



QUALITY AWARDS FOR CEIAG IN ENGLAND: A BRIEF HISTORY

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1. Introduction

1.1 This paper provides a brief record of the development of Quality Awards for careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) in England.

1.2 Quality Awards for CEIAG have been available in England since 1992. They play an important role in setting standards, promoting quality and supporting work in schools, colleges and other learning providers to review, evaluate and improve CEIAG policy and practice. The most recent (March 2015) version of the Government's Statutory Guidance¹ to schools on their careers guidance statutory duty recommends that all schools should work towards achieving a Quality Award.

1.3 The Quality Awards that exist today were developed originally at a local level, by the local providers of career guidance services, working in partnership with schools and colleges in their area, to develop a set of quality standards that the learning providers could use for self-review and evaluation. These developments took place primarily during the period when the Government had contracted out the statutory careers service for young people (during 1993-2000). The careers service contracts were competitively tendered against a robust national specification; and the establishment of most of the CEIAG Quality Awards was supported through ring-fenced funding allocated by the Government to careers service contractors for the purpose of promoting quality enhancements to careers education and guidance programmes in schools.

¹ Department for Education (2015). *Careers guidance and inspiration in schools. Statutory guidance for governing bodies, school leaders and school staff*. London: DfE

1.4 Most, but not all, of the Awards that were developed at this time also offered the option of external assessment leading to accreditation. The Awards, therefore, provided a framework for seeking to ensure that all young people in the local area served by the careers service contractor providing the statutory careers service had access to a high quality provision of CEIAG in their school or college. Initially the Awards were each individual to their local area, but all broadly similar in content. Over time several of the Awards expanded to cover more than one careers service contract area.

1.5 The Learning & Skills Act 2000 led to significant changes in the provision of career guidance for young people. The privatised careers services were replaced by the Connexions Service, and the ring-fenced funding to support developments to promote quality enhancements to CEG programmes in schools was eventually stopped. During the period from 2000-2010 there was a decline in professional support for CEG through Connexions, which had a detrimental effect upon the viability, as much as the impact, of CEIAG Quality Awards.

1.6 Today the context is very different again. Changes in national policy, introduced by the Education Act 2011, have led to the dismantling of a coherent national career guidance service delivered locally. Instead schools and colleges are responsible (through a new statutory duty) for “*securing access to independent careers guidance*” for their students, and are able to purchase such services from any provider. The result is that only in a minority of areas of England is there what could be considered to be a local provider of career guidance, and even in those areas not all the schools and colleges necessarily opt to buy in services from that provider. A number of specialist providers of careers guidance trade across regions and some do so nationally.

1.7 The CEIAG Quality Awards are still offered by providers of career guidance services: some remain specific to their own geographic area; others are available to learning providers across regions and the whole country.

1.8 The other major change is that a system of national validation, the Quality in Careers Standard (QiCS), has been introduced in recent years. The Awards are still individual but all bar one of the currently available Awards have now been validated as meeting the robust national validation criteria of the Quality in Careers Standard.

2. Origins and developments in England

2.1 The first Quality Award was introduced in 1992. A study² commissioned by the then Department for Education and Employment four years later found that about two-thirds of the 68 careers service contract areas were engaged in work on local quality standards. The study reported that, although there was a great variation in the format and approach of the different local standards, their content was very similar and, although most areas were maintaining local ownership, they were taking account of what was happening in other areas.

² Donoghue, J. (1996). *Local Quality Standards for Careers Education and Guidance*. Sheffield: DfEE

2.2 A later, independent study³ identified 25 different Quality Awards in existence in England. By then career guidance services were being provided by a national network of local Connexions partnerships, as a result of the change in legislation in 2000, and the study found that Quality Awards were being offered in 41 of the 47 partnership areas. 23 of the 25 Quality Awards were specific to the particular Connexions partnership, or the careers service company providing career guidance under contract to the Connexions partnership, but two were available more widely. At the time, *Career Mark* was a regional award, used across the East Midlands region, and *Investor in Careers*, which had been developed originally by Cornwall & Devon Careers, was being used nationally across a third of Connexions partnerships, under licence from Connexions Cornwall and Devon. A conference to disseminate the findings of the survey to the providers of the 25 Quality Awards considered the question of possibly moving towards a single, national award and the overwhelming view was that the Awards should remain individual but that there should be some form of national 'kite-marking'.

