

# **Independent External Review of Careers Delivery in Northern Ireland – International exemplars**

**DR DEIRDRE HUGHES OBE (RESEARCH DIRECTOR) AND  
CHRIS PERCY (SENIOR ASSOCIATE), DMH ASSOCIATES, EXETER  
MARCH 2022**

**This paper sets out some exemplars of good/interesting careers policies and practices that can potentially inform the careers support ecosystem in Northern Ireland now and in the future.**

### *Primary schools*

*Start early* - The Australia, New Zealand, parts of England and the US careers support system recognises the value of career guidance-type activities in primary school, noting that this looks very different to secondary school guidance. Education Employers, a charity based in London, has undertaken extensive international research on this topic - <https://www.educationandemployers.org/primary-futures-arrives-in-northern-ireland/> The **Department of Education (DE) in NI currently has main responsibility for careers work in primary schools.**

### *Post-primary and community settings<sup>1</sup>*

*Triage approaches and diagnostic screening* - Globally, most career guidance systems adopt a common triage approach to give greater support to those in need. Triage systems need to build up from some universal level of provision with tiered support planned carefully, to avoid stigmatisation, reduced motivation to engage, and negative outcomes. **Variation in approaches in NI.**

*Groupwork guidance* - This can be seen as indirect support to one-to-one guidance, the driver of improved outcomes remains the one-to-one guidance, with groupwork increasing the effectiveness of the one-to-one sessions in a variety of ways: preparation, follow-up, and understand of guidance, as well as triage and timing, where individuals can have some influence over when the one-to-one session occurs. **Scope to do more.**

*Remote guidance* - This was very rare in NI prior to the pandemic start in March 2020. Telephone and webchat guidance took place with adults on some occasions prior to the pandemic, with advisers typically delivering a mixture of activities across schools and with some adults. During Covid remote guidance has become the primary delivery as an operational requirement. **NI post-primary schools are frustrated with the remote guidance offer. Vulnerable young people and adults want blended face-to-face and online careers support in their community.**

<sup>1</sup> We would like to formally express our thanks to Jane Ellis, CEO, Qdos Career Hubs, England with whom we have previously worked with on an international literature review to identify a typology and evidence-based for all-age careers work.

*Integrated career guidance provision* - **The right balance must be achieved between face-to-face activities online and/or offline and more blended careers support arrangements**<sup>2</sup> e.g., embedded in the curriculum, community project-based or experiential learning, gamification, virtual work experience, careers fairs, internships, job shadowing, etc.

*Employer-led skills and talent programmes/initiatives* - Employer engagement is a critical success factor in providing greater opportunities for young people and adults. **The expertise of employers and career guidance professionals coming together with partner organisations in local communities not only to deliver careers support, but also to help shape and influence skills and modern dimensions of career guidance.**

*Place-/space- focused initiatives* - **The concept of a physical and/or virtual Careers Centres and/or multi-agency Community Hubs can enable greater partnerships and access to all-age career guidance**, including sector specific experiential or project-based learning focused on themes and specific challenges. For example, Finland has adopted a highly inclusive youth, health, education, training and employment one-stop arrangement. Whereas, New Brunswick (Canada) has adopted virtual partnerships that are specific to certain industries and sectors.

*Technology-focused provision* - Technology, artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning are becoming even more ubiquitous and demographic changes will mean jobs emerge, evolve and disappear faster than ever before. **A new national world-class careers portal must factor in inspiration features throughout and significantly raise awareness of the all-age careers service on offer.**

---

2 Many countries are currently examining ways of delivering career guidance and employer encounters to students and outreach community partnerships.

*Country specific examples***Australia – national careers portal, place based innovative careers centres and career-related learning in primary schools**

My Future - A national careers portal aimed at teachers, students and parents - <https://myfuture.edu.au/>

Place based innovative careers centres - The Australian Centre for Career Education (ACCE), Jobs Victoria<sup>3</sup>. The ACCE is a not-for-profit state-wide careers service based in community for Jobs Victoria. This is a new approach where the government has connected the not-for-profit sector services across careers, employment, and education. It provides a coordinated central service that follows the career journey of the client through services at every stage of transition, part of a new careers eco-system that shares the common goal - <https://ceav.vic.edu.au/> ACCE provides services through the Hume City Careers Hub<sup>4</sup> and Dandenong City Centre Hubs<sup>5</sup> as part of Community Revitalisation Projects.

