

# Using and Sharing LMI to Inform Future Choices

**A practical guide for careers service managers**



## Acknowledgements

This work was funded by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills. The report was produced by CFE and authored by Abigail Diamond, Simon Bysshe, Lindsey Bowes and Sophie Spong.

The report has been produced as part of a project to explore how best to use and share career-related labour market information (LMI) in order to enhance practice with young people and adults.

The guide draws on evidence from 12 case studies that were undertaken in England, Scotland and Wales in early 2012 as well as earlier research into the key issues and challenges of using and sharing LMI. A summary of the initial research, along with the research report containing the case studies in their entirety are available to download from the UK Commission's website.

[The Research Report](#)

[The Summary Report](#)

The UK Commission and CFE would like to express our sincere thanks to the organisations that kindly agreed to participate in the case studies and for giving their time so generously.





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# Introduction

## What is career-related LMI?

The labour market is both complex and dynamic, created through the constant interaction between 'supply' (individuals looking for work) and 'demand' (employers seeking to recruit individuals as employees to help them deliver the goods and/or services they produce).

Information about the labour market provides advisers with a helpful background and context in which to consider their work. However, to be useful in career guidance, it has to be turned into labour market intelligence through interpretation and analysis. Although the LMI used by advisers to inform their practice may differ in form and content from that which they use with their clients<sup>1</sup>, the LMI that both individuals and their advisers need most is career-related LMI.

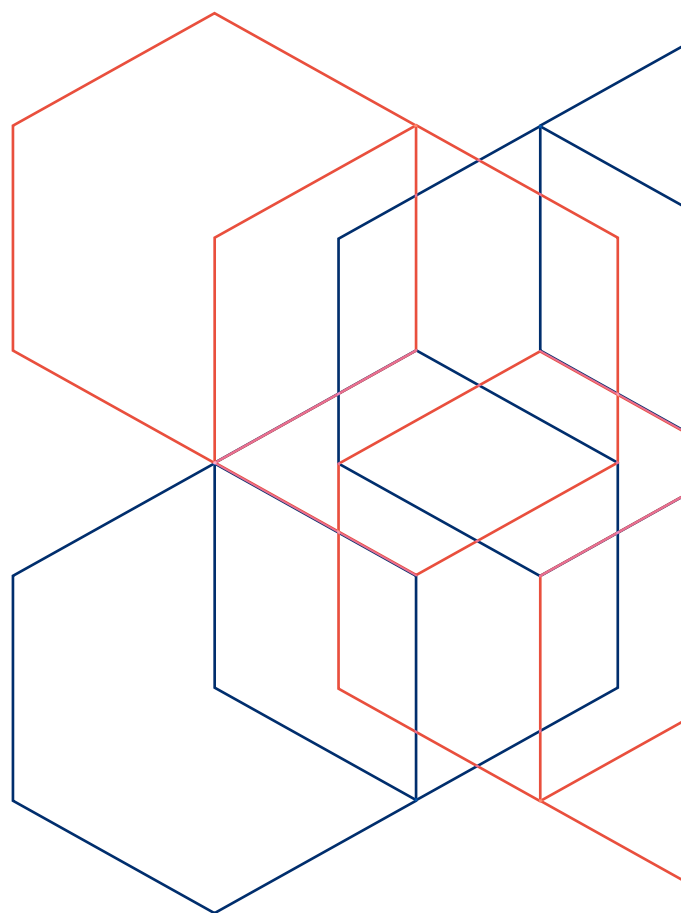
Career-related LMI takes a number of forms. 'Hard LMI' provides a statistical picture of current and likely future employment and skills trends. The data is typically gathered through labour market and employer surveys conducted on a geographic and/or sectoral basis by a range of organisations including government departments, professional bodies and associations, and independent market research agencies. 'Soft LMI' is typically more qualitative in nature. It is often gained by pulling together information from a range of local and more informal sources such as meetings with employers, feedback from customers and media screening.

The distinction between advice and career advice is LMI. Good LMI helps advisers answer questions such as: 'Where is there growth and decline?'; 'What is the age, gender and ethnic profile of different parts of the labour market?'; 'What impact does all this have on availability of and competition for jobs in different areas?' and 'What impact does this have on wage and skill levels?'.

*"Careers advice without good LMI is just advice..."*

## Why is LMI important?

This level of knowledge and understanding enables advisers to support individuals to consider routes into - and ways around and through - the world of work both now and in the future. This includes raising aspirations, challenging stereotypes, increasing job knowledge, and widening career horizons. It also supports advisers in their key task - to help individuals to develop and enhance their career management skills so that they can research and weigh-up the available information on their potential options and opportunities as their career progresses and evolves.



<sup>1</sup> Skills Development Scotland distinguishes between LMI for staff and CMI (career management information) for customers. LMI for staff provides area and sector context so that they are able to understand how to mediate job choice with customers. CMI for customers is presented in a more engaging and accessible way and is occupation based.

## The LMI challenge

There is a plethora of information on the labour market and it is easy for advisers to feel overwhelmed by the sheer volume, particularly when it is often in forms that they are not familiar with and find difficult to interpret and understand.

Raising advisers' awareness and understanding of career-related LMI and its central importance to career guidance is, therefore, crucial. However, in order to enable them to make effective use of LMI in their everyday practice, appropriate systems and processes for using and sharing LMI need to be in place; advisers also need access to resources and ongoing training and professional development. These all present managers of careers services, as well as trainers and advisers, with a number of challenges.

*"We need to be clear about what can, and can't, be said about the current situation and future trends on the basis of available LMI..."*

## What's in the guide?

This guide has been written for managers, trainers and advisers involved in the delivery of careers information, advice and guidance<sup>2</sup>. It is a practical guide which draws on the expertise and experience of people working others in the field. It aims to help improve the way LMI is used and shared within organisations and in work with clients and partners.

## Who is this guide for?

Research and experience from the career guidance field tells us that LMI is most effective when it is fully integrated into all aspects of organisational practice. Managers seeking to improve their service by enhancing the way LMI is used and shared within and outside of their organisation should, therefore, focus on the following five areas:

1. Vision and Strategy
2. Partnerships
3. Systems and Processes
4. Resources
5. Developing Professional Practice

This guide explores what good practice looks like under these five main headings. Practical examples of how organisations across Great Britain are tackling the issues are provided in each section, taken from 12 case studies produced by CFE on behalf of the UK Commission for Employment and Skills<sup>3</sup>. Each section concludes with 'Learning from Experience', a series of 'tips and traps' offered by the managers and practitioners consulted during the case study research.

The guide provides a summary of the good practice observed. Users of the guide who would like further information, or to explore any aspect of the approaches being adopted by the case studies, can contact the appropriate organisation. The name and contact details for the key individual at each case study organisation is provided in Appendix 1.

<sup>2</sup> For consistency this is referred to throughout as career guidance.

<sup>3</sup> The full case studies are published in the research report that accompanies this guide: "Using and Sharing Career Related Labour Market Information." Which is available to download <http://www.ukces.org.uk/assets/ukces/docs/publications/LMIresearchreport.pdf>. The field visits were carried out in February and March 2012 and so for some organisations in England that had Connexions and Next Step contracts, the situation will have changed. However, the good practice and learning still provide important learning opportunities for other organisations operating in different contexts.

## How can this guide help you?

The guide is designed to improve service delivery by supporting managers to develop and/or further strengthen the five key areas are outlined above within their own organisations. In particular, it will help you to consider the following in relation to career-related LMI:

### Do you have a clear vision and strategy for enhancing service delivery through the use of LMI?

- ▶ Is the role and purpose of LMI understood?
- ▶ Do you have clear policies and operational standards for using and sharing LMI?
- ▶ Do you have a plan to put these into place?
- ▶ If so, what evidence have you got that these plans are being effectively implemented?

