The evidence base on lifelong guidance

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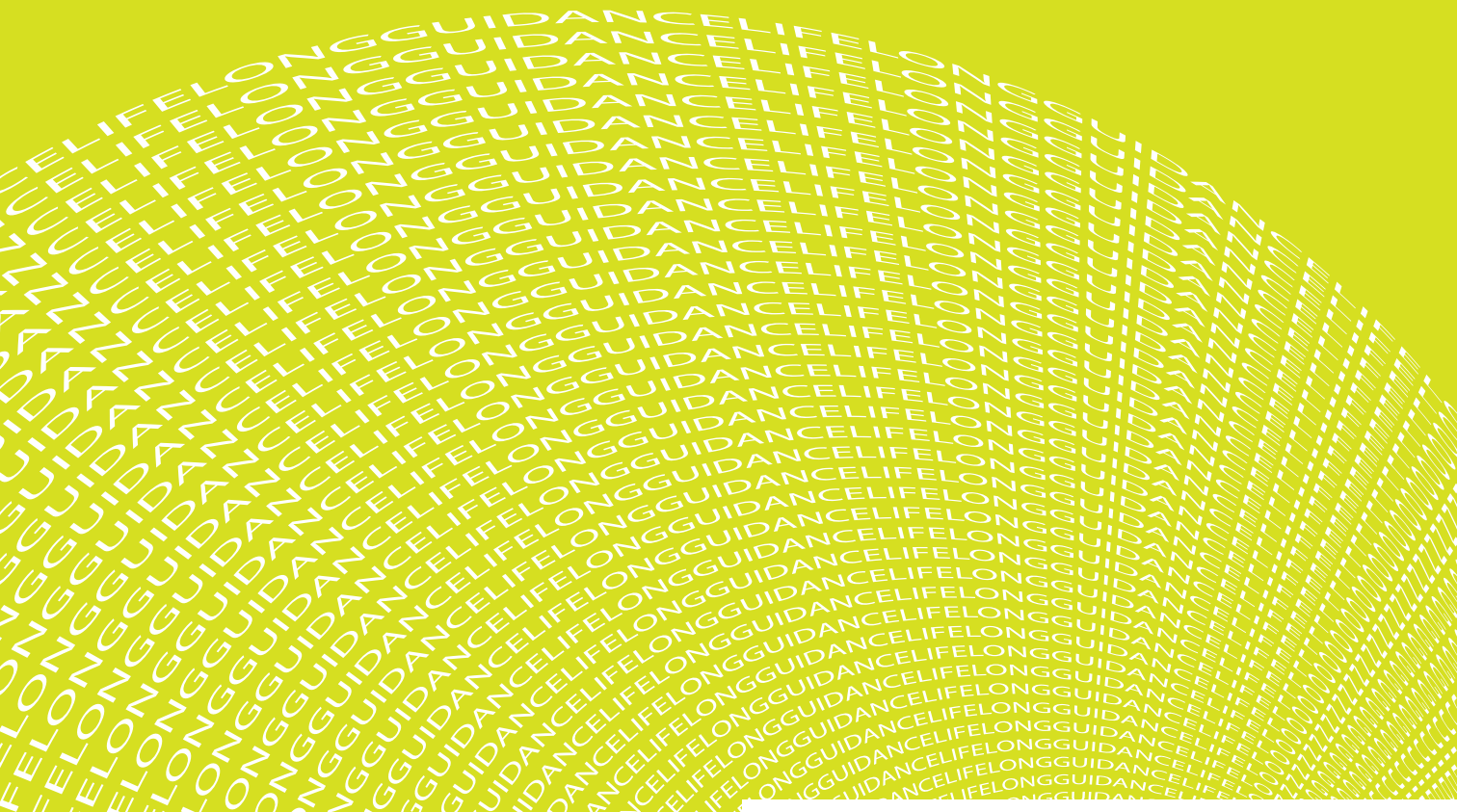
Lifelong Learning

TRISTRAM HOOLEY

The Evidence Base on Lifelong Guidance

A GUIDE TO KEY FINDINGS FOR EFFECTIVE POLICY AND PRACTICE



EUROPEAN LIFELONG GUIDANCE POLICY NETWORK

ELGPN Tools No. 3

The Evidence Base on Lifelong Guidance: a Guide to Key Findings for Effective Policy and Practice

EUROPEAN LIFELONG GUIDANCE POLICY NETWORK

This is an Evidence Guide commissioned by the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN), a Member State network in receipt of EU financial support under the Lifelong Learning Programme. The views expressed are those of the author, approved by the ELGPN, and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the European Commission or any person acting on behalf of the Commission.

The guide has been prepared by Professor Tristram Hooley (University of Derby, UK) with the support of the members and partners of the ELGPN, the International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy (ICCDPP) and the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG).

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Co-ordinator 2013–14:
University of Jyväskylä, Finland
Finnish Institute for Educational Research (FIER)
http://elgpn.eu
elgpn@jyu.fi

Cover and graphic design: Martti Minkkinen / Finnish Institute for Educational Research (FIER)
Layout: Kaija Mannström / Finnish Institute for Educational Research (FIER)

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Using this guide

This guide is aimed at policy-makers, though practitioners and researchers may also find it useful. It builds on existing work by the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN), including the Quality Assurance and Evidence (QAE) Framework which provides an approach for policy-makers to address quality assurance and evidence-based policy and system development. The guide synthesises the existing evidence on the impact of lifelong guidance and suggests how policy-makers might want to make use of this evidence and contribute to its development.

The guide, produced by ELGPN, is aimed primarily at policy-makers in Europe, so European examples are used where possible. But it has been prepared in collaboration with the International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy, enabling it to include relevant studies conducted in Australia, Canada, the USA and other non-European countries. These are used where European examples cannot be found or to supplement these examples. It is hoped that this will also make the guide of interest to a wider international audience.

The guide draws together what is already known and aims to present it in a way that is accessible to policy-makers. In order to do this, the main messages are summarised and illustrated with key examples drawn from the literature.

The guide begins with a two-page summary that is designed to give a top-level overview of evidence for the effectiveness of lifelong guidance and implications for system design. This is followed by an extended summary which distils the main policy-relevant messages. The subsequent main body of the guide explores these issues in more detail and provides a series of evidence case-studies with references to support further investigation.

To help the reader to navigate through this material, a number of textual features are used:

Summaries of the material in a chapter or a section are denoted by bold and italic text in a light grey box.

Key literature reviews which summarise the evidence in a particular area are denoted by a light blue background in a box. Such reviews typically draw on a number of pieces of research.

Specific examples of research studies that have been undertaken in the area are denoted by an orange background in a box.

Full references are given for all documents or publications on the first occasion that they are mentioned in the main guide, and also at the end of the guide. The summaries do not include references.

