

## News release

3 July 2008

### Careers services help learners make informed choices

Careers services in Wales work well with their local Learning Pathway networks to support learners aged 14-19, says a report published today by Estyn. Most networks feel that Careers Wales companies' impartial role has helped to break down barriers and improve dialogue between schools and colleges.

The Welsh Assembly Government describes Learning Pathways as the learning experiences of each individual 14-19 year old. The government proposes that Learning Pathways 14-19 will allow more young people to achieve their potential so they are better equipped for the world of work, better informed and more active citizens.

Dr Bill Maxwell, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales said, 'Careers Wales companies play a key role in contributing to 14-19 Learning Networks. Giving young people wider career choices and more flexible options will help develop their skills, knowledge and experience to prepare them for life'.

Inspectors found that all careers companies respond well to local priorities and match their input to meet the needs of individual networks. However, all companies report that there are not enough suitable work based learning placements, which limits the progress of some learners in each area. Estyn recommends that the Welsh Assembly Government addresses this issue.

All Careers Wales companies provide good quality information about the local labour market and analyse where pupils go when they leave formal education. Inspectors found that 14-19 Learning Networks do not routinely use this information well enough to inform planning. Estyn recommends that Learning Networks make better use of this information.

Overall, Careers Wales companies support the development of learning coaches well. Learning coaches help young people in schools, colleges and work based learning to identify and achieve their educational goals. Good quality training has helped to equip learning coaches for their role, but the impact of their support varies considerably between networks. Estyn recommends that the Welsh Assembly Government establishes clear guidelines to clarify the role of learning coaches.

Learners are more easily able to access information about 14+ options, 16+ options and work experiences placements, thanks to the Careers Wales website. Across Wales, this facility increases the range of experience from which learners can choose and a very high proportion of learners now go out on work experience during Years 10 and 11 at school.

ENDS

#### **Notes to Editors:**

- Estyn, the office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales, provides a high quality inspection and advice service.
- Estyn's report, 'A report on the Careers Services in Wales – Supporting Learning Pathways – The additional services Careers Wales provides to support learners in making choices within 14-19 Learning Pathways' has been commissioned by the Welsh Assembly Government.
- The evidence base for this report is based on:
  - Visits to five of the six Careers Wales companies; a Careers Wales company inspection and a visit to the Careers Wales Association
  - Recent Estyn reports, including:
    - A report on the progress and effectiveness of Careers Wales Online (March 2006);
    - Current qualifications and the 14-19 Learning Pathways initiative (2006); and

- Choice and flexibility for 14-19 learners (March 2008)
- Estyn inspects nursery schools and settings maintained or funded by local authorities, primary schools, secondary schools, special schools, pupil referral units, independent schools, further education, adult community-based learning, youth support services, youth justice system, local education authorities (LEAs), teacher education and training, work-based learning, Careers Wales companies and the education, guidance and training elements of the Jobcentre Plus programmes.
- Full copies of inspection reports are available on Estyn's web site at [www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk)

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