

**How do guidance professionals ensure the  
careers information, advice and guidance  
they deliver is up to date, current and  
in line with industry needs?**

**Case Study – Construction and Built Environment Sector**

**University of Sunderland**

**Masters Dissertation**

**MA in Advice and Guidance (CGM 006)**

**Maria O'Sullivan**

## **Abstract**

This report investigates the range of methods guidance professionals use to ensure the careers information, advice and guidance (CIAG) they deliver is up to date, current and in line of the needs of industry. An important aim of the research project is to gain a greater understanding of the experiences of guidance professionals when endeavouring to deliver CIAG aligned to the needs of the labour market pitched against the views and needs of industry. It is intended that the recommendations of the study will make a contribution towards improving the quality of the careers information, advice and guidance being delivered to young people and adults in relation to the requirements of industry with a particular focus on the construction and built environment sector. The benefits of improving the quality of CIAG in this respect will be primarily reaped by the clients of guidance practitioners and industry. The study begins by exploring the literature and theory linked to the guidance profession, labour market information and the construction industry. The research methods and methodology adopts a cross sectional, qualitative and quantitative analysis to investigate the key themes of the research. The findings of the research are presented with a thematic analysis of the results. Several positive case studies and examples were identified during this study which succeed in helping guidance professionals keep their industry knowledge up to date however many barriers also emerged that prevent both guidance workers and industry communicating with and updating each other effectively. The research leads to a range of recommendations to help remove the obstacles both guidance practitioners and industry face, improve future practice in this area and ultimately enhance relations between industry and the guidance profession thus benefiting the 'end users' of the guidance process.

# Contents Page

<b>Glossary of Terms</b>	<b>Page 1</b>
<b>Chapter 1 – Introduction to the Research Project</b>	<b>Page 2 - 12</b>
➤ <i>Introduction</i>	
➤ <i>Structure of the Report</i>	
➤ <i>Aims and Objectives</i>	
➤ <i>Defining the research title</i>	
<b>Chapter 2 – Literature Review and Theoretical Analysis</b>	<b>Page 13 - 27</b>
➤ <i>Introduction to Chapter 2</i>	
➤ <i>Description of the current CIAG landscape</i>	
➤ <i>Guidance profession and industry knowledge/LMI</i>	
➤ <i>Construction &amp; Built Environment (CBE) sector</i>	
➤ <i>Conclusion to Chapter 2</i>	
<b>Chapter 3 – Research Methods and Methodology</b>	<b>Page 28 - 43</b>
➤ <i>General introduction</i>	
➤ <i>The primary researcher</i>	
➤ <i>Research participants</i>	
➤ <i>Questioning techniques</i>	
➤ <i>Focus groups</i>	
➤ <i>Semi-structured interviews</i>	
➤ <i>Online Questionnaires</i>	
➤ <i>Future research</i>	

# Contents Page

<b>Chapter 4 – Research Findings and Analysis</b>	<b>Page 44 - 82</b>
➤ <i>Methods guidance practitioners use to keep up to date with industry</i>	
➤ <i>Barriers to updating LMI/Key themes</i>	
➤ <i>LMI training and input</i>	
➤ <i>Positive case studies/projects</i>	
➤ <i>The views of guidance professionals towards LMI</i>	
➤ <i>Other industries/Sector Skills Councils and the Guidance Profession</i>	
➤ <i>The Construction and Built Environment Sector</i>	
<b>Chapter 5 – Conclusion and Recommendations</b>	<b>Page 83 - 91</b>
➤ <i>Restatement of Aims</i>	
➤ <i>Conclusion</i>	
➤ <i>Recommendations for future research</i>	
➤ <i>Recommendations for future practice</i>	
<b>List of Appendices</b>	<b>Page 92</b>
<b>Appendices 1 - 10</b>	<b>Page 93 - 112</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>Page 113 - 120</b>

## **Glossary of terms**

<b>AGCAS</b>	Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services
<b>CBE</b>	Construction and Built Environment
<b>CIAG</b>	Careers information, advice and guidance
<b>DSCF</b>	Department for Schools, Children and Families
<b>DBIS</b>	Department for Business and Innovation
<b>EHRC</b>	Equality and Human Rights Commission
<b>FE</b>	Further Education
<b>HE</b>	Higher Education
<b>IAG</b>	Information, Advice and Guidance
<b>ICG</b>	Institute of Careers Guidance
<b>LDSS</b>	Learning, Development and Support Services
<b>LLUK</b>	Lifelong Learning UK
<b>NEET</b>	Not in employment, education or training
<b>LMI</b>	Labour Market Information
<b>PA</b>	(Connexions) Personal Adviser
<b>QCG</b>	Qualification in Career Guidance
<b>SSC</b>	Sector Skills Council

## **Chapter 1 – Introduction to the Research Project**

An upsurge in interest and reports around the subjects of Careers Information Advice and Guidance (CIAG) and labour market information (LMI) from a wide range of key stakeholders including (former) government, local authorities, the guidance community and Sector Skills Councils (SSC's), which will be analysed in Chapter 2, clearly indicates that ensuring guidance professionals and services are up to date with all aspects of the labour market is a high priority for all these stakeholders. Although certain studies, for example Hall (2009), and Lifelong Learning UK (2009) have focused on the Labour Market Information (LMI) and overall skills and training needs of the guidance profession there is a lack of research which takes in to account the specific LMI requirements of the guidance practitioner balanced against the needs of industry. This study will aim to examine this 'gap' in research based on the aims and objectives explained below.

From the primary researcher's viewpoint this subject area is of particular interest on both a personal and professional level. The high level of interaction with guidance professionals experienced by the primary researcher led to a realisation that LMI is a subject area which many advisers feel passionate and genuinely interested in. The researcher's experience of representing the Construction and Built environment sector which is changing at such a fast pace meant keeping guidance professionals up to date on this sector was proving challenging. This challenge coupled with the ubiquitous phrase 'LMI' which seemed to feature in a whole range of different literature, as discussed above, prompted the researcher to endeavour to ascertain the position of guidance professionals in terms of keeping their knowledge of industry up

to date and how effective and efficient the flow of information is between industry and the guidance community. Through gaining a deeper understanding of this topic and making suitable recommendations the researcher feels this study could improve the quality of CIAG being delivered by careers advisers to young people and adults. This improvement would allow clients to make more informed and wise career choices based on the needs of industry which would also improve their long term career prospects. Industry would also benefit from a workforce who has a better understanding of its needs and a workforce that *meets* those needs. Other beneficiaries of this research could include the economy in terms of profiting from a healthy, successful labour market and the guidance profession through an enhancement of their continuous professional development.

Furthermore by presenting the position of the guidance profession and industry in relation to the subject matter this will hopefully lead to both parties adopting a more empathetic and appreciative position towards each other thus leading to a more fulfilling relationship and ultimately improving the exchange of information to mutual benefit. The importance and purpose of this study is further discussed further on page 6 and 7 in relation to the research title.

### **Structure of the Report**

This section will begin by further defining the aims and objectives of the research project followed by an explanation of the research title in more detail. The Literature Review in Chapter 2 will appraise and examine the literature and theory linked to the guidance profession, labour market information and the construction industry. This will be followed by cross sectional, qualitative and quantitative research and analysis

involving key stakeholders with conclusions and recommendations being made based on the primary and secondary research findings covered in the report.

The time frame for this research project covers the period up to beginning May 2010 therefore it was not possible to take into account the change in government which occurred during this time.

### **Aims of the Research**

The overarching aim of this research project is to gain an insight into the professional practice of guidance workers when delivering CIAG. The study endeavours to ascertain *if* and *how* guidance professionals ensure the CIAG they deliver is current and in line with the needs of industry. Furthermore the position of industry is also taken into account in an attempt to understand the dynamic between industry and the guidance community and the flow of information between the two parties.

The main aims and objectives of this research project, listed below, will be achieved through completion of the literature review, primary research, conclusion and recommendations as detailed above.

### **Aims**

- To investigate the range of methods guidance professionals use to ensure their industry knowledge is up to date and how this knowledge impacts on the careers information, advice and guidance they deliver.
- To examine how important it is for guidance workers to keep their careers information, advice and guidance (CIAG) in line with industry's needs



### **Aims continued**

- To study the relationship dynamic and flow of information between the guidance community and industry.
  
- To identify barriers both guidance professionals and industry face when endeavouring to exchange information and build working relationships.
  
- To ascertain the views of industry, primarily through the medium of Sector Skills Councils, towards the guidance profession and how SSC's liaise with the guidance profession.
  
- To consider the position of the Construction and Built Environment sector in relation to this topic and what methods it employs to keep the guidance profession up to date on changes to its industry.
  
- To describe the relationship between industry and the guidance profession with particular focus on the Construction and Built Environment (CBE) sector.

### **Objectives**

- To gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between the guidance profession and industry with focus on the flow of information between both parties.
  
- To determine the value the guidance profession places on engaging with industry particular the CBE sector and keeping their knowledge of industry current.
  
- To make recommendations which will aim to improve relations and awareness between the guidance profession and industry.

### **Objectives continued**

- To suggest ideas which will contribute towards removing the barriers both groups face in this process in order for this piece of research to be of 'real' benefit to those involved.

### **The Research Title**

The definition of key words and terms featured in the research title will be clearly explained to ensure the reader understands the interpretation of these words in the context of this research project. The importance of the industry sector chosen for this report, i.e. the Construction and Built Environment, will be briefly explained and justified to aid the readers understanding of why this industry field was chosen. Defining and validating the research title will also clarify further the importance and purpose of this study.

### **Definition of “Careers Information, Advice and Guidance”**

The first important term which requires definition, in relation to this report, is the term 'careers information, advice and guidance' (CIAG). There are a number of different definitions of IAG which exist. Each definition depends on the context and client group in question and several definitions are not orientated towards careers and are therefore more generic in definition. CIAG by its very nature is multi-faceted, can take place in a whole different range of scenarios and be delivered and received by everybody. On this subject, Bimrose et al (2004) remarked in the report '*What makes guidance effective?*' that finding a definition of 'guidance' which is satisfactory to the wider community has proved "*elusive*" (Bimrose, 2004, p. 22). Due to the all-encompassing elements of CIAG, and the difficulty of finding one satisfactory

definition, it is more appropriate to draw on two definitions of CIAG. Below is a definition provided by the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) which is often referred to:

- “- At key periods in a young person’s life where information, advice and guidance will be necessary to help them make decisions about their future. This will include raising aspirations, challenging stereotypes, and ensuring that young people are aware of all the opportunities which are open to them*
- At any time during their teenage years when they need help to deal with any issues they may be facing. For example, these might include health, smoking, drugs, relationships etc*
- Signposting to specialist advice, advocacy and/or referral to more intensive support if necessary” (DCSF, 2007, p. 4).*

This definition is geared towards young people, yet in many respects, it could be equally applicable to adults. The shortfall of this definition for this study lies in its generic wording and the fact that it does not wholly focus on *careers* IAG. The definition below of ‘career guidance’ from the Organisation for Economic and Co-operation and Development (2004) bridges this gap and effectively defines the role ‘guidance’ and the ‘labour market’ plays in the IAG process:

*“Services intended to assist people of any age and at any point throughout their lives to make educational, training and occupational choices to manage their careers. Career guidance helps people to reflect on their ambitions, interests, qualifications and abilities. It helps them to understand the labour market and*

*education systems, and to relate this to what they know about themselves. Comprehensive career guidance tries to teach people to plan and make decisions about work and learning. Career guidance makes information about the labour market and about educational opportunities more accessible by organising it, systematising it and making it available when and where people need it.” (OECD, 2004, p.19).*

For the purposes of this study a combination of these two definitions of CIAG will apply. Considered together they effectively take into account the important elements of CIAG. They emphasise that CIAG is a continuous and lifelong process as well as recognising the role ‘guidance’ plays in helping a client understanding the world and more specifically the labour market.

#### **Definition of “Industry” and further discussion of the research title**

The definition of ‘industry’ can be described in a financial and commercial manner as clearly defined below:

*“An industry is a subdivision of a market sector and includes companies producing the same or similar goods and services. These companies often compete with each other for customers and investors.”*

(Dictionary of Financial Terms, 2008).

Within the above defined term of industry a labour market operates which is fundamental to an industry’s survival. When adopting a financial interpretation of the term ‘Labour Market’ it is agreed by many sources such as the Department of

Education and Skills (2005) to be a place in which employers of people (labour demand) are matched with people who are available for work (labour supply). Because the labour market is fundamental to an industry's survival and performs a fundamental role within industry, for the purposes of this research, the terms 'labour market' and 'industry' will be used interchangeably. Bearing this mind, when referring to CIAG being 'current, up to date and in line with industry needs' this can be defined as CIAG taking into account a range of factors which are key to the success of an industry. Some of these factors as identified in the report LMI Matters! Understanding labour market information by DfES (2004) include:

- Labour demand v Labour supply – the type and level of occupations which are in demand and which are no longer required.
- Skills, Qualifications and Training – the level of skills and qualifications needed to do the jobs available.
- Future skills – the skills industry requires in the future to develop and flourish.
- Demographics and Diversity - The gender profile, ethnic mix, age and disability profile of the workforce
- Government legislation – how will future government legislation will affect industry and its labour force

Considering the issue of labour supply and demand further the Department for Education and Skills (2005) *Understanding the Labour Market* Report summed up this relationship succinctly '*Employers will not employ people to do jobs that do not need doing.*' (DES, 2005, p. 9). This report, in line with numerous other reports that focus on the labour market and industry (Leitch, 2006; LLUK 2009), reinforces the need for

CIAG to be current, up to date and in line with industry and that knowledge about industry and the labour market in isolation does not equate to effective CIAG . Such knowledge must be interpreted to meet the needs of the client and industry and help to match labour supply with projected demand so mismatches can be avoided which can seriously affected individuals and society as a whole. (DoE, 2007; Leitch 2006; LLUK 2009) summed up in the report below:

*“When someone receives good labour market information that leads to a good decision, it benefits the individual, the employer and the economy.”*

(DfES, 2004, p. 2).

This argument will be further developed in this review and subsequent chapters.

### **“Guidance Professional”**

CIAG can be provided by a wide range of people including parents, families, teachers and peers and come in many different forms such as online IAG, advice and guidance delivered face to face or over the telephone. Due to limitations on time, resources and budget and bearing in mind the priorities of the sponsoring organisation (discussed below), the sole focus of this study will be on guidance professionals delivering CIAG.

For the purposes of this research, a guidance professional is defined as an individual who delivers CIAG to young people or adults and has ideally achieved a guidance qualification at level 3 or above. Guidance qualifications would include:

- NVQ 3 or NVQ 4 in Advice and Guidance
- Diploma in Career Guidance (Part 1 and 2)
- Qualification in Career Guidance/Post Graduate Diploma in Guidance

Throughout this study a 'guidance professional' will also be referred to as a '(careers) adviser', 'guidance practitioner' and 'guidance worker' as these are terms frequently used to refer to a guidance professional.

Guidance professionals, in relation to this study, may work for a number of different guidance organisations including:

1. Connexions (age 14-19)
2. Jobcentre Plus (adults, post 19)
3. Higher Education Careers Services (adults post 18)
4. Further Education Careers Services (primarily post 16)
5. Next Step (adults, post 19)

### **Construction and Built Environment (CBE) Sector**

The Construction and Built Environment sector has been selected as a case study for this piece of research. To clarify the coverage of the sector the ConstructionSkills' *LMI report*, (2010) can be referred to:

*“Construction is the creation of the built environment. It is everything around you that is man-made from football stadiums to roads. It covers all stages of the construction process, including creating the initial ideas and designs, actually building the structure and ensuring that everything continues to work smoothly after it is complete.*

*The industry spans the following areas:*

- *Infrastructure – Roads and Rail*
- *Public and Private Housing*
- *Public non-housing - Schools*
- *Industrial*
- *Commercial – Offices and Retail*
- *Repair and Maintenance”*

(ConstructionSkills, 2010, p. 1).

This industry sector was chosen as a case study for several reasons. Firstly, it underpins all other economic activity and forms a significant part of the UK economy in terms of employment and wealth generation (ConstructionSkills, 2009). The research into this sector will also serve to compliment and inform the development of the ConstructionSkills’, the Sector Skills Council for the construction industry, recently formed IAG team. This team are primarily tasked with ensuring the guidance community is kept to date with key information relating to the CBE sector. This piece of research has been sponsored by ConstructionSkills to contribute towards their future planning and strategy development in terms of CIAG and to further strengthen relationships between the guidance community and the CBE sector.



## **Chapter 2 - Literature Review and Theoretical Analysis**

### **Introduction to the Chapter**

This chapter will study the literature and theory linked to career guidance, the guidance profession and LMI. Thorough analysis of the current literature will also attempt to describe the existing landscape relevant to guidance professionals and the CBE sector in order to identify key issues relevant to the study.

In terms of the genres of literature reviewed for this research project, the existence of numerous reports, research papers and (former) government white papers surrounding this subject area has led to the focus of the literature review and subsequent discussion to be largely based and influenced by these forms of literature.

### **Description of the current CIAG landscape**

The current careers information, advice and guidance (CIAG) landscape is very much open to interpretation depending on which (former) government white papers, task force, report or survey a reader is alluding to. Recent reports may interpret the current IAG landscape as quite bleak as there is a critical, reoccurring theme towards IAG services. For example, studying the research findings from the Equality and Human Rights Commission's (EHRC) *Staying on report* (2009) the outlook seems quite disheartening in terms of IAG provision for young people. The report states that:

*“One in five young people in England feel they have not had enough information and advice to make the right choices about their future, rising to 23*

*per cent of young people with a disability and a quarter of those from ethnic minorities.”* (EHRC, 2009a, p. 36).

These views were further reinforced in the (former) government’s *Unleashing Aspirations* Report (2010) which stated that the Connexions service was ‘*simply not good enough and the service requires a radical rethink.*’ (H.M. Government, 2010, p. 74). Focusing more specifically on CIAG, a report by the charity, The Sutton Trust, further criticised the careers advice students in mainstream education received by describing it as ‘*inadequate*’ and ‘*inappropriate*’ (Lipcott, 2008). This dissatisfaction was also echoed by higher education students in the *National Student Forum Annual Report* (2008) which detailed that students were also looking for improved information, advice and guidance.

In an attempt to explore these criticisms further and verify their validity research was carried out to seek counterbalancing arguments. Finding such opinions or research to offset the findings and opinions above has proven to be challenging. An alternative viewpoint could be adopted relating to the power that schools and colleges were given to "opt out" of Local Authority commissioned arrangements and to commission their own IAG if they were dissatisfied with the current service (DfES, 2006). Following this offer to schools, not one school followed up on this option, which could suggest that schools may not have been as displeased with the service as it first appears. Referring back to the EHRC’s *Staying on Report* (2009a) if one in five young people feel they have not had enough information, advice and guidance to help them make decisions about their future it could be inferred that four out of five felt they had

received adequate provision. If this is the case, and 80% of clients are satisfied with the provision of IAG this could be considered a positive outcome.

The issues and challenges related to IAG provision may also be explained by a number of different factors which are related to the lack of access that large sections of some marginal communities have to advice and guidance. This issue does merit further exploration but in this case as it is not directly related to this research title it therefore must remain a consideration for the purposes of this report.

Taking a more general view, a consultation of the raft of recent government white papers all place great emphasis and status on the role of Information, Advice and Guidance (DCSF, 2009a; DBIS 2009a, 2009b). These (former) government reports coupled with the recently developed 'Careers Profession Taskforce' (ICG, 2010) seems to herald a critical and crucial time for the career guidance profession. The reports communicate a strong, consistent message that the (former) government was wholly committed to improving, qualifying and modernising the provision of IAG and the career guidance profession which is confirmed in this quote by Ed Balls, (former) Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families,:

*'We want every child to succeed, and we will never give up on any child. That is why we need a radical change in the way Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) is delivered. This strategy will modernise IAG and careers education to make it accessible for today's generation of young people and to keep pace with a rapidly changing economy.'* (DCSF, 2009a, p. 4)

Some may view this as a very positive and reassuring sign that the (former) government was realising the importance of high quality IAG as well as the professionals and companies that deliver this service describing them as playing a *'particularly critical brokerage role'* (EHRC, 2009a, p. 34). However performing a more holistic study of what is happening in (careers) education, in one respect the guidance profession and its role seems very high on the political agenda yet the guidance profession is being missed out of the equation in other respects. For example, if we are to look at the new 'Education and Employers Taskforce', which was borne out of several (former) government reports for example, DIUS (2008), the guidance profession is not referred to once on its dedicated website [www.educationandemployers.org](http://www.educationandemployers.org). Clearly this taskforce is aimed at fostering relations between education and employers however the taskforce seems to have overlooked the role of the guidance practitioner in this CIAG process. This oversight of the guidance profession can also be identified in the DCSF's *Quality, Change and Aspiration report*, (2009a). This report proclaims *'a step change in on-line advice and guidance so that we can deliver a truly 21st century IAG service with young people able to access IAG on Facebook, You Tube, blogs and other social networking sites'* (DCSF, 2009, p. 4) and a new dedicated online mentoring scheme from 2010 to allow young people to contact professionals via the internet. Such taskforces and new 'forms' of IAG are evidently aimed at revolutionising advice and guidance yet it begs the question that once a young person gathers information from the internet, from social networking sites and their industry e-mentor who is going to be on hand to help them process, filter and interpret this information? In this instance the structural frameworks of career guidance supported by Roberts (1995), which views the function of the guidance professional as a form of arbiter and filterer of information who helps

to appraise a client's world view, appear very appropriate. The views of these frameworks of career guidance are further championed by a raft of reports from the (former) government (for example DoE, 2007; Leitch 2006) discussed in Chapter 1, and the Lifelong Learning UK Report (2009), *Skills Needs and Training Supply for Career Guidance – a Gap Analysis*. These reports highlight that (careers) Advisers cannot expect clients to be able to interpret detailed LMI alone and the Adviser must play a fundamental role in helping their clients to understand this information and apply it to their situation. Bearing this mind, it could be considered short sighted of the (former) government to not involve guidance professionals in this taskforce and its IAG strategy and recognise the integral role they play in working with young people and helping them to filter, review and interpret the information they gather from the internet and industry.

