately half of the CSCs reported that they had evaluated the effectiveness of their workplace guidance activities but only 14 had collected information on a list of eight specific outcomes. The most frequently collected information was the number of employees enrolling on courses and employee self-report of increased self-confidence.

Additional comments: This report suggests that individuals believe that guidance may help them to find paid work and more appropriate work. However, findings are based on the perceptions of guidance workers not on clients. CSCs appeared to have limited evidence of effectiveness of their work with adults. It is not possible to assess employers' views of the benefits of guidance from this study.

James, K. (2001) *Prescriptions for Learning: evaluation report*. Leicester: National Institute for Adult Continuing Education.

Focus of study: For the "Prescriptions for Learning" project a learning adviser was based in health care centres to help patients identify learning opportunities and to provide on-going support during any learning they undertook. The evaluation was conducted in the early stages of the project, but covered the role of the learning adviser in the project in some detail. Views were gathered from some healthcare staff and from 19 of the 46 individuals who had received guidance from the learning adviser.

Key findings: Of the 46 individuals who had met with the learning adviser, 32 had embarked on a learning activity and 12 had not yet made a decision. Healthcare staff thought that it was too early to assess any difference in the people they had referred.

Feedback and information from 19 of the patients who met with the learning adviser indicated that the project was effective in attracting people who had not engaged in learning for some years. All reported that speaking to the adviser was useful, and most appreciated receiving information

about the range of opportunities open to them. All felt that learning had made a difference to their lives, especially in terms of their mental health.

Fifteen patients said that they would not have considered learning without the help of a learning adviser. Seven felt that the help they received from the learning adviser made it easier to embark on learning, or that they had chosen a more suitable course as a result.

The evaluation noted that the learning adviser (an experienced guidance worker) encountered considerable difficulties in finding information about learning opportunities.

Additional comments: Further evaluation of this and similar projects may provide more specific evidence, from larger sample groups and over a longer time frame.

Killeen, J. (1996b) *Does guidance work? An evaluation of the intermediate outcomes of Gateways to Learning*. London: Department for Education and Employment.

Focus of study: Guidance services were provided through the Learning Gateway to help unemployed adults find suitable education and training as a step towards gaining work. During the year following guidance the experiences of over 800 Gateway clients were compared with those of an equivalent number of similar people who did not use the Gateway. Data was gathered first by interviewing research participants and at a later date by postal survey.

Key findings: Three-quarters of Gateway clients thought it was helpful and many reported an increased interest in education or training as a result. About half claimed to have gained in awareness of opportunities, and/or about themselves, and/or have been helped in their planning and/or have been given ideas about how to go about further search.

About a third of respondents reported having applied for education, training or a job as a result of guidance. 22% attributed their entry into education or training to the guidance they had been given about it. 30% reported entering something they had discussed in guidance and as a result of that guidance.

By the time of the second follow-up 5% fewer of the Gateway sample were unemployed than the comparison group, and participation in some form of education and training by the Gateway group was nearly double that of the comparison group.

The Gateways may not significantly increase the probability of entry into work but are significantly associated with entry to education and training. Participants in the Gateway may have been attracted to it because they were already more open to education and training.

Additional comments: The author draws attention to different interpretations of data, to the potential flaws in design and the unreliable nature of retrospective perceptions of the effects of guidance.

Killeen, J., White, M. and Watts, A. G. (1992) *The economic value of careers guidance*. London: Policy Studies Institute.

Focus of study: The authors surveyed research studies most of which had been conducted in the 1970s and 1980s. Most studies were UK-based, although some US studies were included.

Key findings: The authors concluded that guidance affected the learning outcomes of decision-making skills, self-awareness, opportunity awareness and transition skills. Guidance was found to reduce the duration of job search and unemployment; increase early job retention and reduce 'floundering' behaviour (frequent job changing which lacks direction or purpose).

There was no evidence of career guidance influencing: participation in post-compulsory education

and training; non-participant groups to enter the labour market; student retention and achievement; people away from areas of labour surplus; lifetime income or lifetime employment or job satisfaction.

Limited evidence resulted from insufficient studies specifically addressing the economic benefits of guidance, partly due to the difficulties of separating the impact of guidance from other effects, and of determining when the effect of guidance is felt. Evaluations that had been conducted did not consider sufficiently large samples or were deficient in terms of measurement and design.

Additional comments: Recent work⁸ suggests that effective learning processes as well as outcomes need to be evaluated.

Killeen, J. and White M. (2000) *The Impact of Careers Guidance on Adult Employed People*, DfEE, Research Report RR226: Sheffield.

Focus of Study: The aim of the study was to provide a rigorous evaluation of the net impacts of guidance on adult employed people, with particular emphasis on economic outcomes. The focus was on publicly available (usually free or subsidised) guidance services being provided to currently employed people, and specifically excluded guidance which was based within - or given by - the individual's employers. The services considered included a personal interview with a guidance practitioner/counsellor (94% of cases), or talking to an adviser in a group (6%), and in many cases other inputs (e.g. taking skills and interest tests 26%, using a computer to get information/help 45%, and using leaflets/books 55%).

In total some 2,700 guidance clients were approached, and, of them 1,612 responded (about a 60% response rate). The research cautions that, like most evaluation studies, the results can not be directly generalised, and that as usual, the study uses volunteers who may have untypical characteristics.

In addition it adds - mainly because of attrition in the in the research group - at some point research findings are reported as significant at a 90% confidence level, less than the 95% 'gold standard' in statistical analysis. However, the report added that:

- the sample group constituted a large fraction of all the adult employed people receiving publicly funded careers guidance in 1997;
- the methods of matching (against non-users) provide a robust basis for evaluation;
- overall, these considerations should increase confidence in the research findings.

