

Using and Sharing Career Related Labour Market Information Research Report



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Executive Summary

Introduction

This research report has been written by CFE for the UK Commission for Employment and Skills. It considers the findings from case study research conducted with organisations across Great Britain that examined the ways in which career-related labour market information and intelligence (LMI) is being used and shared. It builds on earlier work which explored the issues and challenges of using and sharing career-related LMI (referred to throughout as Stage One).

Project aim

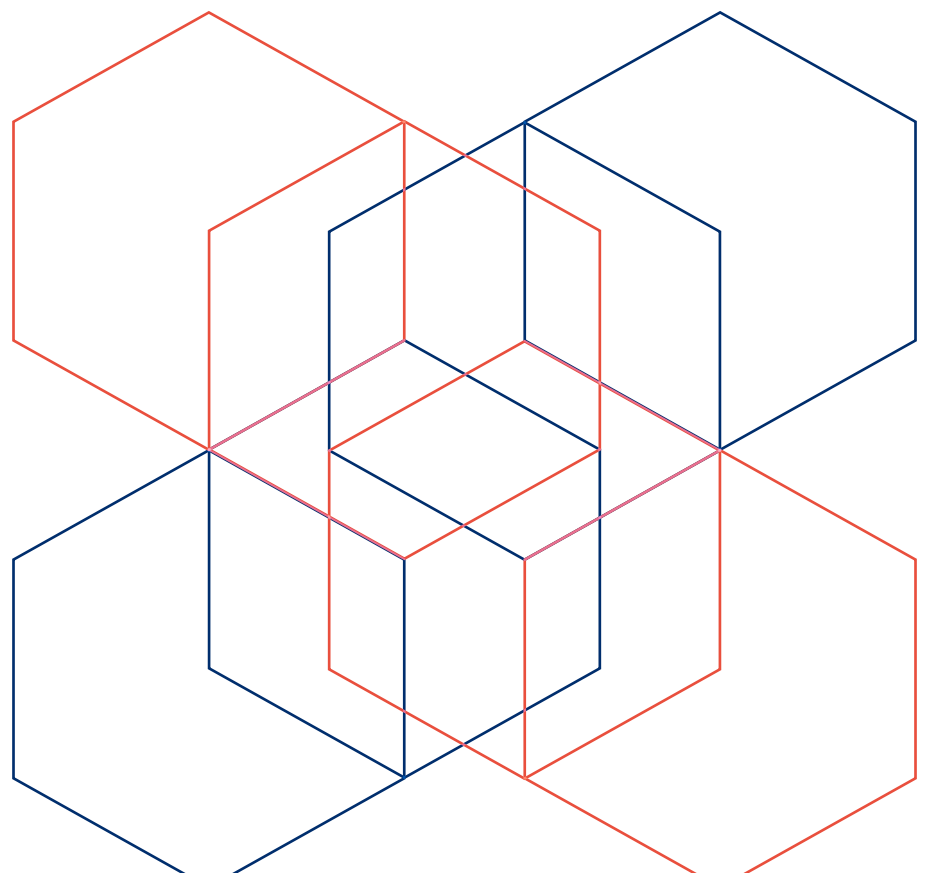
The aim of the Stage Two research was to capture good and interesting practice in using and sharing LMI from organisations that are successfully integrating LMI with a view to enhancing service delivery. The purpose of this report and the accompanying guide is to give managers and advisers¹ the tools to consider how the approaches outlined could help them improve their own delivery of career guidance, and related information and advice services, to young people and adults.

Methodology

The Stage Two research was undertaken between January and March 2012. It involved a review of the evidence gathered during Stage One and the launch of a 'Call for Evidence' via the UK Commission's website. The 'Call for Evidence' invited key stakeholders to contribute their views and experiences.

Drawing on the 'Call for Evidence', CFE identified 12 organisations across Great Britain that were seeking to enhance their service delivery by improving the ways LMI is used and shared. In-depth fieldvisits were conducted in order to consult with staff involved in the planning, management and delivery of IAG services. The findings from the fieldvisits formed the basis of 12 case studies (see Appendix One). The emerging findings from the case study research were shared at two consultation events held in London and Manchester in March. The final phase of the project involved collating this report and [a practical guide to help managers consider 'what works.'](#)

¹ The term 'adviser' is used throughout this report to refer to staff involved in the delivery of information, advice and/or guidance on learning and/or work. This encompasses Personal Advisers working within Jobcentre Plus, Information Officers and Careers Advisers.



Key findings and conclusions

► Career-related LMI helps career guidance practitioners and advisers understand the dynamic interplay between 'supply' and 'demand' in fast-changing labour markets. This intelligence is vital if individuals are to be effectively supported in their learning and career decisions and guided through the myriad of current and future options and opportunities in the world of work.

► A key message from the research is that a range of partners (including learning providers, Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and Sector Skills Councils (SSCs)) need to work together to explore how relevant data can be collected, collated, analysed and interpreted for use by practitioners and advisers as well as individuals.

► Organisations need to decide how they are going to manage and undertake this work. This includes: developing a clear vision and strategy; working together to develop common systems and approaches; and developing effective internal mechanisms, such as intranets, and materials and resources that are driven and informed by the needs of staff and customers. Dedicated resources must be ring-fenced for this work to be effective and sustainable in the longer term. The level of resourcing for some of the most effective approaches is relatively modest. The most effective approaches are driven by specialist staff employed to lead the work and through working closely with employers and other partners.

► LMI produced for both advisers and individuals has got to be 'fit for purpose'. The Stage One research highlighted that advisers particularly value resources based on local information and intelligence, that benefit from good design, and which are available in manageable elements (including 'bite-size' bits).

Effective practice in this area includes developing localised information on both a geographic and a sectoral basis. Good examples include the materials produced in Wales and Scotland in co-operation with SSCs, and the data collated in some Jobcentre Plus Districts on the operation of the labour market in local areas for internal use and sharing with partners.

This practice can be enhanced when practitioners/advisers are actively engaged in the development work (e.g. through undertaking employer visits and/or contributing to the production of the materials) and the information is captured and shared. A good example of where this is done effectively is the daily staff briefings held in jobcentres between employer engagement and adviser staff where 'soft' LMI about current developments is shared. In some instances, National Careers Service staff attend these meetings and are able to both input and gain information/intelligence about local developments.

► Career guidance practitioners and advisers work in a wide variety of contexts. In some, their tasks are tightly defined and may be focused on helping individuals enter available - primarily local - work opportunities. In others, their job role and brief can be much wider, as may the options and opportunities that their clients are willing and able to access.

The research highlights that it is crucial for practitioners and advisers to have a clear understanding of the LMI they need to perform effectively in their role, including what is necessary to help their clients/customers progress. This should include information on immediate opportunities as well as historic data and future trends. By having information on each of these, advisers can develop an informed three-dimensional view - '3D LMI'.

► The role of initial training and continuous professional development (CPD) cannot be underestimated in this context. To be effective, this needs to move beyond developing advisers' awareness and understanding of the sources of LMI and provide them with the skills to analyse, interpret and use it with different client groups. Customers require advisers to have real expertise in this area so that they can be supported to weigh-up options and opportunities and make informed choices.

Transferability of Good Practice

The issue of what constitutes 'good practice', the reasons why particular practice is effective in a specific context, and what pre-conditions are necessary for practice to be effectively transferred, are complex and it cannot be assumed that what works in one area will necessarily work well elsewhere. Each of the case studies that provide the evidence base for this report, therefore, contains relevant contextual information.

It is clear that some organisations have chosen to make using and sharing career-related LMI a priority and have, as a consequence, allocated dedicated resources, including staff. Examples here include Durham and Tees Valley Jobcentre Plus, CfBT North East and Skills Development Scotland. Others have given particular priority to the development of web-based tools and resources and have drawn on the latest approaches to individualising searches by mashing data from a number of sources. The approach adopted by Careers Wales with support from the Welsh Government is particularly noteworthy and drew favourable comments from others in the sector who had a chance to see it in operation at the consultation event in London.

The Stage One research highlighted that a considerable amount of infrastructure has been lost as the result of budgetary restraints and cuts; for example, the networks of skills observatories previously supported by Regional Development Agencies (RDAs). Furthermore, there has been a significant loss of expertise as a result of the changes made to the Connexions service in general and, in particular, the loss of specialist information officer and related posts in both England and Wales. Indeed, it is by no means certain that some of the work highlighted in Appendix One will continue to receive current levels of resource. Similarly, it cannot be assumed that new funding will be available to support developments in the future. As a consequence, it is vital that work which has been developed with public funding, and that has been shown to be effective, is disseminated and adapted for use in other nations, regions and/or organisations. In addition, existing resources need to be innovatively managed and work linked to new developments such as the Transforming Labour Market Services work being rolled out by the Department for Work and Pensions. The development of new and existing resources may require new business models and approaches to be devised, which could include subscription-based services and increased pooling of resources through partnership arrangements.

Suggested Areas for Action

Stakeholders, including policy-makers, funding bodies and representative organisations

It is suggested that policy makers could help support and take the agenda forward in the following ways:

1. Develop strategies to support and sustain the development and use of career-related LMI and, through the UK-wide policy makers' group, consider ways that good practice could continue to be shared.²
2. Encourage key players, including those leading economic and skills policy in localities, to focus on the issue of how best to utilise career-related LMI, including ensuring that this information is available to those delivering advice and guidance locally as well as to those delivering national services (e.g. telephone helplines).
3. Build on the investment that has been made in different parts of Great Britain in developing effective approaches to using and sharing career-related LMI.
4. Continue to champion the professionalisation of advisers and career guidance practitioners, including the importance of gaining appropriate accreditation in using and sharing career-related LMI and in developing appropriate levels of competence and capability in delivering guidance.
5. Monitor and evaluate the on-going impact of work in this area and use the results to inform both policy and professional practice.

² This is already being undertaken in Wales by the Welsh Government LMI Project which has ministerial approval.

Career Guidance Providers

It is suggested that in light of this research, career-guidance providers:

1. Review, with staff, their policy and strategy, in relation to using and sharing career-related LMI.
2. Identify ways that working in partnership with others could help develop both the amount of available career-related LMI and the way it is used and shared.
3. Review systems and processes used to share career-related LMI and develop mechanisms and resources to ensure advisers have access to relevant, up-to-date information and intelligence for use in their practice. Recognise that clients' needs differ from the needs of professionals and ensure that LMI targeted at different client groups is tailored appropriately, presented in engaging ways and accessible from a number of platforms, including the internet.
4. Support managers to develop and maintain appropriate skills and levels of expertise amongst their advisers by undertaking a training needs analysis (TNA) with staff and subsequently enabling them to undertake relevant training, gain appropriate levels of accreditation, and develop their practice through continuous professional development (CPD).
5. Review and monitor the effectiveness of the work undertaken (including through the implementation of robust quality assurance procedures) and measure the ongoing impact of the work to build the business case for future investment.

Advisers

It is suggested that providers support advisers to:

1. Recognise the centrality of LMI to their work and the need to develop appropriate skills.
2. Consider 'What do my customers need to know?' and 'What do I need to know in order to support them to make informed choices in a fast changing labour market?'
3. Review their professional practice and the ways in which they are using and sharing LMI with different customer groups.
4. In line with the Career Progression Framework proposed by the Careers Profession Alliance (CPA)³ engage in training and seek accreditation for the skills and competences they have gained where appropriate; develop their practice through CPD.
5. Capture feedback to measure the extent to which improved LMI is enhancing service delivery and impacting on the outcomes for customers and employers.
6. Contribute to the production and dissemination of information and intelligence.

³ See Careers Profession Alliance (2012) Blueprint for Register of Career Development Professionals and Career Progression Framework: [http://www.icg-uk.org/hres/CPA%20Blueprint%20Final%20\(V3\).pdf](http://www.icg-uk.org/hres/CPA%20Blueprint%20Final%20(V3).pdf) (accessed 13/07/12)

1. Introduction

This research report has been written by CFE for the UK Commission for Employment and Skills. It considers case study evidence of good practice in relation to the use and sharing of career-related labour market information and/or intelligence (LMI).

Project Background

The UK Commission has long recognised the critical importance of improving careers information, advice and guidance (CIAG) for both young people and adults. The overall purpose of its work in this area has been to encourage and inform the development of systems and processes to help people into sustainable employment and to progress in work. It is set in the context of the Commission's interest in developing the wider employment and skills system,⁴ including how effectively it is using and sharing LMI. The Commission's report, 'Ambition 2020'⁵ made a number of recommendations to the UK Governments and key partners. These included that they should: 'transform the quality and availability of information, advice and guidance on career and learning opportunities through high-quality labour market information and the use of Web 2.0 technologies'.

The UK Commission's work on career guidance in 2010/2011 involved extensive research and consultations that led to the publication of a major report in August 2011, 'Helping Individuals Succeed: Transforming Career Guidance'.⁶ This report reflected on a number of key areas including: the role of information and communication technologies (ICT) in career guidance; the importance of helping individuals to develop career management skills; and the need to develop the 'career support market'. A key recommendation in the report was that the UK Governments should work with stakeholders to make LMI more 'accessible and available' and, within this, that more work was required to explore options to use and share local career-related LMI. Further research on behalf of the Commission in 2011/2 built on these findings and considered the complementary area of employer involvement in career guidance.⁷

4 UK Commission for Employment and Skills (2011) Review of Employment and Skills (www.ukces.org/publications/review-of-employment-and-skills)

5 UK Commission for Employment and Skills (2010) Ambition 2020: World Class Skills and Jobs for the UK. London: UK Commission for Employment and Skills

6 UK Commission for Employment and Skills (2011) Helping Individuals Succeed: Transforming Career Guidance. London: UK Commission for Employment and Skills

7 UK Commission for Employment and Skills (2012) Developing Business, Developing Careers' (<http://www.ukces.org.uk/publications/developing-business-developing-careers>)

Using and sharing LMI

Stage One

The research to identify current good practice in using and sharing LMI builds on an earlier study conducted by a UK Commission Research Fellow to explore the issues and challenges which advisers and managers face when using and sharing LMI. This study involved a rapid review of relevant literature, an e-survey of colleges and Work Programme providers, and interviews with advisers and stakeholders. When tackling the issues and challenges identified, the research highlighted the importance of:

- ▶ Raising advisers' awareness and understanding of career-related LMI and its central importance to effective career guidance.
- ▶ Developing working practices that enable an appropriate balance to be struck between operational delivery and professional development.
- ▶ Establishing clearer roles and responsibilities in relation to using and sharing LMI, including deploying appropriate resources.
- ▶ Undertaking appropriate needs analyses with advisers relative to the duties they are fulfilling and subsequently providing appropriate and on-going continuous professional development.
- ▶ Advisers being pro-active in undertaking formal and informal research into career-related LMI that is important for the development of their professional practice, including having opportunities for direct contact with employers about their requirements and wider labour market 'demand'.
- ▶ Systems being in place to gather 'supply' side data from customers about their needs and requirements to contribute to the development of a more balanced view of 'supply' and 'demand' in fast changing labour markets.
- ▶ Effective partnership working and networking being in place to share career-related LMI with agreed local and national partners.
- ▶ Maximising the use of ICT (including social networking) through developing both intranets and extranets to link partners, to enable the collectivisation of knowledge and the creation of multi-sourced 'career intelligence'.
- ▶ Collating and producing accessible and useful career-related LMI products for different customer groups.
- ▶ Evaluating the impact of using and sharing career-related LMI more effectively, including: helping to improve the operation of labour markets, identifying the key barriers to be overcome and the ways this could be achieved, and further evidencing the impact of related career information, advice and guidance work.

A summary report 'Issues and Challenges in Using and Sharing Career Related LMI – [A Summary Report](#)' is available to download from the UK Commission website and the [full report](#) can be made available on request.

Stage Two

CFE, working in partnership with the Research Fellow responsible for Stage One, was commissioned to undertake a follow-up study to identify, assess and report on examples of good practice from across Great Britain in using and sharing career-related labour market information and intelligence. The key aim was to enable others to consider how the approaches outlined could help them enhance their own delivery of career guidance, and related information and advice services, to young people and adults.

Methodology

The Stage Two research was undertaken between January and March 2012. It involved a review of the evidence gained during Stage One and the launch of a 'Call for Evidence' via the UK Commission's website. The 'Call for Evidence' invited key stakeholders to contribute their views and experiences.⁸

Drawing on the 'Call for Evidence', CFE identified 12 organisations across Great Britain that were seeking to enhance their service delivery to young people and/or adults by improving the ways LMI is used and shared. In-depth field visits were conducted in order to consult with staff involved in the planning, management and delivery of IAG services. The findings from the field visits formed the basis of 12 case studies (see Appendix One). The field visits were carried out in February and March 2012 and so for some organisations in England that had Connexions and Next Step contracts, the situation will have changed. However, the good practice and learning still provide important learning opportunities for other organisations operating in different contexts.

The emerging findings from the case study research were shared at two consultation events held in London and Manchester in March.⁹ The final phase of the project involved collating and analysing the research findings.

Acknowledgements

CFE and the UK Commission would like to thank all those who contributed to the research and the consultation events, in particular those who agreed to showcase their work.

⁸ The 'Call for Evidence' elicited responses from a wide range of organisations, including colleges/learning providers/Higher Education Institutions, guidance organisations/providers (including those covering Higher Education), Jobcentre Plus, Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and Sector Skills Councils (SSCs).

⁹ The consultation events were held on the 19 and 21 March respectively. 78 participants attended the events, which included: presentations from good practice case study organisations and representatives from the Department for Work and Pensions and Skills Funding Agency; detailed discussions of good practice; and opportunities to consider how best to take the work forward.

2. Good Practice in Using and Sharing Career-Related LMI

This chapter provides a brief overview of career-related LMI and the IAG systems as they are currently operating in Great Britain before drawing on case study evidence from each of the nations to illustrate good practice in using and sharing career-related LMI.

Career-Related LMI

The labour market involves the dynamic interaction of **'supply'** (individuals looking for work) and 'demand' (employers seeking to recruit individuals as employees to help them deliver goods and/or services they produce).

The labour market is complex and ever-changing. It is easy for advisers to feel overwhelmed by the sheer volume of information particularly when it is often presented in forms that they are unfamiliar with and find difficult to interpret and understand.

Career-related LMI takes a number of forms. **'Hard LMI'** provides a statistical picture of current and likely future employment and skills trends. The data is typically gathered through labour market and employer surveys conducted on a geographic and/or sectoral basis by a range of organisations delivering career guidance. **'Soft LMI'** is typically more qualitative in nature. It is often gained by pulling together information from a range of local and more informal sources such as meetings with employers, feedback from customers and media screening.

Labour market **information** on its own can be helpful, providing advisers with a background and context in which to consider their work. However, to be useful in guidance, it has to be turned into labour market **intelligence** through interpretation and analysis. Although the LMI used by advisers to inform their practice may differ in form and content from that which they use with their clients,¹⁰ the LMI that both individuals and their advisers need most is **career-related** LMI. Career-related LMI helps individuals consider routes into, and ways around and through, the world of work both now and in the future.

Career related LMI can help advisers to better understand such things as:

- ▶ "Where is there growth and decline?"
- ▶ "What is the age, gender and ethnic profile of different parts of the labour market?"
- ▶ "What impact does all this have on availability of and competition for jobs in different areas?"
- ▶ "What impact does this have on wage and skill levels?"

When providing this career-related LMI to individuals, the key questions that have to be asked are:

- ▶ "What is going to be meaningful to the individual?"
- ▶ "How am I hoping this information/intelligence will help them in making choices?"
- ▶ "How might it raise aspirations, challenge stereotypes, increase job knowledge and widen career horizons?"

In this, a key task is to help individuals to enhance their **career management skills** so that they can research and weigh-up the information that is available to them on their potential options and opportunities.

¹⁰ Skills Development Scotland distinguishes between LMI for staff and CMI (career management information) for customers. LMI for staff provides area and sector context so that they are able to understand how to mediate job choice with customers. CMI for customers is presented in a more engaging and accessible way and is occupation based.

IAG in Great Britain

As the research covers Great Britain, it is important to acknowledge from the outset that there are different arrangements in place in each of the three nations to deliver publically-funded career guidance services to young people and adults and to use and share career related LMI. Before we examine the practice from a cross section of organisations operating within each of the nations, we provide a brief overview of the systems currently in operation and the importance placed on LMI.

England

The systems for the delivery of publicly-funded careers information, advice and guidance in England have been subject to considerable change over the past three years.¹¹ The online and helpline services for adults, and the network of organisations previously badged as Next Step, became the National Careers Service in April 2012. Remote telephone and web-based services (including career-related LMI) for young people are being made available via the National Careers Service. Following new legislation in the Education Act 2011, supported by statutory guidance,¹² schools have a duty from September 2012 to secure independent and impartial careers guidance for pupils in years 9-11.¹³ Matrix, the quality standard for information, advice and guidance services, has been strengthened and all aspects of the new service will operate to that by April 2013. Practical guidance has been issued for schools to draw on in interpreting their new duties.¹⁴

BIS has indicated in a summary document¹⁵ about the National Careers Service that: *'careers advisers in the National Careers Service will go through a programme of development in expert skills, which will cover: 'identifying the needs of customers, using labour market data, building confidence and motivation and working with employers and other services'.*

Scotland

An all-age careers service has been operating in Scotland for a number of years. However, in March 2011 the Scottish Government launched its first Career Information Advice and Guidance (CIAG) strategy,¹⁶ which places a continued emphasis on the central importance of individuals developing effective career management skills and being enabled to make informed career choices. The strategy recognises that careers advisers need to be informed about 'context' Labour Market Information (LMI) and that 'Career Management Information' (CMI) should be made available to those accessing careers guidance services. Since the strategy was launched, the Scottish Government has brought together a range of partner organisations to develop an LMI Framework. The framework, which was published in March 2012, sets out a vision for the development of labour market information and intelligence in Scotland that is robust, useful and easy to find, that can be utilised effectively by relevant stakeholders and that can achieve high policy impact.

The CIAG strategy and associated framework recognises the importance of LMI and CMI to support staff and customers respectively and acknowledges Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) as a primary source. To support the use and sharing of CMI, a key part of the service redesign is Skills Development Scotland's (SDS) web-based service 'My World of Work'¹⁷ which aims to help people plan, build and direct their career throughout their working lives and provides information on skills, learning and employment.

In order to meet the objectives set out in the CIAG strategy, SDS has developed a Career Management Framework for the careers sector that sets out an approach to supporting individuals to develop and use what are collectively referred to as 'career management skills'. The intention is to use it to inform the professional development of SDS staff as well as the development of careers services in Scotland.

11 Ofsted (2010) Moving through the system - information, advice and guidance Manchester: Ofsted

12 The Education Act 2011: The Duty to Secure Independent and Impartial Careers Guidance for Young People in Schools: Statutory Guidance for Headteachers, School Staff, Governing Bodies and Local Authorities <http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/statutory/g00205755/statutory-guidance-for-schools-careers-guidance-for-young-people>

13 The statutory guidance will be reviewed by my March 2013 following a consultation on extending the age range to which the new legislation relating to young people's careers guidance will apply.

