

# Career guidance in Scotland: retrospect and prospect

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**ABSTRACT** *Devolution of powers to Scotland has accentuated pre-existing divergence from the rest of the UK with respect to education, training and career guidance provision. Scotland now has an all-age national careers service—Careers Scotland. It is suggested that it is unlikely that a national, publicly-funded careers agency would have been established in the absence of devolution. The article outlines the development of career guidance in Scotland over the last 25 years and how the pre-existing Scottish context and the new context of devolution have impacted upon it. The role of Careers Scotland and its relationship with other providers of career guidance in Scotland are examined. Other key issues considered include: the allocation of resources based on need; relationships with local authorities and schools; and training and professional identities in an increasingly diverse UK guidance context.*

## **Introduction**

Career guidance has become more important to policy-makers in Scotland, in common with many other developed countries, as they have recognised its relevance to the achievement of their policies on lifelong learning, economic development/competitiveness and inclusion (e.g. OECD, 2003; Scottish Executive, 1999a–c; Scottish Office, 1998a; Sultana, 2004). In Scotland, this has contributed to the establishment of an all-age national careers service, Careers Scotland, described recently as ‘probably the largest publicly-funded organisational structure in the world that is dedicated to career planning support’ (Watts, 2005, p. 5). Watts also noted that, in organisational terms, Careers Scotland represents the most substantial exemplar of the structural approach commended by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Careers Scotland is not the only body in the Scottish career guidance sector, but it is by far the biggest player. Some of the key

issues for career guidance in Scotland relate to its policies and operations, its relationship with other providers, and what its existence means for the career guidance community and for the actual and potential clients of career guidance.

### *Divergence before devolution*

Prior to devolution in 1999, there were already differences from other parts of the UK which impinged on career guidance: these must be recognised in considering the impact of devolution on policy and structure. The legislative devolution of 1999 had been preceded by a much longer process of devolution of responsibility for education and training (Raffe *et al.*, 1999). There were significant institutional differences between England and Scotland, with a clearer division of functions between schools and colleges of further education (FE) in Scotland where FE provided a progression route from school rather than an alternative to it (Howieson *et al.*, 1997). There were also differences in the structure of the curriculum and qualifications, which enabled students to take more flexible combinations of courses and make more incremental year-on-year decisions than was the case in England (Howieson *et al.*, 1997; Scottish Office, 1994). These differences provided a different context for individuals' decision-making, for young people's transitions and for career guidance than in other parts of the UK.

There are other structural differences that have affected the organisation of career guidance in Scotland. Local Enterprise Councils (LECs) are the counterpart of the former English and Welsh Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs), but LECs have had a more comprehensive role in economic development. Also, they are co-ordinated by two central bodies—Scottish Enterprise (SEnt) and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE)—set up by specifically Scottish legislation in 1990 (Raffe, 2000). Such differences in respect of the role of the enterprise network in Scotland have proved critical in the debates, and eventual decision, about the appropriate location for Careers Scotland.

Other relevant factors include the different political ideology within Scotland. Here, the role of local authorities (LAs) and their relationship with central government (i.e. the Scottish Office and now the Scottish Executive) contrast with that in England (Green, 1999; Humes, 1999; Paterson, 2003). Central government in Scotland has generally sought to work closely with local authorities, perceiving them as critical to the delivery of its policies in a way that has not always been true in England. Another relevant aspect of the distinctive political context in Scotland has been the general rejection of market principles in education and training—a central element of the policies of the Conservative governments of 1979–1997. Some of the Conservative policy changes were not introduced in Scotland; others were introduced in a weaker form or, while introduced in principle, were largely ignored in practice (Adler, 1997; Humes, 1999; Jones, 2003; Paterson, 2000, 2003; Phillips, 2003). The divergence in the political climate was evident in how Careers Service Companies were set up in Scotland after 1993, as we will outline later.

*Devolution*

The Scottish Parliament and Executive were established in 1999, with legislative and executive responsibility for a wide range of devolved matters, including education and training, economic development and local government (House of Commons, 1998; Keating, 2002). But as Keating points out, there is a high degree of functional dependence between devolved matters and those that are reserved to Westminster. In career guidance, this is most noticeable in relation to welfare and benefits (reserved), training (devolved) and labour market policies (partly devolved), all of which are highly interdependent. The New Deal exemplifies this interdependence since it links education and training, job creation and reform of the benefits system. It was introduced under the remit of the Employment Service but to run it in practice has required a complex partnership and contracting regime with several different bodies in Scotland, including the careers service (Fairley, 2003).

**The last 25 years***The statutory careers service*

Over the last 25 years, the main statutory provider of career guidance in Scotland, as in the early part of this period in England and Wales, has been the Careers Service, initially set up following the UK Employment and Training Act 1973. This Act placed a statutory duty on Scottish local authorities to provide free careers guidance and placing services for students in full-time education (other than in the higher education sector) and for those in part-time vocationally related learning. The Act added a statutory responsibility for full-time and some part-time FE students of all ages. One consequence of this was that for the first time some adults now came within the statutory client group: this extension encouraged some limited work in a few careers services with adult clients outwith this group.

At this time the work of the Careers Service can be characterised as being largely focused on providing career information and guidance to young people in secondary school (typically via one-to-one interviews) and providing a placement function for school-leavers and, to a lesser extent, young workers. The increase in youth unemployment from the late 1970s onwards and the creation of a series of special programmes for the unemployed involved the Scottish careers services (as elsewhere in the UK) more closely in the delivery of government policy and extended their role. Over time, careers service involvement in special programmes became more focused on initial placement and on supporting young people with special needs, as the programmes moved from being palliative measures to more structured training programmes as part of government attempts to create quality work-based training provision (Howieson *et al.*, 2001).