Key findings: A very wide range of people used guidance services, but the mix in the survey sample was distinctive in a number of respects. Compared to the general working population, people who used services tended to be young, childless and reasonably well-qualified in educational terms. 60% of them were women, with the same proportion in 'white collar' jobs.

Fewer of the sample worked part-time or as self-employed, than among the employed population as a whole. The sample was also characterised by a high level of recent job mobility, with 35% changing job in the 18 months before guidance.

Two-thirds (67%) said that they used a guidance service because they wanted to change career, and more than half (55%) said they used it because they wanted to change job, with a similar percentage (56%), indicating they wanted to improve skills/qualifications.

Guidance clients were appreciative of the help they had received. More than four-fifths (83%) indicated that it had been fairly or very helpful, and only a small proportion (5%) believed it to have been of no help.

⁸ Law, B. 1996 A career-learning theory. In A. G. Watts et al Rethinking careers education and guidance: theory, practice, policy and practice. London: Routledge, pp46-71

In terms of perceived effects - with the average client reporting between three/four of these - just under four in ten (37%) indicated that they were given ideas about how to apply for jobs, and over half (57%) indicated that they felt it had helped them to search more effectively. Two-thirds (66%) of the sample stated that they were made interested in getting more education and training, and over two-thirds (67%) indicated that they had been told about suitable educational and training opportunities.

Just under two-thirds (65%) were made 'to feel more hopeful about the future', which is noteworthy granted that just over a third (38%) indicated that they had sought guidance as they, 'were at a loss to know what to do'.

In terms of substantiating the effects noted, the research showed that taking part in guidance had a positive impact on many aspects of participation in education and training. Over the two-year follow-up period, about 8% of the guidance sample entered *full-time* education and training, which was four times larger than the comparison group. Additional education and training - not full-time - paid for and organised by the individual, was started by 30% of the guidance group in the first year of follow-up, and by nearly 20% in the second year. This was substantially higher than the comparison sample.

Similarly the guidance sample was more than twice as likely to get a qualification from a course which they had initiated, than the comparison group, and had a higher rate of qualification, even after taking account of employer-provided training in which the comparison sample did better.

In terms of other outcomes, the research concluded in regard to job satisfaction, that individuals may get help from a variety of formal/informal sources, and that it is difficult for guidance to do better than these. In regard to earnings progression, there was no indication that the guidance group improved its earnings more than the comparison group. However, it indicated that there may be scope for guidance services to increase their beneficial effects on earnings by providing advice on the potential financial implications of career steps.

Additional comments: The research indicated that conclusive research on issues such as earnings would need research with larger samples than were available for this study.

It indicated that there is a 'chicken and egg' problem here, for only when there are larger scale guidance services in place, will sample sizes be available to assess the relative economic effectiveness of different models of provision.

La Valle, I. and Finch, S. (1999) *Pathways in Adult Learning Survey*. London: DfEE

Focus of study: PALS was based on interviews with 1,000 of the 5,000 adults who had participated in NALS. PALS was concerned with recording the learning experiences of interviewees over 18 months. Findings were linked to NALS, resulting in data about learning over a four and a half year period.

Key findings: Lack of knowledge about local learning opportunities continued to be a deterrent to participation for some, with 18% of long term non-learners (those who had done no learning in the previous four and a half years) reporting this as an obstacle.

Individuals who may potentially have the most to gain from learning and be most able to increase their contribution to society are also those least likely to participate. According to the PAL survey the majority of those who take up learning do so for job or employment-related reasons. Long term non-learners were more likely to lack qualifications - 66% of those without academic qualifications had participated as compared with all of those qualified at degree level.

Participation levels were much higher among people in full-time paid work (92%) than those who were not in paid work (47%), and amongst professional and managerial occupations (94%) than manual workers (77%).

Additional comments: Findings suggest that improved guidance provision might contribute to greater participation in learning which may lead to associated economic benefits.

McGivney, V. (1996) *Staying or leaving the course: retention and non-completion of mature students in further and higher education*. Leicester: National Institute for Adult Continuing Education.

Focus of study: A literature review and qualitative data contributed to this study. The researcher held a consultation meeting with representatives from adult, FE and HE institutions and obtained data via a postal survey from 15 tertiary and FE colleges, 13 HE institutions, 10 access validating agencies and 2 local education authorities.

Key findings: Many institutions declined to participate, partly because they lacked the relevant data. Institutional and research evidence indicates that mature students receive little or no advice before starting on advanced courses, and find course content and workloads demanding. Many reports recommend that providers supply more detailed and accurate information, and independent pre-entry guidance. They also argue for on-course careers advice.

A point is made about guidance being available to all students, not only those studying full-time.

Additional comments: Data about students and guidance provision may have improved since research was undertaken. Martinez and Munday (1998) -see bibliography - have undertaken more recent research which we were unable to access within the timescale.

McLeman, P., and Smith, P., *The Career Management Initiative at Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College*, in Yorke, M., and Stephenson, J., (1998) *Capability and Quality in Higher Education*, London: Kogan Page

Focus of the Study: The Career Management Initiative was introduced to help graduates maximise their chances of success in the employment market. A Steering Group was established including representatives from the faculties, careers guidance staff and employers.

The Teaching Quality Assessment demonstrated that students had gained valuable transferable skills as well as subject knowledge through their degree course, but many were not aware that they had done so and were therefore not in a position to make best use of these skills in their subsequent careers.

There was therefore a clear rationale for the introduction of the Career Management Initiative to raise skills awareness, awareness of opportunities, and to help to develop job searching skills including those related to the application and selection process.