Jobs Victoria's \$10.8 million Community Revitalisation Program offers new pathways to employment for those facing entrenched barriers to meaningful and ongoing work. Community revitalisation involves the community as active participants in delivering solutions. The following community revitalisation initiatives are currently underway in the Hume City Careers Hub: Employment Readiness and Careers Counselling is an intensive person-centred approach using the Employment Readiness Scale, targeted career development strategies and professional careers guidance to assess levels of work readiness and employability. Passport to Work aims to increase the level of productivity and emotional resilience of local job seekers over a three-to-four-month period so that they are ready to move into meaningful, ongoing work. Stepping Stones to Economic Inclusion is a staged program of activities to develop small business and self-employment capabilities for recently arrived migrant and refugee women. The programme is tailored and aims to build on each participant's strengths and experiences. Participants are offered a suite of culturally tailored workshops, mentoring and holistic support to develop business capability and improve financial security and social connectedness. The project is expected to attract more than \$1 billion in private sector investment, create 5,000 jobs, and enhance Dandenong's appeal as a place to live, work and visit. The service provided has formed the basis of the new Jobs Victoria Careers Service.

A career education programme managed by BECOME illustrates ways in which students (aged 10 to 13) can be helped to think about their potential futures in work. The programme aims to create a culture of curiosity among young people, helping them to broaden as well as raise aspirations, encouraging and enabling detailed investigation of potential careers. The programme shows how young people can be encouraged to reflect seriously about their potential futures while they still have years of education ahead. See: <https://www.oecd.org/education/career-readiness/Example%20of%20Practice%20-%20Australia,%20BECOME.pdf>.

3 <https://jobs.vic.gov.au/>

4 <https://www.hume.vic.gov.au/Businesses/Local-Jobs-for-Local-People>

5 <https://www.development.vic.gov.au/projects/revitalising-central-dandenong?page=overview>

## Belgium and Switzerland

Cités des Métiers – e.g. Brussels and Geneva The “Cités des Métiers” fall within a framework of lifelong career guidance. This Brussels centre opened in March 2018 - <https://www.citedesmetiers.brussels/fr/en-recherche-d-emploi/> The centre was established through a partnership of Actiris (Unemployment Office), Bruxelles Formation (The French-speaking public service for vocational training for the people of Brussels), VDAB (online – see Autumn 2021 Career Guidance Campaign - <https://extranet.vdab.be/nieuws/2021-najaarscampagne-loopbaanbegeleiding>) and Leerwinkel (A guidance centre for learning - young people and adults can find free information and coaching when choosing a course, training or education. Individuals can go to a Leerwinkel for diploma-oriented courses as well as courses that strengthen their knowledge and skills, teach something new or help to manage change).

Charleroi, the fifth-largest city in Belgium, has given the green light to the construction of its first Cité des Métiers (literally meaning City of Crafts). The municipality announced on their website late 2020 they have granted a planning permit for the realisation of what should become the first hub of excellence in terms of scientific guidance, education, training and discovery in Wallonia. An investment of 43, 585 000 euros will result in the opening of 1 school for vocational training in industry and construction, 1 lifelong guidance centre, 2 advanced technology centres, 1 science and innovation discovery centre, 1 reception area for job seekers, 1 FOREM training centre, 1 exhibition for Trades of the Future, 1 activities centre allowing for the discovery of the professions of the future and 1 FABLAB. The Cité des Métiers building in Charleroi should open its doors in 2024 with a specific focus on researching the sciences and professions of the future. In addition, two other “Cité des Métiers” infrastructure projects are being developed in Wallonia, one in Namur and another in Liège - <https://www.themayor.eu/en/a/view/charleroiwill-soon-have-its-own-cit-des-m-tiers-5750?trans=en-US>

Cité des Métiers established in Geneva since 2008, the Cité des Métiers du Grand Genève is a free and anonymous consultancy and resource centre at the service of all audiences looking for guidance and information on trades and professional life - <https://www.citedesmetiers.ch/actualites/> <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1111&langId=en&intPagelId=4557>

### Canada - Future New Brunswick

New Brunswick's Centres of Excellence for Education: Enhancing Equitable Career Awareness through Virtual and Experiential Learning. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has launched the Centres of Excellence initiative to help combat the equitable career awareness challenge. Focusing on Centres for Energy, Health, Entrepreneurship, and the Digital Economy. This initiative seeks to ensure that youth across the province are connected to virtual and experiential learning opportunities that foster career-awareness and promote readiness for post-secondary and career opportunities - <https://futurenewbrunswick.ca/eecd/> This partnership assists students in understanding the employment opportunities available in the province, and the need for pathways to enable smooth transitions into them. The Centres amplify labour market needs, helping students gain a better understanding of, and higher quality pathways into, strategically important areas of long-term anticipated job demand. The Centres of Excellence are currently working in partnership with New Brunswick University on a range of impact assessment and outcome measures.

