

Careers South West Annual Report 2010/11



"... people need high quality information, advice and guidance to help them find their way in the world and make decisions that will set them on the path to success."

The National IAG Strategy

Chairman's summary

The UK is experiencing challenging economic times and the South West is similarly affected. Although Careers South West has been subject to large budget reductions we continue to provide a valuable service to young people and adults.

The core business of Careers South West is to link the world of education and skills training with the world of work.

Our staff endeavour to provide a wide range of support for individuals and businesses in order that the needs of employers for good staff match the aspirations of individuals seeking a career.

When jobs are scarce and employers are under pressure we believe that our services to both young people, adults and employers are of even more importance.

Dr Alan Stanhope, Chairman of the Board

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Chief Executive's introduction

Against a challenging economic backdrop and amidst a public services spending review resulting in significant cuts - more in the South West even than London - it is no wonder that our customers are concerned about their futures and our staff about their jobs.

Despite the challenges I have to thank publicly our staff and commissioners for maintaining their focus on the task in hand and ensuring that our customers still receive the help and support that they require.

This company in this most difficult of years has again been accredited with the liP Gold standard and has been awarded with the Next Step contract for adults which will transmute into the National Careers Service from April 2012.

Another feature of this year is that Careers South West Ltd is one of the founding members of a new company, Transitions Plus UK Ltd, with seven other not for profit social enterprises in our sector, which has won a national contract from the DfE. The aim of this company is to tender for and win national contracts so that we can bring additional resource for our customers and partners into this area to enhance services.

In the light of so much change we are talking to our schools and colleges and local authorities about how best to deliver careers information, advice, guidance and transition support in the peninsula going forward.

At the same time we are taking the opportunity to consider how we can do things differently, how we can use new technologies and how we can continue to deliver services valued by customers.

This is what our customers have said this year:

- In surveys carried out asking for the opinions of young people, 100% said they found the staff helpful and friendly and were satisfied with the service that they received. Over 99% said they would recommend the service to others and would use the service again if they needed to.
- Parents were also consulted; 94% felt that Careers South West had supported their son or daughter well and 99% said they would recommend the service to other parents and young people.
- 100% of the employers we asked said that they felt our staff were helpful and friendly and received the support and assistance that they required. 96% said that the written information that they were given was useful and 100% were satisfied with the overall service received.

Jenny Rudge OBE, Chief Executive

"I have always been treated with respect and had help or information given to me of a very good standard."

Young person

Information, advice and guidance for young people

Careers South West delivers independent and impartial information, advice and guidance (IAG) for young people in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, Devon, Plymouth and Torbay. It helps all 13-19 year olds (up to age 25 for those with learning difficulties and disabilities). We also provide young people access to appropriate opportunities to help them fulfil their aspirations.

IAG and related services are delivered by dedicated local teams of advisers in schools (including special schools), FE colleges and to the wider community via our work in IAG centres and other outreach locations.

This service was one of the first to be effected by the cuts to public spending suffering a reduction in funding during this year. Despite this we have continued to maintain high levels of contact with young people and maintain NEETs (not in education, employment or training) at low levels.

In 2010/11

- We supported a 13-19 cohort of nearly 148,000 young people of which only 164 (0.1%) had a current status of 'Not Known' recorded for the entire year.
- We conducted over 590,000 interventions of varying types differentiated by individual need.
- We had direct contact with over 80% of the cohort, the balance having been tracked and supported through contacts on their behalf or through the capture of intelligence from partner agencies.

Cornwall

Across Cornwall we have worked hard to secure opportunities for young people, from apprenticeships to alternative learning provision.

We linked with training providers and the National Apprenticeship Service during National Apprenticeships week in February to run events in Young Peoples' Centres. Providers and advisers were able to give information and advice direct to young people and their parents/carers, and answer any queries. Our successful Cornwall Apprenticeship Project, funded by the Skills Funding Agency, has gone from strength to strength. Now with over 400 starts for new apprentices or for those at risk of redundancy, again working closely with training providers across Cornwall, and covering occupational areas from hairdressing to construction and all areas in between.