14 DFE (2012) *Securing Independent Careers Guidance. A Practical Guide for Schools* (<http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeople/participation/b00211910/independent-careers-guidance>)

15 BIS (2011) *National Careers Service: The Right Advice at the Right Time - New Challenges, New Chances: Further Education and Skills System Reform Plan* London: BIS

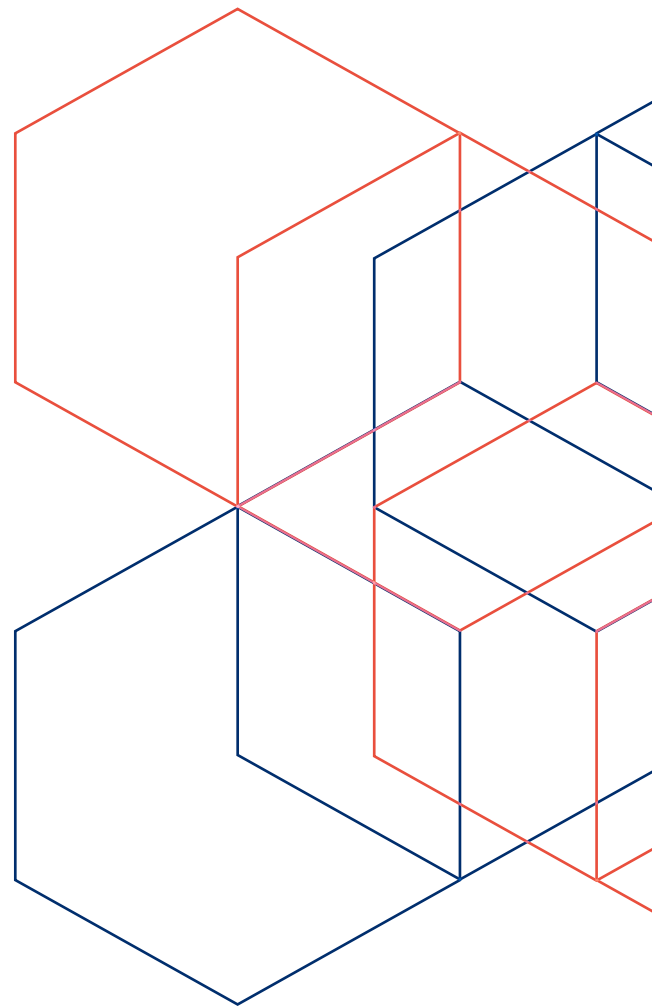
16 *Career, Information Advice and Guidance (CIAG) in Scotland - A Framework for Service Redesign and Improvement* (www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/03/11110615)

17 <http://myworldofwork.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/>

Wales

The delivery of the all-age careers services in Wales has been reviewed in the context of the Welsh Government's 'Skills that Work for Wales'¹⁸ strategy and action plan. The 'Future Ambitions' (2010)¹⁹ report sets out a vision for service delivery which builds on the recognised strengths²⁰ of the current arrangements within Careers Wales and seeks: 'to create fully integrated online, telephone and face-to-face services designed to ensure that every individual, regardless of their circumstances, can develop and apply career management and employability skills that will sustain them throughout life'.

The shape and remit of careers policy in Wales is likely to change from March 2013. The ongoing development of intelligence and the challenges with respect to career-related LMI will be included in this remit. Such development was highlighted in *Future Ambitions: Developing Career Services in Wales*²¹ and will be guided by national policy objectives.



¹⁸ *Skills That Work for Wales strategy*, Welsh Assembly Government, 2008 www.wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/081217stvwstrategyandactionen.pdf

¹⁹ *Future Ambitions; Developing Careers Services in Wales* (www.cymru.gov.uk)

²⁰ Watts A G (2009) *Careers Wales: A Review in an International Perspective, A report* by A.G. Watts. Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS) Cardiff: Research Document No. 033/2009 and Estyn's Inspection Reports: <http://www.estyn.gov.uk/english/inspection/inspection-reports/>

²¹ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/researchandevaluation/evaluation/futureambitions/?lang=en>

What Works? – Sharing Good Practice in Using and Sharing LMI

The case study research has highlighted that a wide range of good practice exists in relation to using and sharing career-related LMI. The remainder of this chapter focuses on the question of what has been done to raise awareness of the role and importance of LMI amongst IAG providers and their partners and the practical steps that organisations have taken to put the mechanisms in place to facilitate the effective and efficient use of LMI.

Our analysis is presented under five key headings:

- ▶ **Vision and Strategy:** Including the importance of developing a clear vision in respect to how career-related LMI is to be used and shared and a strategy to meet agreed goals.
- ▶ **Partnerships:** Including the importance of both identifying and working with key stakeholders and delivery partners in developing effective approaches and methods to meet the needs of identified customer groups.
- ▶ **Systems and Processes:** Including developing robust approaches to both collecting, sharing, and using career-related LMI, and ensuring it is accessible, up-to-date, and otherwise ‘fit for purpose’.
- ▶ **Resources:** Including identifying what resources practitioners and customers need and how to present these in a range of formats
- ▶ **Developing Professional Practice:** Including ensuring that staff are aware of the critical importance of using and sharing career-related LMI and develop necessary skills and competences to enhance their professional practice and to enable them to deliver effective customer services.

Vision and Strategy

The most effective practice identified through this research has been driven by a clear vision and informed by an effective strategy at organisational, area and/or national levels. In turn both have been informed by addressing three key questions - ‘What do individuals need to know?’, ‘What do advisers need to know?’, and ‘How can advisers best use LMI in their practice?’.

Effective strategies begin by identifying and assessing where advisers are ‘starting from’ and working progressively to build clear systems and processes to ensure they, and managers, have the LMI they need in highly accessible and customised formats.

Good examples of practice seen in the case study organisations include:

- ▶ **Careers Wales:** Policy makers regard the work of Careers Wales to be central to the delivery of a range of economic and social strategies²² in Wales. Careers Wales works proactively with the various bodies, at local and national levels and in the private and public sectors, that are involved in meeting national objectives. This work includes extensive involvement with using and sharing career-related LMI (See Appendix One – Case Study 2).
- ▶ **Skills Development Scotland (SDS):** LMI is regarded as fundamental to the achievement of SDS’s strategic goals to: enable people to meet their potential; make skills work for employers; work together to improve the skills and learning system; and achieve organisational excellence.²³ In 2009, a multi-disciplinary team of six research and careers professionals was established and charged with ‘making LMI work for SDS’. Their approach is underpinned by a clearly defined vision and purpose for LMI within SDS and informed by five prioritised work streams. These work streams provide the parameters for the development work and an important touchstone for the team which helps to prevent mission drift. (See Appendix One – Case Study 11).

Partnerships

Partnership work is a central feature of successful service development. The Stage One research identified that in order for partnerships to be effective, it is important to recognise that different organisations have different agendas and develop different approaches to the collection and use of LMI. As a consequence, partnership development requires organisations to identify a common vision, consider effective ways of working, and set clear goals and objectives. Best practice here includes developing joined-up approaches to using and sharing LMI, in particular linking local/regional economic development to the employment and skills agendas.

²² Specific examples include: Youth Engagement and Employment Action Plan 2011-15; Child Poverty Strategy for Wales; Learning Pathways 14-19; STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths); Careers and the World of Work (CWW) Curriculum; Skills and Training Initiatives e.g. AMS (Apprenticeship Matching Scheme); Delivering a Digital Wales.

²³ See: <http://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/our-story/our-strategy.aspx>

Good examples of practice seen in the case study organisations include:

► **Jobcentre Plus in Derbyshire** has forged a number of partnerships to improve its awareness, knowledge and use of LMI. These have included agreeing a joint approach with members of their **Integrated Employment and Skills Board** when working with employers to ensure that employers are offered the best possible service. Working relationships have also been fostered with recruitment agencies to increase their awareness of and involvement in recruitment drives. Work with Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) has been undertaken to improve the sectoral knowledge of JCP staff, including the specific skills requirements of workers in the individual sectors (See Appendix One – Case Study 6).

► **Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership (GMCP)** is working in partnership with the **Liverpool City Region Employment and Skills Board** to successfully secure European Social Fund to support the [Jobs for Tomorrow](#) project. Overseen by a steering group comprising representatives from a range of organisations with a stake in the 14-19 agenda, skills and the local economy, the project is helping to raise awareness of four priority growth sectors in Greater Merseyside and the opportunities they offer both now and in the future. A series of resources have been produced which are designed to challenge the thinking and career aspirations of young people, their parents/carers and adults, as well as helping to inform career guidance practice and curriculum developments within local learning providers (See Appendix One – Case Study 5).

Systems and Processes

A key challenge identified in Stage One of the research was that advisers can feel overwhelmed by the quantity and ever-changing nature of LMI. As a consequence, successful practice focuses on ensuring that clear systems and processes are in place to ensure: LMI is collected and collated from a wide variety of sources (including advisers) effectively and efficiently; and LMI is analysed, interpreted and subsequently made available to advisers in user-friendly forms. Some consultees, including those who attended the consultation events, stressed the importance of up-to-date data being 'no more than two clicks away'. They indicated that, given the high operational demands on advisers, they 'had not got the time to undertake this work for themselves'.

Organisations achieve excellence in this area by being 'brilliant at the basics' and by developing simple robust systems powered, as necessary, by technology. The best systems and processes are underpinned by support mechanisms including intranets, bulletins and regular updates at staff meetings, and are further informed by feedback from key customer groups on the use and impact of LMI in practice.

Good examples of practice seen in the case study organisations include:

► Advisernet, the **CfBT** web-resource, provides a range of information for all National Careers Service advisers in the North East. The LMI section has been developed by the LMI Officer, who has liaised extensively with advisers through user research and seeking their on-going advice and feedback through the LMI/ Advisernet focus group (See Appendix One – Case Study 3).

► **Connexions Kent and Medway** uses an intranet called Careers Net Kent. Like many intranets within career guidance organisations it provides a wealth of information and advice on careers education (CE) and IAG practice for advisers with differing levels of experience in addition to news stories, events information, and resources. Key resources include the 'Work for Tomorrow' pack and a 'Careers Bulletin' created by a local school which contains LMI. However, the site also has additional functionality including: the ability to comment on news stories and other resources; set up groups and forums in which practitioners can communicate with each other; set up user profiles and the option to add users as friends; and send email notifications when updates are made to the site (See Appendix One – Case Study 4).

► **Skills Development Scotland (SDS)** [media monitoring](#) service was developed as a cost-effective²⁴ solution to the challenge of scanning the local and national press for information on current and future changes to the labour market. An external service provider was commissioned to consult with each of the regions to identify the relevant local press to be monitored. Headlines on local job gains, job losses and training opportunities are summarised along with the national headlines and relevant labour market policy developments in a series of weekly reports which are produced and tailored to the needs of each region. A round up of the key headlines for the month is also produced (See Appendix One – Case Study 11).

²⁴ The service costs approximately £2k per annum to run.

Resources

Research, including the stage one study, indicates that in order to be effective, guidance practitioners and advisers need labour market information and intelligence in readily accessible forms so they can use it to update their own knowledge and inform/advise their clients. Contributors to the Stage Two research stressed the importance of:

- ▶ Presenting data in simple and engaging ways, especially through the effective use of infographics and, where relevant, for LMI to be broken down into 'bite-size' bits to inform both guidance work and for use in careers information and educational/learning materials (e.g. quizzes).
- ▶ The importance of using the full range of media, including where appropriate print²⁵ and social media.²⁶ Good examples were found in the use of video (e.g. [Jobs for Tomorrow](#), GMCP) and audio sources (e.g. LMI Podcasts by the Office of National Statistics (ONS)). Overall, the creative use of these technologies was seen as critical, with best practice focused on helping advisers and individuals to integrate a range of data from a range of sources to inform customer options and facilitate choice. It was noted too that first-hand experience with employers in the form of visits by advisers and work tasters/experience for individuals can have a significant impact by complementing and extending the understanding gained from third-party sources.

Good examples of practice seen in the case study organisations include:

- ▶ **Careers Wales** has been working to stream LMI from government data sources directly into the website via a unique 'mashing tool'. Results of this can be accessed via the search area on the home page of the [careerswales.com beta site](#). An 'I want to be...' search facility enables individuals to access information about jobs (e.g. profiles), see related data 'mashed' from different sources (e.g. pay rates), as well as to look at visual maps, including by Local Authority area/s, detailing actual vacancies and courses related to their search enquiry (See Appendix One – Case Study 2).
- ▶ 'Plain Guides' are available through the **Careers Yorkshire and the Humber** website. Each 'job' guide covers: who employs people doing the job; pay; skills; qualifications and training; the current picture and future trends; and where to look for jobs as well as links to more information and further help. Feedback from advisers across Yorkshire and the Humber is consistently positive and use is made of the guides in both group and one-to-one sessions. According to users, the guides 'blur the edges' between what is often seen as LMI (e.g. regional/sector trends) and occupational information and make sense of data from a range of different sources (See Appendix One – Case Study 1).

²⁵ The need to continue to provide some information in hard form was stressed for some customer groups and situations (including using technologies such as QR codes within this and providing web-links to encourage links between actual and e-based sources).

²⁶ It is clear that social media is playing an increasing role in the dissemination of careers information. For example, LANTRA mentioned in response to their 'Call for Evidence' that specific career-focussed Facebook pages have received over 122,000 impressions since their launch in October 2011.

▶ **Jobcentre Plus in Derbyshire** uses data collected from Job Points in Jobcentre Plus offices to provide Personal Advisers (PAs) with insight into the most popular jobs their customers are searching for. As a result, the Employer and Partnership team has worked with employers to develop work experience opportunities to match the jobs that their customers are looking for. These opportunities are then communicated to PAs who market them to their customers. The initiative enables customers to acquire relevant experience, thus improving their potential employability in sectors in which they would like to work (See Appendix One – Case Study 6).

▶ **Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership** (GMCP) has developed practitioner resources designed to support the integration of LMI into CEIAG in schools and colleges. The 'i-choose' Practitioners' Guide provides information on the CE programme, including who it is designed for and why it is important, along with an overview of the CE programme content and structure, mechanisms for assessing progress, and a series of career resources. The associated LMI Pack is tailored to the needs of each of the six sub-regions and contains complete lesson plans, two labour market DVDs on specific sectors, information that can be used to create lesson plans to illustrate the composition and structure of the local labour market, and a pen drive which contains a series of PowerPoint presentations (See Appendix One – Case Study 5).

Developing Professional Practice

A review of the case study evidence would suggest that developing effective professional practice relies on two main elements. The first is to have a robust, quality assured framework within which advisers develop the use of LMI in all areas of their practice. The second is having strong initial training and continuous professional development (CPD) which both identifies common issues and training needs (e.g. in regard to providing opportunities to update all advisers about developments) and supports individual practitioners to identify and improve their knowledge, capability and competences necessary for their work with customers/clients.

The Level 6 Diploma in Career Guidance and Development contains two specific units relating to LMI²⁷ and there is evidence that some providers are ensuring all staff complete them as part of their initial training or ongoing professional development (see below). Advisers seeking to develop their practice can also access an Online Learning Module designed to support them to develop the ability to access, understand and manipulate Labour Market Information as part of effective careers information, advice and guidance.²⁸

²⁷ These are Unit T/502/8431 'Source, evaluate and use Labour Market Intelligence with clients' (20 guided learning hours) and Unit L/502/8435 'Use Careers and Labour Market Information With Clients' (40 guided learning hours).

²⁸ See: <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/ngrf/lmimodule/>

In addition, the Careers Profession Task Force recommended that initial training and CPD for careers professionals should include a focus on labour market information (LMI), as well as information and communications technology (ICT), and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).²⁹ The Careers Profession Alliance (CPA) is working to develop a coherent unified single voice for the careers profession for people working in careers education, information, advice, guidance and development. The CPA has developed a national Register of Career Development Professionals. The registration process is voluntary and entails practitioners expressing interest in signing-up to CPA as the new professional body and holding agreed career guidance qualifications.³⁰

The Stage One research highlighted that, in those areas where training/CPD has not been undertaken, significant skills gaps have been noted.

Good examples of practice seen in the case study organisations include:

► **Skills Development Scotland (SDS)** regularly convenes LMI events to highlight skills issues in Scotland's key sectors. These events are designed to bring together employers and SSCs with the guidance and education communities to learn about the challenges and issues facing the sectors. The events are promoted in advance and are held at different locations throughout Scotland. They typically involve a series of presentations by sector experts and the opportunity to network with employers and employees. The events provide a dynamic environment in which stakeholders involved in both the supply of and demand for labour market skills can share intelligence, including up to the minute information on vacancies, redundancies, training and/or courses. (See Appendix One – Case Study 11).

► **C&K Careers**, on behalf of **Careers Yorkshire and the Humber**, worked closely with the **Leeds City Region Partnership** to run a regional 'LMI Perspectives' conference focusing on priority sectors. The event involved a number of employers and the 70 attendees included staff from Jobcentre Plus and Next Step as well as trainee advisers undertaking the Qualification in Careers Guidance (QCG) at Huddersfield University. C&K Careers noted that this event was undertaken 'with no budget' for speakers. The support of the LEP and local employers was welcomed along with support from SEMTA and the Financial Skills Partnership (See Appendix One – Case Study 1).

► **Next Step Greater Manchester (NSGM)** sets high operational standards for its advisers. The latest assessment against the [matrix](#) quality standard indicates that Manchester Solutions has robust structures in place to monitor and observe practice. These include 'tiers of observation' which involve formalised reviews by contractors, peer observations and unannounced service observations by the Prime Contractor.

► NSGM undertook a comprehensive Training Needs Analysis (TNA) exercise with all staff between January and March 2011. As a consequence, NSGM decided that they would make it compulsory for all advisers, 106 in total, to undertake the Level 6 Diploma in Career Guidance and Development Units on LMI (See Appendix One – Case Study 8).

Summary

The research makes it clear that a range of approaches need to be in place to enable advisers to effectively use and share career-related LMI. In the most successful examples, these approaches are underpinned by a clear vision and strategy, as well as initial training and CPD, and are integrated into all aspects of service delivery, including face-to-face services, web and telephone channels. The case studies set out in Appendix One provide evidence of the context in which these approaches are being delivered and highlight how important synergy between the different elements is. The final chapter reflects on the key lessons learned from the research and the actions needed to progress work in this crucial area.

²⁹ Careers Profession Task Force (2010) Towards a strong careers profession. An independent report to the Department for Education. <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DFE-00550-2010> (accessed 13/07/12)

³⁰ See www.cparegister.org

3. Conclusions

Introduction

The issue of how best to improve the use and sharing of career-related LMI by career guidance practitioners and advisers has been a longstanding concern. The Stage One research which informed this Stage Two research highlighted a range of issues and challenges. However, the case study evidence illustrates clearly that substantial progress is being made by organisations in different parts of Great Britain. These organisations recognise the importance of the work and have used existing - or secured additional - resources to enable it to develop.

In this concluding chapter we consider:

- ▶ The key lessons learned from the research;
- ▶ The principal issues and challenges of transferring the good practice identified into different organisational contexts; and
- ▶ The key areas for action for policy makers, providers and practitioners in taking the work forward.

Key Findings and Conclusions

The key findings and conclusions are as follows:

- ▶ Career-related LMI helps advisers understand the dynamic inter-play between 'supply' and demand' in fast-changing labour markets. This intelligence is vital if individuals are to be effectively supported in their learning and career decisions and guided through the myriad of current and future options and opportunities in the world of work.
- ▶ Career guidance is important not just to individuals but also in helping meet wider economic and social goals. Career-related LMI can provide a vital link between these two areas³¹ as is already understood by the forward-thinking bodies highlighted in this report. However, LEPs are at different stages of development³² and a key message from the research is that a range of partners (including learning providers and SSCs) need to work together to explore how relevant data can be collected, collated, analysed and interpreted for use by practitioners and advisers.
- ▶ Organisations need to decide how they are going to manage and undertake this work. This includes: developing a clear vision and strategy; working together to develop common systems and approaches; and developing effective internal systems and processes driven by the needs of staff. The latter includes developing efficient ways of sharing and updating information through systems such as intranets. Dedicated resources must be ring-fenced for this work to be effective and sustainable in the longer term. The level of resourcing for some of the most successful approaches is relatively modest. The most effective approaches are driven by specialist staff employed to lead the work and through working closely with employers and other partners.

▶ LMI produced for both advisers and individuals has got to be 'fit for purpose'. The Stage One research highlighted that advisers particularly value resources based on local information and intelligence, that benefit from good design, and which are available in manageable elements (including 'bite-size' bits).

Effective practice in this area includes developing localised information on both a geographical and a sectoral basis. Good examples include the materials produced in Wales and Scotland in co-operation with SSCs, and the data collated in some Jobcentre Plus Districts (e.g. Durham and Tees Valley) on the operation of the labour market in local areas for internal use and sharing with partners.

This practice can be enhanced when practitioners/advisers are actively engaged in the development work (e.g. through undertaking employer visits and/or contributing to the production of the materials) and the information is captured and shared. A good example of where this is done effectively is the daily staff briefings held in Jobcentres between employer engagement and adviser staff where 'soft' LMI about current developments is shared. In some instances, National Careers Service staff attend these meetings and are able to both input and gain information/intelligence about local developments.

▶ Career guidance practitioners and advisers work in a wide variety of contexts. In some, their tasks are tightly defined and may be focused on helping individuals enter available, primarily local, work opportunities. In others, their job role and brief can be much wider, as may the options and opportunities that their clients are willing and able to access.

The research highlights that it is crucial for advisers to have a clear understanding of the LMI they need to perform effectively in their role, including what is necessary to help their clients/customers progress. This does not just include immediate opportunities but must also include historic data and future trends. By having information on each of these they can develop an informed three-dimensional view - '3D LMI' - based on past, present and future trends.

▶ The role of effective initial training and CPD cannot be underestimated in this context. To be effective, this needs to move beyond just understanding what the sources of LMI are, to being able to analyse, interpret it and use it effectively with different client groups in different contexts. The goal here should be nothing short of ensuring that advisers have real expertise in this area so that they can use LMI to enable customers to weigh-up options and opportunities as well as to inform choice.

³¹ An example of this in practice would be where an existing (or inward investing company) announces that a number of jobs are to be created. This labour market 'information' needs to be translated into effective 'intelligence', in regard (for example) to the number, type, and location of immediate opportunities that will be created and in respect to future roles that individuals could train and/or otherwise prepare themselves for.

³² Pugalis L, Shutt J, and Bentley G (2012) Local Enterprise Partnerships: Living Up to the Hype? Corby: Institute of Employment Development

Transferability of good practice

The issue of what constitutes 'good practice', why particular practice is effective in a specific context, and what preconditions are necessary for it to be effectively transferred elsewhere are complex. In short, it cannot be assumed that what works in one area will necessarily work well elsewhere, which is why the case studies in this research contain relevant contextual information.

It is clear that some organisations have chosen to make using and sharing career-related LMI a priority and have, as a consequence, allocated dedicated resources, including staff. Examples here include Durham and Tees Valley Jobcentre Plus, CfBT North East and Skills Development Scotland. Others have given particular priority to the development of web-based tools and resources and have drawn on the latest approaches to individualising searches by mashing data from a number of sources. The approach adopted by Careers Wales with support from the Welsh Government is particularly noteworthy and drew favourable comments from others in the sector who had a chance to see it in operation at the consultation event in London.

The Stage One research highlighted that a considerable amount of the infrastructure with the potential to support this work has been lost as a result of budgetary restraints and cuts, for example, the networks of skills observatories previously supported by Regional Development Agencies (RDAs). Furthermore, there has been a significant loss of expertise through changes made to the Connexions service in general and, in particular, the loss of specialist information officer and related posts in both England and Wales. Indeed, it is by no means certain that some of the work highlighted in Appendix One will continue to receive current levels of funding.

At a time of significant budgetary restraint it cannot be assumed that new funding will be available to support developments. As a consequence, it is vital that work which has been developed with public funding and has been shown to be effective is disseminated and adapted for use in other countries, regions and/or organisations. The development of new and existing resources may require new business models and approaches to be devised. Ideas discussed at the consultation events included developing services on a subscription basis (e.g. 'Work Matters' developed by Manchester Solutions and partners, (see Appendix One – Case Study 8) and pooling resources through partnership arrangements.

In addition, existing resources need to be innovatively managed and work linked to new developments such as the Transforming Labour Market Services work being rolled out by DWP in 2012. It is important in all of this that development is planned in the context of wider national provision in England, Scotland and Wales and that the investment made in good practice developed to date is built upon so individuals can receive the information and support they need to make informed career and learning choices.

Suggested Areas for Action

Stakeholders, policy-makers, funding bodies and representative organisations.

It is suggested that policy makers could help support and take the agenda forward in the following ways:

1. Develop strategies to support and sustain the development and use of career-related LMI and, through the UK-wide policy-makers' group, consider ways that good practice could continue to be shared.³³
2. Encourage key players, including those leading economic and skills policy in localities, to focus on the issue of how best to utilise career-related LMI, including ensuring that this information is available to those delivering advice and guidance locally as well as to those delivering national services (e.g. telephone helplines).
3. Build on the investment that has been made in different parts of Great Britain in developing effective approaches to using and sharing career-related LMI.
4. Continue to champion the professionalisation of advisers and career guidance practitioners, including the importance of gaining appropriate accreditation in using and sharing career-related LMI and in developing appropriate levels of competence and capability in delivering guidance.
5. Monitor and evaluate the on-going impact of work in this area and use the results to inform both policy and professional practice.