### How well developed are your partnerships?

- ▶ Which organisations do you currently work with?
- ▶ How well do you share information with organisations such as Jobcentre Plus?
- ▶ To what extent – in England – are you working with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and – in all parts of Great Britain – with Sector Skills Councils and organisations involved in economic development/regeneration?

### What systems and processes are in place?

- ▶ How effective are the systems for keeping staff up-to-date and allowing them to share their knowledge and experience?
- ▶ Are you making best use of Information and Communication Technologies?

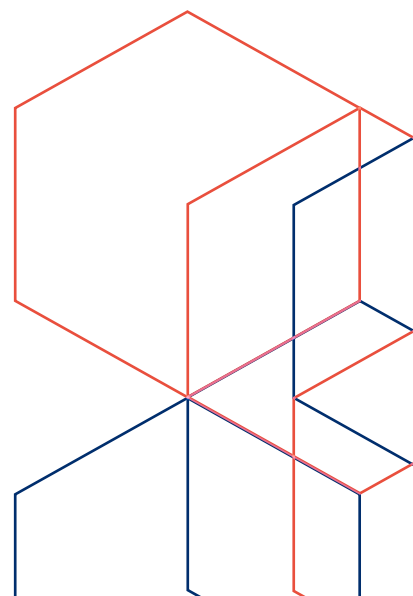
### What resources are in place?

- ▶ How frequently are they used and by whom?
- ▶ How and when are these updated?
- ▶ Do you know if individuals and advisers find them helpful?

### What do your advisers need to make best use of the available resources?

- ▶ To what extent are staff aware of the different LMI resources?
- ▶ How do you identify advisers' training and development needs in relation to LMI?
- ▶ How do you train and support staff at all levels use to career-related LMI with customers?

We hope the guide will help you consider how you can build on what's already working well and consider new approaches to further enhance the effectiveness of your practice and the outcomes and benefits that customers can gain.



# What does good practice look like?

## 1. Vision and Strategy

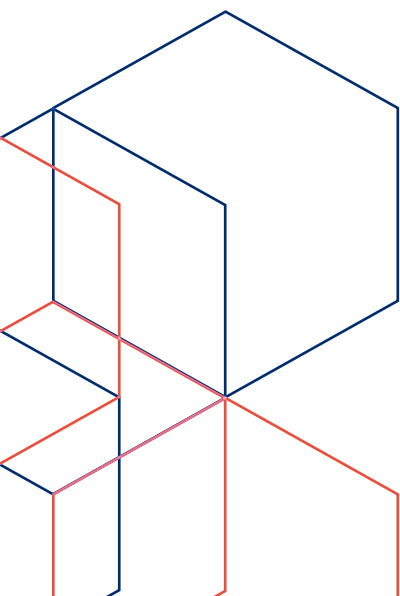
### Introduction

Too often in the past, career-related LMI has been something that careers advisers 'needed to know about' rather than as something that should be fully integrated into the career guidance process. It is, therefore, crucial for organisations seeking to enhance service delivery to develop a clear vision and strategy for LMI.

The most effective practice identified through the case study research is driven by a clear vision and underpinned by a strategy linked, where appropriate, to local, regional and/or national priorities. The vision should focus on questions such as: 'What do individuals need to know?' and 'What do advisers need to know to help them?'.

Effective strategies have been built on identifying where advisers are 'starting from' and working progressively to develop clear systems and processes that ensure they have access to the LMI they need in appropriate and customised formats.

*"Vision is being clear about what you want to achieve – strategy is about getting there..."*



## Connexions Kent and Medway

### Bottom-up approach

Connexions Kent and Medway's strategy and approach to the development of LMI was based on the outcomes of an extensive consultation with staff. The consultation, conducted in collaboration with Warwick Institute for Employment Research, explored practitioners' perceptions of their roles. A key message was that practitioners wanted better LMI to inform their guidance practice. A 'LMI Super User Group' was set up to drive developments and engage with Connexions Kent and Medway staff and schools on an ongoing basis, to inform the development of a range of materials for use with pupils.



## Careers Wales

Vision for online service: [careerswales.com](http://careerswales.com)

The vision of Careers Wales Online services has been to provide:

- ▶ Online, all-age, bi-lingual guidance and information services enabling everyone in Wales to develop their own e-portfolio and to deliver supporting site content.
- ▶ To allow clients to interact with Careers Wales staff and to receive mediated support to help them achieve their learning and career aspirations.
- ▶ To ensure that Careers Wales Online is at the core of the Welsh Government's skills development agenda and that 'Team Wales' partners are encouraged to contribute to, and use, Careers Wales Online.

Over the past three years 1.2 million unique users have accessed 60 million pages of data. The pre-registration of the Key Stage Four cohort - some 35,000 young people per year – indicates that at least two-thirds have used the site when considering post-16 options.



## Skills Development Scotland (SDS) – Careers Strategy

In March 2011, the Scottish Government published its first ever strategy for career information, advice and guidance (CIAG). The strategy provides a framework for the redesign and improvement of CIAG services, and in doing so, sets out clear expectations for SDS working with the wider guidance community.

LMI is fundamental to the achievement of SDS's strategic goals. As a result, in 2009, a small multi-disciplinary team was established charged with 'making LMI work for SDS'. Extensive consultation with SDS staff revealed that a range of sources of LMI already existed and that advisers had a good understanding of the local labour market and client need. However, the existing LMI was not always accessible and in a form that could be easily analysed and interpreted by advisers for use with clients. In addition, many advisers lacked awareness, as well as the skills and confidence, to use the data in this way.

A pragmatic and evolutionary approach has been adopted by SDS, driven by the needs of staff and underpinned by a clear vision, purpose and prioritised workstreams. An important distinction between the data requirements of guidance professionals (defined as labour market information) and clients (defined as career management information) has been made and this has informed the development of systems and processes as well as a series of resources for advisers, partner organisations and clients.

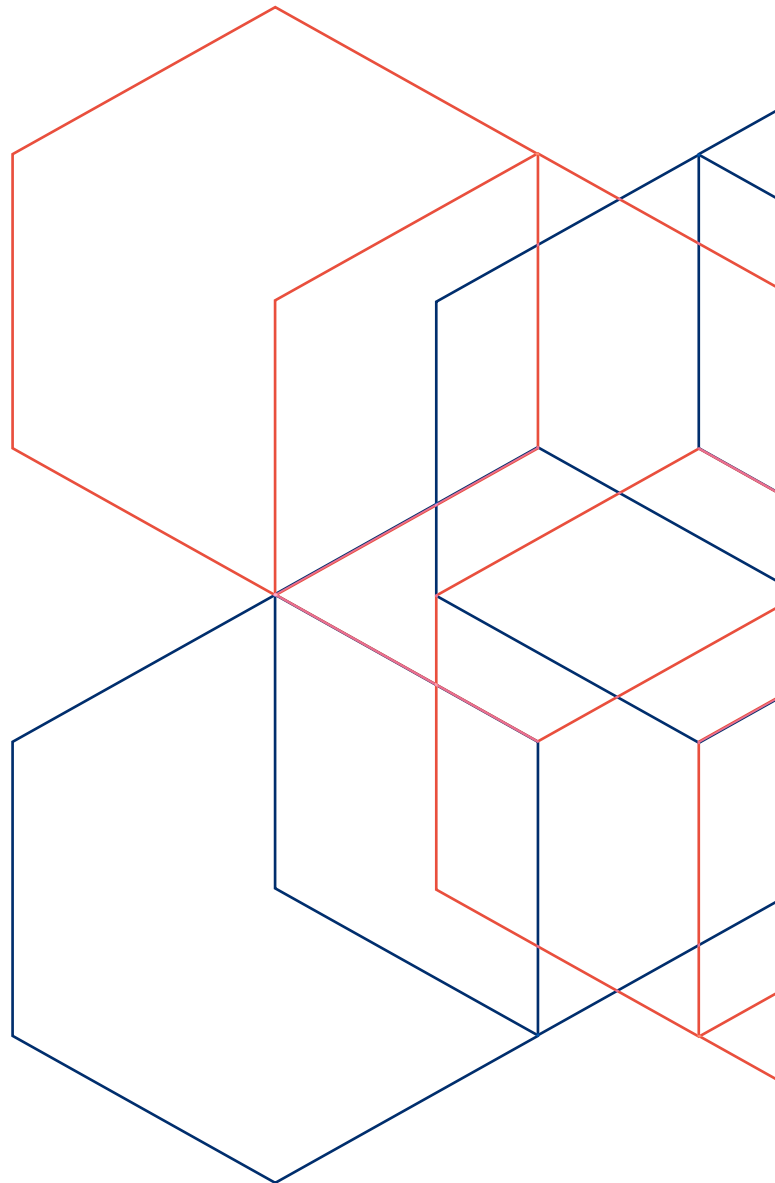
During the development of SDS's LMI system for staff, the Scottish Government brought together a range of partner organisations to develop a wider LMI framework. This framework sets out a vision for the development of labour market information and intelligence in Scotland that is robust, useful and easy to find, that can be utilised effectively by relevant stakeholders and that can achieve high policy impact.