To clarify this discussion further, it must be noted that the most recent (former) government white papers and reports as referred previously in this chapter (DSCF, 2009a, 2009b; DBIS 2009b) refer to the acronym 'IAG' on numerous occasions yet, as already acknowledged, IAG can come in many forms from internet websites to a family planning clinic advising on contraception and does not necessary equate to *career guidance* delivered by trained guidance practitioners. It would be interesting to further qualify these frequent references to IAG to determine to what extent when they refer to IAG do they mean *careers* IAG and how critical they feel career companies and career guidance professionals are to these changes.

Impartiality seems to be at the heart of these (former) government reforms which could be viewed as a very encouraging and positive sign especially since impartiality

is the first principle in the Institute of Career Guidance's *Code of Ethical Principles* (2005). However, considering the high priority that is assigned to impartiality in these changes, the (former) government's offer to schools, considered previously in this chapter, to opt out of the Connexions service and bring the provision in house could be viewed as a potential threat to impartiality.

### **Guidance profession and industry knowledge/LMI**

After describing and evaluating the current climate of the (careers) IAG it is necessary to examine the position of the guidance practitioner, CIAG and the labour market/industry. Previous models of career interviewing including the FIRST model (Bedford, 1982), have recognised and placed value on 'information' and 'realism' when delivering career guidance. 'Feedback' and 'Advocacy' are also key features of the seven activities of guidance (UDACE, 1986). To carry these activities out Gothard et al (2001), firmly state that *'guidance professionals need knowledge and in-depth understanding of how the labour market and education/training markets work'* (Gothard et al 2001, p. 77). The importance of guidance workers keeping up to date with the labour market was also keenly stressed in The Sainsbury Review of Science and Innovation Report (2007):

*"Good careers advice is critical for pupils to be able to understand the opportunities available to them and to raise their aspirations. Careers advice should be firmly rooted in the labour market (present and predicted future) and careers advisors should have excellent knowledge of both these trends and of the learning routes to get there."* (Lord Sainsbury of Turville, 2007, p. 109).

Lifelong Learning UK, the SSC for lifelong learning, has carried out extensive research into this area and their findings wholeheartedly support the importance of guidance practitioners possessing up to date knowledge of industry and the labour market. They argue that knowledge of industry and the labour market is an ‘essential’ skill for practitioners and has been identified as a serious gap in the existing career guidance qualification framework (LLUK, 2009; LLUK 2010).

The (former) government has placed much stress on IAG provision for young people and this is evident in the plethora of reports and white papers around this subject. It is difficult however to find the same range and volume of literature and reports relating to adult provision but equally the (former) government did demonstrate its commitment to adult guidance provision with its plans for the new Adult Advancement and Careers Service which was borne out of the Leitch report (2006) and outlined in DBIS’ *Fuelling Potential* Report (2010). On its website this new service outlines its vision:

*“our vision is for an adult advancement and careers service that responds to the needs of individuals and employers - and that helps people find sustainable work that in turn makes us more competitive and successful on the global stage”* ([www.iagreview.org.uk/vision](http://www.iagreview.org.uk/vision), 2010).

The value being placed on guidance professionals and careers services ensuring the CIAG they deliver is current and related to the needs of industry is a recurring theme which can be found in the above quote, the reports, findings, websites of key stakeholders including (former) government, Sector Skills Councils, and research bodies such as the National Guidance Research Forum. Further strengthened by the

many calls to ensure the impartiality of IAG, the future of CIAG provision meeting the needs of industry could be interpreted in a very positive light. However this viewpoint must be considered in the context of other reports which paint a less positive picture. Firstly, the significant gap in the career guidance qualification framework regarding LMI must be noted (LLUK, 2010). Furthermore, many concerns have been raised by many non-governmental research papers around career guidance been delivered by Connexions Personal Advisers (PA's) without specialist career guidance training, PA's feeling their knowledge base being diminished (Colley, Lewin, Chadderton, 2010), a loss of employer engagement work (Fuller et al, 2005a, 2005b) coupled with the significant pressure of PA's to meet targets whilst at the same time improve their labour market knowledge (Hall, 2009). *The LMI need of Young people, Parents, Teachers and IAG Professionals: A report to the Regional 14-19 Commission* (Hall, 2009) details a 'wish list' of LMI needs expressed by those involved in guidance in the North East of England including e-newsletters, workshops, conferences, easily digestible LMI and regional briefings. This 'wish list' points to a critical message that developing and understanding industry knowledge must play a part in a practitioners' daily working lives and continuous professional development. It could be questioned that if identifying and bridging a gap in the careers guidance qualification framework identified in the LLUK (2010) report regarding LMI is enough. Much of the existing literature examined as part of this review recognises the importance of LMI yet fails to address how updating industry knowledge will become an integral and inherent part of Advisers' daily working lives.

The literature relating to this subject matter also encourages the reader to view the guidance professional as an individual, a human being, and focusing on his/her



relationship with industry. Firstly, the limitations of a guidance practitioner are recognised as supported by this quote:

*“in practice, of course, no career adviser, even when experienced, is ever going to know more than 50 per cent of what he/she might be asked on occasions”* (Gothard et al 2001, p. 80).

This empathetic stance towards the guidance professional is balanced by a strong argument which portrays the careers adviser playing an authoritative, leading and influential role in terms of their client, society and politics. It clearly states that this role should be acknowledged and taken very seriously by the careers adviser as if this is not taken on board ‘*careless talk*’ (Gothard et al 2001, p. 92) could be quite detrimental to many parties and individuals.

### **Construction & Built Environment (CBE) Sector, the guidance community and CIAG**

To further examine the role of the CBE sector and its relationship with the guidance community a key report, *Positive Influence?* (2007), from ConstructionSkills, the Sector Skills Council for the construction industry, who represent the voice of industry, states categorically their stance:

*“Teachers and careers advisers need to be supplied with the right information to communicate the range of opportunities in the industry”*  
(ConstructionSkills, 2007, p. 1).

This quote clearly acknowledges the importance of stakeholders such as careers advisers being sufficiently informed about their industry.

Endorsing the structural frameworks of guidance (Roberts, 1995) and numerous reports already referenced (for example LLUK, 2009, Lord Sainsbury of Turville, 2007) this *Positive Influence?* Report (2007) also views the careers adviser as a type of 'interpreter' of information to facilitate young people navigating the complexities and specialisms with the construction sector. Furthermore it expresses the need for guidance practitioners to fill the career guidance skills gap that many parents, according to this research, do not feel they possess.

A whole raft of literature points to the image problems and lack of diversity experienced by the construction industry (ConstructionSkills, 2009; Fuller 2005b; CCI 2008; EHRC 2009b). It has been recognised that the role of the guidance worker and guidance interview can play a significant role in challenging stereotypical career choices (Rolfe, 1999) through 'exploration and constructive realism' (Bimrose, 2001, p.90). This approach to guidance may respond to some of the industry's need, as discussed previously in the *Positive Influence?* Report (2007) in terms of challenging young peoples' negative images of the CBE sector.

When considering diversity within the CBE sector and the position of the guidance worker a whole host of different stances and opinions can be found within existing literature. Whilst some reports disregard the role of careers adviser in challenging these stereotypes (ConstructionSkills, 2007; Egan 2004), some literature recognises the positive role a guidance professional can play (Rolfe 1999; Bimrose 2001) and

taking this one step further several reports (EHRC 2009b; CCI 2008) place the careers adviser in a very influential role and portions an element of blame on the profession (and education) for the CBE sector's lack of diversity and development summed up explicitly in the quote from the EHRC's Report (2009b) *Race Discrimination in the Construction Industry*:

*“the lack of appropriate advice from career counselling and education services seems to disproportionately disadvantage ethnic minority students at vocational levels, thereby impoverishing the industry.”* (EHRC, 2009b, p.17).

It must be noted however these reports detailed above are written from a variety of different standpoints and voices. The literature that could be classed as representing the construction industry (ConstructionSkills, 2007; CCI 2008; Egan 2004) however is still inconsistent in its viewpoint leaving it difficult to draw an overall conclusion as to industry's overall opinion of the role of the guidance profession. The inconsistent attitude of the sector identified in these reports towards the role of the guidance worker has clear resonance with previous literature discussed (DCSF, 2009b; DIUS 2008) which vacillates between placing the guidance profession as playing a key role in the CIAG process to overlooking them entirely.

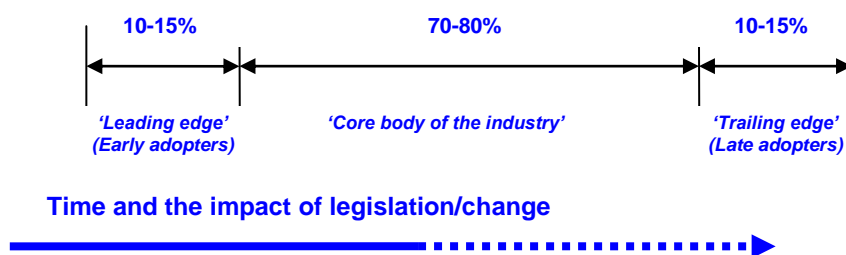
Integral to this piece of research is the focus on CIAG being '*in line with industry needs*'. Therefore, pertinent to this part of the research is to investigate the Construction and Built Environment sector in more detail and how it ascertains and communicates what its needs are. Understanding its own requirements is a pre-requisite before the sector can accurately inform external stakeholders of these needs.

A recent SSC report, the *Sector Skills Assessment for the Construction Sector (2009)*, focussing on the future skills priorities, examines the challenges the industry faces in terms of the ageing population, widespread redundancies, the zero carbon targets for buildings, the greater use of modern methods of construction and client attitudes demanding a more skilled workforce. This report implies, along with a recent article published by *Van den Brink, Anagboso, (2010)* that the industry is difficult to measure, predict and quantify due to its high levels of self employment and small businesses, its seasonal nature and its dependency on migrant workers. Furthermore the *Sector Skills Assessment for the Construction Sector (2009)* report highlights the industry's reactive nature to change summed up in the quote:

*“New technologies and innovations are generally adopted if, and only if, there is a sympathetic set of business, legislative or cultural conditions”*

*(ConstructionSkills, 2009, p. 3).*

The diagram below, based on extensive employer research by the Future Skills unit within ConstructionSkills, further demonstrates the lack of uniformity that can be found in the industry. It depicts how industry is responding to the impact of legislation and change. From this diagram it can be inferred that the majority of the industry are slow or late to respond to change.



(Collin, 2009)

Based on the literature and research analysed, it could be argued that if the majority of the CBE sector is not fully aware or effectively responding to the future changes and challenges it faces, this may hinder the currency and accuracy of information being communicated to the guidance profession.

However in other respects, ConstructionSkills, who represents and is partially funded by the sector, could in some respects be viewed quite forward thinking and pro-active in terms of careers IAG in that it provides technical LMI (CSN, 2010), careers LMI (ConstructionSkills, 2010), runs a Construction Ambassador programme where it trains industry professionals to share their experiences of working in the sector (ConstructionSkills, 2007) and a dedicated Recruitment and Careers Team (ConstructionSkills, 2007) to liaise with and inform guidance professionals and education. The industry's introduction of the Construction Ambassador programme is several years ahead of the recommendations featured in the *Unleashing Aspirations: The Final Report of the Panel on Fair Access to the Profession* (2010) which states:

*“Each profession should recruit and support a network of young professional ambassadors who would work with schools to raise awareness of career opportunities for young people.”* (H.M. Government, 2010, p.17).

However all the literature linked to the sector must be viewed in light of the current climate. The negative effect of the recent economic downturn experienced by the industry has dominated much of the recent sector specific literature. Widespread redundancies, the prospect of significant levels of future graduate unemployment, graduates abandoning the industry and the potential skills gaps this may cause

(ConstructionSkills 2009; CIC 2010, CSN 2010) signal the industry may experience serious challenges in the short and medium term. In a recent report focusing on the future skill priorities of the sector two of the key themes below were identified that must be addressed if the industry is to successfully operate in this current environment:

- “ *Preserving the skills base through the downturn and maintaining readiness for an upturn.*
- *Keeping the pipeline of talent flowing through.*”

(ConstructionSkills, 2009, p. 13) .

A significant question that arises from this literature review is:

To what extent does the CBE Sector feels the guidance community can contribute towards these goals and how important a role does the guidance professional play in this process? These pertinent questions will inform further the research carried out as part of this study.

### **Conclusion to the Chapter**

The existing literature covering this subject area clearly supports the importance of guidance workers keeping their industry knowledge up to date and reflecting the needs of industry. Certain literature develops this argument further by placing the onus on guidance organisations and professionals to keep their knowledge up to date (for example, Lord Sainsbury of Turville, 2007, p. 109, Gothard, Mignot, Offer, Ruff, 2001, p.77). It is debatable however, based on reports alluded to above (for example Colley, Lewin, Chadderton, 2010, p4-5; Hall 2009, p. 10) that even if this responsibility is

taken seriously by Advisers do their employers, their training, the government, industry and the targets they are working towards create the environment which *allows* them to fulfil their responsibilities and ensure their industry knowledge is kept up to date. These significant and reoccurring issues that have arisen from this review will inform the focus of this research project in order determine to what extent practitioners feel that these factors help or hinder them to keep their industry knowledge current and in line with industry needs. From the CBE sector's point of view, taking into account the industry's inconsistent approach and attitude towards the guidance profession, it would be pertinent to investigate as part of this study what employers and other Sector Skills Councils, particularly those who represent the wider Built Environment sector e.g. Summit Skills, feel about their relationship with the guidance community. Furthermore, although a significant amount of literature has been written around the barriers guidance professions face when keeping their industry knowledge up to date, in order to provide a more balanced picture, it would be rational to research what industry believes are the key issues and challenges it encounters when endeavouring to keep the guidance profession updated on its needs.

## Chapter 3 - Research methodology and methods

### General Introduction

The two broad areas of research methodologies which exist are commonly referred as *Deductive Reasoning* and *Inductive Reasoning*. Both methodologies have their own strengths and weaknesses (Gill & Johnson, 1991). No single method is ideal for all situations, the advantages and disadvantages of either depends on the context and the subject under research. Consequently the methodology chosen needs to be contingent to the research topic. The approach most effective will depend on a large number of variables and while the nature of the research will be uppermost, other variables will include the knowledge, control, limitations and resources available to the researcher.

The use of a range of different research methods in this study, both quantitative, primarily through the analysis of the online questionnaires, and qualitative, through conducting interviews and focus groups, provides a broad spread across the inductive and deductive continuum. This mixed methodology approach is commonly used in both educational, social and market research where it is realised that questioning alone may produce data rife with assumptions and misinterpretations (Watts, 2000). It must be recognised that a mixed methodology approach may extend research time or produce conflicting results (Robson, 2002) but it is anticipated that overall this mix will provide a more robust, rich and synergistic approach to both the research and the findings. Several researchers, for example Tashakkori and Creswell (2007), who recommend this mixed methodology approach advocate that 'rich' data gathered by qualitative methods should also be supported by quantitative analysis.

In considering the methods of research for this study a checklist composed by Denscombe (1998) was taken into account which advocates considering research methods against the following points:



- Relevance
- Feasibility
- Coverage
- Accuracy
- Objectivity
- Ethics

Consideration of these points will be discussed in more detail in this chapter.

### **The primary researcher**

The researcher's employer, background and prior knowledge of this area of research should be viewed as both a strength and weakness. The researcher's professional and employment experience, which includes achievement of career guidance and teaching qualifications, equates to over 13 years experience of managing groups, presenting and interviewing a range of different clients in a wide variety of contexts. This breadth of experience, background and qualifications held by the researcher proved useful and effective when conducting the interviews and focus groups for this research project. The researcher's guidance and industry background also facilitated her to successfully relate to, understand and empathise with the research participants as well as confidently control the group sessions where necessary.

Gummesson (1991) is of the opinion that the most difficult task facing the researcher is the acquisition of institutional knowledge and knowledge of the social interaction process. He believes that 'satisfactory' access to a company is a necessary condition for the development of pre-understanding and understanding of the consequent improvement in the expertise of the researcher. Although Gummesson's (1991) opinion was mainly related to management research it is still very applicable in this scenario. The danger of being too closely involved in a community, sector and culture is the likelihood of analysing events within the particular

perspective of that culture. The reluctance to criticise a community and industry you represent could also be considered a weak point. The potential unwillingness of the researcher to critique her industry and organisation was offset by her desire to make recommendations which would benefit all parties concerned. In order to suggest improvements to improve a process an element of constructive criticism may be necessary. The researcher's role as an employee of ConstructionSkills, the Sector Skills Council (SSC) for the construction industry, coupled with her employer sponsoring the research could also be viewed as possibly impacting on the research participants' ability to speak frankly and openly about the ConstructionSkills and/or the Construction and Built Environment (CBE) sector. To address this potential issue, the researcher strongly encouraged the participants to view her as unbiased, objective and free of any other motive other than research. This approach seemed to work successfully as all participants spoke very freely during the interviews and focus groups and where appropriate criticised the construction industry. For example, in one of the focus groups several participants complained openly about the difficulty of finding employers for apprentices within the construction industry. The researcher's own subjectivity towards the subject matter, her sponsor/employer and the basis of her research methodology must be viewed as a potential weakness which was constantly monitored and challenged through the research process. Ultimately the human element of all researchers must be recognised, as stated by Sellitz and Jahoda: *'Interviewers are social beings and not just machines'* (1962, p. 41).

### **Research Participants**

Organisations and individuals selected for this research were from a range of different guidance organisations and sectors ranging from Connexions to Higher Education (Please see Appendix 3 & 9 for more details). These guidance services and individuals were chosen to provide a broad range of data and coverage which would be representative of the guidance community serving both young people and adults. The sample size of guidance professionals

comprised 74 over three research methods. Based on the data received it can be confirmed that 52 were female and 18 were male. For guidance professionals, exact figures cannot be calculated for gender as four respondents in the online questionnaire did not respond to the question of gender. Two other professionals from the Network of SSC's and the Humber EBP who manage projects linked to Labour Market Information were also interviewed to develop case study examples to inform this study.

In term of non-guidance professionals i.e. employers and Sector Skills Councils, the sample comprised two employers and eleven Sector Skills Councils. Involving employers and sector skills councils, who represent industry, in the sampling contributed towards a more balanced and holistic approach to the study and allowed for both key parties i.e. guidance professionals and industry to have a 'voice' and to provide the breadth of coverage Denscombe (1998) refers to in his checklist. This supports Gilbert (2008) view that '*research can be informed by more than one perspective*' (Gilbert 2008, p. 264). Clarifying the views of the Construction and Built Environment (CBE) sector regarding its industry needs and their attitude towards the guidance community was particularly pertinent in light of the inconsistent and ambiguous approach identified in the literature review, in Chapter 2 towards these subject areas.

Although the CBE sector was a key focus of this research, data was also collected from other industries through their sector skills councils. This allowed for the study to adopt a broader perspective as well as taking into consideration viewpoints and best practice from other industry sectors. Furthermore, as was identified in Chapter 2, in the Literature Review, although a significant amount of literature has been written around the LMI needs of guidance professionals and the barriers guidance professions face when keeping their industry knowledge up to date this study failed to identify research which took into account the position of industry. Bearing this in mind, with the aim of providing a more balanced picture, the research design aimed to explore what industry believes are the key issues and challenges it

encounters when endeavouring to keep the guidance profession updated on their industry needs.