Career Guidance Providers

It is suggested that in light of this research, career-guidance providers:

1. Review, with staff, their policy and strategy in relation to using and sharing career-related LMI.
2. Identify ways that working in partnership with others could help develop both the amount of available career-related LMI and the way it is used and shared.
3. Review systems and processes used to share career-related LMI and develop mechanisms and resources to ensure advisers have access to relevant, up-to-date information and intelligence for use in their practice. Recognise that clients' needs differ from the needs of professionals and ensure that LMI targeted at different client groups is tailored appropriately, presented in engaging ways and accessible from a number of platforms, including the internet.
4. Support managers to develop and maintain appropriate skills and levels of expertise amongst their advisers by undertaking a training needs analysis (TNA) with staff and subsequently enabling them to undertake relevant training, gain appropriate levels of accreditation, and develop their practice through continuous professional development (CPD).
5. Review and monitor the effectiveness of the work undertaken (including through the implementation of robust quality assurance procedures) and measure the ongoing impact of the work to build the business case for future investment.

Advisers

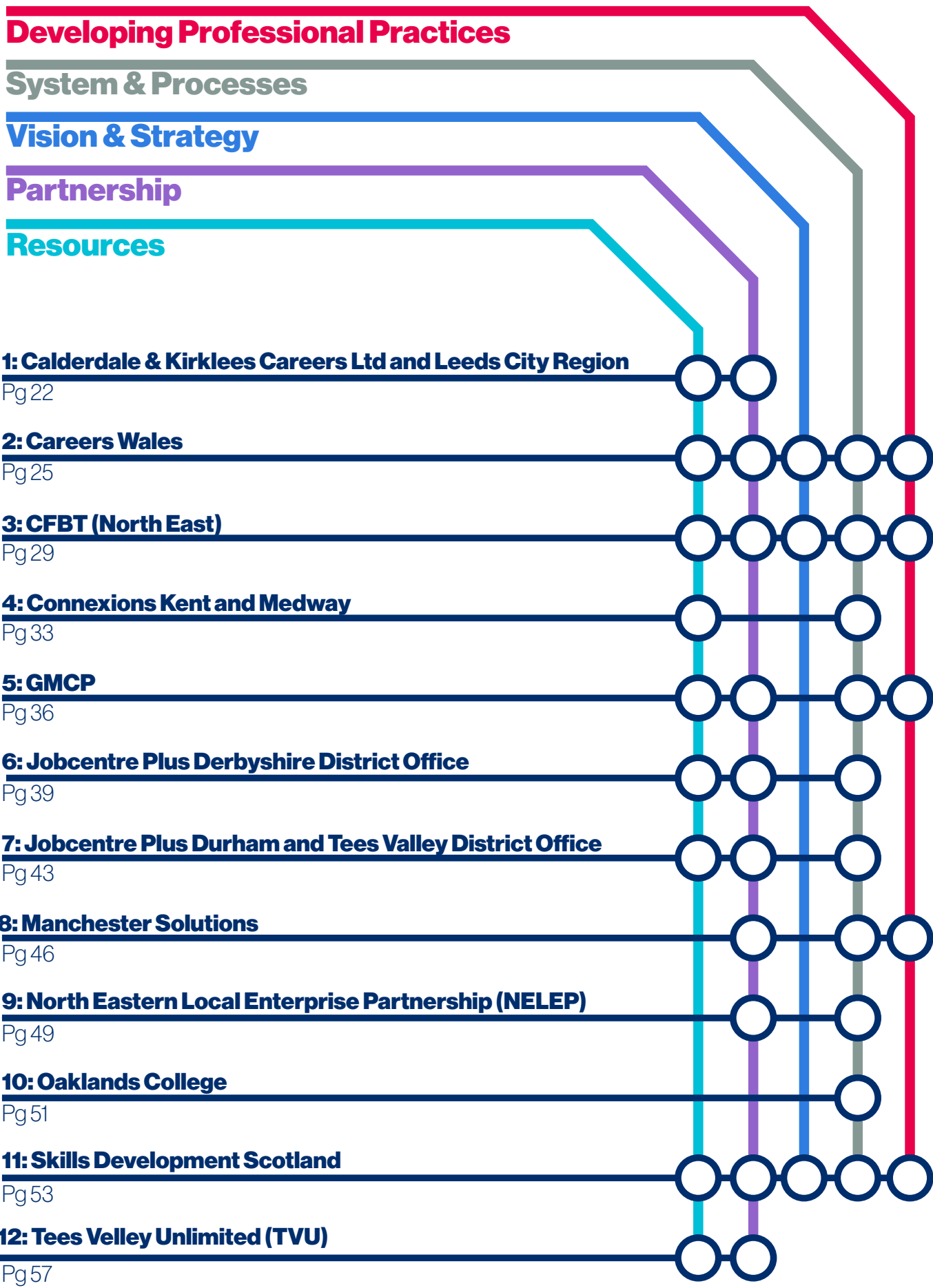
1. Recognise the centrality of LMI to their work and the need to develop appropriate skills.
2. Consider 'What do my customers need to know?' and 'What do I need to know in order to support them to make informed choices in a fast changing labour market?'
3. Review their professional practice and the ways in which they are using and sharing LMI with different customer groups.
4. In line with the Career Progression Framework proposed by the Careers Profession Alliance (CPA),³⁴ engage in training and seek accreditation for the skills and competences they have gained where appropriate and; develop their practice through continuous professional development.
5. Capture feedback to measure the extent to which improved LMI is enhancing service delivery and impacting on the outcomes for customers and employers.
6. Contribute to the production and dissemination of information and intelligence.

³³ This is already being undertaken in Wales by the Welsh Government LMI Project which has ministerial approval.

³⁴ See Careers Profession Alliance (2012) Blueprint for Register of Career Development Professionals and Career Progression Framework: [http://www.icg-uk.org/hres/CPA%20Blueprint%20Final%20\(V3\).pdf](http://www.icg-uk.org/hres/CPA%20Blueprint%20Final%20(V3).pdf) (accessed 13/07/12)

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Case Study 1: Calderdale & Kirklees Careers Ltd and Leeds City Region

This case study summarises the ways in which LMI is used and shared within Calderdale & Kirklees Careers Ltd. Amongst the good practice is the **Information Services Team, partnership work with Leeds City Region** to cascade LMI to staff and partners, the Careers **Yorkshire and the Humber Plain Guides** which provide LMI to customers, and **Kickstart your Career – Mobile Solutions Project** which has led to the development of mobile phone apps to make LMI more accessible to customers.

Organisational Background

Calderdale & Kirklees Careers Ltd

Calderdale & Kirklees Careers Ltd (C&K Careers) is a social enterprise/not-for-profit company. It holds the contract to deliver Connexions services in Calderdale and Kirklees which is undertaken in connection with a range of partners, including 46 local schools and colleges. C&K Careers is also part of the Careers Yorkshire and the Humber consortium³⁵ which delivers the Next Step contract in Yorkshire and the Humber. Its work-based services include 'Recruitline', a recruiting and matching service for young people and commercial services supporting the recently unemployed into employment. Other specialist services include C&K Training, which undertakes training with a wide range of practitioners and delivers locally accredited career education, information, advice and guidance quality standards in schools and colleges across Calderdale and Kirklees. Although C&K Careers service delivery is mainly funded through core contracts, the Business Development Team and wider staff have been successful in securing a range of other project work.³⁶ The organisation employs 140 full-time equivalent staff and has delivery centres in Huddersfield, Dewsbury and Halifax.

Leeds City Region

The Leeds City Region Partnership brings together the eleven local authorities³⁷ to ensure the city region economy continues to grow. In order to achieve this goal and address the city region's economic challenges, the Leeds City Region has established a Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

The LEP's plans are set out within its recently published Partnership Plan. A key action point is to: 'promote better information about growth sectors for learners, employers, colleges, universities and training providers to make more informed decisions, working with the careers sector where appropriate'. The LEP has produced a series of career-related LMI materials on their priority sectors (including manufacturing and hospitality and tourism). The LEP has also undertaken 'Skills Priority Analysis' research which compares the learning and training provision available within the region with current and trend data on employment opportunities. The aim is to highlight actual as well as potential mismatches in skills supply and demand.

³⁵ Other members of the consortium are: Aspirel, igen, Prospects and Babcock Enterprise.

³⁶ An example is 'The Kickstart your Career Mobile Solution Project' undertaken with Kirklees Council and outlined in the main report.

³⁷ Barnsley, Bradford, Calderdale, Craven, Harrogate, Kirklees, Leeds, Selby, Wakefield and York and North Yorkshire County Council

Gathering and Sharing LMI

a. Information Services Team

The Information Services Team consists of a manager, a team of four information specialists, and an information administrative assistant as well as three part-time staff who make up the design team. In addition, three staff run a freephone helpline and e-mail service called 'Learningline' for young people and adults in Calderdale and Kirklees who have enquiries about careers, education and training. The Learningline team answer 3,500 enquiries a year. As well as delivering services locally, the Information Services Team has secured a three-year contract to deliver an online careers information directory for young people in the London Borough of Islington.

A key role for the Information Services Team is to identify and fill 'information gaps'. They have produced and maintain a searchable database of local provision at level 2 and below aimed at vulnerable adults ([Kirklees CLiK](#)). It was agreed with key local partners that a useful addition would be to develop a list of all local providers of employment support services (e.g. work clubs).

b. Partnership work with Leeds City Region

In November 2011, C&K Careers, on behalf of Careers Yorkshire and the Humber, worked closely with the LEP to run a regional 'LMI Perspectives' conference focusing on priority sectors. The event involved a number of employers and the 70 attendees included Jobcentre Plus staff, Next Step staff and trainee advisers undertaking the Qualification in Careers Guidance (QCG) course at University of Huddersfield. C&K Careers noted that this event was undertaken 'with no budget' for speakers and the support of the LEP and local employers was welcomed alongside support from SEMTA and the Financial Skills Partnership.

c. Information Products

C&K Careers produces a range of information products aimed at both young people, their parents and adults.

Resources for young people include a range of booklets such as 'Directions – Year 8/9 Options', 'Get Organised Kirklees', 'Post 16 Options in Calderdale' and 'JobFAQs' for advanced-level leavers looking for work. Guides are also produced for parents in the form of e-booklets. In addition, they produce a catalogue of over 700 careers information leaflets, most of which are available on their [website](#).

Careers Yorkshire and the Humber - Plain Guides

The value of producing short guides about jobs that adults frequently ask about has long been recognised. The first ten titles produced provided information about the 'top ten' jobs notified to Jobcentre Plus. The series now comprises 23 titles, including advice on job searching.

The 'Plain Guides' are available through the Careers Yorkshire and the Humber [website](#) and each job guide covers: Who employs people doing this job; Pay; Skills; Qualifications and Training; Current Picture; Future Trends; Where to look for jobs; More Information and Further Help. Feedback from advisers across Yorkshire and the Humber is consistently positive and use is made of the guides in both group and one-to-one sessions. The guides are perceived to 'blur the edges' between what is often seen as LMI (e.g. regional/sector trends) and occupational information and help the reader to make sense of data from a range of different sources.

d. 'Kickstart your Career - Mobile Solution Project'

The project started in August 2010 and involved a range of local partners including C&K Careers, Kirklees Council and [Looking Local](#), a service that provides project management and technical support.

The main aim of the project was to use smartphone technology to help young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) by giving them access to key services and content (including LMI). The project also hoped to assess how the use of mobile phone technology can help clients and their support networks. The project involved both the development of apps for smartphones, lending smartphones to selected clients and/or downloading the apps to parents/family members, or friends' phones.³⁸

Following successful field trials and evaluation, two of the three prototype smartphone apps for Android devices have been released to the Android market (now Google Play). These are:

- ▶ [C&K Careers](#) – an app for searching job vacancies, training opportunities and other LMI data powered by C&K's workabout.org.uk website. The App allows search by both career area and location.
- ▶ Do-it.org – an app for searching for volunteering opportunities throughout the UK (powered by YouthNet's Do-it.org website).

The project demonstrated the value of developing apps and the C&K Careers Work-Based Services team report that an increasing number of young people are accessing services via the app and are achieving positive job outcomes.

Using LMI

a. Staff Training and CPD

Based on wider training needs analyses (TNA) of adult advisers, C&K Careers has been involved in running LMI training on behalf of Careers Yorkshire and the Humber, and has subsequently produced a related guide for Careers Yorkshire and the Humber advisers.

Half-day events were run in the three sub-regions (Huddersfield, Leeds and Sheffield) and involved 60 participants in all, which accounts for about a quarter of the regional Next Step Adviser workforce (240). To extend the reach of the training, participants were given the task of 'cascading' the training to other advisers. All resources from training sessions are uploaded onto the Careers Yorkshire and the Humber staff intranet.

Outcomes and Transferability

a. Outcomes and Key Success Criteria in Using and Sharing LMI

The key success criteria for the work that C&K Careers is doing are:

- ▶ The Senior Management Team (SMT) recognise the value of the work that the Information Team do and although overall budgets have reduced by 20-25% in recent years, there is a commitment to sustain the Information Service Team's work and to market its expertise to a wider audience than the geographical area that it currently covers.
- ▶ The Information Services Team has experienced specialist staff who work closely with advisers and clients to ensure that products and services delivered meet needs.
- ▶ Information is produced 'in a variety of formats' for different audiences and a high level of importance is placed not only on maintaining the currency and accuracy of information, but also on its presentation and design.

Emphasis is also placed on developing and maintaining information resources in delivery centres and partner organisations, with the Learningline providing necessary initial telephone support.

Available feedback suggests that the Information Team's work is valued and is contributing to enhancing the guidance process. However, specific evaluation studies and outcome evidence is not directly available and will form part of future development work.

³⁸ The project report indicates that the C&K Careers Workabout App had been downloaded from the Android Marketplace around a 100 times by August 2011.

b. Transferability of Practice

Some of the good practice identified in the study is readily transferable. For example:

- ▶ With necessary agreement on copyright, the idea of producing localised information products could usefully be considered in more areas.
- ▶ Where LEPS are in place, guidance organisations could seek to forge links with them to hold LMI conferences and events in their local areas.
- ▶ Where the necessary technical expertise and funding are available, more work could be undertaken to develop Android apps to make web-based LMI resources more accessible to users.

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Case Study 2: Careers Wales

This case study focuses on the approaches adopted for using and sharing LMI in the context of an integrated all-age service. Amongst the good practice in Wales, **the careerswales.com online** service developments are particularly noteworthy, which include the use of **innovative 'mashing' tools** which bring together live data from a range of sources. Careers Wales' work with **employers in a range of different contexts**, the development of **sector level information** and its focus on **professional development** also offer some useful insights which could help to inform organisational development elsewhere.

Organisational Background

[Careers Wales](#) is the national, all-age careers service for Wales funded by the Welsh Government.

Careers Wales provides a free (at point of delivery) bilingual, careers information, advice and guidance (IAG) service that aims to be both nationally coherent and locally responsive. Its Education Business Partnership (EBP) activities include: facilitating work experience placements for young people; mentoring programmes; teacher and lecturer placements; enterprise and business awareness events; and a range of tailored business support services. As such, Careers Wales is integrated into the delivery of a range of economic and social strategies³⁹ in Wales.

Careers Wales is developing a blended approach to delivery and is integrating online, telephone and face-to-face platforms to drive efficiency, while ensuring a client-centred service.⁴⁰ The effective provision of career-related LMI continues to be a crucial element of the developing service offer.

Gathering and Sharing LMI

a. Careers Wales Online

[Careers Wales Online services](#), now generally known as Careerswales.com, have long been at the forefront of developments and in 2005, the service won a BAFTA Award for Technical and Social Innovation. The vision has been to provide:

- ▶ Online, all-age, bi-lingual guidance and information services enabling everyone in Wales to develop their own e-portfolio and to deliver supporting site content.
- ▶ To allow clients to interact with Careers Wales staff and to receive mediated support to help them achieve their learning and career aspirations.
- ▶ To ensure that Careerswales.com is at the core of the Welsh Government's skills development agenda and that 'Team Wales' partners are encouraged to contribute to, and use, Careerswales.com.

39 Specific examples include: Youth Engagement and Employment Action Plan 2011-15; Child Poverty Strategy for Wales; Learning Pathways 14-19; STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths); Careers and the World of Work (CWW) Curriculum; Skills and Training Initiatives e.g. AMS (Apprenticeship Matching Scheme); Delivering a Digital Wales.

40 This includes continuing work to explore the use of new technologies to effectively promote the availability and accessibility of services.

Over the past three years there have been some 1.2 million unique users who have accessed 60 million pages of data. This includes two-thirds of the Key Stage Four cohort who have used the site when considering Post-16 Options.

Over the past year a considerable amount of work has been undertaken to develop a beta version of the website for release in autumn 2012. The site is a significant development in that, to avoid duplication, it is not age-differentiated and has a high-level of visual and inter-active content.

The site will provide: individuals/clients with unmediated access to a developing range of careers information, advice and guidance products and services which will help to develop their career management skills; the opportunity to interact with Careers Wales advisers on-line; and the opportunity to support a range of policy initiatives by Welsh Government and other key stakeholders.

The site enables access to a range of databases, including: the Jobcentre Plus vacancy database; Jobs and training opportunities notified to Careers Wales; Jobs Growth Wales' (a developing programme aiming to provide 12,000 six month work placements for the young unemployed); the All-Wales Apprenticeship Matching Service; and Post-16 Courses in Wales. Other information contained includes over 1,000 [icould](#) video and occupational profiles. The site also draws on LMI and other data held by the [Learning and Skills Observatory \(LSO\) Wales](#).

Online developments during the latter part of 2011 have seen a search facility developed which integrates LMI and occupational information resources.

b. LMI integration with occupational search

Careers Wales has been working to stream LMI from government data sources directly into the website via a unique 'mashing tool'. Results of this can be accessed via the search area on the home page of the [careerswales.com beta site](#)

The 'I want to be...' search facility enables individuals to access information about jobs (e.g. profiles) in addition to related data 'mashed' from different sources (e.g. information on pay rates). Users can also view visual maps by Local Authority area detailing actual vacancies and courses that relate to their search enquiry.

The next stage of development will be to enable clients to tailor on-line applications for jobs and courses identified using information available from their e-portfolios.

c. Sector Level Information

Careers Wales has been developing sector level information.⁴¹ Fourteen sector level⁴² articles will be available on Careerswales.com this spring to fit with the priority areas established by the Welsh Government. A pan-Wales research and writing team was responsible for developing this set of articles together with

41 For example, Careers Wales produced a useful 'Pathways Into...' series of leaflets (into topics such as 'Science Based Industries'), which cover areas such as: Facts you should know; What you could do; Skills and qualities needed for this work; Getting started; Courses to consider and useful contacts.

42 ICT; Energy and Environment; Advanced Materials and Manufacturing; Life Science; Finance; Creative Industries; STEM; Engineering; Retail; Land based; Health; Tourism/Hospitality; Food and Drink; Construction.

the Careers Wales All-Wales LMI Group. The articles link to other related content on the website (e.g. occupational information, case studies, course and vacancy data and video clips).

Careers Wales has also adopted a 'frequently asked questions (FAQ)' approach for their sector and other local information.⁴³ For example in the 'Spotlight' series on sectors, FAQs act as section headings for 'bite-size chunks of LMI' (e.g. Where could I work? How much could I earn? Where are the skills shortages? What about the future? Do I need Welsh language skills?).

The 'Spotlight'⁴⁴ series is used widely with clients and by staff and partners. Previously they were printed and distributed directly to schools, colleges and careers offices. However, in order to increase access and reduce costs, greater use has been made of interactive electronic pdf copies. The product is marketed widely through a combination of channels, including careers and EBP events, parents' evenings and partner events (e.g. SSC Seminars). Careers Wales also use social media to promote 'Spotlight' and it is featured on partners' websites (e.g. Regional Skills Observatory). Clients can access the resources through careerswales.com, careers offices, or careers events. They can also be downloaded via QR codes advertised on posters. New editions are disseminated directly by email to staff, partners and stakeholders, including schools and college careers co-ordinators and subject teachers.

Building on the success of existing work, four SSCs – [Lantra](#), [Improve](#), [People 1st](#), and [Skillsmart](#) - invited Careers Wales to work with them on developing a suite of [products](#) about the food and drinks sector - which from 'farm gate to plate' employs around one in five of the workforce in Wales. Launched in January 2012, Careers Wales and the SSCs are now working together to market and promote the products, which include a Spotlight publication and eighteen bilingual case studies.

d. South West Wales Regional Learning and Skills Observatory

Careers Wales were actively involved in pilot work to develop the Regional Learning and Skills Observatory (RLSO) in West Wales which has benefitted from three years of ESF funding.

The Observatory, and the associated Regional Learning Partnership in West Wales, have benefitted from close collaboration and sharing of intelligence. Careers Wales continues to be actively involved, chairing the project management group and has seconded staff to the research team at the Observatory. The Learning Partnership and SSCs are collaborating to host a series of seminars on specific sector skills needs

⁴³ Careers Wales also produce about ten 'Factsheets' a year. These cover popular topics (e.g. 'Working in the Fire Service') and complement nationally available information by providing localised content and contact details.

⁴⁴ The 'Spotlight' series aims to give a concise guide to working in each sector covered. There are seven current titles. The key objective of the publication is to give intelligence on opportunities within the sector at a local level, as well as a national and UK picture. They aim to raise aspirations, widen horizons, challenge stereotypes, combine careers and labour market information, as well signpost and enable individuals to do their own research.

e. Employer Visits/Surveys

Careers Wales undertakes a wide range of work with employers, including the development of education/business links which includes facilitating work experience placements for school learners; discussing employers' recruitment and training needs; and working with employers to support staff who have been made redundant, including through the Welsh Government's [ReAct programme](#).

In 2009-10, Careers Wales produced seven 'Working In....' information leaflets which included evidence from local surveys they undertook with employers in relevant sectors in North East Wales. More recent work has seen information gathered from employer visits and other sources being used to create a new LMI database. This includes information regarding employers' plans to recruit within the next 12 months, those recruiting Welsh speakers, and those recruiting under 18s and/or offering training

Careers Wales has worked with the RLP and RLSO in West Wales to undertake an in-depth study of the Creative Industries sector at a local level. Collaboration has involved sharing research, methodologies and staff to amass the data.

f. Information for Advisers (including LMI Bulletins)

The [Professionals](#) area of the careerswales.com website houses LMI. This comprises links to a range of useful websites/portals for LMI, including to all SSCs and Local Authority Profiles based on the series of profiles developed by Careers Wales. There will also be a LA sector profile available for each of the 22 Welsh Local Authority areas.

In addition, Careers Wales produce updates for their staff on LMI including daily and weekly bulletins made available through their intranet, e-mailed newsletters, RSS and Twitter feeds.

Careers Wales provides hyperlinks to online press articles and other sources (e.g. Welsh Government website) are displayed on the front page of the company intranet under a heading 'Labour Market News – Today's Headlines'. They cover local and national jobs news (e.g. unemployment statistics/trends, business expansions, redundancies, and new businesses coming into the area) and sector developments/trends (e.g. SSC reports and other sources).

At the end of each month the headlines are archived in a Word document and added to the LMI section of the intranet. This system was introduced in October last year to provide a more 'immediate' news service for advisers.

Using LMI

a. LLwyddo'n Lleol (Succeeding Locally) Project

The [LLwyddo'n Lleol project](#) is a European Social Funded project in North Wales and is available to young people aged 11-19 living in Gwynedd, Anglesey, Conwy and Denbighshire.⁴⁵ The project aims to help young people learn about employment and self-employment opportunities within growth sectors in Gwynedd and to develop enterprising skills. The funding provides staff cover (felt to be a key factor in enabling staff to take time out to become involved in visits) and access to equipment and/or expertise that is not readily available in schools

Careers Wales is working closely with the projects and is organising one day events aimed particularly at young people making option choices in Year 9, and those who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET. Project work (which has so far involved some 350 young people since March 2011) has included: working with [Cyfle](#) – a specialist creative industries training provider - to develop Apps for local businesses; undertaking visits to the [Centre for Alternative Technology](#); undertaking visits to look at specific growth sectors such as biomedical sciences and the marine sector; and organising social enterprise fairs. Baseline research with young people has indicated that in many cases they had little or no understanding of the sectors or industries prior to the visits, but that their interest and awareness had greatly increased afterwards.

