ICCDPP
THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC POLICY

CATE
Ngā Kaitohutohu Rapuara Aotearoa
Careers and Transition Education Association NZ

Tertiary Education Commission
Te Amorangi Mātauranga Matua

Country Report

10th International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy, Auckland, New Zealand, November 2026

Country name

England

This country report has been prepared for discussion and information purposes in connection with the 10th International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy. It draws on an online questionnaire on the Symposium themes, which national teams were invited to complete in advance.

ICCDPP: Navigating new horizons - Country perspectives survey

Introduction

Q1. Do you agree to participate in this survey?

Yes

Q2. I confirm that I am providing a response on behalf of my country.

Yes

Q3. I confirm that I am happy for the responses to this survey to be shared publicly.

Yes

Q4. Is your country going to participate in the 2026 ICCDPP symposium in New Zealand?

Yes

Q5. Who have you consulted with before completing this survey?

Jane Hubbuck, Deputy Director - Careers, Department for Education, UK Government
Tristram Hooley, Head of iCeGS, International Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby
Gill Frigerio, Associate Professor, Centre for Lifelong Learning, University of Warwick
Stephen Plimmer, Research Manager, Career Development Institute
Tom Shirt, Project Manager, Gatsby Charitable Foundation
Laura Hawksworth, Associate Director, The Careers & Enterprise Company

About you

Q6. What is your name?

David Morgan

Q7. What organisation do you work for?

Career Development Institute

Q8. What is your job title?

Chief Executive

Q9. What is your email address?

david.morgan@thecdi.net

Q10. Are you happy for your contact details to be published on the ICCDPP website/ relevant documents as part of the publication of this data?

Yes

About your country

Q11. What is the name of your country?

England

Q12. Which groups can access career development services in your country?

	Accessible and free to everyone	Accessible and free to some groups	Accessible to those who can pay	Not accessible
Indigenous people		X		
Young people in schools	X			
Young people in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)		X		
Young people in university or higher education	X			
Young people not in education or work (e.g. NEETs)		X		
Adults in education		X		
Adults in work		X		
Adults not in education or work (e.g. unemployed workers and the economic inactive)		X		
Migrants		X		
People in the criminal justice system		X		
Employers/businesses		X		

Q13. Are there any other groups in your country, not listed in Question 12 above, that can access career development services?

Schools and colleges in England provide career development services to all young people, in a combination of careers education, information, advice and guidance. It is the responsibility of each institution to develop, resource and deliver career development services, to meet the Statutory Guidance set out by the Department of Education and evaluated by the schools inspector, Ofsted.

England's National Career Service offers information services to those aged 13+, and to 19 if NEET. The service is also designed to be used by parents, teachers, employers, and professional careers advisers. However, these are not usually supported in the form of 121 guidance, but rather web information services.

The National Careers Services supported adults with both online information and 121 guidance, though services are typically targeted to those who are unemployed or facing barriers to the workplace. Adults in work can access some universal information, including online and telephone support, but access to free personalised guidance is limited.

Q13. Are there any other groups in your country, not listed in Question 12 above, that can access career development services?

Recent graduates: Many universities allow their career services to continue to be used by graduates for a period after graduation.

Self-employed and business founders can get forms of advice that cover careers, so which include elements of career guidance, though typically through other vehicles than the careers system.

Employers of larger institutions can access careers services for more specific sorts of advice within a profession/sector e.g. the NHS.

About your country

Q14. How far do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The career development policies, programmes and services in my country are meeting the career needs of the population.			X		
School leavers in my country are well prepared for successful transitions to work or further learning.			X		
There is a strong evidence base to support the provision of career development services in my country.		X			
AI is having a major impact on the education system in my country.		X			
AI is having a major impact on labour market in my country.		X			
AI is having a major impact on the provision of career development services in my country.			X		

Q15. Are indigenous groups involved in the design of career development services in your country?

Not relevant

About your country

Q16. Please provide a short summary of your country's career development system. [Up to 300 words]

Careers policy sits across the Department for Education (DfE), for schools, colleges, and Independent Training Providers (ITPs), and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), for adult employment support. The DfE sets the requirements for careers provision through Statutory Guidance, based on the Gatsby Benchmarks - a framework of eight quality standards.

The 2025 statutory guidance reflects updated Gatsby Benchmarks, including increased focus on leadership, inclusion, meaningful encounters and experiences, use of information and data, and engagement with parents and carers.