Due to the limitations of time and budget the majority organisations and individuals involved in the research were based in Yorkshire & Humber and the North East which may influence the data collection. The research was carried out between March and early May 2010 and could not take into account the change of government.

In order to fully inform the research findings participants who were classed as guidance practitioners were asked about their gender, number of years' guidance experience and their level of guidance qualification. All participants were offered to be informed of the recommendations and conclusions of the research once complete. The benefits participants could reap as a result of the findings and outcomes of the research were explained during the research process. It was intended that this offer to share recommendations and the emphasis placed upon the mutually advantageous nature of the research would lead to better response rates, as well as a wider appreciation and possible application of the recommendations therefore strengthening the research outcomes.

### **Questioning Techniques**

Open questions were favoured for both the focus groups and interviews for the main reason cited below by Seale and Filmer:

*“Open question allow respondent to answer on their own terms enabling the researcher to discover unexpected things about the way people see a topic”*

(Seale and Filmer, 2004, p. 130).

Drawbacks to open questions must also be recognised in that they can provide answers which are ambiguous and digressional, making them difficult to categorise. The use of open questions coupled with the frank, unbiased discussion which was encouraged during the interviewing process and focus groups proved challenging for the researcher at times. For example, at times during one focus group discussions became rather personal and critical with regards to some of the participants' employers/managers. During these discussions Singer's recommendation to display interest without being intrusive was taken on board (Singer et al, 1983). In such instances, the researcher showed interest in their views but did not probe for further information and attempts were made to move the discussion forward.

For purposes of clarity, it was ensured that all questions used in all research methods were relevant to the participants and worded simply. Hypothetical, leading and multiple questions were avoided, where possible, in the focus groups and semi-standard interviews. Both the focus groups and semi-standards interviews were recorded to aid the researcher taking notes and ensure accuracy in line with Denscombe's (2008) checklist.

The wording and nature of the questions developed in all three research methods were influenced by the important themes and gaps in research identified in Chapter 2, the Literature Review which included:

- the nature of the relationship between the guidance community and industry
- the barriers both parties face to keep each other updated
- examples of good case studies to identify how we can improve the lines of communication and the relationship between the guidance community and the CBE Sector/industry.

## **Ethics**

This study has been approved by the University of Sunderland Ethics Committee. The ethical principle of 'informed consent' was strictly applied to the involvement of all research subjects. Each participant of the interviews and focus groups signed a consent form (see Appendix 1). The completed consent forms are available on request. For the online questionnaire it was assumed a participant through voluntary completion of the questionnaire had granted their consent. All participants, prior to taking part in the research were provided with information sheets (see Appendix 2) explaining the nature of the research, their right to confidentiality and their entitlement to withdraw from the process at any stage. Participants in the focus groups and interviews were also reminded verbally of the ethical nature of this research and their rights prior to commencing the research.

## **Focus Groups**

In line with the qualitative focus of this study, and in order to develop an understanding of attitudes, knowledge and views linked to the subject area (Gilbert, 2008) two focus groups were conducted as part of this research project. Please see Appendix 3 for further details of the focus groups. It was decided that two focus groups would be sufficient for this study based on the level of the research, funding and time constraints. Each focus group lasted approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour at two different venues in the North East of England which were comfortable and accessible to participants. Due to budget and time constraints and to encourage an acceptable participant rate, the first focus group took place after a Connexions Darlington staff meeting and the second group after an event at Stockton Riverside College, Tees Valley. For both focus groups *Purposive Sampling* was used to select participants. On each occasion, a wide range of potential suitable participants who were taking part in the meeting/event were emailed one month in advance explaining the nature of the research, what the focus group would entail, the mutual benefits of the research and the consent form as well the researchers' contact details if they had any further questions (see Appendix 1 and

2). Following this email request, only participants who volunteered to take part were included in the focus group.

All participants as per Appendix 3 were guidance practitioners, mainly working for Connexions, with the exception of one Careers Adviser from Higher Education. 85.7% (n=12) of participants held a specialist guidance qualification namely the Qualification in Career Guidance or equivalent or an NVQ 3 or 4 in Advice and Guidance. Two participants held the NVQ4 in Learning Development and Support Services (LDSS). The fact that 92% of participants came from a similar geographical area i.e. North Yorkshire and Tees Valley and worked for the Connexions service, some of them for the same Connexions service, meets one of Gilbert (2008) key success criteria to have people with shared interests and similar social identities taking part in focus groups. This seemed to prove true as participants, as has already been alluded to, on the whole, spoke candidly, shared ideas and common ground. The numbers of participants were limited for both focus groups to avoid 'social floating', a phrase coined by Latané (1979) which describes the scenario where the more people that are involved, the less participants feel they need to contribute.

In both instances participants had already travelled to the venue for another purpose. The focus groups were organised in this way to make it more convenient for those involved. Both groups, prior to the focus group, had attended an awareness raising session about the CBE sector run by ConstructionSkills which the researcher had co-delivered with colleagues. This 'input' prior to the focus groups could be viewed in a positive light in that contributors had been prompted to think about relevant topics around industry, labour market information and the CBE sector prior to the focus group which meant they needed less time to 'warm up' during the focus group. Conversely, this prior 'input' could be viewed as influencing and biasing the participants' responses. Another concern which arose was participants' ability to fully concentrate and contribute to a focus group after having attended a previous 'input'

session which could prove tiring for some contributors. This was taken into account and participants were given the opportunity to take a break between the information sessions and the focus group to refresh and refocus. A very small number of participants did seem slightly fatigued and did contribute less than others to the discussion. This issue was addressed by the researcher encouraging these participants to contribute individually to the discussion so all views were represented.

To further aid comfort and delivery of the sessions, participants were seated around in a horseshoe shape and were able to lean on a table. This also enabled the researcher leading the focus group to easily observe all participants. A second researcher also assisted the focus groups and wrote down participants responses on behalf of the primary researcher to ensure comprehensive notes were taken. In order to avoid secondary researcher bias, the secondary researcher was fully briefed before the focus groups to just note down the participants' contributions without adding opinion or interpretation. The secondary researcher's notes were also compared against the recordings to ensure accuracy and impartiality.

Merton and Kendall (1946), one of first supporters of focus groups, detailed four essential criteria for the success of a focus group:

1. Range – allows maximum number of relevant topics to be discussed.
2. Specificity – for participants to use examples relating to their lives, not just abstract.
3. Depth - Understand sources of their attitudes and add depth.
4. Personal Context – take into account personal context of participants' lives.

This criterion was taken into account when conducting the focus group. Contributors were given a set of questions (see Appendix 4) as prompts at the start of the focus group which covered the range of topics to be discussed. These questions were used to initiate and



encourage discussion but were not used in a strict question and answer format. Contributors were given a few minutes to read and absorb the questions but not too long in order to avoid them preparing or rehearsing responses and maintain a level of spontaneity. Participants were encouraged to give examples and case studies relating to their professional lives and not just provide abstract, vague responses. Where necessary participants were asked to qualify their responses and were probed for more information where responses were not comprehensive or specific enough. For example, one participant said their employer did not very often organise speakers from industry to update them at team meetings. In this instance, the participant in question was asked to qualify what he/she meant by 'not very often' in terms of frequency. To control and focus the group especially when discussions were digressing from the main subject topic, questions were repeated and the group were encouraged to refocus on the question.

Post analysis of the focus groups, common themes, areas of agreement and disagreement were identified. Although qualitative analysis of the findings was primarily employed, where possibly quantitative analysis was applied where possible. The distinction between opinions of individuals and group opinions were also identified to provide a more accurate and true analysis of the discussions (Barbour and Kitzinger, 1999).

### **Semi-structured interviews**

The one drawback of focus groups that many researchers have identified is that they can lack depth and substance. In order to compliment the focus groups, semi-structured interviews, were carried to allow further exploration of the study at a more personal and deeper level (Gilbert, 2008). This individual, personal approach also supports the research of career guidance experts (Gothard et al 2001; Colley, Lewin Chadderton, 2010), as cited in Chapter 2, the Literature Review which encourages the reader to view the guidance practitioners as individuals in their own right.

The focus groups were carried out before the majority of the interviews thereby also allowing the issues raised in the focus groups to be addressed in more detail in a face to face interview. For example, the role of the Connexions Adviser as being more 'generalist' was a concern aired by participants during both focus groups than specialist. To explore this in more depth, this subject, where appropriate, was explored further in the face to face interviews with both Connexions and non-Connexions guidance workers to compare and contrast responses.

Semi-structured interviews were chosen, in keeping with the qualitative approach to this study, to ensure a structured approach whilst maintaining some flexibility which a structured interview can lack. Another major benefit of this instrument of research, as recognised by Gilbert (2008), is that this method of interviewing can be adapted to the respondent's situation, level of understanding and their responses.

All interviews were carried out on a face to face basis. This allowed for rapport to be built up more easily through eye contact and positive body language with the intention that respondents would be more willing to open up and feel more relaxed. The interviews lasted on average 45 minutes to 1 hour which allowed sufficient time to explore questions in depth but did not cause an inconvenience to the participants or researcher. Again using the researcher's network of contacts and internal colleagues, *purposive sampling* was used to select participants. 14 semi structured interviews were carried out with a wide range of guidance professionals from a wide range of sectors including Next Step, Jobcentre Plus and Connexions as well as employers and Sector Skills Councils. See Appendix 9 for full details of the interviewees. 100% (n=7) of the guidance professionals interviewed held guidance qualifications i.e. QCG or equivalent and/or NVQ 3 or 4 in Advice and Guidance. Overall 71% (n=10) of the interviewees were female and 29% (n=4) male. All participants volunteered to take part in the interviews of their own free will. Explaining and checking understanding of the interview process was particularly appropriate with non-guidance professionals i.e. mainly

employers as they expressed concerns that they would not be knowledgeable about the subject matter. Such fears were allayed by explaining the value of their input, opinions and views and that they were not expected to be experts in any particular topic area and they only needed to answer questions they felt comfortable with. All participants were sent an information sheet which explained the research project, line of questioning and consent form in advance (see Appendix 1 and 2). This was also accompanied by a telephone call prior to the interview to check understanding and details of the meeting. Two main *interview guides* (see Appendix 5) were developed and used during the interviews. These included questions that could be covered but included an element of flexibility depending on the participant, in line with the principles of a semi-structured interview (Gilbert, 2008). Bearing in mind the very different background of employers/industry representatives, a different interview guide was used for guidance professionals and non-guidance professionals (Appendix 5).

The findings of the interviews, following a similar pattern as the focus groups, were primarily analysed qualitatively, however quantitative analysis was also employed where appropriate.

### **Online questionnaires**

To balance the more qualitative research methods adopted during the interviews and focus groups, two online questionnaires were designed and used to add a more scientific, quantitative element to the research project. This approach is in line with the methodology of deductive reasoning often referred to as 'natural science' or 'positivism' which focuses on reliable data and adheres to scientific method (Gilbert 2008). However these questionnaires were analysed using both a quantitative and qualitative approach in line with the mixed method approach this study is adopting. Some researchers are rather ambivalent about online surveys however others have described this research method as a powerful approach towards research (for example Coomber, 1997). It has been recognised by researchers that the ethics surrounding online surveys are not clear cut. When preparing these online questionnaires the

Association of the Internet Researchers, Code of Ethics (2002) were consulted and taken into account. Based on this Code of Ethics, particular consideration was given to the expectations/assumptions of the subjects and the benefits that could be gained from the research which was clearly communicated to potential respondents as previously discussed. Ultimately, as Gilbert (2008) states, the advantages of online surveys outweigh the disadvantages. Joinson (2005) advised researchers to include some information about the researcher and to tailor the invitation to the specific respondents in to encourage people to complete surveys and encourage disclosure. This advice was partially followed. All invitations to fill out the online questionnaire were accompanied by an email (see Appendix 6) which included information about the researcher, the opportunity to receive the recommendations of the report as well as the opportunity to not be contacted again. The key section of the email was bolded to alert the reader to the primary purpose of the email. *Purposive sampling* was used again to ensure the suitability of respondents. The invitation sent to guidance professionals/SSC's also asked recipients to forward the questionnaire to other suitable respondents. Recipients were asked to inform the researcher of the number of people they had forwarded the email onto and it was made clear who would be a suitable respondent. The researcher was informed by several respondents of the identity and number of colleagues they had forwarded the invitation onto however it must be recognised that invitees may have forwarded on the invite without the researchers knowledge and/or to unsuitable participants which could have affected the sampling. As previously covered, consent was implied through voluntary completion of the questionnaires. Both questionnaires were checked by a small sample of people which included guidance professionals, industry representatives and a Research Manager for content, clarity and coherence prior to being sent out. Feedback following the provisional sampling was taken on board and changes to the questionnaire were made. For example, on one of the questions it was identified that the rating scale was unbalanced in that it offered more positive than negative options. Consequently the rating scale was altered to provide a more impartial scaling. To provide a balanced and fair

sampling, allowing for different perspectives as discussed in Chapter 1 and 2, online questionnaires were sent to both guidance professionals and the network of 24 Sector Skills Councils who represent industry. A different online questionnaire was designed for guidance professionals and SSC's to take into account their background, specialism and experience (see Appendix 7 and 8). Time had been taken in the design of the questionnaire in an attempt to eliminate, or at least reduce, the suggested detrimental influences on response rates including the length of the questionnaire. Based on research by Harris (1997) that response rates drop after 10-15 questions, each online questionnaire comprised only 10 questions, and potential respondents were given an estimate of how long it would take to respond (5-10 minutes) in order to optimize the response rate (see Appendix 6).

Respondents, where appropriate, were always given an option to of '*Don't know/no opinion*' to allow them to avoid answering a question they felt unknowledgeable or uncomfortable about. *Ranges* were given where possible to ease completion and coding. *Ranking scales* were also used to ascertain the level of importance of a number of items. The majority of questions asked were closed questions as is recommended by researchers (for example, Gilbert, 2008) when large numbers of individuals are to be studied by self-completion questionnaire. Closed questions were also used to facilitate analysis of the responses and consequently save time and money. Where appropriate, respondents were also asked to give reason for their responses to gain a deeper and more detailed account of their responses and aid qualitative analysis. To allow the participants to remain anonymous if they so wished the question relating to 'Name' and 'Job title' was marked as optional for the online questionnaire for guidance professionals. For the SSC's, the question relating to 'Name' and 'Contact details' was made optional. Contributors' anonymity was further guaranteed by the use of the online tool, as detailed below. Responses to the online questionnaires were not sent directly to the researcher but were stored online and accessed by the researcher via a password system. This option to remain anonymous upholds the ethical approach to this research project. Furthermore it allowed participants to give more honest and

open responses without the risk of them being identified. The online tool [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com) was chosen to web-enable the online questionnaires (see Appendix 7 and 8). As Gilbert (2008) advocates, online questionnaires conducted via a website give the impression of being more elegant and well formatted and respondents can feel this method of completing a survey is more secure and official.

The first online questionnaire (see Appendix 8) was sent to 23 out of 25 Sector Skills Councils and the response rate was 48% (n=12). The total number of SSC's who responded was 11 as two different representatives from one SSC responded twice. Although this was slightly disappointing, this was counterbalanced by the fact that majority of the Sector Skills Councils that link with in with the Construction and Built Environment as per list below did respond to the questionnaire. When analysing the results the positive response rate from the 'Built Environment' SSC's as detailed below will allow for a broader, more balanced industry perspective.

- AssetSkills - covers property, housing, facilities management and cleaning industries and would help anyone interested in working as a: Surveyor, town planner, housing manager, caretaker, facilities manager or cleaning supervisor.
- SummitSkills – covers building services engineering sector, which encompasses the electrotechnical, heating, ventilating, air conditioning, refrigeration and plumbing industries
- Energy and Utility Skills – covers electricity, gas, waste management and water industries.
- Senta – covers science, engineering and manufacturing technologies

The second online questionnaire (see Appendix 7) was sent to 95 guidance professionals. This figure includes those who the invitation was also knowingly forwarded to on behalf of other respondents. The response rate for this questionnaire was 54.7% (n=52). 79.2%

(n=38) of respondents were female and 20.8% (n=10) were male, 4 respondents did not respond to the question of gender. In terms of guidance qualifications 61% possessed the QCG or equivalent and 29% the NVQ3 or 4 in Advice and Guidance, 18.2% the NVQ 4 in LDSS and 2% did not possess a guidance qualification. Please note one or more guidance qualifications could be held by more than one respondent but this was impossible to confirm based on the responses received. Although initially dissatisfied in the response rate of the questionnaires, statistics from other researchers would indicate that this was, in fact a healthy response rate for surveys distributed via the internet. Witmer et al. (1999) suggested response rates of 10% or lower being common. Although it must be noted that this research was carried out in 1999 when the internet was not as widely used the response rate of 55% is still over 5 times better than Witmer's 10% estimation.

Chapter 4 provides a full presentation and analysis of the findings for all three research methods.

### **Future Research**

Based on a range of restrictions and considerations, including time, budget, aims and objectives of the research project the most robust and comprehensive research methods, methodology and design were adopted. However, several limitations of the research project are acknowledged and discussed in Chapter 5, the Conclusions and Recommendations. Suggestions are made in this Chapter to further strengthen and enhance the research design and sample.

## Chapter 4 - Research Findings and Analysis

### Methods guidance practitioners use to keep up to date with industry

In exploring how guidance professionals ensure the Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) they deliver is current and in line with industry needs the first logical step in analysing the findings of this research project is to evaluate the *methods* practitioners use to keep abreast of industry and its changing needs. In relation to this subject matter, the results for Question 5 'What methods do you use to ensure the (careers) IAG you deliver is up to date and meets industry needs?' from the online questionnaire for guidance professionals (see Appendix 7) presented some interesting results. Please see Appendix 11 for full results for Question 5.

Responses from the focus groups and interviews to this question relating to the *methods* practitioners use to keep abreast with industry produced very similar results to the data in Appendix 11. According to the data presented in Appendix 11, 'Careers Literature' (87.5%, n=42) and 'Internet research' (83.3%, n=40) were the most popular methods used by guidance professionals as well as 'Through your own organisation' (76.2%, n=38). And 'Training Days' (75%, n=36). Considering the significant presence of the internet it is not surprising that 'Internet research' featured quite highly; although it is quite remarkable in this digital age that 'Careers Literature', if we are to assume this means hard copy literature, was the most popular choice. Consequently, these results imply that electronic/web based information is not necessarily always the preferred method practitioners use to keep their industry knowledge updated. The popularity of careers literature may be considered in conjunction with the information provided in the interview with the Head of Recruitment and Careers from ConstructionSkills, the Sector Skills Council for the Construction industry (see Appendix 9, Interviewee 11). This Interviewee explained that due to financial reasons and the perceived popularity of the internet ConstructionSkills were producing less and less hard copy



careers literature. In light of these findings this decision to move away from producing hard copy careers brochures may be a decision worth reconsidering. The need for further clarification and research into the subject of careers literature is addressed in the 'Recommendations for Future Research' in Chapter 5.

A second feature of this study is to focus on the currency of Careers Advisers' industry knowledge. One drawback to hard copy careers literature can be the currency of its content and the time and expense associated with updating this medium of communication. The major advantage of the internet compared with hard copy literature is the relative ease and low expense associated with updating its content which should mean web based information is more likely to be up to date. Therefore to accurately analyse these findings further research and questioning needs to be carried out. The open responses to Question 5 of the online questionnaire as well as the data from the other research methods failed to determine the detailed definition of what is meant by 'Careers literature'.

The results from Question 5 (see Appendix 11) indicated that 'Employer contact' and 'SSC's' as an information source were a less popular method used by guidance professionals to keep their industry knowledge current. The findings for this study do not provide specific reasons for these results but one explanation could be given is that the internet, careers literature, training days and sourcing information through one's own organisation could be considered relatively quick and easy ways to source information. Employer and SSC's may require more time and effort on the part of Advisers which they are clearly lacking based on findings that will be discussed in more detail at a later stage in this chapter. These results also suggest that employers and SSC's perhaps need to take a more proactive approach to engaging with guidance professionals.

### **Barriers to updating Labour Market Information**

In considering the qualitative data, the most salient and outstanding findings which emerged were linked to the barriers and obstacles guidance professionals faced when endeavouring to keep their industry knowledge up to date. Related to these findings, several strong interlinked themes, listed below in no particular ranking order, were raised consistently throughout all three research methods. These findings were primarily highlighted by participants who were guidance professionals and will be discussed in more depth.