Contents

Brief summary

Lifelong guidance refers to "a continuous process that enables citizens at any age and at any point in their lives to identify their capacities, competences and interests, to make educational, training and occupational decisions and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings in which those capacities and competences are learned and/or used. Guidance covers a range of individual and collective activities relating to information-giving, counselling, competence assessment, support, and the teaching of decision-making and career management skills."[1]

There is an extensive research base on lifelong guidance, some of which is set out in this guide, with detailed references. It recognises that there are many beneficiaries of such guidance, including individuals, their families and communities, and the organisations where they study and work, as well as society as a whole. Lifelong guidance impacts on: educational outcomes; economic and employment outcomes; and social outcomes.

This guide suggests that policy-makers should continue to develop this evidence base to ensure that policies are based on the best evidence available and that they work as expected. It builds upon earlier and ongoing ELGPN work addressing quality assurance and evidence-based policy and system development.

The evidence supports the use of lifelong guidance as a key tool of education, employment, youth and social policies. Lifelong guidance can help to address the current economic crisis and Europe 2020 targets on education, employment, and poverty and social exclusion. Guidance is most effective when it is conceived as a lifelong system, though much of the evidence relates to its impacts in particular sectors.

Guidance in lifelong learning. Guidance can play a central role in learning systems by increasing individuals' engagement with learning, making clear the pathways through learning and work, and supporting the acquisition of career management skills (for managing life, learning and work).

- Guidance in **schools** contributes to increasing students' engagement and success in school by clarifying the relevance of subjects to future opportunities, and supporting transitions from school through providing information and skills to underpin good decision-making, so helping students to establish successful lives and careers.
- Guidance in **vocational education** supports individuals to see opportunity and value in vocational options and helps those in vocational education to make the most of their skills and knowledge.
- Guidance in **higher education** supports good career decision-making and effective transitions to the workplace, helping to ensure that graduates' learning and skills are well used.
- Guidance in **adult education** supports adults to consider their return to education, enhance their skills and employability, and utilise their skills effectively in the labour market.

Guidance for work. Guidance plays a critical role in effective labour markets, supporting individuals in transitions to and within the labour market, and helping them to make effective use of their skills and be resilient in the face of change.

- Guidance is frequently used as a way to engage **unemployed adults** in the labour market. As such, it forms a key part of active labour market

[1] Council of the European Union (2008). Council Resolution on better integrating lifelong guidance into lifelong learning strategies. 2905th Education, Youth and Culture Council meeting Brussels, 21 November. Available from http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/educ/104236.pdf [Accessed 27 January 2014]. This Resolution confirmed the definitions developed in an earlier 2004 Resolution.

policies. The evidence suggests that, within the bounds of the broader performance of the labour market, career guidance is effective in re-engaging unemployed people in work.

- Guidance is important in helping individuals to manage their **return to the labour market** following periods of injury, illness, caring responsibilities, or other kinds of career breaks.
- Guidance is useful for **young people** who have failed to make successful transitions to the labour market. This can be an effective strategy, particularly where it is possible to develop approaches that recognise the diversity of the youth population and that seek to pre-empt and/or to manage failed transitions.
- Guidance for **working people** can take place within the workplace or outside it. It benefits both the individual and their employer. Business benefits include increasing employee satisfaction and engagement, and supporting knowledge transfer and cohesion.
- Guidance supports the **mobility** of workers both in the home country and in the host country. It helps people to understand the opportunities and processes of mobility and to re-orientate themselves and become productive once they have moved.
- Guidance supports **older workers** to engage in learning and actively manage their staged retirement.

In addition to demonstrating the effectiveness of guidance, the evidence also indicates ten evidence-based principles to underpin the design of lifelong guidance services:

Focus on the individual	Support learning and progression	Ensure quality
1) Lifelong guidance is most effective where it is genuinely lifelong and progressive. 2) Lifelong guidance is most effective where it connects meaningfully to the wider experience and lives of the individuals who participate in it. 3) Lifelong guidance is most effective where it recognises the diversity of individuals and relates services to individual needs.	4) Lifelong guidance is not one intervention, but many, and works most effectively when a range of interventions are combined. 5) A key aim of lifelong guidance programmes should be the acquisition of career management skills. 6) Lifelong guidance needs to be holistic and well-integrated into other support services. 7) Lifelong guidance should involve employers and working people, and provide active experiences of workplaces.	8) The skills, training and dispositions of the professionals who deliver lifelong guidance are critical to its success. 9) Lifelong guidance is dependent on access to good-quality career information. 10) Lifelong guidance should be quality-assured and evaluated to ensure its effectiveness and to support continuous improvement.

The evidence base for lifelong guidance can be further enhanced through the Lifelong Guidance Policy Cycle, in which implementation of new policies and services is followed by monitoring and evaluation, which in turn provides greater understanding on which future investment and initiatives can be based.

Introduction

> *The Council of the European Union invites member states to… strengthen the role of lifelong guidance within national lifelong learning strategies in line with the Lisbon Strategy and with the strategic framework for European co-operation in education and training.*[5]

Europe is experiencing a period of rapid economic and demographic change. A mix of factors has meant that large numbers of Europeans are going through major changes in their lives and careers. These factors vary across countries, but typically include low levels of growth, decline of the public sector as an employer, reorganisation of education systems, changes in technology and high levels of youth unemployment. Another key change relates to demographic changes, with an ageing working population and increasing levels of migration. How to keep the existing workforce engaged and productive for longer whilst integrating new migrants represent major long-term public-policy challenges. How to address all of these issues and to ensure that individuals remain resilient during changing times is likely to be a key focus for public policy for the foreseeable future.

There have been a number of European responses to address these challenges. The Europe 2020 targets identify the focus for government actions as ensuring employment, investment in research and development, addressing climate change, improving participation in education, and challenging poverty and social exclusion.[6] Such targets provide a broad framework for action, within which particular strategies such as lifelong guidance can be considered. The Council of the European Union Resolution on lifelong guidance suggests that guidance services offer public-policy tools that can address these kinds of challenges. It notes that "lifelong guidance" refers to:

> *a continuous process that enables citizens at any age and at any point in their lives to identify their capacities,*

[5] Council of the European Union (2008). Council Resolution on better integrating lifelong guidance into lifelong learning strategies. 2905th Education, Youth and Culture Council meeting Brussels, 21 November 2008. Available from http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/educ/104236.pdf [Accessed 27 January 2014].

[6] European Commission (2011). Europe 2020 Targets. Available from http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/targets/eu-targets/ [Accessed 1 February 2014].