## Learning from experience

Managers and practitioners in case study organisations highlighted a number of 'tips and traps' from their experience of developing their vision and strategy:

- ▶ It is important to take account of wider local, regional and/or national priorities for skills and economic growth when developing your a vision and strategy to ensure a joined-up approach.
- ▶ Consider what resource is available to both start and sustain this work and think about what you can be realistically achieve within these constraints.
- ▶ LMI needs to be integrated into the wider approach to organisational development as well as to the development of service delivery and professional practice.
- ▶ This level of integration requires the buy-in of staff at all levels and a shift in organisational culture may be needed before this can be achieved. The appointment of local 'LMI champions' with an interest and/or expertise in using and sharing LMI can help to foster cultural change by promoting the role and importance of LMI amongst their peers.
- ▶ The strategy should be informed by the needs of advisers. Establish advisers' current level of knowledge and understanding about LMI and its role in the guidance process. Consult with staff to assess their needs and to find out what information they require to work effectively with clients. This will also help to achieve buy-in to a strategy of using and sharing LMI.
- ▶ Have a clear vision and purpose for the development of LMI within the organisation but do not be afraid to let your systems and approaches evolve gradually. It will take time to get things right; taking risks and making mistakes are an integral part of the process.
- ▶ Put systems and processes in place to monitor the effectiveness of the strategy, including feedback from staff. Virtual 'LMI User Groups' provide a valuable touch stone and sounding board and can act as a conduit between those responsible for driving the strategy and staff on the front line.
- ▶ Develop specific, measureable, attainable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) objectives to ensure the success and impact of your strategy is able to be measured.



## 2. Partnerships

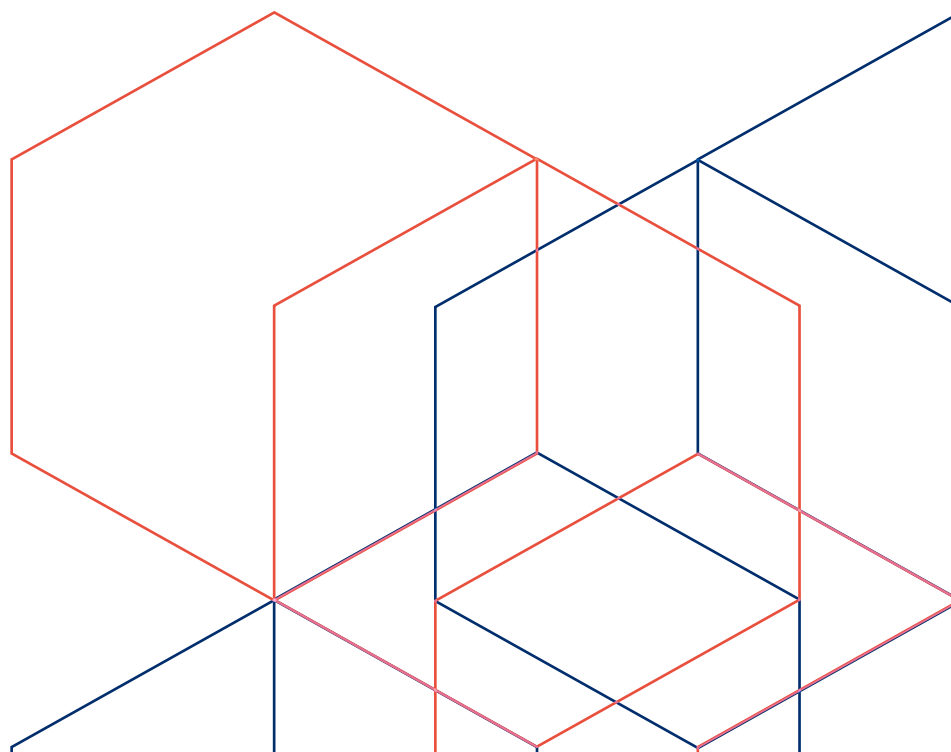
### Introduction

Organisations delivering career guidance and/or job search advice and support are used to working in partnership and recognise the challenges as well as the benefits of doing so. Different organisations often have different agendas and operating parameters. Reconciling these in order to establish a common vision and goal for the partnership is sometimes challenging. Recently, partnership working in England has become complicated by the 'marketisation' of career guidance. This is resulting in increased competition between providers and their partners as well as the commercialisation of some knowledge, skills and resources which were previously shared openly.

Within this changing environment, organisations need to continue to work together to ensure career-related LMI is collected, collated, shared and used effectively to support professional development and professional practice. Organisations benefit from joined-up approaches to using and sharing LMI, as they help to reduce duplication, which saves time and resources, and ensures that all those who need it have access to the most up to date intelligence.

The best examples of joined-up approaches to using and sharing LMI ensure systems and processes are in place that allow a two-way exchange of data and intelligence. They recognise and give parity of esteem to the contribution made by each partner, some of whom may be co-located. There is also evidence of wider synergies with local, regional and/or national policy relating to skills and the economy.

*“We need to work together to build a more complete picture of what’s happening in the labour market...”*



## Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership (GMCP Ltd) - Partnership with Liverpool City Region Employment and Skills Board

Liverpool City region has benefited from considerable inward investment and regeneration over the last ten years. Four key priority sectors – The Knowledge Economy, SuperPort, the Low Carbon Economy, and the Visitor Economy – have been identified as having the growth potential needed to close the productivity gap with the rest of the UK and generate additional employment opportunities for the local population. The Liverpool City Region Employment and Skills Board secured ESF funding to support GMCP to raise awareness of the priority sectors and the opportunities they offer for young people and adults both now and in the future. With a total budget of £112k, the 'Jobs for Tomorrow' project was delivered in partnership with and overseen by a steering group comprising representatives from a range of organisations with a stake in the 14-19 agenda, skills and the local economy.

## Durham and Tees Valley JCP – Partnership with LEPs

### Tees Valley Unlimited (TVU) - LMI User Group

TVU has a LMI user group, which includes members from Jobcentre Plus, Local Authorities, National Careers Service/ Next Step, and Teesside University.

On the recommendations of that group, TVU have let a contract to review all the skills data that is currently available and relevant to TVU. The results are being built into a Skills and LMI Portal which is a key element of the TVU (LEP) website and which partners will help to keep up to date.