35 final year social sciences students participated in the pilot. The pilot consisted of 4 workshop sessions held on Wednesday afternoons throughout the first semester during the 1996/97 academic year. The students then took part in a video-recorded discussion at the end of May 1997.

Key Findings: The video discussion and self reports completed by the students revealed that student awareness of the career opportunities available to them had broadened and that they had grown in confidence. Students also demonstrated enhanced awareness of their skills and abilities and most importantly what they had to offer a potential employer. Having the opportunity to experience a real interview situation was also regarded as invaluable, as students felt assured that they would know how to interpret job adverts and get across the information that the employer was looking for in the future.

The timing of the module is essential so as not to conflict with the other demands of the final year. Students felt that in future the workshops should be run in the second semester of the second year, running into the first semester of the final year.

Mayston, D. (2001) *Developing a Framework Theory for Assessing the Benefits of Careers Guidance*. York: Centre for Performance Evaluation and Resource Management. University of York.

Focus of Study: This research report seeks to provide an analytical framework for identifying the benefits which careers guidance can achieve.

Key Findings: The report explores the relevance of careers guidance to the concept of human capital. In a world of imperfect information, careers guidance can add value to human capital by improving the investment decisions which individuals make in undertaking further education and training or other career moves. By adopting a decision analysis approach, the report examines the difference which careers guidance can make to these investment decisions.

The benefits of careers guidance come through its reducing the risk of individuals making Type I errors, of rejecting career moves which would be most appropriate for them, and of making Type II errors, of undertaking career moves for which they do not have the capability to succeed. The greatest payoff from careers guidance may come from its provision to advisees whose risks or these errors in the absence of high quality guidance is greatest.

Additional Comment: The report extends the analysis to allow for non-monetary differences in the quality of life which career choices can influence. In addition, it examines a number of wider social benefits of high quality careers guidance. It concludes by examining the macro-economic benefits that careers guidance can yield by improving the functioning of the labour market and the degree of skills and geographical mismatch which may exist between supply and demand in the labour market.

MORI (2001) *Demand for Information, Advice and Guidance*. The Guidance Council: Winchester.

Focus of Study: This research was commissioned by the Guidance Council to explore the expectations of, and demand for, information, advice and guidance (IAG) about opportunities for learning and work. Following a literature review and pilot study, the researchers interviewed 1,000 general population working-age adults aged 16-65 in 61 enumeration districts in September and October 2000. 300 users of guidance were subsequently interviewed by telephone in October 2000.

Key Findings: In general, attitudes towards IAG are either positive, or at worst indifferent. Two in three adults agree that information, advice and guidance are useful in helping them to make the right decisions about education, work and training.

Nearly half the working age population has accessed IAG about education, training and work opportunities in the last year. Multivariate analysis shows that age is the factor which most influences use of services, with those under 25 - particularly 16-19 year olds - most likely to have used services. Amongst those over 25, those who have formal qualifications are much more likely to access IAG than those without. In turn ABC!s (non-manual occupations), are more likely to use services than C2DEs (unemployed and disabled), as well as those over 45.

Employers are the most common source of IAG - around a third of users accessed IAG through their employer. The majority of users (57%) indicated that they had received IAG from more than one source. Half of users had accessed IAG in person, whilst one in three used the telephone.

Almost all adults (93%) who accessed guidance in the last year were satisfied with what they had received. Most users of guidance (86% - of the 300 sample) reported a positive outcome resulting from IAG. Over half (54%) reported learning new skills, or updating existing skills (50%), but this is more likely when IAG was received from their employer. Just over a third (36%) indicated that - as a result of the IAG they had - they gained additional qualifications, and 30% found or took up a job.

Additional Comment: One in four adults (28%) express some unmet demand for IAG. The level

of unmet demand is highest amongst unemployed adults – principally for job-search related activities – and non-white adults, and those under 20 are more likely to express an unmet need.

MORI (1996) *Evaluation of ESF Vocational Guidance and Counselling Schemes*. Sheffield: DFEE.

Focus of Study: This research project undertook evaluation research with 300 providers of ‘Choices and Access’ Schemes which were co-funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) in 1994. Projects which secured funding were managed by a range of public, and some private sector bodies, including Training and Enterprise Companies (TECs), voluntary bodies, further/higher education institutions, local authorities, and provided guidance, counselling and/or job-search support which was aimed to help recipients enter jobs and/or training.

Key findings: The most common client group targeted by projects (81%) were long-term unemployed adults. Other groups included people living in inner cities (55%), people needing help with basic literacy/numeracy (54%), lone parents (54%).

Outcomes for clients - indicated by project managers/organisers who responded (222) – included that on leaving guidance and counselling projects, an average of one in five (22%) got a job; three in ten clients (31%) went on to further and higher education; 17% went on to a training course, and 17% were unemployed – the destination of a further 17% was unknown.

Other important ways that it was reported that projects had helped clients included enhancing their personal development (64%), increasing awareness of educational/training opportunities (49%), and improved job search skills (37%). In terms of other labour market additionality, many respondents indicated that this was difficult to assess because of the complexity of identifying the unique contribution the project had made.

Additional comments: The evidence in the report was primarily obtained on a self-report basis with some validation from other sources. However, the report does provide some evidence about the stated effectiveness of these projects with challenging client groups.

Morris, M., Nelson, J., Rickinson, M., and Stoney, S.M., with Benefield A. (1999) *A literature review of young people’s attitudes towards education, employment and training*. London: Department for Education and Employment.