In its second year, the convergence funded My Future project, for young people aged 14 to 16, has helped around 50 more young people with a range of more complex needs secure and maintain alternative learning provision. The My Future Personal Advisers provide intensive mentoring support to the young people and their parents/carers, and work closely with other professionals and agencies in a 'team around the child' approach, aiming to repeat the high levels of positive outcomes of the first cohort.

"I felt my adviser gave me good information and guidance on how to achieve what I want to do later in life."

Young person



Information, advice and guidance for young people

Devon

By December 2010 many of the projects devised for NEETs and those reluctant to engage had come to an end. Activity Agreement and newleaf proved to be successful but we had to look to other providers such as FE colleges to deliver the relevant programmes. They are now working with us to place young people and are using our premises to deliver information sessions.

At the Red Rock youth centre in Dawlish we have delivered sessions on the world of work with the aim of engaging with young people and helping them achieve positive outcomes. At the other end of the age spectrum we have been involved in a project in the Dawlish area working with young people who have been identified by their primary schools as "at risk" of disengaging.

Plymouth

Plymouth Summer Mix is based upon the award winning Tower Hamlets model of a summer university, which was voted Best Education Project in the National Lottery Good Causes Awards 2009.

Plymouth City Council's Youth Service and Extended Schools Services, in partnership with Connexions and young people themselves, put together a programme of courses and learning opportunities for approximately 1,600 young people aged 11-19, across the city of Plymouth, during the month of August.

As well as co-constructing and co-facilitating the Summer Mix programme, Plymouth Connexions created and lead on the delivery of two careers information programmes in partnership with employers, Plymouth University and City College Plymouth, producing two independent interactive weeks of experiential learning courses for 13-18 year olds in Plymouth. Participants were given the opportunity to get involved in exploring occupations in the healthcare and engineering sectors by visiting and interacting with the providers, then reviewing the experience with qualified guidance practitioners, who also attended the sessions.

Torbay

In the Torbay area a good deal of work has gone into maximising learning provision for young people.

A placement panel operated throughout the autumn with representatives from Torbay Council's 14-19 team, South Devon College and Careers South West. The panel identified gaps in provision which led to the creation of a programme of pre-foundation learning (Pre Flex) delivered by South Devon College.

Personal Advisers also lobbied for better provision for young people on the autistic spectrum. A pilot programme is now operating to offer specialist support through a dedicated unit which will be expanded in future years.

Further funding has also been secured for additional places on the Torbay Employers Apprenticeship Reward Scheme (TEARS) which will provide incentives for employers taking on an apprentice for the first time.

"I found the service incredibly helpful and I can't fault it in any way"

Young person



Next Step

Careers South West are one of 12 prime contractors delivering the national Next Step service. Our area now covers Somerset, Dorset, Devon and Cornwall.

The service provides free help and advice on training, learning and work to all customers aged 19 or over (and aged 18 when referred by Jobcentre Plus), irrespective of their qualifications. There is further extended support offered to customers who have yet to achieve a level 3 qualification, are at risk of redundancy, or have other barriers to engaging in employment or training.

Next Step advisers operate from a range of locations across the sub-region, including all but 2 of our 34 Jobcentres, colleges, within the Probation Service, training organisations, adult and community learning providers, and specialist organisations providing services for people with disabilities.

Since August 2010 when the new 32 month Next Step contract started, Careers South West has:

- completed 24,610 interventions with over 19,000 customers
- provided its own directly delivered provision and also contracted with a network of 22 subcontractors to provide advice sessions across the sub-region
- delivered the service through over 180 advisers either directly employed by Careers South West or employed by our subcontractors
- provided a service and action plan to over 60% of JSA claimants in Jobcentres.