TVU is keen to work with partners to develop career-focused video clips using local employers and employees to provide information on opportunities in key sectors in the Tees Valley area. TVU promote these through its partner networks and are hoping to extend the scope and range of local employment opportunities covered with further support from their partners.

The LMI team works closely with the two Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) covering the JCP District - Tees Valley Unlimited and North Eastern LEP. Opportunities are actively sought, with and through LEPs, to pool funding resources. Typical initiatives include organising local opportunities fairs. Some of these are themed around topics such as enterprise and volunteering, others are targeted at specific customer groups (e.g. young people). Partners value the LMI products that Jobcentre Plus produce, including the data regarding vacancies sought and those that are most available ('Top Ten').

## Oaklands College – One Stop Shop

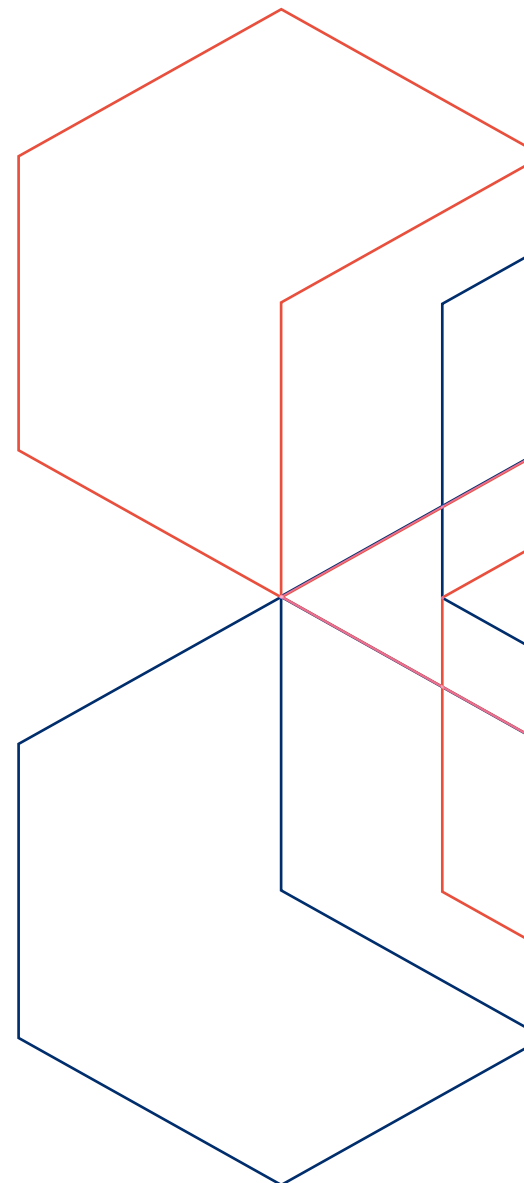
Oaklands College is working in collaboration with the Association of Colleges Eastern Region and three other colleges to pilot a new online service provided by Monster. The 'One Stop Shop' is featured on the college website and provides Monster's standard recruitment services, such as access to recruitment systems and candidate databases, as well as careers advice and guidance for candidates, which includes a job-search function and CV and interview tips.

As a result of the pilot, the college's profile has been raised with the employer community; parents are increasingly becoming aware of the site and will also be able to benefit from it. As part of the project funding, the pilot will be extended to another six colleges and the intention is that this service will be offered nationally to all colleges in the future.

## JCP Derbyshire District Office – Work with employers and SSCs

The JCP Derbyshire District Employer and Partnership Team has been working with multiple partners to improve results for employers and customers. They have agreed with partners on their Integrated Employment and Skills Board to practice a joint approach when working with employers to ensure they are no longer contacted by multiple organisations with identical queries. Employers are now contacted once and referred to the appropriate organisation. In addition, better communication has improved working relationships and the flow of information about current and future opportunities between JCP, employers and recruitment agencies. This approach has helped support the successful delivery of Sector Based Work Academies.

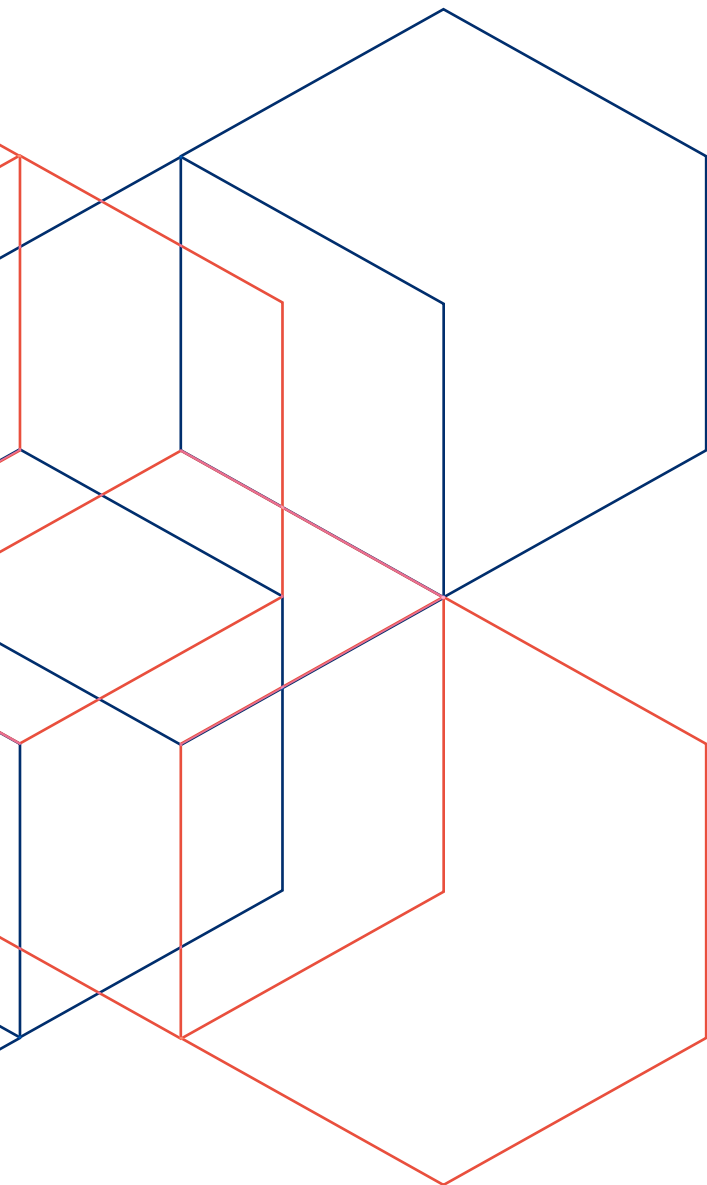
The Employer and Partnership Team has also been working closely with a number of Sector Skills Councils to improve their Personal Advisers' knowledge of key sectors in the region and awareness of likely job gains and losses. Personal Advisers are now in a better position to support individuals, including those in redundancy situations, because they understand what opportunities are available in the locality in the sector and how best to support them to find new jobs.



