The role of parents and carers in providing careers guidance and how they can be better supported

International evidence report

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Acknowledgements

Acronyms

CDI	Career Development Institute
CEC	Careers and Enterprise Company
CEG	careers education and guidance
CEIAG	careers education, information, advice and guidance
CPD	continuing professional development
EYH	Explore Your Horizons
FGC	Family Group Conferences
HKJC	Hong Kong Jockey Club
IAG	information, advice and guidance
IAEVG	International Association of Educational and Vocational Guidance
ILP	Individual Learning Plan
IYSS	Integrated Youth Support Services
LEA	Local Education Authority
LMI	labour market information
NEET	not in education, employment and training
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
SEN	special education needs
SCCT	Social Cognitive Career Theory
SDS	Skills Development Scotland
STEM	Science, technology, engineering and mathematics
TEC	Training and Enterprise Council
VET	vocational education and training

Glossary

Parents includes parents, carers and guardians.

Educational institutions refers to schools and colleges for those aged 11 to 18 years, which are the focus of this study.

Careers education and guidance (CEG), and the various others terms that refer to careers guidance, is used to label the services schools and colleges provide to support students (young people) with their education and learning decisions, together with mediation of an accurate understanding of the labour market, with the vocations available to them.

Careers practitioner refers to those in a role providing careers education, information, advice and guidance to young people (as is the focus of this study). They can be providing these services on a one-to-one basis or in a leadership role within or for an educational institution. Other names are used in the report, such as careers adviser, guidance counsellor, careers counsellor and school counsellor, denoting similar work to that of a careers practitioner in the UK context, but commonly referred to differently in the international context.

Careers leaders are responsible and accountable for the careers education, advice and guidance programmes in their school or college.

Executive summary

Introduction

Careers education and guidance (CEG) can play a key role, not only in supporting young people in their career progression directly while in education and training, but also in engaging parents (including carers and guardians) through various means so that they can better support the career development of their children. The aim of this research is to understand precisely in what ways parents and carers might perform a supportive role to young people as part of CEG.

Although parents undoubtedly have the potential to influence their children's career development, both positively and negatively, robust evidence of what, when and how parental behaviours constructively support their children's learning about career progression remains inconclusive. This is because formal, large-scale, preferably longitudinal evaluations, the results of which are available through publication, have not been conducted. However, this study has brought together a range of experiential evidence on engagement of parents in education, with a focus on CEG.

Approach and aim of the study

The aim of this study was to understand how parents and carers can be better supported by schools and colleges to feel more informed and confident about the support and advice they give to their children about their career choices. The methodology, comprising a literature review and interviews, was designed to collect and examine a range of evidence from different sources to provide an enhanced understanding of the potential role of parents (including carers and guardians) in providing support as part of CEG and to determine how they could be better supported.

Evidence on parental engagement in education and careers

There is much evidence that parental engagement in careers is important to facilitate and/or expand opportunities for young people, with a need for them to be 'career aspirants' that is supporters of education and career pathways and providers of information. Key findings that have emerged include:

- **The role of parents in careers development**

  The influence of parents is exerted through certain kinds of behaviours, as well as through family conditions that foster the development of values, attitudes and self-concepts in children.

- **Defining parental involvement and engagement**

  This can be defined as firstly, parent activities at home and within educational institutions (schools and colleges for those aged 11 to 18 years) that provide psychological, financial, learning and well-being support and structure; and secondly, institution based activities, which include communication and/or collaborations with teachers and careers practitioners, plus attendance and participation in school and college activities. Both types of involvement emerge from the evidence as having positive impacts on young people beyond careers.

- **Measuring involvement and engagement of parents in careers**

  There have been various attempts to measure parental support and engagement. Existing evidence indicates that levels of this engagement exist on a continuum from those parents who are fully disengaged, to parents engaged only at key points, through to those who are fully and actively engaged. Parental engagement is important for supporting the development of: information seeking and research behaviours; self-efficacy, career decision-making and confidence; planning, goal setting and creating a sense of direction; and career adaptability, flexibility and employability skills.

- **Impact of parent careers support and advice**

  Young people value parental support and often ask them to provide a 'rational' input into their career decision-making processes. Parents' own experiences of education influence and shape their recommendations and expectations for their children.

- **Approaches to engaging parents in careers**

  Parental engagement in CEG works well when parents can work in partnership with educational institutions to support learning and careers related activities. However, parents have different expectations and needs at different points in time, which influences the nature and level of engagement. Clear communication is essential, backed up with targeted careers resources and workshops for parents and their children.

Careers education and guidance in schools and colleges

Over the last 15 years, the expectations of CEG by governments in England have moved along a continuum from matching young people to jobs and/or attempting to tackle wider issues of social deprivation and societal (dis)engagement.

The initiatives uncovered in the review undertaken for this research suggest that enhancements to parental engagement and involvement in England are often associated with project funding. Evidence shows that embedding parental engagement in school and college programmes and curricula can be effective. Approaches in Scotland and Wales offer insights into how provision can be successfully embedded across the curriculum and how parents are recognised, valued and supported in CEG provision.

Through practitioner and expert stakeholder interviews a wide range of CEG related activities and interventions that engage parents were identified as taking place in schools and colleges across the UK, including: parents evenings; careers fairs; breakfast and coffee clubs; curriculum activities; personal guidance sessions; careers open days; collaborative careers events with other schools and colleges; employer/sectoral events; expert presentations on topics such as the future labour market, employability skills, apprenticeships, etc.; and career guidance sessions for parents.

Examples of interventions engaging parents in the UK

With CEC support, Adviza is currently delivering a set of three interactive workshops, '**Help your child achieve their goals'**, aimed at parents and their Year 10 children to support them with future options. Workshops are offered in the early evening offer parents and young people a space to work together to create a shared understanding of career choices and pathways.

The **Brilliant Club** is a charity connecting schools and universities. Its aim is to increase the number of young people from under-represented backgrounds (aged 10-18 years) from non-

selective schools to progress to higher education. It offers activities that develop the career aspirations of academically able young learners. Parents are supported to participate in the activities organised by the Club so they can have shared experiences and dialogue with their children.

The **Maths with Parents** intervention illustrates how parents of primary school students (aged 3-11 years) can be encouraged to engage with schools and get involved in their child's learning. Maths with Parents is a web-based programme that supports parental involvement in their child's learning through supported activities at home. Key learning from this initiative could potentially be transferred to parents of older students and to a careers context.

A number of **online interventions, apps and websites** have been developed to engage parents offering ways in which to communicate, disseminate and enable access to information. It is unclear how these programmes and subscription services are funded, quality assured, updated and promoted to parents. Parents may also require support to make full use of online content.

One particular example of an online intervention is the **INSPiRED teenager programme**. This is a paid for online video course and e-book for parents and their children to 'learn at home together', but can also be delivered face-to-face. It aims to help parents become more confident, better informed and able to use coaching techniques with their children.

Policies and strategies to engage parents from other countries

Neither national nor international evaluation evidence on parental engagement policies that have had a positive impact on children's career development is strong.

However, the need to support parents who are recognised as having a positive impact on children's career development is shaping practice and guidance, both in the UK and internationally.

National and international evidence reveals how parental engagement in CEG is moving away from passive forms of involvement and information giving, to creating space for active engagement, collaboration and communication between parents and educational institutions.

National policies and strategies that identify how the education system could engage parents were found in, for example, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, and the Netherlands. Such policies typically facilitate CEG rather than making it mandatory.

Examples of interventions with parents from other countries

Ways in which policies are interpreted and implemented vary amongst and within countries. Some features of practice from international examples include:

- The **Parents as Career Transition Support** (PACTS) program in Australia provides parents with up-to-date information related to their children's transitions through group workshops. A trained facilitator discusses with parents how they can support their children's career aspirations and preferences with confidence.

- The **Future to Discover** project in Canada comprised a range of interventions that supported the education and labour market outcomes of under-represented students. The Explore your Horizons programme of workshops explored educational options in post-secondary education. It offered enhanced career planning and information on the costs and benefits of post-secondary education. The aim was to increase the

knowledge of young people and their parents about future options, but also provide guidance to parents on how to support their children in this process.

- **Family Conference** is the method used in Czechia to support a young person in a difficult situation or in a crisis. It is also used to support disadvantaged groups, like migrants. A key principle is the full integration of parents, who take responsibility to mobilise resources to help the young person in need.

- In France, voluntary organisations are working with schools to help tackle social inequalities by **supporting young people with their educational journey**. Higher education students are providing tutoring support on a voluntary basis to young people and their parents in their homes to raise aspirations. The volunteers spend two hours a week with the family over the year creating a positive bond.

- In Germany, Vodafone has published a **handbook of good practice**, with practical examples of how to get parents involved in schools. Although the focus is not specifically careers education, the practical suggestions are equally transferable to CEG. Four 'pillars' are identified: building relations, respectful communications, involvement in different activities, and ways of cooperating with parents.

- In Hong Kong, as part of **The CLAP for Youth project**, an award for parents has been introduced to support parents to realise their own career dream. The underpinning rational being that if parents can be supported to succeed in achieving their own career dream, they are more likely to motivate and support their children in achieving theirs.

- In the Netherlands, **Parents Turn** was a government-funded project in secondary education. Four career interventions were delivered by career teachers with the support of tutors, teachers and heads of department at their schools. Parents and their children attended the sessions together, which aimed to support parents in facilitating their children's career building.

- **Individual Learning Plans** (ILP) was highlighted in the USA as a common mechanism for integrating parents into the CEG programme, involving annual meetings with the parent and student, to record progress and difficulties and negotiate a career action plan for the next year.

Learning from others in the design and delivery of careers-related activities for parents

From the evidence, key learning that has emerged in relation to the design, development and delivery of careers-related activities and programmes to support parental knowledge and engagement in careers advice includes: strategic leadership and management support; parental involvement in the design of CEG activities; targeted, personalised communication to parents; and mixed delivery programmes involving a range of activities, events, etc.

Key features of current parental engagement strategies in schools and colleges include:

- Planned activities embedded across the school and college as part of their service;

- Effective leadership;

- Collaboration and engagement between the educational institution and parents;

- CPD to support careers practitioners and education staff in their engagement with parents;

- Clear communication plans to engage parents including the use of digital tools; and

- Ongoing monitoring and development for sustained improvement.

The overall aim of a parental engagement strategy is to ensure that parents are supported, ultimately reinforcing and complementing the advice and guidance delivered by schools and colleges.

Importantly, evidence highlights challenges to parental engagement in the UK with some highlighting how: the timing of events often conflicts with parents' working hours; there are issues around when and how careers support is communicated; and that there is a general lack of time, space and resources available within educational institutions. Parental engagement activities can be resource intensive, so sustainability emerges as an important issue.

Conclusions

There is a significant body of evidence outlining the importance of parents in young people's career decision making. Overall, evidence emphasises the need for parents to be supported by schools and colleges to develop their knowledge and understanding of choices and future careers so that they, in turn, can provide better career support and advice for their children.

There is not, however, a significant body of robust literature evidencing the approaches that have most impact regarding engagement of parents within CEG programmes. However, from our examination of current practice, schools and colleges could consider supporting parents and young people by:

- **Promoting and communicating** the CEG activities across the curriculum by involving parents wherever possible, for example, asking them to contribute to classroom activities, getting involved in homework activities and through their integration in careers days;

- **Redesigning existing activities** to involve parents, so, for example, inviting parents to their child's personal guidance session (where appropriate), careers fairs/ open days and ensuring they are held at times when parents are more likely to attend;

- **Creating parent-friendly environments** with activities to draw parents into the school or college, such as breakfast and coffee clubs, and career guidance sessions for parents;

- **Designing new activities** that engage parents, employers and the local community, such as 'meet the employer events', 'guess my job' and informational events on topics requested by parents that involve local experts;

- **Using technology** to engage and support parents in their child's learning and CEG, since this offers ways in which to communicate, disseminate and enable access to information.

Careers practitioners also have a role in supporting both parents and their children in their career conversations to ensure they are supportive, informative and useful. Where parental support is absent, it could be argued that practitioners have a duty of care to the young person as well providing support to parents, where appropriate.

To take these research findings forward pilots are needed in schools and colleges to test a range of careers interventions and activities. Evaluating these pilots would provide a better evidence base in which to take careers practice forward.

1. Introduction

Career guidance is important for young people making informed decisions about their educational and learning pathways. Ensuring that they have access to career support and up-to-date career information is essential, but parents (this term is used throughout to refer to parents, carers and guardians) also need support, and information, so that they may assist those in their care with career decision-making more effectively. In ever-changing labour markets, parents have an increasingly crucial role to play, so there is an urgent need for those young people in education, as well as their parents, to understand not only the options within education and training, but also the sometimes bewildering array of career progression routes available that follow (Langley, Hooley, & Bertuchi, 2014). Whilst there is a growing body of evidence on the importance of the role of parents in this respect, it is also recognised that parents are not always confident about the advice and support they provide because of their own lack understanding of available pathways and labour market options. Recent surveys of parents and students reported that just three in five parents felt confident in advising their child about 'how they can achieve their career/job goals' or 'what career/job options would be best for them' (Knibbs et al., 2018; Lindley et al., 2019). There is a need, therefore, to understand how parents and carers can be better supported by schools and colleges to feel more informed and confident with their support and advice. It was the aim of the research study that underpinned this evidence report to address this gap, as well as identify evidence relevant to those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The ways in which parents, carers and extended family can effectively perform this supporting role in career transitions into the labour market are increasingly becoming the focus of research and discussion, both nationally (e.g. Haywood, Brennan, & Molesworth, 2010; Hooley, Matheson, & Watts, 2014; Irwin, & Elley, 2012; Knibbs et al., 2018; Lindley et al., 2019; Youth employment UK, 2019) and internationally (e.g. Aaltonen, 2016; Broadbent, Cacciattolo, & Papadopoulos, 2012; Çelik, 2019; Musset, & Mýtna Kureková, 2018; Rogers, Creed, & Praskova, 2018; Ross, & Lloyd, 2013; Turan, Celik, & Turan, 2014; Zhang, Yuen, & Chen, 2015). Continued parental support throughout a young person's education and career trajectory is seen as a key factor contributing to successful career development, with parents operating across different roles, including: advisers, supporters, information providers, advocates, role models, aspirants and facilitators. In a context of entwined technological advancement and newly emerging educational and training qualification routes, parents can often find it challenging to stay reliably informed so that they can, in turn, advise their children with confidence. Careers education plays a key role in not only supporting young people directly while in education and training, but also in engaging and involving parents through various means so that they understand, better, their children's current options for education and career pathways.

1.1. Approach and aim of the study

The overall aim of the research study was to understand how parents can be better supported by schools and colleges to feel more informed and confident with their support and advice to their children about their career choices. It has examined evidence from the UK and internationally, as well as speaking to professionals with responsibility for supporting parents. A key element of the research was to identify careers interventions involving parents, so recommendations could be identified that may be practical and implementable.

As indicated above, in section 1, the term 'parent' is used throughout this report (unless otherwise stated) to refer to parents, carers and guardians. The terms 'career education', 'information', 'advice' and 'guidance' are used interchangeably and in different combinations. Whatever the terms used, they reflect the services schools and colleges provide to support students (young people) with their education and learning decisions, together with the mediation of an accurate understanding of the labour market, with available vocations.

1.2. Methodology

A methodology comprising desk research and interviews was designed to collect and examine evidence that would develop an enhanced understanding of the role of parents in providing careers support and to determine how they could be better supported.

The initial phase of the study adopted a collaborative, co-design approach where the commissioners and researchers worked together to refine the methodology and develop research protocols and tools (including interview guides, consent forms, and participant information leaflets). These formed the basis of the application to the University of Warwick's research ethics committee for approval (Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, HSSREC). Full ethical approval was granted.

The study comprised: a literature and international system review; evidence gathering from experts; reporting; and dissemination.

1.2.1. Literature and international system review

Two literature review strategies were implemented that enabled a comprehensive review; systematic and narrative. The primary focus of the overall review was on parental engagement and involvement in careers education and guidance (CEG), together with approaches adopted by schools, colleges and others to engage parents in providing high quality careers guidance, by increasing their capability to assist children in their care and the support needed in this role.

First, a systematic search strategy was undertaken in eight databases (ABI/Inform; OECD iLibrary; Business Source Premier; Science Direct; Oxford Journals Online; Sage Premier; Wiley online library) and one platform (EBSCO) which enabled access to a further 10 databases. This robust review methodology comprised five phases: setting review parameters (such as publication period, keywords, inclusion and exclusion criteria); searching; screening; data extraction; and synthesis.

The following keywords were used to make up the search strategy with keyword 1 used in combination with keyword 2. Keyword 3 was only used to refine searches with high numbers of returns. Boolean operators, truncation and wildcards were used to extend the searches and ensure optimum coverage of the databases. Keywords included in the search strategy were as follows:

- Keyword 1: parent; family; school; parental involvement; parental engagement.

- Keyword 2: career(s); career(s) advice; career(s) guidance; careers education; careers information; counselling; counsellor; careers information, advice and guidance; CEG; CEIAG.

- Keyword 3: secondary; post-secondary; vocational education; further education; college; VET; employability; career readiness; school-to-work transition; school-family-community partnership.

These keywords were also used to search a number of databases and websites for grey literature. The following were searched: Ethos.bl.uk; OpenGrey; Professional bodies and careers guidance (NICEC; CDI; Skills Development Scotland; Careers Wales); E4Education; Unifrog; Learning Foundation; National College for School Leadership; AccessHE; plus, professional body magazines.