Our Next Step contract covers a diverse geographic area which includes urban centres and the rural and coastal regions of Cornwall, Devon, Dorset and Somerset. The region includes both prosperous and deprived areas.

The Company also runs the Next Step Volunteer Bureau in Somerset, which recruits and manages over 1,000 volunteers who are offered training and are matched to placements across Somerset, working seamlessly alongside the main Next Step sub-regional service.



Investor in Careers

Investor in Careers (IiC) is the country's leading national quality award for careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG).

Funding cuts are putting pressures on licensees. However, we have maintained our position in the market as the most used quality award for CEIAG.

The award builds a structure that can help schools and colleges with Ofsted inspections. The IiC CODE covers:

- Commitment to delivering careers education, information, advice and guidance to young people
- Organisation of a programme of careers education
- Delivery of a programme suitable to the stage of every young person in the institution
- Evaluation to ensure the programme is constantly improved.

During the year we have promoted IiC at three national events and have attracted new interest both from schools and colleges and from CEIAG consultants who want to get involved with the product.

In 2010/11

- 50 additional schools have achieved the award during the year.
- An additional 12 schools across our region have completed the award for the first time and an additional five schools have been successfully reaccredited.
- Revised standards have been agreed for schools and colleges that cover the new IAG principles.
- Schools in three areas where there is no IiC licensee have worked directly with us direct to achieve their award.



Devon Education Business Partnership (DEBP)

DEBP aims to ensure all young people in Devon and Torbay are supported to get the right skills, experiences and knowledge to enable them to be economically competent when they leave full-time education.

This is done by improving the links between businesses and schools to deliver high quality work related learning and enterprise education.

In 2010/11

It has again been a busy year for DEBP with notable achievements including:

- achieving a majority rating of 'excellent' in the Award for Education Business Excellence
- over 8,500 duty of care checks carried out for work experience
- the refresh and re-launch of the Work Experience Policy and Guidance for Devon and Torbay schools
- over 260 teachers benefiting from industry based professional development placements
- over 200 companies directly involved in delivering enterprise and employability education
- the management of the National Centre for Languages employer engagement programme, enabling over 2,000 students to explore the excitement of languages
- 16 schools, including for the first time three special schools, supported to achieve the Education Business Excellence Award.

The team's achievements ensure a well recognised and valuable service is provided to schools and local authorities.

The enhancement and enrichment of teaching Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) and increasing the number of STEM Ambassadors across Devon, Torbay, Plymouth and Cornwall has continued to be a primary focus.



Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM)

DEBP has held the STEMNET contracts for the recruitment and deployment of STEM Ambassadors and the provision of a brokerage service for STEM enhancement and enrichment opportunities for schools and colleges across Devon and Cornwall.

In 2010/11

Our key performance achievements include:

- the recruitment of 513 registered STEM Ambassadors across Devon and Cornwall making a total of 719
- successfully exceeding targets of schools engaged in the SWRDA/ Techlink CAD/CAM (Computer Aided Design and Computer Aided Manufacture) project with 60 secondary and 136 primary schools across the South West involved
- 25 Nuffield Bursary students offered research placements
- employability skills for STEM undergraduates project working with HE establishments across the South West. The project delivers training to help students engage in STEM Ambassador activity to improve their employability skills
- successfully bidding to host the Big Bang Science and Engineering Fair with over 80 schools and 50 exhibitors attending
- attracting funding from The AstraZeneca Science Teaching Trust to work with secondary and primary schools on robotics and control activities around an Olympic theme
- increasing the take up of Crest awards which are the national award scheme for project work in STEM subjects.



Surveys and quality awards

Sunday Times Best Companies

In March 2011 Careers South West achieved 51st place in the top 100 best places to work for in the public and voluntary sector. The format was changed this year to include voluntary and charity organisations, enabling a much larger group to apply. The company also attained a top 10 place for Customer Service.