## Learning from experience

Managers and practitioners in case study organisations highlighted a number of 'tips and traps' from their experience of partnership working:

- ▶ Different organisations have different agendas, priorities and drivers. Partnerships work best when roles and responsibilities, vision and purpose, outputs and accountability structures are formally agreed.
- ▶ Celebrating success and sharing good news stories with partners helps to build and reinforce relationships as well as highlight where partnership working can support the achievement of mutual objectives and targets.
- ▶ Partners can be a valuable source of both hard and soft LMI. You can avoid duplication of effort and make best use of limited resources if you tap into existing newsletters, e-mail alerts or e-zines and data produced by organisations such as Sector Skills Councils. Relationships with learning providers that work directly with employers can provide both hard and soft insights into the immediate needs of employers, often at the local level. By working with organisations that deliver both career guidance and vacancy services you can also gain intelligence on both 'supply' and 'demand' side issues as well as the key barriers to making the labour market operate more effectively.
- ▶ Working with partners to develop new resources (e.g. lists of local employment agencies and materials on local opportunities) also helps to avoid duplication and is cost-effective. It is also a good way to promote joint-working and ensures the needs of individuals working across administrative boundaries are met.
- ▶ Employers appreciate a joined-up approach which ensures they are directed through a single point of contact and referred appropriately. Working with partners with well-established employer links can also give you extra clout and credibility.
- ▶ Holding events on employers' premises helps to 'make LMI real' for advisers and also helps to foster direct links between advisers and employers. Links of this nature are a valuable source of LMI as advisers are often notified directly by employers when new jobs are about to be created or staff are at risk of redundancy.



# 3. Systems and Processes

## Introduction

It is vital to implement effective systems and processes for sharing and using career-related LMI both within and between career guidance service providers and their partners. Effective systems and processes support strong partnerships and ensure all staff are aware of the importance of using and sharing LMI for their own development and the development of their professional practice. They also help to ensure LMI is robust, up-to-date, and presented in an appropriate format.

There is evidence that a number of organisations are harnessing the power of information and communication technology to ensure that the systems and processes in place provide staff - and in some cases partners – with regular access to LMI, irrespective of their geographical base. Staff intranets are widely used and provide a particularly valuable mechanism for sharing LMI amongst staff. Typically intranets allow users to access data, start discussions, and/or share resources for others to use. Email alerts ensure users are aware when updates are added.

However, it is equally important to get the basics right and this does not need to involve the use of technology; a standing item on LMI on the agenda of a regular team meeting can be just as effective as electronic mechanisms. Staff meetings provide a platform for raising awareness and the profile of LMI and refreshing advisers' knowledge and understanding. They can be used as a vehicle for disseminating information as well as good practice in using and sharing LMI. Inviting guest speakers to deliver short presentations at these meetings can also be valuable.

*“If LMI is going to be used and shared effectively it’s got to be no more than a click or two away...”*

## **JCP Derbyshire District Office –LMI for Personal Advisers**

Jobcentre Plus Derbyshire District has Employer and Partnership Advisers and Managers, as well as Employer Relationship Managers, who are responsible for assimilating LMI and cascading this to Personal Advisers (PA). The Employer and Partnership Team, who are now based in individual local offices, have 5 minute daily 'huddles' with PAs and send weekly email updates. Typical updates include key LMI data from the Knowledge Hub (their staff intranet), such as the top ten placed and unfilled vacancies and the top ten Job Point searches, as well as softer LMI gathered through their day to day activities, such as information on large recruitment drives, urgent vacancies, work experience opportunities, pre-employment training opportunities and new job clubs. This arrangement means that PAs are equipped with crucial real time LMI when advising their customers which they do not necessarily have time to gather themselves.

## **CfBT - LMI Officer**

CfBT launched an 'Improvement and Development of Labour Market Information' project in summer 2010. The aim of the project was to develop capacity and capability and to ensure that career-related LMI was gathered and disseminated in a structured, efficient and effective way. A specialist Labour Market Information Officer was appointed in January 2011 to help focus and drive the work. The LMI Officer's first task was to conduct a needs analysis amongst advisers. This involved the development and administration of an e-survey which explored the types of LMI currently used, what advisers found most helpful, and the ways in which information could be best disseminated. Advisers were also asked which questions they found most difficult to answer when working with customers. The needs analysis found that advisers require information about employers, work/training opportunities and sector-specific information and that they prefer to receive information electronically.

## **Skills Development Scotland – Partnership Events**

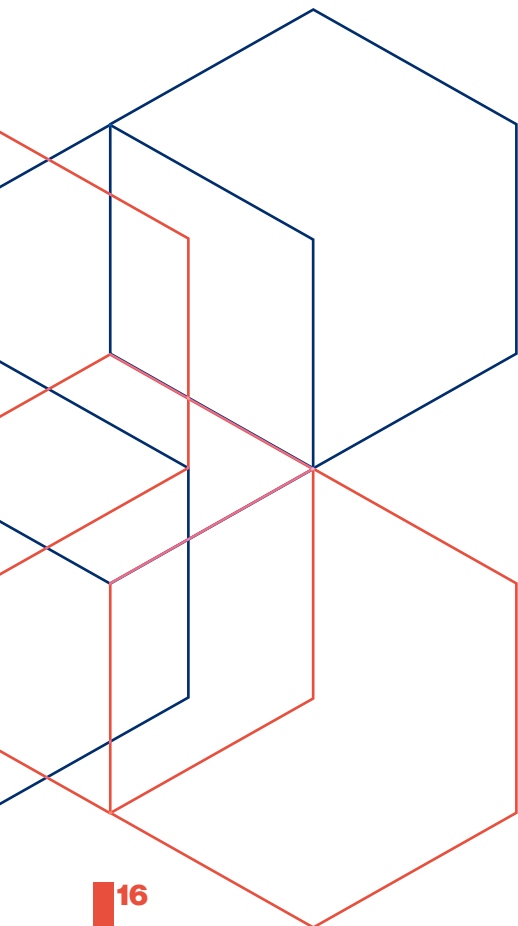
SDS regularly convenes LMI events to highlight skills issues in Scotland's key sectors. These events are designed to bring together employers and Sector Skills Councils with the guidance and education community to learn about the challenges and issues facing the sectors. The events are held at different locations throughout Scotland to maximise the opportunities for SDS staff and partners to attend, irrespective of their geographical base. They typically involve a series of presentations by sector experts and the opportunity to take part in 'speed dating' style networking with employers and employees within a sector. The events provide a dynamic environment in which stakeholders involved in both the supply of and demand for labour market skills can share intelligence, including up to the minute information on vacancies.

The LMI events complement the Skills in Focus seminars. This series of events has been developed by the Skills Committee, which is jointly sponsored by the Scottish Funding Council and SDS. Delivered by leading academics in the field, the seminars are designed to support informed debate about current and future skills.

## Learning from experience

Managers and practitioners in case study organisations highlighted a number of 'tips and traps' from their experience of developing systems and processes:

- ▶ An intranet is a valuable mechanism that enables advisers to both access up to date LMI and share information they obtain through their everyday interactions with clients and partners.
- ▶ There is a tendency amongst busy advisers who feel overloaded by the sheer volume of LMI available to use the source that is closest to hand, or with which they are most familiar, rather than the most appropriate. Systems and processes that are designed to collate and disseminate the most valuable information help to reduce 'information overload' and ensure advisers have access to, and feel confident using, a range of relevant sources. Robust information management systems and protocols have a key role to play. They help to ensure that the LMI stored is relevant and up to date and that information that is 'past its shelf life' is removed.
- ▶ Analysing usage by observing practice and using Google Analytics or other web-metrics on intranets and extranets provides an indication of whether information managements systems are effective as well as providing valuable insights into staff training and development needs.
- ▶ Obtaining and maintaining up-to-date LMI is a key challenge and can be time and resource intensive if handled at an individual level. Standardised forms for LMI data collection for use with local companies can be an excellent way of collecting data which can then be processed and stored easily. A centralised team or dedicated individual for LMI helps to reduce duplication of effort, maintain consistency and quality, and ensure good practice is shared. In addition, outsourcing activities and buying into news feeds or media scanning services can be more cost effective than doing them in-house.
- ▶ Although technology has a valuable role to play, simple measures, such as a standing item on LMI on the agenda of regular team meetings, can be just as effective. They to provide a mechanism for signposting advisers to 'hard' LMI as well as for sharing 'soft' LMI.