Searches of databases and grey literature, plus the use of our own databases resulted in over 9,300 sources being screened, with 244 sources examined more closely, illustrating that the scope of the topic was too broad. The evidence identified using this approach highlighted that a significant number of academic articles were broadly in-scope, but very few were directly in-scope (main focus of article) for the research. The majority of the articles mentioned 'parents' (the term 'carer' is rarely used) as important actors (or stakeholders) in providing careers support to their children evidencing their involvement and engagement in careers. Few articles report on practices supporting parents in this role. It is noticeable that there is limited evidence in the academic literature from the UK, with grey literature providing more evidence on interventions, activities and practices. Internationally literature yielded more evidence on practices to support and engage parents.

As part of screening phase, the quality of the evidence was assessed by an analysis of the strengths and limitations of studies to help 'weight' the findings and conclusions of different studies. These 'weights of evidence' were based upon:

- The soundness of studies (internal methodological coherence), based upon the study only;

- The appropriateness of the research design and analysis used for answering the review question;

- The relevance of the study topic focus (from the sample measures, scenario, or other indicator of the focus of the study) to the review question; and

- An overall weight taking into account the points listed above (EPPI-Centre methodology, 2002),

This quality assessment helped ensure that the evidence included was robust, but also enabled researcher judgement to be used to select appropriate evidence from small scale studies and those using larger samples of randomised control trails. The majority of evidence was qualitative in nature. The data extraction framework enabled consistency in how evidence was recorded.

To address the limitations of a systematic approach for this topic, a narrative approach (Bell, 2003) to the review was also adopted. Oomen (2018) argues that the field is simply not coherent enough for a systematic literature review to yield many useful results. Instead, she argues a narrative approach to a literature review on parental influence in the careers field makes more sense. Some of the literature she highlights includes the following.

> 'Children's school success benefits from parental involvement as reflected in the degree of parent-teacher contact (Englund et al., 2004), participation in school activities and parent-child discussion about school-related matters (Fan & Chen, 2001; Jeynes, 2007), which gives young children an educational advantage over students whose parents are less involved. However, the educational attainment of the involved parents also appears to make a difference to their child's academic attainment. Involved but lower-educated parents affect their child's academic and occupational

aspirations but appear not to support their academic attainment to achieve high status occupations (Hill et al., 2004; Lareau, 2011).' (Oomen, 2018, p. 66).

Following Oomen's recommendation, a narrative approach was adopted for the international literature following up narrative themes that were highlighted in a workshop on 'the role of parents in careers education', held at the International Association of Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG) conference in Bratislava in September 2019. This narrative approach evolved through a dynamic interplay between research questions, theory, experience, conversation, and reflection. This provided the opportunity to: 'probe and work towards an in-depth understanding of patterns of meaning-making among a relatively small group of people' (Bell, 2003, p.95), who were knowledgeable about the role of parental engagement and involvement in careers. This workshop provided the opportunity to reflect, probe and discuss parental engagement with international researchers and practitioners in the field, both individually and collectively. Subsequently, eight initiatives were followed up in-depth. Expert contributions were elicited from international researchers, and practitioners, from Czechia, Germany, Hong Kong, Iceland, the Netherlands and the USA. Substantive contributions presented at the IAEVG conference from Australia and Canada were also utilised in the review of evidence. Using this same approach, the research team also drew upon their own research database, as well as taking into account other relevant reviews. The themes identified and specific leads generated were followed up with additional web searches, including through snowballing from the leads generated. The international review focused on approaches and interventions to engaging parents, both within the education and vocational education and training (VET) sectors.

The final phase of the review involved the synthesis and reporting of evidence through the development of a framework for data analyses. Evidence was synthesised and presented by theme.

1.2.2. Expert interviews

The review was supplemented with practitioner and expert stakeholder interviews. In the UK, six career guidance practitioners were interviewed; three who were delivering one-to-one or personal guidance and three in a careers leader or leadership role. Practitioners were in schools (academies, state and independent) and colleges from across England in urban, rural, poor and affluent areas. Some practitioners were engaged in ongoing work to involve parents, and others were engaged in smaller and more innovative activities. The aim was to capture the practitioner's experiences of engaging parents in careers activities (and the school or college more widely) and, significantly, activities that are unlikely to be published or widely disseminated. To complement the UK interviews and to support the international review, expert interviews were also undertaken with five international experts engaged in careers education activities with parents, together with in-depth discussions with others (see section 1.2.1, above). A long list of possible interviewees was generated, including from funders and an international workshop on parental engagement. In consultation with funders about an appropriate balance of country examples and interviewees were chosen. The aim was to capture evidence on international examples.

Additionally, ten expert stakeholder interviews were undertaken in the UK, including policy makers, leaders in the field and representatives of professional bodies. Interviewees were asked to identify any grey literature or small interventions to supplement the review. The aim

of these interviews was to support the development of recommendations and enhance understanding of review findings.

Interviews typically lasted from 45-60 minutes and were conducted at a time convenient to the interviewees by telephone, videoconference and/or face-to-face. All interviewees formally consented to participate in the research with 18 agreeing to be named in the acknowledgement as contributing to the study. All interviews were thematically written up and analysed with evidence included throughout this report.

1.3. Reporting and dissemination

This report is the main output of the study, with a workshop and webinars also produced to support and initiate discussions with key stakeholders and practitioners about how better to support parents in providing careers advice to their children. A practice report was also produced to highlight current activities and interventions engaging parents.

1.4. Report structure

Following this introduction, section 2 summarises evidence from the UK and internationally on parental engagement in education and careers focusing on information, emotional and practical support. The impact of parental engagement and involvement on young people's self-efficacy, career decision-making, career exploration and career development is discussed. From the evidence we can identify common approaches that are being used to engage parents.

Section 3 draws upon the experiential evidence from the interviews with practitioner and expert stakeholders. It provides some context on how education and careers policies have shaped CEG provision and services for young people and their parents in England. Some current interventions and activities that engage parents in CEG in the UK are described.

Section 4 focuses on international policies and strategies that engage parents in CEG presenting examples from selected countries – Australia, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, and USA. Examples of international interventions are described and discussed in section 5. These sections mainly draw upon information and experiential evidence from international expert practitioners and stakeholders.

Section 6 and 7 present, respectively, key conclusions from the study and recommendations.

2. Evidence on parental engagement in education and careers

2.1. Introduction

This section of the report draws together wide-ranging evidence from the UK and internationally that provides an enhanced understanding of the influence of parental involvement and engagement on young people's educational career choices, career aspirations and career decision self-efficacy. This affords a foundation for understanding how parents engage with schools and colleges and how they may be better supported.

It should be noted that there is significant evidence and debate on involving parents in their young people's education and training and supporting engagement with educational institutions, which is not the particular focus of this report. However, a recent report by the Education Endowment Foundation (van Poortvliet, Axford, & Lloyd, 2018) on how UK schools can engage parents offers some insights that are transferable and relevant in a careers education context. It recommends that schools:

- Critically review how they work with parents to enable a better link with home and school learning environments;
- Provide strategies to support learning at home;
- Tailor school communications to support positive dialogue; and
- Offer more sustained and intensive support where needed.

International guidance on engaging parents in educational institutions reiterates and supports this evidence from the UK. For example, Portugal's Ministry of Education suggests that it is essential for parents to be involved in their children's education through contact with their teachers and participation in schools' activities (Instituto de Orientação Profissional, Universidade de Lisboa, 2018). Collaboration is highlighted as necessary to supporting both the school and the family. Creating a space for communication and dialogue between parents and their children creates trust and openness (ibid.). From the Netherlands, a similar range of interventions were found to have a positive impact on young people's academic achievements, including: reading at home; raising parents' aspirations for their children's academic achievement and schooling; improving communication between parents and children regarding school; and encouraging parental support for learning (Boonk, Gijselaers, Mitzen, & Brand-Gruwel, 2018).

Cumulatively, this evidence provides initial insights into generic practices for parental engagement that offer a framework for reviewing specific evidence on parental engagements in CEG.

2.2. The role of parents in careers development

The Whiston and Keller's (2004) study on the influence of the family of origin on career development provides a thorough review of traditional career theories on the nature of parental support in careers decisions of young people. Although some of the material may be regarded as somewhat dated, it nevertheless represents an historic perspective on what has been known for some time in this area. Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT)(Lent et al., 1994,

2002) applied Bandura's (1986) concept of self-efficacy to career development processes and pinpointed it as an important personal variable for understanding career development. According to SCCT, career self-efficacy can be defined as the confidence in one's ability to manage career development and work-related tasks. Indeed, it is generally recognised that parents are a major influence on the career development of their children (Whiston & Keller, 2004). This influence is exerted through certain kinds of parental behaviours as well as through family conditions that foster the development of values, attitudes, and self-concepts in children (Schroedel & Carnahan, 1991). Although young people become progressively independent from their parents during adolescence, they continue to depend heavily on parents in the area of career development (Sebald, 1989). Research also shows that adolescents speak most frequently about career issues with their parents (Otto, 2000) and name parents as being a major influence during educational and career transitions (Knibbs et al., 2018; Lindley et al., 2019; Mortimer, Zimmer-Gembeck, Holmes, & Shanahan, 2002).

While parents' desire to support their children may be incongruent with a young person's wish for self-determination and independence (Powers, Geenen, & Powers, 2009), it has long been established that high levels of parental involvement can be a critical factor in promoting successful transitions of young people into adulthood (Hasazi, Gordon, & Roe, 1985). Although parents play an important role in their young person's career development process, exactly what they do to encourage them to learn about careers is largely unknown. Various studies that have examined family contributions to a young person's career development and future plans have focused on general family attributes rather than on career-specific ones (e.g. Hargrove, Inman, & Crane, 2005).

Research shows that young people themselves tend to report parental support as an influential aspect in their career development (e.g. Altman, 1997; Haywood, Brennan, & Molesworth, 2010; Knibbs et al., 2018; Phillips, Blustein, Jobin-Davis, & White, 2002; Ross, & Lloyd, 2013; Schultheiss, Kress, Manzi, & Glasscock, 2001; Young et al., 2001; Youth employment UK, 2019). Career-related parental support is conceived as a behaviour in which parents let their children make their own choices while offering orientation and instrumental support (e.g., writing applications) if needed (Phillips et al., 2002), encouraging them to explore career interests and abilities as well as various occupational options. This support includes helping young people to reflect on relevant career choice experiences (Schultheiss et al., 2001). Adolescents consider these behaviours as supporting their motivation to engage in the career preparation process (Phillips et al., 2002).

According to Keller and Whiston (2008), parents can act as a source of general psychosocial support (e.g., giving encouragement) by offering instrumental guidance and support for their child's career (e.g., talking about specific careers or finding information on the Internet). A factor found significant in the domain of career construction is parent-child career-related interactions. Research on this issue has focused only on structured interactions, rather than on spontaneous ones (e.g., Young, Paseluikho, & Valach, 1997). Support from parents also facilitates children's engagement in career-related learning experiences that shape self-efficacy (Turner & Lapan, 2002).

2.3. Perceptions of parental support in career development

From the evidence, perceptions of parental support in career development emerge as important. Some studies confirm that parents are only one of a number of potential contributors to careers education programs in schools (Andrews, & Hooley, 2016). There is also evidence

that parents affect career choice more than careers practitioners, teachers, friends, other relatives, or people working in their field of interest. New evidence suggests, however, that while young people do not believe that parents influenced their study choices (19%), they rate their parents as a really useful source of careers support (64%) and help with employability skills (66%) (Youth employment UK, 2019).

Research from Australia and the US highlight the range of influences on young people's career development and their choices, with parental support being one such influence. For instance, Turner and Lapan (2002) examined the relative contributions of proximal and distal supports to the career interests and career self-efficacy in a multi-ethnic sample of middle school students in the US. They found that perceived parental support accounted for 29% to 43% of the total unique variance in career self-efficacy. The results suggest that the strong associations between young peoples' perceptions of parental support for pursuing particular types of careers and the confidence young people have for performing tasks related to those careers may stand in contrast to older adolescents' dependence on other environmental career support, such as from peers. It is particularly noteworthy that for younger adolescents, parental support accounted for as much as approximately one third to almost one half of their career-task related confidence. It is, therefore, suggested that early adolescence may be a critical time for parental involvement in the career development of their young people.

Turner and Lapan (2002) recommended that to assist parents in increasing the career self-efficacy of their young people, they should be given the opportunity to understand more thoroughly the types of careers that will be available for them. To do this, professional school counsellors should provide parents with career information about specific occupations. This career information can be presented in various ways, including weekly columns in the school bulletin, information about highlighted careers on school listservs, and family nights at the school career centre. Other recommendations included professional school counsellors holding parent training seminars to teach parents career-related communication skills, such as: how to listen to the children's career concerns; how to provide children with verbal feedback about career choices; and how to provide children with individual instruction in work-related skills and values (Paa, & McWhirter, 2000; Young, & Friesen, 1992).

More recent exploratory research in the US by Howard, Flanagan, Castine and Walsh (2015) on the perceived influences on the career choices of children and youth discuss how this understanding can shape CEG for young people. The results suggested that children can freely generate, identify, and describe influences that shape career choice and aspiration. These findings underscore children's capacity to understand their own experiences related to career choice. Similarly, research in Australia found young people engaged in CEG developed their career choices and vocational identities, but that these may counter parents understanding of the labour market (Rogers, Creed, & Praskova, 2018).

Overall, evidence indicates that a better understanding of what young people are consulting about and with whom, as they form career aspirations, will allow career development experts to provide perceived influential parties, including parents, with quality strategies to support and promote positive career development among young people. Moreover, educating young people about the range of factors that influence career decision-making can promote the use of more deliberate career choice strategies by increasing awareness of the many factors that shape decisions.

2.4.   Defining parental involvement and engagement

From the evidence examined, it is clear that the terms 'parental involvement' and 'parental engagement' define two different, but complementary types of activities. First, parent activities at home and within educational institutions (schools and colleges for those aged 11 to 18 years) that provide psychological, financial, learning and well-being support and structure. Second, is institution-based activities that include communication and/or collaborations with teachers and careers practitioners, plus attendance and participation in school and college activities. Both types of activities emerge from the evidence as having positive impacts on young people beyond careers (for further debates on this definition see: Boonk, Gijselaers, Mitzen, & Brand-Gruwel, 2018; Goodall & Vorhaus, 2011; and Goodall, & Montgomery, 2014).

In terms of careers education, advice and support, these terms require further refinement. The Career-related Parent Support Scale (Turner et al., 2003, p.85) provides one useful framework for conceptualising parental support. This framework is grounded in the development of self-efficacy (see Bandura, 1977, 2006). Parental careers support is defined, fourfold:

1. Instrumental assistance – parents' support with their children's career-related skill development;

2. Career-related modelling – parents' own examples of relevant career-related behaviours and experiences;

3. Verbal encouragement – parents' praise and encouragement associated with their children's educational and career development; and

4. Emotional support – parents' support with their children's experiences of educational and career development.

While all of these types of support are reflected and illustrated in the evidence presented throughout this section, perhaps a more accessible conceptualisation is: practical support (such as providing financial and material support, researching and analysing information in order to provide rational input into discussions); informational support (such as drawing on their own experiences and knowledge); and emotional support (such as offering psychological help, enabling discussions on feelings, and offering empathy).

2.5.   Measuring involvement and engagement of parents in careers

To achieve a comprehensive understanding of the support that parents could provide in careers education, it is important to integrate knowledge about their influence and impact on both educational attainments (as they can influence and/or determine educational and vocational options) and career decisions. Whilst there have been various attempts to measure parental support and engagement, evidence indicates that levels of this engagement exist on a continuum from those parents who are fully disengaged, to parents engaged only at key points, through to those who are fully and actively engaged. This was reflected by all practitioners interviewed based on their experience and a number of expert stakeholder and international interviewees.

In terms of practical, informational and emotional support, there may be a fine line between positive involvement of parents and over-parenting. Bradley-Geist and Olson-Buchanan's study (2014) undertaken in the US, surveyed 482 college undergraduates and reported that parental involvement had a positive impact on young people's intentions to continue in education. It was hypothesised that young people felt psychologically and financially

supported by their parents. Similar findings were reported in other studies of college undergraduates in the US (Kyong-Ah, Yoo, & Gagne, 2017; Padilla-Walker, & Nelson, 2012). In contrast, the recent discussions on 'helicopter parents' – defined as middle-class parents who take an increasingly active role in their children's lives (Bradley-Geist, & Olson-Buchanan, 2014; Kyong-Ah, Yoo, & Gagne, 2017; Padilla-Walker, & Nelson, 2012) – illustrate how parental involvement can be less positive. Research has explored the differences between this form of parental involvement and over-parenting with the latter having a negative impact, particularly in terms of self-efficacy (Bradley-Geist, & Olson-Buchanan, 2014; Gagnon, 2019; Kyong-Ah, Yoo, & Gagne, 2017).