Focus of study: Documents, most of which were published after 1993, are reviewed and the resultant report includes some coverage of the role of guidance in influencing young people’s attitudes

Key findings: The research suggests that some young people lack sufficient knowledge about content and workload of courses, and that students withdraw from further education courses mainly because of concerns about course content and timing, teaching quality and social relationships. Access to good quality careers guidance was one of the key factors in raising levels of awareness and positive attitudes towards vocational training.

Additional comments: The quality of guidance is emphasised.

NATFHE (2001) *Higher Education: Student Retention*. Paper Submitted to the Education and Employment Select Committee Inquiry. London: HMSO.

Focus of the study: This submission to the Education and Employment Select Committee considers the evidence in relation to the retention of students in higher education and the reasons why students drop out.

Key Findings: The quality and nature of academic and pastoral support that students receive are fundamental to student retention.

There is a clear link between drop out rates and the numbers of students coming into higher education from non-traditional HE backgrounds. Recent development in HE such as the reduction in lecturer and classroom contact time place increased pressure on students to work autonomously and be self-directed in their learning. NATFHE suggest that it is in fact only the most able, confident and well prepared students who can be expected to organise their own learning from the outset.

Comments: The NATFHE paper does not consider the role of guidance in helping to reduce drop out rates. Indeed, neither does it consider whether a lack of guidance leads to poor retention. The papers are concerned with other overriding factors that cause students such as hardship, diminished academic support, developments in teaching and learning strategies including changes in course structures, modularisation, semesterisation and amount of teaching and teacher: student ratios.

Park, A. (1994) *Individual Commitment to Learning: Individuals' Attitudes. Report on the quantitative survey. Research Series No. 32. Employment Department.*

Focus of Study: The report contains the findings of the SCPR 'Survey of Individual Attitudes to Lifetime Learning', which sought to increase understanding of different attitudes towards learning, to identify barriers to learning, and to examine the impact which the removal of these barriers would have upon take up of learning. The research included a range of questions about awareness of sources of information/advice, about experience of advice/guidance services. The survey was based on 1403 interviews with respondents aged between 16 and 54, with a net response rate of some 67%. The larger age groups in the sample were as follows: 14%, 25-29; 26%, 30-39; 27%, 40-49.

Key findings: Overall, respondents initially displayed very low levels of awareness of sources of information about learning. After prompting, Colleges of Further Education were recognised by as a potential source by 63%, and Jobcentres by 67%, of respondents. Similarly few were aware of the various financial incentives for particular forms of learning (e.g. only 31% of learners, and 19% of learners recognised the term 'Career Development Loan', though 42% recognised the existence of such loans once the principle was explained).

Over four in ten (43%) of respondents felt there was not enough information available about different sorts of learning that people can do (Learners agreed more than non-learners - 49% and 39% respectively). Respondents indicated that learning that was self-funded was less likely to be easier to find out about than that funded by employers (84% and 91% respectively). 86% indicated that they found the information they received very or fairly useful.

A quarter of learning episodes was preceded by advice and guidance from someone specially trained in the area. This was more likely to apply in the case of respondents not in work, and for learning that lasted over a year. It was less likely in the case of professional and managerial workers.

In over nine in every ten cases (94%), the specialist advice was seen as being useful. Only a third (34%) of completed learning episodes, was followed by the respondent receiving advice or guidance on how to use learning in the future. One in five of learners were followed up by advice obtained from the respondent's employer, and one in twelve from other sources.

Additional comments: Over 51% of those respondents who had completed full-time education stated that it was unlikely that they would do any vocational learning in the next two or three years. 73% of likely future learners were either learning at the time of learning, or had done some vocational learning in the three years prior to the interview.

The potential role of enhanced information, advice and guidance services (including addressing perceived barriers such as cost) in addressing this issue was not explored by the research.

Quality and Performance Improvement Dissemination (2001) *Training Older People*, Sheffield: DfEE

Focus of Study: This QPID study aimed to investigate the use and experience of Work Based Learning for Adults (WBLA), Programme Centres and Work Trials by people aged over 50, and the factors associated with participation, achievement and successful placement. Alongside a review of statistical and management information the qualitative research included interviews with 180 programme participants over 50, and with 104 staff in 7 TEC areas.

Key findings: Staff interviewed at training providers, Jobcentres, and Programme Centres regarded 'success' as a job or qualification, and/or qualitative improvements in regard to clients' increased motivation/confidence, coping skills, access to a network of support, or broadening of occupational horizons.

In regard to programme centres, management information data quoted in the research for April-October 2000, indicated that older people who use Programme Centres are as successful as those aged 25-49, with 38% getting a job. The research indicated that outcomes may be improved further if extra job-search assistance were given to WBLA leavers.

Additional Comments: The research recommends that Employment Service consider undertaking further research into the costs and benefits of providing a limited follow-up support service for Programme Centre leavers who may need some help at first to stay in employment.

Quality Assurance Agency (2000) Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education: Career Education, Information and Guidance. London: QAA *<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/public/COP/COPcex/introduction.html>*

The Code of Practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education: career education, information and guidance (CEIG) is intended to help higher education institutions ensure that they are meeting students' expectations of their preparedness for their future career, and that they are producing graduates equipped to meet the demands of current and future employment markets. It does so by seeking to ensure that institutions have a strategy for CEIG that is adequately quality assured.

It is becoming increasingly important for students and graduates to take personal responsibility for managing their own career development. Career guidance is one essential component of the overall support which students need. There is, however, an important interrelationship between career education, information and guidance and the development of employability and career management skills. The role of higher education career services has been expanding in response to these trends and the scope of the code therefore encompasses career education and information, as well as guidance.

Comments: The QAA's focus is on careers education, information and guidance as being inherently good, fulfilling a vital role in ensuring graduates make a successful transition into employment. The guidelines do not sight any evidence that effective guidance leads to employment or why it is that they believe that guidance is good.