# 4. Resources

## Introduction

Putting the systems in place to ensure advisers are aware and understand the importance of using LMI is vital but only the first stage in the process. In order to make sense of the information and apply it in their professional lives, careers advisers need access to practical resources that can assist them in their work with clients as well as in their own professional development.

It is widely acknowledged that careers advisers' LMI needs differ from the needs of clients. As a consequence, it might be helpful to draw a distinction between labour market information (LMI) for advisers and career management information (CMI) for clients<sup>1</sup>. Some organisations, including Skills Development Scotland, are successfully differentiating information and intelligence on the labour market in this way and this has informed the development of resources tailored to the needs of the respective groups.

In order to ensure resources are readily available to advisers and clients, good practice suggests that they should be provided in a range of formats, both electronic and paper-based. While some groups, such as parents, appear to prefer printed, text-based materials, others, including many young people, respond best to interactive resources that contextualise the information and bring the labour market to life. There is also a need to ensure access to resources is not limited by space and time as many individuals, including adults in work, find it difficult to seek information, advice and career guidance in normal office hours. Once again, technology is fulfilling a key role in the development and dissemination of LMI-related resources.

Finally, careers advisers as well as clients need resources containing local and sectoral LMI as well as on regional and national trends. Providing data at a local level helps to challenge as well as shape career aspirations and effectively informs the decision-making of local people seeking local opportunities.

*“Too much information is too much information – LMI is best in ‘bite-size’ bits...”*

<sup>1</sup> GHK (2011) 'The use of LMI in career direction and learning' available to download at: <http://www.ukces.org.uk/assets/bispartners/ukces/docs/publications/the-use-of-lmi-in-online-career-direction-and-learning.pdf>




## Connexions Kent and Medway – 'Work for Tomorrow' pack

Connexions Kent and Medway worked in collaboration with the Warwick Institute for Employment Research (IER) to develop the 'Work for Tomorrow' pack.

IER was tasked with collating the raw data and Connexions Kent and Medway's 'LMI Super User group' designed the materials for practitioners and young people. Since the pack's launch in late 2008, it has been continually refined in response to feedback. It currently includes:

- ▶ Sectoral LMI sheets that provide an introduction to the sector, key statistics, possible jobs, what is likely to happen in the future, and the skills and training required to work in the sector.
- ▶ National, regional, county, surrounding county, and locality bound LMI sheets containing key employment statistics, further details of sector and occupational coverage, and 'like for like' comparisons.
- ▶ A set of 'quirky careers' handouts which provide information on unusual jobs in up and coming sectors in the area. These handouts were developed following feedback from schools and are designed to motivate gifted and talented students in particular.
- ▶ Quizzes and worksheets for young people and handouts for parents.
- ▶ A set of quality standards based on practitioners' needs to help them assess the reliability and validity of LMI from other sources.

The pack makes extensive use of colour, graphics and charts to engage the reader and ensure the information is as accessible as possible.



## Greater Manchester Solutions – ‘Work Matters’

The ‘Work Matters’ website was re-launched in summer 2011. It includes data and resources related to the labour market in Greater Manchester and beyond. These include:

- ▶ Current news items and summaries of recently published reports.
- ▶ Sector Fact Sheets providing an overview of the 12 key employment sectors for Greater Manchester.
- ▶ Area Factsheets focusing upon the labour markets of the 10 Greater Manchester local authority areas.
- ▶ Resources to support the provision and understanding of LMI (for example, session plans and tools to enable teachers/advisers to copy data so that it can be used on whiteboards and in other presentations).


An interesting feature on the site is that data has been analysed to show how many people travel from one part of Greater Manchester (and surrounding areas) to another. This is helpful in demonstrating that an increasing number of people need to travel across the sub-region to find suitable employment. Access to Work Matters is by subscription only. There are over 200 active subscribers, including schools and colleges.

## Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership (GMCP Ltd) - Jobs for Tomorrow


‘Jobs for Tomorrow’ is a resource designed to raise awareness of the opportunities available in four growth sectors in the region. Many of the resources are available to download from the Jobs for Tomorrow section of the GMCP website. These include sector leaflets, case studies, information on apprenticeships, qualifications and progression routes, and lesson plans. A series of video profiles (for example, see [here](#)) showcasing the views and real life experiences of local people undertaking a range of jobs in the priority sectors have also

been produced. The use of local accents and organisations known to the people of Greater Merseyside effectively bring the opportunities to life and convey the commitment and enthusiasm of the people already working in the sectors. These resources are helping to challenge the thinking and career aspirations of young people, their parents/carers and adults as well as helping to inform career guidance practice and curriculum developments within local learning providers.

## Skills Development Scotland – My World of Work



My World of Work is an interactive, one-stop shop that aims to help users find employment opportunities and develop their careers. It provides its users with support from the very beginning of their journey by highlighting the importance of considering the job market, which SDS feels is a more tangible concept for its customers than LMI, and includes information regarding Scotland's key industries, the top 10 most advertised jobs in Scotland, and skills that are in demand. It also helps users to identify what drives them and where their potential may lie through 'My DNA', and to consider their strengths through 'My Strengths'. The website houses information to enable users to research specific careers and training courses. Finally, once users have decided upon a potential career path, they can learn about the value of work experience, view job opportunities, and access guidance on creating CVs, writing job applications, and preparing for job interviews. The website also has the functionality to allow users to create an account so that they can store information such as CVs and their favourite articles. The system is able to suggest relevant career options to the user based on this information.



## Careers Wales

### [careerswales.com](http://careerswales.com) Beta Site

Over the past year a considerable amount of work has been undertaken to develop a BETA version of the [Careers Wales website](http://careerswales.com) for release in autumn 2012: careerswales.com. The site is a significant development in that it is not age-differentiated and has a high-level of visual and interactive content.

The site will provide individuals with unmediated access to a developing range of careers information, advice and guidance products and services which will help to develop their career management skills. Users will also have the opportunity to interact with Careers Wales advisers on-line. The site enables access to a range of databases, including: the Jobcentre Plus vacancy database; jobs and training opportunities notified to careers companies within Careers Wales; 'Jobs Growth Wales' (A developing database of 12,000 six month work placements); the All-Wales Apprenticeship Matching Service; and Post-16 Courses in Wales. Other information

includes over 1,000 iCould video and occupational profiles. The site also draws on LMI and other data held by the Learning and Skills Observatory (LSO) Wales.

Careers Wales has been working in partnership with Pontydysgu to stream LMI from government data sources directly into the website via a unique 'mashing tool'. Through using an 'I want to be...' search facility, individuals can access information about jobs (e.g. profiles) in addition to related data 'mashed' from different sources (e.g. pay rates). They can also view visual maps providing information about actual vacancies and courses related to their search enquiry by Local Authority area/s. A next stage of development will be to enable clients to tailor on-line applications for jobs and courses identified using information available from their e-portfolios.

## Sector Guides

Building on the success of previous work, four SSCs – Lantra, Improve, People 1st, and Skillsmart - invited Careers Wales West (CWW) to work with them to develop a suite of products about the food and drinks sector which from 'farm gate to plate' employs around one in five of the workforce in Wales. Launched in January 2012, CWW and the SSCs are now working together to market and promote the products, which include eighteen bilingual case studies.

## Calderdale and Kirklees Careers Ltd

### Kick-start your Career Mobile Solution Project

The work started in August 2010 and involved a range of local partners including C&K Careers, Kirklees Council and Looking Local, a service that provides project management and technical support.