- The pressure of targets, caseloads
- Lack of time
- The “dumbing down” of the careers profession
- The Connexions service v the pre-1997 careers service
- Inconsistencies between different careers/Connexions services

### **Pressure of Targets**

One of the prime drivers hindering guidance practitioners as per list above that emerged throughout all research methods was cited as being the Connexions services’ target driven approach towards reducing the number of young people, age 14-19, not in employment, education or training (NEET). For example in Focus Group Two (see Appendix 3) NEET Targets were described by 71.4% (n=5) of the group as a barrier to keeping up to date with industry needs and employers. One Connexions Personal Adviser (PA) from this focus group described the Connexions service as having an “*Obsession with reducing NEET’s*”. Another Connexion PA verbally agreed with this participant in the same focus group and added to the discussion by stating:

*“LMI is not seen as important by management. They don’t see the link between reducing NEET and improving industry knowledge” (ibid)*

Across all research methods, high levels of agreement were noted from those practitioners sampled working for the Connexions Service around the subject of NEET targets preventing them from spending time updating their industry knowledge (see Appendix 3, 7 and 9 for more details on research methods).

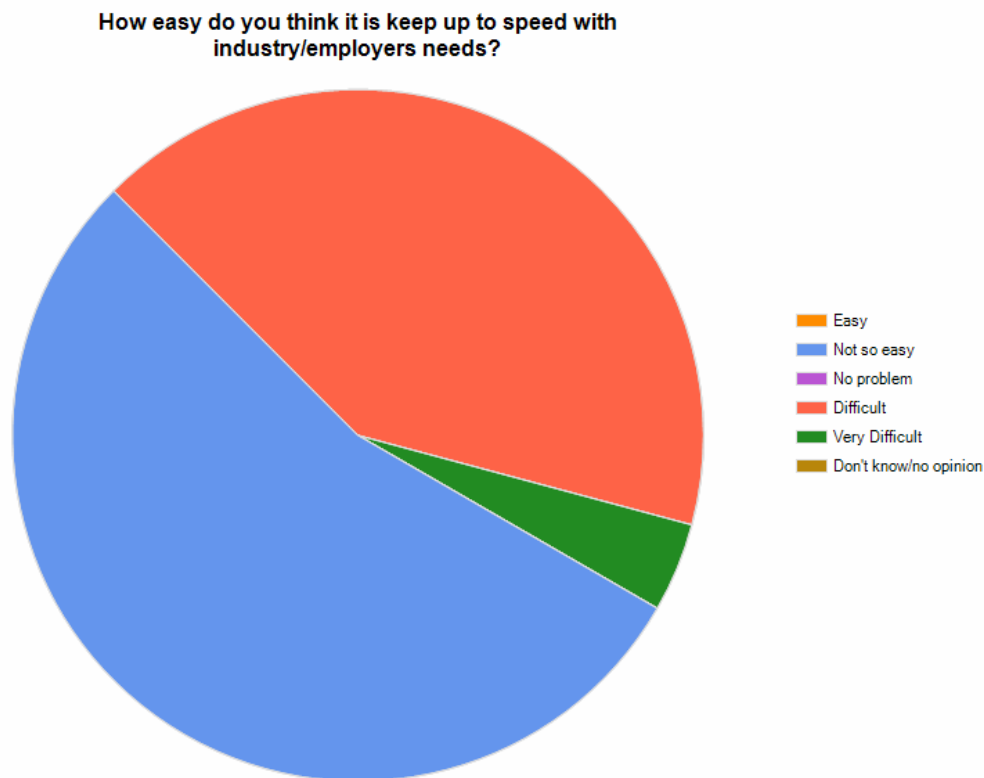
A high frequency of words and phrases relating to the pressure of targets and workload were identified in the narrative in the online questionnaire for Questions 6 and 8 as displayed in Figure 1 (see Appendix 7 for full online questionnaire).

Online questionnaire for guidance Professionals	Words and phrases used and frequency related to targets				
	“Target”	“Caseload/ Caseloading”	“Contractual Demands”	“Chasing NEET clients”	“Quantity over quality”
Question Number and wording					
6. How easy do you think it is to keep up with industry needs?	4	2	1	1	1
8. How much labour market information training do you receive from your current employer?	1	1	0	0	0
<b>Total Frequency</b>	5	3	1	1	1

**Figure 1 – Word Frequency Table**

All of the respondents who used these words/phrases above worked for Connexions services (clients aged 14-19). These words were invariably used in a negative context and referred to as a reason for participants *not* being able to keep their knowledge of the labour market up to date and current. This data is also further reinforced by a remarkable level of agreement for question 6 of the online questionnaire as depicted in the Pie Chart in Figure 2. For Question

six, 92.3% of participants of the online questionnaire indicated that they found keeping up speed with industry/employers “not so easy” (50%=n26) “difficult” (38.5%=n20) or “very difficult” (3.8%=n2). No single participant responded that keeping up to speed with industry/employers needs was easy.



**Figure 2 - Pie Chart - Question 6 (see Appendix 7).**

**Please note - 6 possible responses, only 3 were given.**

It must be noted that this pressure of targets was not only felt by Connexions staff (youth guidance). The Next Step Adviser (adult guidance) interviewed (see Appendix 9, Interviewee 1) also expressed strong concerns about revenue targets they were set by management. This participant explained how these revenue targets that were linked to the number of clients interviewed, impeded their opportunity to network, attend courses and employer events and adversely affected the quality of the CIAG being delivered. In this interview, on the subject of keeping up to date with industry, the Next Step Adviser admitted this was:

*“Extremely difficult, we are only paid to see people not go on a course to our update knowledge”.* (see Appendix 9, Interviewee 1)

### **“Dumbing Down” of the Connexions Service**

This pressure of targets and caseloads seems to be linked to what a participant described in Focus Group One (see Appendix 3) as the ‘dumbing down’ of the Connexions services. Although this was not made explicit in the open comments of the online questionnaire, this ‘dumbing down’ of the Connexions Service may also constitute another reason for the negative response to Question 6 (How easy do you think it is to keep up with industry needs?) as previously discussed in this chapter. On this subject, 71.4% (n=10) of participants over both focus groups and one Connexions PA interviewed raised concerns around the issue of being generalist advisers rather than career specialists. A Connexions PA from Focus Group One explained that because PA’s were *‘expected to be all singing, all dancing’* it proved very difficult to have the time and focus to devote to keeping abreast with current LMI. Another Connexions representative stated in the narrative for the online questionnaire, Question 7 which reads ‘How important do you think it is to ensure the (careers) IAG you deliver is current, up to date and in line with industry needs?’ (see Appendix 7 for full questionnaire):

*“LMI information/training does not have the same priority as training on drugs, sex and alcohol etc”*

This Connexions target driven approach coupled with the ‘dumbing down’ of the Connexions service corroborate the findings of Colley, Lewin, Chadderton (2010) which were considered in the Literature Review, Chapter 1. The PA’s interviewed as part of their study also resisted the idea of the PA role as *‘jack of all trades and master of none’* resulting in PA’s feeling that they were *‘de-skilling’* (Colley, Lewin, Chadderton, 2010, p.6-9). One PA in the online

questionnaire as part of this study also used the word 'deskilled' in an open response to Question 8. In relation to LMI training the PA stated that:

*'professionally I am being deskilled'* (see Appendix 7, Question 8).

The report by Colley, Lewin, Chadderton, (2010) studied the theories of identity closely linked to professional capacity supported by Lave and Wenger (1991) to explain how many PA's had left the Connexions service for another career guidance sector to enable them to work in a specialist careers advisory role rather than in a more 'generalist' capacity. This type of career change has been described by Colley et al as 're-becoming' in line with Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of identity. This 're-becoming' had been directly experienced by a participant in this study. This individual had left the Connexions service in line with the reasons cited above in order to work in a specialist careers service where career guidance was considered a high priority. By continuing working for the Connexions service this participant felt at risk of losing valuable career guidance skills.

### **Guidance Qualifications**

On the subject of skills and training, the guidance qualifications the (guidance professional) participants held who participated in this study also merits discussion. In Chapter 1, the Introduction, a guidance professional, for the purposes of this survey, was identified as an individual who delivers CIAG to young people or adults and has ideally achieved a guidance qualification at level 3 or above (see Chapter 1 for full list of qualifications). The findings of this report revealed that 90.5% (67 out of 74) of research participants with a guidance background possessed one or more of 'guidance' qualifications. The remaining (guidance) participants had completed the NVQ4 in Learning NVQ4 in Learning Development and Support Services (LDSS) and 2% did not hold a guidance qualification. It is debatable whether the NVQ4 in Learning NVQ4 in Learning Development and Support Services (LDSS) could be classed as a 'career guidance qualification'. Students of this qualification have the option to take 'guidance'

units they are not mandatory. The findings of this study could not fully determine if participants had taken these guidance units and whether guidance professionals held more than one qualification. Although the majority of research participants fit the 'guidance professional' criteria for this research project detailed in Chapter 1, the findings imply that over 9.5% (n= 7) of the guidance professionals delivering CIAG who participated in this study do not hold a specific guidance qualification. Any conclusions drawn from this must be treated with caution, due to the difficulty of assessing how many individuals hold more than one qualification and what units of the LDSS were taken. However, although this number of guidance professionals not holding specific guidance qualifications is relatively low, it does raise the question of how many guidance professionals in the field are delivering CIAG who do not hold guidance qualifications and how this impacts on the advice and guidance being delivered. On this subject, Colley, Lewin, Chadderton (2010) in their report called for '*recognition that professional capacity to deliver career guidance requires adequately specialised initial training.*' (Colley, Lewin, Chadderton 2010, p. 4).

### **LMI Training and Input**

Moving on to focus on training and input guidance workers receive around LMI. The research identified several inconsistencies between some Connexions services based on geography and guidance sectors i.e. youth, HE, FE, Adult in terms of the priority ranking management/employers in these sectors place on their staff being conversant with labour market information and needs. To analyse the findings further the responses to Question 8 of the online questionnaire displayed in Figure 3 can be studied (see Appendix 7).

<b>How much labour market information training/input do you receive from your current employer?</b>
---

Method	Response Percent	Response Count
None	2.1%	1
Very little	20.8%	10
Some	<b>52.1%</b>	<b>25</b>
Quite a lot	25.0%	12
Too much	0.0%	0
Not applicable/no opinion	0.0%	0

**Figure 3 – Online Questionnaire for guidance professionals, Question 8**

This data could be interpreted in several different ways. 77.1% (n=37) receive ‘Some’ or ‘Quite a lot’ of LMI training from their employers, 22.9% (n=11) receive ‘Very Little’ or ‘None’. It is encouraging, in light of the focus of this study, that the majority of participants, i.e. 97.9% (n=47) receive some form of LMI training, however the data still indicates that 75% (n=36) of participants receive only ‘Some’, ‘Very little’ or ‘None’. The questionnaire does not qualify what is meant by ‘Some’ or ‘Very little’ and it must be recognised that these terms are subjective. This opinion based research must be recognised for its drawbacks and recommendations for future research are made in Chapter 5, Conclusions and Recommendations which take this into account.

From a sample of 18 Connexions staff from 6 different Connexions services who participated in the focus groups and interviews, 50% of the Connexions services gave examples of good practice and encouragement by management to update their labour market knowledge. In accordance with the (former) government reports discussed in the Literature Review (DCSF, 2009b; EHRC 2009a, DBIS 2010) where IAG and LMI were portrayed as being high priority, one Connexions manager commented on this happening in practice in the quote:



*“IAG is being shunted up the agenda. There is a recognition that didn’t exist before. There is a new strategy of NEET prevention which is a better tactic than NEET reduction”*

(see Appendix 9, Interviewee 5).

Many of the guidance professionals from a range of guidance sectors in this sample gave local/regional examples of good practice around LMI, improving relationships with employers and helping ‘time poor’ PA’s. These included:

- A dedicated Information Team who provide leaflets, updates and a helpline to Connexions PA’s and Adult Guidance workers in their region on labour market information/intelligence, unusual requests for career information and employer information (Appendix 9, Interviewee 8). This positive case study can be contrasted with a comment from a Connexions PA *‘I would love to have someone within our organisation responsible for disseminating info (sic) regularly instead of ad hoc* (Online Questionnaire, Appendix 7, Question 8).
- An LMI leaflet for Parents (Appendix 9, Interviewee 5).
- A new ‘Employer and Engagement Broker Team’ who have hybrid roles. Half of their workload is spent as a PA working with caseload of clients and half of the time is spent engaging with employers to increase job vacancies, work experience placements and performing a matching process between clients and employers. Central to this new team is to understand the needs of local employers (Appendix 9, Interviewee 5).
- The RACE (Redcar and Cleveland Employers) group made up of all the guidance services in the area. If an employer has more than ten vacancies they can approach this group and they will provide a seamless recruitment and liaison service for the

employer. Recently this group was quoted as having saved Asda millions of pounds in recruitment fees (Appendix 9, Interviewee 5).

- One Connexions service gives responsibility to their staff members to have an industry specialism. PA's are encouraged to develop their knowledge of their industry sector through internet research, meeting employers, attending conferences etc and to compile a file with the knowledge they acquire and disseminate this to their colleagues. The files they develop are available to all staff members (Focus Group Two).
- Jobcentre Plus (JCP) has several mechanisms in place to update Advisers including producing local LMI reports a District Provision Tool and team meetings (Appendix 7, Interviewee 4).

Focusing further on guidance sectors other than the youth guidance sector/Connexions, practitioners sampled from the HE and FE guidance sectors, 3 out of 22 (13.6%) explained that engaging with employers and keeping their LMI knowledge up to date was a fundamental part of their role and was encouraged by their management. This again is in contrast to results from the youth guidance/Connexions sample. One HE Careers Adviser interviewed stated that keeping abreast with changes in industry and liaising with employers was an integral part of their professional practice and by not engaging in these activities this would be questioned by management. The FE Careers Adviser interviewed explained how they are set targets for employer engagement and are expected to manage a caseload of local employers. This FE Careers Adviser is the only guidance professional out of a sample of 74 (1.35%) who explicitly alluded to having targets for employer engagement.

It could be concluded from these findings that HE and FE guidance services take LMI, employer engagement and career guidance more seriously than other guidance services. However, more extensive sampling would be required to corroborate this. Disparities between the guidance sectors could be explained by a number of influencing factors including

differences in targets, caseloads of clients and the type of clients guidance professionals in HE and FE manage, who are possibly more mature and 'career' focused. The research process for this report has been unable to identify any complimentary research which explicitly analyse these identified disparities between guidance sectors. It seems logical that any future research should concentrate on identifying the underlying cause of any differences in order to ensure a more consistent approach to guidance/LMI across all guidance services.

### **Inconsistencies between Connexions Services**

Focusing again on the Connexions services sampled, the positive examples cited previously in this chapter involving 50% of the Connexions services who took part in the interviews and discussions are in stark contrast to 50% of the other Connexions services who participated in this research. Representatives from 50% of the 'other' Connexions services include comments such as their management having an obsession with NEET reduction as well as the strong results of the online survey relating to targets and caseloads set by management/their employer previously discussed. This data appears fraught with contradictions and further highlights the inconsistencies between Connexions services based on geographical location. It seems the prioritisation of IAG and the importance being placed on LMI coming from the raft of reports and (former) government white papers as discussed previously in this chapter and in Chapter 2 is not being filtered down from management and felt by *all* front line Connexions services. The implication of these inconsistencies which stem from Connexions management's 'buy in' to the importance of LMI and engaging with industry will have a serious impact on the quality and consistency of CIAG which is being delivered to young people as well as it being out of sync with the needs of industry.

### **Pre and Post Connexions Service**

As well as highlighting differences between Connexions services and guidance sectors the research data has also demonstrated a marked difference between the current Connexions service and the pre-Connexions careers service. 29.7%, 22 out of 74 of the guidance

professionals who participated in this research project had worked for the pre-1997 Connexions service. From the sample of guidance professionals who worked for the pre-Connexions careers service the data reveals a high level of consensus that employer engagement and labour market knowledge was a much higher priority pre-Connexions. Careers Advisers who worked for this careers service explained how they had employer caseloads to manage, employers frequently visited their careers services to update staff on their industry and that dissemination of labour market information to colleagues and industry input was planned into an Adviser's professional development. Participants who held part 1 and part 2 of the Post Graduate Diploma in Career Guidance which replaced the Qualification in Career Guidance explained how employer liaison formed part of the assessment of Part 2 of their qualification. One Adviser who was interviewed started professional life in 1996 just before the Connexions service started remarked:

*"When I first started I had 10 employer visits to do a year, then 5, then nobody cared. I chose to do it"* (Appendix 9, Interviewee 3)

This quote highlights the change felt by many of the participants in this research who moved from working for the pre-Connexions service to the current Connexions service. Another practitioner in Focus Group Two who had worked in career guidance for over 30 years lamented that: *"We need to go back to the old careers ethos"* (see Appendix 3 for Focus Group Information).

This message of employer liaison being embedded into a Careers Adviser's workload pre-Connexions can be compared with the findings collected from many of the guidance professionals who now work for the Connexions service. For example in Focus Group One (see Appendix 3) 100% of the group admitted that, in the majority of cases, updating their LMI was just left to their own initiative and was by no means planned into or targeted by their

employer. As already discussed, only one Adviser out of 74 (1.3%) stated that they were targeted on employer engagement. Although, this figure should be treated with some caution as participants were not directly asked if they were targeted on employer engagement/updating their labour market knowledge, it is still very interesting to note the difference that has been highlighted between the pre and post Connexions service. These findings further support the reports of the Lifelong Learning UK, the sector skills council for the lifelong learning sector, (2009 and 2010) as examined in the Literature Review, Chapter 2. These reports identify a gap in the current existing career guidance qualification framework in relation to labour market knowledge and that steps need to be taken to address this. How employer liaison and development of industry knowledge will be embedded into practitioners' ongoing professional development as it seemed to be in the pre-Connexions careers service has been partially studied by Hall's (2009) report which is discussed in more detail later on in this chapter. However current studies and reports examined as part of this study fail to fully address this issue and further research in this area would be beneficial as, depending on the results of such a study, this may help careers services such as Connexions to understand the importance of allowing Advisers' time to keep their LMI knowledge continually updated.

### **Time Constraints**

Closely related to the issues of targets and workload as previously examined in this chapter, unsurprisingly 'time constraints' were another barrier frequently referred to in the narrative to Question 6 of the online questionnaire (How easy do you think it is to keep up to speed with industry/employers' needs?). In Question 6 (see Appendix 7) the word 'time' was referred to 14 times in 14 separate responses out of 31 open responses to this question. Responses ranged from short, two word explanatory responses such as "time constraints" (x2) to more detailed responses such as:

*“don’t get much time now to work directly with employers”*

*“less and less time for research and info gathering”*

*“no time is allowed for reading/research”*

(see Appendix 7, Question 6)

High levels of agreement were found in both focus groups and the interviews with guidance professionals complaining about their general lack of time and the length of time it can take to research LMI. One Interviewee summed this up by stating: *“My sourcing of LMI needs to be as pain free as possible”* (see Appendix 9, Interviewee 5).

The report, *The LMI needs of Young people, Parents, Teachers and IAG Professionals*, by Hall (2009) discussed in Chapter 2 also raised the issue of lack of time and pressure of targets (school) IAG professionals and school career staff experience and recognizes how these staff:

*“find it difficult to see where they can steal the time to improve their careers and labour market knowledge unless it becomes a higher priority in school”* (Hall, 2009, p.10).

This quote by Hall (2009) also accentuates the interrelated issues of ‘lack of time’ and what schools/management view as high priority. The results of this research project coupled with Hall’s (2009) findings indicate that for many guidance services improving careers and labour market knowledge is not always viewed as high priority. In response to the issues raised by guidance professionals during his research, Hall (2009) included the recommendations below to help meet the LMI needs of IAG professionals which, based on his research, he believes

will allow guidance professionals to be kept up to date using the most effective and efficient methods. These recommendations include:

- *'Training events to build their knowledge - and confidence - about the region's employment structures and patterns*
- *Access to electronic newsletters/e-mailed alerts*
- *Subject/sector specific regional briefings*
- *Professional Development time allocated specifically for this purpose*
- *Access to immediate/local LMI where it exists*
- *Local and regional collection methodologies and strategic partnerships to provide travel to work-based LMI' (Hall, 2009, p.19-21)*

Interviews conducted within this study indicate that some of the recommendations as listed above have been implemented to some extent as exemplified in the three projects/initiatives detailed below. These three projects/initiatives below all share a common aim which is to inform advisers about LMI/industry as efficiently and effectively as possible thus saving them time. One project is UK wide, one regional and one is industry led and starts to discuss the specific findings of this project in relation the Construction and Built Environment (CBE) sector.