Although universities have to submit their first destinations statistics to the Higher Education Statistics Agency, these figures only monitor what graduates are doing 6 months after graduation. Data on whether the students received effective guidance is not required by HESA so it is not possible to establish whether there is a correlation between guidance and early employability.

Rivis, V. Assuring the Quality of Guidance and Learner Support in Higher Education in Wisker, G., and Brown, S., (1996) *Enabling Student Learning: Systems and Strategies*. London: Kogan Page

Key Findings: The HE sector has had an ambivalent attitude to guidance and learner support. A paradox exists that on the one hand the view persists that students entering HE ought to be able to

make effective decisions about learning, deal with academic and personal problems and function as autonomous learners without specialist guidance but on the other the tradition of personal tutoring still exists based on the belief that students benefit from one-to-one guidance.

Sargant, N. (2000) *The learning divide revisited. A report on the findings of a UK-wide survey on adult participation in education and learning.* Leicester: National Institute for Adult Continuing Education.

Focus of study: This quantitative study is based on data collected by interviewing over 5,000 adults (aged 17+). Taught and non-taught learning in vocational and non-vocational subjects is covered.

Key findings: 5% of the sample reported giving up a course before completion. Of these, 25% gave reasons related to the course such as finding it too difficult (7%) or not suitable (6%). Learners who gave up appear to be in greater proportions in the categories associated with educational disadvantage.

According to the author findings indicate “the need for appropriate information and advice which might help match learners to courses more appropriately, support them better and hence reduce drop-out”.

40% of respondents agreed that there was not enough help and advice available about different sorts of learning.

Additional comments: Both the data and respondents’ comments suggest that learning information and advice is lacking and better provision might aid retention especially of educationally disadvantaged groups.

Sims, D. Nelson, J., Golden, S. and Spielhofer, T. (2001) *Young people’s experiences of the Learning Gateway.* Research Report RR277. London: Department for Education and Skills.

Focus of study: This study investigated young people’s experiences of the Learning Gateway. Gateway clients are supported by a Personal Adviser (PA) and progress to Life Skills courses or mainstream learning and employment.

Data was collected using qualitative interviews/discussions with 152 young people aged 16-18, and interviews with eight careers service managers and 17 Personal Advisers.

Key findings: Interaction with a PA is regarded as critical. On the whole young people were very positive about the personal support and practical help they had received from their PA.

In particular they valued having a trusting relationship with one person on whom they could rely, and practical help in making applications and job-search. Some reported gaining enhanced career-related skills such as job search, CV preparation and interview techniques. The Gateway helped young people develop a more positive attitude and greater self-confidence. The majority of leavers moved on mainstream education or training, mainly leading to NVQ level 2 or GNVQ Intermediate.

Additional comments: Findings reflect other studies of the role of PAs in government initiatives. It may not be appropriate to compare this level of support and provided to this particular group with guidance afforded to other groups and at different levels of intensity. It is difficult to assess how many young people identified the benefits listed in the absence of quantitative data and limited qualitative descriptors (e.g. many, some, a few) are included.

SWA Consulting (1999) *Evaluation of early Individual Learning Account development activity.* Research Report 123. London: DfEE.

Focus of study: Information, advice and in-depth guidance were amongst the aspects of ILA developments evaluated.

Key findings: Some evidence of guidance being valued and effective. For example, in West

Wales where careers services provided mandatory advice about choice of course and learning provider, drop-out was very low (5%) once learning had started. Low drop-out rates were associated with other schemes such as Career Development Loans where guidance was mandatory.

In Dorset, where in-depth guidance interviews were mandatory, over half of those who gave feedback (50 learners) found the interview useful and expressed a willingness to pay for guidance in the future.

Additional comments: Willingness to pay for guidance suggests that individuals valued guidance sufficiently to anticipate some return on their investment. However, the number of respondents was small and Bosley et al (2001) report that most learners were seen as reluctant to pay or use their ILA funds for guidance.

The National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (1997). *Higher Education in a Learning Society*. London: HMSO.

Focus of Study: The NCIHE was appointed in May 1996 to make recommendations on how the purposes, shape, structure, size and funding of higher education, including support for students, should develop to meet the needs of the United Kingdom over the next 20 years.

The Committee was explicitly asked to recognise that higher education embraces teaching, learning, scholarship and research.

Key Findings: The NCIHE made extensive recommendations but recommendations 11 and 12 refer specifically to the role of careers education and guidance: Recommendation 11: NCIHE recommends that:

- Institutions of higher education, over the medium-term, integrate their careers services more fully into academic affairs and that the provision of careers education and guidance is reviewed periodically by the Quality Assurance Agency.
- The Government, in the medium to long-term, should integrate careers advice for lifelong learning, to complement services based inside higher education institutions.

Recommendation 12 recommends that:

- NCIHE recommends to students' unions and institutions that they review, on a regular basis, the services offered to their students and adapt them as necessary, in particular to meet the needs of part-time students.

The Committee took their steer for these recommendations from a number of sources including the National Union of Students and unpublished evidence from the Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC) that concluded:

'Guidance and learner support is an important area of quality that affects student choice and learner autonomy, the development of general skills and the enhancement of effective teaching and learning'

The Committee undertook a student survey that demonstrated that students are motivated to enter higher education by the desire to improve their labour market prospects. Careers advice is therefore essential.

Additional comments: The NCIHE acknowledges that in order for students to be 'work-ready' on graduation they must have received information, advice and guidance on career development, career management as well as skills development. The Committee also makes very explicit the role careers advice has in addressing skills shortages.