Particular efforts have also been made to make parents aware of changes in the labour market and the implications these have for young people's choices. For example, in co-operation with local partners, Careers Wales sent mailshots to parents and young people regarding the range of developments connected with the designation of Anglesey/Ynys Môn as [Anglesey Energy Island™](#).

b. Guidance Practice

Careers Wales has well-developed quality assurance systems, which are regularly commended by Estyn - HM Inspectorate for education and training in Wales. LMI is highlighted within the extensive interview observation programme regularly undertaken with advisers. The assessment of advisers' work in this area considers the type, nature and appropriateness of the LMI used and also measures how far it has contributed to the development of clients' ideas and planning.

c. Staff Training and Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

LMI is integral to the work of staff with clients and is regarded as 'a strand that runs through all that we do'. Staff training on LMI is on-going within Careers Wales and this approach is recognised for 'raising staff awareness and understanding of LMI as well as empowering staff to undertake career-related LMI research'.

LMI features as a core objective in staff induction. It is one of 16 generic induction programme modules that are completed during phase 2 of the 20 week induction process and also features in probationary programmes. LMI training is delivered as part of CPD to existing careers advisers, including a specialist training day for

adult careers advisers. Good practice identified in existing arrangements includes that:

- ▶ All advisers in one Careers Wales region have attended 'Work Smarter Not Harder' training sessions covering the use of LMI on the intranet and also a 'Products and Services' day which focussed on work with employers and the collection of LMI during employer visits. LMI gathering and interpretation is a mandatory part of induction for new advisers and is a mandatory and optional element of the new level 6 qualification for advisers.
- ▶ Elsewhere Careers Wales has designed a distance learning module entitled 'Using Career and Labour Market information with Clients' for QCG students and careers advisers seeking to upgrade or refresh their knowledge and skills. They have also produced guidance in the form of 'LMI Tips and Techniques' giving practical suggestions about how advisers can answer typical questions clients have.
- ▶ Advisers undertake regular employer visits. For example, in North West Wales there is regular liaison between careers advisers and the employer liaison team about what sorts of visits they would find helpful. Recent activity has included visits to Stena Line Ferries in Holyhead and Siemens at Llanberis. Professional development reports are completed on all visits and trainees undertake up to four job studies as part of their NVQ training. Other related work includes Sector Skills Training Days and university visits (e.g. to Bangor University), which include discussions of graduate opportunities.
- ▶ More informal LMI training and intelligence sharing is delivered on an on-going basis through team meetings and briefing by Employer Engagement staff and the LMI team.

Trainee careers advisers from across Wales attended a 2-day LMI training programme in March 2012. The programme entitled 'Effective use of Labour Market Information'⁴⁶ was designed to meet the assessment criteria and occupational standards of the LMI Units in the Level 6 Diploma in Careers Guidance and Development. It was also intended as a standalone programme for CPD and to complement a distance learning module.

Partnership working features strongly in the delivery of effective training. Careers Wales regularly engage guest speakers from partner organisations, which include Local Authorities, Sector Skills Council and Regional Learning and Skills Observatory as well as Careers Wales staff, in their training programmes.

⁴⁵ Funding is available up to 2015.

⁴⁶ The aim of the programme entitled 'Effective Use of Labour Market Information' is 'to develop the learner's skills in sourcing, evaluating and using labour market information with clients

Future Development in Using and Sharing LMI in Wales

Building on the collaborative work already carried out in 2011/12 by the Wales LMI group, and an even more structured pan-Wales approach to the collection and dissemination of LMI for both clients and Professionals.

Work will continue to ensure LMI for clients is provided in an easy to understand accessible format. Careers Wales intend to add to the suite of resources already developed and increase the use of templates, Flash presentations and bite-size chunks of information in order to improve client and adviser access to relevant, up-to-date information.

Developments for 2012/13 are likely to include a regular National and Regional LMI bulletin for staff, nationally agreed training modules and the increased use of careerswales.com to standardise access to good quality LMI.

Outcomes and Transferability

a. Outcomes and key success criteria in using and sharing LMI

Careers Wales staff indicated that LMI is being used with clients in a variety of different ways to raise aspirations, tackle stereotypes, widen horizons, and empower individuals to ask the right questions. Although it is difficult to specifically identify the role that LMI has played in achieving these outcomes, client feedback indicates that these discussions with advisers have helped to develop their career ideas and plans.

Typical statements from clients include: 'I would never have thought of going into that area'; 'I never realised there were so many opportunities in this field'; 'I can now see what jobs I can do in this area'.

Key success criteria in regard to using and sharing career-related LMI effectively in Wales include:

- ▶ The all-age nature of the service, its impartiality, and continuity which have enabled it to become a 'well-known and trusted partner' that provides 'a distinctive voice' in regard to the operation of both 'supply and demand' in the labour market on a pan-Wales basis, as well as within its distinctive regions and sub-regions.
- ▶ The capacity to identify gaps and provide 'value-added' local approaches and products to complement nationally available materials.
- ▶ The work of the All-Wales LMI group that has enabled both the review of practice in the separate companies and also the production of new materials and resources (e.g. the Sector LMI).
- ▶ The development of careerswales.com - particularly the potential to provide highly interactive and engaging new content through the use of 'mashing' tools.

b. Transferability

Much of the practice is transferable to other guidance services and/or is already evident in other guidance services where practice is effective.

Some development work (e.g. the Llwyddo'n Lleol project and Learning and Skills Observatory work) has required ESF funding which may not be available in other areas/regions. Although many of the developments outlined have taken place in the context of reduced budgets, good practice has been sustained. However, other developments, such as the beta site development of careerswales.com, have required additional investment as part of a wider service re-configuration and the development of the revised Careers Wales service offer.

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Case Study 3: CfBT (North East)

CfBT (North East) is implementing a range of good practice to support the effective use and sharing of LMI. The appointment of a dedicated **LMI Officer** has been central to their approach, along with a series of **Sector Specific Workshops for customers** designed to stimulate demand in job areas where there are current vacancies, sector specific workshops for advisers to improve their sectoral knowledge, and the staff intranet **Advisernet**.

Organisational Background

CfBT Education Trust is a consultancy and service organisation which provides educational services in both the UK and internationally. CfBT Advice and Guidance is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Trust and its portfolio of work in recent years has included managing 13 Connexions services across the country. It is currently developing new commercial services to meet emerging needs.

In the North East, CfBT Advice and Guidance employs 60 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff, of which 41 are advisers. The organisation has held the contract to deliver adult IAG services in County Durham since 2004. It subsequently gained the contract to manage regional IAG services for adults in 2008 and retained the contract to manage the re-branded 'Next Step' service in 2010. In their role as Prime Contractor, CfBT manage and deliver the both a 'universal' service and targeted services designed to meet the needs of specified priority groups.⁴⁷

Direct service delivery is organised through four geographical hubs,⁴⁸ all of which have shop-front premises. Each of the hubs is managed by a Co-ordinator, with a delivery team of advisers, supported by a Customer Service Officer (CSO) and administrative support. CSOs have an outward-facing role, which includes working with local partners. They also have responsibility (working with the LMI Officer) for hub-specific resources, including the local LMI library. In addition to the hub-based teams, an Employer Engagement Team works regionally on a peripatetic basis. The team was originally formed shortly after new European Social Fund (ESF) funding became available from the Learning Skills Council (LSC) to support individuals/employers whose jobs were being made redundant.

Using LMI

a. CfBT's approach to developing LMI

The Regional Management Team (RMT) initiated an 'Improvement and Development of Labour Market Information' project in late summer 2010. The aim of the project was to develop capacity and capability as well as to ensure that career-related LMI was gathered and disseminated in a structured way. The key benefits of this approach as set out in the 'Project Initiation Document' were:

- Careers advisers are 'well informed and able to give IAG relating to the local, regional and national labour market'. It was hoped that in turn this would help ensure a consistent approach in

47 The transition from Next Step to the National Careers Service, involved (from August 2012) the additional delivery of IAG services to offenders under the careers information and advice service specified through offender learning and skills service (OLASS).

48 County Durham, Newcastle/North Tyne/Northumberland, South Tyne and Wear, and Tees Valley.

the way that advisers access, use and share career-related LMI.

- Labour market information is 'readily accessible and up-to-date' and: 'reflects clearly the targeted needs of the client group'.
- 'Outcomes for clients are improved as they receive information which reflects and supports their needs'.

It was also felt that the creation of a specialist Labour Market Information Officer post would help focus and drive this work as well as reduce duplication and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of information sharing. The LMI Officer took up post in January 2011. The work reflected here has taken place during the past year.

Needs Analysis

From the outset of the project considerable emphasis has been placed on meeting advisers' needs. The LMI Officer launched an e-survey early in 2011 which asked advisers about issues such as: what type of LMI they used, what they found helpful and how information could best be disseminated.

Advisers were also asked which questions they found most difficult to answer when working with customers. Alongside areas like funding, these included questions such as: 'What are the growth sectors in the area/region?'; 'Which careers/jobs are in demand?'; 'Who employs people as a xxx?'; 'Are there many jobs in xxx sector?'

The survey found⁴⁹ that e-mail was the most popular way of disseminating information amongst advisers and that what they wanted was information about employers, work/training opportunities and sector-specific information. There was less demand for LMI 'statistics' and 'policy updates'.

The key challenge in taking this forward has been how best to engage advisers and – in some instances – how to best demonstrate the benefits for them and clients of having a specialist post in this area. This has been achieved through regular liaison with advisers and CSOs and regular reviews by the Labour Market Focus Group (see under Advisernet⁵⁰).

b. Sector Specific Workshops for Customers

National Careers Service advisers work closely with Jobcentre Plus and most service referrals come from local jobcentres. It has become evident through reviewing local LMI data that there are significant mismatches in some sectors between the first choice preference of jobseekers (as noted on their Jobseekers Agreement) and the number of notified vacancies. In order to widen jobseekers' occupational horizons - and/or their understanding of particular jobs - and to seek to address skills shortages, CfBT have facilitated sector specific workshops.⁵¹

49 Based on 22 respondents

50 The LMI Officer is looking to extend this work through the creation of a 'virtual' LMI forum and discussion group on the Advisernet.

51 It was noted too that workshops have sometimes been run for particular companies, as for example in the case of a taxi company that was looking to substantially increase its workforce where – working with the local college providing introductory NVQ training - Next Step advisers helped individuals consider whether this was the type of employment opportunity which would suit them and what the requirements of the work were.

For example, a Care Sector Workshop was run in Newcastle in December 2011. At the time there were over 300 vacancies but only 50 claimants who had specified this as their first choice area of work. CfBT advisers worked closely with the local jobcentre's Employer Engagement Team to identify individuals and, on the basis of their Job Seekers agreement, invited those who might be interested.

The session ran for one and a half hours and involved a local employer and training providers. The session covered issues such as: what care work involves, pay scales, and skills required, with an emphasis on the way that skills gained in other sectors/areas of work could be transferable. Subsequent feedback from customers attending the session showed that around half went on to sign-up for a training course in care. Increasingly, standard materials (e.g. Sector Fact Sheets produced by the LMI Officer) are used in these sessions, which in turn are being developed in the light of adviser/customer feedback.

The key challenges to overcome in relation to these workshops relate to the time necessary to plan, undertake and follow-up the events and – to ensure impartiality – to engage more than one learning provider. The benefits to those who have already attended an event include, in the words of the adviser, that they 'now know enough about the sector to make a decision about whether they could work in it and what they're signing up for'. It was stressed that this is likely to reduce the considerable 'drop-out' rates from both introductory provision in FE Colleges and initial employment. It was also felt that this service would be a useful addition to work happening in recently launched 'Sector-Based Work Academies', one of the 'Get Britain Working' work streams.⁵²

c. Using LMI with customers

LMI is used extensively by advisers during one-to-one guidance sessions as well as in group sessions such as the sector specific workshops. A range of sources are used, including those which can be accessed through Advisernet, a web-resource for the Next Step delivery network and partners. Advisers frequently use the Skills Health Check⁵³ to help individuals consider their skills and abilities and then use LMI to help individuals explore their options. An example was given of a customer who had recently left the RAF having latterly held a role in bomb disposal. They were very unclear about what they wanted to do and had, therefore, been referred to Next Step by a JCP adviser. Through careful questioning, and use of the Skills Health Check, the customer identified that they would be interested in security work. Through subsequent use of local information (and job profiles), the adviser identified a specialist course in airport security that was being run in connection with the local college to which the customer was successfully referred.

Lack of connectivity has presented a key challenge for advisers seeking to use LMI, particularly when working in rural or remote settings. To address this all CfBT advisers' company phones are fitted with an Android browser that enables them to access information such as LMI Weekly Bulletins in pdf format.

d. Staff Training and CPD (including Sector Specific Workshops for Advisers)

CfBT employs a Training and Development Co-ordinator. Although their primary focus is on the development of CfBT staff, they also worked with sub-contractors to support the development of staff working on the Next Step contract.

Training and development needs are identified through regular appraisals, work observations, the production of development plans, and periodic training needs analyses (TNA). The Co-ordinator runs a 'best practice' group with advisers that considers all areas of practice, including the use and sharing of LMI. The LMI Officer provides input to this on a periodic basis.

The Training and Development Co-ordinator said that having a specialist LMI Officer had made, 'a tremendous difference'. She indicated that the organisation had previously used external providers to deliver training and that it had been the responsibility of one of the area managers to circulate an LMI bulletin. The Co-ordinator said that 'LMI is complicated because it covers everything from global trends to working in the local corner shop'. Having a dedicated person, 'who acts as a resource for the staff', had meant they 'had been able to analyse chunks of data and produce it in a clear way for advisers'. This had helped improve the way advisers use LMI in guidance sessions.

To widen advisers' sectoral knowledge, a number of sector specific workshops have been run. So far these have covered sectors such as care, health, engineering and renewable energy. To allow advisers to undertake some delivery in the morning, the sessions are run in the afternoon (usually 1.30-4.30pm). The sessions have attracted between 16-30 attendees from CfBT and their sub-contractors⁵⁴ and the wider IAG community.⁵⁵ A review of evaluation sheets would suggest that the sessions have generally been very well received. Typical feedback from advisers is that they now feel 'more confident' and 'better informed' and consequently feel they can give 'better advice about the sector'.

As with workshops for customers, a key barrier is how to engage employers and to recognise the time necessary to set them up. What has worked well is offering these workshops once a quarter, rather than once a month, as well as being specific with speakers/contributors (such as SSCs) about who the advisers are (including that they work with adults and not young people) and what they are going to find most helpful.

A key challenge in relation to staff training has been supporting staff to achieve the best balance between the need to maximise delivery in order to meet key operational targets and taking time out for CPD. This has been achieved through careful planning and management, but remains an on-going tension that has to be managed rather than a one-off problem to be solved.

⁵² See: <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/policy/welfare-reform/get-britain-working>

⁵³ See: <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/tools/skillshealthcheck/Pages/default.aspx>

⁵⁴ In addition specific training sessions on LMI have been run for Sub-Contractor staff.

⁵⁵ For example, invitations are issued to NAEGA members in the area.

e. What has worked well and taking the work forward

The LMI project is generally felt to have worked well. In large part this is due to the way that the LMI Officer post-holder has been able to prove the 'added value' of creating this specialist role rather than using the money to directly increase delivery capacity for example.

Priority has been given to the work within the operational budget and the costs are set out in the Project Initiation Document as mainly involving the appointment of the LMI Officer along with the further integration of LMI into the Advisernet (web-site development and maintenance costs) and other staff time to support on-going development work.

The plan is to further develop the effectiveness of the work by building on the developing skills of advisers in this area, including encouraging and enabling them to develop their research and analytical skills (including, for example, developing job profiles for local companies).

Sharing LMI

a. Advisernet – web-resource

Advisernet, the CfBT web-resource, provides a range of information for all Next Step advisers in the North East. The LMI section has been developed by the LMI Officer, who has liaised extensively with advisers to undertake both user research and to seek their ongoing advice and feedback through the LMI/Advisernet focus group. The key purpose of this group is to:

- ▶ consult advisers on LMI/Advisernet content;
- ▶ develop consistency in using Advisernet as a method of communication;
- ▶ promote the increased use of LMI within Next Step delivery;
- ▶ support advisers using LMI and provide a feedback mechanism;
- ▶ provide feedback to inform the work of the LMI Officer and the content, and timeliness, of LMI provided.

In addition, the LMI Officer has begun to use Google Analytics to see what resources individuals are using, and how these are being accessed; and the results of this are being fed back to the focus group.

Advisernet is a key method for sharing resources, which include:

- ▶ **Weekly Bulletin:** An LMI and Policy Bulletin is produced each week which provides a range of information gained from different sources, including the local press and similar bulletins produced by Jobcentre Plus for their staff. Where appropriate, material is archived under sector headings so this is available for advisers wanting to gain an overview of recent developments.
- ▶ **Hub LMI Updates:** These include a range of information which seeks to provide an overview of the situation in specific geographical areas in the region. This draws heavily on sources such as NOMIS⁵⁶ and data provided by Jobcentre Plus.
- ▶ **Sector Fact Sheets:** These are short (often 2 sides of A4) summaries of information about specific sectors in the North East drawn from a range of sources.
- ▶ **Topic Fact Sheets:** Information on a specific topic that advisers have requested information on – for example Higher Education Destinations.

In addition, an LMI resource directory has been produced to complement other tools such as a list of links to Sector Skills Assessments produced by SSCs.

b. Meetings

It was indicated that advisers have close links with the Jobcentres in which they work and try, where possible, to attend daily staff meetings at which information (including LMI) is shared. Similarly, advisers in partnership hub offices provide briefings for each other about new opportunities or developments in their 'patch' and appropriate information is passed on to the LMI Officer for wider circulation through the Weekly Bulletin and other means.

c. Partnership Working

The LMI Officer has developed links with other organisations in the North East who produce LMI. For example, strong relationships have been built with bodies such as Jobcentre Plus and the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) covering the area (North Eastern LEP⁵⁷ and Tees Valley Unlimited⁵⁸). An IAG/LMI 'Task and Finish' group has been formed which includes Teesside University, Jobcentre Plus and Local Authorities. The LEP is considering how it can best work with and support providers in the provision of career related LMI; it is also looking to create a specific LMI portal.

d. What has worked well and taking the work forward

In addition to the points made above, it is worth highlighting that having an LMI Officer enabled Next Step to liaise more effectively with other key local partners, including Jobcentre Plus and Local Enterprise Partnerships. Interestingly, advisers report that having useful LMI to share 'boosts referrals' and 'helps build trust with JCP advisers'.

⁵⁶ See: <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>

⁵⁷ The work here is the subject of a separate case study

⁵⁸ See: <http://www.teesvalleyunlimited.gov.uk>

Outcomes and Transferability

a. Outcomes and Key Success Criteria in Using and Sharing LMI

It was indicated that it is difficult to measure the specific outcomes of the work that has been undertaken, although much of the individual feedback from advisers has been positive and there has been evidence, through training, of advisers developing their professional practice. The key success criteria appear to be:

- ▶ Having a clear project development plan for the work, a dedicated staffing resource, and monitoring the implementation of the plan.
- ▶ Identifying adviser needs at the outset and building effective and regular methods of communication and feedback with them.
- ▶ Focusing relentlessly on what advisers need to fulfil their operational role.
- ▶ Building effective relationships with partners, including identifying key areas for co-operation.

b. Transferability of Practice

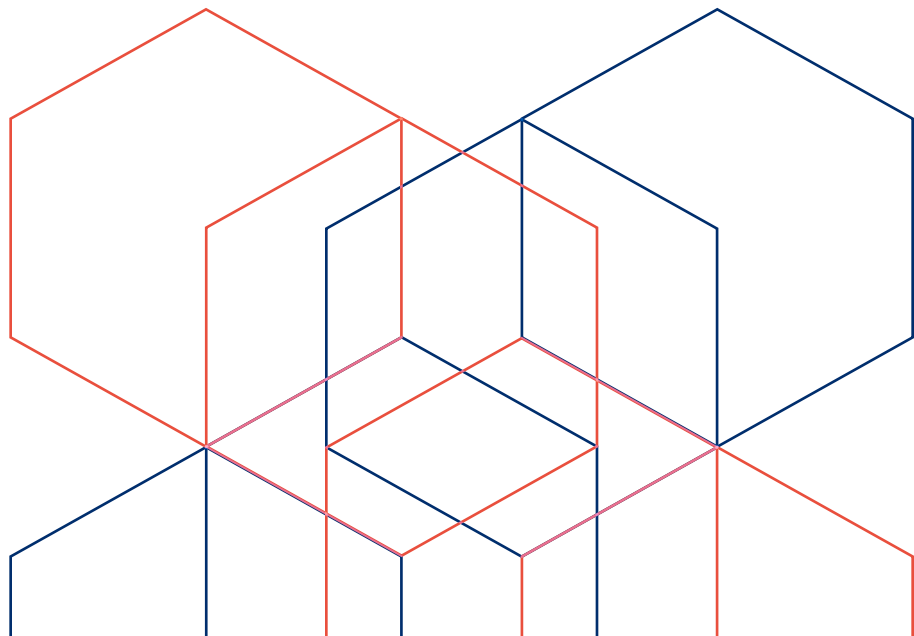
Much of the practice indicated is highly transferable to other areas, although the viability of a specialist LMI post will be dependent on the available resources.

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Case Study 4: Connexions Kent and Medway

Connexions Kent and Medway has adopted a **staff-centred approach** to the development of LMI within the organisation which has also benefited from **expert input** from the Warwick Institute for Employment Research (IER). The development and use of the **'Work for Tomorrow'** pack has transformed the way LMI is delivered in schools and the intranet **Careers Net Kent** has helped to ensure advisers have access to the resources they need to support their practice.

Organisational Background

Since 2005 Connexions Kent and Medway has been commissioned by Kent County Council to provide impartial and confidential advice, guidance, support and personal development services to all 13-19 year olds and those up to the age of 25 with learning difficulties or disabilities in Kent. It employs 273 staff who deliver services across its 12 Connexions Access Points and outreach services in local Jobcentre Plus offices, youth centres and gateways. It is also currently responsible for delivering a Careers, Information, Advice and Guidance package to 110 schools in the area. The package includes careers guidance for pupils and support to ensure that the schools have a careers education programme in place.

From 1st August 2012, its contractual services to schools will cease and from 31st August 2012 it will operate its core services, as Connexions, as CXX Ltd.

Approach to developing LMI

Connexions Kent and Medway developed its LMI approach as a result of a staff consultation. The consultation, conducted in collaboration with the Warwick Institute for Employment Research, was designed to explore practitioners' perceptions of their roles. As a result, it became apparent that practitioners wanted better LMI to inform their guidance practice. From there on, a LMI Super User Group was set up to engage with staff and school colleagues in order to inform the development of materials for practitioners.

Sharing LMI

a. Development of the 'Work for Tomorrow' pack

The LMI Super User Group worked with staff and school colleagues to ascertain what LMI they would find useful. They then worked in collaboration with the Warwick Institute for Employment Research to develop the Work for Tomorrow pack to house this information.

Obtaining reliable and robust LMI was key to their mission. IER were tasked with collating the raw data; the LMI Super User group then designed the materials for the pack that would be useful to practitioners and young people. Since their launch in late 2008, the materials have been continually developed based on users' feedback. The pack currently includes:

- ▶ Sectoral LMI sheets that provide an introduction to the sector, key statistics, possible jobs and what is likely to happen in the future, what skills are required and training provision to help get work in the sector.

- ▶ National, regional, county, surrounding county, and locality bound LMI sheets containing key employment statistics with further detail of sector and occupational coverage, and like for like comparisons all set out in text and colourful graphs and charts.

- ▶ A set of quirky careers handouts, which provide information on unusual jobs in up and coming sectors in the area. These contain key facts about the industry and who works in it, descriptions of the types of unusual jobs you can do, what skills and qualifications are required to enter these career paths, potential earnings, what might happen in the future, and signposting to other useful websites. These handouts were developed following feedback from schools and are designed to motivate gifted and talented students.

- ▶ Quizzes and worksheets for young people and handouts for parents to introduce the idea of LMI and its importance when thinking about options.