Further evidence suggests that emotional and practical (or material) support are important for creating positive career exploration activities and young person's agency (Bradley-Geist, & Olson-Buchanan, 2014; Pappas, & Kounenou, 2011; Zhang, Yuen, & Chen, 2015). In the US, Olle and Foud (2015) quantitatively assessed what had a positive impact on high school seniors and juniors. The finding was that parental support, particularly emotional support, increased young people's agency. This was similarly reported in Finland where parental support resulted in autonomous motivations and confidence in post-secondary transitions (Vasalampi, Kiuru, & Salmela-Aro, 2018). Corey and Chen (2019), however, found that both lack of parental support and pressure from parents regarding career choices had negatively impacted the career exploration activities of young Canadian women. This in-depth qualitative study explored the experiences of 20 young people and the role of parents in their career choices. The study recommended that young people need to work with careers practitioners to ensure: their voices are heard; they develop autonomy; and are encouraged to seek support from others. The same study also suggested that some parents may need counselling to help understand how to support their children.

Related to this, the integration of parents into CEG can represent a proxy for increasing social capital. Education is seen as key to social mobility, with social class (Crawford, Macmillan, & Vignoles, 2014) and intergenerational class reproduction exerting negative influences on educational attainment inequalities (Crompton, 2006; Thompson, 2019). Those living in poorer areas or areas with high unemployment are less likely to have opportunities for career learning or be in contact with role models, which limits their perceptions of what is possible. This, in turn, suggests that parents' informational support will be constrained by their own experiences. This evidence was reflected by two expert stakeholder interviewees who suggested that work experience represents a valuable source of enhancing the social capital of children. Some do not have easy access to work experiences, including or beyond educational provision. Equally, some young people have easier access to opportunities for increasing their social capital in this way than others. If we accept that parental socio-economic background represents differential access to social capital, then those parents with easier access to resources that enhance social capital need to be engaged in CEG to help young people without such access.

Evidence from the UK supports this finding, concluding that family background and location impacts on young people's education choices, further leaning and whether they aspire or go on to higher education (e.g. Goodman, et al., 2010; Hooley, Matheson & Watts, 2014; Irwin, & Elley, 2012; Kintrea, St Clair, & Houston, 2011; Ross, & Lloyd, 2013). Research from the UK also found the young people from poorer households had poor educational outcomes due to the lack of parental support, low aspiration, a stressful home life and poor mental wellbeing (Baars, et al., 2018; Millard, et al., 2018). Further research from the UK and France suggest a relationship exists between socio-economic status and the extent to which parents are involved in CEG (Breen, Van de Werfhorst, & Jæger, 2014; European Commission/ICF, 2015;

Phillips, 2015; Ross, & Lloyd, 2013). For instance, parents from classes ABC1 (higher socio-economic social classes[1]) were likely to see themselves as more involved in, and more influential on, their young people's decisions. Those in classes C2DE (manual) were less involved, and less likely to see themselves as influential (European Commission/ICF, 2015). Overall, for informational support to be effective or heard, there needs to be alignment between the aspirations of parents and the young people in their care (Kintrea, St Clair, & Houston, 2011). Two international expert interviewees, however, did highlight the problems that could be created by parents from higher socio-economic groups who approached career support for their young people from their own self-perception as highly knowledgeable, because of their own educational background and labour market success. Often, these parents had not updated themselves on changes to, for example, educational pathways, so were at risk of providing incorrect or incomplete information to their young people. Evidence confirms that parents lack knowledge, particularly, of vocational routes (Aaltonen, 2016; Blenkinsop et al., 2006; Lynch, Sims, & Wespieser, 2015).

Research in the UK (including qualitative studies and a longitudinal study that linked and analysed a number of national datasets related to educational attainment, pathways, parental social economic position and attitudes) found that young people from poorer families underachieve in education, as a result of poor family living conditions and young people's aspirations, attitudes and behaviours (Baars et al., 2018; Goodman et al., 2010; Millard et al., 2018; Ross, & Lloyd, 2013). Baars and colleagues (2018) suggest that targeting communications and creating educational environments that are parent-friendly can encourage parental engagement in their young people's learning.

Similar findings were reported from research undertaken in Australia by Homel and Ryan (2014). Young people from poor backgrounds are more likely not to have conducive home learning environments, which shapes attitudes and beliefs regarding education and post-education learning. The positive impact of creating a positive family learning environment, where parents are engaged and involved, is well documented with positive economic, educational and social outcomes reported (NRDC, 2012). It should be noted that lack of parental engagement is not always about lack of interest or willingness, but about time and resources (Millard et al., 2018). Goodman and colleagues (2010) suggest that young people from poor backgrounds see themselves as less academically able, compounded by a lack of aspiration on the part of both the young people and their parents. Aspirations, attitudes and behaviours towards education were found to be formed at early age, emphasising the need for early interventions. One international expert interviewee also confirmed this need, based on their own experiences of practice research.

Research from the UK and Finland found that a parent's own experiences of education influenced and shaped their recommendations and expectations for their young people (Aaltonen, 2016; Baars et al., 2018). These were found to be positive where parents felt they had missed an opportunity and wanted their young people to do better than they had, but also negative where parents has struggled at school, so had urged their young people to consider a vocational route (Aaltonen, 2016). However, a study of high-attaining schools in the UK reported being more confident in being able to shift parents' expectations and aspirations for their young people (Baars et al., 2018).

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[1] This is a socio-economic classification produced by the UK Office for National Statistics, for more information see: https://ukgeographics.co.uk/blog/social-grade-a-b-c1-c2-d-e.

Research from the UK and Europe noted that immigrant and refugee parents tend to find it hard to integrate in their local labour markets (Aaltonen, 2016; Newman, Bimrose, Nielsen, & Zacher, 2018). This suggests a need for targeted and specialised careers support (Bimrose, & McNair, 2011) to help combat misconceptions about education and the opportunities available to them and their young people, thus improving the informational support a parent can provide. Since schools and colleges have a legal responsibility to inform parents about the schools activities, one study recommends this as a way to support the social mobility of young people, particularly in families were the young person may be the first to go to university (Hooley, Matheson & Watts, 2014).

Careers practitioners in the UK were found to have little impact on career choices, with parents having the greater influence (Haywood, Brennan, & Molesworth, 2010). Examining evidence from other countries on career choices, informational support from parents was sometimes found to be partial. For instance, the perceived low status or quality of vocational routes in some countries results in a lack of parental interest in, and support for, these educational routes (China: Chak-keung Wong, & Jing Liu, 2010 and Zhang, Yuen, & Chen, 2015; Finland: Aaltonen, 2016; UK: Haywood, Brennan, & Molesworth, 2010 and Irwin, & Elley, 2012). This was further confirmed by interviews with practitioners and expert stakeholders, both national and international. Siblings have also been found to negatively impact on young people's decisions between academic and vocational choices (Aaltonen, 2016). Young people from higher socio-economic social classes, viewed vocational education routes as suitable for those from poorer families or of lower social economic class. This was again confirmed by a number of interviewees who suggested that vocational routes, such as apprenticeships, are not perceived as good routes by parents, discouraging uptake by young people (Practitioners A, C; Expert stakeholders).

The role of siblings in providing informational support for careers is emphasised by research. In Australia, a study of secondary school students found that whilst parents were the highest reported sources of careers information, siblings were also reported to be significant sources of support. (Broadbent, Cacciattolo, & Papadopoulos, 2012). Furthermore, qualitative research from Finland examined young people's transitions from less privileged backgrounds and the resources they use to make decisions (Aaltonen, 2016). Part of the study focused on the role of siblings in education and career decision-making as a source of support and rivalry, as well as competition for resources and/or attention. Siblings were found to be particularly influential in educational choices as they were considered less impartial or discreet than parents. Older siblings who had good experiences in education tended to be most positive. This suggests that career interventions focused on parental engagement should include siblings.

Overall, parental engagement in careers is important to facilitate and/or expand opportunities for young people to draw upon a variety of sources and experiences to help with their career decisions (Broadbent, Cacciattolo, & Papadopoulos, 2012). This includes work experiences, attendance at careers fairs, internet access, career guidance interviews, with the school acting as a source of information. Broadbent and colleagues (2012) concluded that parents, family and significant adults need to be 'career aspirants' defined as supporting a young person's chosen career path by creating a safe place in which young people can test their ideas. The impact of parental careers support is discussed next.

2.6. Impact of parent careers support and advice

Extensive evidence exists on the positive impacts of career-related parental support on their children's career decision-making self-efficacy (e.g. Olle & Foud, 2015; Mulcahy, & Baars, 2018; Pappas, & Kounenou, 2011; Ross, & Lloyd, 2013). Research from Greece, for example, confirms a correlation between a young person's career decision-making, their self-efficacy and parental influence (Pappas, & Kounenou, 2011). The study, undertaken with 148 post-secondary vocational students, measured career decision-making self-efficacy and then their parent's career decision-making. Whilst a father's perceived educational level was found to have some influence on self-efficacy, it was mothers who were found to have a greater positive influence on career decision-making self-efficacy (see also Bonnard, Giret, & Lambert-Le Mener, 2014).

Other international evidence, particularly from China, suggests that parental support can enhance the vocational aspirations, self-efficacy, career decision-making, and career expectations of young people, and that this, in turn, supports the development of employability skills (Chak-keung Wong, & Jing Liu, 2010; Zhang, Yuen, & Chen, 2015). Chak-keung Wong and Jing Liu (2010) suggested a number of interventions could encourage parental support for vocational courses, including industry learning seminars, career talks, and fieldtrips involving both parents and their children, whilst for young people, direct experience of industries through internships and work experience opportunities are advocated.

In another study from China, Guan, Capezio, Restubog, Read, Lajom and Li (2016) examined the role of traditionality in the relationships among parental support, career decision-making self-efficacy and career adaptability. Key points were:

- Parental support was positively associated with career adaptability;

- Parental support was positively associated career decision-making self-efficacy; and

- Low traditionality beliefs strengthened the indirect effects of parental support in predicting career adaptability.

They concluded that the career adaptability of Chinese undergraduates was developed in families where there were high levels of parental support and low levels of parental influence. The implications of this study are two-fold. The first is that it would be helpful to have CEG interventions that challenged traditional beliefs. That is, an awareness of the changing labour market would be helpful prior to making career choices. Second, parental support was positively associated with both career decision-making self-efficacy and career adaptability. However, parents and children need some congruence in terms of career aspirations and plans for that impact to be positive.

In Australia, a survey of 415 young people examined engagement with career development tasks and the development of vocational identities (Rogers, Creed, & Praskova, 2018). The research found that the relationship between young people and their parents in the development of vocational identities was important, but that they can have very different perceptions of what career development activities are useful.

A study of 476 young people in Turkey reported that where parents and their children did agree over career aspirations, goals and pathways, this could predict positive career exploration and school attainment (Çelik, 2019). There is, however, a strong culture in Turkey for parents to support their children and for children to respect their parents, so a greater degree of congruence may be reported in this social context than in others. Çelik (2019)

concluded that young people's career exploration was the result of career confidence and self-efficacy developed through shared career aspirations with their parents, whist earlier research also recognised the influence of others in addition to parents (Turan, Celik, & Turan, 2014).

A study in France similarly highlighted the significance of the environment in terms of family support and parental involvement in career decisions. A survey of French undergraduates concluded that where parents had been involved in their children's career guidance sessions, parents were supportive of vocational choice and higher earnings were expected (Bonnard, Giret, & Lambert-Le Mener, 2014). This suggests that where parents and their children have shared conversations, there may be greater congruence in terms of career aspirations and education attainment.

Evidence both from the UK and internationally indicates, therefore, that young people value parental support (see for example Aaltonen, 2016; Haywood, Brennan, & Molesworth, 2010; Mulcahy, & Baars, 2018; practitioner and Expert stakeholder interviews), but that ideas about what career development activities (in terms of career planning and exploration) should entail can differ (Rogers, Creed, & Praskova, 2018). From the UK, a qualitative study examining the career decision-making of 58 young people reported that parents were often left to gather information on further and higher education and vocational courses and provide a 'rational' input into the decision-making process (Haywood, Brennan, & Molesworth, 2010). Parents looked at league tables, asked about employability and read reviews. Some students used this information to 'filter' their choices and focus on their feelings in order to make decisions. This not only highlights the importance of ensuring parents understand where to find information on educational courses, but also suggests a significant gap in careers education provision in that young people are unaware of the types of information they could consider when making career decisions. Again, the need for some alignment in views and knowledge between parents and their children is highlighted. A review of practice with young people also suggested that career conversations between parents and young people in their care is part of effective practice (Hughes, Mann, Barnes, Baldauf, & McKeown, 2016). This was also strongly advocated by international and national expert stakeholder interviewees.

Overall, evidence indicates that parental engagement is important for supporting the development of:

- Information seeking and research behaviours (e.g. Haywood, Brennan, & Molesworth, 2010);

- Self-efficacy, career decision-making and confidence (e.g. Bradley-Geist, & Olson-Buchanan, 2014; Çelik, 2019; Olle, & Foud, 2015; Mulcahy, & Baars, 2018; Pappas, & Kounenou, 2011; Ross, & Lloyd, 2013);

- Planning, goal setting and creating a sense of direction (e.g. Çelik, 2019; Instituto de Orientação Profissional, Universidade de Lisboa, 2018; Zhang, Yuen, & Chen, 2015); and

- (Career) adaptability, flexibility and employability skills (such as entrepreneurship and team working skills) (e.g. Guan et al., 2015; Instituto de Orientação Profissional, Universidade de Lisboa, 2018; Zhang, Yuen, & Chen, 2015).

2.7. Importance of parental support for particular groups

As discussed in section 2.5, above, parental support and access to resources can differ and depend on a number of factors, such as geography, socio-economic status, educational experience and occupation. There are a range of groups for whom parental behaviour can be particularly helpful. Here, a number of examples are given.

Children with disabilities: Research has shown the importance of parental behaviours for the development of children with disabilities (e.g., Bennett, & Hay, 2007; Bodvin, Verschueren, & Struyf, 2018; Francis, Regester, & Reed, 2018). The impact that parents have on adolescents' career development may be even more significant when considering children with disabilities. It is well known that people with disabilities face challenges in establishing a career and tend to exhibit high rates of unemployment and underemployment (Burkhauser, Houtenville, & Wittenburg, 2003). However, relatively few studies have explored the factors contributing to their career development. Regarding parental influence, Wagner and colleagues reported that youth with disabilities are more likely than non-disabled youth to mention having received a high level of parental attention (Wagner, Newman, Cameto, Levine, & Marder, 2007).

Children with special education needs: A study examined school collaborations with parents of children with special education needs (SEN) children during periods of educational transition, comparing findings from Belgium (Flanders) with those from the UK (Bodvin, Verschueren, & Struyf, 2018). Focus groups were undertaken with school guidance counsellors to examine the role of parents and the school. Parents did not have a significant role in determining their children's transition, with the educational specialist determining the course of action. There was mixed evidence on parental involvement. On the one hand, the view was expressed that parents 'know their children best', so should have input. On the other hand, over involvement from parents was seen as difficult by the schools, as they typically asked questions about schools' measures and wanted greater input into the decision-making process. Whilst this research does not focus specifically on careers interventions, it does highlight both the benefits and challenges of parental engagement in the educational transition decisions of SEN children. It recommends that school-parent collaborations need to be fostered with parents having a greater input into their child's trajectory as this has a positive impact. This was also reflected by the practitioner's interviewed (Practitioners A, C) who suggested that from their experience, schools and colleges need to be parent-friendly environments and open to communication. Similarly, from experience, an expert stakeholder spoke about the need to link learning plans to CEG support for SEN students and those with a disability to ensure they have access to career guidance at key transitions points.

Children with disrupted life stories: A contribution from Iceland drew attention to how young people with disrupted life-stories (for example, if they grew up in very different cultures from their parents) might benefit if both parents and students developed career narratives and then discussed these. In this way it might be possible to draw upon different cultural knowledge in order to imagine how different ways of understanding career journeys and the links between past, present and future.

One parent families: Research from Germany drew attention to how adolescents in one-parent families have lower mean levels of perceived parental support in comparison to those living with two parents (Mulcachy, & Baars, 2018). They had on average lower development regarding four of twelve career competence aspects. These were: occupational knowledge, career curiosity, exploration and self-regulation. Interestingly, it is suggested that parental engagement can raise aspirations and be 'a protective factor' for those in disadvantaged or poorer families (Mulcahy, & Baars, 2018). However, in the Netherlands schools are sometimes

reluctant to offer special provision because they believe all students (and parents) should have equal access to career support and resources (Oomen, 2018).

2.8. Evidence on what works with engaging parents in careers education and guidance

This section provides an overview of evidence relating to what works in engaging and involving parents in CEG. Specific interventions from the UK are reported below, in section 3.

The evidence collected for this study indicates how the integration of parents into careers education is certainly 'a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition' (Expert stakeholder) for the successful career development and progression of their children. As one expert stakeholder said: 'When talking about the integration of parents and carers into careers education and guidance, what we're really talking about is a co-partnership, where complementarity is crucial'. A review undertaken by Goodall and Vorhaus (2011) highlighted key features of parental engagement strategy in schools and colleges. These included:

- Planned activities embedded across the school and college as part of their service;
- Effective leadership;
- Collaboration and engagement between the educational institution and parents; and
- Ongoing monitoring and development for sustained improvement.

Parental engagement in CEG works also well when there is a recognition that parents can work in partnership with educational institutions to support learning and activities (Barnes, 2019; Goodall & Vorhaus, 2011; Oomen, 2018; Williams, Buzzeo, Spiegelhalter, & Dawson, 2018). However, it is important to emphasise how parents have different expectations and needs at different points in time, which influence their level of engagement. It is, therefore, not logical to approach their integration into the CEG process as though they are a homogenous group. Oomen (2018) argues that parental capacity to engage with CEG depends on their: knowledge and skills, self-efficacy and role definition. This recognises that parents not only need the time to understand and process careers information so that they can use it to support their children, but also that they need to have the confidence to be a positive influence. Overall, parents need to accept that they have an important role in the learning and career development of their young people.