It does not acknowledge that careers guidance has a role in combating retention problems, rather this is implicitly seen as the role of other support services such as the Students' Union who offer advice on finance, childcare, health and other non-academic related matters that are widely regarded as major influencing factors on student drop out.

Tremlett, N., Park, A. and Dundon-Smith, D. (1995) *Individual commitment to learning: further findings from the individual surveys*. Research Series 54. Social and Community Planning Research. Sheffield: Employment Department.

Focus of study: This study analyses data collected in 1993 on individuals' attitudes to, and experiences of commitment learning. 1,403 individuals aged 16-54 years were interviewed. Information, advice and guidance was amongst the key issues studied.

Key findings: Provision of information or specialist guidance before a learning episode did not in itself have any apparent effect on respondents' views of the outcome (eg getting a job or promotion). Information and specialist guidance which respondents categorised as fairly or very useful was associated with such outcomes.

There is also an association between perceived usefulness of information and satisfaction with learning and perceived usefulness of specialist guidance and satisfaction with learning. These findings need to be interpreted with caution as the numbers of respondents who categorised information and specialist advice as 'not very useful'/not at all useful' were small. The most commonly reported beneficial outcomes of learning were employment-related.

Additional comments: It is difficult to draw any clear conclusions from this study. The report highlights the problem of evaluating the effects of guidance using subjective and retrospective perceptions as the learning experience may influence subsequent views of the guidance leading to it.

The study also shows the importance of distinguishing in evaluations between different information and specialist guidance, and taking account of perceptions of the quality.

Tremlett, N., Thomas, A. and Taylor, S. (1995) *Individual commitment to learning: providers' attitudes*. Research Series 47. Sheffield: Employment Department.

Focus of study: Quantitative data were gathered from 857 learning providers (including further, higher education and adult education institutions, charities, Trade Union and private sector providers). Qualitative data were gathered from 25 providers.

Key findings: Nearly all claimed to provide advice about courses both pre-enrolment and on-course. Most providers, especially FE colleges, recognised the central importance of pre-entry advice and guidance. Providers, especially HE and FE institutions, recognised the importance of on-course advice and guidance in reducing drop-out and encouraging participation. Just under a quarter reported that they did not offer any form of follow-up action or support to students who completed their courses. Very few had any system of monitoring the impact of their advice and guidance services. Nearly one-third said they had plans for altering their provision of follow-up action in the future, and in a third of these intended expanding or increasing their advice and guidance services.

Additional comments: More recent research may indicate an improvement in data collection and IAG provision. Martinez and Munday (1998) have undertaken research in this area which we have been unavailable to access within the timescale.

Van Reenen, J., (2001) *No more skivvy schemes? Active labour market policies and the British New Deal for the young unemployed in context.* WP01/09. London: The Institute for Fiscal Studies

Focus of study: This quantitative study explores the success of the New Deal for Young People in moving participants into employment. Economic benefits of the programme are highlighted.

During the pilot period young people on the New Deal were compared with those who were not and thereafter New Deal participants were compared with 25-30 year-olds who had been unemployed an equivalent period. Data on the flow into employment of 5% of those claiming employment-related benefits were used as the basis of the study.

Key findings: The New Deal includes a 4-month 'Gateway' period during which young people receive extensive help with job search from a Personal Adviser. Overall participants in New Deal were estimated as 20% more likely to find jobs each month. The job assistance element (as opposed to the job subsidy element) accounted for between 5.3% and 8.15% of flow into employment.

Social benefits were estimated at between £25m and £50m, excluding more indirect benefits such as social inclusion effects, the redistribution of wealth from older taxpayers to young unemployed, and enhanced employability and productivity. Job assistance was identified as the most cost effective element of the programme and was estimated as increasing steady state employment by about 8,000.

Additional comments: Studies of similar schemes are reviewed in this paper. This detailed, rigorous study includes an examination of methodological and analytical flaws. An extensive bibliography covers US, European and UK studies.

Winterbotham, M., and Adams, L., with Hasluck, C., (2001) *Evaluation of New Deal for Long Term Unemployed People Enhanced National Programme.* Report ESR82. Sheffield: Employment Service.

Focus of study: The effectiveness and impact of the enhanced New Deal 25 plus was evaluated using qualitative methods. Data collection included interviews and group discussions with 70 clients and 28 staff, nearly a year after the enhanced programme was introduced.

Key findings: The majority of participants felt that they had benefited in some way from the New Deal. Many felt they had gained confidence and motivation. Participants were fairly evenly divided between those who felt interviews with their Personal Adviser was beneficial and those who did not. The former group appreciated the one to one contact with their Personal Adviser (PA), generally because of the personalised service, and the encouragement and support they received. Negative views were related to a sense that they were being pressured into applying for jobs or to take work that was not suited to them, and that their needs were not being taken into account.

External Gateway activity, usually involving job search skills, was very often viewed positively. Clients gain definite benefits such as updating a CV and confidence from these courses. Some changed their job search tactics as a result.

Of the 53 programme leavers, 12 found full-time jobs (some of which were subsidised). Mostly these jobs were described as not ideal, but were providing a positive experience.

Additional comments. The nature of the relationship between participant and PA, and having tailored help seem significant in shaping the value participants place on New Deal.

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Appendix 1

Meta-analyses of US controlled-trial evidence.

The following note excludes US 'career education' and 'experience-based career education'. These were very substantial curriculum modifications incorporating CEG interventions, lacking strict parallels in the UK. They were intended to raise motivation and attainment within the compulsory phase of education and thus are tangential to the present review. There is some evidence that the former, but not the latter, did have small positive effects. They are considered, together with other studies of greater relevance, in Killeen et al., (1999).