> *competences and interests, to make educational, training and occupational decisions and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings in which those capacities and competences are learned and/or used. Guidance covers a range of individual and collective activities relating to information-giving, counselling, competence assessment, support, and the teaching of decision-making and career management skills.*[7]

Guidance is primarily a service directed towards the individual; however, bringing about changes in the behaviour of the individual can change the way in which wider systems operate. Such activities might include information and advice giving, counselling, competence assessment, mentoring, advocacy, and teaching career decision-making and career management skills. They may be collectively known by a variety of names, including "career development", "educational / vocational / career guidance", "guidance and counselling", "occupational guidance", and "counselling".[8]

ELGPN has already produced a Resource Kit for European policy-makers that explains the key features of a lifelong guidance policy system. The Resource Kit explores the skills for managing life, learning and work (career management skills) that such a system is trying to develop, how access can be facilitated, how quality can be assured, and the arrangements that can be developed to support the co-ordination of a lifelong guidance system and ensure that it works effectively with the wider education and employment system.[9]

This guide focuses on the evidence that underpins the kinds of policies described in the Resource Kit. An understanding of the evidence can support policy-making, but does not answer all of policymakers' questions or supplant the need for policy debate. The design and nature of guidance services may not be wholly determined by the evidence, but hopefully are informed by it. Lunn's description of the interaction between policy and evidence provides a good summary:

> *Regardless of one's political views or values it is possible to use research evidence to improve public policy. Few would disagree with this claim. Policymakers of whatever stripe are more likely to achieve desirable outcomes if they are better informed about relevant facts and if they have superior understanding of the causal mechanisms that lead to those outcomes. In other words, inferences can be drawn from evidence about whether different policies are more or less likely to achieve their goals, whatever those goals might be.*[10]

Guidance practice draws on a wide range of research and evidence that has been conducted about the relationship between career, learning and work. Such work examines questions like how individuals develop career ideas, how the education system and social context shapes such ideas, how far an individual can be seen as fitting into a particular job, and what happens when they wish or are required to change career direction. This underpinning research draws on psychology, education, sociology and economics as well as many other disciplines. Describing this underpinning evidence is beyond the scope of this guide. Sources like the *International Handbook of Career Guidance*[11] provide a good introduction into both the underpinning literature and how this literature has informed and shaped practice in the field. The present guide focuses more specifically on the evidence that demonstrates the impacts of lifelong guidance.

The evidence cited has been identified by ELGPN members and international colleagues, and gathered from a range of sources, including both the scientific literature in the field and key national and local com-

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7 Ibid.

8 European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (2012). *Lifelong Guidance Policy Development: A European resource kit*, p.13. Jyväskylä, Finland: ELGPN.

9 European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (2012). *Lifelong Guidance Policy Development: A European resource kit*. Jyväskylä, Finland: ELGPN.

10 Lunn, P.D. (2013). Researchers imply, policymakers infer: The relationship between evidence and policy. *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland*, XLII: 96-108.

11 Athanasou, J.A. & van Esbroeck, R. (Eds.) (2008). *International Handbook of Career Guidance*. Springer.

missioned evaluations. A pluralistic view has been taken with regard to the inclusion of evidence. The guide includes quantitative and qualitative studies, and studies produced by academics, public-policy evaluators and practitioners. It is hoped that this pluralistic approach provides a rich description of the existing evidence base on the impacts of lifelong guidance.

1.1. Ensuring quality in lifelong guidance

This section summarises the ELGPN's approach to quality and argues that quality assurance and evidence gathering are overlapping and complementary activities. It contends that the Quality-Assurance and Evidence-Base (QAE) Framework provides a strong basis for the quality assurance of lifelong guidance and also provides a foundation for developing the evidence base in this area.

Developing an understanding of the evidence is essential to ensuring the delivery of high-quality lifelong guidance services. ELGPN has concentrated on the issue of quality as one of its key areas of focus. An important output has been the Quality-Assurance and Evidence-Base (QAE) Framework.[12]

OECD[13] noted that at the time of its international review (2002) very few countries had systematic and cross-sectoral processes for ensuring quality. It suggested a number of common criteria that could be used to assess the quality of career guidance (citizen and user involvement, practitioner competence, service improvement, coherence, and the assurance of quality in a range of provision). ELGPN drew on this work and identified quality as a key area of development for the Network. Field visits, a review of quality processes in countries across Europe and briefing and reflection notes were then used to underpin the development of a quality-assurance matrix and indicators.[14] These were refined and developed into the QAE Framework.

ELGPN is involved in the ongoing piloting and testing of this Framework as a policy development tool to support countries in gathering robust data that will inform and improve the range and quality of their provision, shape their monitoring arrangements and drive forward the development of the evidence base. The QAE Framework identifies a series of key elements that should be built into national systems to support quality service delivery and underpin the collection of evidence:

- Practitioner competence.
- Citizen/user involvement.
- Service provision and improvement.
- Cost-benefits to government.
- Cost-benefits to individuals.

The Framework is included as an appendix to this document.

ELGPN has emphasised the importance of using evidence and monitoring data to drive service development. Evidence and quality are distinct, but related, concepts. In the ELGPN Resource Kit, the purpose of quality assurance is described as follows:

> *The aims of a quality-assurance system and mechanisms are to improve efficiency in service provision, to increase institutional financial accountability and to create transparency from the perspective of the citizen.* (p.50)

Quality is concerned with understanding how services work and ensuring their consistency and accountability. **Evidence** seeks to describe and quantify whether lifelong guidance works, what its impacts are and what approaches are most effective. Clearly there is a strong relationship between these two concepts. The QAE Framework provides a powerful tool to draw them together.

[12] For further information on the development of the Framework, see: ELGPN (2012). *European Lifelong Guidance Policies: Progress report 2011–12,* Appendix 5. Jyväskylä, Finland: ELGPN.

[13] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2004). *Career Guidance: A handbook for policy makers*. Paris: OECD.

[14] For further detail on the development of the ELGPN's quality approach, see ELGPN (2010). *Lifelong Guidance Policies: Work in progess*. Jyväskylä, Finland: ELGPN.

Not all evidence is generated through quality processes: some evidence gathering may seek to assess the impact of an entire service or intervention, without necessarily attending to the quality processes within the intervention. For example, a researcher may seek evidence about whether a guidance intervention is likely to increase an individual's chance of finding work by measuring whether receiving the intervention leads to employment; but such an inquiry may not explore the detail of how the intervention is delivered. There are also aspects of quality-assurance processes that are not directly addressed to the question of ensuring that services have an impact: for example, those associated with financial monitoring.

The approach that has been taken by ELGPN is to argue that quality and evidence are, and should be, strongly complementary in the development and management of lifelong guidance services.

1.2. Monitoring and evaluation

The relationship between monitoring and evaluation is important in thinking about the role of evidence in lifelong guidance. Monitoring addresses the question "are we doing things right?", while evaluation addresses the question "are we doing the right things?".