The main aim was to use smartphone technology to help young people who are not in education, employment and training (NEET) by giving them access to key services and content (including LMI). The project also hoped to assess how the use of mobile phone technology can help clients and their support networks. The project involved the development of Apps for smartphones, lending smartphones to selected clients and downloading Apps to parents, family members or friends' phones.

Two of the three prototype smartphone Apps for Android devices have been released to the Android market (now Google Play). These are: C&K Careers – an App for searching job vacancies, training opportunities and other LMI data powered by C&K's [workabout.org.uk](http://workabout.org.uk) website. The App allows users to search by both career area and location; Do-it.org – an App for searching for volunteering opportunities throughout the UK, powered by YouthNet's Do-it.org website.

The project demonstrated the value of developing Apps and the C&K Careers Work-Based Services team report that an increasing number of young people are accessing services via the App and are achieving positive job outcomes.

### Plain Guides

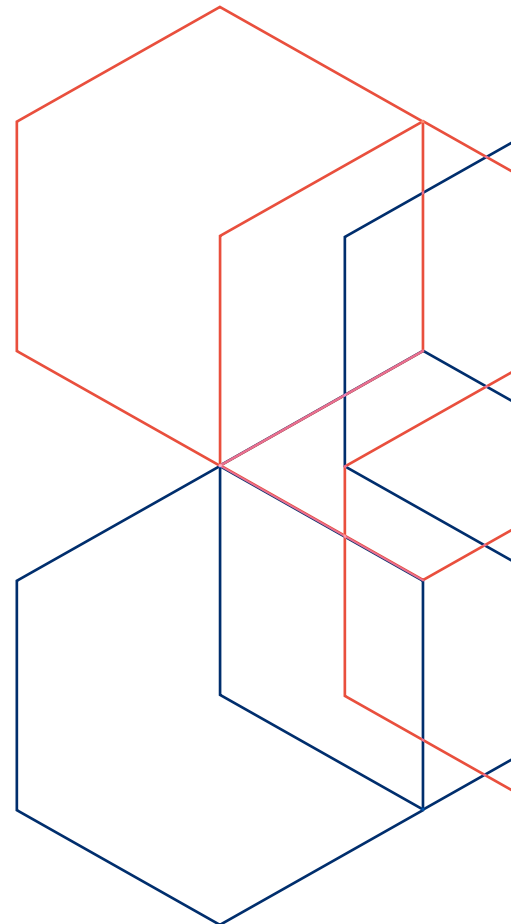
The Plain Guides have been developed to respond to adults' needs for clear information about local opportunities. The first ten titles were produced to provide information about the 'Top Ten' jobs that are notified to Jobcentre Plus. The series now has 23 titles, including ones providing advice on job searching.

The 'Plain Guides' are available through the Careers Yorkshire and the Humber website and each 'job' guide covers: Who employs people doing this job; Pay; Skills; Qualifications and Training; Current Picture; Future Trends; Where to look for jobs; More Information and Further Help. Feedback from advisers across Yorkshire and the Humber is consistently positive and use is made of the guides in both group and one-to-one sessions. The guides are successful because they 'blur the edges' between what is often seen as LMI (e.g. regional/sector trends) and occupational information, and make sense of data from a range of different sources.

## Learning from experience

Managers and practitioners in case study organisations highlighted a number of 'tips and traps' from their experience of developing resources:

- ▶ Resources that are developed in consultation with end users are often the most useful and have the most impact. It is, therefore, helpful to establish what resources advisers and clients/customers need and where the information gaps are at the outset.
- ▶ Initial testing and on-going review of resources with advisers and clients/customers can help to ensure they remain relevant and up to date. Capturing feedback on the extent and nature of usage can also help inform and target future developments.
- ▶ Current experience suggests that resources are most effective when they:
  - ▶ are short and sharp with a clear message;
  - ▶ break down career-related LMI into 'bite-size' chunks so that it can be accessed and used in a variety of different ways, for example in guidance interventions such as LMI quizzes; on social media such as twitter and facebook; and tailored to the needs of individual client groups.
  - ▶ present information using a mix of text-based and audio-visual formats, including infographics, photographs, videos and podcasts;
  - ▶ avoid using language and terminology that is unfamiliar to the intended audience; and
  - ▶ are contextualised and brought to life through the use of case studies and examples based on local, well-known companies and individuals with local accents.
- ▶ The use of standard templates for resources such as job and sector profiles help to ensure advisers know where to find information quickly.
- ▶ Although tight budgets can limit the amount of printed information produced, a well-designed flyer can help to promote more cost-effective web-based tools and resources and act as a trigger to spark people's interest in LMI.
- ▶ The growing availability of smartphones means that it is becoming increasingly viable to develop Apps that enable individuals to access job opportunities and wider career-related LMI. The use of 'QR codes' on posters and publications provides a quick and simple route for people with smartphones to access pdf copies of useful documents.
- ▶ Wherever practical, clients should be empowered and encouraged to do their own labour market research. However, it is important to assess a client's capacity and capability to seek out, interpret and make effective use of LMI in their decision-making before referring them to a particular resource.



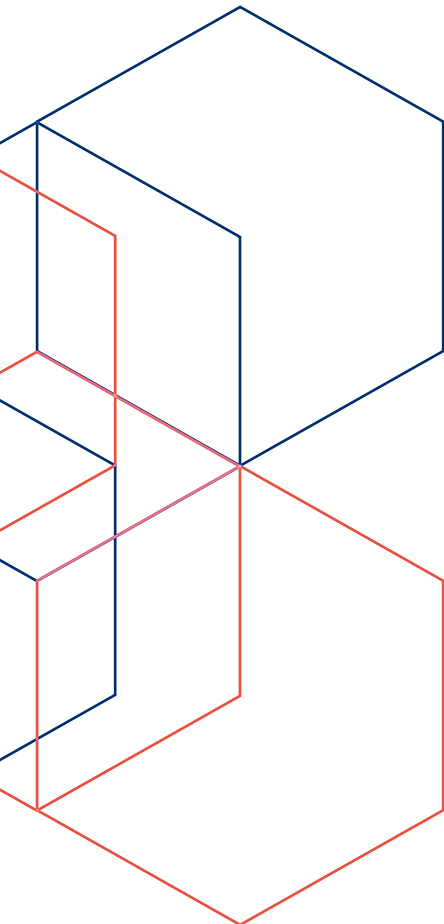
## 5. Developing professional practice

### Introduction

Building adviser confidence and securing their 'buy-in' to the use of LMI is crucial if it is to become fully embedded in their practice, as is developing advisers' competence and capability in this area. Access to resources is not enough. Careers advisers need to be made aware of the role and importance of LMI and supported to develop the skills they need to regularly review their approaches, and interpret and apply LMI appropriately in their work with clients. This is best achieved through initial training and continuous professional development (CPD) that includes, and is informed by, robust programmes of observation and professional support.

The ability to understand and apply LMI effectively is a defining feature of the guidance profession. It also contributes to quality assurance and service improvement. LMI has the potential to inform the development of new services that are not only responsive to changes in the labour market but anticipate shifts and help to shape the skills supply.

*"It's vital that advisers see themselves as experts in this area... customers expect them to know this stuff..."*





## Careers Wales – Staff observations

Careers Wales has well-developed quality assurance systems which are regularly commended by Estyn. Career advisers' use of LMI is reviewed as part of their extensive interview observation programme. The assessment considers the type, nature and appropriateness of the LMI used and also measures how far it has contributed to the development of clients' ideas and planning.



## Skills Development Scotland – Programme of staff development

SDS has recently completed an extensive programme of staff development to raise awareness of LMI amongst careers advisers within the organisation. A series of training sessions were conducted with members of a virtual LMI group comprised of SDS staff that focussed on the resources available through the knowledge tab on the SDS website and the staff intranet, LMI Exchange. SDS adopted a 'train the trainers' strategy in order to ensure the training was delivered in an effective and timely fashion to the wider staff. This approach also helped to give rise to a greater sense of ownership over the training and resources.

