

EFFECTIVE GUIDANCE ONE YEAR ON: EVIDENCE FROM LONGITUDINAL CASE STUDIES IN ENGLAND

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Foreword

A qualitative, longitudinal evaluation of effective guidance in England is being conducted by the Warwick Institute for Employment Research over the period 2002 to 2008. It has been funded by the Department for Education and Skills, Access to Learning Division. This is the second major report from this study¹.

Fifty in-depth case studies have been successfully completed (December, 2002 to March, 2004) and the clients who participated in the initial investigation are being followed-up over a four year period (through to 2008).

This second report from the study focuses on the first phase of the follow-up investigation. The 50 clients from the initial case study investigation (December, 2002 to March, 2004) were all contacted by telephone, approximately one year after the guidance interview that featured in the first report (October 2004-March 2005). Forty-five of these clients agreed to be interviewed. This report is based on findings from these first follow-up interviews with clients. It focuses on the progress the clients have made over the last year, their reflections on the guidance interviews, their future plans and next steps.

¹ For the full text of this first report: Bimrose, J., Barnes, S-A., Hughes, D. and Orton, M. (2004) *What is Effective Guidance? Evidence from Longitudinal Case Studies in England*, DfES/Warwick Institute for Employment Research. Available online: <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/publications/bydate/egr2004.pdf>

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The fieldwork was carried out by a multi-disciplinary team of researchers from three centres of expertise in guidance, who are due thanks both for their professionalism and tenacity. Contributions were as follows:

- **Institute for Employment Research (IER)** at the University of Warwick, project managed and took a central role in the fieldwork, data management and data analysis. IER also led on the writing of the report.

Dr. Jenny Bimrose – Principal Research Fellow and Project Manager

Dr. Sally-Anne Barnes – Research Fellow

Dr. Michael Orton – Senior Research Fellow

- **Centre for Guidance Studies (CeGS)** at the University of Derby assisted with fieldwork and data analysis. CeGS has also contributed to the report.

Deirdre Hughes – University Reader in Guidance Studies and Director of CeGS

Denise Smith – Research Associate

Irene Krechowiecka – Research Associate

- **National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling (NICEC)** assisted with the field research.

Lesley Haughton – Fellow

Finally, thanks go to Mary Munro, the external evaluator for the project, who is an Associate Fellow of the National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling. She continues to provide invaluable contributions to the research process, the approach to data analysis and to the structure and content of the report.

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Executive summary

Please note: throughout this report, the guidance interview that clients received as part of the initial, in-depth case study research investigation is referred to as the 'case study interview' (irrespective of whether this was their first guidance interview or a follow-up). The research interview conducted one year on is referred to as the 'follow-up' interview.

1. The first phase of follow-up in this longitudinal study has met all of its objectives, with **further evidence of the positive impacts of guidance** (complementing evidence collected during the initial stage of research) documented.
2. The **attrition rate has been extremely low**, with 45 of the original 50 participants (90%) successfully followed up one year after their case study interview.
3. The study has successfully tracked the achievements and aspirations of participants, providing **rich insights into contrasting career trajectories**.
4. Seventy eight per cent (n=35) of participants who were followed-up felt that **guidance had resulted in direct and positive change** (such as: a change in their situation, or thinking, and/or future plans; being pointed in the right direction; given alternative options/ideas to consider; or had affirmation of their ideas).
5. One year on, over half of the participants (53%, n=24) were found to be **enhancing their occupational competence**, by engaging with education or training.
6. **Four barriers to career progression** have been identified. These are impeding individual progress by preventing clients from implementing the action plans agreed during the case study interview. All are external to the guidance intervention and comprise: financial constraints; childcare commitments; health issues and local labour market conditions.
7. Many of the participants who either received guidance whilst undertaking higher education or after having recently completed their degrees, are **experiencing prolonged transitions into the labour market** and using various strategies to progress.

8. One year on, **87% (n=39) of participants still regarded their guidance as 'useful'**, whilst 11% (n=5) were less sure of its value. One client still felt that her guidance had been of no value.

9. Participants identified **five ways in which they had found their guidance useful**. Guidance was useful when it: gave access to specialist information; reduced confusion; motivated or provided new insights; confirmed ideas and built confidence.

10. The majority of the participants contacted for the follow-up (89%, n=40) **had followed through on all, or elements of, the action agreed in their case study interviews** (including clients who were continuing to implement action at the time of the follow-up interview).

11. Guidance **had acted as a catalyst for positive change, even where agreed action had not been implemented or advice followed**.

12. It follows that the **measurement of the impact of guidance needs to take account of 'distance travelled' by clients**, in a way that focuses on the process of effective guidance as well as its quantifiable outcomes.

13. **Twenty-seven (60%)** of the 45 clients who were contacted **had received further guidance** since their case study interview.

14. The **research process** may be having an effect on the career progress of some participants (e.g. the process of reviewing the past year with a researcher may have prompted one participant to further action).

1. Introduction

This is the second report from a study of effective guidance that is currently underway in England.

The aim of this study is:

- to use a qualitative, longitudinal case study approach to investigate the nature of effective guidance for adults and how, over the longer-term, it can add value to post-compulsory learning and enhance employability.

The objectives for the second phase of investigation were to:

- track the career progress of clients over the period since their case study interview;
- investigate clients' views of their guidance interview, one year on;
- examine what, exactly, was found useful by clients;
- evaluate the extent to which action plans, agreed a year ago, had been implemented; and
- explore the further guidance received by clients in the interim period together with future support needed.

This longitudinal research began with a detailed investigation of 50 in-depth case studies of varied guidance contexts (2003-2004). Each of these case studies included a detailed examination of a guidance interview. The progress of the 50 clients who were the recipients of guidance in the original case studies will be tracked over a four year period (2004-2008).

Of the 50 clients who participated in the initial phase of data collection, 45 were successfully contacted and interviewed by telephone during the period October, 2004 – March, 2005. Findings from this first follow-up study are presented here.

1.1 Background to the study

Changes in the labour market (like globalisation and rapid developments in information technology) have challenged the relevance of the traditional, narrow view of career transition as a one-off event at an early stage of an individual's development, replacing it with a broader understanding of how these transitions – into, through and within education, training and employment – are more complex, more prolonged and often

span lifetimes². Recent documents have tried to capture the implications of such changes for guidance. For example, the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2004)³ and the Council of the European Union (2004)⁴ have both emphasised the need for guidance to support multiple transitions over a prolonged time-span. Both also acknowledge how guidance comprises varied activities⁵.

In England, a recently published government White Paper⁶ seeks to develop a strategy for ensuring that employers have the right skills to support the success of their businesses. It also intends to help individuals gain the skills they need to be employable and personally fulfilled. One of the core strands of this skills strategy is:

To support individuals in achieving their ambitions, through better information and guidance, to identify the best options for them in terms of jobs, skills and training. (p.9)

This document goes on to detail the centrality of guidance to the Government's skills strategy:

Achievement of our skills goals depends on far more adults having access to information and guidance to know what training opportunities are available and how to get them. There are many people who feel stuck in a rut, who would like a better job, and see that better skills and qualifications could help them get on. But making sense of the complex array of qualifications and training schemes, understanding which would provide the best preparation for a new job, and knowing what support is available and how to get it can all seem daunting. It means that people cannot get to first base because they

² Young, R.A. and Collin, A. (2000) 'Introduction: Framing the Future of Career', in Collin, A. and Young, R.A. (Eds) *The Future of Career*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

³ OECD (2004) *Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap*, Paris: OECD.

⁴ Council of the European Union (2004) 'Draft Resolution of the Council on the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in their field of Guidance throughout life in Europe', Brussels.

⁵ For a fuller discussion of the policy context, see Bimrose *et al.*, (2004) *op cit*.

⁶ HM Government (2005) *Skills: Getting on in Business, Getting on at Work*, Part 1 (Cm 6483-1), Part 2 (6483-11), and Part 3 (648-111). Available Online: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/skillsgettingon/> (23rd March 2005).

cannot decide what route to take. This forms a major barrier to economic and social mobility. (p. 20)

Government has made explicit that much needs to be done to improve the quality, consistency and visibility of these services⁷.

The results from this first year follow-up of effective guidance are, therefore, timely as (at the time of writing) preparations are being made to pilot a new model of delivery for in-depth guidance for adults across England⁸.

1.2 Researching effective guidance

The difficulties inherent in evaluating effective guidance, especially its longer-term outcomes, are well documented⁹. Despite this, a good deal of research evidence already exists, though most is from quantitative studies and much from North America¹⁰. However, even with existing gaps, there is a growing body of evidence to support a claim for the positive effects of guidance¹¹.

The current study builds on recommendations that the understanding of guidance that has been derived from quantitative data should be complemented with insights that can only be gained from qualitative research, particularly longitudinal studies¹². A case study

⁷ For example, see: DfES (2003) *21st Century Skills: Realising our Potential*, Cmnd 5810, London: Department for Education and Skills.

⁸ This is proposed in the White Paper: HM Government (2005) *op cit*.

⁹ For example, Killeen, J. and White, M. (2000) *The Impact of Careers Guidance on Adult Unemployed People*, Department of Education and Employment, Research Report RR226; Hughes, D., Bosley, S., Bowes, L. and Bysshe, S. (2002) *The Economic Effects of Guidance*, DfES/University of Derby, CeGS; Maguire, M. (2004) 'Measuring the Impact of Career Guidance', *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 4(2-3), pp.179-192.

¹⁰ One of the findings from an extensive review of evidence: Hughes *et al.*, (2002) *op cit*.

¹¹ Watts, A.G. and Sultana, R.G. (2004) 'Career Guidance Policies in 37 Countries: Contrasts and Common Themes', *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 4(2-3), pp.105-122; Tyers, C. and Sinclair, A. (2005) *Intermediate Impacts of Advice and Guidance*, DFES: Nottingham, Research Report 638.

¹² A recommendation from the review of evidence: Hughes *et al.*, (2002) *op cit*.

approach was used for the initial phase of research since it encourages multiple methods of investigation, encourages an overtly involved stance and recognises the importance of context and social structure. It has also enabled detailed comparisons to be made across varied guidance contexts.

The 50 in-depth case studies, carried out in 2003-2004, examined: the client's perceptions of the guidance episode; the practitioner's perceptions of the guidance episode; the perceptions of an 'expert witness' of the guidance episode; together with the structures and operation of guidance services¹³. Additionally, the strategies and skills used by practitioners have been analysed and organised into four broad categories of activities, with 40 sub-sets. Research findings can, therefore, be used both to bring worthwhile career guidance practice into the public arena and give practitioners and clients a voice.

Both deductive and inductive analysis of the case study data was undertaken. A framework adapted from previous research into guidance interviews was used for the deductive analysis of each guidance episode. This was extended and developed using inductive analysis of digital recordings of interviews and open coding to capture emergent themes. During the data analysis for the first ten case studies, two 'expert witnesses' worked closely together with two field researchers, to develop rigorous codes. Data were coded independently and compared. For subsequent case studies, members of the research team sampled coded data for comparative purposes. The external evaluator acted as a moderator for the overall process.

1.3 Key findings from the initial phase of study

In this research, 'effectiveness' has been defined as what the recipients of guidance (the clients) found useful. The majority (98%, n=49) who participated in the initial phase of this research evaluated their guidance interview as 'useful', immediately after the event.

Findings also indicated that guidance is useful to clients in supporting their transitions into and through professional learning and development when it: provides challenge and direction; gives access to relevant resources; can be accessed over a period of time; brings about positive change(s); and provides support and safety. The research highlights how some factors that influence the guidance process come from outside the

¹³ See Bimrose *et al.*, (2004) op cit. for the full report on the case studies.

immediate boundaries of the interview itself (e.g. availability of different types of resources for clients). Variations in the professional contexts within which guidance is delivered were found to be multidimensional and the circumstances in which much guidance is undertaken are unpredictable (e.g. whether a suitable interview room was available at the time it was needed). Any evaluation of in-depth guidance is, therefore, unlikely to be comparing like with like.

A typology of the guidance interview was generated from practitioner interventions across the forty-nine 'useful' interviews. Four discrete categories of activities emerged from a detailed analysis of the interview transcripts. These are: building a working alliance; exploring potential; identifying options and strategies; plus ending and following-through. Each category comprises between three and six sub-sets of activities. Not all activities of guidance are evident across all interviews, nor did any particular combination or sequence emerge.

The professional contexts in which the case studies have been carried out included: further education, higher education, charitable/voluntary organisations, adult guidance organisations and the workplace. A comparative analysis of data collected on the delivery contexts revealed considerable diversity, including a range of organisational settings. All participating organisations operated to some type of external and/or internal quality standards and the majority had in-service training support for practitioners. The majority of practitioners (78%, n=39) who participated in the research held a specialist qualification (specifically a Qualification in Careers Guidance, Diploma in Careers Guidance, Certificate in Careers Guidance or an NVQ Level 4 work-based qualification in guidance). Less than a quarter of practitioners (22%, n=11) held an NVQ Level 3 work-based qualification in guidance or had no careers guidance related qualifications. Many of the practitioners had been professionally active for over ten years and had gained their experience across varied contexts.