One of the ways in which quality and evidence are inter-related is through the collection of data as part of service provision and improvement. The QAE Framework suggests that such processes include the collection of data on the career management skills people are acquiring, the level of adherence to national quality management systems, the utilisation of new technologies, the level of knowledge about conditions in the education system and the labour market, and the profile of the service users.

It is useful here to draw a distinction between monitoring and evaluation:[15]

Monitoring

Monitoring is the routine collection, analysis and use of information about an ongoing development intervention. Its aim is to provide indications of the extent of progress and achievement. It should cover activities, outputs, the use of funds, indications regarding the achievement of the objectives, and some indications regarding unexpected effects or changes in the environment of the development intervention. It uses the operational plan as a reference and is usually carried out by individuals and organisations directly involved in the development intervention. The leading question is: "Are we doing things right?"

Evaluation

Evaluation is an assessment of an ongoing or completed development intervention. It should cover the rationale, design, implementation and results of the intervention. Evaluations should be as systematic and objective as possible. The aim is to determine whether the intervention fulfils a series of internationally recognised criteria, such as effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, impact and sustainability. It is usually carried out in co-operation with external evaluators or entirely outsourced. …. The leading question is: "Are we doing the right things?"

Monitoring is important in ensuring that a programme remains on track and continues to deliver against its objectives. It is an activity that needs to penetrate every aspect of a service as part of the management of that service, and is strongly related to the quality approach adopted by the organisation.

[15] These definitions are derived from Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH (2011). *Monitoring and Evaluation for TVET-Related Development Interventions: A guide for practitioners.* Cairo: GIZ.

Evaluation is usually concerned less with operational management questions (although these will sometimes be examined) and more with strategic questions about the activity. Evaluation does not necessarily have to pervade all aspects of a service, and may require staff and clients involved in the evaluation to undertake activities that it would not be practical to deliver across all services.

An evaluation was conducted of Estonian Career Centres in 2011 and 2012.[16] The evaluation used an online survey to collect data from service users one month after they had interacted with the service. It found positive impacts from both individual and group counselling, with the majority of respondents agreeing that the service had given them new perspectives, increased their confidence and helped them to put together a career plan.

Monitoring and evaluation activities can be important both to the enhancement of quality and to addressing questions of evidence and impact.

1.3. The evidence on the impact of lifelong guidance

The evidence about lifelong guidance seeks to answer questions about the effective delivery of guidance and the impacts that can result from it. There is a considerable research base which has used a range of different research approaches to answer these questions.

Lifelong guidance can have a range of levels of impact, ranging from measuring levels of take-up through to measuring changes that take place at a societal level as a result of guidance programmes.

Lifelong guidance can have impacts on educational outcomes, economic and employment outcomes and social outcomes.

There are a range of different beneficiaries of guidance programmes, including individuals, their families, communities, employers and society as a whole.

This guide discusses the evidence that exists for lifelong guidance. At its core, this is about trying to answer some key questions that may be of interest to policy-makers:

- Do lifelong guidance programmes make a difference to the careers of individuals? For example, can they increase individuals' aspirations or their chances of progressing?
- Do lifelong guidance programmes contribute towards policy aims such as supporting an effective education system, labour market efficiency, and social equity?
- Can lifelong guidance programmes reduce reliance on social security and welfare services?
- How are lifelong guidance programmes best designed and implemented?
- How can lifelong guidance programmes be improved and made more effective?
- Is anything known about what does not work and how best to avoid ineffective practices?

Such evidence has been collected by a wide range of people for a wide range of reasons. This guide refers to evidence produced by academics, public-policy researchers and consultants, and by policy-makers and practitioners themselves. In many cases there will be relatively little dialogue between each of these groups. Of course, each group has different motivations for the collection of evidence and different approaches to collecting this evidence. This guide has brought these different traditions together, in the belief that this will strengthen the overall understanding of the evidence for lifelong guidance.

[16] Rammo, M. (2013). How successful are career centres and schools in supporting Estonian young people taking steps in their career paths? Poster presented to the Euroguidance meeting, Dublin, 25-26 February.

A note of caution on using and interpreting evidence

It is important to remember that any attempt to measure impact is inevitably reductive. Any educational activity such as lifelong guidance leads to a range of impacts, many of which are difficult to predict or measure. For example, a relationship built during work experience may not result in a job for the individual involved, but that individual may pass on an opportunity to a friend or family member. Such happenstance connections are difficult to identify, but this does not make them any less real.

This is one reason why it is important that monitoring and evaluation processes do not skew the delivery of programmes in ways that reduce their potential to have wider impacts. For instance, an excessive focus on immediate employment outcomes may have negative impacts in the long term if it reduces the opportunity for individuals to rethink their careers and consider more strategically where their talents might be best directed.

Such concerns about ensuring that lifelong guidance is understood and evaluated in the round highlight the importance of using a range of different evaluation approaches. Quantitative measures can identify relationships between interventions and measurable impacts. Qualitative measures can help to identify broader and more subtle types of impact. There is therefore considerable value in mixed-methods approaches. However, it is also important to remember that no research can ever describe all of the impacts that result from an intervention.

Researchers use a range of different strategies to explore these questions. Maguire provides a useful summary of different approaches that can be taken to measure the outcomes of guidance, highlighting both the importance of doing so and the value of both formative and summative approaches to evaluation.[17]

In general, researchers seek to measure or describe what is happening and to trace relationships between interventions and possible outcomes. The ELGPN has organised its quality-assurance matrix and indicators around an input-process-outcome framework[18] and this approach has also been picked up and developed by a Canadian group (CRWG)[19].

However, identifying relationships between inputs and outcomes (and the level of contribution made by participation in the process) is not always straightforward. The ongoing Canadian programme from which Figure 1 is derived has invested considerable time in considering what input, process and outcome measures it is useful and possible to apply in different contexts. It has also sought to examine the interactions that exist between these different factors. Such a recognition of complexity recalls Scheerens' reminder that input-process-outcome models in education take place in a context.[20] Similar inputs, processes and outcome do not always produce the same results within different contexts. So an unemployed client might receive identical guidance and learn just as much about career in two different contexts; but depending on the occupational structure, economic situation and level of competition, he or she might experience a very different result.

The input-process-outcome models are therefore a useful tool for thinking simply about complex problems. Such models raise big questions, such as where do we start (with inputs, processes or outcomes?) when we are designing services and then when we

[17] Maguire, M. (2004). Measuring the outcomes of career guidance. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 4(2-3): 179-192. 18

[18] ELGPN (2010). *Lifelong Guidance Policies: Work in progess*. Jyväskylä, Finland: ELGPN.