The statutory guidance requires all secondary schools to secure independent careers guidance for pupils in Years 7-13. Schools set their own careers provision from their budgets, including having a trained

Q16. Please provide a short summary of your country's career development system. [Up to 300 words]

Careers Leader who oversees the strategy and operationalisation of the careers programme.

The Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) is a DfE-sponsored body that drives careers education quality improvement, as well as coordinating a network of 44 Career Hubs that bring together schools, colleges, employers, and local economic partners in regional collaborative structures.

National tools such as Compass+, the Future Skills Questionnaire, OnTrack+, careers activities and destination measures provide evidence to monitor implementation, measure outcomes and support continuous improvement across the careers system.

Higher education institutions offer careers services for students and alum, often as part of a wider student services and employment service.

DWP manages the National Careers Service (NCS), providing a publicly funded adult guidance offer, as well as having a broader remit to help those over 13 years old. The NCS is delivered through commissioned contractors, though from October 2026 the service will be taken in-house by DWP and combined with employability support into a new 'jobs and careers service'.

Professional standards are maintained by the Career Development Institute (CDI), the UK-wide professional body, and the Graduate Futures Institute which supports careers services in higher education.

Q17. Please provide links to any key reports, articles or websites that provide insights into your country's career development policies and systems. [Up to 300 words]

Overall/cross system
Cedefop (2023). Inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices - UK – Independent review of England.

Schools inc. 16-18
Gatsby Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years –See also appendices 2, 4 and 5.

DfE (2025). Statutory guidance Careers guidance and access for education and training providers – updated statutory guidance.

Ofsted (2023). Independent review of careers guidance in schools and further education and skills providers

CEC (2026). Careers in England 2024/25. – annual review.

CEC (2025). Insight briefing: Learner career readiness in 2024/25. Data from over 330,000 learners.

CEC (2025). Insight Briefing 1: Modern work experience pilots. Approaches to work experience.

CEC (2025). Looking deeper at destinations – linking careers education and outcomes.

DfE: Post-16 education and skills white paper – important contextual document.

Young people and work: interim report – government inquiry into NEET young people.

FE & TVET
CEC (2024). Effective approaches to careers guidance for apprentices – advice on supporting TVET pathways.

Technical Education Resource Hub - CDI – resources for careers advisers about technical and vocational education pathways.

Supporting young people onto apprenticeships and technical pathways - progression into apprenticeships and technical education.

UCAS, Apprenticeship guides and Apprenticeships (Government information hub) – examples of TVET

Q17. Please provide links to any key reports, articles or websites that provide insights into your country's career development policies and systems. [Up to 300 words]

related materials in a portal, provided by UCAS.

Higher Education
Graduate Futures Institute– description of the body for HE careers services.

Prospects website – a hub for careers for graduates.

Adults

The National Career Service (NCS) website.

NCS Satisfaction and progression surveys 2025.

UK Parliament (2025). Get Britain Working: Creating a new jobs and careers service

Gatsby Foundation / Pye Tait Consulting (2022). Career Guidance for Adults: Evidence gathering – maps adult provision.

Gatsby Foundation / Chris Percy (2022). The demand for adult career guidance in England

Gatsby Foundation/SQW/iCeGS (2025). Good Adult Career Guidance: International case study evidence

Gatsby Foundation / York Consulting (2024). NCS and FE co-location.

Q18. Do you have any other comments that you would like to make about the way in which your country organises its career development services? [Up to 300 words]

Aspects of career development services are considered world class – including the Gatsby Benchmarks. However, each institution has responsibility for what it provides and how to resource it.

Career readiness among young people is generally high, with some young people receiving exceptional support. Yet other young people receive lower levels of provision, more likely for those who face disadvantage. Young people also move between different careers provision as they progress through education and into work.

National datasets and longitudinal research track implementation and outcomes over time, supporting understanding of the value generated.

The progress in education since 2018 has depended on a stable national infrastructure. In 2025 the Government committed to this further, integrating the updated Gatsby Benchmarks into statutory guidance and retaining Careers Leader training, data infrastructure (including Compass) and regional Careers Hubs.
Funding for support for school and college provision has been through an annual grant to the CEC. From 2027, the government is considering moving to a multi-year funding model to build long-term collaboration between education, employers, careers professionals and local partners.

Adult services tend to be targeted at those who most need it – such as those unemployed. All adults can access NCS's online services, though adults already in work often lack a visible route to guidance to help them progress, retrain or change career. The transition towards a 'Jobs and Careers Service' aims to integrate with employment services to offer more comprehensive support.