1.4 Building on the initial findings

The first phase of the follow-up research builds on the initial findings by continuing the focus on the client's perception of 'useful' guidance. The career progress of each client since the initial case study interview has been documented. One year on, clients were asked to evaluate: the usefulness of the guidance they had received in the light of their experience; the value of the action plan they agreed with their practitioner; and the type of support they would appreciate in the future.

1.5 What next?

All 45 clients who participated in the first phase follow-up gave their permission to be followed up in a year. The next phase of the research (2005-2006) will, therefore, involve telephone interviews with these 45 clients. Once again, their career progress will be tracked and issues that have emerged from the analysis of data will be further investigated. A third report, on the second year of follow-up, will be produced in the summer of 2006. The process will be repeated two more times with reports produced in the summers of 2007 and 2008.

1.6 Report structure

This report comprises seven sections including this introduction. Section 2 provides details of the methodology used during the first phase of client follow-up.

Section 3 examines client achievements and aspirations, one year after the case study interview. It documents their progress in enhancing occupational competence; examines what prevents clients from progressing their career and/or implementing their agreed action plans (barriers to effective guidance); and considers some possible inter-relationships between career decision-making and lengthy occupational transitions.

The extent to which the different elements of the action plans produced from the initial case study interview have been implemented is reviewed in section 4, together with client reflections.

Evaluations by the clients on the effectiveness of their guidance are presented in section 5. Findings on the usefulness of guidance from the in-depth case studies are probed further, with clients asked to re-evaluate their guidance in the light of their career progress over the past year.

Section 6 provides details of the further guidance and future support that clients identified as desirable.

Finally, the conclusions can be found in section 7.

2. Methodology: follow-up of clients

The 50 clients who participated in the initial phase of this study were contacted by telephone during the period October, 2004 – March, 2005, approximately one year after the case study interview featured in the first report. Forty-five of those 50 clients were successfully contacted; all agreed to be interviewed by telephone. This section reports on the methods used to contact the clients, the response rates and the characteristics of those clients successfully contacted.

The field research team for the first phase of follow-up consisted of five of the eight researchers who originally undertook data collection for the initial case-study phase of the investigation. All are experienced researchers with expertise in conducting in-depth interviews. Three are also experienced guidance practitioners.

2.1 Developing the interview proformas

Key issues and themes drawn from the initial case study investigation were used to develop interview proformas for the first phase of follow-up (see Appendix 1 for an example). These were based on each of the five different professional contexts in which the recorded guidance interviews took place, specifically:

- Connexions, Information, Advice and Guidance Partnerships (IAGP) and Jobcentre Plus;
- Higher education;
- Further education¹⁴;
- Community/outreach guidance and not-for-profit organisations (which included organisations with charitable status); and
- Private careers companies and organisations offering guidance on a funded basis in the workplace.

The interview proformas comprised questions based on the following headings:

- progress over the last 12 months (including career changes and developments, plus follow through, action plans and agreed next steps);

¹⁴ Two proformas were developed for Further education – one for those clients who were interviewed before starting a course and one for those who were on a further education course at the time of the interview.

- reflections on the digitally recorded case study interview (in terms of action plans, self-reflection and usefulness);
- any further guidance received; and
- future plans.

The majority of clients contacted were very willing to talk (94%, n=42) about what they had been doing over the last year. Three clients were not particularly forthcoming, possibly because they felt they had not made any progress. However, in two of these instances, further probing by the researcher revealed that the clients had, in fact, made progress.

The telephone interviews ranged from around 6 minutes to 31 minutes, and the average interview length was just under 15 minutes. The interview not only gave researchers the opportunity to probe clients on their progress, but also to continue building a good rapport with clients to aid future follow-ups. In many instances, clients were keen to share their experiences, progress from the last year and future plans.

2.2 Contacting the clients and response rates

Each client was contacted by telephone by one of the research team. In cases where the client had requested an email for the first follow-up, this method was used. A variety of methods were used:

- between 1 and 37 attempts to make contact by telephone were made;
- 19 telephone messages were left;
- 22 emails and 14 letters were sent.

In 20 cases, it proved difficult to contact the clients. For example, telephones had been disconnected, email addresses were invalid or clients had moved home. In these cases researchers approached the guidance practitioners, contacted parents and/or directory enquires for more recent contact details. These methods ensured a low attrition rate. Forty-five of the 50 clients were successfully contacted one year on from their case study interview; achieving an overall response rate of 90% (see Table 1). All the clients who had had their case study interview within a private organisation or funded by their workplace were successfully contacted (see Table 1). However, high responses rates were achieved for all contexts. All of the interviews were digitally recorded with the explicit permission of the client.

In 28 cases, the follow-up interview with the client was immediate once contacted by the researcher. In 16 cases the researcher was asked to call back at a more convenient time and in 16 cases the client contacted the researcher after receiving a letter, email or telephone message. Two clients had informed the research team (during the year) of changes to their contact details.

Table 1 Response rates by context

| Case study context | | Number of clients successfully contacted one year on from their guidance interview (response rate for context) |
|--|--------------|---|
| Connexions, IAGP & Jobcentre Plus (n=14) | Total (%) | 12 86 |
| Higher education (n=10) | Total (%) | 9 90 |
| Further education (n=10) | Total (%) | 9 90 |
| Community/outreach guidance & not for profit organisations (n=8) | Total (%) | 7 88 |
| Private organisations & workplace guidance (n=8) | Total (%) | 8 100 |
| Total number of clients contacted | | 45 |
| Overall response rate | | 90 |

The efforts required to track many clients indicates that the five 'missing' clients were generally not contactable, rather than unwilling to participate. All five clients had reported a positive experience of guidance from their case study interview.

2.3 Clients successfully contacted

Of the 45 clients successfully contacted one year on from the case study interview, 64% are female (n=29) and 36% are male (n=16)¹⁵. Characteristics of those clients successfully contacted can be compiled using data collected during the initial phase of the study including: age; ethnic origin; disability; and highest qualification level. This data is presented in Tables 2 and 3.

Over half (58%, n=26) of the clients successfully contacted were aged between 18 and 29 years. Across all contexts, 22% (n=10) of clients were aged 30-39 years, 13% (n=6) 40-49 years, 4% (n=2) 50-59 years and one client was aged 60 plus years. Further information on the characteristics of the clients successfully contacted is presented in Table 2, according to professional contexts in which the guidance had taken place.

Of those clients successfully contacted, 69% (n=31) self-reported their ethnic origin as 'White' or as 'White' with a nationality assigned. Ten clients (22%) defined themselves as 'British' or 'English'. Four clients (9%), all whom were female, defined themselves variously as 'British Caribbean', 'Black Caribbean', 'Black British' and 'Half Cast' (50% Nigerian and 50% White).

Seven clients (15%) described themselves as having a disability¹⁶. Thirty-five clients (78%) did not regard themselves as disabled. The status of three clients was unknown.

Table 3 shows the highest qualification level achieved by clients successfully contacted according to professional contexts in which the guidance had taken place. The majority of the clients had gained a Level 3 (33%, n=15) or Level 4 qualification (33%, n=15) (See Table 3). Four clients (9%) of clients had a Level 1 qualification, seven clients (16%) had a Level 2 qualification, one client had a Level 5 qualification and three clients (7%) had no qualifications. The highest qualification level of the clients will be tracked in future follow-ups to record any change.

¹⁵ The initial client population participating in the study consisted of 66% female (n=33) and 34% male (n=34).

¹⁶ The initial client population participating in the study consisted of seven clients (14%) self-reporting a disability, 40 clients (80%) as not having a disability and three clients as unknown.

Table 2 Characteristics of those clients successfully contacted*

| Client characteristics | Organisational context | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Total |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------|---------------|------------------|----------|--------------|-------------------|----------|--------------|--|----------|--------------|--|----------|--------------|-----------|
| | Connexions, IAGP & Jobcentre Plus | | | Higher Education | | | Further Education | | | Community/outreach guidance & not-for-profit organisations | | | Private organisations & workplace guidance | | | |
| | Male | Female | Total n=12 | Male | Female | Total n=9 | Male | Female | Total n=9 | Male | Female | Total n=7 | Male | Female | Total n=8 | |
| Age | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 18-29 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 2 | 6 | 8 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 3 | | 3 | 3 | 26 |
| 30-39 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | 3 | 3 | | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 10 |
| 40-49 | 1 | 2 | 3 | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 6 |
| 50-59 | | 1 | 1 | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | 2 |
| 60+ | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Total | 5 | 7 | 12 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 2 | 7 | 9 | 4 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 6 | 8 | 45 |
| Ethnic Origin | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| White UK | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | | 1 | | | | | | | 4 |
| White British | 2 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 5 | | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 17 |
| White English | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| White European | | 1 | 1 | | | | 1 | | 1 | | | | 1 | | 1 | 3 |
| White | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | | 2 | 2 | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 6 |
| British | 3 | 1 | 4 | | | | | 1 | 1 | 2 | | 2 | | | | 7 |
| English | | 1 | 1 | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | | | 3 |
| British Caribbean | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | 1 |
| Black Caribbean | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Black British | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Phillipine | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| * 'Half caste' (Nigerian/White) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 5 | 7 | 12 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 2 | 7 | 9 | 4 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 6 | 8 | 45 |
| Disability | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| yes | | 2 | 2 | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | | 1 | 7 |
| no | 5 | 5 | 10 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 6 | 7 | 35 |
| unknown | | | | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | | | 3 |
| Total | 5 | 7 | 12 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 2 | 7 | 9 | 4 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 6 | 8 | 45 |

* The data presented in this table were collected during the initial phase of the study, but only includes those clients which were successfully contacted one year on from the recorded guidance interview. Disability and ethnic origin* were self-reported by the clients.

Table 3 Highest qualification level achieved by clients successfully contacted*

| Organisational context | | Qualification Level | | | | | Total | |
|---|--------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------------|--|-----------|-----------|
| | | 1 Foundation | 2 Intermediate | 3 Advanced | 4 Higher level | 5 Higher level No qualifications | | |
| Connexions, IAGP & Jobcentre Plus n=12 | Male | | 3 | | 2 | | 5 | |
| | Female | 2 | 1 | | 4 | | 7 | |
| | Total | 2 | 4 | | 6 | | 12 | |
| Higher Education n=9 | Male | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | |
| | Female | | | 5 | 1 | | 6 | |
| | Total | | | 6 | 2 | 1 | 9 | |
| Further Education n=9 | Male | | | 1 | 1 | | 2 | |
| | Female | | 2 | 3 | | 2 | 7 | |
| | Total | | 2 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 9 | |
| Community/outreach guidance & not-for-profit organisations n=7 | Male | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | |
| | Female | 1 | | 2 | | | 3 | |
| | Total | 2 | | 3 | 1 | 1 | 7 | |
| Private organisations & workplace guidance n=8 | Male | | 1 | | 1 | | 2 | |
| | Female | | | 2 | 4 | | 6 | |
| | Total | | 1 | 2 | 5 | | 8 | |
| Total | | 4 | 7 | 15 | 15 | 1 | 3 | 45 |

Level 1 = GSCE (D-G); CSE; GNVQ Foundation; City and Guilds Level 1

Level 2 = O Level; GCSE (A*-C); CSE Grade 1; GNVQ Intermediate

Level 3 = A Level; Advanced GNVQ; NVQ Level 3; BTEC National, Scottish Highers; Access course; City and Guilds: OND

Level 4 = HND; BTEC Higher; Advanced Diploma; Degree; Higher TEC

Level 5 = Postgraduate qualification; PG diploma

* The data presented in this table were collected during the initial phase of the study, but only includes those clients which were successfully contacted one year on from the recorded guidance interview.

2.4 Approach to the analysis

The analysis presented in the report is based on the follow-up interviews with the clients who were successfully contacted one year on from the case study interview.

The interviews were transcribed and analysed using QSR NVivo 2, a qualitative data analysis software packages¹⁷. The responses of the clients were coded and moderated by two researchers. The list of codes was refined to 68 codes (see Appendix 2) which were then divided into themes and key issues for the purposes of the report. The transcripts were also considered in terms of gender, but as an uneven number of men and women had participated in the study and been successfully contacted one year on, no direct comparison could be undertaken.

2.5 Effects of research on the guidance process

Whenever appropriate, researchers responded helpfully to clients during the research interview. This occurred in 14 (31%) of the cases. One client, who lived in a rural area, wanted to take driving lessons but was unable to fund them himself. He felt this was impeding his ability to get a job and was advised by the researcher to enquire at his local guidance organisation:

Interviewer: It might be worth asking next time you go.

Client: Yeah.