- ▶ A set of quality standards based on practitioners' needs to help them assess the reliability and validity of LMI from other sources.

Consulting with practitioners has been key to the success of these materials. It ensured that the key audience was engaged in the development process and that the materials were useful and fit for purpose. Presenting the information clearly and in a way that is easy to interpret was also important. The LMI Super User Group felt that it was essential to create a standardised layout for the LMI sheet so that practitioners knew where to access the same information when looking at sheets containing LMI for different areas.

The pack is shared with practitioners on Connexions Kent and Medway's intranet, Careers Net Kent, which is described below. Not only does this help to ensure that practitioners have the most up to date information, it also means that there is no cost involved in printing the pack, which was initially trialled but soon became unfeasible.

b. Careers Net Kent

The staff consultation also revealed that practitioners felt they would benefit from a central communication channel from which they could obtain information and advice. As a result, work began to develop a staff intranet system in early 2009. The LMI Super-User Group consulted with practitioners regarding the design and content of the site. It currently provides a wealth of advice regarding CEIAG practice for advisers with differing levels of experience as well as news stories, events information and resources, including the Work for Tomorrow pack and a Careers Bulletin created by a local school which contains LMI. However, the site also has additional functionality including the ability to: comment on news stories and other resources; set up groups and forums; and set up user profiles and add users as friends. The site also sends email notifications when updates have been made. Careers Net Kent therefore ensures that good practice, including LMI, is easily shared amongst practitioners and promotes a sense of community. This has been particularly useful for Careers Education Co-ordinators in schools, who otherwise work in very small teams.

c. Kent Choices Magazine

In addition to the worksheets and quizzes in the Work for Tomorrow pack, Connexions Kent and Medway has published a magazine called [Kent Choices](#), which also introduces the idea of LMI to young people. Kent Choices is created by Connexions Kent and Medway, Kent Choices and Kent County Council, and is sponsored by the local paper, the Kent Messenger. It is provided to all year 11 students to help them consider their careers options. There are several pages within the magazine on the importance of researching a potential career path. These pages cover the importance of ascertaining if a career is right for you, considering if it will lead to future employment opportunities, and culminates in work trends in Kent, including the largest employment sectors and key growth areas. Practitioners felt that the magazine embedded LMI in the wider CEIAG context for young people and provided a “good local feel”, which is important.

Using LMI

a. Training for Practitioners

Team leaders received initial training to introduce them to the Work for Tomorrow pack, the quality standards for practitioners and Careers Net Kent; they were then charged with cascading this information to their team of advisers. It was felt that individuals were initially fearful of LMI, but their fears lifted following the training.

“People think they’re going to become entrenched in stats. Of course, when they look at it they go...this is really useful.”

Rebecca Towner – Guidance Development Officer

Keeping LMI on people’s agendas has been a challenge; however, this is achieved through regular meetings for advisers and careers co-ordinators. These meetings provide a platform for sharing good practice and LMI is a standing agenda item. In addition, there is an annual LMI event in the summer, which is a refresher session for practitioners. Aside from these more formal gatherings, the automatic mail-outs on Careers Net Kent ensure that advisers are kept up to date with any developments.

There is also a strong emphasis on practitioners being responsible for their own CPD. Advisers are expected to keep up to date with LMI, by ensuring they use current materials and conduct their own research. The quality standards for practitioners help advisers to ascertain if a source is reliable and valid. It was also noted that it is important to help advisers realise that they do have a good awareness of softer LMI from their day to day role.

b. Using the ‘Work for Tomorrow’ pack

The Work for Tomorrow pack has been incredibly useful to both Connexions staff and to schools. It has provided practitioners with readily accessible information that they can share with young people to help them make informed decisions. Practitioners found that being able to provide young people with facts and figures about areas of interest, as well as careers they perhaps had not thought about, helped them to think a bit more realistically about their options and steer them away from careers with no local employment opportunities.

Connexions Kent and Medway also feels strongly that LMI needs to be part of a wider careers, information, advice and guidance approach that is most successfully taught when it is embedded at a subject level. The Work for Tomorrow pack makes this viable for teachers and one careers co-ordinator made photocopies of specific LMI sheets and worksheets and posted these in teachers’ pigeon holes.

“Teachers really value the idea of it being integral to what they teach. They don’t see careers education and the Labour Market as something that is a periphery. Actually, it can be dropped in, so the kids don’t even know about it. That’s how it should be delivered.”

Rebecca Towner – Guidance Development Officer

In addition, the use of LMI sheets, worksheets and quizzes with young people helps them to develop their own research skills in this area, which helps to equip them with skills to do this going forward.

Outcomes and Transferability

a. Outcomes

As a result of conducting a staff consultation, Connexions Kent and Medway has been able to focus its efforts on developing resources that meet practitioners’ needs. The key outcome of its work is that practitioners now have a set of user-friendly LMI resources to draw upon, which they helped to design. As a result, practitioners therefore have an increased awareness and knowledge of LMI and are ultimately able to provide young people with better CEIAG, which in turn means that young people are better equipped to make informed career choices.

Communication amongst the practitioner community has also improved as a result of the development of Careers Net Kent. Not only has the frequency of communication increased, but also the speed and efficiency in communicating with a wide audience. This has meant that practitioners have been alerted to the most up to date LMI resources in real-time.

b. Key success criteria in using and sharing LMI

Connexions Kent and Medway pointed to a number of success criteria, including:

- ▶ The staff consultation was vital in order to design and produce resources with the correct content in a user-friendly way. In doing so, this helped to ensure staff buy-in.
- ▶ Having an LMI Super User Group provided a driving force to ensure that the work was progressing.
- ▶ The use of quality, current data from a reliable source gave advisers confidence in using LMI with young people and ensured they were providing them with accurate careers education and IAG.
- ▶ Using a standardised layout for the LMI sheets in the Work for Tomorrow pack meant that practitioners were able to familiarise themselves with the layout of the materials quickly. Therefore, if a practitioner needed to access specific LMI, they immediately knew where to look for it. This has helped to ensure that the pack is continuously used by practitioners.
- ▶ Ensuring that the materials in the Work for Tomorrow pack used simple language that was easy to interpret meant that they were suitable for a wider audience. It also helped to ensure that they are used consistently by practitioners.
- ▶ Embedding LMI in their wider CEIAG approach has helped to keep LMI on practitioners' agendas.

c. Transferability

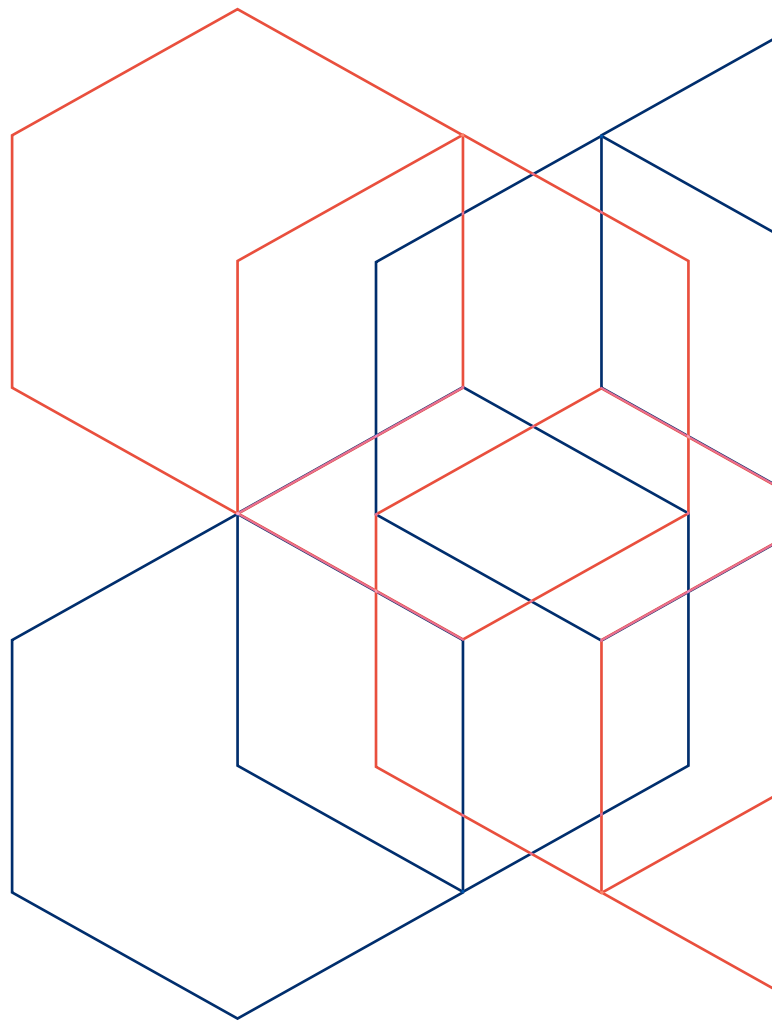
Although the resources used by Connexions Kent and Medway required some additional resources to initially develop, their on-going costs are relatively low. Therefore, these products are highly transferable to other services, although they would need to decide how to use their available resources to meet their own needs.

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Case Study 5: GMCP

GMCP has implemented a number of systems and processes and developed a range of resources to support the development and application of career-related labour-market information (LMI). These include a **Toolkit** for Personal Advisers, an electronic **e-brief**, a series of **practitioner resources** and a vacancy search facility. This case study provides an overview of these activities but focuses in particular on an ESF-funded project, **Jobs for Tomorrow**. Developed in partnership and in response to the changing economic needs of the region, this initiative is helping to raise awareness of current and future opportunities in four growth sectors and shape the supply of skills.

Organisational Background

GMCP was established in 2001 and currently employs approximately 350 staff. The organisation provides careers information advice and guidance services to young people aged 13-19 on behalf of the six Local Authorities in Greater Merseyside. Targeted services for vulnerable groups are delivered through Connexions Centres and a range of other venues including community centres, libraries, one-stop shops, schools and colleges. Webchat, email, freephone and text message services are also in operation. GMCP is the prime contractor for the National Careers Service (formerly Next Step) provision in the North West and works with 25 sub-contractors to deliver IAG services to adults. Next Step Advisers operate out of Connexions Centres and community venues and are also co-located with Jobcentre Plus. In addition, GMCP delivers a range of contracts, for example, those funded through the European Social Fund (ESF), the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Department of Education (DfE).

Sharing LMI

Liverpool City region has benefited from considerable inward investment and regeneration over the last ten years. As a result, the local economy has grown substantially although it still lags behind the rest of the UK. Four key priority sectors – The Knowledge Economy, SuperPort, the Low Carbon Economy, and the Visitor Economy – have been identified as having the potential to help close the productivity gap and generate additional employment opportunities for the local population. However, in order to realise this potential, further investment in the economy as well as in the skills of the current and future workforce is required.

a. Partnership working

The Liverpool City Region Employment and Skills Board successfully secured ESF funding to support GMCP to raise awareness of the priority growth sectors and the opportunities they offer for young people and adults both now and in the future. With a total budget of £112k (£30k ESF funding and £82k GMCP match), the 'Jobs for Tomorrow' project was delivered in partnership and overseen by a steering group comprising representatives from: Merseyside Colleges Association, 16-19 Sub-Regional Group, Greater Merseyside Learning Providers Federation, Employer Coalition, The Mersey Partnership, Liverpool Science Park, Skills for Logistics, Liverpool Chamber/ Low Carbon Liverpool, Mersey Maritime, National Apprenticeship Service, Jobcentre Plus and Liverpool City Council 14-19 team. A series of resources have been produced which are helping challenge the thinking and career aspirations of young people, their parents/carers and adults as

well as helping to inform career guidance practice and curriculum developments within local learning providers.

The resources are available to download from the GMCP website (which receives 60,000 to 80,000 hits per month) from the [Jobs for Tomorrow](#) section. These include sector leaflets, case studies, information on apprenticeships, qualifications and progression routes, and lesson plans. A series of film profiles showcasing the views and real life experiences of local people undertaking a range of jobs in the priority growth sectors have also been produced with support from Careersbox. These are available to both view and embed in partners' websites.

The resources present information about the growth sectors and the opportunities they provide in a clear and concise way that is easy for the target audience to understand as well as use in their decision-making. Although challenging to produce in the short timeframe available, the videos in particular, with their use of local accents and organisations known to the people of Greater Merseyside, effectively bring the opportunities to life and convey the commitment and enthusiasm of the people already working in the sectors.

b. Personal Advisers' Toolkit

GMCP established an LMI Task Group comprising representatives from each of the six Local Authority Areas in Greater Merseyside to examine organisational and wider LMI needs. This group is now dormant but while active it identified the need for a central repository of LMI so that advisers could access and make greater use of this resource in their interventions with clients and partners. As a result the PA Toolkit was developed. The toolkit is located on the GMCP's intranet, alongside other resources such as Careerscape, Exodus and Kudos which advisers regularly access to support their work with clients. It houses key documents, a list of useful websites, group work sessions and information on higher education in the form of 'issues' leaflets. These leaflets have been produced with input from a number of professional bodies and provide information on 38 subject areas, including the range of programmes available within an area and the potential career routes for graduates with different degrees, as well as generic information on student fees and graduate job search skills. Although the central Learning and Labour Market Services team assume overall editorial responsibility for content contained in the Toolkit, advisers are encouraged to contribute to the repository of information and resources.

c. LMI Snapshot

The LMI snapshot is a weekly electronic e-briefing sent to staff and key partners. It was developed in response to recommendations by the LMI Task Group that a regular summary of the issues affecting the local labour market should be produced to ease the time pressures on advisers and prevent duplication of effort. The LMI snapshot contains articles based on information gained from the local and national press on employment and skills issues, including job gains and losses, which are impacting on the Greater Merseyside area.

The LMI Snapshot is complemented by a weekly vacancy bulletin which is also available to staff and partners and features a 'job of the week', vacancies by Local Authority area and informa-

tion on events and courses. In addition, advisers have access to 'Local Context', a report on the labour market and economy in the Greater Merseyside area which contains information on the four growth sectors, developments in the local infrastructure and the composition of the labour market, including unemployment and deprivation, educational performance and the distribution of employment by sector in each of the six Local Authority areas. The distribution of employment in each area is visualised through use of coloured boxes which represent the different employment sectors; the size of the box reflects the number of jobs in that sector as a proportion of the labour market as a whole in the area. This enables advisers to immediately identify the sectors that employ the most significant numbers of staff in their locality as well as the distance a client may need to travel to secure employment in their chosen field.

Using LMI

a. Staff development

A series of training sessions on Jobs for Tomorrow have been held with GMCP staff designed to ensure they understand the range of resources available and the ways in which they can be used to enhance their professional development as well as their work with clients. Staff have subsequently delivered awareness-raising sessions on the growth sectors to local partners, including schools and colleges. These help to ensure staff at all levels are aware of wider economic developments and the implications for their learners' skills development and career choices. GMCP is also supporting partners to utilise the lesson plans and integrate the wider resources into the curriculum.

In addition to the training on Jobs for Tomorrow, GMCP staff working with adults as well as young people have access to wider training opportunities ranging from information-giving sessions involving third parties such as Sector Skills Councils designed to update them on developments within a specific sector, through to staff development on 'Using LMI'. The 'Using LMI' sessions are tailored to the needs of the audience and can include an 'LMI update', how to identify and assess sources of robust LMI, and the use of case studies to explore the application of LMI in practice. The extent to which adult advisers, including those working for sub-contractors, are embedding LMI in their interventions with clients is monitored through quality systems, including action plan reviews and observations.

b. Practitioner resources

The i-choose LMI Pack and associated Practitioner's Guide are key resources for practitioners working in schools to deliver programmes of career education, information, advice and guidance to learners at Key Stage 3, 4 and 5. The guide sets out what the programme covers, who it is designed for and why it is required. An overview of the programme content and structure is also provided along with information on how to assess progress and a series of career resources. The LMI Pack is tailored to the needs of each of the six sub-regions and contains complete lesson plans, two labour market DVDs on specific sectors, information that can be used to create lesson plans to illustrate the composition and structure of the local labour market, and a pen drive which contains a series of powerpoint presentations.

b. Vacancy service

A Centralised Vacancy Services Team deals with all opportunities for young people across Greater Merseyside. The GMCP website provides a [search facility](#) for anyone seeking training and employment opportunities in the Greater Merseyside area. The facility draws on vacancy information captured by GMCP, Jobcentre Plus (JCP) and the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) and enables users to search for jobs, voluntary opportunities and training by district and employment sector. Details of the opportunities can be viewed online but potential applicants must contact GMCP in person at a centre or by telephone, email, text or webchat for information on how to apply. This allows GMCP to assess whether the individual requires IAG, such as support with their application or interview preparation. Registered users can save their searches, receive text or email notifications when similar vacancies appear, and email links to their friends. Job seekers value this facility because it provides a single portal to a range of opportunities. Employers and training providers benefit because they are able to promote opportunities, such as Foundation Learning and Access to Apprenticeships, which are not advertised through JCP or NAS. Also, the Centralised Vacancy Team runs a system that matches employed-status vacancies to individual NEET young people's career and location preferences, notifying them of relevant opportunities via email or letter.

Outcomes and Transferability

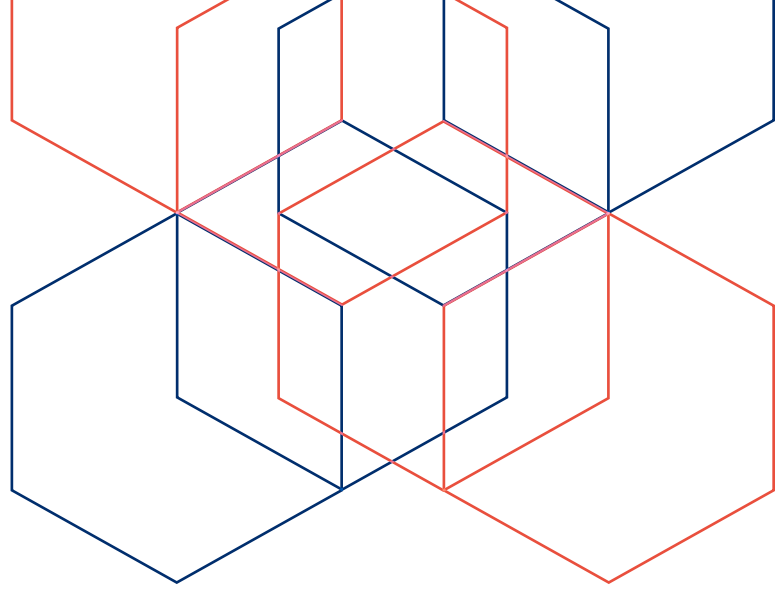
a. Outcomes

As a result of the resources produced and the associated training on 'Jobs for Tomorrow', GMCP has successfully raised awareness and understanding of the strategic and economic importance of the four priority growth sectors for Greater Merseyside amongst GMCP staff and partners. Young people, their parents/carers and adults are becoming increasingly aware of current and future opportunities within these sectors and their career aspirations are being challenged as a result. The project is helping to shape the curriculum within some learning providers, resulting in a shift away from provision in declining sectors towards the development of new programmes that address the needs of the growth areas. This will have a positive impact on the supply of skills moving forward as it will ensure local people have access to the training they need in order to take advantage of the new employment opportunities. By working in partnership, key stakeholders have ensured a joined-up approach to tackling identified skills needs in the region which should result in greater prosperity for all in the future and help to narrow the productivity gap with the rest of the UK. The investment made in systems and processes, as well as in staff development, ensures staff are aware of the LMI available and able to access it easily for their own development and their work with clients.

b. Key success criteria in using and sharing LMI

GMCP have identified a number of factors that have been key to their success:

- ▶ Translating strategic economic goals into sector-based action plans with clearly identifiable aims and objectives supports effective partnership working and the development of joined-up approaches to using and sharing LMI.



- ▶ A central repository for LMI and associated resources that can be accessed by staff, irrespective of their location, co-ordinated and monitored by a central team. Mechanisms to encourage staff to regularly access the repository, such as co-location of other resources.
- ▶ Training for staff to ensure they are able to effectively access and utilise LMI. This includes training on how to assess the quality and robustness of different sources of LMI and how to interpret them for use with different client groups.
- ▶ Avoid making assumptions about the level of information and knowledge different partners hold.
- ▶ Presenting LMI in ways that staff and clients understand is key. Visual representations of statistical information are easier to interpret than numerical data. Utilising technology to develop interactive resources that bring the labour market to life has more impact than purely text-based resources. However, when developing resources such as film profiles it is important to ensure they feature local people with local accents so that viewers can relate to them.
- ▶ It is important to be mindful of lead in time which is often required to successfully engage employers and other stakeholders in the development of resources.

c. Transferability

The implementation of the new policy arrangements for career guidance in England is impacting on GMCP as the key provider of IAG services for both young people and adults in the region. As a result, the organisation is in a state of transition and is operating in an increasingly commercial environment. Other similar organisations are experiencing the same challenges. Although much of the activity undertaken in Greater Merseyside is transferable into other settings, it will require an ongoing strategic commitment from the organisational leadership and, in some cases, external resources.

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Case Study 6: Jobcentre Plus Derbyshire District Office

Alongside its core service delivery, the Derbyshire District Employer and Partnership team is implementing a range of national practice, as well as its own, to help use and share LMI with its employees and partners. Within this array of activities it is particularly worth noting its use of an **Employment and Partnership team** to synthesise LMI for Personal Advisers; its partnership work including being the **single point of contact for employers**, as well as **work with Sector Skills Councils and training providers**; in addition to its development work on the **'Making Derby Work'** project.

Organisational Background

Jobcentre Plus is a public employment service and part of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). It provides services that support people of working age from welfare into work, and helps employers to fill their vacancies.

The Derbyshire District provides a county bound service managing the delivery of Jobcentre Plus provision across 17 offices within its 10 local authority areas. The district is the second smallest in the country and is catered for by 670 members of JCP staff. It covers a diverse range of urban and rural areas with differing labour markets. The South of the district has several large employers who provide high levels of employment in sectors such as manufacturing and the public sector. These large employers include Derby Hospitals as well as Rolls-Royce, Toyota and Bombardier and their respective supply chains, which provide high spec engineering and manufacturing jobs in the locality. Whereas the North of the district is slightly more deprived and is dominated by small and medium sized employers, covering sectors such as retail and hospitality, leisure and tourism.

Sharing LMI

The District uses a number of mechanisms to help share LMI among its employees and partners, which are outlined below.

a. EPAs, EPMs and ERMs synthesising LMI for PAs

Employer and Partnership Advisers and Managers and Employer Relationship Managers (EPAs; EPMs and ERMs) are tasked with developing working relationships with employers and key partners in the area in order to:

- ▶ To find out about current and future employment needs and ensure that employers are aware of the support available to them
- ▶ Establish why employers are not filling their vacancies and develop solutions to address any issues e.g. arranging pre-employment training for candidates
- ▶ Account manage large recruitment drives and ensure candidates are matched to employers' needs
- ▶ Develop work experience opportunities and inform the development of jobs/enterprise clubs
- ▶ Act as the redundancy single point of contact if affected company is not deemed a "national employer" or the number being made redundant is under 20.

The Employer and Partnership team (EPT) synthesises softer LMI alongside key LMI from the Knowledge Hub (mentioned below) and cascades this to Personal Advisers. This is achieved through weekly emails and daily team 'huddles' which are possible due to the re-location of these individuals from a single centralised office out into local delivery offices. Typical updates include key LMI data from the Knowledge Hub, such as the top 10 placed and unfilled vacancies, and top 10 Job Point searches; as well as softer LMI gathered through their day to day activities, such as information on large recruitment drives, urgent vacancies, work experience opportunities, pre-employment training opportunities and any new job clubs. This arrangement means that PAs are equipped with crucial real time LMI when advising their customers.