#### **Example One, Sector Skills Councils' LMI Project, General, UK wide**

(see Appendix 9, Interviewee 10)

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (DBIS) have funded all Sector Skills Councils (SSC's) to provide high quality labour market information and intelligence which will be featured on the NextStep (adult guidance) website. 24 out of 25 Sector Skills Councils

have produced labour market information reports for this project. The LMI reports for this project are specifically aimed at guidance practitioners. Although it is intended to support the (former) Adult Advancement and Careers Service it is applicable to practitioners who work with clients of all ages. The time saving nature of this LMI portal means that practitioners can source information relating to a high proportion of industries and the workforce as SSC's are UK wide and cover 90% of the workforce ([www.sscalliance.org](http://www.sscalliance.org)). The project has also developed bite size LMI for each SSC and is in the process of developing an overall Information, Advice and Guidance strategy for all Sector Skills Councils supported by the Chief Executive Officer of each organisation. The Project Manager for this project who participated in this research spoke about the feedback received from guidance professionals on this project:

*“The feedback we have had from careers advisers has been overwhelmingly positive. They (careers advisers) want to be able to access high quality LMI as quickly as possible and the LMI web portal meets this need as well as raising the advisers’ awareness of the important role of SSC’s. The benefits are obvious - access to and use of the LMI has increased dramatically and therefore both careers advisers and SSCs can be sure that clients have the most accurate and up to date LMI available.”*  
(see Appendix 9, Interviewee 10).

This project meets many of the objectives outlined in DBIS’ *Fuelling Potential* Report (2010) alluded to in Chapter 2, Literature Review in relation to SSC’s acting as the primary source of information for LMI.



### **Example Two – Humber LMI Project, Regional**

(see Appendix 9, Interviewee 9)

As explained by the Humber LMI Development Manager in interview this regional project which sits within the Humber EBP has developed an LMI website ([www.lmihumber.co.uk](http://www.lmihumber.co.uk)), quarterly LMI newsletters for young people and guidance practitioners as well as LMI events for guidance practitioners. The practitioners' newsletter has been distributed since 2006 to approx 500 individuals mainly from the Humber region and their LMI events which showcase a wide variety of industries are very well attended and always have a waiting list. The regular nature of the newsletters, updating of the website and events "Keep LMI alive" to quote the LMI Development Manager for the project.

### **Example Three – ConstructionSkills' IAG Team - Sector Specific Findings**

(see Appendix 9, Interviewee 11).

One of the reasons the ConstructionSkills', the Sector Skills Council for the construction industry, IAG team was formed in 2009 was in recognition of the fact that IAG was a key driver in the white papers coming from (former) government. This SSC believed that the key to communicating their message to young people and adults was through 'influencing the influencers' i.e. Careers/Personal Advisers, parents, teachers etc and then the 'influencers' would pass on this information to their clients/students/children described in the quote from the Head of Recruitment and Careers at ConstructionSkills:

*"Influencers, they are the people that young people and adults listen to. We have come across government research that suggests it's important to be seen to be targeting influencers. Also there is easy accessible to influencers."* (see Appendix 9, Interviewee 9)

The IAG team has 6 Advisers who cover the whole of England. Their primary aim is to liaise with key regional/ national IAG stakeholders to influence the provision of IAG to young people

and adults in order to meet the skills needs of the sector. They work closely with careers guidance professionals, teachers and parents to ensure influencers are provided with accurate, appropriate and impartial IAG about career and progression routes in the sector and to communicate industry recruitment needs based on the Labour Market Intelligence ConstructionSkills produce. Activities they are involved in to meet these targets include:

### **LMI/Industry Newsletter aimed at guidance practitioners –**

This is currently being developed and will be sent via email to approx 1000 guidance professionals around England and will provide short, sharp information about the CBE Sector along with important LMI.

### **LMI Project**

ConstructionSkills have been involved in the DBIS Labour Market Information Project, as described above, since 2007. In March 2010 the ConstructionSkills LMI document accounted for 20% of downloads from the LMI portal, aimed at guidance practitioners, which was the most popular of all the Sector Skills Council Labour Market Information downloads as per information in Figure 4 below:

- Visits to the web page: 1057
- Views of the web page: 1379
- Average Time Viewed: 03:01

<b>Sector Skills Councils</b>	<b>% of LMI downloads</b>
<u>ConstructionSkills</u>	<b>20</b>
<u>Improve</u> , - SSC for Food and Drink Manufacturing Industry	<b>16</b>
<u>Creative and Cultural Skills</u> - SSC for Crafts, Cultural Heritage, Design, Literature, Music, Performing, and Visual Arts.	<b>12</b>

<u>AssetSkills</u> - SSC for facilities management, housing, property, planning, cleaning and parking.	<b>12</b>
--	-----------

**Figure 4 – Sector Skills Council Downloads to the LMI portal**

**LMI/Feature Events** – these events are aimed at raising the profile of the construction industry. Many of the events have been named ‘It’s not just mud and boots’ with the intention of challenging the poor image and stereotypes associated with this industry as identified in the Chapter 2 (ConstructionSkills, 2009; Fuller 2005b; CCI 2008; EHRC 2009b). Where possible events are delivered at an employers’ workplace or on a construction site. The employers interviewed as part of this study (see Appendix 9, Interviewee 13 and 14) have both hosted events for teachers and guidance professionals at their workplace. This is a paragraph taken from one of the invites for the event for guidance professionals and teachers hosted by the employer Ploughcroft (see Appendix 9, Interviewee 14).

**‘It’s not just Mud and Boots!’**

*Construction is one of Britain’s largest industries and offers a wide range of challenging, exciting and rewarding careers. This event, run in partnership with Ploughcroft, a roofing and training organisation, and ConstructionSkills, the Sector*

*Skills Council for construction, will give you the opportunity to find out about the range of careers, qualifications, training, skills and materials related to the roofing sector of the industry. The day will include a practical session and presentations on traditional and renewable resources now in practice such as photo-voltaics (solar panels) and green roofs. You will also be able to gather case studies from a variety of inspirational role models working in the industry and obtain information on related industries (e.g. scaffolding and plant operation). All this information will be invaluable both for the delivery of the CBE Diploma (especially sustainability) and for IAG purposes.”*

As the Head of Recruitment and Careers explained during the interview the Recruitment and Careers team does not record the number of events they hold but more the number of influencers they work with. An influencer, as defined by this team is any guidance service or school such as a Connexions Service or HE Careers service or a school. The events are recorded and evaluated in terms of the % increase of knowledge (about the CBE Sector) of attendees before and after the event, the quality of the events and the number of influencers who attend the events. The results for this team for year to date are detailed below in Figure 5:

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Jan – June 2010</b>
% Increase in knowledge of influencers who attended CBE events. (Pre and Post event)	20
Quality of awareness raising events (%)	88
Number of influencers invited to events	88

**Figure 5 – ConstructionSkills’ IAG Team Targets**

These events also feature Construction Ambassadors that ConstructionSkills have trained to inform young people, adults and influencers about their experiences of working in construction.

There was overwhelming consensus from practitioners throughout this study regarding the importance of such events/experiences led by industry and the importance of meeting role models from industry. All the participants in the focus groups, 63% (5 out of 8) of the guidance professionals interviewed expressed a desire to meet '*real life*' ambassadors from industry and visit employers workplaces in order to experience and observe industries first hand. Advisers explained that these experiences then allowed them to speak more knowledgeably and credibly about industry sectors to their clients. One Connexions Personal Adviser in Focus Group One shared an experience of meeting an engineer at a Careers Fair:

*"It was great to actually hear from industry and receive different messages from theory. Meeting a real life person helped me to see the practical reality of it all"*

(see Appendix 3)

Another Connexions PA interviewed commented on a visit to a construction site: "*The visit really opened my eyes to the changes in the industry*"

(see Appendix 9, Interviewee 2)

In the online questionnaire for guidance professionals some of the respondents referred specifically to these feature events led by ConstructionSkills in their open responses to Question 10 (see Appendix 7)

*"The day I attended at Stockton Riverside recently was great and hope that these are a regular occurrence."*

“(Construction sector) should offer more training courses such as the recent event at Stockton Riverside College”

These examples of good practice detailed above, as well as meeting many of the LMI needs of guidance professionals as identified in Hall’s (2009) report, also meet several of the recommendations outlined in the *Unleashing Aspirations: The Final Report of the Panel on Fair Access to the Profession* (2010) as discussed in Chapter 2 which proposes that every profession should train ambassadors.

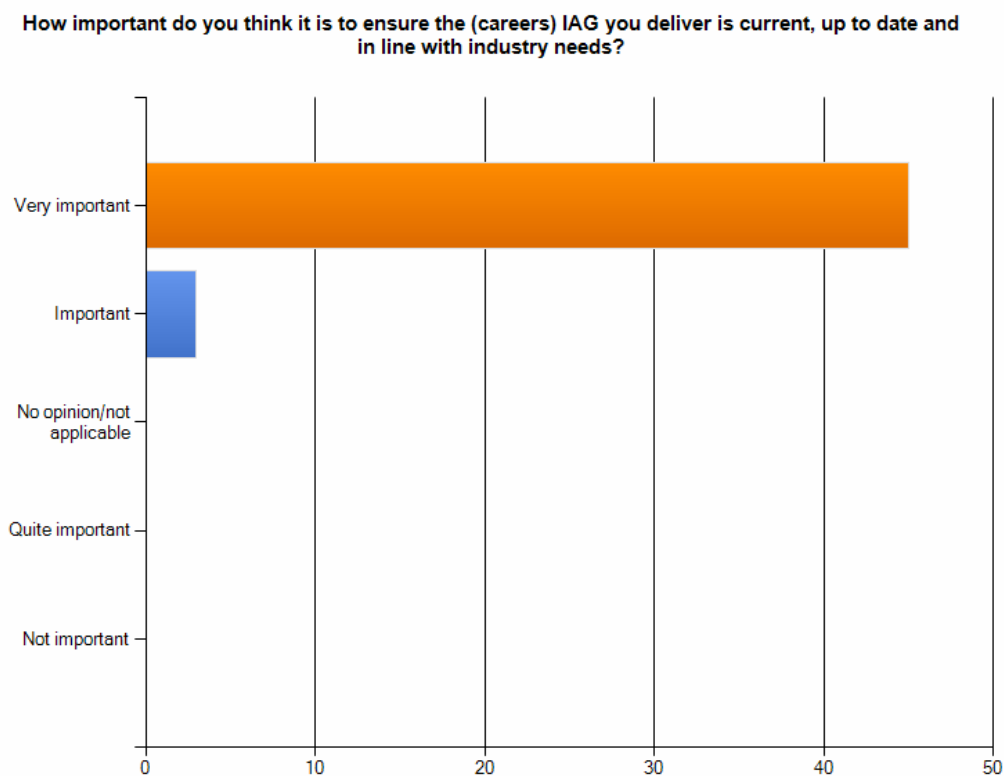
Clearly, there are many excellent examples of good practice in terms of communicating LMI to practitioners which have been examined as part of this report. It seems some Advisers are aware of the various sources of information available to them and some will not be able to access them on grounds of geography or industry. However as Hall (2009) pointed out when referring to IAG professionals:

*“All of these professional audiences feel that there is very little information produced specifically to meet their needs”* (Hall, 2009, p. 11)

It must be noted however that Hall’s (2009) report was written for the North East region of England and only involved guidance practitioners from the North East. This study, which is not focusing on one particular region, does still partially endorse the above statement. The results of this research project demonstrates that good practice is clearly taking place with regards to producing and communicating LMI to guidance professionals however the findings indicate that there are still significant inconsistencies between Connexions services regionally relating to this subject area and there is still much publicity to be done to ensure all guidance professionals are aware of the LMI resources they can access.

## The views of guidance professionals towards LMI

As well as focusing on the *methods* guidance professionals use to keep up to date with industry and the barriers they face, this research project also aimed to determine how *important* guidance professionals felt the process of keeping their LMI knowledge up to date was and how this affected the CIAG they delivered. In accordance with the views of a significant number of the reports and studies examined in Chapter 1 (DBIS, 2010; DCSF 2009a; DES 2005, Hall 2009, Gothard, Mignot, Offer and Ruff, 2001) and across both the qualitative and quantitative data from this report there is an overwhelmingly agreement that CIAG should be current and in line with the needs of industry. The bar chart in Figure 6 taken from the online questionnaire for guidance professionals clearly indicates a significant level of agreement.



**Figure 6 – Online Questionnaire for guidance professionals, Question 7**

**(See Appendix 7)**

This quantitative data shows a significant positive correlation with the qualitative data gathered in the focus groups and interviews conducted with practitioners. Quotes taken from interviews and open responses to the online questionnaire linked to this subject include:

*“Without knowledge of what is going on out there (in industry) can make you feel a bit stupid. If you can start talking about what they (clients) want to hear it starts to build their confidence in you. Without industry knowledge it’s all just gas and air”*

(Appendix 9, Interviewee 2).

*“In group sessions if you give out incorrect information you have 30 witnesses”*

(Appendix 9, Interviewee 6).

*“If the advice and guidance you deliver isn’t up to date, you’re wasting your time, it’s at its core”* (Appendix 9, Interviewee 7).

*“For client trust and rapport, knowing your industries is essential”*

(Appendix 7, Question 7).

A strong theme emerged across the quantitative data linked to guidance practitioners’ current knowledge of industry/LMI and how this affected the dynamic between them and their client. Key features of this theme were that up to date knowledge of industry *helped* guidance practitioners to build rapport with their clients (see above quotes) coupled with the sense of responsibility practitioners felt towards their clients exemplified in the quotes below from the open responses to Question 7 in the online questionnaire:

*“To give wrong information could mean a client takes the wrong form of training or qualifications or gains inappropriate work experience”*



*“Want to give clients the best service possible”*

*“It’s important for our clients to have up to date information on which to base their decisions”*

(see Appendix 7, Question 7).

This sense of accountability described by Advisers as part of this study is consistent with the views of Gothard et al (2001) examined in Chapter 1 who quite clearly stated that if Advisers partake in ‘*careless talk*’ (Gothard et al, p. 92) with regards to the CIAG they deliver this could be quite detrimental to many parties and individuals.

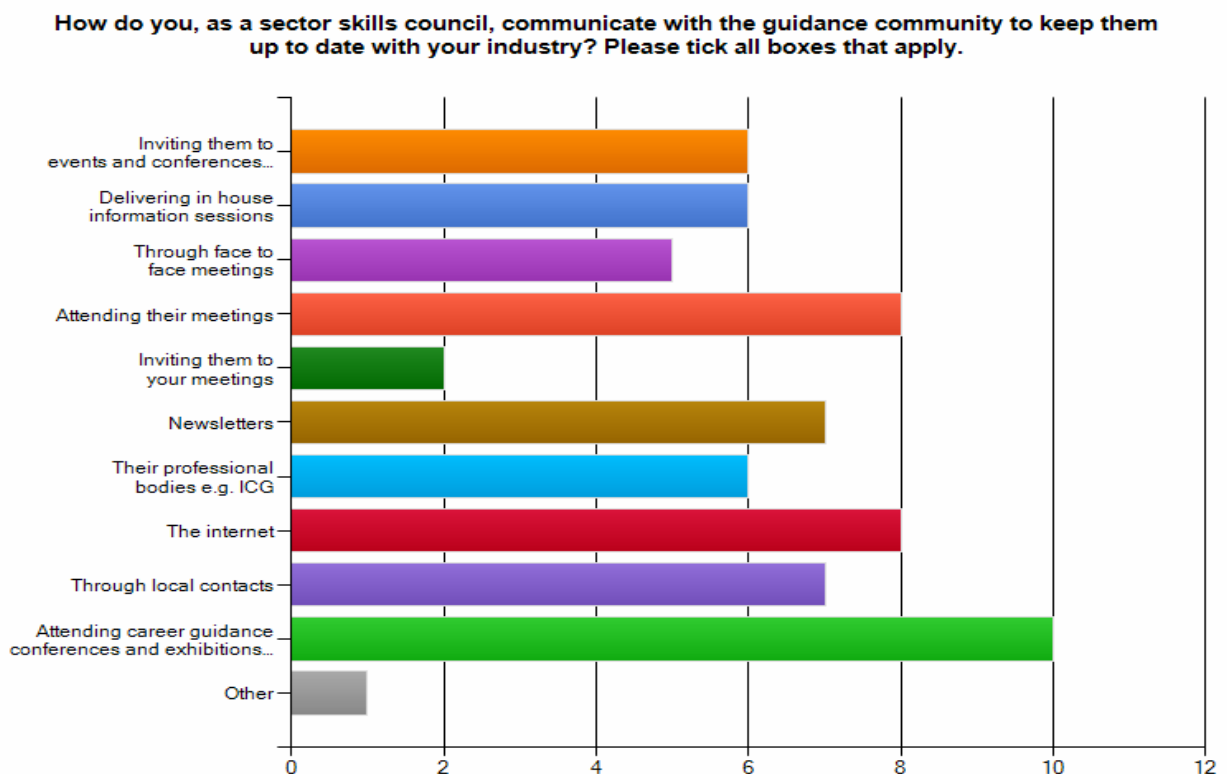
One surprising finding which emerged from the quantitative data was how Advisers how use LMI as a mediation tool when liaising between parents and clients. An individual in Focus Group One gave an account of using LMI to positive effect to persuade a client’s parents to accept the idea of their son pursuing a career in fashion design. These results support and develop the structural frameworks of guidance espoused by Roberts (1995) discussed in Chapter 2, the Literature Review, which views the role of the guidance professional as a type of intermediary. The findings above clearly indicate that guidance practitioners place a high level of importance on LMI during the guidance process should be considered in light of the results previously examined linked to the barriers Advisers face such as time constraints, workload pressures and lack of encouragement from management which prevent them keeping up to date with industry. This conflict which the findings of this research reveal implies that the majority of Advisers clearly possess the desire, commitment and purpose to keep their industry knowledge current but in many cases feel thwarted by the number of barriers they face as previously identified in this chapter.

### **Other industries/Sector Skills Councils and the Guidance Profession**

An integral part of this study, as discussed in Chapter 1 and 2, is to examine and explore the dynamic between industry and the guidance profession with particular focus on the CBE

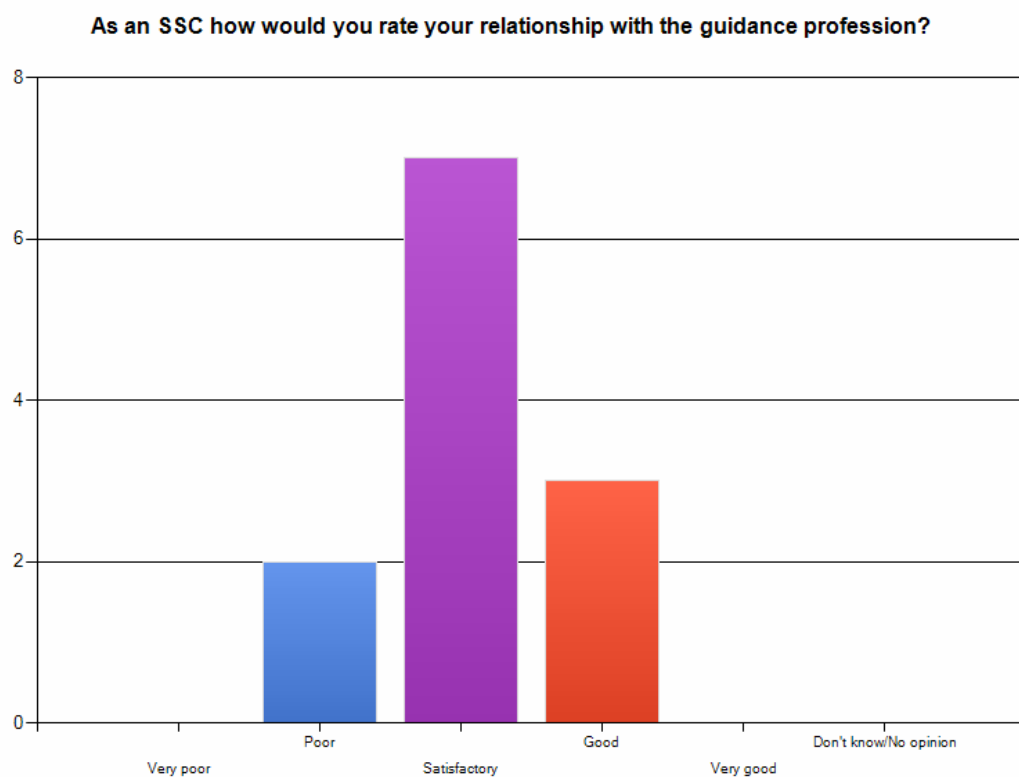
Sector. The relationship between the CBE sector and the guidance profession has been considered in some depth thus far and will be examined further in this chapter. As identified in Chapter 2, it is also pertinent to evaluate the research data gathered from other sector skills councils, who represent other industries, and compare and contrast them with the findings from the guidance profession and the CBE sector.