Interviewer: They have funds available for it [driving lessons] if it would make a difference to you finding a job. It might be worth asking about that.

Client: Yeah, I'll see about it.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Client: I asked them a few years back and they said they didn't do it, but...

Interviewer:it might be worth asking about.

Client: Yeah, I'll find out.

[Interview 4]

Other types of helpful responses from researchers comprise affirmation and encouragement. For example, encouraging clients to get further help from their local guidance networks; confirming their understanding of where information could be found; and reaffirming the original advice given by the practitioner. In one case, the researcher offered to contact the client's local guidance network and organise a guidance interview.

¹⁷ For further information on this package see Appendix 13 of the first report.

The researcher was concerned that the client was very isolated after a recent move to a new town and still unable to find employment.

Clients who asked researchers directly for guidance (9%, n=4) were advised to seek further help from their local guidance networks or were pointed in the right direction. For example, researchers were asked for: course information; the contact details of the practitioner they had seen; and advice on where to get help.

The extent to which researcher interventions may have affected client progress will be investigated in future phases of the research.

3. One year on: achievements and aspirations

A key aim of this longitudinal study is to track clients' career progress and make an assessment of the extent to which this progress can be related to the guidance given during the case study interview. The first follow-up interviews have revealed considerable progress achieved by clients. For example, over the 12 months following the initial guidance interview:

- 58% (n=26) had found new employment;
- 36% (n=11) had gained different work experiences which had assisted their career decision-making (i.e. temping, work shadowing, volunteering);
- 29% (n=13) reported an increase in their self confidence;
- 24% (n=11) were feeling more positive or motivated about work;
- 7% (n=3) had progressed at work (e.g. received a promotion and/or improved salary package, changed job role and received more responsibility).

Overall, 78% (n=35) of the clients who were followed-up felt that guidance had resulted in direct and positive change (such as: a change in their situation, or thinking, and/or future plans; being pointed in right direction; alternative options/ideas to consider; or affirmation of ideas), whilst 31% (n=14) felt guidance had resulted in indirect positive change (such as a realisation that they wanted to achieve more in life; or increased confidence in their actions and/or decisions).

Detailed analysis of exactly what clients have been doing over the past 12 months has revealed three broad themes:

- enhancing occupational competence;
- barriers to career progression; and
- prolonged transitions.

These are discussed, in detail, below.

3.1 Enhancing occupational competence

Fifty three per cent (n=24) of clients had progressed their training for employment:

- 16% (n=7) had undertaken some type of work-place training; and/or

- 42% (n=19) had started, were currently undertaking or had completed some type of training not in the workplace (e.g. at a training centre)¹⁸.

They were at different stages of enhancing their occupational competence. For example:

- 13% (n=6) had gained a qualification;
- 24% (n=11) had been actively looking or applying for some form of training or course (including new and further training after degree);
- two (4%) had changed their course as a result of their guidance interview;
- 9% (n=4) had participated in a training course, but had not successfully completed; and
- 9% (n=4) were still on a course i.e. further education, degree, GCSE, Access course.

Three distinct methods were identified: up-skilling, within the same occupational area; re-skilling for a different occupational area; and training for re-entry to the labour market after a significant period of absence.

3.1.1 Up-skilling

Two clients (4%) had been dissatisfied with their current employment at the time of their case study interview. Both explored options that would have involved re-skilling. However, one year on, they reported how they had decided to stay with their original employer and up-skill. For one of these (a young male client) his guidance interview had acted as the catalyst to seek assistance from his employer with up-skilling:

The case study interview was part of a process of the client asking himself what he wanted to do and where was his career going, because he:

...was in a bit of a slump at work and couldn't see where it was going.

In the interview, he was advised that he could actually apply to universities on the basis of his current qualifications. However, after discussion, he decided an Access course was the best option for him. He was given an application form and the

¹⁸ Two of these clients were undertaking a further training course, having successfully completed one course.

practitioner undertook to organise an interview with the Access co-ordinator. Merits of the full or part-time route were discussed, together with possible financial support. Information about studying in higher education was provided.

Subsequent to the case study interview he had a discussion with his manager at work.

...following the interview, which I did find very useful... ...I actually went to my boss and I actually had a sit down and a chat and basically worked out a way of, you know, improving what I was doing and how to further my job along...

This resulted in his receiving a considerable amount of training to re-skill, followed by promotion to website manager. He is very happy in his role and wants to gain experience within the company to enable him to work abroad in about five years time.

[Interview 1]

Even though this client had not implemented the action agreed with the guidance practitioner, he was clear that the case study interview had been crucial in bringing about the positive changes to his employment situation.

One other client – working within the insurance industry – wanted to explore possibilities of re-training for employment related to law. As an alternative, she was thinking of up-skilling within her current industry. The cost and practicalities of re-training, however, proved a major disincentive, so she had stayed with her employer to up-skill:

After working in insurance broking for four years, this client came to the case study interview wanting to find something that would make better use of her skills. Areas of interest identified by the client were legal executive or legal secretary. Additionally, she expressed interest in up-skilling by undertaking qualifications within her current industry. The practitioner provided relevant information, suggested websites to research and people to contact.

One year on, the client has stayed with the same employer, as she was given a more demanding job and additional pay:

...but I actually did end up staying where I was...before...I decided to stay

there, 'cos I was offered a bit more of a wider job role. Anyway...yeah they did [give her more pay].

She is still interested in becoming a legal secretary, but the pay and opportunities for training are discouraging:

...'cos I looked around at pay and that sort of thing for legal secretaries and probably starting from basic, what I'm getting at the moment...and then I looked at prices and things for taking the courses and there wasn't really any time that I could do that course...they were never going to let me have half a day off....

There is now the possibility of up-skilling, by doing qualifications within her job, paid for by her employer.

I'm thinking that I'm going to be able to take some qualifications there...it's quite ideal if you can do something like that...if work are going to pay for it.

The client's immediate plan is to see how things develop in her current employment:

I think it's really just to see where my job takes me at the moment. Looking carefully into it over the next 6 months...and see if there's any more sort of avenues I can go down in my own work.

[Interview 38]

These two examples provide insights to how the guidance process can act as a trigger to successful 'career dialogue and negotiation' between employee and employer¹⁹ and improve client reflexivity. It should also be emphasised that whilst neither of these clients progressed in the ways agreed in their interviews, both acknowledged the positive impact of their guidance.

¹⁹ Mutual expectations formed between employer and employee act as a "contract in that if either party fails to meet the expectations, serious consequences will follow i.e. demotivation or termination". Schein, E. H. (1978) *Career Dynamics: Matching Individuals and Organisational Needs*, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, USA (p.112).

3.1.2 Re-skilling

Eight clients (18%) had re-skilled (or were in the process of re-skilling) for employment. This had occurred in response to different sets of circumstances. For example, one client had decided to abandon an established career to pursue his aspiration. Whilst he had already identified the occupational area for which he wanted to re-skill before attending the guidance interview, it provided him with the necessary confidence and equipped him with the strategies to implement his career change.

At the time of the case study interview, this client was working as the Acting Sales Manager for a newspaper. He felt he was not being rewarded for the extra responsibility and seemed generally discontent with his work. He had done a considerable amount of research into alternative careers and was very focused on becoming a Physiotherapist. The practitioner identified different entry routes into the profession, with an emphasis on professional training preceded by an Access course. She also suggested visits to physiotherapy departments, work shadowing, provided contact details for the access course tutor and discussed potential financial difficulties. The client had initially hoped he might be able to find work as a physiotherapy assistant and although the practitioner provided suggestions for how to find vacancies, did warn that this would be very difficult.

One year on, this client has given up his job and is studying full time. After the guidance interview, he organised some work experience for himself, which confirmed his decision to change career:

Since then [the interview] I've had work experience...at a physiotherapy clinic...That was really before I decided to chuck my chips in with my job, just to, just to confirm, really, this is what I wanted to do...

He has applied for a Physiotherapy degree and is now waiting for an interview with a University. He is currently combining a science-based access course with science GCSE work and related evening classes:

I'm full-time with a couple of evening classes as well...everyone at college thinks I'm mad...but I mean I checked out with the university I want to go to that it was going to be sufficient, and they've said "Yes", so...I absolutely love it. I really, really enjoy it.

The suggestion made by the adviser to undertake some work shadowing was acted on and this period of work experience helped the client realise his decision to change career was right.

Yeah, after those few days spent at the physio, I really knew that what I wanted to do and it was now or never, so yeah, I handed in my notice. Got some casual work for a friend while I did some reading and some studying before starting an Access course...

[Interview 45]

A second client (previously living abroad, but with UK citizenship) had recently moved to England and wanted to re-skill from pharmacology to medicine.

The client wanted help to progress her ambition of studying medicine. She is a British subject, but had only lived in England for seven months at the time of the case study interview. She has a degree in pharmacology, but had received feedback that her qualifications were not adequate to apply to a British university and that she would have to be resident for three years in order to be eligible for funding. These issues were discussed at the guidance interview together with the need for some relevant work experience in a medical setting in this country and for current academic references. The practitioner also checked the currency of her qualifications.

One year on, this client is pursuing her goal of studying medicine. She is currently completing an Access course:

...he [the practitioner] advised me about going to [college] and that's what I did. I went to [college] and I enrolled on the Access course...

She is in the process of applying for entry to university this year:

...at the moment, I'm preparing for university to study medicine.

Her plans are to complete her Access course and progress to medical school.

[Interview 47]

3.1.3 Re-entry

Five clients (11%) were preparing to re-enter the labour market after a significant period of absence. One client had been made redundant and wanted to use the opportunity to re-skill. He had spent the year researching options discussed at the guidance interview and experimenting with alternative employment - recognising that redundancy had a greater impact on him at the time than he realised.

This client had been made redundant after 27 years with the same company. He specialised in electronics and had experience in quality management. At the time of his guidance interview, he was still trying to cope with the impact of being made redundant and had been unsuccessful in finding a job. The interview explored the reasons for his redundancy and his reactions. It also explored his aptitudes, job preferences, attitudes and approaches to job hunting. Changes to his CV were discussed. The client was also given information about alternative careers in which he had expressed an interest (occupational therapy and accountancy), contact details for voluntary work (so that he could explore new working environments) and for temporary jobs.

One year on and in the client's words:

I've come very full circle...

He managed to secure a job in retail shortly after the interview, but did not find it rewarding and resigned after six months:

...I thought I needed to be more truthful to myself...a school friend of mine died...he got killed. And I thought life's so short, you've got to do what you want to do... ...and I thought...try to cut away from what I'm doing now...and get back within my profession.

The alternative career areas in which he had originally expressed an interest in (occupational therapy and accountancy) required too great an investment in time and training:

...options that [the careers adviser] came up, which are perfectly valid options...there's part of me saying yes, I want to do that. But I can't afford to have two or three years of college or university to study for that... ...

Having tried a different type of employment and researched alternative occupational interests, the client now felt it was time to re-evaluate other options for re-entering the labour market:

...I'm actually sort of tempted to go back to [the careers adviser] and say "look, let's go through this again, can we sort of start things up again and see whether there is any other sort of opportunities available?"

[Interview 13]

One other client wishes to return to the labour market after a break of ten years for child care. She is interested in teaching in Further Education, but training for this made her realise she wanted to pursue her career aspiration of garden design.

The client is returning to training/employment after ten years, during which she has been raising a family. She has been part of a project (aimed at getting women back into employment) and has participated in a ten week confidence building course. The aim of the case study interview was to arrange a psychometric test, explore her options with regard to teaching in further education and working in either floristry, or gardening or horticulture. The client has childcare responsibilities, so is only looking for part-time employment or training at present. She had previously worked as an IT instructor, draftsman and in electronics and telecommunications in which she holds a qualification. During the case study interview, a date for a psychometric test was arranged which was to be preceded by an interview to discuss the results of the test. The practitioner also contacted some local colleges to ask about fees and courses. It was agreed that the client should also investigate what courses colleges offered to determine whether her ideas for one day courses was feasible/needed.

One year on, the college interview had been successful and the client had completed the teaching qualification:

Well, I did the teaching qualification and passed that – although they haven't given me my notes or my certificate yet.

Whilst doing this qualification, the client had decided that she really wanted to follow her dream to be a garden designer:

...I was doing it with the intention of teaching a leisure course...the garden

is my love...and in doing it, I just thought, "Why am I trying to teach it, when what I'd really like to do is be a garden designer?" Well, if I'm doing that, I might as well go for my dream, which to me is to have my own business, you know, as a garden designer.

So she had taken steps to achieve this by enrolling on a three year part-time degree course in garden design at an agricultural college. Once her daughter is at secondary school, she hopes to set up her own business, initially offering a design service:

I'm not actually going to do hands on and all, just doing the designs, but I might actually take on the contracting...if I'm successful at a later date...

