

Name of Review:

Review of Careers Guidance in Maidstone

What are the objectives and desired outcomes of the review

Objectives:

- To assess the quality, and level, of provision of careers advice in Maidstone; and
- To identify best practice from elsewhere in order to improve the provision of careers guidance in the borough.

Outcome:

- To improve the provision of careers advice for the residents of the borough.

What equality issues will need to be considered as part of the review – giving consideration to the 6 strands:

Two particular protected characteristics were considered as particularly relevant to this topic – age and disability.

Age

Lack of effective careers advice can be a barrier to people of all ages. For example, young people leaving school may face barriers as they have never worked before and do not know how to apply for a job. Equally, older people who have been in the workforce for a long time, but find they want to change careers can also face barriers due to not being active in the job market for a long time. This issue will be considered through asking specific questions on this topic to each of the witnesses.

Disability

Disability can be a significant barrier to getting a job. This issue will be considered by requesting a submission of evidence from national charities to the committee.

Which witnesses are required?

A list of potential witnesses were drawn up, including:

- Kent County Council- as careers advice is (loosely) within their remit, although statutory responsibility for careers guidance for young people resides with schools and further education colleges
- Department for Work and Pensions- as they could provide context of the situation nationally
- Representatives from the local Jobcentre- to give an idea of local provision
- Federation of Small Businesses and Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce- as the voice of local business
- Employment Agencies
- Schools, Further Education providers and Higher Education providers. These could be consulted through their Kent networks (for example Kent Further Education Colleges- known as KFEC)
- Local people- from a variety of backgrounds- to gather their own experiences of careers advice.
- Barclays Bank- as they have developed a 'skills for life programme'
- Organisations representing the rural economy- to get a perspective on the effects on the rural economy

Other ways to seek evidence? E.g. site visits, involving members of the public, consultation. *

A visit to a jobs fair may be useful to see what kind of advice is provided there.

A visit to a Local Authority that has been successful, or is developing an innovative

approach, would be beneficial to the committee.

Visit to Mid Kent College jobs shop.

What information/training is needed?

A list of job sites, so that the committee can have a look at the online application process for themselves.

Suggested time for review and report completion date

The review will take place mainly within committee meetings, structured as follows:

January- Kent County Council , Department for Work and Pensions /Jobcentreplus

February- Education providers

March- The public and local businesses including Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce and Federation of Small Businesses

Please note the above will be dependent on witness availability

Barclay's will be contacted early and given the option of attending any of the meetings they are available for.

It may be more suitable to gather evidence from the public in a more informal setting, so a working group could be set up to report back to the committee for this group of consultees.

The aim will be to have the final report ready for the meeting in April, with a working party meeting to convene before the agenda deadline in April to finalise the draft report.

How does the review link to council priorities?

For Maidstone to have a growing economy

- If the outcome of this review is successful it will help to fill vacancies in the local economy, enabling the local economy to grow

For Maidstone to be a decent place to live

- Enabling residents to find work, or to improve their work situation, will contribute towards making Maidstone a decent place to live.
- Providing equalities are considered thoroughly this review will help to eliminate disadvantage for those with protected characteristics by improving their access to the labour market.

How does this item deliver CfPS effective scrutiny principles?

- Provides 'critical friend' challenge to executive policy-makers and decision-makers
- Enables the voice and concerns of the public
- Is carried out by 'independent minded governors' who lead and own the scrutiny role
- Drives improvement in public services

It is considered that this review will deliver on all of the CfPS effective scrutiny principles.

Any co-optees or expert witnesses?

An email will be sent around to all members asking whether they would like to become a co-optee on the review, in case members have a particular interest in this topic or have expertise in this area.

Other suggested expert witnesses could be:

- Lenham Storage- as they have a well-known skills gap for drivers
- Bus operators- as they face similar problems to those for Lenham Storage
- HR departments- either ours or KCC