[19] Canadian Research Working Group on Evidence-Based Practice in Career Development (2013). *Common Indicators: Transforming the culture of evaluation in career development and employment services.* Ottawa, Canada: Canadian Career Development Foundation.

[20] Scheerens, J. (2005). *The Quality of Education at the Beginning of the 21st Century*. Paris: UNESCO.

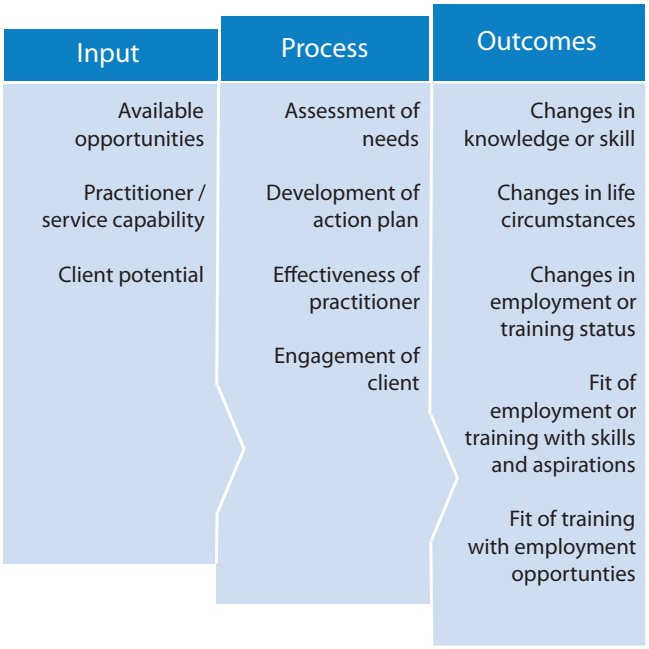

Figure 1: *Input-process-outcome framework (based on the CRWG model)*

are evaluating them. Ideally they encourage movement towards a position where service design and evaluation are conceived together, so that we are identifying what we want to achieve at the same time as thinking about how we will check that it is being achieved. Ultimately this takes us towards a policy or service development cycle built around evidence and evaluation. This will be discussed later in this guide.

Deciding how best to capture the impacts of lifelong guidance interventions can be challenging, as they are frequently nested in other educational interventions, and their impacts are bound up with the personal, social and educational history of the individuals involved. Furthermore, it is not always clear what particular interventions are meant to achieve. For example, is the aim of a guidance programme working with unemployed workers to get those individuals a job, or to support their long-term career planning? It is possible that research might find that it was effective in one of these aspirations, but not in both.

Greater clarity about what interventions are supposed to be achieving is therefore valuable for developing quality interventions, helping to develop a shared understanding between policy-makers, funders, practitioners, clients and evaluators about the purpose of guidance. In practice, different stakeholders may have different objectives for guidance interventions. One of the purposes of effective quality and evaluation processes should be to identify these areas of disagreement or different priorities and to highlight their implications.

1.3.1. Levels of impact

Researchers can measure a range of different levels of impact. A useful place to start is to measure:

- **inputs** (resources, time, human capital);
- **take-up** (breadth and depth of usage) of the services.

Measurement of many of these factors is addressed in detail in the QAE Framework (see appendix). There is clear value in building consensus around a common range of elements that should be measured

across different services. There will be important findings in both of these respects, especially if it is possible, given local data-protection regulations, to analyse them in relation to existing administrative data about clients. For example, it may be possible to identify which types of client are using which types of service and to what extent, and this may in turn be useful in enhancing efficiency and efficacy.

However, looking at inputs and take-up does not necessarily answer the kinds of questions posed above. In establishing impact, we need to go further. Kirkpatrick[21] identifies four levels of impact that can result from training and development interventions. These levels can be adapted to structure thinking about the impacts of lifelong guidance:

1. **Reaction.** How do participants in guidance describe their experience? Did they enjoy it and do they feel their participation has been worthwhile?
2. **Learning.** Is it possible to quantify what has been learnt? Measuring learning is particularly important because guidance is essentially a learning process, by which individuals learn about the world of learning and work and acquire the skills that they need to be successful within it (career management skills). An example of impact at this level therefore might include assessing the acquisition of career management skills (CMS) against a CMS framework.
3. **Behaviour.** Do learners change their behaviour as a result of participating, e.g. working harder, actively exploring their careers, or entering a new course or job?
4. **Results.** Are there any observable impacts on systems, organisations or individuals, e.g. increased retention or academic attainment, improved transitions, increased career and life success?

Kirkpatrick's model does not describe every kind of impact that might result from a guidance intervention. For example, it does not really capture changes in attitudes (e.g. increased self-confidence). However, the way that it conceptualises different types of impacts as building on each other is very useful, and the framework it sets out has a strong relevance to the concerns of policy-makers.

1.3.2. Types of impact

It is also possible to recognise that guidance may result in different types as well as different levels of impact. These impacts can be described as those that relate to:

- **educational outcomes**, e.g. increasing participation in education and training, or improving attainment rates;
- **economic and employment outcome,** e.g. increasing salary, improving employee retention, or increasing someone's likelihood of funding work;
- **social outcomes,** e.g. reducing the likelihood of engaging in criminal activity, or increasing social mobility or community capacity.

For policy-makers these types of impact might be viewed through a range of different policy lenses, to link with wider policy agendas. These might include European initiatives such as those related to flexicurity[22] or youth unemployment[23], such as the Youth Guarantee[24], or helping countries to fulfil education and employment components of the European

[21] Kirkpatrick, D.L. (1994). *Evaluating Training Programs: The four levels*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

[22] Sultana, R. (2012). *Flexicurity: Implications for lifelong career guidance*. Jyväskylä: European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network.

[23] Hughes, D. & Borbély-Pecze, T.B. (2012). *Youth Unemployment: A crisis in our midst – The role of lifelong guidance policies in addressing labour supply and demand.* Jyväskylä: European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network.

[24] See Borbély-Pecze, T.B. & Hutchinson, J. (2013). *The Youth Guarantee and Lifelong Guidance.* ELGPN Concept Note No.4. Jyväskylä: European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network.

Semester.[25] Alternatively, the types of impact might link with local political and economic concerns such as increasing engagement in vocational or higher education, or addressing problematic youth transitions to the workplace, or tackling long-term unemployment.

1.3.3. Beneficiaries of impact

Finally, it is possible to identify a range of different possible beneficiaries of guidance. Guidance is primarily a service directed towards the individual, but any change in the behaviour of the individual is likely to have wider consequences.

Figure 2 provides examples of how this might work. It is not comprehensive: for example, it is also important to acknowledge impacts on family and various levels of community. But it demonstrates how a service which offers individual benefits can support wider community, organisational and social goals. It is important to consider the desired beneficiaries both during service design and in the evaluation of services.