[Interview 40]

3.2 Barriers to career progression

Part of the process of assessing whether the initial guidance interview had been useful to the client was to compare the actions agreed and documented in the 'Action Plan' from the case study interview with the client's subsequent progress²⁰. In nineteen cases (42%), the client's ability to progress in the direction agreed in the action plan had been impeded by circumstances that could be argued to be outside the control of the client and beyond the remit of guidance²¹. This section focuses on these barriers to career progression. Four categories were identified: childcare commitments; financial

²⁰ Thirteen clients (29%) had undertaken only some or limited action. This is discussed further in Section 4.2 of this report.

²¹ External constraints that impede individual career progression are well-documented. For example:

Hodkinson, P., Sparkes, A.C. and Hodkinson, H. (1996) *Triumphs and Tears: Young People, Markets and the Transition from School to Work*, London: David Fulton Publishers.

Johnson, M.K. and Mortimer, J.T. (2002) 'Career choice and development from a sociological perspective', in Brown, D. and Associates (Eds) *Career Choice and Development* (4th edition). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Roberts, K. (1993) 'Career trajectories and the mirage of increased social mobility', in Bates, I. and Riseborough, G. (Eds) *Youth and Inequality*, Buckingham: Open University Press, pp.229-245.

constraints; health related issues and local labour market conditions. These barriers to career progression are discussed more fully below.

3.2.1 Childcare

Three clients identified childcare commitments as the major barrier to their pursuing their career aspirations²². One wanted to change career direction from insurance to classroom assistant, but the responsibility for two very young children combined with just having relocated were impeding her ability to progress her career plans.

At the time of the case study interview, the client saw herself as being at a point where she wanted to investigate options for a career change. She has two very young children and wished to avoid work with too much responsibility. Her previous work experience was in insurance, but she did not want to return to this industry. Areas of interest included legal work, work as a classroom assistant and work as a communication support worker. The practitioner suggested work shadowing might help her decide which of these options would suit her best. The client was provided with information, promised contact from a tutor for advice on entry requirements for foundation degrees for teaching assistants and encouraged to arrange another interview.

One year on, the client had re-located and found part-time employment in a Building Society:

I started work in September. I'm just doing 2 days a week at [Building Society], but that's not something I want to do in the long term – that's something I'm doing purely for financial reasons at the moment.

Her young children, together with the commitments of part-time employment, are limiting her ability to progress her career aims:

²² The Government's commitment to make full, daytime hours, childcare provision increasingly available across the country by encouraging schools and early years centres to offer parents greater flexibility by linking their childcare with their early education entitlement, acknowledges this as a major issue: Department for Education and Skills (2004) *Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners*, London: The Stationery Office, Cmd 6272.

...(child's name) will start school full time next September....so within a year, it might be a bit easier to do something...I don't know... ..with moving and starting work part-time, it's all sort of a bit on the back burner for the moment...

[Interview 18]

Just after her initial case study interview, another client had discovered that her young child had a terminal illness. This shocking discovery has, unsurprisingly, interrupted both her study and longer term career plans, since she feels spending time with her child has become her priority. The future is shrouded in uncertainty.

At the start of the case study interview, this client expressed an interest in Social Work as this was an area which had been suggested by her tutor. This client was a part-time Access student at a Further Education College, taking just one module (English) in order to improve her spelling and punctuation. She was in receipt of benefit, but looking for part-time work. She had a young child (under two) and finding work that would fit around her study and family commitments was problematic.

The discussion on career options widened to include long term options such as health related work and teaching. However the main focus was on choosing further Access modules which would enable her to keep her options open and an encouragement to explore local Higher Education provision. The client saw herself as being at a very early stage of career planning and expressed interest in a range of options related to social welfare and health.

One year on, this client's life and future plans had been completely altered by the discovery that her young child has a terminal illness. This was diagnosed shortly after the case study interview, so the client had not been able to follow through the suggestions and recommendations which were agreed. She did manage to complete her module:

I was doing one module then. So I completed that and I've done it. I've got a credit.

She has chosen not to go back to college this year as she wants to spend more time

with her child and is working part-time in retail:

I thought I'd just have this time with him and enjoy him you know, while he's fit and healthy...

There is now much uncertainty over what the future holds and how much time she can devote to her own development. She plans to return to college next year to do further access modules. This would also give her the flexibility she needs to care for her son:

I'll probably just do 2 modules, which will take up 2 days and then I'll probably do my normal days at work. Perhaps have a day off, where I can sort of attend appointments and things like that, if I need to.

She is clear of the impact that her son's illness will have on her own career development

*...I'll probably have to spend more time with him and you know. It'll be even harder work than more children. You know, I have to be there for him and stuff and I won't be able to have some sort of high-powered career because, you know, I mean I'd have to do a hell of a lot of things, basically, for [him]...
... ..I am sort of worried about financial things...it will be hard for me to catch up at times.*

And has now discounted social work:

I mean, I did think about being a social worker, but I don't think that's an option any more... ..because it's such a hard slog and you know it will be like a full-time job.

Unsurprisingly, the client's confusion about her future is evident:

I'm sort of thinking of something in the health sector or to do with family health. Something secretarial...But I really need something that's gonna be part-time, that's well paid...you know, so I can have a balance.

[Interview 20]

3.2.2 Finance

Financial constraints emerged as a major barrier for five clients (11%). This impeded career progression in various ways. For example, one client was caught up in a complicated divorce and had primary responsibility for her school-age child. She wants

to re-train as a hairdresser, but plans have temporarily been suspended whilst she concentrates on sorting out the divorce settlement:

This client was taking the first steps in thinking about returning to work following a major personal upheaval. She is a single parent, living temporarily with her sister and in receipt of benefits. She wanted to take up learning opportunities, but was constrained by the timing of courses (to fit with school hours) and by financial considerations. She could not afford childcare. The interview explored her circumstances, and her interests in terms of future employment. Information was provided about various courses and the client was offered the option to return for further help.

One year on, the client has pursued only part of the action plan agreed as she is enmeshed in resolving the practical details of a messy divorce, which is time consuming and restricts her in terms of financial outlay. She is still aiming to fulfil her ambition of becoming a hairdresser and has been doing a range of free courses at local colleges.

[Interview 2]

One other client wished to change career from dental nurse to something more broadly in the area of health care. She had started working towards this career aim by undertaking a part-time course, but these plans had been interrupted by the unexpected redundancy of her partner.

This client had recently moved location with her partner. Prior to being at home for four years with her child, she had been a fully qualified dental nurse but now wanted something different, possibly medically related. Partly this was due to the issue of hours of work (i.e. as a dental nurse you may have to stay late to deal with emergencies). The case study interview focused on some of the jobs in which she had an interest. Other issues discussed related to developing job search skills.

One year on, the client has gone back to dental nursing. Her partner had been made redundant and she was better placed than him to get a better paid job as she is better qualified.

It was only a couple of weeks actually after I'd spoken to [the practitioner] that she was actually round at my son's local school...and I bumped into her there and even then, you know she sort of asked, 'How are things going?' She's been lovely actually, she's been really nice...it hasn't led to anything, but that's nothing to do with the advice I was given. It was just through our own personal circumstances...my partner being made redundant...

[Interview 8]

A third client felt his skills were being under-utilised in his current job and wanted to change. He had implemented some element of the agreed action plan, but felt trapped as he was unable to take a drop in salary because of his financial commitments²³.

A graduate, this client works in credit control for a small finance company. He has decided that he would now like to do a job that is more related to the subject matter of his degree and/or uses his research and writing skills. However, there are some practical problems to overcome: he has bought a house so cannot take a large drop in income because of his mortgage commitment; he wishes to remain in the same region of the country; he does not have a car so is reliant on public transport; he has a long working day and only 20 days holiday (so opportunities to engage in job search are restricted). The case study interview was treated as a first step in his career change. The action plan consisted of the client being advised to complete a psychometric test; actively network (e.g. contact companies/organisations he's interested in and ask to spend time with them); and submit job applications. He was also given access to Internet resources.

One year on, the client's situation has not changed:

...things are exactly, literally exactly, the same as they were...

²³ Research has been undertaken into the extent to which graduates express dissatisfaction with the match between their work and their qualifications: Elias, P. and Purcell, K. (2004) *Researching Graduate Careers Seven Years On – The Earnings of Graduates in their Early Careers*. A research project jointly funded by ESRC and HECSU, England, p.3.

Since the case study interview, the client attended eight or nine job interviews, some outside his current work area but also for other companies doing similar work. None were successful. Not being able to take a drop in income proved a particular problem because he was trying to compete with people who had relevant experience:

I was always being beaten in interviews by people who'd worked their way up or who had better experience within the industry than me...

He did complete a psychometric test, some aspects of which he found useful:

The psychometric testing I think was useful more in terms of the, say, the web addresses and the different companies to write to that it gave me...less in terms of actually showing you what you're suitable for and stuff like that...

But the other main element of the action plan – spending time with potential employers – had proved impractical because he only has 20 days annual leave and has used a lot of this time for job interviews.

*...I could see how it would be useful if you were, say, still at university... ...
...but if you're working a 9 to 5 job, it's pretty unrealistic, really, to be able to make contact with other people in 9 to 5 jobs...*

He began to feel trapped in his job, because he felt he was never going to get the experience he needed to move on:

*...my experience within my job is so limited because of the way the company's run and the fact that I've just been doing admin work the whole time...every time I'd go for an interview...I got feedback... ...it would always come down to, "unfortunately, you didn't have the right experience".
...I knew the company I was in at the moment - there was not way of me ever getting the experience. So it's a kind of catch 22 situation.*

[Interview 26]

3.2.3 Health related

Five clients (11%) were grappling with health-related issues that were proving to be serious barriers to their progress. One client suffered from a combination of health issues which she regards as insurmountable barriers to employment.

The case study interview focused on the client's desire to get back into work – and the barriers that were getting in the way. These included her concerns about losing her benefit; her health; her lack of mobility (she is very reluctant to go anywhere outside her home town); her literacy (she is a poor speller); and her reluctance to undertake either voluntary work or anything 'scheme' based that only paid a 'premium' on top of benefits. The client was interested in what she described as 'packing' work. The practitioner was able to suggest alternatives and provide her with information about where she might get support in relation to the benefits system and where she might be able to access training.

One year on, although this client found the interview helpful at the time, it has led to no significant progress. As result, she had been put in touch with a programme called 'Yes To Work', which sends her information about possible vacancies. She found this easier than having to search vacancies herself. At the moment, she's waiting for an appointment for a medical assessment and although she applies for jobs, she has not been successful:

...I mean you just get used to it, because I mean I've had that many let-downs. Anyway, I'm just used to it now...I wasn't at first...'cos it upset me and I thought, well, why bother trying any more...

The client sees herself as being in a hopeless situation, unless her health problems can be resolved.

...like I say, everything's just...I'm back to where I started from...

[Interview 11]

Ill-health had dramatically changed the plans of one other client who had been unable to complete her degree course. After two negative experiences of employment she is now taking time out of the labour market to review future plans and recover fully from her illness.

This client had been on a training course for a paramedical career at the time of her case study interview, but decided it wasn't for her. She transferred to an Allied Health Professions course, which she was completing at the time of her case study interview. She had met the practitioner previously and had worked through two computer aided

guidance programs. The client had brought printouts from both of these to the interview and much of the session was spent interpreting the results. The client seemed particularly interested in work that would involve advising, supporting and helping – though not in a medical context. The adviser suggested the client spent more time going through print outs and doing further research using specific Internet resources before coming back for another interview.

One year on, the client reported having a difficult year, due mainly to the impact of ill health. This resulted in her not successfully completing her degree course, so she actually finished her course with a Diploma in Allied Health:

...my year's been quite eventful and I've finished with my partner. And I became ill in March, so I didn't finish my dissertation, but I've come out with a Diploma in Allied Health instead. So it changes what I come out with, slightly.

She then took a job with a large company in customer services, which she regards as a mistake on two counts - first, she hadn't fully recovered from her illness and second, the job didn't allow her to use her skills and experience. Then she took another unsatisfactory job through an employment agency, which she also regards as a mistake. Despite these negative experiences, she recognises that they have helped her to be clearer about what she does want to do:

...so in terms of job-wise, I have learned a lot about what I don't want to do, but it's the fact of trying to find out what I do want to do... ..I think it has taken me a while to sort it out...

Her immediate plans are to work towards a full recovery:

I'm spending some time looking after myself and doing self-development and so it might not be for another six to nine months before I start looking for work.

[Interview 24]

3.2.4 Local labour markets

For seven clients, the operation of local labour markets was proving to be a barrier to career progress. One was trying to retrain for welding, after being made redundant from fencing, but was unable to progress this option because of the lack of availability of the work-based element necessary in the area he was living.

This unemployed client had previously worked in fencing and had recently undertaken the first year of a welding course at a local college at the time of his case study interview. The client had been contacting engineering employers – sending out CVs and letters. The practitioner felt he should follow up such contacts with a visit and that he should widen his job search to include a greater variety of employers, such as garages. She also suggested how he could get help with application writing and interview preparation. The client appeared to be positive about all these suggestions.