Recent practice in Clay Cross provides an example of how this set up has worked particularly well. Through partnership working between the Local Authority and the Employer and Partnership team it became apparent that a supermarket was needed in the locality and the opportunity was put out to tender. JCP were asked to provide wage comparisons and a skills analysis within the area to inform decisions about pay rates and to assess if any pre-employment training was required. When the contract was awarded to a supermarket chain the Employer and Partnership team negotiated that a percentage of the employment opportunities would be ring-fenced for local people. The team communicated this message to PAs in local delivery offices who marketed the employment opportunities to local people and advertised specific pre-employment training opportunities. As a result, 157 long-term JSA claimants entered employment. JCP continues to work with the employer and key stakeholders.

b. Knowledge Hub

All JCP employees have access to an intranet system called 'Knowledge Hub' which hosts a wealth of LMI. Employees can find information on: local LMI, including local recruitment drives, new businesses and redundancies; national LMI, including sector news; sector job profiles and related advice for Job Seekers; supply and demand data and charts at a national, regional, district and local level; claimant counts and on-off flows, further broken down by claimant type; vacancies and jobs notified, further broken down by industry type/occupation; and analysis of vacancies to identify under-supply and over-supply.

It was noted that the charted visualisation of supply and demand data, and particularly using red and green to denote over-supply and under-supply, was particularly effective in helping PAs to understand LMI and subsequently better advise their customers. However, whilst this information is available to all employees, time constraints are problematic for PAs who will not always have time to look explore Knowledge Hub.

c. Partnership working

Integrated Employment and Skills Board – Single point of contact for Employers

The EPT meets with the Integrated Employment and Skills (IES) Board on a monthly basis, which is made up of colleges, providers and key partners such as local authorities. The purpose of the Board is to better understand the current and future needs of employers in the area. During these meetings members share

LMI and good practice in recruitment methods. This activity has resulted in all partners agreeing to practice a joined-up approach when working with employers. Employers are now contacted by a single organisation and referred to the most appropriate organisation. It is this approach which has helped to support the successful delivery of Sector Based Work Academies (outlined in section 3), whereby the EPT worked in partnership with recruitment agencies and colleges to help deliver the respective recruitment drives.

Employers and recruitment agencies

Better communication has improved working relationships between JCP, employers and recruitment agencies. This has helped to better understand local employer demand and has opened up doors to a future flow of opportunities from its established contacts.

Alongside the work of the Employer and Partnership team to improve working relationships with employers, the team has also commissioned research to explore employers' satisfaction of the services they receive from JCP. The first wave of research is being conducted with 150 of their key employers and they plan to draw upon these findings to make improvements to their future service.

SSCs

Working with Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) has been key to improving organisational sectoral knowledge. To date the Employer and Partnership team has worked most notably with two SSCs as outlined below:

► SEMTA: During a time when there was a high risk of large scale sector redundancies, the EPT asked SEMTA to deliver a session to its employees. The session focussed on improving employees' knowledge of the sector and what skills individuals facing redundancy possessed. This enabled employees to better understand what sector opportunities were available in the locality and how they could best support individuals facing redundancy.

► Skills for Logistics: despite candidates having relevant qualifications, the district experienced high numbers of unfilled HGV Driver vacancies. As a result, the District Office worked with Skills for Logistics, DHL and Chesterfield College. The project involved candidates undergoing an assessment, conducted by DHL, and if they passed they were sent on a short refresher course, delivered by Chesterfield College, which also included forklift truck and customer service training. 90% of candidates have successfully gone through the project and are now being matched to jobs.

It was noted that having a good understanding of sectors and the specific roles that exist within them really helped PAs to understand what a day to day role might look like for a potential employee. This helped them to better understand what skills might be required of candidates and better match candidates to specific employment opportunities. For example, working on a car production line requires dexterity, IT literacy in order to read and write reports, and agility to fit into small spaces – it is not all about using tools.

The Employer and Partnership team is hoping to work with other SSCs in the future to help further improve employees' sectoral knowledge through the delivery of presentations to staff by relevant SSC representatives.

Redundancy support

The Employer and Partnership team is working in collaboration with Welfare Rights (Derby City Council) and the National Careers Service to deliver a redundancy package providing those affected with all the necessary information. In addition, it is the responsibility of the team to ensure that PAs are aware of any large scale redundancies so that they are fully prepared to deal with any new claimants that may enter their portfolio of work.

As part of their negotiated redundancy support service to Derby City Council, the EPT recently supported a 'Jobs Fair'. The team organised 12 support stands, including stands for JCP, HMRC, Welfare Rights, Next Step and local training providers; and 17 employer stands. Derby City Council agreed that it was important that the event was open to LA employees, any other public sector employees under threat of redundancy, as well as 16-24 year olds. The event was advertised through the JCP and advisers' networks, posters in children's centres, libraries and schools, on the radio and even on BBC East Midlands Today. In total the Jobs Fair attracted over 1,000 16-24 year olds and over 400 public sector workers. Employers were staggered by the quality of candidates and as a result of the success of this event, the Mayor has asked Jobcentre Plus to repeat it. The team is currently looking at the impacts on attendees and employers.

Using LMI

In addition to the work being undertaken to share LMI, the District EPT is also using LMI in several different ways to improve their work. These activities are summarised below.

a. Making Derby Work

The Demand for Skills in Derby and Derbyshire 2009 – 2023 report highlighted that Derby has a higher than national average proportion of young people aged between 10 and 25; as a result, there will be higher demand for future jobs.⁵⁹ The research aimed to establish the skill sets required by employers in priority sectors over the next 3 to 15 years and to consider if these differed from their requirements today.

As a result of this research, Derbyshire JCP worked in collaboration with the Derby City Partnership and Derby City Council to further explore the needs of priority sector employers. Research was conducted with over 400 employers in the area in order to map these future skills needs. The priority sectors in the area include Creative Industries; Health and Social Care; Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure; Logistics; Manufacturing and Engineering; Public Sector; and Retail. The research resulted in five key recommendations for the city's strategic partners: focussing on schools and young people; linking learning provision to the employment and skills needs of business sectors; providing a seamless service to employers to support the creation of future job opportunities – the Derby "offer"; enabling adults to access jobs in priority sectors; and establishing

⁵⁹ See <http://www.derbyskills-2023.co.uk/>

an “enabling” organisation such as the Making Derby Work team to lead the delivery of these recommendations with local partners.⁶⁰

Work has already been undertaken to action recommendations from this research, some of which is outlined below.

Working with schools and young people

The project team has developed cloud-based technology on huddle.com to provide a platform on which to share up to date information with schools regarding the required skills to work in priority growth sectors in the area. In addition, a DVD has been developed to help bring these points to life for young people. It also includes several dramatisations about transferable work appropriate skills, which employers are concerned that young people are not developing, such as professional behaviour in interviews and the workplace.

The team is also hoping to continue with previous work undertaken by the Derbyshire Education and Business Partnership to increase the usage of the School Ambassador model incorporating employers from all of the key business sectors in the city. This involved STEM employers visiting schools to talk to young people about working in their sectors and answering any questions. This worked particularly well with Rolls-Royce who also took on work experience students, which resulted in young people moving into jobs and apprenticeships for both Rolls-Royce and their supply chains. The project team already have a list of employers who have agreed to this in principle.

Enabling adults to access jobs in priority sectors

The Making Derby Work project team have developed relationships with employers in key sectors to deliver work taster sessions. These short focussed sessions involve employers visiting outreach centres to talk to JSA claimants about what jobs in their organisations entail and dispel any myths about who they employ, such as not necessarily needing to have formal qualifications and that transferable softer skills are more valuable. This worked well when Asda delivered a session in a children’s centre, which motivated JSA claimants to find jobs in the sector helped by their PAs and training providers if intervention was necessary. However, whilst these sessions have been successful, further Regional Growth Fund funding is required to take this work forward.

b. Sector Based Work Academies

In a bid to help Job Seekers back into work and to ensure that employers in key sectors are able to fill their vacancies quickly and effectively, Jobcentre Plus are delivering Sector Based Work Academies.⁶¹ The Academies are designed to help meet employers’ immediate and future recruitment needs as well as ensuring that their workforce has the right skills to sustain and grow their business.

They can last up to six weeks and have three flexible key components:

- ▶ Pre-employment training delivered in association with a FE college or training provider - relevant to the needs of the employer’s business and sector
- ▶ A work experience placement
- ▶ A guaranteed job interview.

EPMs are tasked with developing relationships with employers to promote this opportunity and fully understand their needs. Once an Academy is in development, they cascade this information to PAs who then recruit suitable candidates for the Academies.

The EPT has run numerous Academies. These have included a manufacturing Academy for Toyota, a customer service Academy for HEROtsc, a food Academy for Thorntons, a public sector Academy for Derby Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and a logistics Academy for Sports Direct. It also found that Academies work well if you group together numerous small employers operating in the same sector, which they did for the care sector. This approach meant that smaller employers were able to benefit in same way as larger employers and that candidates were able to experience the same benefits as those in other Academies.

These initiatives help to ensure that employers are able to recruit individuals to meet their needs and also help customers – particularly those furthest from employment – into viable employment opportunities. Their success is largely due to understanding employers’ needs and maintaining open communication with all parties involved, including recruitment agencies and training providers.

c. Using Job Point information to inform work experience

Data collected from Job Points in JCP offices provides PAs with insight into the most popular jobs their customers are searching for. As a result, the Employer and Partnership team has worked with employers to develop work experience opportunities to match the jobs that their customers are looking for. These opportunities are then communicated to PAs who market them to their customers and as a result, customers acquire experience in the sector they would like to work, thus improving their employability in the sector. This arrangement has resulted in several positive employment outcomes for JCP customers, for example one month ‘landscaping’ was a top search-term on the Job Points, so the city EPM marketed work experience opportunities to a garden centre, which resulted in a couple of employment opportunities for the work experience candidates.

d. Advisers using LMI and future development

The work conducted by the Making Derby Work team has helped to improve employees’ understanding of the key sectors in the area. This coupled with supply and demand data from Knowledge Hub, and the work of the Employer and Partnership team to establish current and forthcoming recruitment drives, work experience opportunities and sector knowledge provides PAs with a vast pool of LMI on which they can draw.

⁶⁰ See <http://issuu.com/marketingderby/docs/makingderbywork>

⁶¹ See: <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/sbwa-employer-guide.pdf>

As Districts are provided with greater flexibilities in their service delivery, the EPT encourage PAs to develop their own LMI knowledge. As part of this plan, PAs are being encouraged to access a self assessment area of the Knowledge Hub so they can assess their own knowledge and work out what areas they might need to develop.

However, the current arrangement has provided PAs with a far better understanding of the local labour market and what it has to offer. Alongside an increased understanding of sectors and what it means to work in them, this has allowed PAs to better advise their customers when initially completing their Job Seekers Agreement and also in on-going customer meetings.

Outcomes and Transferability

a. Outcomes

Although the evidence to date is anecdotal, it suggests that the approach is having a positive impact on JCP staff, customers and employers. The Employer and Partnership team will have further evidence of the impact of their work once their employer survey is complete, which will help to inform their work going forward. The most notable outcomes to date include an improved two way flow of information with partners, and better working relationships with employers and recruitment agencies; all of which has improved IAG and employability outcomes for customers.

b. Key success criteria in using and sharing LMI

Partnership working has been of paramount importance for the District. The sharing of knowledge and information, as well as agreeing on a joint approach to working with employers has been instrumental to the work that has been carried out to date. Without this, the work would not have been anywhere near as successful as it has been.

The Employment and Partnership team have also played a significant role in the District's success. In addition to being the external face of JCP to employers and partners alike, they have a pivotal bridging role between external organisations and PAs. Re-locating this central team out into to local offices has had a huge impact on improving the LMI that is imparted to PAs.

c. Transferability

As JCP local offices are afforded greater flexibility in their service delivery, it was felt that other Districts could adopt approaches used by Derbyshire District as they chose, although they would of course need to decide how to use their available resources to meet their own needs.

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Case Study 7: Jobcentre Plus Durham and Tees Valley District Office

Alongside its core service delivery, the Durham and Tees Valley District office is implementing a range of national practice, as well as its own, to help use and share LMI with its employees and partners. Its use of **Jobseeker Opportunity Managers** to liaise with employers, a **Labour Market Information Team** to assimilate LMI and cascade this to staff, and its **partnership work with Local Enterprise Partnerships** are particularly noteworthy.

Organisational Background

Durham and Tees Valley District has 21 Jobcentre Plus outlets. Offices are grouped in seven clusters which are broadly co-terminus with Local Authority areas.⁶² Jobcentre Plus employs the equivalent of approximately 930 full-time staff in the District delivering employment and working age benefit related services.

The District covers areas which have very different labour markets. For example, the Tees Valley still has a strong manufacturing base, including its long-established petrochemical industry. By contrast the larger towns in the district have seen significant moves away from heavy manufacturing and the growth of new employment opportunities in retail, service and other sectors. Durham still has a substantial manufacturing base but has seen an expansion, for example, in employment opportunities in customer contact/call centres.

Sharing LMI

a. Jobcentre Plus Jobseeker Opportunity Managers

Each Local Authority area in the District has a Jobcentre Plus Jobseeker Opportunity Manager. Their role is to understand the employer and economic geography of their areas and, in particular, to:

- ▶ establish employers' current and future employment and skills development needs through visits and other activities;
- ▶ ensure employers are made aware of suitable provision that meets their recruitment needs;
- ▶ work with employers to plan recruitment, including ensuring that suitable candidates are prepared and referred; and
- ▶ support customers in their transition into employment by designing pre-recruitment training route ways in partnership with the Skills Funding Agency, local providers and other key stakeholders.

It was indicated that this role is crucial in both understanding and supporting employers in the local labour market. Joint partnership working is particularly used in supporting large-scale employer recruitment exercises, where it was said that Jobcentre Plus staff have 'worked closely with employers and pulled in resources from partners to develop an enhanced and joined-up service'.

⁶² These are: Darlington; Durham North (with offices in towns such as Durham, Stanley and Peterlee); Durham South North (with offices in towns such as Bishop Auckland and Crook); Hartlepool; Middlesbrough; Tees Valley East (with offices in towns such as Redcar and Loftus); Tees Valley West (with offices in towns such as Billingham and Stockton).

Information from employer visits and other engagement is shared with advisers in a number of ways, including through what were described as daily 'Pitstop briefing meetings', e-mail and through posting urgent messages and updates on a staff whiteboard.

c. Intranet and Knowledge Hub

A number of labour market sites are accessible to advisers within the Jobcentre Plus intranet which include:

- ▶ A Knowledge Hub - national and local information on the labour market, sector analysis and opportunities available.
- ▶ A Vulnerable Customer Hub - national and local information on advice, support and opportunities for people who have health problems and disabilities, drug and alcohol problems, caring responsibilities or other barriers to work.
- ▶ Local labour market pages - giving LMI briefings at national, district and sub-district levels.
- ▶ A District Provision tool which gives details of all DWP contracted and non-contracted provision available to customers.

Additionally, career profile information covering 22 employment sectors is held on the Jobcentre Plus Adviser Hub,⁶³ which link to external websites/sources (including relevant Sector Skills Councils). An interesting feature of these profiles is that they contain a section on 'myth-busting' which seeks to challenge common misunderstandings and/or stereotypes that customers may have about particular areas of work. Advisers also use a number of internet sites, although it was indicated these tend to provide information about actual jobs and opportunities rather than a broader labour market picture. Apart from the Directgov site (which includes information for jobseekers and access to Jobcentre Plus services), these typically include recruitment sites (e.g. Monster) and those regarding learning opportunities (e.g. learndirect and local college prospectuses).

d. Labour Market Information Team

The Labour Market Information team (an LMI Manager and Officer) keep an overview of labour market developments in the District and wider region. This includes seeking out and receiving economic briefings, statistics and analysis from a variety of sources and translating it into relevant 'intelligence' for advisers. The intelligence is made available through labour market pages on the intranet and typically includes:

- ▶ Updates in the form of a bulletin regarding key developments (e.g. companies moving into the area), alongside a searchable archive of recent news stories so that advisers can find out about developments over a period in the District or surrounding area (e.g. developments at Nissan, including plans to develop electric vehicles).
- ▶ LMI Summaries produced on a monthly basis which provide an overview of the labour markets in Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) areas, as well as details of 'jobs notified and sought' in Local Authority/cluster group areas.

⁶³ Other information on the Adviser Hub includes: Advice for jobseekers; quick links to helpful web-sites and information about opportunities arising through the London 2012 Olympics.

The latter are particularly helpful as they can highlight 'mismatches' in terms of supply and demand in the labour market, although it was indicated that on their own as raw data 'they give an indication, but the information has to be treated with caution'.

Additionally, in consultation with advisers, the team seek to identify gaps in information provision. Recent work here has included:

- ▶ Identifying companies that recruit mainly, or indeed exclusively, on-line for some or all of their opportunities and ensuring that necessary information was collated and placed on the intranet.
- ▶ Researching and developing a comprehensive list of recruitment and temporary work agencies,⁶⁴ ensuring that necessary information is made available (e.g. the area they cover, the areas of recruitment in which they specialise) and that contact/web-site details were checked/verified.

e. Partnership Working – Local Enterprise Partnerships

The LMI team and other colleagues work closely with the two Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs)⁶⁵ covering the District. Both are developing sites where organisations can share labour market information. For example, Tees Valley Unlimited has a LMI User group, including Jobcentre Plus, Local Authorities, Next Step, Teesside University representatives and will shortly launch its Skills Portal. As part of this it has commissioned a series of career-focussed video-clips covering opportunities with companies in the Tees Valley.

Opportunities are actively sought - with and through LEPs – to look at ways of pooling funding resources. Typical initiatives include local opportunities fairs. Some of these are themed around topics such as enterprise and volunteering, others are targeted at specific customer groups.

Partners noted that they valued the LMI products that Jobcentre Plus produce, including the data regarding vacancies sought and those that are most available ('Top Ten').

Using LMI

a. Advisers using LMI

Customers agree Jobseekers' Agreements (JSAG) with Jobcentre Plus advisers when they first attend to apply for working age, active welfare benefits. Within this, the adviser will typically agree up to three job goals and appropriate actions the customer must take to enable them to quickly take up employment.

Advisers have a view to the labour market in agreeing the JSAG, for which they use the products and information sources outlined. Where a customer requires more in-depth and informed support on careers (e.g. they have little idea what they feel they could do given their skills and experience and/or if they need to make a career change) advisers are able to refer to the National Careers Service.

⁶⁴ To date over 50 such agencies have been identified as operating in the District and it is felt that the true number may be about 80.

⁶⁵ Please note separate mini-case studies have been produced on the work of the North Eastern LEP and Tees Valley Unlimited (TVU).

It was said that most advisers used the Next Step/National Careers Service website⁶⁶ as the main source of career-related advice. One adviser said that a key advantage of having up-to-date LMI through the Next Step site and other sources is that it is 'good to have hard evidence of what's happening' and that it enables advisers to tell it as it is'.

A key challenge was said to be that advisers see 'customers from all walks of life, with different backgrounds, skills, experience and aspirations'. It was indicated that 'they cannot be experts in every employment sector or in every area of support available to enhance employability or remove barriers'. As a consequence, it was felt that 'it is therefore even more important that LMI, linked to support available to help customers into work in the local economy, is available, very quick to access and up-to-date'.

b. Training

Training on using and sharing local labour market information is provided to all Jobcentre Plus advisers. It was indicated that improving skills levels is addressed through 1-1 coaching and mentoring support. Specific training has also been provided on the use of digital resources.

Outcomes and Transferability

a. Outcomes

It is difficult to be specific about the outcomes that have been achieved through the development of the LMI resource available to advisers. However, feedback gained from both employers and individuals (including 'voice of the customer' surveys) indicate that the quality and responsiveness of service delivery is increasingly being recognised and that enhanced information provision is felt to be 'a key factor in this', although the need to do more work to quantify the effects was noted.

b. Key success criteria in using and sharing LMI

The District felt that when working with employers, it is important that 'they don't have to see the wiring'. In other words, what has worked well is using specialist employer engagement staff to focus on how best employer needs can be met, rather than focusing on the different sources of funding (e.g. ESF, Jobcentre Plus, Skills Funding Agency) that may be used.

In regard to partnership working, the District identified the importance of identifying 'common agendas' and tasks (e.g. supporting young people who are not in education, employment and training and tackling worklessness). Other parts of the agenda include looking at issues linked with 'prevention rather than cure', including increasingly looking to support schools/colleges.

The District indicated that advisers' 'time with customers has to be limited and focussed and any access to LMI must be fast and effective'. It was said that 'they do not have time to trawl through websites or read lengthy and high level analysis of economic statistics, inward investment, employment trends and needs short and long term'. As a consequence the challenge for those who support

⁶⁶ See: <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/Pages/Home.aspx>. The National Careers Service was launched in April 2012.

advisers is 'to ensure information is researched on their behalf and made available to them through a couple of clicks on the Intranet in such a way as to enable them to quickly and appropriately advise customers, linking the goals of the customer to local needs'.

c. Transferability of practice

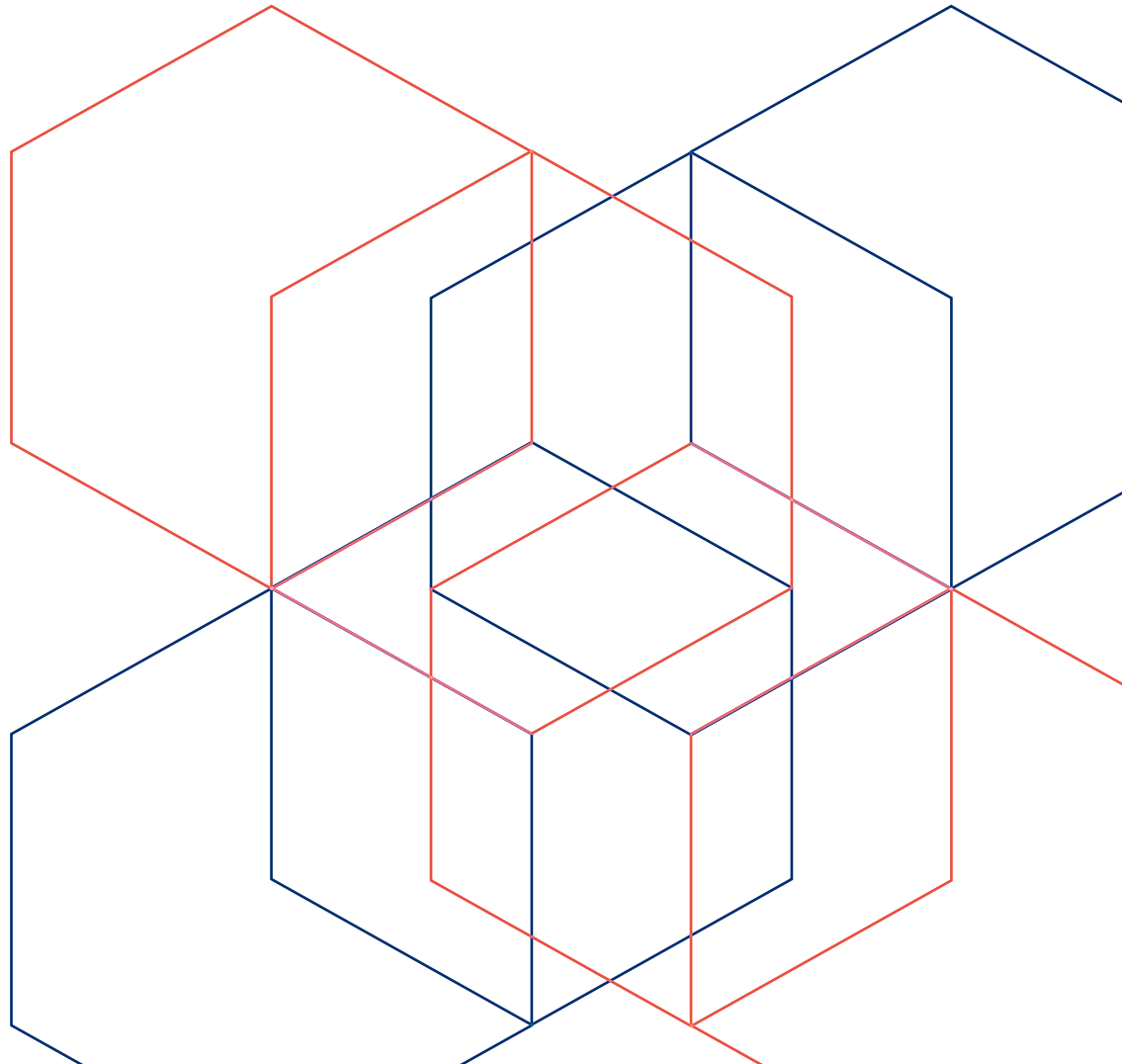
It was felt that much of the practice outlined is highly transferable to other areas. Clearly each District has to decide how best to allocate available resources to best meet operational needs and priorities. However, it would appear that the work being conducted by Jobcentre Plus Durham and Tees Valley District Office (including having specialist LMI roles and developing strong working relationships with LEPs) is resulting in more responsive provision for customers.