Trusted local access points, including FE colleges, workplaces and community venues, could help reach adults who would not approach a traditional careers service. For example, the DWP are trialling mobile job centres where vans take jobcentre staff on the road to communities with some of the highest rates of unemployment.

Productivity and the inclusive economy

Q19. To what extent do policies for education, training, and employment in your country reflect the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Career development services contribute to economic growth.		X			
Career development services contribute to workforce productivity.			X		
Career development services deliver a positive return on investment on public spending.		X			
Career development services support entrepreneurialism.			X		
Career development services help to address employers' skills and labour needs.		X			
Career development services can be accessed by small and medium sized businesses (SMEs).				X	
Career development services improve levels of job satisfaction.		X			
Career development services contribute to decent work (jobs with access to training, a living wage and other benefits).		X			
Career development services support equality of access to learning and work opportunities.		X			
Career development services contribute to the green transition.		X			

Productivity and the inclusive economy

Q20. Provide further information about the way in which policies and practices for career development services in your country support productivity. [Up to 300 words]

Career services have been demonstrated in research and evaluation studies to provide benefits to the economy and individuals. Increasingly, studies show how careers education is helpful for stimulating interest in STEM and green jobs. However, while recent policy papers and consultations have highlighted the benefits of career development to the individual, economy and social mobility, the current levels of provision do not address the current and future-potential for career services to contribute to these national and wider agendas.

Emerging evidence suggests that careers education contributes not only to individual outcomes but also to labour market efficiency by improving alignment between young people's aspirations, educational pathways and employment opportunities. Through employer engagement and labour market information, careers provision can also help learners understand opportunities in growing sectors and areas of skills need. Recent CEC research has also identified substantial potential fiscal benefits associated with reducing the likelihood of young people becoming NEET through high-quality careers provision.

In 2024/25, average benchmark achievement reached 6 out of 8 across 94% of state-funded secondary institutions. Improved careers education is associated with nearly 6,000 fewer learners becoming NEET each year, saving an estimated £300m annually. Employers also report business benefits from

Q20. Provide further information about the way in which policies and practices for career development services in your country support productivity. [Up to 300 words]

engagement, including stronger future talent pipelines and reduced recruitment costs.

Research by Education and Employers shows higher school-mediated employer engagement is associated with lower likelihood of young people becoming NEET, as is individual employer engagement. Those young people undertaking job shadowing were associated with an 11% wage premium, and those who found employer engagement helpful noted a 16.4% wage premium over peers.

Q21. Provide further information about the way in which policies and practices for career development services in your country support an inclusive economy. [Up to 300 words]

In schools and colleges, the Gatsby Benchmarks support inclusion by making careers guidance a universal entitlement while requiring tailored support for each young person. The updated Benchmarks strengthen this through Benchmark 3, which focuses on the needs of each young person, including vulnerable and disadvantaged young people, those with SEND and those who are absent. Learner-level data, including the Future Skills Questionnaire, helps Careers Leaders identify gaps in confidence, skills and pathway knowledge, and target support. This matters because disadvantaged learners still report lower career readiness and essential skills, even where provision has improved.

The Careers & Enterprise Company supports targeted approaches for groups facing disadvantage, including learners eligible for Free School Meals, learners with SEND, young people at risk of becoming NEET, and those in Alternative Provision. Through Careers Hubs, targeted programmes, and the development of tools such as OnTrack+, the organisation seeks to improve access to high-quality careers support and workplace experiences for young people facing additional barriers.

The National Career Service makes free 121 services available for young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs) past the age of 19. This is complemented by wider government initiatives, including the Youth Guarantee, that support participation, progression and employment outcomes for young people and adults facing barriers to work. There is also wider eco-system of organisations from which young and disadvantaged people can receive support, through these are not captured under the umbrella of the formalised national/state-funded system.

Careers practitioners are trained to support individuals with different characteristics, situations and challenges, and are encouraged to undertake ongoing CPD to maintain and develop their skills.

Q22. Please provide links to any key reports, articles or websites that provide further insights into the relationship in your country between policies for career development, and policies for productivity and the inclusive economy. [Up to 300 words]

Skills England: skills for growth and opportunity - GOV.UK – The 2025 UK skills strategy describes, “Excellent careers advice, linked to education and training choices, will be vital for both younger people and those in work to match individuals to opportunities.”