### Denmark

E-Guidance - a national all-age careers portal including telephone helpline - <https://www.ug.dk/6til10klasse>

### England – Career Hubs

A new wave of Careers Hub expansion has been announced in England (2021) by the Department for Education and The Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC), extending coverage in local communities across England. Working through a partnership approach with schools, colleges, employers, local enterprise partnerships and other local organisations, Careers Hubs have accelerated levels of support and improvement in young people's career development. More than 2,200 schools in communities across country will now be in a Careers Hub – nearly half of all state sector schools and colleges. In eleven regions, all schools and colleges will now be covered by a Careers Hub. Two thirds of schools and colleges in Hubs run regular encounters with employers, compared with just over a third (36%) in schools and colleges outside the network. Nearly three in five schools and colleges in Hubs run work experience compared to around a third (35%) outside the network. <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/our-network-careers-hubs/> See also: London sector specific Careers Hubs. In contrast, the Manor Property Group is building and financing all-age Career Hubs in areas of social deprivation in England - <https://qdos-career-hub.com/>

### Finland - work experience for school students and multi-agency one stop centres

In Finland, there are strong local/regional structures that guide the development of career guidance in localities. Each region has a lifelong guidance forum which oversee and inform guidance provision within the region. Career education is a compulsory element in the curriculum, comprising 76 hours of scheduled activities in students' timetables during classes 7-9. In addition, there is an entitlement for individual guidance and group counselling, and practical work-experience periods (TET) in companies. During the TET period, students are practicing those skills needed in the workplace in a real working environment. TET is implemented in cooperation with the other school subjects utilizing their content and working methods. TET-tori - <https://peda.net/tet>. The School-to-Work Group Method was introduced to Finnish vocational upper secondary schools. programme was an adaptation of the US Michigan Prevention Research Center JOBS Search Program which had been demonstrated, through a series of randomised control trials to reduce worklessness and enhance psychological well-being among unemployed adults (Vuori, 2015)<sup>6</sup>. In the Finnish context, the programme was designed to prepare young people to first find and then stay in attractive employment. Designed as a twenty-hour programme delivered over five days of four-hour sessions in the final year of secondary education, the course is jointly taught by a vocational school teacher and a representative of the local public employment service (PES).

Ohjaamo One-Stop Guidance Centres, Finland Ohjaamo one-stop guidance centres provide low-threshold, multi-agency services to young adults under the age of 30. The centres provide information, advice, guidance and various services. They serve as a platform for multi-agency collaboration between public, private and the third sector agencies in offering tools for employment, training, life management and wellbeing. The roles and administration of the organisations involved are organised locally. The One-Stop Guidance Centre model requires close collaboration between national, regional and local agencies as well as private and third-sector operators. Prime Minister's Office, 27 March 2020 The One-Stop Guidance Centres are easily accessible, multi-sector service points for the under-30s, that fulfil the objectives and activities of the EU Youth Guarantee. Based on the cost-benefit calculations made in the study, the One-Stop Guidance Centres cover their costs while also producing government savings. <https://www.doria.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/162148/OneStopGuidance.pdf?sequence=5>

The Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment endorsed in March 2021 a joint National Lifelong Guidance Strategy 2020-23. The strategy is linked to the priorities of the current government programme priorities in education, youth, employment and social policies. The strategy includes recommendations for actions both over the current government term and strategic long-term objectives for lifelong guidance practice and policy development - <https://lnkd.in/dEuMTkZW>