In view of the relatively large number of US studies with comparison groups, it has become possible to subject them to meta-analysis. This is convenient, because it makes it possible to report the results of many studies succinctly, albeit with a loss of detail which hinders interpretation. However, a large proportion of the source studies have been reviewed elsewhere by the present author. The most important meta-analyses form a series covering 105 studies over a period of approximately fifty years. These are Spokane and Oliver (1983), which was elaborated with some additions as Oliver and Spokane (1988), and Whiston et al., (1998). The last of these considers studies published in the period 1983-1995, taking-up where the earlier analysis left-off.

Scope and basic characteristics of trials

Only 'career interventions' were considered. Related psycho-therapeutic interventions and interventions, which in the UK fall within the province of educational psychology, but in the US can fall, together with career guidance, within the province of counselling psychology, were excluded. Search was almost exclusively confined to US sources, but a small number of non-US studies are included, as national origin was not a bar. The other main criteria of inclusion were adequate reporting of statistical results or the presence of test statistics (e.g. F, t) which permit their 'backward calculation' and the presence of a control group. The control group may have been exposed to a placebo treatment not classifiable as a career intervention, but 'no treatment' controls predominate. This effectively excludes ex post facto correlational studies (econometric or not) in which attempts to construct the counterfactual fall short of defining a 'control group'.

Combining information from the publications just noted, 58% of trials were randomised at the individual level. The remainder were randomised at the group level or, more commonly, were not randomised. That is, a substantial proportion of studies were 'non-equivalent group' quasi-experiments. 69% had N \leq 100. Whiston et al. (1998) assessed 70% of studies conducted after 1982 to have attrition problems above the mid-point of their rating scale. Oliver and Spokane (1988) noted that in earlier studies attrition was poorly reported.

As most US refereed journal publications of this kind are conducted by counselling psychologists employed within the education system or undertaking post-graduate research, three important restrictions are that (a) a high proportion of samples are drawn in, and remain in, education throughout trial periods (b) interventions are usually of the kind made within education (c) outcomes are usually of the kind measurable in this context and, even when this is not so, reflect the immediate concerns of US career counselling psychology. Some trials are conducted in order to evaluate new or altered interventions devised by the experimenter, rather than common practice.

Methodology

Standard meta-analytic procedures were employed. In meta-analysis, each comparison (between mean scores of two groups on an outcome variable) becomes a 'case', much as an individual is a 'case' in a survey data set. Thus a study which has one treated sample, one control sample and two outcome variables yields two comparisons and two 'cases'. The available sample is, therefore, for some purposes, greater than the number of studies. Each comparison gives an 'effect size', which may be positive (good) or negative (bad). The crudest effect size coefficient is Glass's D (delta) which measures treatment sample 'gain' or 'loss', as the mean difference between samples converted to comparison sample standard deviations. Study sample sizes and other factors are commonly introduced into the analysis to refine mean effect size and associated estimates. The degree of refinement of the later analysis (Whiston et al., 1998) is greater in this respect (use of the $d+$ effect size estimator) but this is in addition to methods used earlier. Effect size coefficients are not meant to show how important or valuable treatment gains are. Small gains on some outcome measures may be much more

worthwhile than large gains on others. Similarly, small gains may be because the outcome variables in question are inherently more difficult to shift. It is, for example, easier successfully to communicate needed information than to ensure that someone becomes re-employed.

The simplest form of analysis is to obtain mean study effect size and, from this, global mean effect size and the standard error of the estimate, hence the confidence interval for the estimate so that statistical significance may be assessed. Thereafter, analysis can be more complex according (a) to the additional data coded for each comparison and (b) to the numbers of studies and comparisons available to the analysis. Most obviously, the type of outcome (e.g. career decidedness, re-employment) is coded and mean effect size may be estimated by outcome type. Similarly, type of guidance, intensity, unit cost, or type of client or context may be coded and mean effect size estimated according to such factors. Study attributes (e.g. randomised or not, attrition, quality of measurement, number of comparisons etc. – see above) may also be introduced, thus allowing inspection of the degree to which effect sizes are biased by study quality. However, the level of precision with which any of these factors may be measured and regression analyses intended to inspect the relative contributions of such factors are both very seriously restricted by the number of comparisons available. These restrictions are exaggerated by the fact that a distinct group of (post-1982) studies, rather than all studies, is considered in the later analysis. In the present context, the difficulties are analogous to those of conducting complex multivariate analysis of a survey sample of about 130 people.

Results:

Most of the outcomes considered fall into the broad category of ‘learning and associated’ outcomes, being changes in career-decision and transition-related attitudes, knowledge or skills, and in subjective perceptions of adequacy of such knowledge or skills. In the early days of evaluation, ad hoc measures of unknown reliability or validity were often employed (as is still common in the UK), but the use of standardised measures has increased. The two most popular multi-item outcome measures of this type have been the Career Maturity Inventory Attitude Scale (CMI-AS) and the Career Decision Scale (CDS). (For descriptions and reviews of these and other scales, see Killeen et al., 1994)

Tests of the homogeneity of effect sizes confirm that ‘career interventions are not one uniform activity producing one uniform effect, but rather, diverse interventions producing diverse effects’ (Whiston et al., p. 153). Upon momentary reflection, this is consistent with the informal judgement which any informed observer would be likely to make.