One year on, little seems to have changed:

...there's just nothing about here'.

When asked specifically about the guidance interview, the client indicated that he thought the advice given was useful:

...it was useful advice [visiting employers] but nothing's come of it, cos there's no-one taking on...

He identified various things that could help his career development – moving away from the area, learning to drive and being able to continue with the welding course. But the latter is dependent on his having related employment.

[Interview 4]

A second client had been made redundant from printing. He felt that his ability to drive (which restricts where he can look for employment) and structural labour market changes were conspiring against him, as well as his age²⁴.

The client was hoping to find an 'out-door' job, having been a printer for most of his working life. He was about to move from the Gateway stage of New Deal to the Intensive Activity Period (IAP) where he would take up a work placement. The action

²⁴ The varying degrees of exclusion that many older adults experience can lead to isolation, which in turn leads to loss of self-esteem. Ford, G. (2005) *Am I Still Needed? Guidance and Learning for Older Adults*, Centre for Guidance Studies (CeGS) Research Report Series. University of Derby, p. 51.

points agreed were that the practitioner would contact the company managing the New Deal to emphasise certain aspects of what the client hoped to gain from the programme, particularly the importance of facilitating the client's access to driving lessons, and that the client could return for further discussion if required.

One year on, the client had got a part-time job picking items at a warehouse and is also registered with a private agency that offers services to pet owners. He did try to re-train for computer work, unsuccessfully:

I myself went off to try a computer course at the college... ..I think I lasted 2 weeks...they say you can retrain for anything, but I'm afraid I don't think you can really...in the end I just had to say, 'Well, look, I'm sorry to waste your time, but this is just not my scene.' I've actually got a second hand computer from my nephew...I know they're very useful...but frankly it's not my cup of tea...and unfortunately that's all they keep shoving down your throat.

This client is pessimistic about access to the labour market for older men with outdated skills and now believes that the range of opportunities is only available to women:

...it's become a woman's world, really, in my opinion, you know. Good luck to them you know... ..about 20 or 30 years ago, it was more of a man's world...Now things have gone more in the office line and, well tend to be things that suit a woman more...

He still believes that his choices are restricted because he has no transport and cannot drive, but cannot afford to address this problem:

...all these types of work I said, 'Yeah, love to do 'em, love to do 'em, but frankly I haven't got a driver's licence.

[Interview 15]

3.3 Prolonged transitions: career indecision

Ten clients (22%) were still trying to make a decision about which career to pursue one year after their case study interviews²⁵. All were either graduates or students in the process of completing degrees and at the time of the follow-up interview, were trying to establish their occupational preferences, priorities and associated values. Three approaches to resolving this indecision were identified: testing out various options; buying time (in the hope that things would become clearer); and pro-actively working to clarify values.

3.3.1 Testing out options

Five clients had used the year since their case study interview to test out various options, using different strategies. For example, one had changed both her degree course and University half way through her first year of study. Part-time, temporary employment was providing one type of work experience and she was planning to use the work placement required as part of her degree as another method of finding suitable employment.

At the time of her case study interview, this client was in her first year of her degree. She had 'no idea' what she wanted to do regarding her career. The guidance interview included a general discussion of possible areas of interest (e.g. law). The action plan included the client investigating vacation placements, Insight courses and

²⁵ Evidence from careers research indicates that people vary in their career objectives. Their expectations may, for example, be influenced by their self concept (Super, 1990), career orientations (Derr and Laurent, 1989) or their vocational personality (Holland, 1992).

Derr, C.B. and Laurent, A (1989) 'The internal and external career: a theoretical perspective', in Arthur, M.B. and Rosseau, D. (Eds) *Handbook of Career Theory*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Holland, J.L. (1992) *Making Vocational Choices: A Theory of Vocational Personalities and Work Environments*. (2nd edition), Odessa, FL: Psychological Assessment Resources.

Super, D.E. (1990) 'A life-span, life-space approach to career development' in Brown, D., Brooks, L. and Associates (Eds) *Career Choice and Development* (2nd edition), San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, pp.197-261.

computer aided guidance available on the Internet.

One year on, she had changed both her course and her University. She did implement the agreed action plan but then, half-way through the academic year, experienced a crisis of confidence and went for a further guidance interview:

...I just gradually got more and more disillusioned with my degree...And I was questioning why I was at [University] and, you know, just where I was going in my life basically. So I did go back and I remember going into the careers office one afternoon, when I was really upset. And they were brilliant with me, like just helped me sort out my options and gave me some advice...

As a consequence, she decided to switch to a different degree at a different University. She started the second year of that course at the beginning of the next academic year and is thoroughly enjoying it. She is also doing temporary work in administration and looking forward to the work placement later in her course. The client did attend some Insight courses, but found them of limited value because of her own uncertainty about her situation. Her immediate plans are to have a positive placement experience and get a good degree. She hopes that a job will materialise out of her work placement.

[Interview 25]

A second student had decided to apply for a Master's course as the next step in achieving her career ambition. A gap year and relevant work experience are other strategies she identified to support her progress.

At the time of her case study interview, this client was in the second year of a history degree and wanted to think about what to do next. Prior to the interview, she had completed a computer aided guidance program. The interview included discussing various options including law, heritage and doing a Master's. It ended with the client being shown various resources to research different options and work experience placements were also discussed.

One year on the client was in the final year of her degree course, although she appears to have suffered doubts about whether to continue:

...I weighed up whether or not to stay at the university or to embark on something totally different... ... I think everything I want to do is at this Uni, at least for a year.

She has selected the Master's course onto which she wishes to progress:

So I have completed...some applications for Master's courses and handed them all in...yeah, I made four applications – which took a very long time, actually, and quite a lot of effort...

If she is unsuccessful, she will consider doing a gap year:

I'm thinking of taking a gap year. I have nothing else sort of concrete, so I'm going to have to work for a year and do something work experience wise and then re-apply for a Master's, because that's definitely what I want to do...

Ideally, she's hoping to get relevant work experience, for example, in a museum or an art gallery:

...if I have to take a year out, I will be looking into sort of, I suppose, art history work at museums and galleries and things like that.

[Interview 35]

3.3.2 Buying time

Three clients had built strategies into their career planning to give them time to experience life and reflect on their options. One, for example, had spent five months abroad immediately after completing her degree and was currently acquiring vocational skills that would enable her to undertake further travel. This was her clear and immediate priority with a decision about her longer-term career relegated to a future date.

As a consequence of suffering from glandular fever, this client had graduated with a lower degree classification than expected. She attended the case study interview to find a focus for her job search. Several career options were discussed. Since she was concerned about the funding implications of further training, she was provided with information about courses offering free training for those wanted to become self-

employed, as well as the Prince's Trust. Travelling and working abroad were also discussed as the client was keen to travel but worried about financing such a trip.

One year on, this client is in temporary employment whilst undergoing vocational training. After her case study interview, she spent 5 months in Greece working in a Beauty Salon and a hotel bar:

I just decided to go abroad. I've been offered this job in Greece for six months over the summer season...

On the advice of someone she was working with abroad, she returned to England a month earlier than planned to start an NVQ 2 in Beauty Therapy at the local college. In the evenings she is undertaking a part-time sports massage course. She is self-funded and is really enjoying these part-time courses. To help with finances, she's working in retail. However, she still seems confused about her career direction and is now considering nursing, amongst other options.

....my friend's doing a postgrad 2 years in nursing... ...that appeals to me, but then everything appeals to me – nutrition, sports science again – I don't know!

She remains keen to work abroad and her immediate plans are to complete the courses and then look for work in beauty therapy in New Zealand or Australia:

I want to go to New Zealand and Australia and other places as well. I know I've got to get some money first and get a job, you know, at least before that...

[Interview 27]

3.3.3 Clarifying values

Three clients were pro-actively trying to identify personal values that would guide occupational choices. This was typically being achieved by experimenting with different types of employment and then reflecting on the positive and negative aspects. For example, one client who had identified publishing as her key occupational focus had changed this to library work as a result of both undertaking work experience and applying for publishing jobs.

In the final year of her degree, this client wanted to enter publishing at the time of her case study. She also wanted to travel before settling down so came to talk about doing an overseas placement in publishing at the end of her degree – possibly in the USA. The practitioner talked her through the practicalities of this course of action, highlighting two placement programmes that help with issues like visas and advising her to contact employers directly. Additionally, the practitioner discussed undertaking a publishing course and spending time abroad doing something other than publishing such as teaching English as a foreign language. Advice on deadlines was given, together with further guidance on CVs and applications.

One year on, this client's plans had changed completely from wanting to go into publishing to library/archive work:

I've had a complete change of heart.

Since graduating, she had completed a TEFL course and done some casual bar work. She undertook some work experience in publishing, which she enjoyed, and applied for a couple of publishing jobs, from which she was rejected. Though she enjoyed the work experience, it helped her to decide against publishing:

...publishing seemed a bit cut-throat and if I'm leaning towards something else, it seems to waste all my energy...

The research that she had done following the guidance interview, using information given by the practitioner, had been one factor in the process in helping her decide on library work:

...if I hadn't done the research... ...I wouldn't have been able to come to the decision that it wasn't the right thing to do...you have to do it yourself and although you get the guidance, you need that guidance to point you off in the right direction and just give you different avenues to explore and maybe something will be turned up that you haven't yet considered yourself.

The client is now clear about what she wants to do and has a timed plan, which involves work experience in a library, travel and then post-graduate training.

[Interview 14]

A second client had been focused on employment with the security services at the time of his case study interview, but had subsequently switched to recruitment. This change

of mind had been brought about by his experiences of applying for security services and undertaking further research into what the job would actually involve. A key motivation currently is earning money, but he is still considering new options, like the police force.

After completing his degree, this client had spent a year working and travelling. The interview was mainly concerned with exploring in depth the client's skills, interests and aptitudes and his initial ideas about career choices. Much of the discussion was about what features of a career would provide job satisfaction for this client. Career areas explored were: the security services, human resources, recruitment, social care, probation and civil service options other than security.

A follow-up interview was offered to check the client's CV and application for the security services. It was also agreed that the client would use a computer aided guidance program, undertake research into career preferences and look for immediate job vacancies – even if these were not long-term prospects.

One year on, this client had changed his mind about applying to the security services:

...after looking into it further and also speaking to quite a few friends from University, who I found that had applied, after they'd sort of been through the first bit of it...gone through to the assessment and then failed...it really just basically dissuaded me from carrying the application form any further...and also finding more out about it and realising that it would have been a 100% desk job as well...sort of put me off a bit.

Immediately after the case study interview, he had taken temporary employment at a University, whilst looking for something more permanent. He decided to follow up the idea of working in recruitment and was successful in securing a post in which he is currently working. He is not finding it entirely satisfying, being driven by targets and making a profit:

...when I first started I wasn't enjoying it a massive amount, because there's a fair amount of pressure, like with targets and money you've got to make for the company...so it is basically a sales role...but now I'm getting into it ...it's getting a lot better, but still I don't feel that it's something that I'd want to do sort of indefinitely anyway.

He was originally attracted by the idea of helping people. However, he is still undecided what to do in the longer term and so is content to focus on the present:

...Not really knowing what I wanted to do and my initial thoughts were, if I could spend a year or so trying to make money, or as much money as possible, whether to pay off a bit of debt, buy a car, get a bit of freedom that way...that sort of a plan came afterwards and I thought I could, you know, still look and think about it whilst in a job that pays fairly decent money, which is basically what I'm doing at the moment, still really considering what I want to do.

He is currently attracted by a fast track scheme in the police force and also considering other options:

Also a bit on the mundane side is, sort of, either Human Relations or management consultancy, things like that...

[Interview 21]

Given the wide range of client achievements and aspirations, the question remains – what, exactly, was the impact of the guidance received during the case study interview? An examination of action plans formulated and the extent to which these had implemented follows in section 4.

4. Action plans

Action plans, usually agreed towards the end of in-depth guidance, comprise the record of the next steps required to achieve, or progress, clients' career goals. In 84% (n=42), of the initial case study interviews, action plans were used. The follow-up study, therefore, provided one method of evaluating the impact of guidance on clients by examining whether these action plans had been implemented, one year on. Had clients (and/or practitioners) actually done what they agreed to do at their guidance interview? If so, what had been the effect(s)? If not, why not?

This section of the report focuses on the clients' reflections on their action plans and examines which elements have been progressed. It examines cases where the clients have implemented agreed action and contrasts those with cases where no action has been taken. It also scrutinises the extent to which practitioners followed-through on agreed action. Finally, this section reviews clients' future career plans.

4.1 Action by clients

The majority of the clients contacted for the follow-up (89%, n=40) had followed through on some, or all the elements of the action agreed in the interviews (this includes clients who were continuing to implement action at the time of the follow-up interview).