Whilst parents want to be confident that educational institutions are preparing and helping young people make efficacious learning and career choices, their own needs can vary, depending on a number of factors, including their level of engagement. Communication about CEG is regarded as important to parents, with digital engagement methods considered to be most effective (such as Facebook, Facebook Live (for events), text alerts, Twitter, and email) (Barnes, 2019; Practitioner interviews). Recent research has identified what parents would like from educational institutions. This includes:

- Assurances that their children are being prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences open to them;
- Timely communication about what the educational institution is doing and what they can do to help their child;
- Feedback on the progress and achievements of their children as well as the how best to advise and support them; and

- Opportunities to engage with the educational institution and CEG staff at mutually convenient times (Barnes, 2019).

Furthermore, parental engagement is considered to work well when details of CEG programmes and activities are clearly communicated to parents and their young people. Barnes (2019) argues that CEG should be a partnership between educational institutions and parents involving effective communication. Communication needs to be backed up with the provision of careers resources and workshops for parents and their children. Various mechanisms have been found to support the effectiveness of communications with parents, including:

- Face-to-face communication, such as individual consultations, impromptu conversations, presentations by careers practitioners and discussions at parents' meetings and evenings;

- Provision of hard copy communication and materials, such as direct mail to the home, leaflets and booklets, posters and displays (including plasma screens) and articles in parents' newsletter; and

- Online communication, such as careers pages on the school website, blogs, texts, micro-blogging (e.g. Weibo) and posts on social media (Barnes, 2019).

The development of bespoke resources is valued by parents, as well as both parents and young people (Barnes, 2019; International expert interviews). The literature does not provide evidence of which materials would have most impact. However, expert interviewees identified: a guide to the careers programme; and how to get the most out of a careers fairs, higher education open days and personal guidance (see appendix 1 for examples). For schools, guidance was recommended by interviewees on how to maximise the benefits of work experience. Additionally, the creation of customised careers and labour market information (LMI) resources for parents is necessary. The need for context specific careers literature in relevant ethnic minority languages and/or arranging interpreters from the community to be available at school events was also emphasised by interviewees.

Some studies recommend that teachers in schools and colleges should be offered continuing professional development (CPD) to develop their confidence and ongoing communication with parents (European Commission/ICF, 2015; Goodall & Vorhaus, 2011). Communication is increasingly through technology (SMS messaging, email, online through school website, social media and blogs), plus through the usual school and college events, such as progress and report evenings, open days and one-to-one meetings (Barnes, 2019; Practitioner and Expert stakeholder interviews). Furthermore, it was suggested by expert stakeholder interviewees that careers practitioners need to be confident and competent at conducting career guidance sessions with young people and participating parents.

Research evidence also exists on the positive effects of partnerships between schools, employers and parents, how this works in practice and its effectiveness (Dhakal, Connell, & Burgess, 2018; Goodall, & Vorhaus, 2011; Mann, Rehill, & Kashefpakdel, 2018; Musset, & Mýtna Kureková, 2018; Williams, Buzzeo, Spiegelhalter, & Dawson, 2018). One example is a literature review undertaken by Mann and colleagues (2018) which provides a number of examples of where parents and employers are involved in careers education activities that have had an impact on student decision-making. Examples from Mann and colleagues (2018) study (both from the USA) included: a school to work transition programme that engaged employers, schools and parents to enrich learning and improve career awareness and an

employer mentoring programme which helped improve parent-child relationships. Research from Australia concludes that school-employer, and school-community partnerships not only improve young people's career outcomes, but also benefit parents. Initiatives such as breakfast and homework clubs and community gardens benefited families, helping them access learning and feel more connected to their local communities (ACER 2010, 2011).

Importantly, UK evidence suggests challenges to parental engagement and involvement in CEG, including activities often conflicting with parent working hours (van Poortvliet, Axford, & Lloyd, 2018) and when/how careers support is communicated to parents (Barnes, 2019).

Interviewees reflecting on their own experience of working with parents also noted that parents are time poor, so support offered by school often conflicts with work and other commitments. Interviewees noted that timing is crucial, since school-based parental support is often delivered at a time when parents have just come home from work (Practitioners A, B, C, F; Expert stakeholders). Furthermore, interviewees commented on how educational institutions: often neglect hard-to-reach and/or disengaged parents (e.g. travellers, migrant groups); communicate generally with all rather than target information; expect all parents to engage at the same level; and do not give students the space to discuss their aspirations (which they may wish to conceal from parents) (Practitioners A, B, D, F; Expert stakeholders).

Other studies have variously highlighted barriers to educational institutions engaging and involving parents more in CEG and education generally, including: a lack of trust in parents; a lack of time, space and resources; sustainability of programmes; uncertainty in how to reach disengaged parents; and lack of staff experience in working with parents (Barnes, 2019; Goodall, & Vorhaus, 2011). What is often overlooked is how parents can be regarded as a resource for CEG, but schools do not necessarily see this as there is often a tendency for them to be wary of inviting their involvement (Barnes, 2019).

2.9.   Summary

This section has presented evidence of the importance of parental engagement in careers for facilitating and/or expanding opportunities for young people with a need for them to be 'career aspirants'. In particular, where parents and the young people in their care have shared career conversations, there may be greater congruence in terms of career aspirations and education attainment for young people and increased motivation for parents. Moreover, educating young people about the range of factors that influence career decision-making can promote the use of more deliberate career choice strategies.

Engagement in CEG that places collaborative partnership between schools and parents at its centre optimises effectiveness. However, there is evidence that parental capacity to engage with CEG depends on their knowledge and skills, self-efficacy and role definition. Importantly, evidence emphasises the need for parents to accept that they have a role in their young people's learning and career development, as well as recognising that they can be a positive influence.

The home environment, in which the parent-child relationship is located is crucial, emerging as a significant factor in a young person's career learning and development. This environment shapes attitudes and beliefs related both to education and to post-education learning. Significantly parents' own experiences of education influence and shape their recommendations and expectations for their children, particularly in terms of the educational routes supported. In contexts where there are high levels of parental support and low levels

of parental influence, young people are able to develop their career adaptability skills, which supports the career and learning choices. Evidence consistently stresses the significant role of parents in the career choices and aspirations of young people in their care.

Siblings can be particularly influential in educational choices as they may have (recent and real) experience to draw upon and tend to be less impartial or discreet than parents (Aaltonen, 2016; Broadbent, Cacciattolo, & Papadopoulos, 2012). This suggests that career interventions focused on parental engagement could benefit from including siblings.

Research has shown that for particular groups of children parental engagement and involvement is important in supporting educational pathways. Parental engagement and collaboration with educational institutions is important for children with disabilities (e.g., Bennett, & Hay, 2007; Bodvin, Verschueren, & Struyf, 2018; Burkhauser, Houtenville, & Wittenburg, 2003; Francis, Regester, & Reed, 2018); children with SEN (e.g. Bodvin, Verschueren, & Struyf, 2018); and children from one parent families (e.g. Mulcachy, & Baars, 2018).

Overall, an analysis of the evidence emphasises the need for parents to be supported in developing their knowledge and understanding of choices and future careers, so that they can provide better support and advice for their child. Careers practitioners also have an important role, in supporting both parents and their young people in their career conversations to ensure they are supportive, informative and useful. Where parental support is absent, it could be argued that practitioners have a duty of care to the young person, as well as providing support and counselling to their parents.

3. UK interventions with parents to support the career development of their young people

3.1. Introduction

This section of the report provides an overview of the education and careers policy and strategy development, which have influenced the current context and CEG services today. Some current examples of work with parents are presented, including a summary of their impact and key learning points. This section draws upon evidence and reflections on learning from practitioners and experts stakeholder interviewees.

3.2. Careers education and guidance: Context and practice in England

CEG has been at the heart of governmental policies concerned with promoting economic prosperity, and social cohesion. This stretches back as far as the early twentieth century, when concerns about the economic activity and welfare of young people resulted in the formation of the National Association of Juvenile and Welfare Officers in 1922 (Peck, 2004). Since then, the expectations of CEG by governments in England have swung between providing services that match young people to jobs; or, attempting to tackle wider issues of social deprivation and societal (dis)engagement.

This policy swing has been particularly evident since the late 1990s; and has provided the context from which the Gatsby Benchmarks arose (The Gatsby Foundation, 2014). Before the full arrival of Connexions in 2001, careers guidance services operated as quasi-privatised organisations under joint Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) and Local Education Authority (LEA) control.

It is hard to over-estimate the impact of the Connexions service on former careers education and guidance provision. Services in schools and colleges were in large part meant to focus on reducing NEET rates in order to mitigate the risk of young people's disengagement from society. New Labour's policy agenda led to various service iterations, shaped by Every Child Matters (Department for Education and Skills, 2003); Youth Matters (Department for Education and Skills, 2005); and the set-up of Children's Trusts. The latter relocated the statutory provision for providing careers support for young people back to local authorities, but under another new banner – Integrated Youth Support Services (IYSS). The consequence of the latter for (careers education and guidance) services to young people in schools and colleges was considerable. One of the main effects was the fragmentation of provision, and an increasing lack of consistency and quality (Watts, & McGowan, 2007). Evidence, at the time, found that local authorities had reduced staffing and funding for youth and careers support transferring responsibility to schools, although some tried to maintain a measure of universal provisions (Langley, Hooley, & Bertuchi, 2014).

The arrival of the coalition government, and the Education Act 2011 returned the statutory duty for providing access to careers guidance to schools and colleges, but with no identified funding to enable this. The effect was to reduce the extent, quality and consistency of service provision even further (Hughes, 2013). Regularly revised statutory guidance to schools and colleges since then have shown a recognition by government of the impact of poor service consistency on the choices of young people, as identified particularly by OFSTED in 2013.

Furthermore, the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC), set up in 2014 (DfE, 2014), marked government's intention to re-develop careers and enterprise as a key part of raising young people's aspirations, and strengthening links between employers and schools and colleges.

The concern for the quality and consistency of careers provision was also addressed by a number of key developments. In England, the legal requirements for career support are now set out in two sets of statutory guidance, one for secondary schools and one for colleges (Department for Education, 2018). This is situated within the government's Careers Strategy (Department for Education, 2017), which sets out the information parents should be given and how partnerships between schools, parents and employers will be enabled (particularly in STEM). Many further education colleges have large established careers services and therefore also use the Matrix standard (a quality standard for careers and advice services) to shape these services. It also notes that parents should have a role, in conjunction with employers, to design CEG. The government is using the strategy to guide the development of services, such as the World Skills UK Live, which aims to change parental expectations about apprenticeships, T Levels, etc. The CEC are funded by government to support schools and colleges deliver career guidance in line with their strategy. The National Careers Service is also funded by government to provide clear, impartial information about different careers – this includes a face-to-face service for priority groups of adults, but a website and phone service that can be used by young people and their parents.

The government's Careers Strategy (2017) and statutory guidance (2018) are organised around the eight Gatsby Benchmarks (The Gatsby Foundation, 2014). This CEG framework is now widely used across England to structure school and college careers and education provision (CEC, 2019). Practitioner and expert stakeholders interviewed for this research reported how the Gatsby Benchmarks have been helpful in emphasising the importance of high quality careers guidance provision to educational institutions; and, in particular, the value of employer engagement to such provision.

The Quality in Careers Standard is a quality award scheme, which is mapped to the Gatsby Benchmarks that schools and colleges can apply for in order to publicly recognise the institution's commitment and success in careers guidance. There was variable uptake amongst the three practitioners interviewed, but all could see the value of the award.

Analysis of the benchmarks noted a number of performance indicators and evaluation criteria aimed at and involving parents, including requiring schools and colleges to: publish their CEG programme online; promote and evaluate their CEG programme; and encourage parents to access careers LMI (Barnes, 2019). It is also argued in this report that at the level of individual schools and colleges, a strategy for parent engagement needs to outline not only the overall vision, but plans for implementation, communication, resourcing, training and evaluation (Barnes, 2019).

CEG activities in schools and colleges

Through school and college practitioner and expert stakeholder interviews a wide range of CEG related activities and interventions that engage parents were identified as taking place across the UK variously in secondary schools and colleges:

- **Parents' evenings** – practitioners involved in the study noted that these events were a good opportunity to raise the profile of careers and education services and the importance of career planning, to parents. However, parental involvement in these

events can mirror to a large extent aspects of social advantage, therefore risking reinforcing disadvantage.

- **Careers fairs** – practitioners also confirmed the importance of these events to the school or college concerned. The success of securing parental involvement in such events could rest on apparently simple practical points, e.g., many parents could not afford the time off work to attend. Twilight slots did not always suit employers, though.

- **Breakfast and coffee clubs** – the incidence and extent of these events was very variable, with some practitioners not using them, e.g., due to lack of time or support. Yet, they were seen as potentially excellent ways of involving employers, and indeed parents who were employers.

- **Curriculum activities** (such as 'guess my job…' where a parent answers questions from young people about their job which young people then have to guess) – these activities, where run, were rated as effective careers guidance interventions by practitioners to develop career learning.

- **Personal guidance sessions** (some involving parents) – according to the practitioners, parental involvement was patchy – not necessarily due to a lack of interest, but again due to time and resourcing constraints. Such involvement could, in the experience of practitioners, have positive as well as less positive aspects, like inhibiting the young person's predisposition to talk freely.

- **Careers open days** – the same caveats apply here as for the first two activities above.

- **Collaborative careers events with other schools and colleges** aimed at parents – where offered, these provided potential opportunities for involvement, but once again timings, and work commitments, militated against attendance;

- **Employer/sectoral events** where employers make presentations and are open to answer questions – practitioners remarked that such targeted careers events, well-timed, could pique parents' interests and involvement, especially as the latter could feel that the services are targeted at the young people in their care, rather than being too generic. These activities are well worth exploring by schools and colleges.

- **Expert presentations on topics such as the future labour market, employability skills, apprenticeships, etc.** – some practitioners were concerned that, in their experience, some parents could be over-inclined to see the value and applicability of the career experience of presenters as overriding the value of school or college-based careers service. This is often a key point: that parental involvement, though extremely well-intentioned, is not always well-informed. Again, the study noted instances where well-targeted and marketed events could be very effective in engaging and educating parents (see the example of The Brilliant Club, section 3.3.3, below).

- **Career guidance sessions for parents** – again, caveats noted above, in the latter activity ('Expert presentations'), are applicable here.

Practitioner and expert stakeholder interviewees also spoke about the range of activities in which parents are invited to participate exist across their educational institutions, such as: general contributions to classroom activities; involvement in suitable homework activities; and through careers-related activities, such as 'take your sons and daughters' to work days and 'guess my job…'.

Many of these activities are taking place in both schools and colleges. It should be noted that in the further education setting, parents' evenings, events with employer and education providers and gathering feedback from parents takes place throughout the year (Williams, Buzzeo, Spiegelhalter, & Dawson, 2018). Expert stakeholder interviewees and practitioners highlighted some differences in the parental engagement approaches between schools and further education colleges. For example:

- Colleges frequently have an established advice and guidance service that is often part of an holistic student support service (see also Williams et al, 2018).This offers a mix of support covering learning and welfare issues, safeguarding, mental health support and career development services. Practitioners highlighted that, because students can also access this service at any time through self-referral, students have different levels of engagement and experiences across a single college.

- Learners in college often encounter CEG provision when they apply to enter courses. This is managed in collaboration with college recruitment teams (see also Williams et al, 2018). Activity in the run up to joining a college can include: a cycle of open events, sometimes two or three meetings a term, and prospective students are encouraged to bring their parents. Both can meet tutors and tour departments. Parental engagement was highlighted as being particularly important by interviewees for this study, at this early decision-making stage.

- Practitioners stated that further education colleges can prefer to view their learners as adults (or soon to be adults) and this can, in their view, be reflected in their approach to CEG and parental engagement.

CPD can play an important role in developing teacher confidence and ongoing communication with parents (European Commission/ICF, 2015; Goodall & Vorhaus, 2011). This was reflected by the further education practitioners interviewed who felt it could also help to highlight the important of CEG to teaching staff and the importance of personalisation.

Summary

Developments over the last five years have enabled good quality careers guidance for young people to be developed and integrated in England; though it should be recognised that provision is not only variable across the country, but also within institutions (CEC, 2019). Significant developments include: the adoption and promotion by the CEC of the Gatsby Benchmarks for good CEG; new infrastructures to support and develop provision, for example, the Careers Hubs that operate in many parts of England; and the role of the Careers Leader in schools and colleges, with a national, CEC-funded training programme to support this role. An additional key development has been the revised OFSTED guidance in 2019, where CEG provision features more prominently (OFSTED, 2019). This indicates the ways in which careers guidance provision will play a much more significant role in inspectors' reviews of schools and colleges. The benchmarks also promote the integration of CEG into schools and colleges' strategy and educational provision, rather than it being a series of discrete activities focused mainly on transition points.

Whilst these more recent developments are encouraging, they also demonstrate the ways in which government support and funding can have a positive benefit on the nature, extent and quality of CEG. How future political changes will continue to both support and reshape provision are unknown, though they will probably confirm CEG's close relationship with governments' policies concerning education, employment and training, especially concerning

young people. These shifts, alongside complex and changing labour markets, have placed greater emphasis on the need for parents becoming more involved in supporting the education and career choices of their children by not only providing advice and support, but by developing an awareness of the labour market and experiences of work.