This period saw an increasing number of resource pressures on careers services, as they struggled to respond to increased demand from a number of sources. For example, an increased proportion of young people stayed on at school beyond 16 and sought more than one advisory contact, yet careers services' resource allocation

continued to be based on the number of 14-year-olds in schools. Moreover, careers service budgets were not ring-fenced within the local authority education budget, and proved vulnerable to transfer when resources for schools were stretched.

The increasing demand for their services (which was largely considered to be the same as 'need') meant that careers services had to begin to consider ways of 'rationing' scarce resources. Some careers services experimented with methods of need prioritisation, including the development of client-driven self-referral services. These issues were pre-cursors of the challenges which have subsequently faced Careers Scotland as a national service serving the Scottish community.

*The beginning of divergence in the statutory service.* Significant divergence between the Careers Service in Scotland and that in England and Wales can be dated from the 1993 Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Act (TURER) which amended the 1973 Act and re-structured the Careers Service throughout Britain (House of Commons, 1993). It moved the responsibility for the provision of careers services from local authorities to the (then) Secretary of State for Scotland. The way in which the Act was interpreted and implemented in Scotland reflects a more general divergence in attitudes between Scotland and England in respect of the role of the public sector and the application of market principles to education and other public services by the Conservative government, as noted earlier (Ozga & Lawn, 1999; Paterson, 2000). The 1993 Act transferred the duty to provide a careers service from local authorities to the Department for Education and Employment and the Scottish and Welsh Offices, each of which invited tenders for the delivery of local careers services. The aim was to encourage greater competition and a more business-like approach to the delivery and management of careers services. In Scotland, the Scottish Office invited local authorities and Local Enterprise Companies (LECs) to submit bids to run their local careers service on a partnership basis. If an acceptable bid was submitted, the delivery of the careers service would *not* be subject, as in England and Wales, to competitive tendering. Two of the 17 Careers Service Companies (CSCs) had to go to open tender; but in the end, all Scottish CSCs included LECs and LAs as the main partners, and none were owned by private companies.

TURER prioritised clients in terms of 'core' and 'non-core'. Services to core clients were free and were financed directly by central government; non-core clients and services were not covered by direct funding. CSCs could seek additional funding for both core and non-core clients: in some cases on an invited basis from the Scottish Office (e.g. for adult guidance); in other instances on a competitive basis (e.g. redundancy counselling) or by charging non-core clients. The 17 CSCs across Scotland gave different weight to core and non-core work and to additional income generation (Howieson & Semple, 2001). In many respects, those CSCs which gained funding for non-core activities such as Education Business Partnerships and adult guidance work anticipated the range of Careers Scotland's responsibilities. This may have eased their transition from CSCs to becoming part of Careers Scotland.

The new arrangements resulted in changes of approach and management by the CSCs, although the extent and nature of these changes varied across Scotland (Howieson & Semple, 2001). The changes included more attention to policies and systems, to resourcing and the cost/benefit analyses of services, to quality assurance (via the Scottish Quality Management System and Investors in People), and to client evaluations and marketing. Nevertheless, compared with the response of English CSCs, those in Scotland did not fully embrace market principles. Accordingly, change to Careers Service provision in Scotland was less radical following the 1993 Act, with greater continuity in provision and approach and a less challenging impact on practitioners than in England.

*A national careers service.* The Duffner Committee was set up in October 1999, shortly after the establishment of the Scottish Parliament, to review the Careers Service (Careers Service Review Committee, 2000). It resulted in a radical restructuring of the statutory service with the creation of 'Careers Scotland', which became operational in April 2002. Careers Scotland is a national, all-age career-planning organisation with underpinning strategies in inclusion, employability and enterprise which has brought together not only the existing 17 CSCs but also Education Business Partnerships, Adult Guidance Networks, and Lifelong Learning Partnerships. The drawing together of these organisations reflects Duffner's criticisms of the 'cluttered landscape' of bodies involved in transitions, which it viewed as inhibiting the effective delivery of services. The creation of a national organisation is also a response to the previous variability of standards and performance across the CSCs in Scotland, the lack of public awareness of the Careers Service, and the absence of a clear national voice for career guidance: all issues which were identified by Duffner and in research carried out for the Scottish Executive (Howieson & Semple, 2001).

*Approaches to inclusion.* Until the late 1990s, careers services in Scotland operated a combination of generalist and specialist provision for young people with disabilities, learning difficulties or sensory impairment. They also supported other vulnerable young people through their work with unemployed clients and those on youth training programmes. In terms of youth training, careers services' review and support role with participants became more focused on trainees with special training needs. Over this time, careers services developed their work with unemployed clients: for example, through setting up career clubs; running groups on confidence building; outreach work with young people in youth projects; undertaking special assessment of young people with special training needs; and establishing special projects for disaffected school-leavers, often in conjunction with the local authority or Local Enterprise Company.

In 1998, a major review was undertaken by the Beattie Committee of provision for young people (16–25) who had wide-ranging 'additional support needs' in making the transition from compulsory education to post-school opportunities. As a result of the Beattie Report (Scottish Executive, 1999d), the Scottish Executive

allocated £15m over a 3-year period to implement a programme of Inclusiveness Projects across the then 17 Careers Service Companies; further funding has been made available subsequently. A central element of the Beattie recommendations is the concept of a 'key worker' to provide continuity of support to the young person throughout their transition. While the Committee emphasised the importance of 'joined-up' inter-agency working in achieving a successful transition, the decision to locate the Inclusiveness Projects within the careers services signalled a strong employability focus. Careers Scotland is now responsible for delivering the Inclusiveness Projects and for the recommended mainstreaming of the inclusiveness approach within its all-age guidance service (SQW Ltd, 2005).