Specifically, this action included:

- active job search, using Internet resources and publications (where clients had searched for, or were continuing to search for, paid or voluntary work);
- course applications (online and paper-based);
- job applications (i.e. submitting applications for vacancies; sending speculative letters and Curriculum Vitae to prospective employers);
- in-depth research (of prospective careers, jobs, qualifications and courses) using a range of resources (e.g. local careers libraries, Internet sources, and higher and further education institutions);
- direct contact (e.g. with tutors, employers and employment agencies) for more detailed information;
- follow-up (i.e. of contacts and information given by the practitioners); and
- organisation of work experience, placements and internships.

In some instances, action plans were used to develop job search skills. One client, for example, was able to limit his options and became more strategically focused as a result of the research agreed in his action plan:

...I sort of looked into the options that I had career wise. I sort of thought over them and I sort of, yeah...I researched as much as I could do, but a lot of the avenues that were there, I think teaching was one of those options, but a lot of the options just didn't...I wanted...I didn't feel comfortable taking them on. Or I sort of got so much information. Then thought I wasn't so sure.

[Interview 22]

Where clients followed the guidance given to implement action, plans tended to be successfully implemented. For instance, one client was now able to scrutinise job descriptions in a particular manner:

*...I've applied to do voluntary work for [charitable organisation] in working with young people, and this is what came out of the interview I had last year... ...
...It [the guidance interview] was very useful, because it made me look through the jobs and say, "Oh, what does that entail?" and it made me look more closely at what the different jobs entail, and what interested me, and jobs that I hadn't heard of and things like that... ... what I was lacking in, was experience with young people, which is why I'm doing this now, really.*

[Interview 24]

4.2 No or limited action by clients

Some clients (29%, n=13) had taken limited or no action for various reasons. Four (9%) had begun to follow through on the action agreed (for example, speaking to a tutor or prospective employer), but had received a discouraging response and consequently abandoned their plan. For example, one client had contacted her tutor for help in selecting subjects, as agreed, and had become so disillusioned by the response that she had left college:

I did sort out my subjects, but the tutor made a mess of it... ... there wasn't a great deal of help around as regarding tutors and stuff... ... they just didn't have 5 minutes for us and when we needed help, we couldn't get it...

[interview 12]

For others, a change in circumstances (for example, relocation, partner redundancy, unexpected illness) meant they were no longer able to pursue what had been agreed.

These barriers to career progression were discussed in detail in Section 3.2, above. A few were unable to remember whether they had followed through on their action plan or not. Others just seemed to lack momentum without knowing why:

I just didn't follow it up and to be honest with you I can't think of the reasons now why that was. It wasn't anything to do with the college, it was probably more partly laziness of myself...

[Interview 1]

This same client was keen to excuse the practitioner from any blame for his non-action:

As I say, I just kind of, having sat down with [the practitioner] she obviously gave her time to me, I felt guilty to think that I, you know, she did sit down there and I didn't carry on, but again that's probably just me.

[Interview 1]

It is interesting to note that, similarly, twelve of the thirteen clients who had taken no or limited action did not attribute this failure to the practitioner²⁶.

4.3 Follow through by practitioners

It was not uncommon for practitioners to agree to undertake some action for clients. This included:

- sending information or applications to the client;
- advocating (e.g. speaking to a tutor at a college or on an employment programme on behalf of the client);
- arranging a psychometric test or follow-up interview; or
- researching funding opportunities, occupations or qualifications.

Twenty-four per cent of clients (n=11) explained how practitioners had followed through on action agreed. For instance, a disabled client has job applications sent to her by the practitioner on a regular basis:

²⁶ Mayston (2002) argues that 'career choices, like other forms of investment, often have the features of 'putty-clay', that before the choice is made they are highly malleable into different forms, but after they have been made these cannot be so easily reversed'. This element of risk linked to uncertainty may be a determinant factor in individuals' behaviours and attitudes towards implementing their previously agreed action plans: Mayston. D. (2002) *Assessing and Measuring the Benefits of Career Guidance*. Centre for Guidance Studies, (CeGS) Occasional Paper Series, University of Derby.

...They did send me applications to apply for jobs. They look for the jobs for me, send the applications to me and I just apply.

[Interview 11]

One other client, who had been on incapacity benefit for a year as a result of a stress-related stroke, really appreciated the help given by the practitioner. In fact, the persistence of the practitioner in following up employment possibilities and suggesting alternative career paths had resulted in his getting two part-time jobs, both of which he was enjoying.

I couldn't get anything at all... You know it was just a waste... I was getting so frustrated because I thought I was on the scrapheap, if you know what I mean? They done all the pushing and the shoving sort of thing, like, and got all the 'phone numbers, because everywhere else I was getting no luck at all.

[Interview 23]

However, four clients (9%) reported how the practitioner had not followed through on the action agreed in the interview. Three indicated that practitioners had failed to send promised information and/or failed to contact the client²⁷.

4.4 Clients' future plans

Clients' future plans were probed as part of the follow-up study. These can be differentiated into active or inactive: those who are currently following through on their plans (active) and those who are still considering what to do next (inactive)

4.4.1 Active plans

Forty-seven per cent (n=21) of clients are actively seeking employment. Strategies include:

- searching employment websites;
- enrolling at employment agencies;
- attending job search programmes organised by their local Jobcentre or IAG network;
- using local council websites; and

²⁷ This aspect of guidance practice will be further monitored as part of the next phase of follow-up research.

- talking to course tutors (not only to discuss their work options, but also other courses which may help their progress into employment faster).

Clients actively seeking employment included: those wishing to change career; those seeking similar employment with a different employer; those with a definite idea of what they wanted to do to; and those who were still confused. One client is keen to undertake some voluntary work to clarify her ideas:

... My plan is, if the voluntary work goes all right (and it is an area that I enjoy, because my focus moved from the elderly to the young, because I felt like I didn't really want to work with the elderly anymore), if young people is an area that I enjoy and get on well with, then it would be an area that I would be interested in.

[Interview 24]

Other future plans include working towards:

- a promotion or job change (22%, n=10);
- undertaking or completing a training course (31%, n=14);
- developing a varied portfolio of experience relevant to employment (7%, n=3);
- changing location, at home or abroad (18%, n=8);
- taking or planning a gap year (7%, n=3); and
- researching different educational and employment opportunities (47%, n=21).

Three clients (7%) are planning to gain more experience in their current job, as a step towards future promotions. For example, one has carefully positioned herself to get the skills she needs to achieve future goals:

Well the position that I'm in, in the (current company)...I deliberately negotiated to ensure that I would have responsibility for the Internet, which is an area I feel is lacking, because I haven't had experience with the Internet ...So I've quite carefully sort of put everything in place so I'm actually, this phase now is a broadening my experience phase...Basically, it's been quite deliberate and then after that, you know, I'll just be looking to sort of move onwards and upwards and [take] more responsibility.

[Interview 10]

Eight clients (18%) were considering relocating for various reasons. For example, one female client was keen to use her newly acquired qualification for teaching English as a foreign language:

I have, yes, the [qualification]. I'm not sure when I'm going to get abroad, but I really want to go and use that, because it seems a shame to have gone and done it...and then not go abroad to use it. But I've got one of my uncles who worked in [country] for a bit... ... yeah and I'm thinking of possibly going over to Japan and Australia.

[Interview 14]

Thirty-one per cent (n=14) of clients are planning or undertaking further education or training as part of their re-entry or re-skilling strategy for employment. One, who has suffered from poor health and had several unsatisfactory jobs, has taken a building confidence course to prepare for re-entry to the labour market:

...this term I'm doing building self-confidence. Although I'm confident in some areas, I think I still lack confidence when, you know, meeting people for the first time and putting myself forward... ... I'm...Like I said, I'm spending some time looking after myself and doing some self-development and so it might not be for another six to nine months before I start looking for work.

[Interview 24]

Another is planning a further education course to re-skill for different employment and has also inspired her partner to look at educational options:

Like I say, me and my partner are both looking at maybe doing something at college, or an Open University course. And he'd quite like to do something because he's got quite a lot of spare time, with him being a fireman.

[Interview 5]

4.4.2 Inactive plans

Inactive future plans include those clients who are still considering options, but have not yet taken any action. This includes those clients (36%, n=16) with education or training aspirations, either for re-entry to the labour market or up-skilling. For instance, one client found her guidance interview useful because it helped her understand the requirements for nursing. She still is interested in adult learning courses, as preparation for her vocational training, but has not yet taken any action:

Yeah, yeah and I'm actually looking again. I'm gonna be looking again at the Adult Education Centre in (place), about picking up on some of the modules I've already done...Because Science is one of the areas they do ask for in... obviously, in nursing and I was considering doing the maths and maybe

English...But that's why I'm thinking of enquiring about obviously picking up on the levels I've left at and whether it's possible to carry on...

[Interview 12]

Another client, who had successfully started up her own business, was keen to develop her business and management skills, as she planned to open another store. However, with a young family and a business to run, time was proving to be the enemy:

...More business training and also time management and delegation, because I don't have...Because I have worked freelance...and I don't have a kind of more corporate background, things like that... ..where I might be, just, "Oh god, if I have to get it done, I might as well do it myself," which really I shouldn't do myself...Well, I might do when I get more time, which is what I need!...

[Interview 49]

Inactive plans are also the result of continued uncertainty (24%, n=11). A client in the second year of her degree course remains vague and is waiting until a clearer idea about her future career forms:

I was hoping, you know, that things would really start coming together and I'd have a better idea of what I want to do and things.

[Interview 7]

One other client, who had completed her HND course and converted to degree course, was still uncertain, even after completing the research suggested by a practitioner:

Not really...Like I say, I'm a bit difficult, because I don't know what I want to do. They suggested looking at websites and looking here, there and everywhere, which is what I sort of knew myself anyway. There's a lot of sort of good things on the Internet, all kinds, if you can fill in these forms with what kinds of strengths and weaknesses you have and things like that. But I've not really done that.

[Interview 39]

Several clients are not very optimistic about their future (18%, n=8). One female client with a disability has a long history of failure in employment and feels this will continue:

...So I may as well, I don't know, just forget it. I'll see what happens, but I mean if nothing happens...I'm not holding my breath.

[Interview 11]

An elderly male client is similarly pessimistic about his future:

...but frankly you've either got something that somebody wants or you haven't... ..All you met with was elderly men of my age and really nobody there had a lot to offer you frankly.

[Interview 15]

Inactivity seems, therefore, to be caused by various factors linked to a client's particular circumstances and experiences.

5. Clients' reflections on their guidance interview

Forty-nine of the 50 clients who participated in the first phase of data collection stated that they had found their case study interview useful. One year on, clients were asked whether, looking back over the past year, their views had changed. Of the 45 clients contacted, 87% (n=39) reported that they still regarded their case study interview as useful, whilst 11% (n=5) were now uncertain whether it had actually been useful. One client still felt that her interview had not been at all useful.

Where clients still felt the guidance received during their case study interview was useful, reasons were probed. Five categories emerged. Guidance was still regarded as useful where it: had provided specialist information; had helped to reduce confusion; had proved to be either motivational or revelatory; had been confirmatory in some way; and/or had helped build self-confidence. Each is discussed below.

5.1 Useful guidance: specialist information

Guidance is valued because of the access it gives to specialist information (23%, n=9). Information benefits clients in different ways. For example, it can help re-focus career aspirations and can assist with job search. One client indicated that getting access to information was the primary reason she would use guidance services in the future:

Oh, definitely, definitely...I wanted to go back there again...because I thought, well, they're the ones that they've got all the information, they've got the booklets and stuff, and they can look it all up on the computer for me, and they've been helpful previously...I think so many people don't know about it ... people just don't realise it's there'.

[Interview 2]

For another client, information given had resulted in her getting a job as a trainee nurse:

...that kind of put me on the right lines. When I looked through that booklet she gave...not booklet...it's one of those reference books that she gave me, I looked through that...There's nothing stopping me from just calling a hospital direct, I mean a recruitment centre direct, and trying to get myself in as an auxiliary...with the hope of training.

[Interview 34]

Research undertaken by a third client, using information given by the practitioner, had both increased self-awareness about her own role in determining her future career and helped re-focus her ideas:

...if I hadn't done the research...I wouldn't have been able to come to the decision that it wasn't the right thing to do...You have to do it yourself... although you get the guidance, you need that guidance to point you off in the right direction and just give you different avenues to explore and maybe something will be turned up that you haven't yet considered yourself.

[Interview 14]

5.2 Useful guidance: confusion reduction

Ten clients (26%) found the guidance received during their case study interview useful because it had helped reduce their confusion about some aspect of their career development. For example, self-reflexivity had been prompted for one client, who regarded it as a significant event in his career development:

The actual plan itself was very good... ..I was going through a bit of time when I thought what am I actually doing?...Where, you know, where is my career going?...and that made me think...where do I see myself in 4/5 years time, once I've done this, and been through the course, got the debt, etc. and then where would I go from there?...I've kind of realised that I'm growing up a bit and I've got to start seriously thinking about where I'm going in life. It sounds quire deep. It's kind of...I kind of sat down and though, 'Yeah, this is what I've got to do.