The original strategy comprised three levels of training: induction, intermediate and advanced. However, following staff feedback that the intermediate training was too focused on techniques for researching and analysing the labour market and that not enough emphasis was placed on how to interpret and apply the information in practice, the strategy was revised. It now includes a two-stage process of induction (which is now complete) and application. The training is also designed to address wider skills gaps, such as in the use of information and communication technology.



## Manchester Solutions – Staff Training and CPD

Next Step Greater Manchester (NSGM) set high operational standards for their careers advisers and has taken a proactive approach to enhancing staff competency. They have introduced a mandated CPD support programme focusing on the proposed requirements for the Careers Profession Alliance (CPA).

NSGM undertook a comprehensive Training Needs Analysis (TNA) with all staff between January and March 2011. In reviewing training needs they also drew on Ofsted recommendations, observation/performance management and audit evidence. As a consequence of this review, NSGM decided to make it compulsory for all advisers to undertake the Level 6 Diploma in Career Guidance and Development Units on LMI: 'Source, evaluate and use Labour Market Intelligence with Cclients' (unit 15) and 'Use Careers and Labour Market Information With Clients' (unit 6). The training is generally felt to have successfully enabled staff to become more effective.

### CfBT - Sector Specific Workshops

Advisers work closely with Jobcentre Plus and most service referrals come from local jobcentres. It became evident that there are significant mismatches in some sectors between the first choice preference of jobseekers (as noted on their Jobseekers Agreement) and the number of notified vacancies. In order to widen jobseekers' occupational horizons and to help address shortage areas, CfBT has facilitated sector specific workshops.

A Care Sector Workshop was run in Newcastle in December 2011 where, at the time, there were over 300 vacancies but only 50 claimants who had specified this as their first choice of work. CfBT advisers worked closely with the local jobcentre's Employer Engagement Team to identify individuals and, on the basis of their Jobseekers Agreement, invited those who might be interested to the workshop. The 90 minute session involved a local employer and training providers and covered issues such as what care work involves, pay scales, and the skills required. An emphasis was placed on the ways in which skills gained in other sectors/areas of work could be transferable.

The time necessary to plan, undertake and follow-up the events presents a key challenge, as does the engagement of more than one learning provider. However, feedback from advisers and customers suggests that the sessions are having a positive impact. Approximately half of those who attended the care workshop went on to sign-up for a training course in that area. It is hoped that by increasing customers' knowledge and understanding of the sectors before they sign up for training, the considerable 'drop-out' rates from introductory provision in FE Colleges and initial employment will be reduced in the longer term.

## Learning from Experience

Managers and practitioners in case study organisations highlighted a number of 'tips and traps' from their experience of developing professional practice:

- ▶ Some advisers and staff within partner organisations such as teachers may not understand the role and importance of LMI. Initial training and/or CPD fulfils a crucial role in both convincing them of its value and instructing them on how to use it to help the people they work with to develop their knowledge of viable employment opportunities, to widen their horizons, and/or to make realistic plans.
- ▶ The needs of advisers will vary depending on the setting in which they work. Some advisers are multi-functional, others specialise in working with certain customer groups. Advisers' 'occupational map' (i.e. their knowledge of what jobs exist), understanding of the current position, future trends in the labour market and common labour market terms will also differ. It is, therefore, important to assess their needs before providing them with training.
- ▶ As the use of new technologies and digital resources is becoming increasingly wide-spread, it is also important to assess advisers' confidence and competence in the use of IT, including the internet and software packages such as powerpoint.
- ▶ Advisers, as well as individuals, possess a wide range of stereotypes and preconceptions about particular sectors and occupations. It is important to ensure advisers' sector knowledge is extended through training and ongoing CPD and that they are equipped to harness the power of LMI as a tool that can both provide a 'reality check' for those who might only be considering work in a narrow field and/or that is currently in very short supply, and act as an 'encourager' for those who need assuring that there are opportunities available to them, including in new and developing fields that they may not be aware of.
- ▶ Case study scenarios are useful for adviser training. They get advisers to think about a particular individual's needs and then use the available LMI to suggest how that individual's needs could best be met.
- ▶ It is important that advisers take responsibility for their own continuing professional development. Employers can support them in this process by releasing them to attend training and events and encouraging them to sign up to relevant mailing lists and newsletters.

# Taking the work forward

The process of using and sharing labour market information is challenging. The focus must be on what career-related LMI advisers need most to help them in their work with customers/clients. This will vary depending on which customer/client groups they are working with and the type and level of work they are undertaking with them. Figure One below sets out a way of reviewing what needs to be done to take things forward:

- 1. Source:** Consider what sources of both 'Hard' and 'Soft' LMI exist for customers you're working with and how they can best be obtained (including what role advisers themselves can play in this).
- 2. Analyse:** Consider how this information can be analysed, simplified and turned into usable intelligence, including what is best done internally and what it is better to outsource.
- 3. Synthesise:** Consider how different sources can be brought together, wherever possible mashing/synthesising information to produce user-friendly tools/resources.
- 4. Share:** Share relevant information with appropriate partners (including sourcing information/intelligence from them).
- 5. Interpret and use with customers:** Use accessible and relevant career-related LMI with customers. Gain information from them about their experience of the labour market and evaluate the outcomes of the work.

## Appendix 1: Key contacts at case study organisations

A full list of acknowledgments can be found in each of the respective case studies in the Stage 2 Research Report <http://www.ukces.org.uk/assets/ukces/docs/publications/LMIresearchreport.pdf>. Contact details for each of the case study organisations can be found in the below table below.

Case study organisation	Contact name	Contact job title	Contact e-mail
Calderdale and Kirklees Careers Service and Leeds City Region	Julie Tree	Information Service Manager, (Calderdale & Kirklees Careers)	<a href="mailto:Julie.tree@ckcareers.org.uk">Julie.tree@ckcareers.org.uk</a>
Calderdale and Kirklees Careers Services and Leeds City Region	Sue Cooke	Project Director (Leeds City Region Employment and Skills Board)	<a href="mailto:Sue.cooke@leeds.gov.uk">Sue.cooke@leeds.gov.uk</a>
Careers Wales	Sarah Finnegan-Dehn	Chief Executive Careers Wales North West (and Regional Director for Careers Wales North in new CCDG)	<a href="mailto:sarahfd@careers-gyfra.org.uk">sarahfd@careers-gyfra.org.uk</a>
CfBT (North East)	Edwin Milligan	Assistant Regional Manager (Employer Engagement)	<a href="mailto:emilligan@cfbt.com">emilligan@cfbt.com</a>
Connexions Kent and Medway	Rebecca Towner	Guidance Development Officer	<a href="mailto:Rebecca.Towner@cxk.org">Rebecca.Towner@cxk.org</a>
Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership	Anne Chisholm	Learning & Labour Market Services Manager	<a href="mailto:Anne.Chisholm@connexionslive.com">Anne.Chisholm@connexionslive.com</a>
Jobcentre Plus Derbyshire District Office	Sue Fielding	Senior Employer and Partnership Manager	<a href="mailto:sue.fielding@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk">sue.fielding@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk</a>
Jobcentre Plus Durham and Tees Valley District Office	Chris Livingstone	Senior External Relations Manager	<a href="mailto:chris.livingstone@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk">chris.livingstone@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk</a>
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Tees Valley Unlimited	Sue Hannan	Employment, Learning and Skills Manager	<a href="mailto:Sue.Hannan@TeesValleyUnlimited.gov.uk">Sue.Hannan@TeesValleyUnlimited.gov.uk</a>





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