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Case Study 8: Manchester Solutions

This case study provides an overview of the systems and approaches Manchester Solutions has developed to support the use of LMI. **Partnership work** has fulfilled a key role in helping to both increase knowledge about, as well as the sharing of LMI. Also of note is the **Work Matters website** which facilitates the dissemination of LMI and Manchester Solutions **staff training and development programme CPD** designed to ensure that advisers are equipped with the skills they need to use LMI effectively in their practice.

Organisational Background

Manchester Solutions (MS) is the trading arm of the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce. The Manchester Solutions Group is the holding company for a range of individual and employer facing operations including [Education Business Solutions](#), [Skills Solutions](#), [Career Solutions](#) and [Work Solutions](#) which trade under a single brand.

Careers Solutions delivers the Connexions service in Manchester, Rochdale, Salford and Tameside. Work Solutions is a not-for-profit company that delivers employment, recruitment and skills services to employers, local people, and Government.⁶⁷ It has over 250 staff working across Greater Manchester and beyond and an annual turnover in excess of £14m. It is contracted by the Adult Careers Team (ACT) – the Greater Manchester Next Step Prime Contractor – as the internal operating company delivering over half of Next Step services across the ten local authority areas in Greater Manchester.⁶⁸

Gathering and Sharing LMI

Partnership work

Service co-location

Two 'Deepening Co-location Pilots' have been operating in the Altrincham (Trafford) and Newton Heath (Manchester) areas since autumn 2011. The pilots are exploring the impacts and added benefits of co-locating Jobcentre Plus and Next Step (now National Careers Service) for the organisations and their customers. The strengthened relationship between the two organisations is helping to support cross-referrals and service uptake, including increased usage of the web and telephone service channels. The pilots have also supported warm handovers and protocol arrangements within the Skills Conditionality Mandation programme. They have helped to reduce non-attendance rates amongst referred clients and have increased the sharing of 'soft' LMI and other intelligence between the organisations.

Work with the New Economy

The New Economy is the co-ordinating body for the Greater

⁶⁷ As a part of the MS Group, Work Solutions has detailed databases with direct access to over 75,000 businesses in Greater Manchester and formal arrangements with the 7,000 Chamber members of Greater Manchester, Leeds, York and North Yorkshire Chambers of Commerce, including operating as their preferred delivery partners for training and delivery of apprenticeships.

⁶⁸ The ACT also manages five other Next Step sub-contractors: BoltonWise, Positive Steps Oldham, Employment Links Partnership (Rochdale MBC), The Manchester College and Wigan MBC.

Manchester City Strategy. They have successfully built a new partnership between the ten local authority areas and other key stakeholders, including Jobcentre Plus, to design and deliver services to enable more people to move off benefits and into work. The New Economy's Board has also been designated as the statutory Employment and Skills Board (ESB) to lead on the production of an Employment and Skills Strategy for Greater Manchester. Manchester Solutions works very closely with the New Economy which provides them with 'hard LMI', including a range of local LMI and economic intelligence.⁶⁹ A single 'Greater Manchester Forecasting Model' delivered by Oxford Economics is utilised to ensure a consistent approach is adopted across the region.

b. Work Matters Web-Site

The 'Work Matters' website was re-launched in summer 2011. Staff from the Connexions services operating in each of the ten boroughs of Greater Manchester collaborated on the re-development which was led by Careers Solutions and informed by information provided by the New Economy. In preparation for the launch of the new National Careers Service, the Careers Solutions Development Team also worked with the Next Step Greater Manchester Prime Contractor to ensure the resource was suitable for use with adults as well as young people.

Work Matters includes data and resources related to the labour market in Greater Manchester and beyond. These include:

- ▶ Current news items and summaries of recently published reports.
- ▶ Sector Factsheets providing an overview of the 12 key employment sectors for Greater Manchester.
- ▶ Area Factsheets focusing upon the labour markets of the 10 Greater Manchester local authority areas.
- ▶ Resources to support the provision of LMI, for example, session plans and tools to enable teachers/advisers⁷⁰ to copy data so that it can be used on whiteboards and in other presentations.

An interesting feature on the site is that data has been analysed to show how many people travel from one part of Greater Manchester (and the surrounding areas) to another for work. This helps to illustrate that an increasing number of people need to travel across the sub-region to find suitable employment.

Access to Work Matters is by subscription only. There are over 200 active subscribers, including schools and colleges. There is a desire both to increase the interactivity of the site and to find ways for customers/parents to access it. Key lessons learned to date include:

- ▶ The commitment of senior managers, headteachers and key Local Authority/New Economy staff has been crucial in taking the development forward.
- ▶ The development of the site has required dedicated staff time and continued resources are needed to ensure it continues to be developed and updated.

⁶⁹ See: http://neweconomymanchester.com/stories/822-economic_intelligence

⁷⁰ Advisers spoken to said that they thought that the data in Work Matters was 'pretty comprehensive' and liked the facility to 'put data straight into Power Points'. It was also said to be 'easy to understand'.

Using LMI

a. Staff Training and CPD

Careers Solutions produces LMI in a range of formats.⁷¹ It also delivers a programme of training events, which includes an Annual LMI Conference, half-day 'Essential Guide to LMI' courses, and bespoke sessions for staff and partners, including parents' events. A guiding principle within the organisation is that advisers should develop their capacity and capability to undertake LM-related research and analysis for themselves supported by systems and processes such as the SharePoint staff intranet, Work Matters and bi-monthly network days that frequently cover LMI topics.

Next Step Greater Manchester (NSGM) sets high operational standards for its advisers. The latest assessment against the [matrix](#) quality standards indicates that Manchester Solutions has robust structures for monitoring and observing practice. This includes 'tiers of observation' which involves formalised reviews by contractors, peer observations and unannounced service observations by the Prime Contractor. In response to the Coalition Government's professionalisation agenda for the National Careers Service and the Task Force's recommendations that high quality career information and LMI should be a requirement of service provision, Next Step Greater Manchester has taken a proactive approach to enhancing staff competency through a mandated CPD support programme focusing on the proposed requirements for the CPA Professional Practice Register.

NSGM undertook a comprehensive Training Needs Analysis (TNA) exercise with all staff/advisers between January-March 2011. In reviewing their training needs they also drew on Ofsted recommendations, observation/performance management data and audit evidence. As a consequence of this review, NSGM decided – alongside other actions – that they would make it compulsory for all advisers, 106 in total, to undertake the Level 6 Diploma in Career Guidance and Development Units on using and sourcing LMI.⁷² The training, which has been delivered by specialists from Careers Solutions, will be completed in April 2012 and has generally been perceived as successful. Lessons learned include:

- ▶ Some advisers are initially disconcerted by the emphasis in QCF Level 6 Unit 6 (notably in assessment criteria 1.2 and 1.3) on them understanding both the UK and European education and training systems, and on evaluating information about demand on both a UK and European basis. Some advisers do not see the relevance of this, particularly if they are mainly involved in supporting local job-seekers.
- ▶ Some advisers need to be helped to understand that a lot of LMI is data-rich and that they need to have an understanding of key statistical concepts (e.g. the difference between mean, median and mode) in order to analyse and consider the reliability of different data sets.
- ▶ Although the unit on sourcing LMI is perceived to be more accessible to advisers ('easier to teach') because it is regarded as more 'immediately relevant' and has more 'of a sociological rather than a statistical basis'.

⁷¹ In the past this has included a fact sheet series 'LMI Spotlight On...' and a quarterly newsletter - 'cns2lmi' – produced by the Careers Solutions Development Team.

⁷² These are Unit T/502/8431 'Source, evaluate and use Labour Market Intelligence with clients' (20 guided learning hours) and Unit L/502/8435 'Use Careers and Labour Market Information With Clients' (40 guided learning hours).

Feedback from advisers suggests that they found the unit on using LMI useful and that it helped them: "think about how they could access information;" "explained LMI was not just about local jobs;" "helped them think about whether they could trust information;" "consider the importance of presenting LMI in a client friendly way;" and "think about pragmatic approaches."

Outcomes and Transferability

a. Outcomes and Key Success Criteria

The key success criteria for the examples given above of using and sharing career-related LMI in Greater Manchester include:

- ▶ The important role Manchester Solutions fulfils in linking a number of related areas of work and facilitating joint-working – for example – between different operational arms.
- ▶ Partnership working with the New Economy (and other stakeholders) in the development of a viable local LMI web-site, which could be made sustainable through use of a subscription model.
- ▶ The importance of conducting TNA work with advisers and subsequently delivering both individualised and mandatory training and ongoing observation of practice.

▶ b. Transferability of practice

The development of Manchester Solutions as an operational model is probably unique, but the joint working practices they have developed are transferable. In particular, given necessary LEP/LA support, a local Labour Market Portal, similar to Work Matters could be developed and maintained elsewhere with funding generated through subscriptions from schools, colleges and other bodies.

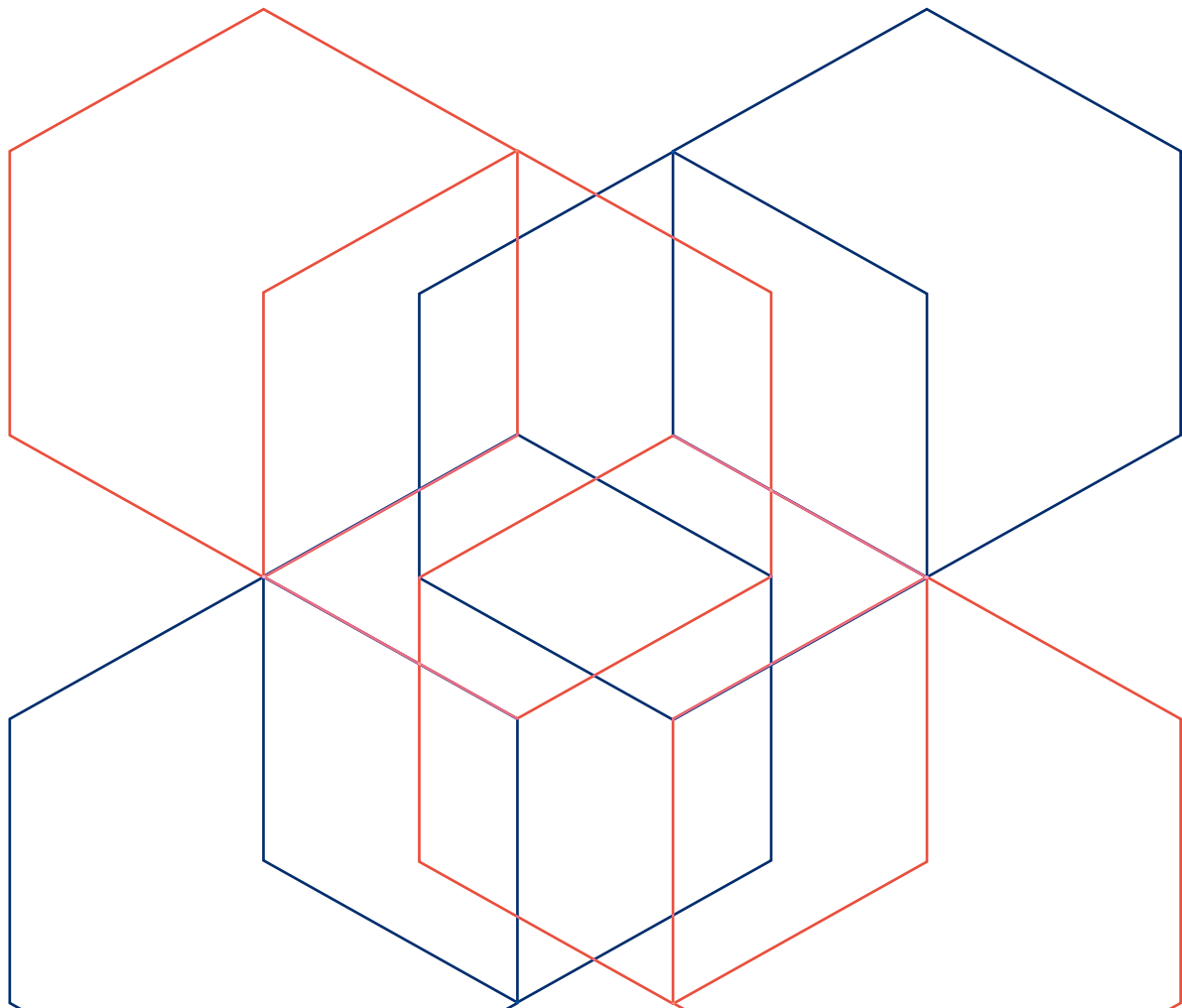
It is clear that many guidance organisations are adopting the Level 6 Diploma LMI Units in their CPD programmes, although far from all are making them compulsory. The key issue will be to consider how to build on this significant investment and to see, through related observation work, to what extent its introduction has impacted on adviser delivery and outcomes for the customer.

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Case Study 9: North Eastern Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP)

Launched in February 2012, the Labour Market Information Portal for Tyne and Wear, Northumberland and Durham, available at www.labourmarketnortheast.co.uk, has the aim of improving access to LMI across the North Eastern Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP) area by providing a central point for information to inform employment and skills strategies and support the development and delivery of careers education and information, advice and guidance (IAG).

Organisational Background

The proposal to establish the North Eastern Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP) was approved in 2011. It set out NELEP's vision to provide 'smart, enterprising leadership between the private sector, local government, Higher Education and Further Education to rebalance the economy, and create Europe's premier location for low carbon, sustainable, knowledge-based private sector-led growth and jobs'. NELEP's Board is now in place and an executive team has been recruited to take the work forward. NELEP has recently secured £17 million from the Government's 'Growing Places'⁷³ fund to support the LEP's strategic priorities of growing key sectors and strengthening infrastructure.

NELEP aimed from the outset to build on the work of predecessor bodies. Through the work of the DWP City Strategy Pathfinder across Tyne and Wear, County Durham and Northumberland, partners in Tees Valley and the Regional Employability Framework (REF), a great deal of progress was made in creating a holistic and co-ordinated approach to the management and delivery of customer, business and provider services across the employment and skills agenda.

Labour Market Information

A key aim set out in NELEP's initial proposal to Government was to: 'use robust labour market information and intelligence to articulate existing and emerging demand from key growth sectors and businesses'.

The established Employment and Skills Partnership, working across the NELEP area, undertakes detailed labour market analysis through combining data from official sources with local data to enable regular updates on 'supply' and 'demand' in the partnership area to be provided to a variety of bodies, including career guidance/IAG providers.

The Partnership, driven by a business-led Employment and Skills Board, has recently agreed funding for a new Labour Market Information Portal to further improve access to LMI across the NELEP area: www.labourmarketnortheast.co.uk. The website, initially launched as a six-month pilot project and delivered and managed by North Tyneside Council, aims to provide:

- ▶ At a glance, access to key statistics including local information about the population, employment, the economy, industry movements, job vacancies and the number of people claiming out of work benefits. The website includes popular areas such as 'Top 20 vacancies by occupation' enabling advisers to consider current opportunities and to use this to help inform their advice;

- ▶ A Resources area, which includes useful tools such as a 'Careers Pathways' page with links to job profiles and career progression routes arranged by sector, Career Videos entitled '21st Century Careers' showcasing what it is like to work in particular priority sectors using local people and local employers and a Provider Services Directory with a searchable database of local support and available training;

- ▶ A Publications page with titles broken down by subject area;
- ▶ A Funding page, which includes useful links, guides to accessing funding and locally produced weekly funding bulletins;
- ▶ A News and Events page, updated daily with local labour market news, events and policy updates related to employment and skills;
- ▶ A Useful Links page broken down by subject area;
- ▶ A weekly E-Bulletin, issued on a Friday morning, detailing all of the news and updates on the Portal from the previous week;

Partnership Working

The development of the LMI Portal has opened up wider opportunities for partnership working to improve the collection, analysis and dissemination of relevant LMI. These opportunities include:

- ▶ Liaison with Local Authorities to collate and synthesise relevant data, appropriate to local areas;
- ▶ Collation, interpretation and analysis of further data from government and other sources;
- ▶ Liaison with the LMI Network and other relevant networks to disseminate and share relevant LMI through agreed and innovative routes (websites, e-newsletters, maps etc.);
- ▶ Establishment of appropriate task and finish groups (including sector-based) to enable providers and employers to identify and agree upon current and emerging skills needs, incorporating the relevant Sector Skills Council (SSCs) (e.g. SEMTA in respect to advanced manufacturing); and
- ▶ An annual cycle for the provision, analysis and action planning of LMI to address current and future skills needs.

To achieve this integration and the effective use of LMI, the partnership recognises that there needs to be a clear understanding of the distinct roles that partners will play in the LMI Network, including LEPs, employers, Local Authorities, education and training providers and IAG services (including Jobcentre Plus and the National Careers Service).

There is already evidence of increased data sharing and joint-working with partners to introduce some of these innovative approaches and examples of the projects initiated in the NELEP area since the launch of the LMI Portal include:

- ▶ Securing ESF Innovation, Transnationality and Mainstreaming (ITM) funding, working with seven Local Authorities, to deliver an employment and skills forecasting tool, which will include the facility to model the employment and skills requirements of new builds and inward investment to better enable local provision/support systems to respond;

⁷³ See: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/regeneration/growingplacesfund>

▶ A Digital Labour Market Project working with a wide range of partners, including Newcastle University, to normalise the use of data, focusing on labour market data requirements including: job gains and losses, current job opportunities, skills requirements of businesses, aspirations of jobseekers, skills of jobseekers and the availability of provision to meet skills requirements;

▶ A joint campaign with SEMTA entitled 'Grow North East' to address skills gaps in the advanced manufacturing and engineering sectors by working with employers to increase the number of apprentices and graduates employed in these sectors;

▶ A joint communications strategy with SEMTA to improve the analysis and dissemination of LMI and publicise events to assist with increased recruitment to the relevant sectors;

▶ Alignment of the work on the LMI Portal with other Government initiatives including the Core Cities: City Skills Fund led by Newcastle City Council;

▶ Joint working with Jobcentre Plus and the National Careers Service to share resources and information on the local labour market; removing any duplication in the collection, analysis and dissemination of LMI.

Future Developments

Subject to further funding being available, there are ambitious plans to develop the functionality of the system and related projects further to include:

▶ More detailed analysis and the availability of localised information on future employment and skills requirements;

▶ Joint working with local employers and schools to produce tailored materials to support careers education and IAG;

▶ Development of the LMI Portal to include tailored products to specific audiences e.g. advisers, policy makers, schools etc;

▶ An online LMI Forum for like-minded LMI specialists to share information, answer questions and discuss common areas of interest;

▶ Media monitoring to complement the data collected through employment and skills forecasting, employer engagement, commissioned research etc;

▶ E-Surveys, the use of Google Analytics and regular consultation with users to evaluate the use of the LMI Portal and inform future developments;

▶ Social Media – including the use of Twitter and ensuring mobile compatibility.

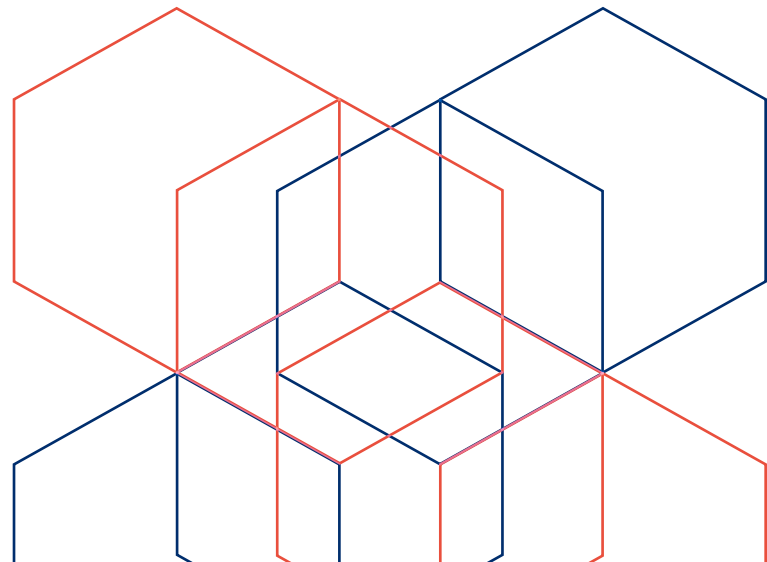
The development of the LMI Portal has opened up new opportunities for partnership working across the NELEP area. It is clear that working jointly to turn 'information' into useful 'intelligence' about supply and demand in the labour market and ensuring that this is widely available through the innovative use of technology is likely to prove a key element in achieving the LEP's vision.

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Case Study 10: Oaklands College

Oaklands College is implementing a range of practices to help use and share Labour Market Information (LMI) with its staff, partners and learners. This case study focuses on its **partnership work with Jobcentre Plus**, its work with **Monster to create a Job Shop**, its involvement in a local **Executive Forum** and how it **embeds LMI in its delivery of Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)**.

Organisational Background

Oaklands College is a large further education college situated in Hertfordshire. It has four campuses and provides education and training to 10,000 students across St Albans District Council, Welwyn and Hatfield District Council, and Hertsmeire District Council. The College has 20 members of staff who provide a wealth of IAG to its current and prospective students through its receptions, advice centre and tutorials. IAG is also delivered through one to one sessions with advisers from the Connexions and Next Step services which the College runs in the area on behalf of Suffolk County Council. As a result of offering the Next Step service, the College also provides IAG to the wider community. It provides outreach services and also is part of a Local Services Hub for St Albans District Council.

Sharing LMI

a. Improved partnership work with Jobcentre Plus

Over recent months, Oaklands College has developed a stronger relationship with Jobcentre Plus (JCP). This process began in September 2011 when their new Director of Apprenticeships and Business Partnerships built relationships with colleagues at JCP. In addition to the top 10 vacancies sought and other data about the labour market that JCP sends to the College, the two organisations now regularly meet to share local employer knowledge and to discuss how they can support each other to achieve their goals. This relationship has not only improved the two-way flow of information between the organisations, but has also resulted in an increased level of involvement for the College in local recruitment drives. For example, JCP approached the College regarding some vacancies at a new Jamie Oliver restaurant opening in the locality and asked if any of their learners would be interested in the vacancies. As a result, the College was able to provide some employability skills training and successfully placed 12 of its learners into employment in the restaurant. In addition, the College's increased awareness of local LMI has enabled its Enterprise Team to focus on developing relationships with employers in sectors where there are employment opportunities.

b. Work with Monster to create a Job Shop

Oaklands College previously ran successful jobs fairs. However, with the onset of the economic downturn these became less effective because of reduced uptake and the cost associated with them. In response, the College recently ran an online jobs fair with some success and concluded that conducting further work with employers would be beneficial. Oaklands College successfully bid for government funding, with the 157 Group, to collaboratively work with the Association of Colleges Eastern Region and three other colleges⁷⁴ to develop and pilot an online service package

provided by Monster.⁷⁵ A key aim of the project was to improve the 'job search' facility for students and to assist with staff recruitment.

The college has termed the package **Job Shop** which is a website that is featured on the College's main website. It provides Monster's standard recruitment services including access to recruitment systems and candidate databases; as well as careers advice and guidance for candidates including a job-search function, CV and interview tips. Additionally, as part of the pilot, the colleges have been able to tailor the website to ensure that the language and layout is appropriate for a college audience. This arrangement has provided the colleges with the opportunity to implement a 'collaborative job shop', in which their learners can search for real-time jobs and obtain careers advice, whilst their employer contacts can advertise their jobs through the **Job Shop** website for free.

Although the website is currently in its infancy, it has had a positive impact on the work of the Enterprise Team which now has another string to its bow when engaging with employers. Early feedback from employers suggests they have been very impressed with this offer, which has already resulted in new opportunities for the College, such as a large food retailer which will be advertising their graduate programme through the site. In addition to raising the College's profile among the employer community, parents are becoming aware of the site and will also be able to benefit from it. As part of the project funding, the pilot will be extended to another six colleges and the intention is that this service will be offered nationally to all colleges.