3.3. Interventions engaging parents in the UK

This section details some current interventions and activities that engage and support parents in providing career support to their children. As for other material in this section, details were derived from purposively recruited research participants, whose roles included careers leadership responsibilities and in some cases also covered careers guidance provision. Their narrative accounts offered rich experiential insights, as the following examples show.

3.3.1. INSPiRED Teenager online programme

There is evidence from the UK and Australia relating to the value of workshops involving both parents and young people (Barnes, 2019; Borlagdan, & Peyton, 2014; Expert stakeholders). These increase parental confidence in supporting their children's education and learning decisions, as well as strengthening children's transition confidence and skills. Furthermore, and as noted earlier, enabling family learning boosts parental capacity and improving the parent-child relationship (NCRD, 2012). Evaluated projects include the INSPiRED programme in the UK (Clark, 2019, Clark, & Parry, 2019) and PACTS in Australia (see below, and section 5.3; Borlagdan, & Peyton, 2014).

The INSPiRED teenager programme is a paid-for online video course and e-book for parents and their children to 'learn at home together' that can also be delivered face-to-face. It aims to help parents become more confident, better informed and able to use coaching techniques with their children. Schools and colleges can buy a multi-user licence and integrate the programme with their parental engagement strategy. It was piloted and developed with funding from NESTA as part of Inclusive Economy Partnership initiative.

The programme has eight modules, each with its own video and information resources, which aim to motivate and inspire young people to develop their own career plan. Each module supports career learning through an exploration of key concepts and answering questions. The eight modules are:

1. Identity – exploration of personality and character, the role of values in career happiness and success to create a better understanding of themselves and what they might like to do.

2. Needs and wants – exploration of themes (such as money, reward and recognition, autonomy and control) to understand the life they want and what they need from a career.

3. Strengths, talents and skills – identification of their gifts and abilities.

4. Passion and interests – identification of their passion or strong interest, understand it and explore how they could develop it further in their career.

5. Impact and contribution – exploration of how to discover a central career theme that provides enduring stability, opportunity and growth in changing times.

6. Relationships – identification of the types of people they want to work with and help them to recognise when a specific role or opportunity is right.

7. Environment – identification of the environment they want to work in, choose the geographic location, physical environment and working patterns, they want in their everyday life.

8. Direction and goal setting – draws the previous seven modules together and distils the major elements to help them create a clear and purposeful career vision and mission based on understanding the essence of what it is they want and have to offer to create a fulfilling career.

Impact

The online and face-to-face format of the programme has been positively evaluated and reported as effective in helping parents support the young people in their care and enabling them to make informed decisions (Clark, 2019, Clark, & Parry, 2019). Whilst the numbers completing both the course and the evaluation was very small (28 pairs of parent and young people), the majority of parents said that they had gained a better understanding of the changing labour market. Significantly, engagement with the programme had facilitated and stimulated family conversations about careers creating a shared understanding of the career direction of their young people. Parents reported themselves to be more confident in helping their young people make good career choices.

Key learning points

- Reflection and learning designed specifically for young people and their parents to work through together creates a shared understanding which, as already discussed in section 2, is essential for good career development.

- It has been designed for parents and young people to complete in their own time and at their own pace.

3.3.2. 'Help your child achieve their goals', Adviza workshops

Adviza is a registered charity that offers careers guidance services to clients, particularly young people, to support their transitions to further learning and work. It arose out of the former Connexions Berkshire service. With CEC support, Adviza is currently delivering a set of three interactive workshops aimed at parents and their Year 10 children to support them with future options. Workshops are offered in the early evening and last 90 minutes. At the time of writing, workshops have been offered to seven mainstream and two virtual schools. Feedback on the workshops has been positive, but parents have requested the course be condensed into two workshops. The pilot was about to be extended to more schools.

Workshop overview

This first session is aimed at parents only, whilst at the second and third workshops students attend with their parents. All workshops comprise a mixture of presentations and interactive activities. The three workshops cover the following subjects.

- *Session 1: How to be a positive support to your son/daughter* – Understand the influence you have on your son/daughter's decision-making and explore both positive and negative behaviours/approaches through the introduction of three simple rules: be involved but not in control; advise but do not decide; and support but do not dominate.

- *Session 2: Self-awareness & decision-making* – Gain a shared understanding of your son/daughter's likes, dislikes, interests, strengths and weaknesses through a series of paper based and online exercises that you'll complete together. Prepare for those

important decisions, review and combine the learning from previous sessions and identify outstanding issues, concerns or areas of uncertainty.

- *Sessions 3: Which way now?* – Get a full understanding of the range of progression pathways, options and Labour Market Information to gain a shared understanding of the pros and cons of each.

Once parents and students have attended the workshops, students were offered a personal careers guidance interview. The aim of these sessions is to support dialogue between parents and the young people in their care. During the personal guidance interview, an action plan is collaboratively developed detailing the steps required for the young person to achieve their goal. It is hoped that schools will continue to see the benefits of these events and commission more workshops in the future.

Impact

A formal evaluation of the workshops is underway, but some initial findings have been reported by the practitioners involved in the research. Whilst attendance at the workshops was lower than Adviza would have liked; all parents were fully engaged in the process and valued the personalised attention. Parents reported feeling more confident in advising their children on future options and felt more able to have a conversation. Careers practitioners delivering the personal guidance interviews said that the young people who had attended the workshop with their parents had progressed their thinking and were better prepared than those who had not.

Key learning points

- Three workshops were considered too much of a commitment by parents, so the next phase of the project is reducing to two workshops.

- Interactive content of each workshop was liked by both parents and their children.

- Parents and the young people enjoyed working together and found the conversations useful.

- Parents valued the 'time out' to focus on the future.

Barnes (2019) provides practical tips for designing workshops for parents and young people: keeping them manageable; asking parents to sign up to all workshops; timing support when choices and decisions have to be made; limiting the size of groups; keeping presentations short and stimulating; ensuring sessions are interactive; getting enough staff involved to ensure all attendees get some individual attention; and providing participants with resources and materials to take home. The primary aim of workshops should be to help parents have conversations with their children and to align ideas and views.

3.3.3. The Brilliant Club – The Scholars Programme

The Brilliant Club is a charity connecting schools and universities. Their aim is to increase the number of young people from under-represented backgrounds (aged 10-18 years) from non-selective schools to progress to higher education. It offers activities that develop the career aspirations of academically able young learners, and some schools have adapted these activities to include parents and families of prospective students. In one school, for example, participants are drawn from Pupil Premium backgrounds.

The Brilliant Club is a structured programme of funded activities for young people, such as university visits, as well as offering workshops on study skills, a series of bespoke tutorials

(e.g. supporting completion of a final assignment) and a certificate/awards ceremony as part of a university graduation trip. At the time of writing, it supports over 12,000 students, and partners with 700 schools and 38 universities.

The Club emphasises the need for targeted provision, where the direct benefits for the young people concerned are readily identifiable. It also shows that promoting career engagement is inseparable from developing learners' engagement in their overall academic and personal development.

One practitioner spoke of how the programme was adapted by schools to promote family involvement in the initial Club presentations and the recruitment of young people; and direct involvement in the university trips. The school also augments engagement with 'cultural and arts' activities for the whole family, such as theatre trips, as a way of developing the social and cultural capital of the families as a whole. Practitioners have regular communication with the parents to offer support and develop trust. Parents are invited to the university ceremony and encouraged to get involved, so that their 'growth' is also celebrated.

Impact

The Brilliant Club works with UCAS annually to evaluate the impact of the organisation nationally (The Brilliant Club & UCAS, 2019). This involves evaluation of UCAS applications, together with the offer and progression rates of students who completed the programme against a control group of 500. The 2017-2018 evaluation reported that students of the programme were more likely to apply, receive offers and progress to a selective university than those in the control group. Students reported that their knowledge of specific subjects (those focused on in the programme) had improved; that they had a better understanding of why and how people study at university; and that their written work had improved.

In terms of qualitative impact, a practitioner using this programme reported much greater engagement in the school's curriculum by learners and much higher levels of motivation for learning. Both learners and their parents could see the direct links between the programme's academic content, and possible career routes, such as those in science. Parents also developed a higher degree of trust in the careers staff in the school and in the information that they were using to explore wider career options. The practitioner observed how parents gained a shared sense of achievement offered by the programme (and so had 'grown' alongside their children). For learners, the impact has been significant since their sense of efficacy and motivation for applying to higher education (and selective institutions) had increased.

Evidence, from those practitioners using the programme, suggested that the impact of the programme was felt not only by the school, but beyond school to the immediate community, as more parents were expressing high levels of interest in getting involved in future delivery of the programme. Due to its success in one particular school, the programme is currently being expanded to involve Years 8, 9 and 10 learners, with cohorts of 30 at each level. However, one practitioner reported that this type of aspiration-raising initiative is quite resource-intensive, and there is a question about how sustainable such intensive support is without on-going funding.

Key learning points

- The challenge has been to create targeted information about the programme and specific events that does not appear generic and simply part of an impersonal process.

- Events that offered direct benefits to young people and supported parents were found to help to develop engagement and trust between the schools and parents.

- Practitioners involved in the programme found that it was useful to have LMI knowledge about future opportunities in order to challenge ideas and dated information that some parents had about particular educational pathways. This was found to be particularly important as parents from more deprived backgrounds can be mistrustful of information, especially those that promote 'official' career routes that are perceived to be unrealistic for their children.

3.3.4. Maths with Parents

The theme of introducing CEG into primary education emerged from the evidence collected from international and expert stakeholders, highlighting this innovation as a critical and important development. The Maths with Parents intervention illustrates how parents of primary school students (aged 3-11 years) can be encouraged to engage with schools and get involved in their child's learning. Key learning from this initiative could be transferred to a careers context.

Maths with Parents is a web-based programme for which primary schools purchase a licence. The programme supports parental involvement in their child's learning through supported activities at home. The development is based on the idea that parent-child interactions are important and that creating a positive home learning environment supports child development and education achievements. The overall objective of engaging parents in their child's learning is to try and address the educational achievement gap between students from poorer backgrounds and those from more affluent areas. It draws on research that the gap in educational achievement is related to parents and home environment, so the Maths with Parents mission is to empower parents.

The programme is initiated by the teacher who selects a mathematics topic which students may be currently engaged in at school (or has recently been done in school). Parents are then notified by email with a link to the online content. Parents and the child are provided with an online video and materials to support their learning on the topic. The first video shows children explaining the methods taught in school and examples of activities from solving puzzles to building and measuring. As part of these learning materials, parents are given a game they can play with the child at home, using items from around the home. Parents are supported to play this game with their children and encouraged to post pictures and comments for the teacher on the website. The overall aim is to get parents engaged with their children's learning.

Impact

Maths with Parents engages, at the time of writing, with 100 schools and over 11,000 parents, which has resulted in 200,000 comments and 18,000 uploaded photographs. An evaluation of the intervention is underway which has included a survey of teachers. Findings report that parents are being motivated by their children to engage, parents value the support and 90% of teachers report that their workload has decreased compared to setting regular maths homework. Due to the success of the programme and the positive feedback from schools, teachers and parents, 'English with Parents' is currently being developed.

Key learning points

- The challenge has been to get parents to log in and start using the programme, but, once engaged, parents complete activities and are happy to post comments and pictures for teachers.

- The reward scheme for students increased usage. Starting activities in school with students, which they then take home to do, has been effective at encouraging parents to get involved.

- Content created by those who understand the principles of teaching and are experts in their field is considered key to its success. However, feedback has been a key to the development process.

- The home is considered a safe place for parents to engage in learning activities and the online materials provide the support and confidence to get involved in the learning.

3.4. Parental engagement interventions in two devolved nations

The following two sections (3.4.1 and 3.4.2) provide descriptions of how parental engagement has been embedded in the Welsh and Scottish careers strategies and careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) provision, both derived from expert interviewees. The examples from Careers Wales and Skills Development Scotland detail their services and how they engage parents. Both are founded on needs analyses of what parents would find useful to know and how they would like to be involved, along with understanding how parents are already involved (see for example, Goodall & Vorhaus, 2011).

For the purposes of population comparisons between England, Scotland and Wales, the population of England, according to the 2018 census, is 55.98 million. BESA (2019) identified 24,323 schools in England of which 3,448 are secondary schools and 2,319 are independent. The Association of Colleges (2019) identify 248 colleges in England; 170 of which are further education colleges, and 52 are Sixth Form colleges.

3.4.1. Careers Wales

Wales has a population of approximately 3.3 million and so represents an example of a relatively small country context in which the National Careers Strategy (Careers Wales, 2017) has embedded CEIAG across all 208 secondary schools and 14 colleges. Within this sits the principle that parents as 'key influences' need to be integrated into the process of delivery. Careers Wales is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Welsh Government, retaining some autonomy to determine priorities regarding delivery of services. At the time of writing, Careers Wales has 25 careers centres. The element of parent involvement has gained prominence over previous years, with the promise of a greater focus being placed on this element of delivery from 2020.

Parents are regarded as key influencers playing an unequivocally important role in shaping young people's career decision-making. Careers Wales sees its role with parents as 'supporting and empowering', providing the tools and knowledge needed. The aim is for Careers Wales to ensure that a careers practitioner attends 90 per cent of all parents' evenings – a goal that is carefully monitored. Senior managers have regular meetings to ensure that this goal is achieved.

Currently, the involvement of Careers Wales mainly starts at key stage 3 (Years 8 and 9). A booklet outlining support services on offer from Careers Wales is available, and distributed, to all parents. This signposts parents to the appropriate part of the Careers Wales website. Parents can also access tools from the website, like a job matching quiz, etc. It also contains a range of digital references with links for the end of Year 11 and the end of Year 13. For additional information, parents can contact 'Account Executives' (careers practitioners, numbering 111), who are located in every school. Account Executives are employed by Careers Wales, qualified to level 6 and support all interactions in the school related to careers and the world of work, provided by Capacity Builders (who provide training support for school staff) and Business Engagement officers (34 in number, who are responsible for all aspects of employer contact). To support these careers staff, continuing professional development webinars are offered three to four times a year, with a virtual community of best practice, a Professional Forum, established for peer learning.

Careers Wales provides an 'holistic service', underpinned by a philosophy that a multitude of different approaches and strategies are adopted, approaching issues from lots of different angles. For example:

- Parents are invited to employer engagement activities (typically, one organised in the north of the country and one in the south, on an annual basis).

- Parents' evenings (Year 9): the target is for careers practitioners to attend one per year group per year.

- Parents attend interviews where appropriate, though it should be noted that parents are not invited to each interview, but they can 'opt in'.

- Careers Wales uses schools' parental mail system, on an ad hoc basis, when required.

- Services for students with special needs: Careers Wales makes a significant commitment. It sends representatives to attend any relevant event being held in special schools, as required. It also organises special events; attends transition reviews; discusses options with parents; and supports parents along with social services. A dedicated booklet has been produced for parents of students with special needs, who also have a differentiated space on the Careers Wales website.

- Career Wales provides marketing stands in city centres.

- Various campaigns are launched at least once a year on, for example, educational pathways, apprenticeships, etc.

- It attends the Royal Welsh Show, together with other similar local and national events.

- It supports events provided by Job Centres, as relevant (Careers Wales provides services to Job Centres for the unemployed and economically inactive).

- Primary schools: there is currently a trial of how Careers Wales could work with this educational sector. The Business Engagement team is currently working on the production of a video for use with Primary Schools, to pilot (in North Wales). A particular focus for this educational sector is to combat gender stereotyping.

- A pilot of the Gatsby Benchmarks is underway in 22 schools.

- Careers Wales website technology – through which various tools are available, like a diagnostic tool for young people, together with a dedicated space for parents.

- There is also Careers Wales TV.

Parent engagement and impact

Currently, Careers Wales is dissatisfied with the level of engagement of parents and wants this to improve. For this purpose, two years ago, a survey was undertaken to find out what parents valued most from career support. One of the outcomes related to how, although they value LMI, do not necessarily understand the extent or complexity of information available. Awareness of Careers Wales among different target groups has increased dramatically over the past few years, but Careers Wales remains uncertain what the best support might be. Some events have proved very successful. For example, a skills event, to which all parents were invited, was exceptionally successful in 2019. In contrast, levels of attendance at parents' evenings varies from school to school.

Further education provision

The remit of the Welsh Government has changed recently. Careers Wales is no longer tasked with the remit to provide career support to the further education sector. Consequently, Careers Wales has only marginal involvement in further education, representing a significant reduction of services provided during the last three years. In the further education sector, only those individuals who are in danger of dropping out are eligible for careers support. For key stage 5, all young people get access to the website and careers information, together with access to special social media support. College templates can be connected to Careers Wales website resources. For young people with special educational needs in further education, support from Careers Wales is considered 'quite comprehensive'.

3.4.2. Skills Development Scotland

Scotland has a population of 5.47 million (as at July 2019), with the combined populations of the two principal cities, Glasgow and Edinburgh, making up just over one-fifth of the national figure. The Scottish government takes a one nation, all-age approach to providing careers guidance through Skills Development Scotland (SDS), which provides services to schools, colleges and adult settings. The organisation employs approximately 1,400 staff, with offices in all of the Scottish districts.