Similar to the data which was gathered from the guidance profession the more interesting results relating to industry/SSC's were centred around the *barriers* they face when endeavouring to communicate with the guidance profession and the nature of their relationship with the guidance community rather than the *methods* of communication they use. The actual methods SSC's used to communicate with the guidance profession produced results displayed in Figure 7 (see Appendix 8, Question 2)



**Figure 7 – Online Questionnaire for SSC's, Question 2**

Clearly the most popular method of keeping up to date with guidance professionals is 'Attending their conferences and exhibitions' (83.3%, n=10). Although the open responses to this question do not provide further explanation one possible reason for this response could be related to the issues of resources and time constraints which were highlighted in other open responses to other questions. To expand this further it is pertinent to examine the responses depicted in the bar chart in Figure 8 to Question 6 from the online questionnaire for SSC's.



**Figure 8 – Online questionnaire for SSC's, Question 6 (see Appendix 8)**

Although the results from this column chart read quite positive in that 91.6% (n=10) of respondents described their relationship with the guidance profession as 'Satisfactory' or 'Good' the open responses below indicate that there is a desire to do more but a lack of resources hinders some SSC's:

*“It is difficult to ensure your message actually gets across to a good proportion of them without enormous resources”*

*“Aware that there is so much more we could do if we had the resources”*

(Appendix 8, Question 6)

These factors may explain why attending careers guidance conferences were the most popular response to Question 2 (How do you as an SSC communicate with the guidance profession?). Such conferences may allow SSC’s to interact with a high number of guidance professionals at an event. This quantitative data from SSC’s also echoes the frustrations felt by guidance professionals linked to time constraints, high caseloads and targets. Another issue which seems to hamper the efforts of SSC’s in communicating with the guidance community is linked to the way guidance/careers services are organised and structured which can be discussed further in relation to the response to Question 8 as per results in Figure 9.

<b>Question 8. How easy do you think it is for your SSC and the industry you represent to communicate with the guidance community?</b>		
<b>Response</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
<b>Easy</b>	0.0%	0
<b>Quite easy</b>	18.2%	2
<b>Not very easy</b>	<b>45.5%</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Difficult</b>	36.4%	4
<b>Very difficult</b>	9.1%	1
<b>Impossible</b>	0.0%	0
<b>Don't know/No opinion</b>	0.0%	0

**Figure 9 – Online Questionnaire for SSC’s, Question 8 (see Appendix 8)**

91.6% (n=10) of the SSC's stated that they found it 'Not very easy', 'Difficult' or 'Very difficult' to communicate with the guidance profession. Reasons for this in the narrative to this question included:

*"A mismatch of SSC/guidance professionals organisational and communication structures"*

*"With the constant change to Connexions it can be difficult to target the right people"*

*"Confusing landscape of organisations and sources of information"*

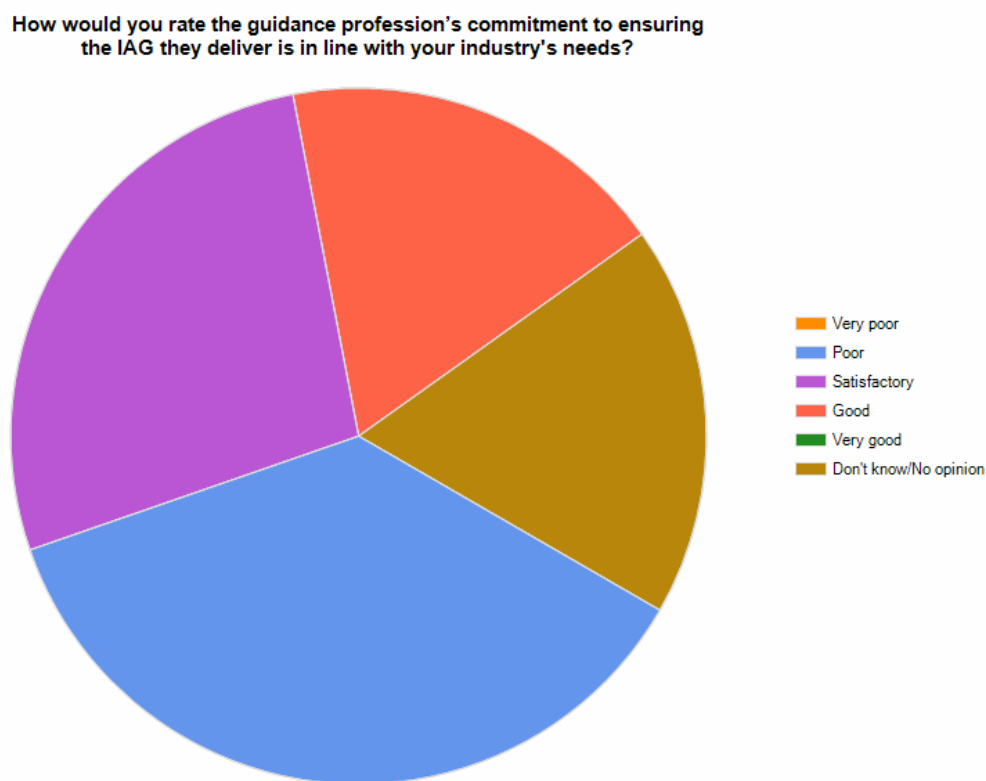
(Appendix 8, Question 8).

These issues were echoed by the construction employers interviewed (see Appendix 9, Interviewee 13 and 14). They expressed uncertainty in terms of the number of different guidance organisations in existence and the most effective way to communicate with them. Interestingly, this confusion and uncertainty was also shared by many guidance professionals when they discussed how they accessed and kept up to date with information about industry. Advisers across all three research methods spoke of the difficulty of trying to navigate through the range of different industries, keep up to speed with industries which are changing which is coupled with the expectations on them to possess a high level of knowledge of all industries. One Adviser admitted when faced with having to help a group of construction students that: '*I didn't know where to start*'. (Appendix 9, Interviewee 2). This difficulty of keeping up to date with the changing nature of industry in many cases for guidance workers was linked to the obstacles previously defined relating to targets and caseloads. These findings draw a parallel with the literature of Gothard et al (2001, p. 80) as discussed in Chapter 1 who take a realistic stance in terms of the limitations of guidance practitioners and the impracticable idea that they can possess unlimited knowledge on all subjects areas. Furthermore, these results may also lead us to question if Advisers feel they possess the correct skills to be able to competently research LMI, industry and engage with employers. The LLUK (2010) Draft Career Guidance

Qualification Framework, as discussed in Chapter 2, presents extensive research around the subject of the skills gaps of guidance workers and regarding LMI training the report concludes:

*'Training for staff in using LMI is urgently needed to help clients make sense of it.'*(LLUK, 2010, p. 10)'.

Moving back to the views of SSC's, their opinion as to whether the guidance profession is fully committed to delivering CIAG in line with industry needs is divided as illustrated in the pie chart in Figure 10.



**Figure 10 – Questionnaire for SSC's, Question 9 (see Appendix 8)**

**Note – Only 4 responses given out of a possible 6**

In relation to Question 9, although 45.5% (n=5) SSC's described guidance professionals commitment as being 'Satisfactory' or 'Good' , 36.4% (n=4) of SSC's rated the guidance professional's commitment to ensuring the CIAG they deliver as 'Poor' (Appendix 8). This

implies there are a significant amount of SSC's who are concerned about the CIAG being delivered relating to the industries they represent.

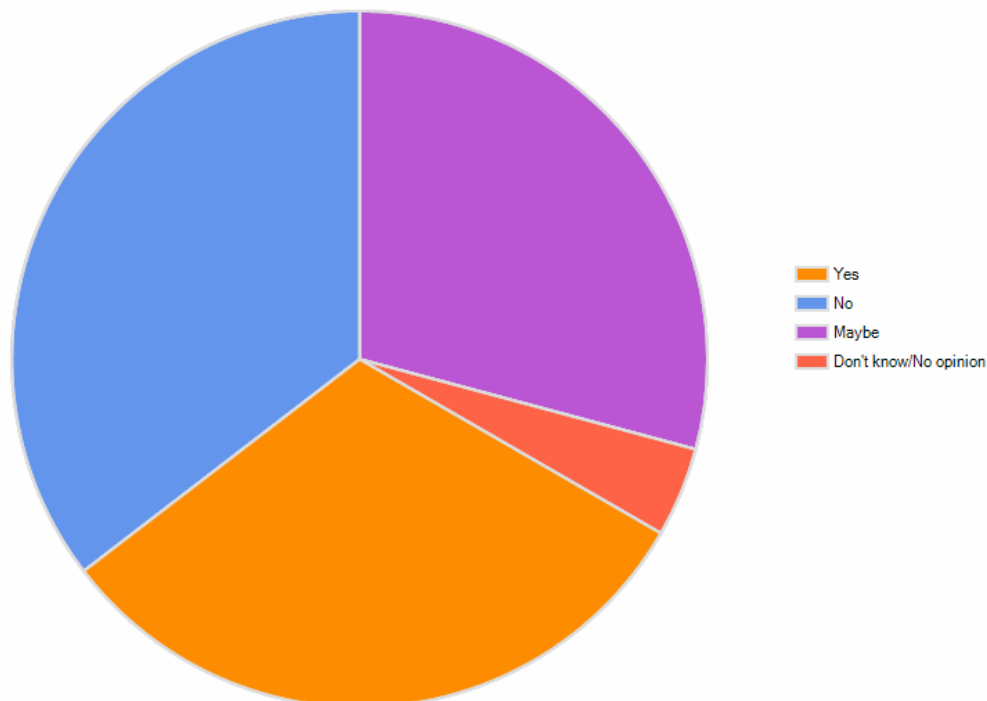
### **Guidance Profession and the CBE Sector**

Sector Specific Findings relating to the CBE Sector have been partially presented earlier on in this chapter but it is necessary to focus on the relationship between this sector and the guidance profession in more detail in relation to the research results.

The positive case studies and examples related to CBE sector as detailed previously in this chapter need be treated with a degree of caution. The opinion of guidance practitioners was divided about whether this industry communicates effectively with the guidance profession. This difference in views is illustrated in the pie chart in Figure 11 from the online questionnaire

for guidance professionals:

**Do you think the construction industry does enough to inform you about the sector including information on careers, training, future skills etc?**



**Figure 11 - see Appendix 7, Question 10**

For this question 30.8% (n16) of respondents answered 'Yes', 32.7% (n17) responded 'No' and 5.8% (n3) responded 'May be'. It must be noted that the question does specifically ask about the 'construction industry' and not ConstructionSkills, the SSC for the construction industry. Although ConstructionSkills represents industry it is not wholly responsible for industry and using the word 'industry' in this question could be interpreted as including a wide variety of stakeholders including employers, training providers, professional bodies and industry federations. 44.2% (n=23) of respondents provided open responses to this question which were very mixed in tone mirroring the quantitative data above. Comments ranged from being positive in nature such as:

*"I think they do really try, certainly there seems to be more info coming from the construction industry than most industries"*



*“ConstructionSkills give a good overall picture of sector”*

*“It (ConstructionSkills) is the most pro-active sector skills council”*

*“I find the ConstructionSkills website very useful in providing information on the current and expected future labour market”*

(See Appendix 7, Question 10)

To quite critical and unfavorable:

*“don’t do a lot with Connexions, could do more”*

*“Local employers could do more”*

*“Very low numbers of employers willing to take people on”*

*“Not at the moment whilst in recession, unsure of what advice to give”*

(See Appendix 7, Question 10).

This division of opinion towards the construction industry was also voiced during the focus groups and interviews and, similar to the online questionnaire, ranged from positive feedback about its proactive approach to communicating with guidance professionals to adverse comment such as:

*“I’m despairing of what to tell clients in this climate”*

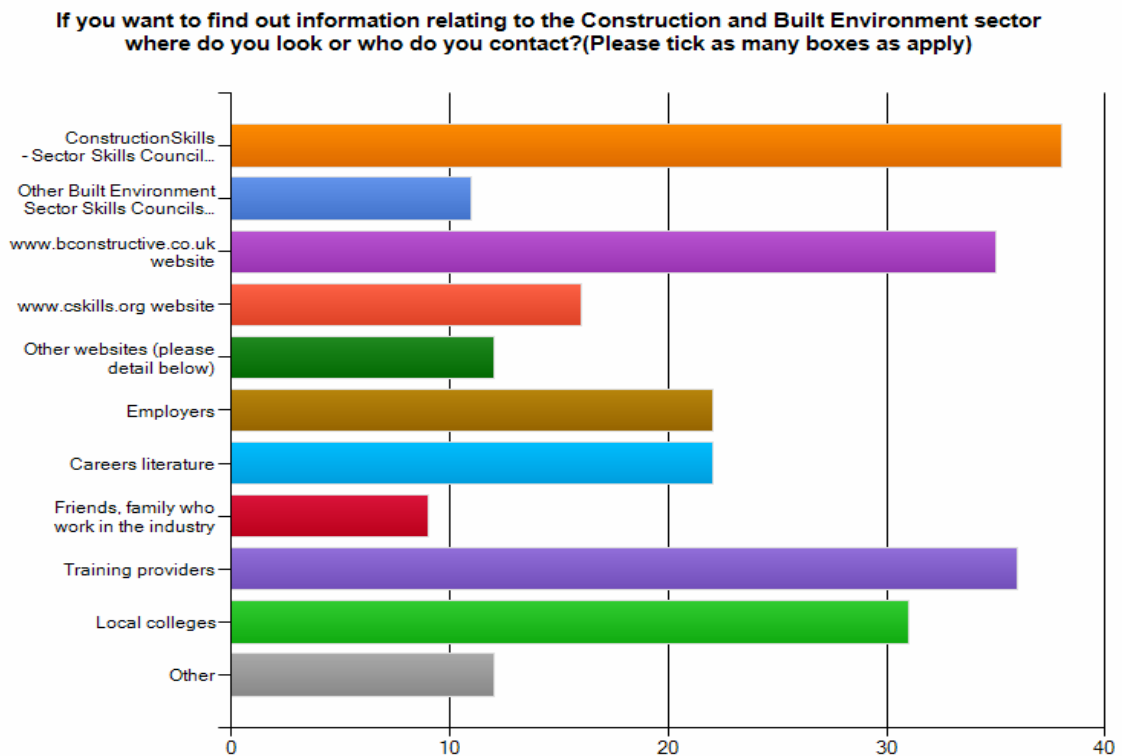
(Appendix 9, Interviewee 1)

*“Construction is classed as being a dumbed down, industry and colleges reinforce this stereotype”* (Appendix 9, Interviewee 2).

There are several possible explanations for these results that demonstrate an ambivalent attitude towards the construction industry. As previously discussed in Chapter 2, the Literature

Review, the industry does suffer from a poor image and stereotyping (ConstructionSkills, 2009; CCI 2008; EHRC 2009b). In some respects the guidance profession may still perceive the industry as the above reports describe which may account for some of the negativity found in the responses. Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter 3, Research methods and methodology, some of the research participants had attended ConstructionSkills' awareness raising events/briefings prior to taking part in the research. These events that the research participants attended received positive evaluations and this may have biased the sample. Finally, the point of reference guidance professionals have for the CBE sector is also significant. For example the general feeling towards ConstructionSkills, on the whole, seemed quite positive, however some guidance professionals also had local points of reference for the construction industry, usually local employers and training providers, which seemed to colour and dominate their perception of the sector. For example in Focus Group Two (see Appendix 3) two Advisers, although their feedback about the ConstructionSkills' event they had just attended was very positive, a negative incident these two Advisers had experienced with a local construction training provider led them to feel unenthusiastic towards the sector as a whole. This scenario seemed to be repeated in many of the interviews and responses from the online questionnaires where the guidance professionals' local point of reference for the industry was paramount in influencing their opinion.

The above results also need to be considered in line with the findings from Question 10 from the online questionnaire (see Appendix 7) in Figure 12:



**Figure 12 – Online Questionnaire for guidance professionals, Q 10**

For this question, surprisingly training providers were chosen as the most popular source of information for the Construction and Built Environment sector with the highest percentage (76.9%, n=40) however ConstructionSkills (75%, n=39) and their bconstructive website (71.2%, n=37) did come a very close second and third. It is significant that training providers, who may or may not be viewed as ‘representing industry’ were a more popular source of information than employers (46.2%, n=24), other built environment SSC’s (23.1%, n=12) and careers literature (48.1%, n=25). These results accord with feedback received in Focus Group One where one participant made the comment below which the rest of the group agreed with:

*“We (Connexions PA’s) are experts in learning opportunities. A lot of the information we gather is from training providers”* (see Appendix 3)

This comment may also provide an explanation as to why training providers seem to be such an important source of information for practitioners. The data gathered from the interviews and focus groups also correlated with the results above regarding how the Advisers sourced information about the CBE Sector. The research data does not provide clear reasons why training providers and learning opportunities are popular information sources for guidance professions. Possible explanations for these findings may be related to the previous findings linked to targets. Due to the high prioritisation of reducing the NEET targets previously discussed it could be considered that moving a young person into college or onto a training provider is a quicker or easier solution than moving them into employment or an apprenticeship. Based on these findings, it is evident that being conversant with local learning opportunities for young people and liaising with training providers is an integral part of many guidance workers practice and is within their comfort zone. An implication of this is the possibility that being experts in employment opportunities and the needs of the labour market is taking second place for guidance practitioners. It also leads to the question that is moving a young person into college or a local training provider necessarily the right option for that young person and industry even if it is the quickest or easiest solution.

Returning to the specific findings relating to the Construction and Built Environment sector quantitative data gathered from CBE employers and the ConstructionSkills', Future Skills Unit representative who took part in this study are also highly relevant and helps us to further examine and compare the relationship between the sector and the guidance community.

The findings relating to employers in this sector were rather slightly limited which could be explained by the small number of employers surveyed i.e. two employers (Appendix 9, Interviewee 13 and 14) and their limited knowledge about the guidance community and practitioners. It is important to note that, as previously acknowledged, the employers interviewed as part of this survey clearly understand the value of working with key

stakeholders such as guidance professionals. Both employers opened up their workplace/construction site to guidance professionals for events which were aimed at raising IAG practitioners' awareness of the CBE Sector. The importance of communicating with guidance practitioners was also endorsed and further stressed by the ConstructionSkills, Future Skills Project Manager (see Appendix 9, Interviewee 12) in the quote:

*“Industry has an obligation to inform the informers”*

However with such a small sample size of employers, caution must be applied to these findings, as they may not be representative of other employers in this sector especially bearing in mind the breadth of the CBE Sector which employs 2.35 million people (ConstructionSkills 2009).

Quantitative data from representatives of the CBE sector highlighted a range of issues relating to the CBE sector which could hinder guidance professionals' ability to engage with the sector which included:

- The prevalence of micro-businesses
- The gulf between large employers and small employers in terms of preparing for the changing needs of the industry linked to
- The reactive attitude of the CBE sector to change
- The reliance on sub-contracting which leads to a fragmented industry
- The industry's tendency to use informal recruitment methods
- The poor image of the industry and lack of diversity in its workforce
- The economic downturn

These issues correspond with the literature linked to the sector studied in Chapter 2 (for example ConstructionSkills 2009, CIC 2010, Egan 2004). The concerns of the CBE Sector

around its image are shared with some of the other SSC's in the online questionnaires. For example, in the narrative responses to the online questionnaires some SSC's stated:

*"Perceptions of our industry are hard to break through"*

(Appendix 8, Question 8).

The Institute of the Motor Industry, the SSC for the automotive industry and associated sectors.

*"There is quite a negative perception of passenger transport on the face, but once involved it is better"* (Appendix 8, Question 7)

GoSkills, the SSC for the Passenger Transport industry.

*"(the sector) is viewed as a career choice for the less able and lower qualified in some areas of the advice service"* (Appendix 8, Question 9)

SEMTA, the SSC for science, engineering and manufacturing technologies in the UK.

Focusing back on the CBE Sector, the issues raised by the CBE sector on page 81 were also highlighted by guidance professionals across the quantitative data particularly in relation to the construction industry's economic climate and the difficulty of them knowing what advice to give. Evidently steps are being taken by ConstructionSkills and employers in the sector to address these issues (see page 61 Example 3) but some guidance professionals are still clearly confused about what messages to send out in this economic climate about the CBE sector.