*The placement service and benefits role.* A placement function (including vacancy handling) has been an element of Careers Service work since its initial inception as Juvenile Employment Bureaux (Peck, 2004). This role, however, has been the subject of continuing debate both within the profession and within stakeholder groups, with arguments for and against its retention (Careers Service Review Committee, 2000; Howieson & Semple, 2001). The Duffner Review recommended the transfer of the vacancy-handling role to the Employment Service, with the careers service retaining an enhanced role of supporting the placement of more vulnerable young people. This, however, was one recommendation that the Scottish Executive remitted to Careers Scotland for further consideration. Careers Scotland has now decided that by April 2006 its vacancy service will handle job vacancies appropriate for school-leavers, with a particular focus on proactive search and advocacy on behalf of vulnerable young people. Critically, its vacancy role will be promoted as part of the referral and placing service for young people rather than as a service to employers, thus addressing the tension inherent in trying to meet the needs of both young people and employers.

An issue throughout the period has been the careers service role in respect of benefits, often referred to as 'benefits policing', which many staff felt compromised their supportive role (Howieson & Semple, 2001). Duffner recommended the re-negotiation of the careers service involvement in benefits processing with the then Department of Social Security. While procedures have been streamlined and co-ordinated, for example, an emailing protocol between Careers Scotland and Jobcentre Plus in Scotland has been set up, there have been no fundamental changes to the careers service role in relation to benefits. Policy in respect of benefits remains the responsibility of the Department for Work and Pensions, illustrating the limits of devolution.

#### *The guidance system and career education in schools*

The arrangements in respect of career education and first-level vocational guidance in Scottish secondary schools have differed significantly from those in England and Wales. For most of the period under consideration, all secondary schools in Scotland had a structure of promoted guidance posts under which guidance teachers had

responsibility for the personal, social, curricular and vocational guidance of a caseload of pupils, while generally also retaining a subject teaching role (SED, 1971). Most guidance teachers dealt with all aspects of guidance, in contrast with the arrangements common in English schools where pastoral care and career education and guidance were undertaken by different staff (Andrews, 1995; Semple, 1995, 2002). Guidance teachers usually also had responsibility for personal and social education (PSE), including career education, and for liaison with the Careers Service. The McCrone Review of the teaching structure (Independent Committee of Inquiry, 2000) has radically changed the guidance system in schools: we shall consider this later.

As in England and Wales, career education in secondary schools in Scotland was typically delivered as part of a separately timetabled programme of PSE by school staff with the support of the Careers Service. The national policy framework for career education in the 1980s and 1990s in Scotland was more limited than in England and Wales, but broad guidelines for career education were published in 1986 (SCCG, 1986) and career education was covered in materials produced for school self-evaluation (SOEID, 1996, 1998). As in England and Wales, the extent and quality of career education provision was variable across schools, and was more developed at the compulsory stage than in the upper school (Howieson & Semple, 1996).

In 2001, Learning and Teaching Scotland published a national framework for career education for pupils aged 3–18, which described career management skills in the context of lifelong learning and employability and clarified the school's responsibility for career education, with the support of careers advisers (LTS, 2001). Careers Scotland has given an early priority to the design of teaching materials to support the 3–18 national framework: it sees all-through career education as essential to providing the necessary underpinning knowledge and skills development to enable its delivery model to operate effectively in schools, and to laying down the foundations for effective career planning for the future workforce. Its staff have specific points of input on career planning in the programme, and there is increasing evidence of Careers Scotland staff working with groups of upper-primary pupils.

In 2002, a ministerial review of education for work and enterprise, entitled *Determined to Succeed* (Scottish Executive, 2002, 2003a), incorporated career education under the banner of Enterprise in Education, to be referred to later. This document, published a year after the career education framework, took some of the impetus and focus from the career education guidelines, but the teaching materials produced by Careers Scotland built around the career education framework may strengthen the framework's position at a school level.

### *Adult guidance*

*Funding.* The provision of career guidance for adults has grown in Scotland over the last 25 years. The creation of UK programmes for the unemployed such as

Employment Training and the New Deal has been important in making government funding available for the provision of advice to adults. European funding (commonly from the European Social Fund) has also financed guidance projects or initiatives with a guidance function. Scottish funding became available in 1997 to develop local adult guidance networks (Scottish Office, 1997). Nevertheless, for most of this time, adult guidance in Scotland has been less well resourced compared with the extent of funding from DfES and its predecessors in England (Blake Stevenson Ltd, 2001a). Compared with that of Careers Scotland, the funding of guidance in FE and HE is variable and subject to regular re-negotiation and justification, while that of Local Development Companies is relatively insecure since it relies on unstable ESF monies.

*Adult guidance and policy.* Policy-makers have increasingly recognised the importance of adult guidance to the lifelong learning agenda, to social inclusion and to economic development (Scottish Executive, 1999a–c, 2003b; Scottish Office, 1998a, b). Nevertheless, there was no one document relating specifically to guidance and no written adult guidance strategy for Scotland; instead it has run as a theme through other policies on lifelong learning, community learning, and workforce and skills development (Blake Stevenson Ltd, 2001a). The absence of a national strategy (and central funding) for adult guidance was noted by the Duffner Review. The Scottish Office approach to adult guidance from the early 1990s has been to support the local diversity of guidance provision and to seek to bring key providers together through the network arrangements. The Duffner Review regarded this diversity as valuable in enabling provision to be responsive to the local context and to the multi-faceted needs of adults.