A key governmental concern is the development of the workforce's skills to meet the emerging and future needs of the economy, particularly in relation to the impact of technology and the nature and scope of work. This concern drives the Future Skills strategy (Scottish Government, 2018), with its four main concerns being:

- Increasing system agility and employer responsiveness;
- Enhancing access to upskilling and retraining opportunities;
- Ensuring sustainability across the skill system; and
- Accelerating the implementation of the learner journey review.

SDS's strategy 2019-2022 (SDS, 2019a) is very much informed by the latter aims in its concerns for enabling effective and informed career choices of people (especially young people) and providing support services to businesses in the upskilling of their workforce. It is strengthening the links between career guidance providers within schools, colleges, higher education institutions and adult settings. There are also the associated themes of skills for learning; for life and work; and generic skills for personal effectiveness. The SDS strategy is informed by a number of key developments:

- The *Careers Education Standard for Schools* (Education Scotland/SDS/Smarter Scotland, 2015);

- A review of the learner journey, from school into higher education (2017), with the aim of ensuring a continuity of CEG provision for young people; and

- A review of career education, information, advice and guidance services undertaken by SDS, the results of which are due in early 2020, but it is likely to suggest revising information services and developing parental involvement in career decisions.

SDS are concerned that parents be more engaged, better informed and more supportive of their children's choices, rather than helping to cement stereotypical views of career opportunities. Specifically, there will be a strong governmental push to promote foundation and graduate apprenticeships as strong alternatives to higher education. The offer from SDS to schools and parents (SDS, 2019b), includes:

- A careers adviser, qualified to level 6, located in each secondary school and college across the country, to provide face-to-face personal guidance to support choices at key transition points, e.g., when choosing subject options; and when considering post-16, 17 and 18 options (17 being a key age for Scottish Highers).

- Parental engagement as a key part of an adviser's role, rather than an add-on.

- Career guidance interviews for young people and their parents when they are making their first subject choices at secondary school in Year 3. Whilst invited parental involvement is often predicated on the social and cultural capital of family background, and practicalities such as time, and the fact that interviews take place during the working day. The variable take up by parents of the face-to-face services reflects the experience of schools in England.

- Parental events such as key information evenings on, for example, subject options, post-compulsory education options, work-based training, as well as employer events. The focus of the events will vary from school to school, and area to area.

- Extensive on-line services:

  My World of Work includes a comprehensive parents and carers section, with information, advice and 'tips' to help individuals support the career choices of young people. The website also has materials aimed at 8 to 10 year olds, with simple personality-type quizzes and introductory material to the World of Work. Parents are also encouraged to be closely involved.

  My Kids' Career is aimed directly at parents and carers with a strong message of 'The World of Work is changing'. It includes key facts about current and future jobs to demonstrate just how the nature and scope of work is changing in response to technology. The aim of this website is to help parents support their children understand the world of work, future skills and have career conversations. Leaflets for parents explaining the SDS school service offer are available from the website.

- Careers advisers, in conjunction with schools and colleges, offer career learning programmes to support choices at key stages as set out in the *Careers Education Standard* (Education Scotland/SDS/Smarter Scotland, 2015).

- Services targeted at primary school children and their parents, include the My World of Work website and parents evening for first year transitions to secondary school.

'In a nutshell' parent guides

The National Parent Forum of Scotland working with SDS and Education Scotland have produced a number of information guides, called 'In a Nutshell'[2], for parents, carers and young people focusing on careers, qualifications, skills and employment information. These information leaflets are written by parents for parents on subjects such as 'having career conversations', 'understanding work-based learning-apprenticeships', etc.

Parent engagement: challenges

Some key challenges identified regarding parental involvement:

- In the view of practitioners, parents are viewed as the most significant influencers of young people's career choices, despite the fact parents can see their influence as being at the same level as teachers.

- The perception is that parental involvement in careers events in schools and colleges is low; where it does occur, then it confirms the impact of higher levels of social and cultural capital on involvement and the kind of supportive 'scaffolding' that such families can offer to young people.

- Local projects targeted at raising aspiration and achievement in socially deprived areas can show higher levels of parental engagement (similar to the Brilliant Club project in England). These take a whole family approach, so that parents are also supported in their own career development and upskilling, as well as providing practical support. For instance, 'Holiday Hunger' is a programme run by SDS to address the nutritional needs of young people providing meals in school holidays. These projects are evaluated internally.

- In the experience of practitioners, parents' attitudes towards work-based learning and training can be problematic, despite a strong governmental push on foundation and higher apprenticeships.

3.5. Online interventions, apps and websites

With the continuous development of technology, it continues to become increasingly integrated into careers education and guidance services. It is, therefore, unsurprising that a number of online interventions, apps and websites have been developed to engage parents by providing them with information on: CEG provision; education qualifications, options and pathways; and the labour market. More advanced interventions have been developed online to encourage and support parental engagement.

Some examples of online interventions and apps, identified by practitioners, are provided next; the first two examples are dedicated to careers-related activities and the other examples are aimed at involving and engaging parents in the learning of young people in their care and the school or college more generally.

Unifrog is an example of a macro portal, with a wide range of services and products, with some aimed at developing and supporting parental involvement.

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[2] To access these guides go to the National Parent Forum of Scotland website: https://www.npfs.org.uk/.

The **Parenthub** website provides a range of online resources to support parents, but its latest development is an app for parents, teachers and schools. A school registers for the service and parents are then given access by the school. Parents can then subscribe to class channels, set up by teachers, for quick updates, pictures, letters and so on.

CAPITA Sims has developed an app, which aims to drive parental engagement. SIMS works with schools' data ecosystems, so has developed an all-in-one app to manage: administrative arrangements between parents and schools (such as enabling school dinner and uniform payments, access to school diary, information management); two-way communication; extra-curricular activities; encouraging student learning by sharing achievements and reports; and supporting homework by providing parents with access to documents. A school registers for the service and parents are then given access by the school.

E4Education offer a broader range of e-products to help schools and college communicate more efficiently internally, and with stakeholders (especially parents). For parents a range of communication tools are offered to schools to subscribe to, including: Parent Evening Booking System, Digital Newsletter Builder, Secure Email System, a Text Messaging System, and a mobile app.

More online resources are listed in appendix 1.

3.6. Summary

The awareness of parents should be raised regarding the careers support offered by schools and colleges (Hooley, Matheson & Watts, 2014) with those engaged in careers activities finding parental involvement and engagement of great value (Practitioners A, B, C; Expert stakeholders). It is evident that schools and colleges are trying to engage parents more to support career learning and education with a number of initiatives highlighted by interviewees. These activities are in addition to securing their support for work experience and other school events to dedicated activities where they are invited to share their experiences of work (Practitioner C; Expert stakeholders).

A review of current interventions and practice that engage parents in educational institutions and their career-related activities revealed a wide range of activities – some of which can be considered standard practice (such as parents evening, options events, etc.), whilst other activities highlight new ways of thinking about parental engagement. The all-age guidance provision offers insights into how parents are recognised, valued and supported in CEG provision, as a formal part of SDS and Careers Wales' strategies. What is particularly evident is that the use of technology to enable parents to engage in CEG, at times convenient for them, is becoming more prevalent. Further research into the ways in which such technology promotes and enables involvement by parents in young people's career choices is needed.

4. International policies and strategies to engage parents in careers education and guidance

4.1. Introduction

Evidence that parents exert significant influence on the career development of the young people in their care, in addition to wider learning and achievement, provides a clear rationale for their integration into the career education and guidance process (Gemici, Lim, & Karmel, 2013; Morgan, 2012; Perkins & Peterson, 2005). The international research evidence presented in this section comes from three sources: research publications and grey literature; collective discussions with experts at a workshop on parental involvement in CEG at the IAEVG international conference; and individual expert interviews, which included recommendations as to which leads to follow-up. In order to preserve confidentiality individual respondents are not identified. This section details the policies and strategies of five countries, which set out guidance on how the education system could engage parents.

4.2. National policies and strategies that identify how the education system should engage parents

Policies to involve parents in the educational and career decision-making of their children in secondary education were found to be in place in some countries, for example, Denmark (Katznelson & Pless, 2007), Ireland (Minister for Employment and Learning and the Minister for Education, 2016) and the Netherlands (the Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschappen [Ministry of Education, Culture and Science], abbreviated as OCW). The underlying assumption tended to be that involving parents in CEG reduces dropout (OCW, 2011, 2013; Oomen, 2018). Policies facilitating CEG are usually couched in terms of recommendations, rather than being mandatory. Policies of some countries are examined below to identify broader lessons that may be transferrable across different contexts.

4.2.1. Australia

The involvement of parents in CEG in various guises has been supported for some time in Australia alongside the encouragement of links with industry. See, for example, the Final Report on 'The benefits of school–business relationships' (2011) for the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations prepared by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). ACER had also been involved in the development of school careers advice (see Rothman & Hillman, 2008).

Morgan (2012), in a report on parental engagement in CEG, considered that parental engagement has been moving away from 'over-reliance on passive forms of parent 'information' (newsletters, information sessions, etc.), towards actively involving parents in interactive forms of dialogue and collaborative decision-making. Furthermore, more sophisticated parental engagement strategies have multiple elements in play and attempt to engage parents through a range of methods, thereby increasing their chances of reaching parents at different points in time. Pursuing a multitude of simultaneous channels of engagement is clearly identified in the literature as a feature of successful strategies for parent-child engagement in the home (p. 4).

However, the variable that had the most significant impact on student learning and achievement was the parents' level of educational aspiration for their children (Morgan, 2012). Hill and Tyson (2009) call this academic socialisation, which is 'communicating parental expectations for education and its value or utility, linking school work to current events, fostering educational and occupational aspirations, discussing learning strategies with children and making preparations and plans for the future' (p. 742). Morgan (2012) argues this highlights the value of strategies that aim to raise parents' awareness of education and training opportunities. The possibility of realising best practice in parental engagement in Australia was, therefore, seen by Morgan (2012, p.4) as pivoting 'on the need for a more general shift in career development awareness and consciousness that would enable parents to recognise their role, and be empowered to be involved by the institutions charged with delivering learning to young people'.

This interest in parental engagement in CEG culminated in February, 2019, when *Future Ready: A student focused National Career Education Strategy* (Australian Government, 2019) was launched in Australia, with the Australian Government committed to develop a National Career Education Strategy for schools, under *Quality Schools*, aimed at ensuring students are 'work ready' and prepared for the jobs of the future. *Future Ready* was developed in collaboration with the education sector, industry, parents, career and other agencies targeting youth groups. It was recently endorsed by states and territories through the Education Council.

The *National Career Education Strategy* (Australian Government, 2019) focuses on improving career education in schools by:

- Building teacher and school leader capability;
- Supporting parents in their important role in these conversations; and
- Encouraging collaboration between industry and schools.

4.2.2. Germany

National legislation mandates the delivery of careers education across the country. The details of precisely what careers education students receive, when they receive it and the nature of parental involvement in CEG is, however, determined by each of the sixteen Federal States. Careers education is provided either from grade 5 (age 10) or grade 7 (age 12-13), determined by each State. The levels and nature of parental involvement similarly varies across and within States. Whilst parental involvement is not required by national legislation, there are examples where schools do work with parents to enhance their service offer, like with career fairs, and/or with parents invited to talk to students about their employment.

The development and implementation of quality standards for CEG, which include parent involvement, also depend on each Federal State. In some States, for example Berlin, these processes are very well advanced. Currently, work is underway here that is establishing standards from grade 1 to 10, with a competency model linking to every grade. Once completed (scheduled for summer, 2020) these quality standards will be mandatory for all schools in Berlin (International expert interview).

Studies have shown that in Germany, career development and later career success are strongly related to social background. While it can be argued that school-based career education, based on individual need, may have the potential to counteract these systematic disadvantages, there is little knowledge about the effectiveness of specific career-related interventions on career development. This is partially due to the difficultly of comparing

interventions, or even comparing variables within one intervention type, such as internships (Ohlemann, Driesal-Lange, Weyland, & Ittel, 2019). Indeed, the overall lack of specification of a formal role for parents in CEG contrasts with their pivotal importance in supporting their children. In one study, while careers counselling services were found to be relatively unimportant for students' decision-making, the expertise and the in-depth knowledge careers counselling services providers were found to have the potential to empower parents. Coordinated services for parents could, therefore, create the circumstances for balancing out parents' different circumstances. Consequently, there is a need for individual information and counselling services for parents be 'a new regular target group for career counselling', to ensure that they are in a better position to provide informed advice to their children' (Ulrich et al., 2018, p. 2,203).

4.2.3. Ireland

In Ireland, there is a concern regarding the skills levels of the population, particularly in relation to the emerging and future economic and labour market needs, e.g., working within the digital economy, and the need for higher levels of interpersonal and career management skills. There is a significant concern that parents' insights into, and grasp of, emerging and future labour market needs and opportunities is poor (Expert stakeholder interview). This is set against a backdrop of apparent parental 'values' in relation to post-16 and post-18 options, where progression to university is placed first, and with apprenticeships and work-based training much further down the value order.

A major review of CEG by the Department of Education is due for publication in 2020. This is likely to focus on identifying good practice guidelines and practice expectations in schools and colleges, as well as setting out new recommendations for engaging more effectively with parents to try and address the lack of parental involvement in careers work (Expert stakeholder interview). It will give prominence to the need for higher quality careers information for young people and their parents in order to tackle, in part, the misperceptions of the value of work-based training and education. As a result of this review, it is suggested that a national system for online, high quality information, building on existing portals, such as Qualifax[3] and Careers Portal[4], will be developed to support face-to-face guidance and have pages dedicated to parents.

4.2.4. Netherlands

In the Netherlands, there is no basis for CEG in primary schools. Since 2000, the legal basis for CEG in secondary education, including vocational secondary education, 'is part of the block funding [lump sum] provided in the WVO (Wet op het Voortgezet Onderwijs [Secondary Education Act], 2000), Clause 86 (1.e) which states: 'Block funding refers to the following components: (…) career education and guidance.' The statutory obligations to offer career guidance services in tertiary education are limited to keeping track of the BSA (bindend studieadvies [binding study advice]): the obliged number of credits students must obtain within the first academic year of higher education' (Oomen, 2018, p. 10). In 2011, the government

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[3] Qualifax is Ireland's National Learners Database, which is available form https://www.qualifax.ie/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=179&Itemid=207.

[4] Careersportal.ie is a national careers guidance portal in Ireland, which includes a section dedicated to supporting and advising parents. Available from https://careersportal.ie/

encouraged 'educational partnerships' of schools and parents and stimulated secondary schools to involve parents in their mandatory CEG to prevent school drop-out and absenteeism. However, schools remain autonomous in setting their objectives, content and organisation of CEG and parental involvement in careers is in its infancy (Oomen, 2018).

From 2001, schools were obliged by government to provide CEG, but without any new funding nor further guidelines. How they deliver CEG is up to them and there is no obligation to involve parents. In practice, it is rare to involve parents, schools argue they need time to deliver CEG for their students. There is some guidance on what schools could do to involve parents – and these were renewed a few years ago, but there is no obligation. People in the Netherlands are not as aware of their government's CEG guidance, as people are of the Gatsby benchmarks in the UK (International expert interview).

The impact of parents on decisions, educational choice etc. is detailed by Oomen (2018), who highlights there are marked primary and secondary effects (evidence from Netherlands and Scandinavia). Students' social background influences their career decision-making. Primary effects concern interest in the child's education more generally; providing support creating an environment where children can learn. Secondary effects concern decisions and choices made by parents who did not attend higher education themselves and who are risk-averse in relation to financial issues and subject choice: for example, they may advise children to take subjects with best grades compared to parents who say this subject is important. These parents also differ on time dispersion: for example, better educated parents may say if you have this cluster or profile, you will have a broader horizon at a later stage. Few people are aware of such primary, secondary and tertiary effects on career decisions and schools could do more to support parents and learners in developing greater career self-efficacy (International expert interview).

In the Netherlands, social justice concerns at school level are at a very early stage (in relation to background such as minorities, neighbourhoods etc.). The problem is that for schools to enact an approach that addresses social justice, they would have to differentiate provision for different groups. This is not a popular approach as it contradicts a fundamental education principle in the Netherlands that there should equality of provision for all – the same amount of time and the same amount of effort given to each child (International expert interview). Oomen (2018) looked at parental engagement in the Netherlands through a small parental engagement intervention in six schools: the impact in the six schools was that parents were better informed; parental self-efficacy increased: they were more able to help; and they had a clearer parental role perception (International expert interview).

4.2.5. USA

Policy and practice relating to careers education and parental involvement in the US vary across the fifty States. Mandated requirements operate only at State level with only general guidelines on what comprises careers education existing nationally. It is legislation at individual State level, therefore, that specifies whether a school is required to have a school counsellor, from what age CEG provision should be available, whether parental involvement is required and how this should be achieved. Very few States, for example, specify that a school counsellor is required at elementary level, though this can vary from district to district even within States (International expert interview). Careers education provision is most evident in high schools, mediated and/or delivered through school counsellors. National models for guiding career development efforts exist (Howard, Castine & Flanagan, 2017), with

the National Career Development Guidelines representing one example (Kobylarz, 1996). These particular guidelines were established in consultation with leading career development experts and recommend that professional school counsellors attempt to establish student competencies around several broad areas that include career planning and occupational exploration. States have the option to base their own models for career education on these national models, enhancing provision where required and developing different benchmarks for different levels. Wisconsin, for example, has developed their careers education model effectively. One other such example is Massachusetts, which is committed to the implementation of their Individual Learning Plans (ILP), involving parents, with optional training for school counsellors made available. In 2009, the Madison (capital of Wisconsin) school plan specified an ILP at elementary level, which is still operating (International expert interview).