One of the issues raised by the diverse number of beneficiaries is the question of who is able to report an impact and what might constitute evidence of such impact. An individual might tell a researcher that they have experienced benefits from an intervention, but this may not be apparent in terms of their labour market position. Equally, the reverse is true: researchers may find that the level of engagement with lifelong guidance services has a significant benefit on the local economy, but individuals may not attribute their success to the services they have accessed. Such questions are largely technical ones for researchers to think about when designing evalu-

Figure 2: *The beneficiaries of guidance services*

[25] European Commission (2014). *Making it Happen: The European Semester.* Available from http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/index_en.htm [Accessed 2 February 2014].

ations and research studies. However, the recognition of a range of impacts and a range of beneficiaries inevitably requires the utilisation of a range of different types of evidence.

Figure 3 provides a summary of the types and beneficiaries of impact that we might expect to see in relation to lifelong guidance. It highlights that we might be looking for learning, economic or social impacts, and seeking to register them at a number of different levels.

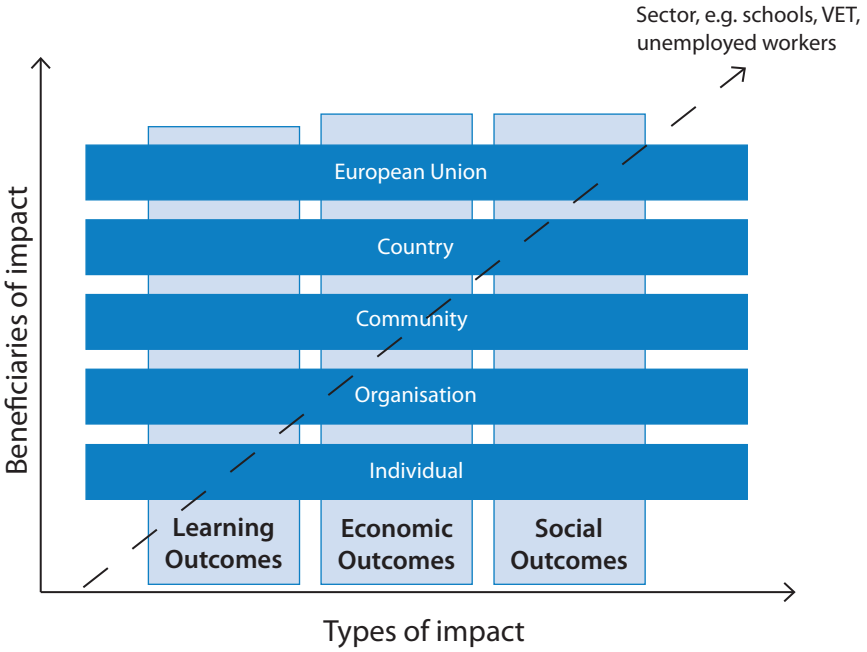

Figure 3: *Types of impact and beneficiaries of impact*[26]

1.4. Research and evaluation approaches

The identification of the levels and types of impacts that are possible, as well as the possible beneficiaries, is an essential element of understanding and measuring the impact of guidance. Different kinds of studies seek to measure different kinds of impact, and utilise a range of different research approaches and methods to do so.

People often distinguish between quantitative and qualitative methods:

Quantitative methods seek to *measure* what is happening. They can be useful to identify clear and simple relationships between interventions and the impacts that result from them.

[26] Figure 2 is a further iteration of a model developed within ELGPN in 2011-12. Borbély-Pecze, T.B. (2011). Review of the working methodology and the content of the ELGPN WP4 2011-12. Presentation at ELGPN WP4 field visit, Tallinn, Estonia, 23 May.

The Future to Discover project in Canada examined the impact of a guidance intervention on over 5,000 students in New Brunswick and Manitoba.[27] The study conducted surveys with participants who were randomly assigned to receive one of two interventions, both interventions, or none. The survey data was linked to administrative data sets, e.g. college enrolment data, to allow real-world impacts to be traced. The intervention found that receiving a guidance intervention enhanced attainment and made some groups of students more likely to enrol in post-secondary education.

Qualitative methods seek to *describe* and *understand* what is happening. They can help to identify broader and more subtle types of impacts.

A qualitative study conducted in Portugal explored how a particular approach to lifelong guidance (career construction counselling) brought about change in clients' ideas about career.[28] The study involved detailed tracking of counsellor/client interactions and a careful process of coding these transcripts to allow for rigorous analysis. The research found that clients became progressively more likely to be creative and purposeful about their career throughout the counselling process.

Both methods can contribute to a range of ways of demonstrating impact and exploring efficacy. However, as noted above, no research can ever describe all of the impacts that result from an intervention.

Some approaches that have been utilised effectively in this area include:

Snapshots. Taking a picture of what is happening (using a survey, series of interviews or observation) and identifying whether stakeholders feel that it is useful.

Research in the Netherlands[29] has looked at the use of portfolios or personal development plans to support students' career development. This qualitative study found that such portfolios were perceived to be useful by teachers, career counsellors and students when they were used to complement and provide a focus for wider career conversations. Where they were not used as part of a broader career learning process, they were generally not seen as useful.

Benchmarking. Taking a snapshot of what is happening and comparing it to a target or goal. Benchmarks can be defined either theoretically (*what should be happening*) or empirically (what has happened when this has been tried elsewhere).

Before-and-after studies. Taking two snapshots before and after implementation of the programme, to try and identify what changes have happened as a result.

A study in Italy examined the impact of a guidance intervention on adolescents' career decidedness and career planning.[30] Participants were measured before participating in the intervention and then subsequent to the intervention to see how much they had changed. The research also used a control group. Following the intervention, the experimental group (those who had received the intervention) showed higher levels of continuity, hope and career decidedness than did the control group.

Then-and-now studies. Asking research participants to identify what has changed and to remember back to what things were like before implementation.

[27] Frenette, M., Ford, R., Nicholson, C., Kwakye, I., Hui, T.S.-W., Hutchison, J., Dobrer, S., Smith Fowler, H. & Hébert, S. (2012). *Future to Discover: Post-secondary impacts report*. Ottawa: Social Research and Demonstration Corporation.

[28] Cardoso, P., Silva, J.R., Gonçalves, M.M. & Duarte, M.E. (2014). Innovative moments and change in career construction counseling. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 84(1): 11-20.

[29] Mittendorff, K., Jochems, W., Meijers, F. & den Brok, P. (2008). Differences and similarities in the use of the portfolio and personal development plan for career guidance in various vocational schools in the Netherlands. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training*, 60(1): 75-91.

[30] Ferrari, L., Nota, L. & Soresi, S. (2012). Evaluation of an intervention to foster time perspective and career decidedness in a group of Italian adolescents. *Career Development Quarterly*, 60(1): 82-96.