*Developments in adult guidance.* The latter half of the 1990s onwards has seen significant developments in adult guidance, reflecting its growing importance to policy-makers. The work of the Adult Educational Guidance Initiative—Scotland (AEGIS) was especially important in the development and strengthening of 17 Adult Guidance Networks (AGNs) (funded by the Scottish Office), in the creation of a national telephone helpline and database, and in the establishment of an advisory group, the Scottish Guidance Group (Scottish Executive 1999e; Scottish Office, 1997; Thomson Consultancy, 2001). Other developments over this period included the creation of a guidance element in the New Deal ('Gateway') and the setting up of the New Futures Fund Initiative by the Scottish Office to fund local projects offering support and guidance to the most vulnerable and marginalised 16–34-year-olds.

In 2000, the Scottish Executive announced the provision of almost £9 million of funding for the development of All Age Guidance (AAG) Services, and careers services and their partners were invited to bid for funding (SQW Ltd & TNS, 2005). Most of the AAG projects that were funded started in 2001 and aimed to provide a single source of information, advice and guidance on careers, training and education in each region for people of all ages. In 2002, Careers Scotland



assumed responsibility for the AAG projects within its national all-age service. This changed the partnership elements of the bids, so that while partnership remains crucial, it is within a different structure than was initially envisaged for the projects.

*Adult guidance providers.* The Scottish Guidance Group (2000, p. 6) referred to ‘the complex and confusing world of adult guidance’. Prior to the creation of Careers Scotland, the range of providers of adult guidance included some but not all careers services, community education, the Employment Service, local authorities, the voluntary sector, Local Development Companies (LDCs), the Continuing Education Gateway, libraries, FE colleges, and HE institutions. Research undertaken in 2000 for the Scottish Guidance Group surveyed all member organisations of the 17 Adult Guidance Networks in Scotland, which amounted to a total of 640 organisations (Blake Stevenson Ltd, 2001b). The research concluded that 250,000–300,000 people had received guidance services from these organisations over the previous year. There was substantial variation in provision for adults across Scotland both outwith careers service companies and within them: a recent evaluation of the AAG projects summarised provision beforehand as ‘limited/very limited’ in seven of the 17 AGN areas, ‘fair’ in five, and ‘good’ in four (SQW Ltd & TNS, 2005).

Other relevant organisations included Local Learning Partnerships (LLPs). LLPs were established by the late 1990s to bring together the key stakeholders in the public, private and voluntary sectors to identify learning needs, and to develop and co-ordinate approaches to lifelong learning in their areas. The Scottish Office encouraged AGNs and LLPs to work to a common agenda, and suggested that some might consider merger (Scottish Office, 1998a).

In the late 1990s, a re-focusing of community education, henceforth to be called Community Learning and Development (CLD) to enable it to contribute better to policies on social inclusion, lifelong learning and active citizenship, reinforced its relevance to guidance (Scottish Office, 1998b). LAs established CLD partnerships, and a new body, Communities Scotland, was set up. With the publication of *Working and Learning Together* (Scottish Executive, 2004a), which tied community learning and development into the guidelines on Community Planning, partnership working has moved to a higher level. Careers Scotland’s links with CLDs and Communities Scotland, and the development of a community guidance strategy, will be outlined later.

Private-sector career guidance provision in Scotland is generally limited and is confined mainly to services to employers relating to outplacement and human resource development.

### *Career guidance in further and higher education*

Under both the 1973 and 1993 Acts, the majority of students in FE were within the remit of the statutory Careers Service. The extent and nature of careers service

provision to FE colleges varied across Scotland, with a generally higher level of service in the east of the country where careers services were typically able to source funding for a part-time careers adviser on site. Provision of services to FE was a major resource issue, since the funding for careers services did not take into account the FE student population (Howieson & Semple, 2001). FE colleges moved out of LA control in 1992, becoming corporate bodies with responsibility for staffing (Scottish Office, 1993). Under the Further and Higher Education Charter (Scottish Office, 1993) colleges were expected to provide advice and guidance to students. In response to this, FE colleges have increasingly appointed their own careers adviser within the college guidance team, especially where they had little direct provision from their local careers service. In a few instances, colleges contracted with careers services, buying in careers advisers' time. Given the role that FE is expected to play in widening access and social inclusion, guidance is recognised by policy-makers as a key function (Scottish Executive, 1999c). This emphasis has impacted upon the nature of the client group for career guidance in FE, with consequent implications for models of delivery and practice.

There is no common structure for career guidance in FE. Staff tend to be located within student support services, and typically combine career guidance with other responsibilities such as student finance, counselling or marketing. The nature and extent of career guidance services in FE varies, depending on the nature of the institution (e.g. specialist or community college), the allocation of resources by college boards, and the decisions of the management team about priorities. Career guidance in colleges is assessed by HMI under the quality standards for FE guidance as a whole.

For many years, the Scottish Further Education Guidance Association (SFEGA) provided a platform for sharing good practice across the sector. More recently, the Guidance and Student Support Network (GASS), supported by the Scottish Further Education Unit (SFEU), has taken a more strategic approach with the backing of the Association of College Principals Forum.