[Interview 1]

Guidance had proved useful for another client because it had helped clarify what action was necessary to pursue her career aspiration:

Yeah, the guidance interview I found was useful, yes...I did find it useful. So it sort of helped with knowing what you needed to do to get where you wanted to go...I found her very easy to talk to as well...I don't think particularly that there was anything more that she could have done...

[Interview 12]

For a third client, the guidance received during the case study interview had helped her to become more focused:

I think it actually gave me a starting point to start to be able to go and think a bit more and know that the resources were there. Just be less lost, I guess. Yeah, very useful, yeah. As I said, like as a starting point to go and think a bit more and to answer some big questions that I had, really.

[Interview 35]

5.3 Useful guidance: motivational and/or revelatory

Seven clients (18%) found their guidance motivational and/or revelatory. For one who was unhappy in her job, the case study interview had encouraged her to 'have a go' at a few work areas, to find out more about them. This strategy was revelatory, as it had not previously occurred to the client that she could do this:

...I never would have thought of, sort of, temping, which I...when she started talking she said, 'Have you ever actually done any of the other jobs?...she advised me...go to see if there was something, some way of, even like shadowing, somebody, you know - just to see what the job, you know, entails...

[Interview 5]

An undergraduate recognised that the case study interview had motivated her to start the process of career decision-making:

...that was quite good, 'cos it sort of kick-started me into action, looking and things...I think it was useful in the way that it probably set, like looking in the newspapers and things like that, it probably set things in motion for me... ...and gave me the incentive to do something...I think now it's about personal incentives anyway and motivation to get a job.

[Interview 7]

For a client with mental health issues, guidance had provided the support and motivation he needed to explore job possibilities:

I feel that you sit down and you talk about, um, directions in where to go in life, you know, which actual of the career aspects you want to take on.

[Interview 42]

5.4 Useful guidance: confirmation

Five clients (13%) found the guidance useful because it confirmed career ideas that were already forming. Whilst the guidance practitioner had not given one client any new ideas, it had crystallized ones she already had:

...but the interview was definitely useful...[it did] crystallize the ones [ideas] I had...she didn't come out with something I'd never ever heard of before...it was more to speak to me about the ideas that I'd already got.

[Interview 18]

Another client found it useful to have his career aims validated by the guidance practitioner:

I saw him a few times, maybe twice or even three times...it did help, it did give me some ideas...basically just chatting and discussing ideas...just voicing out loud and having somebody else to say to me the same things as I was saying I would be suitable for.

[Interview 21]

In addition to highlighting the value of guidance as confirmation, these cases also emphasise the value of 'talking things through'.

5.5 Useful guidance: confidence-building

Eight clients (21%) found their case study interview useful because it had boosted their confidence in their ability to pursue their occupational aspirations. One was adamant that without the practitioner's help she would not have had the confidence to believe that she could enter this sort of work.

It was very useful, yes, definitely. Definitely...I was completely unsure of what I wanted to do, how to do it, or anything, I was...I knew that I wanted to do something sort of social work-related...she sort of opened up a few more sort of holes and doors for me...she made other suggestions, which I found useful...So it has, it's definitely helped me. It has helped me a lot actually in confidence-wise as well...

[Interview 8]

For another client, the job-search skills learnt during the guidance and management coaching process (paid for by her employer) following redundancy, proved invaluable:

...the techniques that I've learned have made me much more confident about switching jobs if I don't think that it's going, you know, the way that I want it to...

[Interview 10]

A client in the process of re-skilling for a completely different occupational area from the one in which he had become established commented on how guidance had provided him with ideas on what to do next as well as giving him the confidence to follow these through:

Yeah, there were some good points. Like I say, I've done a little bit of work experience up to now...I have applied for...I am in the process of applying for my PGCE...So, as I say, things are right on track at the moment...so it was really, really helpful at the time...

[Interview 19]

5.6 Guidance: of questionable or no use?

Of the 45 clients followed up, some made critical remarks about their guidance. Specifically,

- 5 clients (11%) felt that for their guidance to be really useful, they needed to have a clearer idea about what they wanted to do;
- 2 clients (4%) said that they had needed more specific information which had not been available and that the guidance service did not offer sufficient resources;
- 1 client criticised the practitioner for not having stressed the importance of networking;
- 1 client said that there was a lack of feedback from the practitioner after the interview.

Five clients were unsure whether their guidance had been useful or not. One thought that the most useful aspect of the interview was finding out:

...that I was gonna have to find out for myself, really...he just explained, you know, what I'd be able to get from the college and it wasn't what I needed...so I had to then go out and do it for myself... ...there wasn't going to be a place that I could get all the answers from, basically.

[Interview 9]

An unemployed client was thoroughly disillusioned with the help he had received:

They're very nice people up at this place I went to...but frankly you've either got something that somebody wants or you haven't... ..It's just the way the world is and I've just got to accept things...and crack on and do my own thing and hope for the best...having been unemployed...really at the end of the day...you've just got to do what you can for yourself, really...

[Interview 15]

The client who did not find her case study interview useful immediately afterwards still held this view one year on. She feels that the most helpful thing the practitioner could have done was to say he was unable to help at the outset, rather than offering what, in her view, was inappropriate and badly informed advice:

...he didn't help me at all... ..all the things he did say were absolutely useless...but I wish I'd gone in there more positive...Yes, the whole thing was not a very useful experience at all.

[Interview 43]

Five clients (11%) had unfulfilled expectations about guidance that included: lack of direction or instruction; lack of pro-active support in finding a work placement; and lack of answers. One higher education student had expected to be given direction and be told what to do:

...Careers Services are useful if you know what to do and want to, sort of, I found it at school and college as well. If you know what you want to do and you just want to know how to do it, kind of thing, then they're quite useful. But if you're not quite sure what you want to do...

[Interview 7]

Two clients expected to be given work placements rather than being given information and told to research their options:

...he gave me various addresses to look up and research and where to look for placements and things, so the thing...I think...most undergraduates you're sort of hoping someone else will give you the lead...

[Interview 14]

Similarly, this client was unhappy that his concerns had not been answered and that he was expected to go away and do some more research before they would be answered. However, after further reflection he had realised that the information was useful and had helped him move forward:

...but I didn't seem to think there was anything more he can do. He said, "Go away and find out about the courses, if they're relevant". I said, "Yeah, but what about paying for them?" And he said, "No, go away and find out about them first" and I'm continuously saying, "What about...there's no point if I can't fund these things"...but again...really useful, thinking outside the box was something I hadn't thought of doing in the first place, but after that I'm not expecting it on a plate anyway...In one way they're [the careers guidance service] useful, I can look at it and take something from it and push myself forward from that. Like I say, the thinking outside the box, the general.

[Interview 37]

6. Further guidance and future support

Twenty-seven (60%) of the 45 clients who were successfully contacted had received further guidance since their case study interview. This final section of the report discusses the nature of this additional support, how it helped and the future support clients have identified as desirable.

6.1 Further guidance

Sixty per cent of clients (n=27) who were followed-up one year on had received further guidance. Thirty-three per cent of these clients (n=9) said that they had found it motivating. For example, as a result, one client had changed her course:

And they were brilliant with me, like just helped me sort out my options and gave me some advice, like, to go and talk to somebody at [university] about changing degrees and leaving and stuff... ... They just explained it all to me. Whereas, like, I'd had all these thoughts running round in my head and I didn't know what direction I was going or what I was doing and they just clarified everything and, like, gave me some steps that I could do.

[Interview 25]

Another indicated that the further help had been pivotal in his gaining employment. After attending a follow-up interview with the same practitioner, he was referred to a colleague who specialised in supporting clients in their job search:

Yeah, and then I got involved with a girl down there...it's like keeping a personal approach that you're their client. So they carry on with you, sort of thing... ... which I find is good...

[Interview 23]

This continued support was appreciated by this same client who had been unemployed for an extended period:

I reckon they're great down there...if I wouldn't have gone down there, I'd have been still at home picking my nose, if you know what I mean...she stood over me and made me 'phone...she said, 'I'm not going until you 'phone up'. And I phoned two or three times and they were out and she said, 'Well, that's alright, we'll just carry on'. And she did!

Additional guidance proved helpful to a client who was unhappy in her current employment:

I had one more follow-up with [practitioner] to discuss the results of the [psychometric test] and then we talked over the phone. It took me some time to come round to the idea of doing accountancy, but it is great now that I am doing it. I had a look at several different courses. It just wasn't something I had thought about doing.

[Interview 29]

Of the clients who have received further guidance, 44% (n=12) have undertaken either psychometric testing or computer-aided guidance. This was either planned as part of the action plan agreed in the case study guidance interview or agreed at a later date. Psychometric testing has, for some clients, had a very positive influence. For example, one client said:

The [psychometric] test showed that I was good with numbers, numerical analysis and data analysis which I had never thought about before. I just thought everybody could do numbers. It helped me to think about what I could do and made me think about the skills. It was [this] test that was the most useful.

[Interview 29]

Computer-aided guidance programs were also useful to some clients:

I think the actual...I think the computer system's quite good, the actual asking what you enjoy doing, what you like, you know, the actual overall thing, and then the printout of it. Because you look at it and say "Oh yeah, yeah, I'd like to do that job, I probably would want to do that job." And then the information they [the practitioner] gives you afterwards sets you off a little bit...

[Interview 32]

It is important to note that two (4%) clients who have been followed-up had returned for further guidance, but found that there was either no help available or only a reduced service in operation.

Influences on career progress and support have not solely been from guidance practitioners. Thirty-three per cent of clients (n=15) were influenced, helped or supported by family and friends. After talking to his friends, one client recognised the possibilities available to him:

Probably just from peers and things...because, you know, our friends that have gone into teaching... ..and their experience of it...basically I've decided that...well I've found out so much on it. You can basically jump into teaching at any point in time if you've got the credentials that I've got.

[Interview 9]

Sometimes, life events and self-reflection had influenced the decision-making process. For one client, the death of a friend had caused him to reflect on his current situation:

Well, there was something that influenced me to actually resign from [company]. I thought I needed to be more truthful to myself. This is going to sound really depressing, but I don't mean it to! A friend of mine, a school friend of mine, died...And I thought life's too short, you've got to do what you want to do, and I thought...that I'd try and cut away from what I'm doing now at [company] and then try and get back within my profession.

[Interview 13]

An important source of further advice and support came from employers, potential employers and tutors (49%, n=22):

...following the interview... ..I actually went to my boss and I actually had a sit down and a chat and basically worked out a way of, you know, improving what I was doing and how to further my job along...

[Interview 1]

The client who did not find her guidance interview useful immediately afterwards or one year on has received useful information from employers:

...I've had a few letters, you know, from...companies and they've sort of guided...And, you know, they've put me, sort of told me which courses to go for...It's just it's such a long process, you know.

[Interview 43]

6.2 Future support

The 45 clients who were followed up one year after their case study interview were asked about future support necessary to help them progress. This included:

- talking to a guidance practitioner, either formally and informally (38%, n=17)²⁸;
- getting help from a mentor or progression centre (16%, n=7);
- learning about trends in specific occupations and what is happening in the economy by drawing upon the practitioners' knowledge (2 clients);
- being able to talk to someone who had been in a similar situation (1 client);
- getting advice on job and course applications, help with CV writing and psychometric testing (3%, n=6);
- finding out about work placements, work experience and training opportunities (11%, n=5); and
- accessing additional information (e.g. on financial support for training, educational courses, qualifications required, routes into different careers and vacancy information (33%, n=15).

Twelve clients (27%) who were followed-up said that they knew that they could get further guidance if they needed it and that this was important to them.

Nine clients (20%) that were successfully contacted said that they did not want or need any further guidance in the future.

²⁸ Several of the clients who identified future support in the form of seeing the practitioner again, had appointments to see the practitioner in the near future.

7. Conclusions and issues arising

Researching effective guidance

As noted in the first report, investigating what constitutes effective guidance is complex, but the qualitative methodology used for this longitudinal study continues to provide an appropriate investigative and analytic framework.

Attrition rate for participants

The attrition rate for participants one year after the in-depth case studies is extremely low. Data were successfully captured from 45 of the 50 clients (90%) who originally participated.

One year on: client progress

Overall, 78% (n=35) of the clients who were followed-up felt that guidance had resulted in direct and positive change (such as: a change in their situation, or thinking, and/or future plans; being pointed in right direction; alternative options/ideas to consider; or affirmation of ideas), whilst 31% (n=14) felt guidance had resulted in indirect positive change (such as: the realisation that a client wanted to achieve more in their life; or confidence in actions and/or decisions had been increased).

Enhancing occupational competence

Over half of the clients (53%, n=24) had engaged with, or were engaging with, education or training to enhance their occupational competence. They were involved variously with up-skilling, re-skilling or training for re-entry to the labour market.