Percy, C., & Hooley, T. (2024). Lessons for career guidance from return-on-investment analyses in complex education-related fields. – A review of 32 ROI studies, some with UK coverage.

CDI (2024). Valuing Careers. The CDI research document shows that career support contributes more to people having happy, healthy and productive careers – such as engaging more in lifelong learning, having career plans and being motivated to progress.

CEC (2025). Fiscal benefit of inferred NEET reductions for 2020/21 to 2024/25 – estimates the potential public value associated with reductions in young people's risk of becoming NEET linked to improvements in careers provision.

CEC (2026). OnTrack: supporting educators to address risk of young people becoming NEET. Illustrates England's emerging approach to early identification and support for young people at risk of becoming NEET, linking careers provision with prevention and targeted intervention.

Q22. Please provide links to any key reports, articles or websites that provide further insights into the relationship in your country between policies for career development, and policies for productivity and the inclusive economy. [Up to 300 words]

CEC (2025). Right students, right jobs – explores how careers education supports alignment between young people's aspirations, educational choices and labour market opportunities.

Transition to Ambition: Navigating the careers maze - Policy Connect – This report outlined the role careers advice could play and also the gaps.

More is more: exploring the relationship between young people's experiences of school-based career education, information, advice and guidance at age 14–16 and wider adult outcomes at age 21–22 in England How career guidance in schools enhances employment outcomes and contributions to the economy.

Gatsby Foundation (2024). Appendix 8: Review of British Chambers of Commerce labour market insights - employer evidence on skills shortages, labour market change, AI, flexible working and engagement with education.

Enhancing skills and developing technical and vocational education and training (TVET)

Q23. To what extent do policies for education, training, and employment in your country reflect the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Career development services support people to develop skills		X			
Career development services support people to access training	X				
Career development services support the uptake of TVET pathways		X			
Career development services support lifelong learning			X		

Q24. What are the biggest challenges for participation in the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system in your country? [Please tick all that apply.]

School leavers do not see TVET pathways as attractive
Parents do not see TVET pathways as attractive for their children
School staff do not know enough about TVET pathways and the occupations they lead to
Career development practitioners do not know enough about TVET pathways and the occupations they lead to
Lack of career development services for learners considering TVET
Lack of ongoing career development support for learners studying TVET pathways
The influence of gender stereotyping on TVET choices
Falling numbers of adult learners
Shortage of employers offering training placements

Enhancing skills and developing technical and vocational education and training (TVET)

Q25. At what age do young people generally move onto a TVET pathway if that is the path they take?

At 16 – can do an apprenticeship or choose a Post-16 TVET study pathway e.g. a T Level or from 2027, a V Level.)

From 18 – can do an apprenticeship or a higher technical qualification at Level 4 or above, including to Higher Apprenticeship or Degree Apprenticeship.

Q26. Does the age of pathway selection cause challenges for your TVET system?

No

Q27. Is there anything else that you would like to say about the age of pathway selection? [Up to 300 words]

England is undergoing significant change to its post-16 qualifications framework, with the introduction of T Levels (technical) offering new pathways and V Levels (vocational) planned to start from 2027. This means availability is variable while these qualifications roll out across the country. While young people are increasingly attracted to apprenticeships, there may be limited opportunities in their geographic area or sector.

Q28. Provide further information on the ways in which policies for career development services in your country enhance policies for skills development, TVET, and lifelong learning. [Up to 300 words]

Historically, apprenticeships have offered a cost-effective model with benefits to individuals and employers alike (e.g. Apprenticeships-in-England_2018.pdf).

The 2025 statutory guidance explicitly recognises support for TVET pathways as an important part of careers provision. Implementation of these statutory requirements includes Provider Access Legislation and awareness of technical and vocational pathways such as V Levels. Understanding of technical routes is also improved through Careers Hubs, employer engagement, professional development and practical resources. Employer encounters and work experience also help young people develop employability skills, understand workplace expectations and make informed decisions about technical and vocational pathways.

The Government's plans to create a merged employment/career service. The rationale is captured in the Get Britain Working: Creating a new jobs and careers service document, including concern on inequality, low pay, insecure work, and non-decent jobs.

From 2027, the UK government are transforming post-16 education. New V levels will be introduced and two new pathways are being created to better support students at Level 2 — broadly equivalent to GCSEs. These will support those aged 16-18, providing clear route that matches their aspirations, whether that is work or moving into further study;

1. **The Occupational Pathway**

   For those who want to develop the skills and experience needed to move straight into a skilled job or apprenticeship after Level 2. This two-year, employment-focused programme will give students training designed around real jobs and industries, helping them become work-ready and confident about starting in work.