6 Vuori, J. (2015). Evidence based Job Search Interventions for Unemployed Workers and Youth, APA



### Germany - Job Information Centres (Berufsinformationszentren)

Good evidence on the importance of proximity and access to career guidance comes from Germany. A key policy drive sought to increase the availability of dedicated Job Information Centres (Berufsinformationszentren) ultimately providing services in just over 40% of districts. Job Information Centres are public establishments serving both young people and adults free of charge, with circa 69% being young people, who typically attend for a full day in upper secondary school supported by their teachers. In most cases, students will already know the careers counsellor at the centre, since she or he normally visits the class in school prior to the trip. Trips are typically mandatory where the service is available locally. After the first school-supported trip, it is common for students to attend again on their own or with friends. Centres also serve as venues for job choice-related events, such as seminars and talks by educators, or trade organisations, training, and job fairs. Over 50% of visitors also take away reading and information material to review at home. The centres are separate from, but often nearby or collocated with the job centres dedicated to the adult unemployed which support job search and pay out unemployment benefits (Bundesagentur für Arbeit or Arbeitsamt). The impact assessment identifies that the local availability of these centres causes a large and significant increase in the likelihood of experiencing upward educational mobility, and improves chances of acquiring the highest general school degree. For instance, the likelihood of experiencing upward educational mobility and gaining the highest general school degree increases by around 7-12 percentage points. The highest benefits on subsequently completing technical college or university were among those from less privileged backgrounds or on less academic tracks. In terms of labour market outcomes, the estimates indicate that visiting a centre also improves job matching, but without any identifiable average impact on future earnings. Nonetheless, there are identifiable benefits in employment rate. Individuals who went to school in an administrative district with a Job Information Centre spend 1-2 months less time searching for their first job, to be in full-time employment for 2.8 months longer in their first five years of work, and to be less likely to involuntarily lose their job at the beginning of their labour market career. Young people who visit a centre are also 7-8 percentage points more likely to stay living in the same district when they are adults, suggesting the centre helps them understand locally available opportunities and the benefits of remaining local.

### Greece

Skills development workshops at secondary schools is an initiative of the Ministry of Education. Many experts from universities and other educational or business settings are being invited to help train secondary school teachers to be able to organize and carry out these workshops in their schools. Another important initiative is the Support Centers of Social Economy, that are developed and working in the last 2 years in Greece. They support/guide adults, especially from disadvantaged groups, who want to create social enterprises.



### **Hungary - Regional Vocational Training Centres**

Regional Vocational Training Centres support career guidance work with young people and adults. The Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (HCCI) and the county chambers operates the network of vocational careers advisers at a national level and is actively involved in the Euro-World Skills movement. In Hungary most of the continuous training is provided by different ESF-financed projects.

### **Ireland**

A national all-age careers portal offers greater access to online tools and experienced guidance practitioners, investment in greater labour market intelligence and a new centralised, user-friendly careers portal. Visit: <https://assets.gov.ie/24951/dffde726604b451aa6cc50239a375299.pdf>

Ireland has a well established Whole School Guidance Framework - <https://www.ncge.ie/ncge/launch-ncge-whole-school-guidance-framework>

### **Malta**

Last year, the Ministry of Education published Career Learning and Development – A Framework for Schools. The document sets out whole school approaches, covering primary and secondary education, facilitating learners’ personal, social and career development clustered around three areas of learning and competency development: personal exploration and management; learning exploration and management; and, career exploration and management. The document is available at: <https://www.euroguidance.eu/career-learning-and-development-a-framework-for-schools>.

### **New Zealand - Engaging with potential employers and industry partners**

In New Zealand, many schools operate Speed Meets where students aged 16-18 meet with employers in a carousel format, discussing opportunities for work placements, apprenticeships, and ultimate employment. If student and employer are happy to follow up, contact details are exchanged. Speed Meet is designed to help students find work placements, apprenticeships and full-time employment in the skilled trades. A Speed Meet event typically lasts one hour, over which a student can expect to meet ten different employers. At the end, students note whether or not they would like to meet with each employer again, and the employers do the same for the students. If there is a match, the event organizer shares with the employer the student's contact details to arrange a follow-up meeting. Visit: <https://skills.org.nz/blog/speedmeets-2021/>

Manurewa High School in Auckland has worked with industry partners to create a successful occupationally-focused short programme. Undertaken by final year students, the programme combines three days of normal classroom study with two days of paid work experience. In addition, students volunteer in the community, have opportunity to gain professional licences and complete a youth employability certificate. The programme gives students opportunity to gain first-hand experience of work in an industry of interest in order to smooth transitions out of school and into attractive work. See: <https://www.oecd.org/education/career-readiness/new-zealand-manurewa-high.pdf>

### **Scotland - Skills Development Scotland (SDS)**

<https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/what-we-do/scotlands-careers-services/> including My World of Work - <https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/>

My Kids Career - <https://www.mykidscareer.com/>

16+ Data Hub - <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/what-we-do/scotlands-careers-services/16plus-data-hub/>

Local Careers Centres - <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/what-we-do/scotlands-careers-services/our-centres/>

SDS has established a Professional development Academy to support capacity building across agencies up to PhD level. A recent review to inform the national Careers Strategy recommendations including dedicated curriculum time for experiential work-related learning; the provision of meaningful opportunities for students to experience work and understand what fair work is; the enhancement of digital tools; and creating a coalition to oversee the implementation of the review's conclusions including young people, employers, practitioners, and other stakeholders. For more information: <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/career-review/>

## Singapore

Singapore provides universal access to career development provided through seven public careers centres, online provision, and provision in the education system. Career development is viewed as a key component of the country's human capital strategy which is in turn at the heart of its economic strategy.