Barriers to career progression

The ability of 19 (42%) clients to follow the guidance they had received had been impeded by circumstances that could be argued to be out of their control and beyond the remit of guidance. These included care commitments; financial constraints; health-related issues and local labour market conditions.

Prolonged transitions

Ten clients (22%) were still trying to make their career choice one year on. All were either graduates or students in the process of completing degrees. Different strategies were being used to progress, including testing out various options, buying time and actively trying to clarify values.

Action plans

The majority of the clients contacted in the follow-up study (89%, n=40) had followed through on all, or elements of the action agreed in the interviews with practitioners (including clients who were continuing to implement action at the time of the follow-up interview).

Some clients (29%, n=13) had taken limited or no action for various reasons. These included unexpected illness; relocation, partner redundancy; discouraging responses (e.g. from a college) or personal apathy.

Twenty-four per cent of clients (n=11) explained that their practitioners had followed through on action agreed, whilst four clients (9%) reported how the practitioner had not followed through on the action agreed in the interview.

Useful guidance

Of the 45 clients contacted, 87% (n=39) said they still regarded their guidance interview as useful, whilst 11% (n=5) were now uncertain whether it had actually been useful. One client still felt that her guidance interview had not been at all useful.

Where clients still felt their guidance was useful, reasons were probed. Five categories emerged. Guidance was still regarded as useful where: it had provided specialist information; it had helped to reduce confusion; it had been either motivational or revelatory; it had been confirmatory in some way; and/or it had helped build self-confidence.

Measuring the impact of guidance

Measurement of the impact of guidance needs to take account of 'distance travelled' by the client. Participants in this research reported that, even where they had not implemented the action agreed or taken the advice offered, their guidance had acted as

a catalyst for constructive change in various ways. This finding emphasises the need to consider career transition as a complex, often lengthy process, where outcomes (like placement into education, training or employment) are inadequate indicators of whether a client has, indeed, made progress towards a longer term career goal.

Further guidance and future support

Twenty-seven (60%) of the 45 clients who were successfully contacted had received further guidance since their case study interview. Two (4%) clients returned for further guidance, but found that there was either no help available or only a reduced service in operation.

Influences on career progress and support have not solely been from guidance practitioners. Fifteen clients (33%) were influenced, helped or supported by family and friends, with alternative sources of advice being from employers, potential employers and tutors (49%, n=22).

Objectives: second phase of investigation

The objectives for the second phase of investigation have all been met. Specifically:

- the career development of 45 clients over the period since their case study interview has been detailed;
- clients' views of their guidance interview, one year on, have been examined and recorded;
- the details of what, exactly, was found useful by client have been examined;
- an evaluation of the extent to which action plans, agreed a year ago, have been implemented has been undertaken;
- the further guidance received by clients in the interim period has been documented, together with future support needed by clients.

Differences in delivery contexts

The interview proformas used in this investigation were designed to take account of the different professional contexts in which guidance initially took place (whether the client was in education or employment) and the particular circumstances of the client (e.g. for clients who received their guidance within the Further Education context, account was taken of whether the guidance received was pre-entry or on-course).

The effect of the research process on clients

In some cases, it seems that the clients' career development may be affected by the research process. Examples include where a client decided to return for additional guidance as a result of reviewing his progress over the year with the researcher or where a researcher confirmed a client's understanding of the source of particular information. This will be considered in future phases of the investigation

Modification of approach for future follow-ups

Findings from the first year of follow-up will be used to inform the approach to the second year of follow-up. As the career trajectories of individual clients become more differentiated, the interview protocols will, increasingly, have to take this into account. Additionally, careful attention will be given to the effect of the research process on the progress of clients.

Appendix 1: Example of an interview proforma used as a guide to question higher education clients



STUDY RESEARCH INTO EFFECTIVE GUIDANCE – PHASE 3

Higher Education

| | |
|--|--|
| Introduction: | |
| | We're really interested to find out about you and how you are. To talk about the changes in your circumstances and how this relates to your guidance interview you had with at |
| Progress over the last 12 months: | |
| <p>Prompts: Vacation work Voluntary work Unemployment/employment after course (for clients interviewed in their final year) Further study in higher education Undertaken employment specific training More research into interested careers, opportunities, further study More information/advice/guidance Gap year or career break Unable to work</p> | <p>Career changes and development When we met, you talked about doing so what's happened since then?</p> |
| <p>Prompts: What year are you in? Have you finished your course? Did you/are you enjoying the course? If not, why not?</p> | <p>Current situation To clarify, exactly what is your current situation?</p> |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Prompts: Given further information More advice and guidance Advocacy by practitioner Further contact with practitioner Undertaken psychometric tests Used CAG Given access to resources (e.g. reference material, Internet connection)</p> | <p>Follow through (action plan and/or next steps) Remembering when I met you, you and (practitioner's name) agreed an action plan/next steps including was that followed through;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the practitioner? • By you? <p>Explore what parts were useful/not useful and why it was useful/not useful.</p> |
| <p>Client reflections on guidance interview:</p> | |
| <p>Prompts: Clarified what to do Plan to follow/direction Identified next steps Helped to progress Motivated Confidence in plan</p> | <p>86% of interviews included an action plan. So where relevant ask:</p> <p>Do you think the action plan was useful in helping you progress over the last year?</p> <p>Explore in what ways the action plan has been useful or why it was not useful. Explore whether the client believes that it was the best way to progress/proceed/plan. Use responses from previous question to explore this element of the careers guidance interview further.</p> |
| <p>Prompts: Clarified ideas Helped to progress Direction Information on relevant courses Considered other options (careers/courses/direction) Motivated/inspired Reassessed situation Increased self-esteem and confidence Ideas for future</p> | <p>Looking back do you think that your careers guidance interview was useful?</p> <p>Explore elements of the interview and in what ways has it been useful.</p> <p>Explore what the client believes would have been useful.</p> |
| <p>Prompts: Practitioner (skills and knowledge) Support given Information, advice, guidance Being listened to Talking to someone Direction gained Opportunity to discuss and reflect Addressed concerns Increased confidence</p> | <p>Immediately after the interview you indicated that ... (check client response on phase 2 questionnaire) ... was the most useful aspect of the interview. When you think back on the careers guidance interview, now, what was the most useful aspect?</p> <p>Explore client's answer.</p> <p>Explore what else would have been helpful/useful.</p> |

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Prompt: Refer to client questionnaire from phase 2 (question 8)</p> | <p>Do you think the interview gave you a better understanding of yourself or your situation which has been helpful/useful over the last year?</p> <p>Explore in what ways and why the client has a better understanding.</p> <p>Explore what else would have been helpful/useful.</p> |
| <p>Prompt: Refer to client questionnaire from phase 2 (question 10)</p> | <p>Do you think the interview changed your thinking in a way which has influenced your progress over the last year?</p> <p>Explore clients answer and illustrate with examples.</p> <p>Has your progress been a direct or indirect result of this change in thinking?</p> <p>Was this change in thinking important To you? To your progress?</p> <p>How do you think this change in your thinking has influenced your progress?</p> <p>What else has influenced your progress over the last year?</p> |
| <p>Further guidance:</p> | |
| <p>Prompts: More research into interested careers, opportunities, further study More information/advice/guidance Changed course Started career planning CAG Psychometric tests</p> | <p>Have you had any further guidance?</p> <p>Confirm whether this guidance was from the same practitioner, a different specialist, or from a non-specialist.</p> <p>Explore what this further guidance consisted of, whether it was useful and/or needed, plus what were the outcomes of this guidance.</p> <p>Do you think further guidance would have been useful and if so in what ways?</p> |

| | |
|--|--|
| Client's future plans: | |
| <p>Prompts: Vacation work Voluntary work Employment after course (for clients interviewed in their final year) Further study in higher education/undertaking employment specific training More IAG Career break</p> | What are your next steps in terms of your career? |
| <p>Prompts: More advice, information, guidance More contact with practitioner Access to information and resources</p> | In terms of your career, what support would really help you in the future? |
| Future contact with client: | |
| | Can I contact you next year to see how you are doing? |
| | I have as your address and phone number. Is this the best way to get hold of you? |

Appendix 2: Activities and responses emerging from the follow-up of clients one year on from the recorded guidance interview

| Code | Code description | Number of interviews codes | Percentage of interviews n=45 |
|-------------|---|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | Usefulness of guidance reiterated | 34 | 76 |
| 2 | No or limited action/progress by client after interview | 13 | 29 |
| 3 | Career change/new employment | 26 | 58 |
| 4 | Promotion/salary change/more responsibility | 3 | 7 |
| 5 | Guidance created <u>indirect</u> positive change | 14 | 31 |
| 6 | Guidance created <u>direct</u> positive change | 35 | 78 |
| 8 | Useful Guidance – usefulness of action plan | 12 | 27 |
| 9 | Useful Guidance – someone to talk to and/or get help and support from | 19 | 42 |
| 10 | More opportunities at work | 2 | 4 |
| 11 | Happy with life changes/more positive | 18 | 40 |
| 12 | Clearer understanding of self/situation | 39 | 87 |
| 13 | Change in thinking/new perspective | 29 | 64 |
| 14 | No guidance from anyone | 20 | 44 |
| 15 | Action followed through by client | 40 | 89 |
| 16 | Useful Guidance – information from practitioner useful/helpful | 16 | 36 |
| 17 | Influence/help/support from family and friends | 15 | 33 |
| 18 | Training at work | 7 | 16 |
| 20 | Future plans to progress in company, in career, to get qualified | 10 | 22 |
| 21 | Future guidance support needed | 7 | 16 |
| 23 | Started/on/completed training – not in workplace | 19 | 42 |
| 24 | More opportunities resulting from training | 5 | 11 |
| 25 | Qualification gained | 6 | 13 |
| 26 | Active future plans to do training or complete training/course | 14 | 31 |
| 28 | Future support needed – talk to someone who had been in a similar situation | 1 | 2 |
| 29 | Action followed through by practitioner | 11 | 24 |
| 30 | No change in circumstances | 11 | 24 |
| 31 | Inactive training aspirations | 16 | 36 |
| 32 | Advice from others | 22 | 49 |
| 33 | Moving location | 8 | 18 |
| 34 | Gained different work experiences | 16 | 36 |

| | | | |
|----|--|----|-----------|
| 35 | Constraints, responsibilities and personal circumstances that influenced progress, having a negative impact on progression | 31 | 69 |
| 36 | Further support needed from practitioner | 17 | 38 |
| 37 | Increased self-confidence | 13 | 29 |
| 39 | Further guidance from a practitioner or advisers at Job Centre Plus | 27 | 60 |
| 41 | Feeling more positive/motivated about work etc | 11 | 24 |
| 42 | Wishes to draw upon practitioners knowledge | 2 | 4 |
| 43 | Psychometric testing/CAG undertaken | 12 | 27 |
| 45 | Still on a course | 4 | 9 |
| 46 | Help with applications/CVs/psychometric testing | 6 | 13 |
| 47 | Unsure about future action | 11 | 24 |
| 48 | Uncertain of usefulness | 10 | 22 |
| 49 | Actively looking/applying for training/course | 11 | 24 |
| 50 | Positive personal attributes/skills of practitioner commented on | 12 | 27 |
| 51 | Further guidance useful/motivating | 9 | 20 |
| 52 | Staying in job | 3 | 7 |
| 54 | Unfulfilled expectations about guidance | 5 | 11 |
| 55 | Taken/taking/planning a gap year from studies | 3 | 7 |
| 56 | Guidance no influence | 6 | 13 |
| 58 | Client returned, reduced service, no help | 2 | 4 |
| 59 | Not enough resources, specific info required | 2 | 4 |
| 60 | Stress importance of networking | 1 | 2 |
| 62 | Lack of feedback from practitioner | 1 | 2 |
| 63 | Employment scheme helping client | 2 | 4 |
| 64 | No follow through by practitioner | 4 | 9 |
| 65 | No further guidance needed or wanted | 9 | 20 |
| 66 | Changed course | 2 | 4 |
| 67 | Advice from researcher | 14 | 31 |
| 68 | Client asks advice from researcher | 4 | 9 |
| 69 | No follow through/help from others | 4 | 9 |
| 70 | Researching/thinking about various employment opportunities/options for future | 21 | 47 |
| 71 | Gained an idea of what needs to be done/what should or should not be done | 5 | 11 |
| 72 | Know that there is help there if needed | 12 | 27 |
| 73 | Client excuses practitioner from blame for not progressing | 9 | 20 |
| 76 | Participated in some training/course but did not complete | 4 | 9 |
| 78 | Wanted help/support with finding opportunities for work placement or experience, training | 5 | 11 |

| | | | |
|----|--|----|-----------|
| 79 | <u>Not very optimistic/positive about future</u> | 8 | 18 |
| 80 | More information required | 15 | 33 |
| 82 | CEG | 1 | 2 |