Limitations of guidance professionals and SSC's have been discussed as well as the limitations of the CBE sector. The limitations of the CBE sector were further explored in the interview with the ConstructionSkills' Future Skills Project Manager (Appendix 9, Interviewee

12). The flow of information between industry and the guidance community, this Project Manager believes, will always be slightly flawed. The justification for this opinion given by this participant was that the majority of the construction industry are 'late adopters', as acknowledged in Chapter 2 (Collin, 2009), which means they are essentially not conversant with the needs of their own industry. Consequently, the information being passed onto guidance professionals from the CBE Sector may not necessarily be fully up to date. An implication of this finding is that the CIAG being delivered to clients by guidance practitioners about the construction industry may be out of sync with the needs of this industry. Furthermore, even if hypothetically guidance professionals were delivering up to date CIAG which meets the requirements of the CBE sector the existing Further Education provision does not currently fully align with the future needs of the industry according to the ConstructionSkills' Future Skills Project Manager. However, as acknowledged by the same Interviewee, such strong statements should be considered in the context that "*there is not such thing as a perfect model*" and all parties should adopt a realistic attitude to the flow of information between key stakeholders and the length of time it can take to adapt existing qualifications.

## **Chapter 5 - Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **Restatement of Aims**

This research project has investigated the methods guidance professionals use to ensure the CIAG they deliver is up to date, current and in line with the needs of industry. Furthermore, as detailed in the Chapter 1, the Introduction, the study also aimed to explore the (relationship) dynamic between the guidance profession and industry with a particular focus on the Construction and Built Environment sector. The ultimate aim of the research was to deepen understanding of the process guidance professionals undertake when updating their industry knowledge, the barriers they face and find examples of good practice to share with industry and the wider guidance community. Through analysing the theory and literature linked to this subject area and the research process recommendations have been made which will ideally improve the flow of information between industry and the guidance profession, help to remove some of the barriers both parties face in this process and ultimately lead an improvement in the CIAG being delivered to young people and adults about industry and more specifically the CBE sector. Such improvements in the quality of CIAG being delivered will hopefully enhance the training, education and career prospects of clients and consequently benefit industry through receiving recruits that have the right skills, knowledge and qualifications that meet the needs of their industry.

### **Conclusion**

The most noticeable findings to emerge from this study were the barriers guidance professionals face in terms of lack of resources, time, targets, management support and understanding the complexities of industry. Interestingly the results of this investigation show that some of these barriers, particularly lack of resources, and the difficulty of understanding other sectors i.e. the guidance sector, were also felt by industry and Sector Skills Councils which revealed much more common ground than expected. The difficulty of both employers,



SSC's and the guidance profession face when endeavouring to navigate each others' sectors constitutes a valid reason why both parties need to unite and work more closely and empathetically. However the complexities of both sectors i.e. the guidance profession and industry are perhaps the reason this does not happen.

Many excellent case studies were cited where industry and the guidance community are coming together to mutual advantage however this research project and the literature reviewed (Hall, 2009; LLUK 2009, 2010) clearly demonstrates that both industry, the SSC for the lifelong learning sector and guidance professionals still feel more could be done to improve relations and the flow of information between both parties.

The study also highlighted major inconsistencies between Connexions Services geographically and between the Connexions service as a whole and other guidance sectors such as Higher Education (HE) and Further Education (FE). The disparities identified between Connexions services geographically, in terms of their commitment to LMI, have serious implications in relation to the quality and currency of the CIAG being delivered to young people. Although the sample size from HE and FE guidance professionals was small and needs to be treated with caution, based on this study, the data from guidance practitioners from these sectors, indicated that engaging with industry and keeping their LMI knowledge up to date was an integral part of their role and embedded into their daily working lives, as it was in the pre-Connexions service, which is in stark contrast to the practice of many of the Connexions' PA's who participated this study.

Linked to the points above the current findings, which in many respects portrays the Connexions service in a negative light, adds to a body of growing body of literature which is highly critical of the IAG being delivered to young people and namely the Connexions service (EHRC, 2009a, p. 36, H.M. Government, 2010, p. 74, Lipcott, 2008).

The findings from this study also make several contributions to the current literature around LMI. Firstly, the research confirms the high level of consensus between the literature, government reports and studies (for example, DBIS, 2010; DCSF 2009a; DES 2005, Hall 2009, Gothard, Mignot, Offer and Ruff, 2001) and the opinion of guidance professions as to the importance of keeping abreast with industry and delivering CIAG which meets industries' needs. Despite this clear agreement, as alluded to above, a significant amount of frontline Connexions Advisers who participated in this research expressed serious concerns about the lack of resources, time and management 'buy in' to enable them to keep their CIAG up to date.

Current literature and research, written by authorities in the field of guidance and LMI (Hall, 2009, Colley, Lewin, Chadderton 2010, Gothard, Mignot, Offer and Ruff, 2001), discussed as part of this study, takes a benevolent and realistic stance regarding the limitations of the guidance profession in terms of their knowledge, time and professional development. This empathetic position should also be adopted by the guidance profession/sector to industry in that the guidance community perhaps needs to be more appreciative and understanding of the limited resources, knowledge and capacity industries and SSC's have at their disposal to enable them to communicate regularly and effectively with the guidance community. Some of the recommendations below intend to relieve the strains both parties experience in this respect and suggests future working which aims to reduce some of these barriers.

In terms of pressures, the CBE sector could be viewed as a sector that suffers more than most in terms of the range of problems it is experiencing relating to poor image, the economic downturn and the make up of the sector confirmed by the literature and research findings (ConstructionSkills, 2009; Fuller 2005b; CCI 2008; EHRC 2009b). These issues are compounded by an industry which is slow to react to its current needs and a qualification

framework which does not currently meet its future skills needs (Collin, 2009). However, despite these apparent serious issues, the Sector Skills Council for the construction industry, as recognised by many guidance professionals from this research sample, is very proactive and innovative in terms of how it engages with the guidance profession and endeavours to keep it updated on its industry as detailed in Chapter 4, the Research Findings and Analysis. However it must be recognised that ConstructionSkills, although it is the biggest SSC, still only represents one SSC within the overall Construction and Built Environment sector therefore is not entirely representative of the whole sector. More interrelated working with the SSC's which cover the CBE footprint, as addressed by the recommendations below, will increase Advisers knowledge of the sector as a whole.

### **Research Design and Methods**

To further strengthen the research design, methods, sampling and findings the following recommendations for further research relating to this subject area are recommended:

1. Firstly, limitations of time and budget did not allow this study to fully secure a representative sample of both guidance professionals and employers. Only guidance practitioners from Yorkshire and the North East participated in this research project and a small sample size of Careers Advisers from adult guidance such as HE, FE, Next Step were used. The majority of guidance professionals who participated in this research were from Connexions services (93% in the focus groups and over 50% in the online questionnaire).

To further enhance this study a more representative cross-national sample of guidance practitioners involving an even coverage of Advisers from all guidance sectors would be beneficial. This sample would allow deeper analysis of the different Connexions services geographically and the differences/similarities between guidance sectors. Such analysis may lead to an improvement in sharing best practice between guidance sectors and an

improvement in the consistencies between Connexions services geographically thereby improving the quality of the CIAG being delivered to clients. As previously discussed, current studies and reports examined in the literature review, highlight a lack of research in this area and further research would be highly beneficial to a wide range of important stakeholders.

2. Relating to the specific findings of this project, further research into the popularity of 'Careers Literature' as a medium guidance practitioners use to keep up to date with industry is highly recommended as it does have a bearing on the currency of the information Advisers are accessing. Future work is required to establish practitioners' definition of 'Careers Literature', where they obtain their literature from, how often is it updated and if they assess the literature they consult for currency. For a more balanced approach, research could also be carried out with industry and Sector Skills Councils to focus on what careers literature they produce, if any, in what format, who their target audience is and how often they update their careers literature.

3. In terms of industry, although 48% of all Sector Skills Councils, who nationally represent a large section of industry, contributed to this study. Only two employers from the CBE sector were interviewed. The companies interviewed did represent both spectrums of the construction in that one company was a large contractor and one company was from a small to medium enterprise. However, considering that 92% of the construction industry is made up of small businesses (ConstructionSkills, 2009). Further study of this employer base of the CBE sector may lead to a more profound understanding of the sector as a whole, the attitude of these employers towards the changing nature of their industry and how these changes can be communicated to the wider community such as the guidance profession.

4. As noted in chapter 1, guidance professionals are not the only people who provide CIAG. A whole host of people including family, parents/guardians, friends, peers, teachers, career co-

ordinators in schools and employers also provide CIAG to young people and adults. To further extend and deepen this study it would be interesting to look at these CIAG *providers* and examine their role in the CIAG process, where their information sources derive from and how this impacts on the quality of the CIAG they provide.

6. The large element of qualitative analysis applied to this research project must be recognised in terms of it being opinion based, subjective and at times difficult to quantify. Every attempt has been made to analyse the findings quantitatively and remove any ambiguities. However additional research which is more empirical and quantitative based would allow for a more scientific, objective analysis of results and should further minimize the risk of contradictory and unclear findings.

7. Finally, during the writing of this study, a new coalition government has come into power. It would be interesting to undertake a longitudinal study to assess the effects the new government have had on the guidance profession and the new government's stance on ensuring the CIAG being delivered meets the needs of industry. This study could also take into account the report from the new Careers Profession Taskforce expected in Autumn 2011.

### **Recommendations for future practice**

1. SSC's from cross related industry sectors, such as the 5 SSC's which cover the Construction and Built Environment sector or SSC's which suffer from similar issues could work together more effectively to improve their relationship with the guidance profession. This joint working would help share best practice around common issues for example industries who suffer from image problems. SSC's could also deliver joint projects, events and initiatives which would perhaps solve some of their resourcing issues as well as benefiting the guidance profession from being bombarded with information from too many sources. Projects could

include joint events/briefing sessions and joint newsletters aimed at guidance professionals. This joint working would also aid guidance professionals understanding of the overlap between some SSC's such as ConstructionSkills (Construction) and SummitSkills (Building Services Engineering).

2. LMI workshops could be developed by SSC's for guidance practitioners to deliver in their team meetings. These workshops could be either delivered by SSC's, an industry representative or, considering the limited resources of SSC's, the workshops could be self-explanatory and not require industry/SSC presence. These workshops could then be developed for guidance professionals to use with their clients. These workshops should be reviewed on an annual basis by the SSC's

3.The current government and guidance sector needs to implement a national, consistent approach to how guidance professionals, particularly, the Connexions service, keep their LMI updated and the services and resources they can access to enable this to happen. This may involve a specified number of hours or days for continuous professional development strictly devoted to engaging with industry and updating their labour market knowledge and/or each Connexions services to have a dedicated LMI Adviser/team. Similar to the pre-Connexions service, targets could also be set linked to activities such as employers visits and industry placements. However, caution must be applied to further target setting in such a target driven culture such as Connexions as described by the participants of this research.

4.The report by Colley, Lewin, Chadderton, (2010) around 'de-skilling' and the results of this research project, however small the sample, does imply that the Connexions service could potentially be losing valuable members of its staff who have a passion for career guidance. Consequently its clients are potentially losing out on the skills, experience and expertise of trained and committed guidance professionals. Further research in this area could determine

the extent of this exodus from the Connexions service to other guidance sectors and how this is affecting the quality of the Connexions service being delivered.

5. Key guidance organisations/professional bodies, such as the Institute of Career Guidance (ICG) and Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS), should develop a simple diagram and/or guide aimed at industry/SSC's which demystifies the guidance sector. Such a guide would help these key industry stakeholders better understand and communicate with the guidance sector.

Despite this research project focusing on many of the problems the guidance profession and industry face when endeavouring to keep each other updated it is important not to lose sight of the overwhelming positive attitude and intention of the guidance professional towards ensuring the CIAG they deliver up to date and in line with the needs of industry. This commitment to the importance of labour market information and intelligence is supported by a whole range of key stakeholders such as (former) government, SSC's and guidance experts as expressed in the range of literature reviewed as part of this project. As part of this study, many excellent case studies have been cited which demonstrate that this process of communicating and update industry knowledge to practitioners is happening effectively yet specific examples of it being passed on to individual clients is slightly lacking. However it must be acknowledge that a significant amount of guidance professionals feel they are prevented, for a whole host of reasons as previously discussed, to updating their industry knowledge and engaging with employers. Unless key stakeholders in the guidance sector such as the ICG, Connexions senior management and current government start to take serious steps to address how Advisers can incorporate updating their LMI knowledge into their continuous professional development ultimately the CIAG being delivered will not meet the needs of industry. This will have far reaching consequences for the greater economy which is even more critical in this economic climate. The future can be positive for the career guidance

profession and its links to industry if the right key stakeholders take this issue seriously and take positive action to make this happen.



## **List of Appendices**

<b>Appendix 1</b>	Consent Form for research participants
<b>Appendix 2</b>	Information Sheet
<b>Appendix 3</b>	Focus Group Information
<b>Appendix 4</b>	Focus Group Questions
<b>Appendix 5</b>	Semi Structured Interview Guide
<b>Appendix 6</b>	Information email for online questionnaire (sent to research participants)
<b>Appendix 7</b>	Online questionnaire for guidance professionals
<b>Appendix 8</b>	Online questionnaire for Sector Skills Councils
<b>Appendix 9</b>	Interview Information
<b>Appendix 10</b>	Data from Question 5 of Online Questionnaire

**Appendix 1 – Consent Form**

**CAREER GUIDANCE RESEARCH  
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

[maria.osullivan@cskills.org](mailto:maria.osullivan@cskills.org)

**Research Title:**

- How do guidance professionals ensure that the (careers) Information Advice and Guidance they deliver is current, up to date and in line with industry needs?
- Case Study – Construction and Built Environment Sector

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Organisation:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I have read the information sheet and give consent to be a participant in the research conducted by Maria O’Sullivan regarding how guidance professionals ensure the IAG they deliver is up to date and in line with industry needs.

I also understand the discussion may be recorded.

I understand that I can withdraw from the research process at any stage.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

This study has been approved by the University of Sunderland Ethics Committee.

## Appendix 2 – Information Sheet



### CAREER GUIDANCE RESEARCH INFORMATION OUTLINE

My name is Maria O'Sullivan. I work as an Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) Adviser for ConstructionSkills, the Sector Skills Council for the construction industry.

I am undertaking some important field research as part of my Masters in Career Guidance studies at the University of Sunderland on how guidance professionals ensure the careers IAG they deliver is current, up to date and in line with industry needs with particular focus on the construction and built environment industry.

As part of the interview, I will be asking the interviewee/guidance professional questions around:

- how they keep up to date with industry/employers
- what means they use to keep up to date e.g. internet websites
- what difficulties they face e.g. time
- if they have any examples of good case studies around Labour Market Information and working with clients.

This study is a genuine attempt to find out more about

- how guidance professionals keep up to date with industry
- the relationship between the career guidance profession and industry
- how we can improve relations between (construction) industry and the guidance community

I am inviting a range of (career) guidance professionals/advisers to take part in this study and would like to ensure you to have a clear understanding of what the research is about prior to you agreeing.

1. I am conducting a series of focus groups in order to gain a deeper, clearer picture of how guidance professionals keep up to date with industry and their views on industry. I am hoping to run three focus groups in total.
2. I am also conducting a series of in-depth, one-to-one interviews with selected participants.

All participants will also be offered the opportunity to further contribute via an online questionnaire and email.

The point of my research is not just to inform my research for my Masters but it also fits in with my role/remit of working with guidance professionals who work with young people and adults and trying to find the best ways of informing advisers about our industry. Hopefully my findings will also benefit the guidance community. I am more than happy to share my findings and recommendations with you and your colleagues

As a matter of good practice all contributions will be anonymous unless you specifically request otherwise. However participants can choose to be acknowledged as overall contributors to the process. Thus participants can choose full anonymity or anonymity in relation to their specific contribution but be thanked for their general contribution. I will also be recording the interviews to facilitate the write up of my research.

The research has been approved by the University of Sunderland Ethics Committee and all participants can also choose to withdraw from the research at any stage of the process.

If you have any further questions about the research please do not hesitate to contact me via email or telephone me. My contact details are:

Work mobile: 0777 0268718, Email: [maria.osullivan@cskills.org](mailto:maria.osullivan@cskills.org)

**Many thanks for your support & co-operation. Maria O'Sullivan. ConstructionSkills**

**Appendix 3 – Focus Group Information (over 2 pages)**

Focus Group	Date	Venue	Participants Profile
Number 1	19 <sup>th</sup> March 2010	Connexions Darlington Offices after the group's team meeting.	<p><b>Number of participants: 7</b></p> <p><b>Gender:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 71.4% (n=5) male</li> <li>➤ 28.6% (n=2) female</li> </ul> <p><b>Occupations:</b></p> <p>All employed by Connexions Darlington. The group included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 1 Connexions Team Manager</li> <li>➤ 1 Member of the Vacancies Team</li> <li>➤ 5 Connexions Personal Advisers (PA)</li> </ul> <p><b>Guidance Qualifications held by participants.</b></p> <p><b>Please note some participants held more than one qualification.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ NVQ 3 in Advice &amp; Guidance – 14.3% (n=1)</li> <li>➤ NVQ 4 in Advice &amp; Guidance – 14.3 (n=1)</li> <li>➤ NVQ4 in Learning Development &amp; Support Services (LDSS)– 42.9 % (n=3)</li> <li>➤ Qualification in Career Guidance (QCG) or equivalent – 28.6% (n=2)</li> <li>➤ Working towards QCG – 28.6% (n=2)</li> </ul> <p><b>Number of years experience in guidance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 2 to 5 years experience – 71.4% (n=5)</li> <li>10 years plus – 28.6% (n=2)</li> </ul>

Focus Group	Date	Venue	Details of Participants
Number 2	30 <sup>th</sup> March 2010	Stockton Riverside College after an CBE awareness raising event	<p><b>Number of participants: 7</b></p> <p><b>Gender:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 85.7% (n=6) females</li> <li>➤ 14.3% (n=1) male</li> </ul> <p><b>Organisations involved:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Connexions North Yorkshire</li> <li>➤ Connexions Middlesbrough</li> <li>➤ University of Northumbria (HE)</li> <li>➤ North Yorkshire Council</li> </ul> <p><b>Occupations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Connexions Personal Advisers – 85.7% (n=6)</li> <li>➤ HE Careers Adviser – 14.3% (n=1)</li> </ul> <p><b>Guidance Qualifications held by participants</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ NVQ 3 in Advice &amp; Guidance – 14.3% (n=1)</li> <li>➤ NVQ 4 in Advice &amp; Guidance – 28.6% (n=2)</li> <li>➤ NVQ4 in LDSS – 14.3% (n=1)</li> <li>➤ QCG or equivalent – 42.8% (n=3)</li> </ul> <p><b>Number of years experience in guidance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 2 years – 5 years – 57.2% (n=4)</li> <li>➤ 10 years plus – 42.8% (n=3)</li> </ul>

#### **Appendix 4 – Focus Group Questions**

- 1. What methods do you use to ensure the IAG you deliver/or your team delivers is up to date, current and in line with industry needs?**
  
- 2. How easy/difficult is it to keep up to speed with industry/employers needs?**
  
- 3. Have you received any training/input around LMI/industry/employers?**
  
- 4. What contact do you have with the construction & built environment sector?**
  
- 5. How do you rate this contact?**
  
- 6. How do you think relations can be improved between industry and the guidance community?**
  
- 7. Can you think of any good examples/case studies relating to industry/LMI?**

## **Appendix 5 – Interview Guide for Guidance Professionals**

- 1. What methods do you use to ensure the CIAG you deliver/or your team delivers is up to date, current and in line with industry needs?**
- 2. How important do you think it is to ensure the CIAG you deliver is current, up to date and in line with industry needs?**
- 3. How easy/difficult is it to keep up to speed with industry/employers needs?**
- 4. Have you received any training/input around LMI/industry/employers?**
- 5. Do you think your clients find up to date labour market information useful?**
- 6. Who do you think is responsible for ensuring that you are kept up to date with industry needs?**
- 7. What contact do you have with the construction & built environment sector?**
- 8. How would you rate this contact?**
- 9. Do you think the construction industry does enough to inform you about careers, training, future skills etc etc?**
- 10. How do you think relations can be improved between industry and the guidance community?**
- 11. Can you think of any good examples/case studies relating to working with industry/LMI?**



## **Appendix 5 – Interview Guide for Employers/ConstructionSkills**

- 1. What do you think the future needs/changes are for your company/industry?**
- 2. How is your company preparing for these future needs/changes?**
- 3. What do you think the future needs are for the Construction and Built Environment (CBE) industry?**
- 4. What kind of messages do you think guidance professionals need to give to their clients about the CBE sector?**
- 5. How aware is the industry of its own needs?**
- 6. How prepared is the industry for these changes?**
- 7. How are these changes being communicated to the guidance profession?**
- 8. How are these changes being communicated to schools, universities, colleges?**
- 9. How are these changes affecting learning/training provision?**
- 10. Can you provide any good/bad examples of practice relating to updating guidance professionals about how CBE Sector is communication with the guidance community?**

## **Appendix 6 – Email to Guidance Professionals/Sector Skills Councils (SSC's) regarding Online Questionnaire**

Dear Colleague,

Just to introduce myself for those who don't know me or haven't been in touch with me for some time –

My name is Maria O'Sullivan. I work as an Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) Adviser for ConstructionSkills, the Sector Skills Council (SSC) for the construction industry.