2.3 The same question was considered five years later, by the Careers Profession Task Force set up by the Labour administration in response to widespread recognition that access for young people to high quality professional CEG had diminished during the Connexions era and actions were required to redress this error. The Task Force's report⁴ found that by 2010 the number of CEIAG Quality Awards had fallen to 18 and it recommended "*that an overarching national kite-mark should be established to validate the different CEIAG Quality Awards for schools, colleges and work-based learning providers*" (p. 30). This recommendation was accepted by the incoming Coalition Government but no funding or other assistance was initially offered to implement the Task Force's recommendation.

2.4 Therefore the trade association, Careers England, took the initiative to lead the work to implement this particular recommendation and, following extensive consultation with the providers of the Awards, the work resulted in the launch, in early 2012, of the Quality in Careers Standard. The then Minister of State at the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills, John Hayes MP, did (in due course) provide a small but significant grant to enable Careers England to finalise the work on establishing the Quality in Careers Consortium and all associated materials to launch the Quality in Careers Standard.

2.4 The Quality in Careers Standard is owned by the Quality in Careers Consortium (an unincorporated association) which has established an independent Consortium Board to oversee the Standard. The Consortium and the Consortium Board comprise representatives of professional bodies from both the careers sector and schools, colleges and other learning providers.

2.5 In addition to ensuring that Quality Awards meet rigorous national criteria, in a short period of time QiCS has had a major impact on raising the profile and uptake of the Quality Awards.

³ Andrews, D. (2005). *Quality Awards for CEG in England. A Survey of Current Availability and Uptake*. Cambridge: NICEC

⁴ Department of Education (2010). *Towards a strong career profession*. London: DfE

2.6 At the time of writing this paper there are 12 Quality Awards for CEIAG in England: 11 are provided by careers companies or local authorities and one is led by a local enterprise partnership (LEP). All the providers offer schools and colleges consultancy support for working towards the Award and external assessment for accreditation. Only five of the Awards remain currently specific to their locality, while the other seven are available more widely. Eleven of the Awards have been nationally validated – the one remaining Award is preparing for potential national validation in the summer of 2016. The full list of currently available Awards can be found in the appendix to this paper.

3. Developments in other parts of the UK

3.1 Careers services in Wales developed their own local Quality Awards following an approach similar to that which was taken in England. By the turn of the century there were four Awards, covering the then seven Careers Wales careers companies. These were later replaced by a single, national all-Wales Quality Award, developed from the four local Awards, launched by Careers Wales in 2002 and given the title *The Careers Wales Mark*. The seven former Careers Wales companies have since been merged into a single national service.

3.2 In Scotland there are no Quality Awards for CEIAG but the Scottish Government has recently launched a Career Education Standard that sets out an entitlement and recommended learning outcomes for young people and clear expectations of schools, colleges and their partners.

3.3 Whilst no locally-developed Quality Awards for CEIAG have been established in Northern Ireland, one of the Quality Award providers in England is already working with schools in the province and has begun to accredit a small number of schools there. Indications are that other Award providers in England will also look towards offering their Award in Northern Ireland.

3.4 It is interesting to note that two of the Quality Award providers from England have also begun working with schools on the Isle of Man and in the Channel Islands.

4. Progress and success

4.1 A great deal has been achieved over the past two decades since the first local Quality Awards were established. Everything that has been achieved, however, is through the voluntary choices of providers to establish Quality Awards and to retain or develop them; and schools, colleges and work-based learning providers also freely choose to secure accreditation for their provision through one of these Awards.

4.2 We now have 12 Quality Awards of which 11 have achieved national validation and the remaining one is working towards a submission for QiCS accreditation.

4.3 Just over 1,100 schools, colleges and other learning providers have achieved accreditation or are working towards achieving a Quality Award⁵ and we have clear evidence that schools that have gained Awards not only have good quality CEIAG but also have improved examination results and reduced levels of absences⁶. However, we also recognise the need to continue to promote and support good quality CEIAG for young people.