As in the rest of the UK, Scottish universities have their own careers services. Over the past 25 years these have developed well beyond their historical appointments board functions, and have established a specific career guidance identity distinct from a student welfare advice function. By the end of the period in question, two operational models of career guidance had emerged in Scottish HE: one involving a dedicated careers service responsible to a senior university manager; and a second in which staff with a specific career guidance remit are employed within a student services department. Career guidance in HE has moved beyond a traditional focus on the individual interview, developing a range of approaches including the use of computer-aided guidance systems. The development of an 'employability' agenda is also evident in HE (see e.g. SHEFC, 2003).

Career guidance in HE is one case where a distinctive Scottish dimension is less evident. HE career guidance has a cohesive professional identity with more commonality across the UK than does career guidance in other sectors.

## **The current structure of career guidance in Scotland**

### *Description of structures*

The range and nature of career guidance provision in Scotland is complex. Given the space constraints, we will approach the description of provision by focusing on Careers Scotland, by far the largest provider, and by framing our consideration of other providers in the context of their relationship with Careers Scotland.

### *Devolution and the creation of Careers Scotland*

Would Careers Scotland have been created in the absence of devolution? Technically this would have been possible, as it did not require devolved powers to do so. But it is very unlikely to have happened, both because of the additional resource of Ministers and civil servants which devolution brought and the energy and desire to make a difference that devolution let loose. The creation of Careers Scotland required considerable political will and commitment to see through. In the pre-devolution situation, the political and administrative capacity of the Scottish Office was limited, but devolution resulted in the creation of a wider range of Scottish Executive Departments (with Ministers who were based full-time in Scotland rather than split between Edinburgh and London), with an associated increase in policy development support from the civil service. It was the Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning, Henry McLeish, who set up the Duffner Review; and his successor, Wendy Alexander, who established Careers Scotland. The political will to create a national careers service was also part of a wider desire to make use of the new powers that Scotland had gained, especially in the context of years under Conservative administrations that had had little support in Scotland. Scottish Executive sources have noted the ‘almost tangible energy and desire to make a difference’ among Ministers just after devolution and their ‘desperate impatience to get things done’ (Scottish Executive, 2005a).

### *The structure of Careers Scotland*

*Location in the Enterprise Networks.* Careers Scotland is strategically ‘aligned’ [1] with the two Enterprise Networks in Scotland: Scottish Enterprise (SEnt) and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE). This means that Careers Scotland is split into two operational parts, each with its own Director, but working to a common operating environment such as maintaining a recognisable public profile through its website and marketing and a common client record system. The Chief Executives of SEnt and HIE are the Accountable Officers for Careers Scotland. Its two operating arms function at a local level in the same geographical areas as that of the 22 Local Enterprise Company areas. It is funded by the Scottish Executive as part of the Executive’s grant to the Enterprise Networks; its respective budgets are then agreed with the Boards of SEnt and HIE.

The alignment of Careers Scotland with the Enterprise Network locates it in an organisational structure that is focused on economic development. It should be noted, however, that HIE has a broader role than SEnt, with a responsibility for community as well as economic development: this has had an impact on the way the two arms of Careers Scotland have developed.

Without the experience after 1993 of the 'half-way house' status of Careers Service Companies, it is likely that the alignment of Careers Scotland with the Enterprise Networks would have been more problematic. The move from a totally education-based service to the LA/LEC partnership model gave CSCs experience of reconciling the different perspectives of the LECs and LAs and of framing career guidance in an economic-development as well as an educational context.

The strategic direction of the Enterprise Network is set out in *A Smart Successful Scotland* (Scottish Executive, 2001) and its later revised version (Scottish Executive, 2004b). Careers Scotland is mapped against the learning and skills targets of these documents, and performance measures are set within this context as its contribution to achieving the goals of a Smart Successful Scotland (Careers Scotland, 2004).

*Lines of accountability.* Within the Scottish Executive, Careers Scotland falls within the remit of the Minister for Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning. In addition, four other Ministries in the Scottish Executive have a strategic interest and influence on it: Education; Communities; Regeneration; and Social Justice. Twenty-two Local Advisory Boards (based on the LEC areas), with representation of key stakeholders from the education, business and learning sectors, act in an advisory and evaluative capacity to Careers Scotland at local level.

### *Principles and priorities*

*Principles and client groups.* The basic principles underpinning Careers Scotland (as recommended by Duffner) are that career guidance should be impartial, client-centred, confidential, informed, all-age and coherent. Access to career information and advice is free; in principle, access to individual career guidance is also free. Within the acceptance of the principle of free guidance for all, certain groups have priority when resources are limited: under-24-year-olds; pupils and students in secondary schools; most students in FE college; people with disabilities irrespective of age; those qualified to less than level 3 SVQ; unemployed or unwaged people; and those in declining industries.

*Aims, priorities and delivery methods.* Careers Scotland's strategic aim is to 'equip individuals with the skills to make well informed realistic career decisions throughout their working lives' (Careers Scotland, 2004, p. 19). Watts characterised the distinctive focus of Careers Scotland as being 'on career planning linked to economic

inclusion, enterprise and employability, and on making Scotland a career-resilient society' (Watts, 2005, p. 7).