Research is currently being undertaken by researchers based at Boston University, Massachusetts, which aims to map the stage of development of careers education in elementary schools across different States. In its early stages, the number of States investigated for this research will depend on funding availability for the research study (Howard, 2019).

4.3. Summary

Overall the review of these international policies and strategies for CEG revealed that:

- The need to support parents, who are recognised as having a positive impact on children's career development, is shaping international practice and guidance.

- As is evident in UK practice, parental engagement in CEG is moving away from passive forms of involvement and information giving to trying to create space for active engagement, collaboration and communication between parents and educational institutions.

- National policies and strategies that identify how the education system could engage parents were found to be in place in, for example, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, and the Netherlands. Such policies often facilitate CEG rather than making it mandatory.

5. International interventions with parents

5.1. Introduction

Here, the implementation and impact of a number of international projects and initiatives, which target parental engagement in CEG, are outlined. One finding from the literature review carried out for this study, confirmed by three international expert interviewees, relates to the lack of robust evaluation evidence into the impact of parental interventions in CEG. Some successful practices are included from eight countries in this section. Material presented in this section comes from varied sources: academic publications, grey literature and international expert interviews. Each section provides citations and/or indicates the source(s) of information presented on a particular country.

5.2. Australia – A conversation that never stops: An indicative study of the Parents as Career Transitions Support program (PACTS)

The Parents as Career Transition Support (PACTS) is an Australian program based upon the insight that parents play a significant role in supporting their children to make informed decisions in their career pathway planning. However, as the world of work demands flexible work identities, narrow and linear forms of career advice are limited in supporting parents, who increasingly carry the burden of career-related support (Patton, 2001). Young people are likely to face longer periods of time in transition from school to work than previous generations and to face multiple career decisions along the life course (Foundation for Young Australians, 2013). PACTS was designed to help meet the need for transition support for students and their parents for a changing world.

The Parents as Career Transition Support (PACTS) program provides parents with up-to-date information related to their children's transitions to post-compulsory education, training and work (Borlagdan & Peyton, 2014). Through group workshops, a trained facilitator discusses with parents how they can confidently support the career aspirations and preferences of the young people in their care. PACTS seeks to build parents' knowledge of in-school and post-school pathway options. It also aims to build on information provision by offering tools to enhance parent–child engagement. The programs have been running in various formats for thirty years. They are currently operating with many different types of communities across Australia, predominately in Victoria. They can be delivered in different formats but the basic programme involves three two-hour workshops with a maximum of 20 parents per group.

A key feature is that they are interactive facilitated workshops that: focus on discussion and participation; are supported by a simple, easy to understand workshop handbook which all attendees receive; can be held in school, community or workplace environments; help develop increased understanding about the school, its people and services; and that emphasise networking and forming relationships with other parents. Workshop One (Beginning to Explore) focuses on: Finding a place to start; Communicating with young people about careers; Occupational categories; Careers/vocational instruments; Learning to use the Job Guide; Skills connection. Workshop Two (Career and Transition Services) focuses on: Career services and resources; Training and further education options: High School Certificates, VET in Schools, SBATs, TAFE and University; Apprenticeships and Traineeships; What is Group

Training. Workshop Three (Jobs) is optional, focusing on Tackling the employment market; Telephone skills for job seeking; Preparing for interviews; and Job Services Australia.

Borlagdan and Peyton (2014) evaluated PACTS, using surveys and interviews conducted with parents who had attended PACTS in Victoria, as well as input from a focus group of trained PACTS facilitators. The report outlines key findings of the study, summarised as follows:

- *PACTS participants report high levels of satisfaction with the quality of the program.* Data collected since 2010 indicate high levels of satisfaction, with over 90% of parent respondents stating that they were pleased with the quality of the workshops they attended.

- *PACTS builds parent confidence to support their children's transition decisions.* PACTS breaks down parent misconceptions about linear and fixed 'careers'; career decision-making as something that only occurs in Year 12; and parents' sole responsibility for making career decisions for their child.

- *PACTS helps parents to navigate complex post-school systems.*

  PACTS highlights the support parents can access to guide their children through multiple pathways and post-school options. This can be especially important for parents of children with a disability. PACTS also provides practical tools for parents to engage with their children throughout this process.

- *PACTS areas for development:*

  While parents and PACTS facilitators viewed PACTS favourably, they identified areas for development. These included programme attendance and retention; PACTS training for youth-specific service providers; and integration between PACTS and schools.

5.3. Canada – Education and labour market impacts of the Future to Discover project

A study by Shek-wai Hui and Ford (2018), based on the *Education and Labour Market Impacts of the Future to Discover Project*, was published by the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario. This reported on the long-running 'Future to Discover' research project conducted in two provinces in Canada, which is examining ways to increase access to post-secondary education of under-represented students. They found that enhanced career-education programmes, which included parental involvement and promises of financial support made as early as high school, boosted participation rates. Higher participation rates yielded substantial economic returns to the lives of young people.

The Future to Discover project began in 2003 to look at ways of reducing barriers that underrepresented students face, such as: a lack of financial resources; poor academic preparation; and a lack of information about post-secondary education. The study provides "a first, cautious answer to one of the most critical questions asked by decision makers concerned with post-secondary education access programming: 'How much of a difference will post-secondary education make to the lives of youth who will not go if we do not intervene?'".

The Explore Your Horizons (EYH) programme included more than 5,400 students in two provinces (Manitoba and New Brunswick). It tested the effectiveness of two interventions designed to help students overcome some of these barriers. One intervention involved

Learning Accounts while the other EYH intervention provided high school students with enhanced career planning, and information about the costs and benefits of post-secondary programs. The EYH program was delivered through voluntary, after-school workshops beginning in Grade 10. These workshops explored various post-secondary paths including college, university, apprenticeships and vocational training. The EYH program encompassed enhanced career education components designed to help high school students improve their knowledge of the role of post-secondary education and how they might access it; explore their future options through career education; and provide guidance to their parents on how to support them through this process.

Parents were involved in three components of the EYH program. The first component involved Career Focusing, which was designed to help high school students explore career and education options and develop suitable career education plans. There were six two-hour workshops and parents were invited to the final session. The second component, Lasting Gifts, was designed to help parents understand career development and how to support their children through the process. Parents and children were invited to attend all sessions together: four workshops of two hours. The third component, Future in Focus, was designed to help students manage transitions and build resilience to overcome challenges, such as through support networks. There were four two-hour workshops and parents were invited to the final session.

The underpinning research evaluation, spanning more than 10 years, set out to assess whether these interventions, offered either separately or together, would increase high school students' likelihood of enrolling in post-secondary education and the economic implications of that choice. The students were randomly assigned to one of four test groups: one received access to the after-school information workshops, the second was promised funding for post-secondary studies, a third group received both at the same time and a control group received none. The students were tracked from the time they were in Grade 9 to their mid-20s, when they had entered the workforce. The study found that in New Brunswick the interventions, offered either separately or together, increased high school graduation rates and post-secondary education enrolment among under-represented students, including those from low-income families and first-generation students; in some cases, substantially so. But, when it came to post-secondary completion, the effects were less encouraging. While the promise of financial aid encouraged college completion, neither intervention had any noticeable impact on university completion. However, lower-income New Brunswick students who had received the interventions spent considerably longer in post-secondary education than they would have otherwise, the study noted. In Manitoba, where students were offered only the workshops, no long-term impact on post-secondary education participation was seen.

The evaluation of the programme found that in New Brunswick the effects of encouraging young people to participate in post-secondary education, regardless of whether they graduate was substantial (Shek-wai Hui & Ford, 2018). In Manitoba, where the intervention did not lead to higher participation rates, no economic effects were apparent, indicating that interventions may yield different results in different settings. Shek-wai Hui and Ford (2018) argue that access to interventions hold remarkable potential supporting parents in providing guidance. Specifically, teaching parents about career development and how to support their children develop career education plans. Those young people whose parents had engaged in the programme were more likely to go on to post-secondary education.

5.4. Czechia – Family Group Conferences as a means of preventing early school leaving

In Czechia, the family conference (FC) method is used as a means of preventing early school leaving by involving the whole family in the intervention (Fišarova, ́ 2019). FC is a simple tool built around a fundamental idea that the family has expert knowledge about itself. When a student is identified as at risk of early school leaving, a Family Group Conferences (FGC) is set up. This is used to influence career decisions where it is acknowledged that there are areas where the family does not have sufficient capacity or knowledge, so careers practitioners are employed to support the family. The schools take the lead, since the main reason for preparing and carrying out FC is in response to a change in the family situation, which can have negative consequences on the child, for example, school failure, absence of attendance and/or change of behaviour. The FC offers a set of situations in which the family and a young person can be supported in their choice of study or profession. The FC coordinator ensures that the wider family network has full awareness of the process and that the family agrees on a procedure for collaboration of professionals with family members for the next six months. Professional expertise is subsequently sought, when/if the family needs support to help a child deal with a specific issue. The advantage is the possibility of creating a 'safety net', setting the foundation for cooperation even if a member of the family or the young person himself/herself continues to struggle with an issue. Throughout the process of preparation of the FC and during the meeting, the family has time to discuss the joint plan and communicate with experts through a selected family member or in some cases an interpreter. This method of working with the family also produces good results when working with migrants, national minorities and socially excluded people.

5.5. France – Supporting educational journeys

Voluntary organisations have become important in France by offering schools a range of services to help tackle social inequalities. The voluntary organisations can offer up to five hours a week to work with those who are failing. One voluntary organisation (AFEV) sends higher education students into poor neighbourhoods to work with school pupils and their parents offering tutoring support, which includes working with them two hours a week to raise career aspirations. This arrangement can last several years. An estimated 8,000 students have taken part in the programme since it started in 1991. The aim of the AFEV is to support young people on their educational journey and place them in a 'dynamic of openness', which allows them to acquire transversal skills that will promote their integration into a knowledge society. This support ideally takes place at home, in order to foster the bond with his family, throughout the school year, at the rate of two hours per week (i.e. 60 hours of volunteering per year). In 2007, a national evaluation showed the impact of this support when following up the young people. The unique bond that is formed between the young person – beyond their student status – and the volunteer student produces effects: changes are observed, in particular, on self-esteem, cultural openness and relationships with school. A whole series of evaluations have taken place and the most recent took place in summer 2019 (Le Lab, 2019). Eighty percent of the 552 students considered that their student had helped them to see more clearly in their school and/or professional project (International expert interview).

5.6. Germany – Career competency model

As CEG education activities are not standardised, it is difficult to make comparisons about their efficacy, as output variables differ. Research underway is addressing this gap by evaluating 4,400 students against specified CEG variables. This ongoing research is examining how career competencies are developed in relation to a range of different activities and exactly how these activities may impact on students in relation to competency development. The research study is due to finish in 2021. Data are being collected from students over a two-year period (Ohlemann, Driesal-Lange, Weyland, & Ittel, 2019) and have the potential to form the basis of future evaluation studies.

Additionally, the German company, Vodafone has published a handbook, with practical examples of how to get parents involved in school education more generally (Vodafone Stiftung Deutschland, 2013. Qualitätsmerkmale schulischer Elternarbeit. Ein Kompass für die partnerschaftliche. In translation: Quality characteristics of schoolwork with parents. A compass for cooperation between schools and parents). While the practical suggestions contained in this publication are targeted at parental involvement in schools generally, it is argued that they are equally relevant, and can be applied to, careers education (International expert interview). Four pillars of involvement are identified in the handbook: building relations; respectful communications; integration in different activities; and ways of cooperating with parents. For example, it advocates involving parents and carers in the 'kick off' meetings with parents when children start at secondary school. The international expert interviewed reflected that when parents keep talking with their children about careers, this not only creates optimism in the young person, but increases the optimism of parents in their own job role.

5.7. Hong Kong – Learning from others, The CLAP for Youth project

An initiative is underway, focused on career development support for young people, the CLAP for Youth, which addresses the need for CEG in Hong Kong, including parental involvement. This 'CLAP for Youth project' (CLAP for Youth @JC) is a five-year Trust-Initiated Project aimed at developing an evidence-based career and life development intervention model' (Factsheet, 2019). The CLAP model uses a Youth Development and Intervention Framework, which comprises competence and career development (CLAP for Youth @JC, 2017). It was launched in 2015 with initial funding (HK$500 million) from the Hong Kong Jockey Club (HKJC), a charitable foundation, though future funding is uncertain. The overall vision is for all young people to find meaning in their lives and make positive contributions. A network of 52 secondary schools are being supported with various resources, including the provision of a career-life planning curriculum, teacher training, an intervention model and a work-place learning framework (CLAP for Youth @JC, 2018).

The project focuses on three parallel streams: secondary schools, community-based and work-based. It connected with Gatsby in April 2019 and now has its own version of the Gatsby Benchmarks. This is currently being piloted in six schools. The government has taken over best practices of many projects from the HKJC, though this does not represent 'total adoption'. Currently, it seems likely that the government will migrate some resources, from the project, like the e-portal and e-curriculum into the Life Planning website, operated by the Hong Kong Education Bureau. It is estimated that 95 percent of schools have been reached by the project.

Within the project, strategies are being implemented to increase parent involvement in CEG are being pursued. For example, with the aim of enhancing the awareness and willingness of

parents to support their children, an award for parents was introduced. The underlying rationale was that if parents are supported to achieve their own career aspiration, or dream, they are more likely to support their children in pursuit of their aspirations. The scheme, however, is unlikely to be scalable, though it is regarded as successful for its promotional value.

Other strategies designed to increase parental engagement include parent briefing programmes, which provide parent education talks and activities, together with making educational videos, as a form of online training on the 'Parent Education Learning Platform and parent intensive support, whereby parent counselling and parent groups are facilitated and resourced, to focus on career-related issues. Talking to young people and their parents together is regarded as the most successful approach. Optimally, this will take place after the young persons' final exams and before results are published (that is, early June) and has to be voluntary. Timing increases the probability of persuading parents to come into schools with their children, since the impending exam results concentrate them on their future. Parent Teacher Associations are also used as a method of involving parents, because these associations are led by the parents themselves, representing a powerful bridge between parents and schools.

A formal evaluation is not currently available, but first impressions are that the project has been successful overall, particularly regarding motivation (international expert interview). Responses have mostly been very positive. Over the last four years, schools have received a great deal of additional support for CEG, if required. The approach taken by the project team has been very much school-led, that is, schools select what types of support in which areas. It was suggested that this approach would be difficult to scale, going forward. It is considered user-friendly, though it is unlikely that it can be operated effectively across 52 different school models (International expert interview).

Online, the project supports a parent/youth platform for parents called: 'Let's grow together'. This provides parents with careers information and helps support parents to engage in career conversations with their children. This has been 'quite successful', with approximately 12,000 followers, currently. Barriers to parental involvement with the project were identified. First, the level of motivation of individual parents to be involved in the career development of their children represented a challenge. For parents, finding the time to attend school and get involved can be a real problem. Second, gaining access to the parents of young children in organisational contexts other than school. Specifically, gaining access to young people attending vocational schools and/or young people in formal employment was recognised as a particular challenge with little progress made by the project to date. Third, the lack of school support to involve parents in CEG, since schools were unlikely to take an active role in involving parents (International expert interview).

5.8. Netherlands – Parents Turn

'Parents Turn', was a government-funded project directed at the academic stream of Dutch secondary education (Oomen, 2018). The career teachers of six secondary schools around the Netherlands were involved in the project. Dutch career teachers are teachers in academic subjects who take on the additional task of supporting students and also support tutors and teachers in delivering the mandatory CEG provision in their school. Each career teacher involved in the project delivered the career intervention, following an extensive, co-designed script for each of the four sessions with the support of tutors, teachers and heads of

department at their schools. Pairs of parent(s) and children volunteered for the four successive monthly sessions (ten hours in total), which took place in the school after classes, between September and December 2012. Three schools delivered the intervention in the third year (n = 92) while preparing 14-16-year-olds for subject-cluster choices. The other three schools delivered the intervention in the fifth and final year (n = 83) while preparing 16-18-year-olds to choose higher education options.

The programme resulted from a needs assessment among potential participating parents in these six schools. The career intervention aimed to support parents in facilitating their children's career building by helping them to be: up-to-date and well-informed about educational possibilities and their financial consequences, the labour market and the use of information resources; and able to make considered career decisions with their child (Oomen, 2018). It was designed as a learning activity for parents interacting with their child (Kirkpatrick, & Kirkpatrick, 2006). The physical presence of both parents and the child facilitated family-learning. Parents as well as senior students from upper secondary and first-year higher education alumni students served as resources, reflecting the diverse nature of the wider school-community to realise community-interaction (Law, 1981).

The findings suggest that Parents Turn built and enhanced parents' capacity to be involved in and support the career development of their child. This parental capacity consists not only of their knowledge and skills to handle the information on higher education, but also – as suggested by the parental-involvement literature – of their parental self-efficacy and their parental role-definition (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003). The parents involved: enhanced their information level; increased their parental self-efficacy in making use of information, guidance and support tools; changed their parental attitudes and skills; talked more effectively to their child; became more aware of their role and their child's; and felt more able to support their child in career decision-making (Oomen, 2018).