The results were generated by our employees completing online surveys around their engagement with the Company and their work-life satisfaction.

The Company was awarded a Star Status by Best Companies in recognition of a high overall score achieved within the survey results, and commended the organisation for employee engagement.



Customer Service Excellence

In March 2011 the Company had its second Customer Service Excellence (CSE) review after attaining the award in 2009.

The review acknowledged an energetic and vibrant organisation and emphasised the enthusiasm of its staff.

It was recognised that we continue to put the customer at the heart of all we do and provide an excellent service to the customer.



matrix

The matrix assessment took place in April 2010 and is now held for three years. The Company was judged as "Good" and it was acknowledged that we are committed to quality in every aspect.

Staff training and development and in particular the "9 Conversations" leadership programme was emphasised as a strength, along with good partnership working, both in terms of development and maintenance were also identified.

Stating that IAG is at the heart of the Company, the report included comments from customers:

"Nothing could have been better. The advisor knew what they were talking about."

Customer

"You feel encouraged to get work; they plan it all out with you."

Customer

"Brilliant – very useful and fun. Good advice."

Customer



Information systems

Information systems are the central information technology function provider for Careers South West supporting over 500 users across Cornwall, the Isles of Scilly, Devon, Plymouth, Torbay as well as parts of Somerset and Dorset.

Client Caseload Information system (CCIS)

The CCIS primarily supports the delivery of services to young people and continues to be a core requirement of the Department for Education (DfE) in the delivery of the services to both vulnerable young people and in the tracking of engagement in learning. The CCIS will form the basis for the data that will be used to assist local authorities in tracking engagement in learning in order that they will be able to meet their responsibilities for Raising of the Participation Age.

CCIS is populated with information supplied by schools, colleges and the local authority, under the Education and Skills Act 2008. Parents can opt out if they do not want their children's details held on the database.

The CCIS specification issued by DfE defines the data that must be held, details the minimum functionality of the system, and sets protocols for cross border working and data management. It also specifies the data processing controls and parameters, and defines the method for the monthly transfers of individual data to the national CCIS database which are used in the compilation of data sets for statistical analysis and monitoring policy.

The Company continued to contribute positively to the national CCIS agenda, including input to a number of technical work-strands and information sharing policy developments.

Customer Relationship Management system (CRM)

The 2010/11 Next Step contract introduced a requirement for all work with adults to be recorded on a National CRM System. This has presented a number of challenges and we have worked closely with Next Step colleagues, the Skills Funding Agency and the software developers to meet the contractual and associated operating requirements.

This has involved the development of a series of complimentary operational processes, a full training and support package for new users and the development of a data-processing solution to enable the interpretation and analysis of the data held in the national system.

The Company's high level of controls and systems for information security and data management were further enhanced and we have moved to a level of 90% accreditation for the ISO27001 information security award.

Careers South West responded strongly to contractual changes and continues to maintain its reputation of integrity in respect of personal information and confidentiality.

All of these technologies are supported by stringent policies and procedures to ensure that all personal data is processed and shared in full compliance with the Data Protection Act, the Human Rights Act, the Cabinet Office Requirements for Information Security and the Common Law of Confidentiality.

"It has been good to be able to meet with an adviser and then be able to keep in contact by telephone to ask questions."

Parent

Activity Agreement

December 2010 saw the end of the Activity Agreement (AA) project which tested the most effective system of financial support to engage the most disaffected 16-17 year olds. It targeted those who had been continuously NEET (not in education, employment, or training) for six weeks or more (depending on the young person's circumstances), and aimed to influence the government's future youth support policies.

AA helped the hardest to reach young people to move into a positive outcome by offering them a tailor made package of activities, for example, confidence building, basic IT, basic skills, one to one and group activities, and job search, that inspired and gave them the confidence to take their next step into education, employment, or training.