Using LMI

a. Executive Forum

As a result of the high number of unemployed individuals at an executive level in the area, the local strategic partnership decided to set up an Executive Forum in 2009. The Forum aims to provide these individuals with specialist support to help them to find appropriate employment as quickly as possible. It is delivered by JCP, the Chambers of Commerce, St Albans District Council and Oaklands College. The partnership provides higher level employability skills training to these individuals, delivers inspirational and motivational speeches, and provides general guidance with finding new employment opportunities. Oaklands College is specifically responsible for delivering one to one sessions to raise executives' confidence and motivation. Having a good grasp of local LMI helps the advisers to manage individuals' expectations in today's market, provide better guidance to help them think about how they could use their transferrable skills in sectors with more viable employment opportunities, and signpost them to specialist recruitment agencies. As a result of the Executive Forum, 46% of members had returned to employment by December 2011.

b. How the College embeds LMI in its delivery of IAG

An increased awareness of local LMI means that the College is better able to help its learners consider their career options. This is done through a number of mechanisms, such as simply alerting its learners to the Job Shop where they can find real-time job opportunities, through one to one sessions with advisers, and through

⁷⁴ Barnfield College, New College Stamford and Bedford College.

⁷⁵ www.monster.co.uk

tutorial sessions. In addition to delivering these messages themselves, the College has also asked employers in growth sectors to deliver sessions in order to increase learners' interest in careers where there are viable future employment opportunities.

Outcomes and Transferability

a. Outcomes

As a result of the College's closer relationship with JCP and engagement with employers, it has achieved a better understanding of the local labour market. A key outcome of this is that it has been able to improve the IAG it provides to its learners and help them to consider career paths that will provide them with future employment opportunities. Equally, its learners have also benefited from having access to an increased number of employment opportunities which are now readily available through the [Job Shop](#).

Its relationship with JCP and the provision of the [Job Shop](#) have helped to raise the profile of the College amongst the employer community. As it continues to build its reputation, it ensures that it is able to maintain its knowledge of the local labour market, which is essential to providing its learners with relevant and up to date IAG.

b. Key success criteria in using and sharing LMI

Oaklands College noted several points key to the success of its work, including:

- ▶ Partnership work has been critical to the success of improving awareness and understanding of LMI, as a greater pool of knowledge is beneficial for all parties involved;
- ▶ Having a single point of contact for employers has helped to successfully engage with them and achieve repeat custom;
- ▶ From its work on the [Job Shop](#) site, the College has learned that it is essential to carefully brand products so that the intended audience know what to expect and to capture their attention. After all, if this is not done correctly, then the intended audience will not use the product;
- ▶ Linked to the above point, being able to piggy-back on the Monster brand is beginning to bring new and exciting opportunities to Oaklands College.

c. Transferability

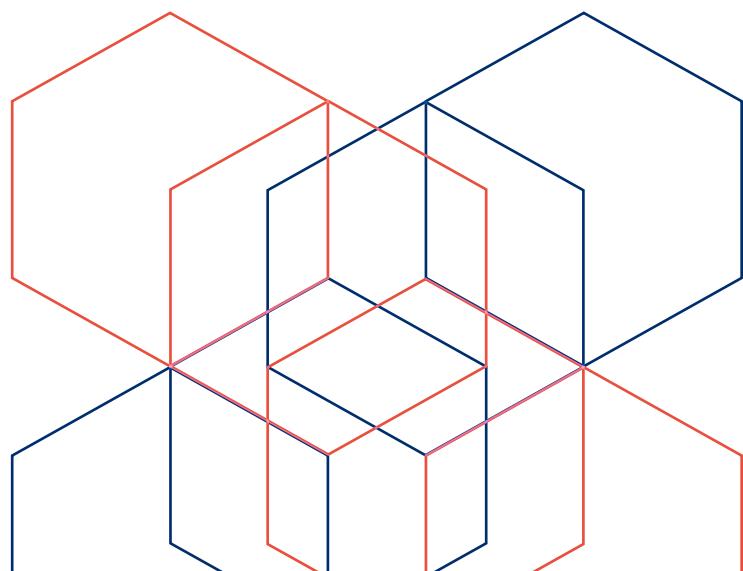
The processes and resources implemented by Oaklands College to use and share LMI are highly transferable to other organisations. Although its [Job Shop](#) is currently in the pilot stage, it is thought that Monster will roll-out this service package to other colleges at which point any college will be able to engage with Monster to use this service.

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Case Study 11: Skills Development Scotland

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) has developed an **evolutionary approach** to 'making LMI work' for the organisation and this has resulted in the development and implementation of a number of systems, processes and resources for SDS staff and partners. This case study provides an overview of SDS's **vision and strategy** for LMI and its links to the achievement of wider policy objectives. Some of the ways in which SDS shares LMI with staff and partners are also explored, including **Research online**, a web-based portal for the most recent and relevant labour market intelligence; a **media monitoring** service; and newsletters, reports and events. Finally, the case study outlines how SDS is making 'career management information' (CMI) available to clients seeking employment opportunities and to develop their careers: **My World of Work**.

Organisational Background

In March 2011, the Scottish Government published its first ever [strategy](#) for career information, advice and guidance (CIAG). The strategy provides a framework for the redesign and improvement of CIAG services in Scotland and, in doing so, sets out clear expectations for Skills Development Scotland (SDS) working with the wider guidance community. The goal is to develop an affordable, sustainable service capable of supporting people to develop effective career management skills and contribute to the achievement of wider policy objectives linked to productivity and economic growth. Strong partnerships and new interactive technologies are integral to the achievement of the Scottish Government's vision.

SDS was created in 2008 when the careers, skills, training and funding services of Careers Scotland, Scottish University for Industry (learndirect scotland) and the skills intervention arms of Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise were brought together to form a single non-departmental public body. With over 1,000 staff (including approximately 500 advisers) and a network of public access centres and offices located across the country, SDS is responsible for the delivery of careers, skills and training services, including the all-age careers service for Scotland.

Sharing LMI

a) Making LMI work for SDS – An evolutionary approach

LMI is fundamental to the achievement of SDS's four strategic goals of enabling people to meet their potential, making skills work for employers, working together to improve the learning and skills system, and achieving organisational excellence. In 2009, a multi-disciplinary team of six⁷⁶ research and careers professionals was established and charged with 'making LMI work for SDS'. Extensive consultation with SDS staff revealed that a range of sources of LMI already existed and that advisers had a good understanding of the local labour market and client need. However, the existing LMI was not always accessible and in a form that could be easily analysed and interpreted for use with clients. In addition, many advisers lacked awareness, as well as the skills and confidence, to use the data in this way.

⁷⁶ The team has been expanded to 11 staff as they are now responsible for research and evaluation as well as LMI.

A pragmatic and evolutionary approach to the development of LMI has been adopted, driven by the needs of staff. A virtual LMI group comprising of staff, including team leaders and advisers, covering all 32 Scottish Local Authority areas has fulfilled a key role. This group has acted as a sounding board and conduit between the wider staff and the central LMI team and contributing directly to the development of resources and staff training. An important distinction between the data requirements of guidance professionals (defined as labour market information) and clients (defined as career management information) has been made and this has informed the development of systems and processes as well as a series of resources.

The approach is underpinned by a clearly defined vision and purpose for LMI within SDS. The development work is informed by five identifiable workstreams, listed in priority order:

1. Develop an LMI system to support SDS staff;
2. Support research for SDS Sector Managers;
3. Provide bespoke analysis for SDS staff;
4. Support the [Skills Committee](#)⁷⁷ and
5. Commission new research working with others.

These workstreams create the parameters for the development work which provides an important touchstone for the team and helps to prevent mission drift.

During the development of SDS' LMI system for staff, the Scottish Government brought together a range of partner organisations to develop a wider [LMI framework](#) which was launched on 9 March 2012. This framework sets out a vision for the development of labour market information and intelligence in Scotland that is robust, useful and easy to find, can be utilised effectively by relevant stakeholders and can achieve high policy impact. The LMI team represented SDS on the Framework Steering Group.

In order to raise awareness of the availability and importance of LMI amongst SDS staff, the central team responsible for the development of LMI has introduced a number of systems, processes and resources. Many of the resources are accessible from the [knowledge tab](#)⁷⁸ of the SDS website at no charge, and so a number of partner organisations also benefit from the work undertaken by SDS in this area. Further resources are available to SDS staff only via an intranet 'LMI exchange'. LMI champions fulfil a key role by encouraging staff to access the web-based services, highlighting changes and supporting the dissemination of information more generally. Further details about some of these resources are provided below.

b. Research Online

[Research Online](#) is a web-based portal located on the SDS website that provides a single gateway to the most recent and relevant labour market intelligence. Launched in 2003, it contains a decade of material on all aspects of labour markets with particular reference to Scotland; it also includes material produced in the other UK nations as well as key European and international literature. The

⁷⁷ The Skills Committee is jointly sponsored by Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council.

⁷⁸ This tab will be renamed 'LMI' in the next iteration of the web service.

service is free – both for those submitting material and for those using the service. Users can register to receive fortnightly updates of new material added to the service.⁷⁹ Users are able to search for material using specific keywords as well as browse by subject. Abstracts of relevant reports, books and journal articles are provided. Where copyright allows, full texts are available to download either directly from the portal or via links to other websites. In addition to the search facility, one of the key advantages of the system are that the database is updated weekly.

c. Labour Market Focus

SDS produces a monthly [newsletter](#), Labour Market Focus that is free for registered users. The newsletter typically includes: a 'Spotlight Article' on a current topic of interest; headline national labour market indicators with links to local reports; monthly job gains and losses; information on the material added to Research Online; along with details of the most popular reports downloaded from the portal that month; a summary of recent SDS seminars and events and a calendar of forthcoming events across the Scottish LMI landscape. The key benefits of the newsletter are that it provides a regular and succinct overview of developments in labour market policy and practice and that it signposts the reader to other services and resources, such as Research Online. With a readership of over 1,600, a wide range of partners, as well as SDS staff, are currently benefitting from this resource.

d. Media monitoring

The local and national press is an important source of information on current and future changes to the labour market. However, scanning the media to identify the information on a daily basis is time consuming and can result in unnecessary duplication if it is not co-ordinated centrally. SDS's [media monitoring](#) service was developed as a cost-effective⁸⁰ solution to these issues. An external service provider has been commissioned to consult with each of the regions to identify the relevant local press to be monitored. Headlines on local job gains, job losses and training opportunities are summarised along with the national headlines and relevant labour market policy developments in a series of weekly reports which are produced and tailored to the needs of each region. A round up of the key headlines for the month is also produced. The reports are valued by staff because they save time and provide key information 'at a glance'.

e. National and sector reports – unemployment trends and vacancy update

In addition to the services outlined above, SDS staff and partners also have access to: monthly updates on [unemployment](#) and [vacancies](#) at both a Scottish and [local level](#); quarterly [National Training programme](#) data including statistics for Modern Apprenticeships, ScotAction, Get Ready for Work and Training for Work; and a series of [sector reports](#) produced by the Sector Skills Councils which summarise key policy interventions along with challenges and opportunities, via the SDS website.

f. LMI seminars and events for SDS staff and partners

SDS regularly convenes LMI events to highlight skills issues in Scotland's key sectors. These events are designed to bring together employers and Sector Skills Councils, with the guidance and education communities, to learn about the challenges and issues facing the sectors. The events are promoted well in advance and are held at different locations throughout Scotland to maximise the opportunities for SDS staff and partners to attend, irrespective of their geographical base. They typically involve a series of presentations by sector experts and the opportunity to take part in 'speed dating' style networking with employers and employees. The events provide a dynamic environment in which stakeholders involved in both the supply of and demand for labour market skills can share intelligence, including up to the minute information on vacancies, redundancies, training and/or courses. They also provide opportunities for SDS staff to offer practical support with some of the recruitment challenges they face. The LMI events complement the '[Skills in Focus](#)' seminars. This series of events has been developed by the Skills Committee. Delivered by leading academics in the field, the seminars are designed to support informed debate about current and future skills.

g. My World of Work

[My World of Work](#) is an interactive website that is accessible to anyone and aims to help users find employment opportunities and develop their careers. It provides its users with support from the very beginning of their journey by highlighting the importance of considering the [job market](#), which SDS feels is a more tangible concept for its customers than LMI. It includes information regarding Scotland's key industries, the top 10 most advertised jobs in Scotland, and skills that are in demand. Whilst considering their careers, it also helps users to identify what drives them and where their potential may lie through '[My DNA](#)', and to consider their strengths through '[My Strengths](#)'. The website also houses information to enable users to research specific careers and training courses. Finally, once users have decided upon a potential career path, they can learn about the value of work experience; view job opportunities; and access guidance on creating CVs, writing job applications, and preparing for job interviews. The website also has the functionality to allow users to create an account enabling them to store information such as CVs and their favourite articles. Doing so the system is able to suggest relevant career options to the user.

Introducing information on the world of work in an easily understandable format, which is integrated with other information required when considering career options, means that the website acts as a one stop shop for its users. SDS regards this as Career Management Information (CMI) which complements the LMI provided for staff. Therefore, the website is an integral tool to SDS's CMI approach and getting users to manage their careers themselves. As this approach develops, SDS plan to add further CMI to the website.

⁷⁹ The service costs approximately £50k per annum to run, and is funded entirely by SDS.

⁸⁰ The service costs approximately £8k per annum to run.

Using LMI

a. LMI Exchange

The LMI Exchange is an intranet for SDS staff. The site was first introduced in October 2011 but developments to the front-end interface and content are continuing. In common with many intranets in operation in other organisations, LMI Exchange provides a hub where staff can access information about events as well as useful resources. However, a key strength of the SDS site is the facility for staff to upload resources they have developed and used in their practice, such as a presentation or a fact sheet, so that they can be adapted for use by staff based in other locations. Where a locally-developed resource has universal application the central team can also have a role in adapting it for more widespread use. Using the intranet in this way is helping to foster a culture of ownership amongst staff, who now expect to be actively involved in the development of LMI as well as recipients of resources developed by others.

b. Continuous professional development (CPD)

SDS has recently completed an extensive programme of staff development to support awareness raising of LMI amongst advisers within the organisation. A series of training sessions were conducted with members of the virtual LMI group that focussed on the resources available through the knowledge tab on the SDS website and the staff intranet LMI Exchange. SDS adopted a 'train the trainers' strategy in order to ensure the training was delivered in an effective and timely fashion to the wider staff. This approach also helped to give rise to a greater sense of ownership over the training and resources.

The original strategy comprised three levels of training: induction, intermediate and advanced. However, following staff feedback that the intermediate training was too focused on techniques for researching and analysing the labour market, rather than interpreting and applying the information, the strategy was revised to include a two-stage process of induction (which is now complete) and application. The training was also designed to address wider skills gaps, such as in the use of information and communication technology (ICT).

Career Management Skills Framework

In order to meet the objectives set out in the CIAG strategy, the Scottish Government asked SDS to define the knowledge, skills and behaviours that individuals need in order to manage their careers throughout their working lives. In response, SDS developed a draft framework for the careers sector that sets out an approach to supporting individuals to develop and use what are collectively referred to as 'career management skills'. Career management skills are defined as a series of competencies grouped under four headings: self; strengths, horizons and networks. The [framework](#) was published following a six-week consultation. The intention is to use it to inform the professional development of staff and the development of careers services in Scotland.

c. Redundancy support

Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (PACE) is the Scottish Government's national strategic partnership framework for responding to redundancy situations. SDS PACE advisers work closely with employers, Jobcentre Plus and a range of other national and local partners including learning providers and the money advice service. They provide careers advice to provide careers advice, skills development and employability support for people in redundancy situations. Participants benefit from one-to-one guidance, group sessions and workshops and access to web services. These are currently being migrated from the existing microsite to My World of Work. LMI is integral to the work of PACE advisers. It is vital they understand the nature of the local labour market to be able to advise on the opportunities available for individuals facing redundancy. In addition, clients need access to up-to-date CMI when looking for a new job within their existing field or a change of career. My World of Work is a key source of information and support for most clients. However, advisers also refer clients with more developed career management skills to the knowledge tab on the SDS website.

Outcomes and Transferability

a. Outcomes

In responding to Scottish Government's CIAG strategy, SDS aimed to make LMI work for them by developing systems, processes and resources that help to raise awareness of the role and importance of LMI amongst staff and that support staff to make effective use of LMI in their practice. Feedback from staff who attended the induction training has been overwhelmingly positive:

- ▶ 90% rated their training useful/very useful;
- ▶ 87% rated the guidance material (LMI user Guide) as useful/very useful;
- ▶ 81% found the LMI practical exercises useful/very useful; and
- ▶ 97% were reasonably confident/very confident to use LMI tools.

By placing the needs of staff at the heart of developments and adopting an iterative approach, SDS has successfully achieved the first of its objectives and is well placed to achieve the second. Although further work is still required to ensure staff are fully equipped to apply LMI in their work, there is further evidence from action plans and insight notes that advisers are growing in confidence and are beginning to make greater use of LMI in their practice.

The development of specific resources such as Research Online ensures that staff and partners have access to up-to-date, readily available and high quality information to inform their own development as well as their work with clients. Unnecessary duplication of effort has been reduced by the implementation of processes such as centralised media monitoring. A key outcome is that staff time is freed up and, as a result, can be utilised more effectively for CPD and front-line services among other activities.

Partnership working is central to the CIAG strategy and the work of SDS. The systems and processes such as the LMI events, and

the resources that are now in place, are helping to reconnect advisers with the labour market and the wider learning and skills sector. In addition, they provide a mechanism for information exchange between SDS and its partners. The credibility of SDS as an organisation, along with perceptions of the professionalism of advisers has increased as a result. This is reflected in the rise in the number of requests advisers receive to deliver presentations on labour market issues for partners.

b. Key success criteria in using and sharing LMI

A number of success criteria have been identified:

- ▶ High level strategic support for LMI in an environment in which it is okay to take risks and learn from mistakes.
- ▶ A pragmatic and evolutionary approach, underpinned by a clear vision, purpose and parameters.
- ▶ Dedicated financial resources and a multi-disciplinary team focused on LMI.
- ▶ A recognition that a distinction between labour market information and career management information is essential.
- ▶ Working in partnership to identify and utilise existing resources so that limited resources are focused on plugging gaps.
- ▶ Development of products and services through consultation with staff; the opportunity for staff to actively shape and contribute to the development of products and services.
- ▶ Investment in CPD. If new technologies are to be used in the development and delivery of systems, processes, and products and services, ensure advisers have the appropriate skills to make effective use of them.
- ▶ Continuous quality improvement. Learn from others within and outside the organisation, capture feedback and act on it, evaluate own practice.

c. Transferability

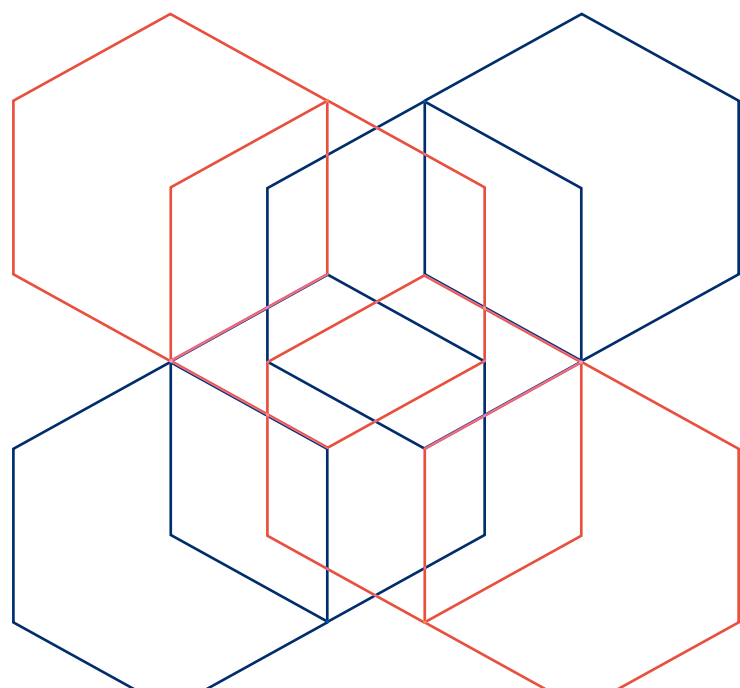
Although the fundamental structure and funding for career guidance services in Scotland differs substantially from England, the principles underpinning their approach to the development of LMI are transferable as are some of the systems, processes and resources.

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Case Study 12: Tees Valley Unlimited (TVU)

TVU's work builds on the considerable development work that had already taken place across the Tees Valley area.⁸¹ TVU is chaired by a local business leader; alongside Local Authority and other key stakeholder representatives it has seven other private sector board members. Working closely with businesses and public sector partners, TVU secured almost £66 million from the Regional Growth Fund (RGF) rounds 1 & 2.

TVU is keen to build and extend on the evidence base to help inform demand and to influence provision. It has a LMI user group, including Jobcentre Plus, Local Authorities, Next Step/National Careers Service, and Teesside University representatives.

On the recommendations of that group, TVU has let a contract to review all the skills data that is currently available and relevant to TVU. The results are being built into a Skills Portal which is a key element of the TVU (LEP) website which partners will help keep up to date.

TVU are keen to work with partners to develop career-focused video clips using local employers and employees to provide information on opportunities in key sectors in the Tees Valley area. This work builds on the work that was undertaken last year in the wider North East Region, which included some Tees companies.⁸²

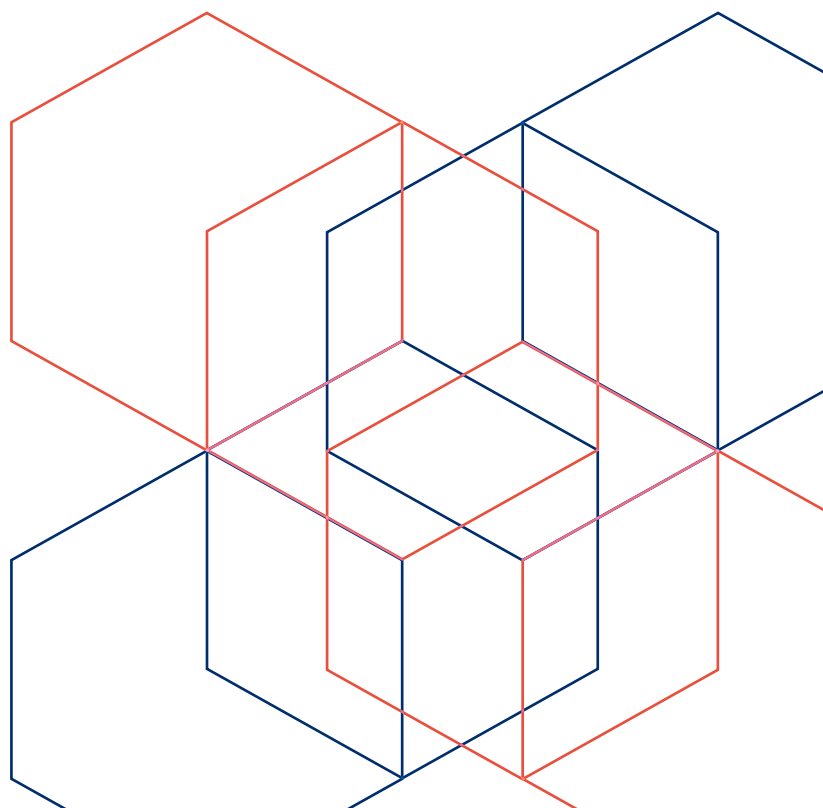
Current work is focussing on developing further video-clips about apprentice-level opportunities and TVU will be promoting these through its partner networks and are hoping, with further partner support, to extend the scope and range of local employment opportunities covered.

Case Study Contact

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⁸¹ Tees Valley encompasses the five local authorities of Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees.

⁸² See: <http://www.youtube.com/user/21stcenturycareers%C2%A0>





The UK Commission for Employment and Skills is a non-departmental public body providing strategic leadership on skills and employment issues in the four nations of the UK.

Together, our Commissioners comprise a social partnership that includes CEOs of large and small employers across a wide range of sectors; trade unions and representatives from the Devolved Administrations.

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