Careers Scotland's delivery methods reflect, on the one hand, the rationale that clients should be empowered to become self-reliant and to develop their career management skills, and, on the other, that staff should neither over- nor under-provide services. It therefore aims to deliver its services on a differentiated basis by assessing the level of input, if any, required from Careers Scotland staff, depending on clients' needs. The explicit use of theory in planning service delivery is an unusual and interesting feature of Careers Scotland. It has used Cognitive Information Processing theory and the Florida State University model as a basis for its differentiated service delivery (Sampson *et al.*, 1999). Other key principles of its delivery strategy are segmentation and prioritisation. With an all-age potential client group, a key issue is how to allocate its resources. Accordingly, it has developed a customer segmentation model for the Scottish community which defines the number of customers in each of various categories and reviews each in terms of their priority level and the type of help they are likely to need (self-help, assisted or in-depth) (Watts, 2005). It also aims to implement a range of access approaches (referred to as 'channelling'), including telephone and web-based support. We will consider Careers Scotland's operational model in the final section of this article.

Careers Scotland uses the term 'career planning' rather than career guidance and links this to the Career Planning Continuum (Allen *et al.*, 1997), an approach based around the stages of rational career planning. An adapted form of this, the Career Planning Journey, maps Careers Scotland's services to the stages of the 'journey' and aims to explain the career planning task to schools, employers, parents, adult clients and other partners and stakeholders. It is also used as a means to help clients to self-assess and recognise their own need to access appropriate services.

Quality assurance and performance measures have a high profile in Careers Scotland. It is currently developing a comprehensive quality-assurance strategy (Watts, 2005).

#### *Adult and community guidance and the interface with other providers*

Careers Scotland has an all-age guidance remit. As well as offering services itself, partnerships with other providers are essential if it is to fulfil this remit. It has negotiated bilateral partnership agreements with a number of bodies such as the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS), SUfi/LearnDirect Scotland and Jobcentre Plus. As well as agreeing referral arrangements with other providers, a key element of Careers Scotland's community guidance strategy is to build career guidance capacity within communities: for example, by providing training for staff in other organisations (Careers Scotland, 2004). Its community guidance strategy relates to the Scottish Executive's Community Learning and Development (CLD) strategy referred to in the previous section. Community Guidance Action Plans are being developed and actioned within the context of the

national priorities for CLD. The community guidance strategy provides a national framework for guidance, but given the range of local providers which continue to offer guidance, and the location of CLD in local authorities with an explicit commitment to flexibility to meet local needs (Scottish Executive, 2004a), it seems that adult and community guidance in Scotland will continue to be characterised by its diversity.

Increasingly, Careers Scotland is seen as a potential contributor to the policy agenda in Scotland, and is being consulted more frequently and at earlier stages. Career guidance as a potential vehicle for policy development is, therefore, more visible. However, the extent to which Careers Scotland itself will have a formal role in representing the guidance community, in providing strategic leadership and in having specific responsibilities in respect of other guidance providers is still to be determined. We will return to this in the final section.

### *Training for career guidance*

One of the main routes for professional training for career guidance is provided in Scotland by three universities through a 1-year postgraduate masters-level course. These universities are accredited centres of the Institute of Career Guidance, the awarding body for the Qualification in Career Guidance, which is a UK qualification. Diplomates subsequently employed by Careers Scotland then complete five units of a Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) in Guidance at level 4; those who enter other guidance providers are not generally required to do so. Another route to professional training has been the postgraduate masters-level qualification in adult guidance: this is a qualification gained while working by many guidance staff in FE and in the community, as well as by a number of staff who joined Careers Scotland from adult guidance roles. Careers Scotland has also taken some employees moving from a support function to a careers advisory post through the full SVQ 4 in Guidance, with underpinning career guidance knowledge and understanding provided through a Postgraduate Certificate in Careers Guidance. The range of qualifications and backgrounds of Careers Scotland staff, and how these staff might be developed to handle a generic client caseload, is currently a live issue.

## **Issues and challenges**

### *Relationship with local authorities/education authorities*

The move of the statutory career guidance services from a LEC/LA partnership model to an Enterprise Network base has required Careers Scotland and the Education Authorities to negotiate and develop new relationships. Local authorities had been used to a locally-based service in which they had some policy-management role, and the creation of a national service strategically aligned with a centralised network raised questions about local flexibility. While Local Advisory Boards (LABs)

initially allowed authorities to have a strategic local role with Careers Scotland, LABs have now moved, as planned, to being consultative. The challenge for both is to develop effective relationships that meet both the LA requirement for flexibility and Careers Scotland's need to achieve consistency of provision and national standards. This balance can be particularly noted in the community guidance strategy, which sits within local-authority-led community planning. The wide diversity of provision, and the numbers of people working with clients in a community guidance role, mean that diversity is inevitable. Careers Scotland faces the challenge of how to respond flexibly to each local partnership while also ensuring consistency of contribution.

### *Changes to the guidance system and Careers Scotland's role in schools*

As outlined earlier, career education and first-level career guidance had been delivered in secondary schools within an integrated guidance system. The restructuring of the teaching profession following the McCrone Report (Independent Committee of Inquiry, 2000) has changed this. There is now no single structure for guidance support. The Scottish Executive has set out 10 standards of personal support that schools (and partner agencies) should achieve, without specifying any particular model of provision (Scottish Executive, 2005b). This has led to greater local diversity between and within local authorities in how pupil support is provided, and on which teachers should work directly with Careers Scotland staff. Overall, there has been a move to a focus on pastoral care and away from vocational guidance as a role for teachers. These changes to the guidance system raise issues about the role of teachers in career guidance and about liaison arrangements between Careers Scotland staff and schools. They have also posed considerable challenges for the practical delivery of services at a school level: Careers Scotland staff have had to implement a new operational model at a time when those teachers who had traditionally been their key contacts have themselves been negotiating new roles and ways of working.