Careers South West delivered the AA pilot that tested a model offering £30 per week to participating young people. Young people were set a clear expectation to progress into learning to reach their full potential, and had to demonstrate progress towards learning in order to qualify for weekly financial support.

In 2010/11

- 304 young people started an AA, which was 15.6% above target
- 205 young people who started AA during 2010/11 moved into a positive outcome within 13 weeks of leaving, which was an achievement of 67.4%.

Since the AA pilot began in 2006 over 1,900 young people have signed up to the project, with nearly 50% achieving a positive outcome.

Throughout the time that Careers South West has delivered the AA we have been one of the top performers nationally.

"The Activity Agreement is helping me figure out what I want to do with my life and career. I enjoy it because it helps me know my choices and also my PA is good to talk to."

Jade



newleaf

December 2010 saw the end of the newleaf project which Careers South West had managed and delivered since August 2008.

The project aimed to engage over 750 14-19 year olds in Devon who were in the NEET category, or at risk of becoming NEET, and move them into education, employment or training.

It provided a personalised programme of activities with a strong information, advice and guidance element, and promoted the importance of lifelong learning and a good work attitude to young people.

The project also sought to increase the number of 16-17 year olds remaining in structured learning.

Our results up to the project end in December 2010 were as follows:

- 803 young people started newleaf, which is a target achievement of 105%
- 591 accredited learning activities were started, which is a target achievement of 120%
- 358 accredited learning activities were achieved, which is a target achievement of 108%
- 381 young people have moved into a positive outcome of education, employment or training within 6 weeks of leaving newleaf, which is a target achievement of 100%
- 365 young people either sustained the positive outcome for a minimum of 13 weeks or moved into a positive outcome within 6 -13 weeks of leaving newleaf, which is a target achievement of 100%.

Throughout the project our advisers provided the young people taking part with the support they needed both to participate in the learning activities and to move into, and sustain, a positive outcome.

"newleaf was brilliant. I came out of it with qualifications and that was really good. I'm doing really well now. I have a flat, a job, ambition and I'm feeling really positive about myself."

Kyrien



Extracts from Directors' report and financial statements

The Company is a local authority controlled company with four owners:

- Cornwall Council
- Devon County Council
- Plymouth City Council
- Torbay Council.

The Company is a social enterprise which reinvests any and all surplus funds in its services. There is no distribution or dividend payment to the owners.

The owners have entered into a joint agreement to carry on the business in the best interests of the Company on sound commercial principles with a commitment to collaborative working.

In 2010/11 :

- the Company's total income was £16.2 million and the Company employed an average full-time equivalent of 340 employees during the year. All of our employees are subjected to full enhanced CRB checks
- £10.3 million was spent successfully delivering young people's information, advice and guidance, including the Connexions service, under a contract from the four owner local authorities
- £3.3 million was spent on delivering other young people's contracts including newleaf
- £2.2 million was spent on delivering information, advice and guidance services for adults; Next Step
- £0.8 million was spent on delivering the services of Devon Education Business Partnership.

A full copy of the Directors' report and financial statements for the year end 31st March 2011 is available on our Company website www.careerssw.org

"Our overall strategy is to position ourselves to provide value for money services to enable the Company to move forward in a more commercially demanding environment."

Chris Owen

Director of Finance and Company Secretary



"All our customers are entitled to a careers path, and we are delighted to be able to link our work with young people and adults. It is important for individual achievement and success that our customers receive good transitional support either into further and higher education, or into new careers."

Jenny Rudge OBE, Chief Executive, Careers South West.



www.careerssw.org

Careers South West Ltd is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all employees and volunteers to share this commitment.

Careers South West Ltd is committed to improving its products and services. If you have any comments or complaints please contact Careers South West Ltd, Tamar Business Park, Pennygillam Industrial Estate, Launceston, PL15 7ED.

This publication can be made available in large print, Braille, audio cd or in languages other than English. Please contact Careers South West Ltd on 01566 777672.

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