My Skills Future - <https://www.myskillsfuture.gov.sg/content/portal/en/index.html>

My Careers Future - <https://www.mycareersfuture.gov.sg/>

Workforce Singapore (2020) - <https://www.ssg-wsg.gov.sg/>

Career Development Framework (CDF) Credential - <https://www.wsg.gov.sg/programmes and initiatives/cdf credential.html>

CAREERS CONNECT ON-THE-GO - <https://www.wsg.gov.sg/career-services/careers-connect-on-the-go.html>

Serving as a mobile extension of WSG's Careers Connect Centres, CCOTG brings career coaching services closer to citizens. They can receive 1-to-1 career coaching, attend walk-in interviews, gain useful job search tips from on-site workshop, and receive referrals from curated community job listings. A mobile app is also available for digitally savvy clients with smartphones to apply for jobs directly on-the-go.

In Singapore, government is taking action to extend the working lives of older workers through its re-employment policy and job re-design grants of up to 80% of the project costs or 20,000 Singaporean dollars, whichever is the lower, with an employer able to make multiple submissions. The National Trade Union Congress in Singapore is also taking steps to widen the support to would-be returners including professionals, managers, executives, and technicians. Employers also receive a retention bonus if the worker is retained for at least three months after a trial period of six months comes to an end.

## Sweden

A major government social partner collaboration programme began in 2019. This year, a new working group on lifelong guidance was established as a subset of the Skills Supply in Lifelong Guidance work strand. The group has jointly agreed to initially focus on adults' need for guidance because there were several weaknesses in guidance support systems identified for this specific target group. The group meets monthly and involves PES, education and community partners. It will make national recommendations and develop practical navigation tools for practitioners' work with adults. Big investments are made into online career management services in Sweden - these are developed in cooperation between the Education and Labour market sectors.

## Wales

Working Wales (WW) – a rebranded all-age Careers Service aimed specifically at supporting vulnerable young people and adults, particularly those whose jobs are ‘at risk’ - <https://workingwales.gov.wales/> WW has developed innovative redundancy “heat maps”, which is an interactive map of Wales populated by the redundancy notifications that the service receives daily. The maps are searchable by geography and density (impact). They enable staff to see up-to-date information on current and upcoming redundancies in their area, and managers to easily generate Local Authority-level information for sharing with partner agencies. At an all-Wales level, this provides the Welsh Government with essential data on the effectiveness of support programmes, and where additional support may be needed.

See also:

- Careers Wales - <https://careerswales.gov.wales/>
- CareerCraft on Minecraft– gamification of careers education supporting children’s learning in primary schools - <https://careerswales.gov.wales/plan-your-career/careers-wales-education-resources/careerscraft-on-minecraft>
- Careers Wales TV – embedded in all post-primary schools - <https://tv.careerswales.gov.wales/>

## The Netherlands – Service Centres on Education and Work (UWV)

The Service Centres on Education and Work (known in the Netherlands as “Leerwerkloketten”) are regional alliances between schools, institutions for vocational training, business owners, trade unions, and government agencies (municipalities and the PES). Together, they develop activities, information packs, products and services that improve the coordination between educational/training programmes and the labour market. They also provide independent and free training and career guidance in 35 labour market regions. Every region has its own configuration of products and services and works partly as a network organisation. Staff working in these service centres are career professionals from different educational backgrounds. Central funding by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (SZW), via UWV, and funding at the local level by municipalities and VET-Centres.

See also: The OECD Career Ready programme and toolkit for schools and colleges - See also: The OECD Career Ready programme and resources - [https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/indicators-of-teenage-career-readiness\\_cec854f8-en](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/indicators-of-teenage-career-readiness_cec854f8-en)

**Contact:** Dr Deirdre Hughes OBE  
 Telephone - 0044(0) 7533 545057  
 Email: [deirdre.hughes3@btinternet.com](mailto:deirdre.hughes3@btinternet.com)  
 Visit: <http://deidrehughes.org/>