Recent developments seek to provide a more varied and flexible curriculum that, among other things, provides the skills for work that young people will need in the future. This potentially offers Careers Scotland a strategic role at school, authority and national level to work with schools to support the development of such a curriculum (Scottish Executive, 2004c, d).

### *Enterprise in Education*

Education Business Partnership (EBP) functions moved to Careers Scotland at its inception, but because the Scottish Executive decided to allocate most of the Determined to Succeed funds to local authorities rather than to Careers Scotland, this has changed the balance of power. Responsibility for developing and delivering Enterprise in Education now rests with local authorities, and Careers Scotland's support role has changed. There are clear links between the development of

enterprising attitudes and approaches on the one hand and an understanding of effective career planning on the other: how can Careers Scotland and education authorities work together to make this relationship explicit to young people and their parents?

### *Delivery systems*

We have described how Careers Scotland aims to deliver its services on a differentiated basis depending on need, but this is not a simple matter to deliver or to explain. The needs assessment is designed to allow services to be targeted on the most needy—which includes those with career guidance and development needs just as much as those with personal and social (inclusion) needs. There are, of course, challenges in getting the needs assessment right. But there are also questions about how an assessment of need can be made of those who do not reach the contact point because they do not perceive any need or lack the confidence to access services.

There is concern in some schools and elsewhere that this model disadvantages some individuals such as young people capable of entry to higher education: a recent report from Universities Scotland suggested that Careers Scotland should support schools in providing a comprehensive careers service for pupils which is not based on self-referral, to ensure that uninformed young people are not inadvertently 'lost' to the higher education sector (Bartley, 2004). For FE careers advisers in community colleges dealing with an increasingly diverse and needy student population as a result of inclusion and widening-access initiatives, a model which expects large numbers to self-help (and to initiate this themselves) raises concerns, especially in a context where career guidance in FE has to be justified to managers through its contribution to retention and positive outcomes. Similar views have been expressed by those involved in community-based guidance; and HE careers advisers have yet a further different picture of delivery.

There does not appear to be a common view across the guidance community in Scotland on delivery models. To what extent does this matter? It may do so if young people and adults who move across different statuses (school, FE, HE and community-based guidance) encounter different expectations and assumptions about their role and responsibility in the guidance process. It is all the more important then that career education in schools helps pupils to develop career management skills that are sufficiently broad to enable them to find their way through lifelong guidance provision.

A related issue facing career guidance in Scotland is the needs of those who, in a situation where resources are prioritised, fall between two providers. An example of this is the situation of recent graduates. University careers services offer support for a minimum of 1 year following graduation, although many do more, and a few give lifelong services (though only for their own graduates). Graduates, especially under-employed ones, are seen as a high priority for University Careers Services, especially since they hold graduate-level vacancies, but institutional resources limit their ability



to respond. After a year, graduates, as agreed in the bilateral arrangements, should refer to Careers Scotland if they require further support. Nevertheless, while such access is in line with the bilateral agreement, Careers Scotland's segmentation strategy does not give priority to under-employed graduates, who are categorised within the general adult client group. Who is to take an overview of the needs of such client groups?

### *Careers Scotland and the wider guidance community*

As has been noted earlier, Careers Scotland is the national statutory career guidance provider and the single largest guidance organisation in Scotland, but there is a range of other providers. What is the appropriate role for Careers Scotland to play in respect of these other organisations, in providing leadership for the guidance sector and in representing it? How can a balance be maintained between the needs of Career Scotland, by far the biggest organisation, and the needs of the heterogeneous range of other bodies in the sector? These are issues that have yet to be determined, although the forthcoming consultations on a National Guidance Policy Forum may begin to address them. However, the Scottish Executive, having established Careers Scotland, already sees it as the body with whom it consults on guidance issues and whom it expects to exercise strategic leadership of the guidance sector (Scottish Executive, 2005a). This is a positive development in many respects, indicating the way in which the creation of a national career guidance organisation has raised the profile of careers guidance among policy-makers.

But the creation of a large guidance provider with the ear of government is problematic for the smaller providers, due to the imbalance of power this creates with organisations that may at times need to compete (as well as co-operate) with Careers Scotland. There may be risks that other parts of the sector may be marginalised. For example, there might be an expectation that Careers Scotland should define quality standards for guidance generally: would this be appropriate? Again, Careers Scotland's decisions about acceptable training courses for its own requirements can effectively determine the viability of CPD training provision because it is the single biggest customer. In either of these situations Careers Scotland would need to know the training needs and quality standards of the rest of the sector, including guidance workers in FE/HE, in LDCs, in community learning, in the voluntary sector and so on: to what extent is this the case?

It is relevant here to note that Careers Scotland and other providers in the adult guidance community work to different definitions. Careers Scotland uses the term 'career planning', in contrast to the rest of the sector where career guidance is not usually seen only in terms of career planning and where, especially in community and adult guidance, guidance may be perceived as more broad-based than career guidance—for example, by those working with clients in adult basic education, for whom the term 'career' may seem a step too far.

*The location of Careers Scotland in the Enterprise Networks*

A continuing issue for Careers Scotland is how to balance the potential tensions between its role in relation to, on the one hand, social inclusion and, on the other, economic development, when it is now based in an Enterprise Network focused on economic development. Careers Scotland's activities have to be justified in terms of their economic contribution. There are differences here between the two parts of Careers Scotland: the issue is less pronounced in the HIE part of Careers Scotland because of HIE's role in 'strengthening communities'.