The implication is that if the trials available to each analysis had been based on a different mix of interventions with a different mix of outcome measures, the global results would have been different. It is in this light that (crude, unweighted D) global mean effect sizes of 0.65 (Oliver and Spokane, 1988; subsequent to removal of outliers) and 0.45 (Whiston et al., 1998) should be judged. It would be foolhardy to assert that effectiveness declined from the high side, to the low side, of ‘moderate’ over the period. Moreover, ‘moderate’ is merely a conventional way of putting numbers in this range into words and, as indicated above, the numbers do not measure the value of what has been achieved. The global results simply show the radical sceptic that guidance does achieve at least some of what it sets out to do.

In what follows, values of Δ are for studies published after 1982. However, these results are broadly comparable to earlier ones, save that the focus of attention shifts over the years. Considering only results based on relatively large numbers of comparisons, career interventions positively influenced, in descending order:-

- Career- or opportunity-related knowledge and (classified separately but without further distinction) associated decision making, problem solving, interview and other skills (lower of the estimates, $\Delta = 0.88$).
- Career maturity ($\Delta = 0.55$; often measured by CMI-AS).
- Information-seeking behaviour ($\Delta = 0.69$, but the more sophisticated $d+$ statistic reduces the estimate to 0.31) and (changes in) self-knowledge ($\Delta = 0.32$).
- Career certainty or decidedness ($\Delta = 0.38$, but note that the use of $d+$ halves this estimate and that the sometimes inappropriate use of this as a criterion is remarked).

It is also noteworthy that some career interventions may have an effect on psychological well-being, consistent with the increased feelings of hope or confidence which many clients say they experience. In three post-1982 studies and seven comparisons, anxiety was reduced ($\Delta = 0.89$).

A tiny number of studies (meeting inclusion criteria) consider 'economic' outcomes. Three outcome categories are of particular relevance: 'securing a job or probability of hire', 'attendance or still in school' and 'records data' (actually educational data).

- Everything of importance relating to the categories 'attendance or still in school' and 'records data' was considered in Killeen et al., (1999, esp. pp. 31 et seq.). The primary sources were examined directly in the course of that review. They state:-

"Whiston et. al. (1998), who inspected US experimental studies conducted in the later 1980's and the 1990's, for the purpose of meta-analysis, found only one using 'attendance or still in school' as a criterion, to which they assign an effect size 0.27. We also found only one study...[of]...undergraduates (Polansky et al., 1993...). In this experiment, which had very small sample sizes, neither CEG nor a combined treatment had a significant impact upon student retention despite the rate of retention being double that of controls for the CEG-only intervention... CEG did, however, have a significant positive effect on study habits. The authors promptly interpret this finding as contrary to 'construct validity', as the study skills treatment...[to which it was compared]... did not!" (p. 32)

"Oliver and Spokane (1988) include just two unidentified studies which take 'records data' (grade point average, graduation/non-graduation etc.) as outcome criteria. These had a mean effect size of 0.35, but the associated standard deviation is large (0.66) and indicates that in only one of these studies was there a positive effect. The samples may have been drawn in tertiary education. Whiston, Sexton and Lassooff (1998), whose work consciously up-dates that of Oliver and Spokane, report no additional studies in this category." (p.38)

- Nothing in the earlier meta-analyses adds significantly to what is said about 'securing a job or probability of hire' in Killeen (1996) pp. 84-88, where it was asserted that, up to that point, studies by Azrin and his collaborators (see elsewhere) provided the best evidence and that this evidence was positive.
- Three additional studies falling in the category 'securing a job or probability of hire' are reported by Whiston et al. These give rise to seven comparisons. The result ($\Delta = 0.73$; $d+ = 0.26$) is significant at (at least) the 95% level. Although it is not possible clearly to identify these studies from the analysis, the probable sources are Caplan et al. (1989), Eden and Aviram (1993) and Keller et al. (1983). It is not possible adequately to evaluate these studies within the time available, but a more recent Finnish study not available to this meta-analysis (Vuori & Vesalainen, 1999) offers credible experimental evidence that intensive 'guidance courses' work better than subsidised employment or training in getting (fairly long-term) unemployed people off the register and into unsubsidised employment. This adds to the growing and persuasive body of evidence that intensive job-search interventions for unemployed people do actually work.

Summarising some of the additional main findings, larger (sample-size weighted) effects were achieved:-

- In secondary school samples than in others.
- For interventions made by post-graduate trained or trainee guidance practitioners rather than for interventions made by those without such training (e.g. teachers) or by non-human (e.g. documentary or computerised) means.
- Per session or per hour, in descending order, by individual (one-to-one) and then group interventions, with lowest mean effect size for counsellor-free ones.
- Where outcome measures were highly reactive.

Related to the above, whilst individualised guidance is more effective per session or per hour, there is a clear indication that economies of scale and the lower staff costs per user-hour associated with computer-assisted guidance may lead to a different conclusion for cost-effectiveness. Cost estimate are as yet, however, cursory. Measures of study quality other than instrument reactivity have a (broadly) curvilinear relationship to effect size, so that trials of moderate quality tend to show the largest effects. This may be a result of a trade-off between realism and technical rigour. The more artificial the trial, the easier it is to be rigorous whereas

realistic field trials are associated with greater practical difficulty. Perhaps realistic studies which are as well-conducted as is possible in the circumstances identify the largest gains? On the other hand, studies in which subjects have sought-out guidance do not report larger effects than studies in which samples are recruited or arbitrarily assigned. However, this is without reference to the types of objectives pursued and outcome measures employed. This is a further reason why it is unfortunate that the possibilities for multivariate analysis are limited. Attempts to consider a variety of these factors *in combination* (since many are related to one another in obvious ways) failed due to insufficient sub-sample sizes.

Thus it is not clear which of all of these (and other) factors actually determine effect size.

'More research required' is a common conclusion, but it is important that this does not keep starting at square one – of this we have enough.

John Killeen
Senior Fellow
NICEC
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