However, career interventions worked differently for parents with different needs, which sometimes related to levels of educational attainment. For example, parents who were educated to higher levels were more likely to update themselves on changing entry qualifications for education and therefore more able to support young people in their care, while parents who were educated to lower levels were less aware of the importance and impact of early educational choices (Oomen, 2018).

Oomen (2018) also found that lower-educated parents might be successful in raising their parental capacity, but then remained unsure about how to make constructive use of newly acquired knowledge and resources. This can be related to the secondary effects of social origin, with the mechanisms of risk aversion and time-discounting preferences (i.e. short-term horizon) causing inequalities of educational opportunity (Breen, Van de Werfhorst, & Jaeger, 2014). Features of the present school system operate as major barriers to sustaining the intervention.

The overall conclusion was that a school-initiated career intervention involving parents, in the form of family learning and community interaction, can build and enhance parents' capacity to be involved in, and support the career development of, their child, but that differences related to higher educational attainment affect both initial involvement and parental capacity. Parental engagement strategies, therefore, work well in some cases, not in others and are most effective when contact with parents is from the start of their children's educational journey (Oomen, 2018). Key issues from the 'Parents Turn' research, for more general discussions about parental involvement, are identified as follows:

- The importance of differentiating between parents who had or had not attained higher education qualifications and of researching the different needs for information, guidance and support, especially where parents are not higher education-qualified themselves (p. 273).

- 'Parental involvement in CEG is not an easy undertaking and, as this study shows, can be a disrupting task for a school. It is also not a light challenge to take up: once the school makes a start with it, there is no way back without risking damage to the relationships with parents (e.g. third-year parents were particularly disappointed when the guidance and support offered by the school declined after the career intervention)' (p. 259).

- 'The parent-school relationship should not be reduced to a static series of concrete activities (Jeynes, 2010). Following the four features for an effective parental engagement strategy as developed by Goodall and Vorhaus (2011) – planning, leadership, collaboration and engagement, and sustained improvement – is another' (pp. 259-260).

- Parents appreciate it if they feel that they are heard from the start. A comprehensive needs analysis among parents beforehand can be planned and the results presented to them, as well as how their needs are translated, as the 'red thread' for the sessions of the programme. Also, students can be heard and motivated to be involved with their parent(s) by a similar needs analysis (p. 261).

- 'Leadership by school management as agents of change is also important (Andrews and Hooley, 2017). As a next step to accelerating the rate of change, additional (facilitated) site meetings with school staff involved in the career intervention are recommended to grow support and 'ownership' of the career intervention at site level' (p.267).

- In relation to policy development 'as Fullan (2016) argues, the emphasis should be on policy drivers of capacity building of leadership in (career) teachers and school managers' (p. 270).

5.9. USA – Integrating parents through Individual Learning Plans (ILP)

As indicated above (section 4.2.5), variation in the practice regarding the involvement of parents in CEG exists across the 50 States in the USA. Where parental involvement is evident, it tends to be achieved through the Individual Learning Planning (ILP) process. Here, the parents get involved in how their child has achieved, what their interests are, what their ambitions are, etc. Then a plan is developed to achieve agreed action and/or targets, with support from the school. These meetings are designed to inform parents and bring them in to the conversation. The school explicitly tries to identify what parents need to support their children's career development. The details of the process will depend on how each State implements the ILP, but parental involvement is likely to be explicit, with meetings that involve parents. This normally occurs once a year. The ILP is, therefore, the key mechanism for integrating parents into the CEIAG process.

In the national career development guidelines model for school counsellors, there are standards for each of three key domains: personal social; educational achievement and

lifelong learning; and career management. States can develop these further, as required. Massachusetts went further than the national model in specifying standards at different grade levels. Again, any approach to the development and/or implementation of standards would take place at State level.

The USA national careers information website provides: 'detailed profiles of each of the 50 US states, including specific career, employment, education and economic information, profiles of hundreds of cities and counties, and links to appropriate occupation and college profile pages'. Additionally, it presents a 'career quiz', to 'uncover your hidden strengths'. Additionally, each State will typically have their own careers information system. These resources are very easy to interrogate regarding career exploration and parents have an important role to play. However, parents are not always aware of the importance of these resources or how to maximise their potential. Many went through school at a time when the support they got for career decision-making was poor (International expert interview).

6. Conclusions

The notion that involving parents in CEG is highly desirable is neither new nor innovative. This is perhaps unsurprising since research indicates that parents affect career choice more than careers practitioners, teachers, friends, other relatives, or people working in their field of interest. Indeed, evidence exists across decades confirming that their (positive) involvement in education generally benefits children/young people and represents good practice. Furthermore, there is a range of groups for whom parental behaviours can be particularly helpful, for example: those with disabilities; those with disrupted life-stories; and one-parent families. Yet, parental involvement in CEG remains somewhat marginal in the UK, with this tendency being more evident in some parts of the UK than others. Indeed, the evidence both from the literature and from the practitioner and international expert interviews carried out for this study illuminates this same tendency towards marginalisation in many countries, with parental involvement often more aspirational than systematised or mandated. While some countries were found to be responding with a policy and/or strategy drive to involve parents in the educational and career decision-making of the young people in their care, this is often being carried out within broader remits, than within a single focus on CEG. For example, with the aim(s) of improving educational outcomes, attainment, supporting socially disadvantaged children and/or preventing drop-out.

Although parents undoubtedly have the potential to influence the career development of young people in their care, both positively and negatively, robust evidence of what, when and how parental behaviours constructively support their children's learning about career progression remains inconclusive and elusive. This is because formal, large-scale, preferably longitudinal evaluations, the results of which are available through publication, have been largely neglected. From expert interviews with practitioners and key stakeholders, career-related, constructive parental involvement continues to be conceived as:

- Practical and informational support (e.g., writing applications);

- Emotional support (e.g. exploring vocational interests and abilities, and various occupational options); and

- Organising and/or helping them to reflect on relevant career experiences, whilst ultimately allowing young people the autonomy to make their own choices.

This review has produced a wealth of experiential evidence on the engagement of parents in education, with a focus on CEG. This experiential evidence on existing approaches to engaging parents in careers education and guidance includes: partnerships between parents and educational institutions that support learning and activities; clear communication on CEG programmes and activities; and involving parents in the design of CEG interventions. Integration of parental support is positively associated with information seeking and research behaviours, self-efficacy and confidence, planning, goal setting and creating a sense of direction, career decision-making, self-efficacy and career adaptability in children.

A summary overview of what is happening in practice in engaging parents in CEG drawing together evidence from the UK and internationally is presented below, in this section of the research report. Overall, it is notable that there is a shift away from passive forms of parent involvement through the provision of information towards more active engagement and

involvement in CEG, such as creating a space for collaboration and communication between the educational institution and parents.

6.1. Evidence from the UK

Since parental involvement in careers activities in secondary schools and further education are under-researched in the UK, knowledge of their successful integration in CEG is both limited and under-developed.

Through practitioner and expert stakeholder interviews, a wide range of CEG related activities and interventions that engage parents were identified as taking place in schools and colleges across the UK, including: parents evenings; careers fairs; breakfast and coffee clubs; curriculum activities; personal guidance sessions; careers open days; collaborative careers events with other schools and colleges; employer/sectoral events; expert presentations on topics such as the future labour market, employability skills, apprenticeships, etc.; and career guidance sessions for parents.

Experiential evidence from practitioner and expert interviews suggest that initiatives often originate through single, short-term funded projects, which is far from having provision thoroughly embedded in school and college programmes and curricula. It is findings from these short-term projects that are typically available in the grey literature. All-age guidance provision in Scotland and Wales offers valuable insights into how parental involvement in CEG can be embedded across the curriculum and how parents can be recognised, valued and supported. From our examination of current practice, the main ways in which educational institutions are achieving parental engagement is by:

- **Promoting and communicating the CEG activities** across the curriculum, such as asking parents to contribute to classroom activities, getting them involved in homework activities and through careers days;

- **Redesigning existing activities** to involve parents, so, for example, schools and colleges are inviting parents to their child's personal guidance session, careers fairs and open days, ensuring they are held at times when parents are more likely to be available;

- **Creating parent-friendly environments** with activities to draw parents into the school or college, such as breakfast and coffee clubs, and career guidance sessions for parents;

- **Designing new activities** that engage parents, employers and the local community, such as 'meet the employer events', 'guess my job' and informational events on topics requested by parents that involve local experts; and

- **Using technology** to engage parents in their child's learning and CEG as it offers ways to communicate, disseminate and enable access to information.

Features of current parental engagement strategies include:

- Planned activities embedded across the school as part of their service;

- Effective leadership;

- Collaboration and engagement between the educational institution and parents;

- CPD to support careers practitioners and education staff in their engagement with parents;

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- Clear communication plans to engage parents including the use of digital tools; and

- Ongoing monitoring and development for sustained improvement.

The overall aim of a parental engagement strategy is to ensure that parents are supported so that they can ultimately reinforce and/or complement the advice and guidance delivered by schools and colleges. Importantly, evidence highlights challenges to parental engagement in the UK with some studies noting that: the timing of events often conflicts with parents' working hours; there are issues around when and how careers support is communicated; plus, a lack of time, space and resources available. Research from the UK suggests that a needs analysis of what parents want is required for the design and delivery of CEG activities to support parents (Goodall & Vorhaus, 2011). This finding is reinforced by more recent international evidence (Oomen, 2018).

6.2. International evidence

It is undeniable that parental engagement strategies work well in some cases, but not in others. International evidence indicates that key issues are the educational context and the student population. One possible solution to increasing engagement could relate to a twin focus on both an underlying national strategy and an individual school approach (as in the Netherlands City Plan and the Massachusetts' Individual Learning Plans, see sections 5.8 and 5.9 above). This would necessitate contact with parents from the start of their child's educational trajectory to ensure they understand what is expected of parents, then building and maintaining relationships with them, using a mix of CEG and education.

Policies to involve parents in the educational and career decision-making of the young people in their care in secondary and further education are in place in various countries. For example, Denmark, the Netherlands, Germany, the USA, Australia and Canada, but often these policies are encouraging and facilitating CEG rather than making it mandatory. The ways in which policies are interpreted and implemented can vary considerably, within countries. For example, variation exists from State to State in the USA, across Federal States in Germany and even between schools in the Netherlands. Some common features drawn from the international examples of parental integration and engagement include: full integration of parents to build relationships with educational institutions; the development of parents' knowledge; and communication of up-to-date information on educational pathways, training and work.

6.3. Learning from others in the design and delivery of careers-related activities for parents

The range of parental involvement interventions that has emerged from the literature review has highlighted the variety and importance of these approaches, whilst interviews with practitioners and expert stakeholders has helped focus on key learning points. Experiential evidence from interviewees has shown how programmes and activities implemented have: had a positive effect on parents' self-efficacy; instilled greater confidence in supporting their children; and developed better knowledge of options, qualifications and the labour market. Parents that have engaged have typically been positive about their experiences and valued the support offered.

Some key learning for the design, development and delivery of careers-related activities and programmes to support parental knowledge and careers advice in schools and colleges were identified as follows:

- Activities need senior leadership and management support, and should involve teaching staff, parents and governors.

- Parents should be involved in the design, development and/or delivery of careers-related activities and events, as their inputs are valuable, as well as the process of involvement supporting parental communication with education staff and raising awareness of what CEG activities are taking place. Activities should be linked where possible.

- Communication with parents needs to be targeted, personalised (where possible) and appropriate in terms of content and timing.

- Creating a parent-friendly environment within the educational institution has been powerful in getting parents engaged and involved in their children's education more generally.

- Mixed methods of delivery (i.e., online and face-to-face) have been found to be effective at reaching parents, because it enables engagement to take place at a time, and in a manner, of the parents' choosing.

- Workshops involving both parents and young people create a shared careers related experience and can be a good way of parents' learning about careers and on starting a dialogue with their young people about their educational and career pathways.

- Events that stimulate family conversations about careers create a shared understanding of their children's career direction, which is essential for progressing thinking and positive for children's constructive career development.

- Workshops with small numbers offer more opportunity for personalised and tailored support.

- Activities, programmes and/or events that offer direct, personalised benefits to young people and their parents can help to develop engagement and trust.

- Starting activities in school with young people, which they then take home to complete, has been effective at encouraging parents to get involved, possibly because the home is considered a safe and unpressurised location for parents to engage in learning activities and with the online materials.

- Activities can be resource intensive (time and money) so replicability and sustainability need to be considered.

- Careers practitioners in schools and colleges need time to support both parents and their children in their career conversations to ensure they are supportive, informative and useful. This is particularly important where parents may be absent and additional care and support may be needed.

- All practitioners need to be able to communicate with parents in different ways on a variety of topics, and be expert in LMI and opportunities, so CPD is a necessity to support this aspect of delivery.

It is evident from the research that parental engagement and involvement is moving up the government agenda, which needs to be capitalised.

In summary, there appears to be a lack of robust evaluation evidence into the impact of parental CEG interventions. To take the research findings from this study forward, pilots are needed in schools and colleges to test a range of careers interventions and activities that engage and involve parents. Evaluating these pilots would provide a better evidence base on which to base careers practice in this field and better support parents. Further research into the ways in which technology is promoting and enabling parents to be involved in young people's career choices is also needed as its use is already prevalent within educational institutions.

7. Recommendations

For policymakers

- Policy needs to be extended to recognise the importance of the role of parents in CEG, how it can benefit children and educational institutions, with support at Ministerial level. This should be accompanied by appropriate funding.

- Parental involvement should be clearly specified in any benchmarking or quality assurance for CEG.

- Workforce development, through high quality training and continuing professional development, to mandatory professional standards should be a prerequisite. CPD activities should be focused on ways to communicate and engage parents, as well as how to foster career conversations in families.

For schools, colleges and careers organisations

Parental involvement in CEG is not an easy undertaking, so should be treated as an educational innovation, requiring senior management support and resourcing. Recommendations include:

- Effective parental engagement strategies that are based upon planning, leadership, collaboration, engagement, and sustained improvement using parent feedback.

- Support that is tailored to parental need, reflecting different expectations, needs and aspirations, as well as recognising that there will be different levels of engagement.

- Specification of what careers information and activities are needed through a comprehensive needs analysis of parents' requirements; the results of which should be used as the basis for further action.

- Ensuring the parent-school and parent-college relationship is not reduced to a static series of concrete activities, but involves a range of stakeholders.

- Embedding engagement activities across the curriculum, so education choices and careers are not only discussed at key transition points, but are part of ongoing conversations.

- Holding site meetings with school and college staff involved in the career intervention in order to grow support and 'ownership' of any career intervention.

- Developing 'peer communities' within and across schools and colleges, in initial teacher training, with careers education and guidance associations, etc. to support skill and knowledge development of careers practitioners and teachers, ensuring new and interesting practices are disseminated, with their uptake encouraged and supported.

- Using ICT to accelerate the processes in all schools and colleges that are engaged in improving practices in parental involvement in CEG. It can also be used to monitor engagement and determine what support is needed.

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Appendix 1: Examples of careers related resources aimed at parents highlighted by research participants

During the course of the study a number of career-related resources were identified in the literature and by interviewees. The resources are listed here as examples of what has been developed and made available, but should not be considered a comprehensive list. Please note that these resources have not been assessed, so their inclusion is not a recommendation or endorsement.

Guides

UCAS (2019). *Parent, Guardian, and Carer Guide 2019: Everything you need to support your child with their higher education choices*. Cheltenham: UCAS. Available from https://www.ucas.com/file/185091/download?token=4Pf51fWt.

Tomorrow's Engineers (2019). *Parents' guide to engineering careers*. London. Available from https://tomorrowsengineers.org.uk/careers-resources-activities/parents-guide-to-engineering-careers/

CIPD & the Careers and Enterprise Company (2018). *Guide to post-16 career options for parents and carers*. London: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD). Available from https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/parents-and-carers-guide-2019_tcm18-17811.pdf

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Careermag for parents from careermap.co.uk, https://careermap.co.uk/careermag-parents/

Websites

- icould – Parentzone, https://icould.com/information-for-parents/
- Parent adviser, http://www.parentadviser.co.uk/advice-for-parents.aspx
- Parental guidance – careers information and advice for parents, http://www.parentalguidance.org.uk/
- The Parenthub, https://www.parenthub.co.uk/
- Pearson – Study guides for learners and parents, https://www.pearson.com/uk/learners.html
- Save the Student, https://www.savethestudent.org/student-finance/parents-guide-tips-university.html
- Target Careers – Resources for parents and teachers, https://targetcareers.co.uk/parents-and-teachers
- The Complete University Guide – Advice for parents, https://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/preparing-to-go/advice-for-parents/
- UCAS Undergraduate: advice for parents and guardians, https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/ucas-undergraduate-advice-parents-and-guardians

Website with resources and information for parents integrated into content

- Unifrog, https://www.unifrog.org/

- E4Education, https://www.e4education.co.uk/e4econnect

Examples of careers information webpages developed by schools and colleges

- Madeley School, http://madeleyschool.org/work-related-learning/copy-of-careers-information-for-parents-2

- Mid-Kent College, https://www.midkent.ac.uk/news/blog/the-role-of-parents-in-their-childs-career-choices/

International examples

- Career Key (USA), https://www.careerkey.org/choose-a-career/parents-effect.html#.XV-m4uhKiUl

- IDreamCareer (India), https://idreamcareer.com/blog/role-of-parents-in-career-planning

- Qualifax, Ireland's National Learners' Database, https://www.qualifax.ie/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=179&Itemid=207

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