In both networks, money for Careers Scotland's delivery of its statutory functions is not ring-fenced (a situation which also applied when the statutory Careers Service was located in education authorities) but it is highly unlikely that its budgets are threatened. In contrast with the situation prior to devolution, it is clear that the devolved Executive in Edinburgh now has both the will and the authority to challenge Enterprise Networks over resource allocation if necessary. But more importantly, Careers Scotland is aligned strategically with other parts of its host organisation and is now in a position to bid for extra funds through its links to other parts of the network, such as those dealing with business growth and development. Continuing to describe and frame the developing career guidance policy agenda in terms that the Networks can understand will allow Careers Scotland continued and possibly increasing access to budgets.

It is sometimes overlooked that Careers Scotland's presence also presents challenges for the Enterprise Networks. The Networks have a predominantly strategic focus, and alignment has brought them an organisation that has not only a strategic focus but also has an operational and delivery role. The operational need to ensure a working career guidance service on the ground requires some changed perspectives and procedures from the Networks. At a practical level, for example, they (quite reasonably) were not initially geared up to respond as quickly as a delivery service needs to do, for example, in respect of issues such as recruitment and staffing. However, the presence of an organisation with a direct and immediate link to local communities also offers potential benefits to the Networks which they have still to realise fully. HIE, with its different responsibility for community development, has been quicker to appreciate the potential of having a 'delivery arm' in each of its communities.

*Reconciling flexibility and responsiveness with standardisation and consistency*

An issue that we have already referred to is the need for Careers Scotland to balance flexibility and responsiveness with standardisation and consistency of provision. This is an issue that is likely to be on-going. On the one hand, part of the rationale for the establishment of a national careers service was to address the problems of variability in provision and standards across the previous Careers Service Companies. The lack of public recognition of career guidance was another reason for the creation of a national careers service, and common styles of communication and appearance are seen as important in creating public understanding and recognition of Careers

Scotland: i.e. the promotion of a national service with a clear 'brand'. On the other hand, local authorities, schools and other clients want, and have been used to, flexibility of provision which can respond, sometimes rapidly, to local needs. In addition, previous policy from the Scottish Office and the Executive has been to encourage diversity in adult guidance provision and in approaches to inclusion. Careers Scotland, as a national organisation seeking consistency and understanding of its role, needs its staff who are negotiating partnerships with other bodies to be 'on message': this could potentially limit responsiveness and flexibility at a local level.

### *One country, two systems*

The division of Careers Scotland into two operating parts poses challenges of maintaining Careers Scotland as a national 'brand' and finding appropriate strategies for doing so. The differences between the two Enterprise Networks make this a complex task. SEnt and HIE have different systems and procedures: therefore, the closer the two parts of Careers Scotland align with their host organisation, the more they may diverge from each other. In addition, there are already some differences in emphasis in the way staff in the two arms of Careers Scotland are expected to deliver career guidance: for example, careers advisers in the respective parts of Careers Scotland have different levels of autonomy in their choice of interview strategy. Does divergence within Careers Scotland matter?

### *Devolution and divergence*

Devolution has both encouraged and made transparent the divergence in career guidance between Scotland and the other countries of the UK, especially England. Career guidance policy and delivery in Scotland is now developed in a political context which increasingly integrates career guidance with enterprise, employability and inclusion issues. No longer do UK guidelines for careers service delivery arrive in Scotland for 'Scotticising'.

Nevertheless, devolution has its limits. A continuing issue is the impact on the guidance sector in Scotland of UK policies and arrangements in respect of reserved functions, not only in relation to welfare and benefits but also to other matters such as immigration. The demographics of Scotland mean that economic migrants are needed, but career guidance practitioners are limited in their work with asylum-seekers and their children by UK arrangements. While both the Scottish and Westminster Parliaments have the same political party in a majority, there is less likelihood of fundamental differences in approach. But if subsequent elections result in governments of different persuasions in Scotland and in the UK, then the tensions between devolved and reserved powers may well impact quickly on the career guidance community in Scotland.

Issues arising in respect of areas which are reserved are not unexpected, but guidance in Scotland is also affected by specifically English policies. The influence of

England has been felt, for instance, in quality assurance, in training and in professional practice matters. For example, in respect of quality assurance, careers services in Scottish HE institutions have been required, as a condition of membership of the national professional body, the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS), to use the Matrix quality standard instead of other models because this is a DfES requirement to apply for funding. This is despite the fact that Scottish HE services cannot access DfES funds.

From a training perspective, the form of professional qualification (commissioned by the DfEE and introduced in the last 5 years), the QCG, seems to have been originally designed with mainly young people and inclusion issues in mind: an agenda which fitted most closely with English policy developments that led to the Connexions Service, and as such, was less relevant in Scotland where the role of the Careers Service was already different to that of Connexions. While the QCG has undergone a number of revisions which have improved its applicability to the needs of the Scottish career guidance community, it needs to change more radically to reflect the enterprise/employability/economic-development focus in Scotland.

The issue of the professional identity of career guidance staff across the UK is an increasingly pertinent question. As we have noted, the role of a careers adviser in Careers Scotland differs substantially from that in most Connexions Services. As Careers Scotland continues to move to a generic delivery model, its advisers will increasingly have both an all-age and an inclusion remit. This all-age and inclusion focus is shared across the guidance sector in Scotland—for example, in FE and Local Development Companies. Thus the professional discipline of career guidance has a strong and coherent identity across many of the different parts of the guidance community in Scotland. But to what extent can we still say there is a career guidance profession in the UK? What are the implications of any further divergence of guidance provision in the constituent parts of the UK for the professional identity of careers staff?

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### **Note**

[1] Alignment is different from merger—it retains an organisation's distinct accountability arrangements.

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