4.4 The unique feature of these dedicated CEIAG Quality Awards is also that they are externally assessed by occupationally competent CEIAG specialists; the 12 Award providers currently have a combined team of over 80 such assessors.

4.5 The current education policy framework in England, based on the principles of school autonomy and the free market, and with limited regulation, has resulted in provision that is patchy and of inconsistent quality across England. It is more important than ever that we have an agreed standard that all schools and colleges should work to, and it is encouraging therefore that the Government is now recommending that all schools should work towards a dedicated CEIAG Quality Award, nationally-validated by QiCS.

5. Links to the Gatsby benchmarks of good practice

5.1 A recent study funded by the Gatsby Charitable Foundation examined international evidence and identified eight benchmarks of good practice in relation to career guidance in schools⁷. These benchmarks are gaining wide recognition in England as a framework of good practice and it could be argued that the Quality Awards represent an external assessment of the good practice described by the benchmarks.

5.2 The national validation criteria for the Quality in Careers Standard have recently been mapped against the benchmarks. Whilst schools are likely soon to be able to review their provision of CEIAG against the benchmarks using a self-assessment tool being developed under the auspices of the Government's Careers & Enterprise Company, the proposed arrangements do not extend to external assessment by qualified assessors. This is where the Quality Awards, nationally-validated by the Quality in Careers Standard, uniquely offer added value to the quality assurance process.

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⁵ Quality in Careers Standard Consortium Board survey (January 2016)

⁶ Hooley, T., Matheson, J. and Watts, A. G. (2014). *Advancing Ambitions: The role of career guidance in supporting social mobility* Derby: International Centre for Guidance Studies

⁷ Gatsby (2014). *Good Career Guidance*. London: The Gatsby Charitable Foundation

Appendix: The 12 Quality Awards for CEIAG in England (as of April 2016)

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1. *The Career Connect Quality Award for Excellence in Careers Education, Information, Advice & Guidance* (Greater Merseyside):
kath.wyke@careerconnect.org.uk
www.careerconnect.org.uk

 2. *Career Mark (Futures Advice, Skills & Employment)*: available throughout England
gary.longden@futuresnn.co.uk
www.careermark.co.uk

 3. *The C & K Careers Quality Standard*: Calderdale and Kirklees and other areas:
jill.ellis@ckcareers.org.uk
www.ckcareers.co.uk

 4. *Inspiring IAG (CEIAG Quality Award)* available across Greater Manchester, West Cheshire, Chester, Cumbria Lancashire and other areas:
jane.wilkinson@careers-solutions.co.uk
www.inspiringiag.co.uk

 5. *Investing in Quality (The Cambridgeshire Information, Advice & Guidance Award)*: janet.harris@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

 6. *Investor in Careers* (CSW Group) nationally available in many parts of England:
debra.scarratt@cswgroup.co.uk
www.investorincareers.org.uk

 7. *The Humber LEP Careers, Education, Information, Advice and Guidance Gold Standard*: Principally covering the 4 Local Authority areas of the Humber sub-region.
First time enquiries are available by visiting this dedicated website link.
www.humberlep.org/skills/gold-standard/gold-standard-registration

(Further enquiries can also be made to p.harrison@humberlep.org)

 8. *The Quality Award in Careers Education, Information, Advice & Guidance (Prospects)*: nationally in many areas of England: qualityaward@prospects.co.uk
sue.thacker@prospects.co.uk

 9. *The Recognition of Quality Award (Essex)*: paula.hornett@essex.gov.uk
tracy.eve@essex.gov.uk

 10. *The Sheffield City Region Careers Award*:
dawn.hodgkinson@sheffieldfutures.org.uk or SCR-Careers-Award@sheffieldfutures.org.uk

11. *CEIAG+ (Staffordshire: ENTRUST):*
maxine.connelly@entrust-ed.co.uk lesley.baird@entrust-ed.co.uk

12. *The Stoke on Trent CEIAG Quality Award:*
kelly.meir@stoke.gov.uk david.oconnell@stoke.gov.uk
paul.chambers@stoke.gov.uk