2. **The Further Study Pathway**

For students who plan to continue in education and progress onto Level 3 courses like A levels, T Levels, or V levels, but who may need more time to prepare, building confidence and strengthening their skills first. This pathway will bridge the gap to higher-level study, helping students prepare for their next step in education.

Q29. Please provide links to any key reports, articles or websites that provide further insights about how career development services can enhance skills and support TVET. [Up to 300 words]

Cedefop have an excellent range of papers covering this area e.g. Lifelong Guidance | CEDEFOP, Developing career education and guidance | CEDEFOP

CEC (2023). Conditions for transition: Supporting young people onto apprenticeships and technical pathways - explores the factors that support progression into apprenticeships and technical education, highlighting the role of careers guidance, employer engagement and local opportunity structures in shaping young people's pathways.

Duckworth et al (2025). Post-16 Pathways: Analysis of Routes & Groups. Department for Education

The Education Hub (2026). New V levels and post-16 qualifications explained – The Education Hub

We also refer back to the CEC report on career guidance for apprentices

Apprenticeship ambassador network - GOV.UK – The apprenticeship ambassador network (AAN) is a group of employers whose main aim is to spearhead the drive to engage new employers to commit to apprenticeship delivery in England.

Association of Apprentices – a growing network that aims to provide the social and broader elements often missing from apprenticeship programmes, with access to advice and guidance which supports life-long career development, and a lifetime of professional networks.

Ensuring disadvantaged and vulnerable groups can thrive

Q30. To what extent do policies for education, training, and employment in your country reflect the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Career development services help vulnerable and disadvantaged groups to thrive.		X			
Vulnerable and disadvantaged groups can access career development services.		X			
Career development services support vulnerable groups to access decent work.		X			
Career development services support vulnerable groups to access the education and training system.		X			
There is adequate funding for career development services targeting vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.			X		
Policies for social inclusion intersect with policies for education, training, and employment.			X		

Q31. Which disadvantaged and vulnerable groups does your government have policies to support and which are provided with bespoke or targeted career development services. [Tick all that apply]

	Government has policies to support	Provided with bespoke or targeted career development services
Indigenous people		
Women and girls	X	
Men and boys	X	
Ethnic minorities	X	
Religious minorities		
Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people		
People from low-socio-economic backgrounds	X	
People with low skill levels	X	
Migrants	X	
People with disabilities	X	
People with health and mental health challenges	X	
Younger people	X	
Older people		
Other		

Ensuring disadvantaged and vulnerable groups can thrive

Q32. Can you provide any further information about the way in which policies for career development in your country support vulnerable and disadvantaged people? [Up to 300 words]

Support for young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is embedded within the Gatsby benchmarks and the Statutory Guidance for schools and colleges. Additional support is provided by the CDI and others in the shape of resources, CPD and training. For example, the CEC provides specialist resources, professional development, targeted programmes and evidence-informed approaches designed to improve careers support for learners with SEND, those in Alternative Provision, and young people at risk of becoming NEET.

England is investing significantly to address NEET issues, with the Youth Guarantee, announced investment in workplaces, and more. An inquiry into historically high NEET numbers has published its interim report highlighting areas of good practice but also challenges that need to be addressed. While career development services were identified as being a critical part of ensuring young people do not become NEET, they were also identified as being ‘under-powered’.

Government policies outlined in the Get Britain Work and Keep Britain Working white papers also outline plans to support more young and older people into long-term work.

Wider policy supports the rights of vulnerable and disadvantaged people, from the Equality Act (2010) to SEND Code of Practice (2015), National Minimum Wage legislation and more.

Q33. Please provide links to any key reports, articles or websites that provide further insights into the way that your country's career development system supports vulnerable and disadvantaged people. [Up to 300 words]

Keep Britain Working: Final report - GOV.UK – 2026 report from the review by DWP into ill-health and disability in the workplace.

Gatsby Foundation (2024). Appendix 4: New evidence to inform the Gatsby Benchmarks - literature review covering inclusion, disadvantage, SEND and personalised careers guidance.

Careers & Enterprise Company (2025). Looking deeper at destinations – demonstrates how stronger careers provision is associated with improved education and employment outcomes, particularly for young people facing disadvantage.


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