

The differences between career information, career advice and career guidance



The following story provided by the Career Development Institute (CDI) illustrates the distinctions between career information, advice and guidance and the benefits to the client and society of utilising the expertise of a Level 6 (or above) qualified Career Adviser.

Chris is a Year 11 pupil and as part of the career education programme in his school he attended a talk by the Fire Service and spent some time as an observer at his local fire station. He has decided that he would like to be a Firefighter. At the fire station he learned that entry is very competitive and that how you complete the application form is a key part of the process. Back at school he requested some career information from the Career Co-ordinator and was directed to the **National Careers Service website**, where he found information on the entry requirements and discovered that he will need to be 18. He also attended a *career advice* session where he learned how to complete application forms and how to write a CV.

Chris is predicted to do well at GCSE level but currently thinks that he will leave school, get some sort of a job on a building site, try and get fitter and then apply to the Fire Service when he is 18. His parents are not keen on him joining the Fire Service and feel that his poor level of physical fitness will let him down and they would rather that he *went to university*.

Having received the above *career education, information and advice* he is in danger of leaving school with *information and advice* but not the *career guidance and career management skills* which would help him to realise his ambition or to find another route should his application to the Fire Service be unsuccessful.

If he had a *career guidance interview* with a Career Adviser who was *professionally qualified* to at least QCF level 6 he would be able to:

- discuss what appeals to him about joining the Fire Service; is this a decision based on gut instinct or the perceived excitement of the role or has he thought through all that the job will involve?
- consider biographical information such as his skills, aptitudes and values which would make him suitable for this role;
- learn where to find more detailed career information provided by the Fire Service which would explain what exactly the Fire Service is looking for from an application. (<http://www.fireservice.co.uk/recruitment>);
- learn whether any Fire Services offer a higher apprenticeship route and which higher apprenticeship routes would be most useful and advantageous to joining a Fire Service at 18+
- discuss how he could develop the skills required over the next two years which would enable his application to be as good as possible;

- discuss the physical entry requirements and how he could address these e.g. referral to different types of sports activities;
- learn about the types of work experience and employer engagement activities that would be most helpful to securing his career ambition
- discuss the features and benefits of all of the post-16 routes: staying at school, Further Education or an Apprenticeship and which of these would best suit him;
- discuss undergraduate routes into the Fire Service;
- look at Labour Market Information on where Firefighter vacancies may be and what the possibility is of working locally;
- look at alternative careers which may also suit him and which he could use as a back-up plan in case his application to the Fire Service was unsuccessful;
- ask the Career Adviser to meet with his parents to discuss all of the above which may help to alleviate their anxieties;
- receive guidance on how to complete the Fire Service application form once he is 18;
- learn where job vacancies are advertised for both the Fire Service and other jobs.

All of the above will help Chris to develop *career management skills* which he could use both now and in the future. His human capital will be increased as he will have developed increased *motivation for learning, job search skills* and *attitudes* and *behaviours* that help when working efficiently and effectively. His network will have increased e.g. sports referrals, thus building his social capital and he will have developed the ability to *make transitions* from one part of his life to the next, which is a lifelong skill.

As a result of this career guidance intervention a successful outcome for both Chris and the school would be that at the end of Year 11 he went on to a post 16 route which could ultimately enable him to realise his ambition and help him to

develop skills and knowledge which he could use in his role as a Fire Fighter or in another career should his application to the Fire Service be unsuccessful.

The economic benefits of Chris receiving career guidance would be that he could pursue a post-16 route which was suited to his needs and would be less likely to *become unemployed* or at risk of not using his skills and knowledge fully. Knowing how the *labour market* works and the fact that he may need to move to find employment as a Fire Fighter will also enable him to be part of a more mobile and flexible workforce.

Only a *career practitioner*, qualified to Level 6 or above, would have the skills to support Chris as outlined above.