In a chapter discussing approaches to evaluating the impact of lifelong guidance services, Hiebert et al. present an evaluation approach used in Canada.[31] In a study examining online guidance for higher education, student participants were invited to use a form of retrospective self-assessment to indicate what they had learnt. More specifically, they were asked: "Given what you know now about career planning, for each item mentioned below rate yourself before you started the program and rate yourself now."

Longitudinal tracking. Ongoing engagement with research participants to explore the long-term impacts of guidance.

A study in Australia investigated students' experiences of a school guidance programme in rural and isolated areas of Australia.[32] Nine students who participated in the programme were interviewed 18 months later to explore their recollections of the experience. Results of the study revealed three themes pertaining to the value of career planning: information; elaboration and confirmation of career thoughts; and the social connectedness and positive experience the programme provided.

Controlled trials. Comparison of what happens to a cohort of clients who access career development services (the experimental group) in comparison to another similar cohort who do not use them (the control group). Researchers' confidence in this kind of study increases if individuals can be randomly allocated to these different groups.

A Portuguese study used a controlled trial to examine the impacts of a one-year career intervention on 183 ninth-grade students.[33] The intervention promoted career exploration and supported students in their career decision-making difficulties. Students were divided into a treatment group (who received the intervention) and a control group (who did not). The study found significant differences in the two groups' capacity to effectively undertake career exploration.

Cost-benefit analyses. Exploration of the relative size of the inputs and outputs of a process. This is usually quantified by using financial measures.

There are advantages and disadvantages to each of these approaches. There is also considerable value in adopting a pluralistic approach to establishing the impact of lifelong guidance.

[31] Hiebert, B., Schober, K. & Oakes, L. (2014). Demonstrating the impact of career guidance. In G. Arulmani, A.J. Bakshi, F.T.L. Leong & A.G. Watts (Eds.), *Handbook of Career Development: International perspectives,* 671-686. New York: Springer.

[32] McIlveen, P., Morgan, T. & Bimrose, J. (2012). A longitudinal study of the experience of a career development program for rural school students. *Australian Journal of Career Development*, 21(1): 22-30.

[33] Königstedt, M. (2012). *Intervenção Vocacional em Contexto Escolar: Avaliação de um programa longo em classe com adolescentes* (*Career Intervention in School Context: Evaluation of a long-term classroom-based programme with adolescents*). PhD thesis, University of Minho.

Lifelong guidance and public policy

Lifelong guidance provides a range of interventions that help an individual to manage their life, learning and work. The ELGPN Resource Kit identifies the key public-policy areas to which lifelong guidance can contribute:

- Efficient investment in education and training.
- Labour market efficiency.
- Lifelong learning.
- Social inclusion.
- Social equity.
- Economic development.

To this list should be added a number of other areas where guidance can have an impact, including:

- Active ageing.
- Active labour markets.
- Addressing youth transitions and unemployment.
- Effective skills utilisation.
- Employee engagement.
- Labour market flexibility/flexicurity.
- Participation in vocational and higher education.
- Reducing early school-leaving.
- Supporting and enabling European mobility for learning and work.

Guidance is therefore addressed to a wide range of policy concerns. In many cases there is a well-developed research base which outlines the nature of these concerns and identifies the key social and economic costs that emerge from them. It is beyond the scope of this guide to discuss these costs in detail. However, a brief case-study focusing on student drop-out from higher education is used below to demonstrate some of these wider costs and how guidance addresses them.

Case-study: Student drop-out from higher education

Student drop-out from higher education provides a useful case-study of how guidance can contribute to wider social and economic aims. Higher education represents a considerable personal and social investment. The policy aspiration is to

create an informed and highly skilled population: higher education has been used as an instrument to drive this. However, many students drop out of education and fail to complete their studies.

This process has been mapped at a European level through both quantitative[34] and qualitative[35] studies. There is also evidence to suggest that drop-out is related to various forms of social and economic disadvantage[36]. High student drop-out leads to a range of undesirable outcomes including wastage of resources, lowering the levels of skills available to the economy and reducing social mobility.

The level of student drop-out is clearly related to systemic factors in the higher education system as well as to wider economic issues. Unfortunately such systemic factors are very difficult to act upon. However, one factor that is often advanced in both research[37] and policy is the importance of purposeful educational choice-making. Students who know what they are doing and are clear about how it fits into their longer-term goals may be less likely to drop out. Guidance can offer a useful solution where the problem is constructed as being about insufficient knowledge of learning or labour market systems and poor decision-making.

Recent large-scale longitudinal research undertaken in England suggests that guidance may indeed offer at least part of the solution to higher education drop-out. In a study based on all university entrants in 2005/06, McCulloch[38] found that both the amount of advice on higher education that an individual had received (from all sources) and their satisfaction with the career guidance that they had received were correlated with reduced likelihood of dropping out.

2.1. The "lifelong" policy frame

Lifelong guidance is a cross-sectoral, long-term investment which frequently impacts on the policies of two or more government departments. This can mean that the main impact of guidance interventions is not always felt within the area that they take place. So for example, the provision of guidance in schools has a number of benefits for the school system, but it also has benefits for VET, universities and the labour market. It is important to consider this lifelong frame of reference when designing policies and seeking to ascertain their impact.

There are a range of ways in which lifelong guidance policies can be constructed. One is building co-ordination processes between different sectors; another is constructing a national strategy for guidance; a third is creating an all-age service which acts as the spine of a lifelong guidance system. This guide largely discusses lifelong guidance in sectoral contexts, because most systems and consequently most evidence-gathering proceed from a sectoral focus. However, there is also a range of evidence which highlights the value of a lifelong strategy to effective policy-making in this area.[39] There is also evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of all-age services as the centrepiece of a lifelong guidance policy.[40]

[34] Quinn, J. (2013). *Drop-Out and Completion in Higher Education in Europe among Students from Under-Represented Groups*. Brussels: DG Education and Culture, European Commission.

[35] Field, J., Merrill, B. & West, L. (2012). Life history approaches to access and retention of non-traditional students in higher education: A cross-European approach. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults*, 3(1): 77-89.

[36] Powdthavee, N. & Vignoles, A. (2009). The socioeconomic gap in university dropouts. *The BE Journal of Economic Analysis & Policy*, 9(19): 1935-1982.

[37] For example: Arias Ortiz, E. & Dehon, C. (2013). Roads to success in the Belgian French community's higher education system: Predictors of dropout and degree completion at the Université Libre de Bruxelles. *Research in Higher Education*, 54(6): 693-723. Also Harvey, A. & Luckman, M. (2014). Beyond demographics: Predicting student attrition within the Bachelor of Arts degree. *International Journal of the First Year in Higher Education*, 5(1): 19-29.