I am undertaking some important field research as part of my Masters in Career Guidance studies at the University of Sunderland on how guidance professionals ensure the (careers) information, advice and guidance they deliver is current, up to date and in line with industry needs with particular focus on the construction and built environment industry.

**As part of my research I am keen to find out the experiences and views of (career) guidance professionals/advisers/industry/SSC's (delete as applicable). If you could spare 5-10 mins to read and fill out the online questionnaire by clicking on the link below or copying the web link onto your internet browser I would be most grateful.**

**<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/KZ789SP> - weblink for guidance professionals**

**[www.surveymonkey.com/s/JZ95XFL](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/JZ95XFL) - weblink for SSC's**

If you can pass this onto any other guidance professionals/SSC's it would be much appreciated. If you are able to do this I would be grateful if could please include me in the email so I am aware of who the questionnaire has been sent to.

The point of my research is not just to inform the research for my Masters but it also fits in with my role/remit of working with guidance professionals and trying to determine the most effective way of informing practitioners about our industry. Hopefully my findings will also benefit the guidance community/industry/SSC's (delete as applicable). I am more than happy to share my findings and recommendations with you, please just email me at [maria.osullivan@cskills.org](mailto:maria.osullivan@cskills.org) if you would like to receive them.

As a matter of good practice all contributions will be anonymous unless you specifically request otherwise. The research has been approved by the University of Sunderland Ethics Committee and all participants can also choose to withdraw from the research at any stage of the process by emailing me directly on [maria.osullivan@cskills.org](mailto:maria.osullivan@cskills.org)

If you have any further questions about my research project please do not hesitate to contact me on the contact details below.

If any participants do not wish to receive further communications from me please inform me using the contact details below.

Many thanks in advance for your support & co-operation, any help is greatly appreciated.

Maria O'Sullivan  
IAG Adviser - Yorkshire & Humber and North East  
ConstructionSkills - Recruitment and Careers  
Work Mobile - 0777 0268718  
Email - [maria.osullivan@cskills.org](mailto:maria.osullivan@cskills.org)  
Website - [www.cskills.org](http://www.cskills.org)  
Building Britain with ConstructionSkills

## Appendix 7 – Online Questionnaire for Guidance Professionals

### 1. Gender

- Male
- Female

### 2. Name of organisation and job title (optional)

### 3. Number of years worked in advice and guidance

- 0-3 years
- 3-6 years
- 6-9 years
- 9-12 years
- 13 years +

### 4. Level of Qualification (Please tick as many boxes as apply)

- Post Graduate Diploma in Guidance/Qualification in Career Guidance (QCG) or equivalent
- NVQ3 in Advice and Guidance
- NVQ 4 in Advice and Guidance
- NVQ4 in Learning, Development and Support Services
- No qualifications

Other advice and guidance qualification  
(please specify below)

**5. What methods do you use to ensure the (careers) IAG you deliver is up to date and meets industry needs?  
(Please tick as many boxes as apply)**

- Industry Journals
  - Working with Sector Skills Councils
  - Work shadowing
  - Industry/Employer visits
  - Employers/Industry presentations at your team meetings or other events/venues
  - Employer contact
  - Through your own organisation e.g. LMI team, vacancies team
  - Attending industry led Events/Conferences
  - Training Days
  - Friends and family
  - Internet research
  - Careers Literature
  - Reports/newsletters
  - Not applicable/no opinion
- Other (please specify)

**6. How easy do you think it is keep up to speed with industry/employers needs?**

- Easy
- Not so easy
- No problem
- Difficult
- Very Difficult
- Don't know/no opinion

**7. How important do you think it is to ensure the (careers) IAG you deliver is current, up to date and in line with industry needs?**

- Very important
- Important
- No opinion/not applicable
- Quite important
- Not important

Please give reasons for response if possible

**8. How much labour market information training/input do you receive from your current employer?**

- None
- Very little
- Some
- Quite a lot
- Too much
- Not applicable/no opinion

Please give more detail where possible

**9. If you want to find out information relating to the Construction and Built Environment sector where do you look or who do you contact?  
(Please tick as many boxes as apply)**

- ConstructionSkills – Sector Skills Council for Construction
- Other Built Environment Sector Skills Councils e.g. Summit Skills, Asset Skills, ProSkills
- www.bconstructive.co.uk website
- www.cskills.org website
- Other websites (please detail below)
- Employers
- Careers literature
- Friends, family who work in the industry
- Training providers
- Local colleges
- Universities
- Industry journals/publications
- Not applicable/no opinion

Other (please specify)

**10. Do you think the construction industry does enough to inform you about the sector including information on careers, training, future skills etc?**

- Yes
- No
- Maybe
- Don't know/No opinion

Please give a reason for your response if possible

## Appendix 8 – Online Questionnaire for Sector Skills Councils

### 1. Full name (optional)

### 2. Name of Sector Skills Council

### 3. Job title

### 4. Email address and contact number (optional)

### 5. How do you, as a sector skills council, communicate with the guidance community to keep them up to date with your industry? Please tick all boxes that apply.

- Inviting them to events and conferences led by you
- Delivering in house information sessions
- Through face to face meetings
- Attending their meetings
- Inviting them to your meetings
- Newsletters
- Their professional bodies e.g. ICG
- The internet
- Through local contacts
- Attending career guidance conferences and exhibitions e.g. ICG Conference
- Don't know
- Other (please specify)

**6. As an SSC how would you rate your relationship with the guidance profession?**

- Very poor
- Poor
- Satisfactory
- Good
- Very good
- Don't know/No opinion

Please comment further if you so wish

**7. How would you rate your industry's relationship with the guidance profession?**

- Very poor
- Poor
- Satisfactory
- Good
- Very good
- Don't know/No opinion

Please comment further if you so wish

**8. How easy do you think it is for your SSC and the industry you represent to communicate with the guidance community?**

- Easy
- Quite easy
- Not very easy
- Difficult
- Very difficult
- Impossible
- Don't know/No opinion

Please can you comment further



**9. How would you rate the guidance profession's commitment to ensuring the IAG they deliver is in line with your industry's needs?**

- Very poor
- Poor
- Satisfactory
- Good
- Very good
- Don't know/No opinion

**Please comment further if you so wish**

**10. If you have any positive or negative case studies or examples that you can provide which relate to your SSC/your industry's relationship with the guidance profession please detail below.**

## Appendix 9 – Interview Information (over 3 pages)

Job Role	Venue	Participants Profile	
1.Next Step Adviser	Participant's workplace	<b>Gender</b>	Female
		<b>Length of experience in guidance</b>	3 years
		<b>Guidance Qualifications</b>	Qualification in Career Guidance (QCG)
2. Connexions PA (Number 1)	Participant's house	<b>Gender</b>	Female
		<b>Length of experience in guidance</b>	5 years
		<b>Guidance Qualifications</b>	QCG & NVQ Level 4 in LDSS
3.Connexions PA (Number 2)	Café near her office	<b>Gender</b>	Female
		<b>Length of experience in guidance</b>	13 years
		<b>Guidance Qualifications</b>	Post Graduate Diploma in Career Guidance. Part 1 and 2
4.JCP Adviser	Participant's workplace	<b>Gender</b>	Female
		<b>Length of experience in guidance</b>	10 years
		<b>Guidance Qualifications</b>	NVQ 3 Advice and Guidance

5. Connexions Workforce Development Manager	Participant's Workplace	<b>Gender</b>	Male
		<b>Length of experience in guidance</b>	14 years
		<b>Guidance Qualifications</b>	QCG  NVQ 4 in Advice and Guidance
6.FE Careers Adviser	Participant's workplace	<b>Gender</b>	Male
		<b>Length of experience in guidance</b>	5 years
		<b>Guidance Qualifications</b>	QCG NVQ4 in LDSS
7. HE Careers Adviser	Participant's workplace	<b>Gender</b>	Female
		<b>Length of experience in guidance</b>	30 years
		<b>Guidance Qualifications</b>	Diploma in Career Guidance. Part 1 & 2.
8. Careers Information Specialist	Participant's workplace	<b>Gender</b>	Female
		<b>Length of experience in guidance</b>	26 years
		<b>Guidance Qualifications</b>	Diploma of Youth Employment Service Training Board

<b>Organisation/Company</b>	<b>Nature of Organisation/Company</b>	<b>Job Role</b>	<b>Gender</b>
9.Humber Education Businesses Partnership	Links education and business across the four Local Authorities of the Humber Sub Region	LMI Development Manager	Female
10.Network of Sector Skills Councils	Network of 24 Sector Skills Councils which has been formed as part a government funded LMI project	Project Manager for SSC's LMI Project	Female
11.ConstructionSkills	Sector Skills Council for the Construction industry.	Head of Recruitment and Careers	Male
12.ConstructionSkills	<p>Future Skills Sector Skills Council for the Construction industry.</p> <p>The Future Skills team are tasked with informing and assisting the construction industry to respond to the changing demands and future skills needs of the industry.</p>	Future Skills Project Manager	Male
13.Laing O'Rourke	Large construction contractor employs c30,000 people world wide	Project Co-ordinator for the National Skills Academy	Female
14.Ploughcroft	Small to medium enterprise which specializes in roofing, training and solar panel installation	Training Manager	Male

**Appendix 10 – Data from Question 5, Online Questionnaire for guidance professionals.**

<b>Question 5:</b>		
<b>What methods do you use to ensure the (careers) IAG you deliver is up to date and meets industry needs? (Please tick as many boxes as apply)</b>		
<b>Method</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Industry Journals	18.8%	9
Working with Sector Skills Councils	27.1%	13
Work shadowing	16.7%	8
Industry/Employer visits	64.6%	31
Employers/Industry presentations at your team meetings or other events/venues	68.8%	33
Employer contact	50.0%	24
Through your own organisation e.g. LMI team, vacancies team	79.2%	38
Attending industry led Events/Conferences	68.8%	33
Training Days	75.0%	36
Friends and family	27.1%	13
Internet research	83.3%	40
Careers Literature	<b>87.5%</b>	<b>42</b>
Reports/newsletters	60.4%	29
Not applicable/no opinion	0.0%	0

## Bibliography

Adult Advancement and Careers Webpage (2010), [www.iagreview.org.uk/vision/](http://www.iagreview.org.uk/vision/), (Accessed 10 May 2010).

Association of Internet Researchers, (2002) *Code of Ethics*. (Online)  
Available at: <http://aoir.org/reports/ethics.pdf>. (Accessed 21 June 2010).

Bedford, T. (1982) *Vocational Guidance Interviews*, London: Department of Employment.

Barbour, R.S. and Kitzinger, J. (1999) *Developing Focus Group Research: Politics, Theory and Practice*, London: Sage.

Bimrose, J., Barnes, S.A., Hughes, D. and Orton, M. (2004). *What is Effective Guidance? Evidence from Longitudinal Case Studies in England*, Warwick Institute for Employment Research: DfES.

Bimrose, J. (2001) 'Girls and Women: challenges for career guidance practice', *British Journal of Counselling*, 29 (1), pp.79-94.

Centre for Construction Innovation (CCI), (2008) *Construction and BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) Project Final Report*, University of Salford: European Social Fund.

Colley, H., Lewin, C., Chadderton, C. (2010) *The impact of 14-19 reforms on the career guidance profession in England, Final Report*, Manchester: Education and Social Research Institute (ESRI).

Collin, A., (2009) *ConstructionSkills: Time and Impact of Legislation Change in the Construction Industry*, Publisher: Unknown

Coomber, R. (1997) 'Using the Internet for survey research' *Sociological Research Online*, 2 (2). (Online). Available at: <http://tinyurl.com/21dmpm>. (Accessed 21 June 2010).

Construction Industry Council (CIC), (2010). *The Impact of the Recession on Construction Professional Services*, London: CIC.

ConstructionSkills (2007). *Positive Influence? A report into parents' attitudes towards their children's career choices*. (Online)  
Available at: [www.constructionskills.net/news/whatsinthenews/20070420-positiveinfluence.asp](http://www.constructionskills.net/news/whatsinthenews/20070420-positiveinfluence.asp) (Accessed 20 May 2010).

ConstructionSkills Research (2009). *Sector Skills Assessment for the Construction Sector 2009. ConstructionSkills Summary*. (Online)  
Available at: [www.cskills.org](http://www.cskills.org) (Accessed 20 May 2010).

ConstructionSkills (2010). *ConstructionSkills LMI*. (Online)  
Available on: [www.adviceresources.co.uk/UsefulInformation/lmi/](http://www.adviceresources.co.uk/UsefulInformation/lmi/) . (Accessed 28 May 2010).

ConstructionSkills Network, (2010). *The Blueprint for UK Construction 2010-2014*. (Online). Available at: [www.cskills.org/csn](http://www.cskills.org/csn). (Accessed 1 June 2010).

F, M. Denscombe (1998) *The Good Research Guide*, Berkshire: Open University Press.

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (DBIS), (2009a). *Skills for Growth – The national skills strategy*. (Online)  
Available at: [www.bis.gov.uk](http://www.bis.gov.uk) (Accessed 10 May 2010).

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, (2009b). *Higher Ambitions*. (Online). Available at: [www.bis.gov.uk](http://www.bis.gov.uk) (Accessed 10 May 2010).

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, (2010). *Fuelling Potential - a blueprint for Skills Accounts and the Adult Advancement and Careers Service (AACCS)*. London: DBIS.

Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), (2007) *Quality Standards for Young People's Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)*. (Online)

Available at:

[www.cegnet.co.uk/files/CEGNET0001/ManagingCEG/QualityStandardsforIAG/quality\\_standards\\_young\\_people.pdf](http://www.cegnet.co.uk/files/CEGNET0001/ManagingCEG/QualityStandardsforIAG/quality_standards_young_people.pdf)

(Accessed 10 May 2010).

Department for Children, Schools and Families, (2009a) *Quality, Choice and Aspiration. A strategy for young people's information, advice and guidance*.

(Online) .Available at: [www.dcsf.gov.uk](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk)

(Accessed 10 May 2010).

Department for Children, Schools and Families, (2009b) *Gender Equality. Challenging Stereotypes*. Nottingham: DCSF Publications.

Department for Education and Skills (DfES), (2006) *Youth Matters: Next Steps. Something to do, somewhere to go, someone to talk to*. (Online)

Available at: [www.dcsf.gov.uk](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk) (Accessed 10 May 2010).

Department for Education and Skills/Learning and Skills Council (DfES/LSC), (2004) *LMI Matters!*, DfES: Nottingham.

Department for Education and Skills, (2005) *Understanding the Labour Market. A Basic Guide for Secondary Teachers in England*. (Online)

Available at:

[www.cegnet.co.uk/files/CEGNET0001/ProfessionalDevelopment/Understanding\\_LMI.pdf](http://www.cegnet.co.uk/files/CEGNET0001/ProfessionalDevelopment/Understanding_LMI.pdf) (Accessed 11 May 2010).

Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS), (2008). *National Council for Education Excellence: Recommendations*. (Online)



Available at: [www.dcsf.gov.uk/ncee](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/ncee) (Accessed 10 May 2010).

*Dictionary of Financial Terms* (2008), (Online)

Available at: [www.finance-glossary.com](http://www.finance-glossary.com) (Accessed 12 May 2010).

*Education and Employers Taskforce* (Online)

[www.educationandemployers.org](http://www.educationandemployers.org) (Accessed 10 May 2010).

Egan, (2004) *The Egan Review. Rethinking Skills for Sustainable Communities*. London: Riba Enterprises Ltd.

Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), (2009a) *Staying On. Making the extra years in education count for all young people*. (Online)

Available at: [www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com) (Accessed 10 May 2010).

Equality and Human Rights Commission, (2009b) *Race Discrimination in the Construction Industry: A Thematic Review*. Manchester: EHRC.

Fuller, A., Beck, V. & Unwin, L. (2005a) The Gendered Nature of Apprenticeship: Employers' and young people's perspectives, *Education and Training Journal* 47 (4/5) 298-311.

Fuller, A., Beck, V. & Unwin, L. (2005b) *Employers, young people and gender segregation (England)*, Manchester: Equal Opportunities Commission.

Gilbert, N. (2008) *Researching Social Life, Third Edition*, London: Sage Publications.

Gill, J. and Johnson, P. (1991) *Research Methods for Managers*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.

Gothard, B., Mignot, P., Offer, M., Ruff. M. (2001), *Career Guidance in Context*, London: Sage Publications.

Gummesson, E. (1991) *Qualitative Methods in Management Research, Revised Edition*, London: Sage Publications.

Hall, D. (2009) *The LMI needs of Young people, Parents, Teachers and IAG Professionals: A report to the Regional 14-19 Commission*. (Online)  
Available at: [www.onenortheast.com](http://www.onenortheast.com) (Accessed 11 May 2010).

Harris, C. (1997) *Developing online market research methods and tools*, Paper presented to ESOMAR Worldwide Internet Seminar, Lisbon July 1997.

H.M. Government, (2010). *Unleashing Aspirations: The Final Report of the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions*, Norwich: The Stationary Office.

Institution of Career Guidance (ICG), (2005). *Code of Ethical Principles*. (Online).  
Available at: [www.icg-uk.org](http://www.icg-uk.org). (Accessed 10 May 2010).

Institute of Career Guidance, (2010). *Taskforce on the careers profession announced*. (Online) Available at:  
[www.icg-uk.org/article689.html](http://www.icg-uk.org/article689.html) (Accessed 10 May 2010).

Joinson, A. (2005) Internet behaviour and the design of virtual methods, in Hine, C. (ed), *Virtual Methods: Issues in Social Research on the Internet* (pp. 21-34), Oxford: Berg.

Latané, B., Williams, K. and Harkins, S.G. (1979) Many hands make light work: the causes and consequences of social loafing, *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 37: 822-32.

Lave, J. and Wenger, E. (1991) *Situated Learning*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Leitch, (2006). *Review of Skills; Prosperity for all in the global economy – world class skills*. London: The Stationery Office.

Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK), (2009). *Skills Needs and Training Supply for Career Guidance – a Gap Analysis*. (Online)

Available at: [www.lluk.org](http://www.lluk.org) (Accessed 10 May 2010).

Lifelong Learning UK (2010). *Draft Report on the Career Guidance Qualification Framework*. (Online)

Available at: [www.lluk.org](http://www.lluk.org) (Accessed 10 May 2010).

Lipcott, A., 2008. Poor advice hinders university access, *The Guardian*, 28 October 2008.

Lord Sainsbury of Turville (2007) *The Race to the Top, A Review of Government's Science and Innovation Policies*. (Online)

Available at: [www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/sainsbury\\_index.htm](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/sainsbury_index.htm)

(Accessed 10 May 2010).

Merton, R.K. and Kendall, P.L. (1946) 'The focused interview', *American Journal of Sociology*, 51: 541-57.

National Student Forum (2008) *Annual Report*. (Online)

Available at: [www.nationalstudentforum.com](http://www.nationalstudentforum.com) (Accessed 10 May 2010).

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), (2004) *Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap*, Paris: OECD.

Roberts, K. (1995) *Youth and Employment in Modern Britain*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Robson, C. (2002) *Real World Research 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers

Rolfe, H. (1999) *Gender Equality and the Career Service*, Manchester: Equal Opportunities Commission.

Seale, C. and Filmer, P. (2004) 'Doing social surveys' in Seale, C. (ed.), *Researching Society and Culture* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition), London: Sage.

Sellitz, C. and Jahoda, M. (1962) *Research Methods in Social Relations* (Rev. edn), New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Singer, E., Francke, M., and Glassman, M. (1983) 'The effect of the interviewer characteristics and expectations on response' *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 47 (1): 68:83.

Stacey, M. (1969) *Methods of Social Research* (1<sup>st</sup> edition), New York: Pergamon Press.

Tashakorri A. and Creswell J. W. (2007) 'The New Era of Mixed Methods' (editorial) *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1: 3 – 7.

Unit for the Development of Adult Continuing Education (UDACE), (1986) *The Challenge of Change*, Leicester: Unit for the Development of Adult Continuing Education.

Van den Brink, Y., Anagboso, M. (2010)' Understanding the divergence between output and employment in the UK construction industry.' *Economic & Labour Market Review*. Volume 4, No 3, March 2010.

Watts, B.L. (2000) *Mixed Methods*, Publisher: Unknown

Witmer, D. F. Colman, R. and Katzman, S. L. (1999) 'From paper-and-pencil to screen-and-keyboard: Towards a methodology for survey research on the Internet' in Jones, S. (Ed.) *Doing Internet Research: Critical Issues and Methods for Examining the Net*. London: Sage. pp. 145-161.

---