[38] McCulloch, A. (2014). *Learning from Futuretrack: Dropout from higher education*. London: BIS.

[39] Watts, A.G. (2005). Career guidance policy: An international review. *Career Development Quarterly*, 54(1): 66-76.

[40] Watts, A.G. (2010). National all-age career guidance services: Evidence and issues. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 38(1): 31-44.

The development of a lifelong guidance system in Hungary is a recent example of an attempt to link up activity in schools, in higher education, and in the public employment service.[41] The Hungarian lifelong guidance services were evaluated using an online survey (300 responses and an equivalent-size control group) and 45 in-depth interviews.[42] The evaluation (focusing on the period 2008-11) found that the service had a positive impact on clients' ideas about the future and on their capacity for career planning and career management. The evaluation also highlighted the diversity of career needs addressed by the lifelong guidance provision in Hungary. It suggested that there were four distinct types of clients who needed to be supported in different ways: the conscious career developers; those in need of career security; those who needed intense emotional support; and those who were required to access the service despite being initially unwilling to use it. The evaluation thus supported both the lifelong framing of guidance and the need to tailor services to individual needs.

The QAE Framework (see appendix to this report) offers a tool which can support both the delivery of high-quality lifelong guidance and the collection of relevant evidence to support the measurement of its effectiveness.

2.2. Why is it important to understand and develop the evidence base for lifelong guidance?

Policy-makers can use an understanding of the evidence base to shape the design and delivery of lifelong guidance services. A key part of this is the evaluation of interventions and the continued development of the evidence.

The Lifelong Guidance Policy Cycle sets out a process of evidence-based service development that policy-makers may wish to adopt.

There is a growing consensus that public policy should be based on the best evidence available. Evidence-based policy-making helps policy-makers to be clear about what the right decision is and its likely impact. In practice, however, accessing evidence can be challenging, not least because it is frequently scattered across a wide range of publications, each of which only provide a part of the story. This is particularly the case for lifelong guidance, where the evidence is spread between books, academic journals and government reports, as well as housed in different academic disciplines (education, psychology, business and organisation studies) and in different government ministries (education [sometimes including distinct ministries or departments for schools, higher education, vocational education, and lifelong learning], employment, business and a range of others).

Even when it is possible to find the evidence on lifelong guidance, it can sometimes be difficult to interpret. What works in one context may not easily transfer to a different country with different education and employment systems. This guide draws out the key features of the evidence in different areas and clarifies how policy-makers might interpret such evidence.

It is important to continue to develop the evidence base as new policies and interventions are introduced. EU member-states have signed up to the idea of a cyclical policy development process through the European Semester.[43] ELGPN in turn is committed to the idea of continuous improvement as a key part of its activities.[44] This guide builds on this by proposing a Lifelong Guidance Policy Cycle which recognises the need to develop and evaluate guidance policies in a dynamic and evidence-based fashion.

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41 Watts, A.G. & Borbély-Pecze, T.B. (2011). The development of a lifelong guidance system in Hungary. *International Journal of Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 11(1): 17-28.

42 Kiss, I., Szabó, M., Herczegné Kereszturi, J., Szemán, D. & Czigány, L. (2010). *A Pályatanácsadás Hatékonyságmérésének Lehetséges Indikátorai* (*Possible Indicators for Measuring the Efficiency of Career Guidance*). Budapest: ECOCOM73. Kft.

43 European Commission (2014). *Making It Happen: The European Semester.* Available from http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/index_en.htm [Accessed 2 February 2014].

44 For example see the ELGPN Continuous Improvement Cycle which is being used to structure the activities of the network itself. See ELGPN (2014). *Lifelong Guidance Policies: Progress Report 2013-14*, Section 2. Jyväskylä: ELGPN.

The Lifelong Guidance Policy Cycle, developed for this guide, builds on a range of established policy evaluation cycles summarised by Werner & Wegrich.[45] Such cycles typically set out a range of stages that characterise idealised policy development processes. Such cyclical conceptions of evaluation make it clear that evaluation is not only a retrospective judgement on a policy's success, but also can inform the design and implementation of new policies.[46] A variety of such cycles have been articulated within education[47] and broader public-sector programme evaluation[48]. The Lifelong Guidance Policy Cycle is proposed as a way of conceptualising this policy development process in relation to lifelong guidance, to be used alongside the detailed framework of indicators set out in the QAE Framework.

The Lifelong Guidance Policy Cycle is designed to support a logical process of service improvement based on the best evidence available. It moves beyond a conception of evidence as simply being about the

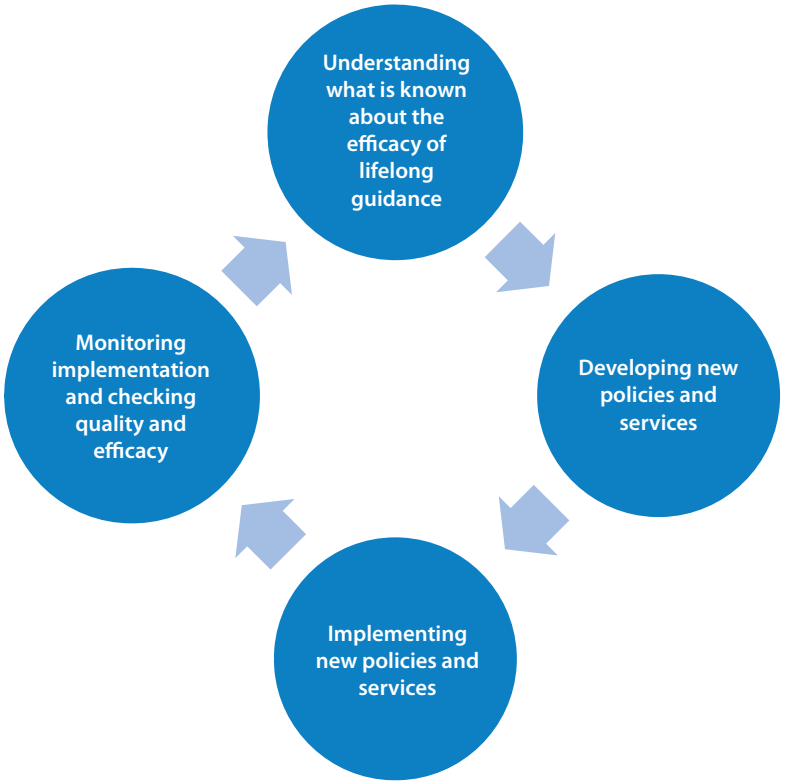

Figure 4: *The Lifelong Guidance Policy Cycle*

[45] Werner, J. & Wegrich, K. (2007). Theories of the policy cycle. In Fischer, F., Miller, G. & Sidney, M. (Eds), *Handbook of Public Policy Analysis: Theories, politics and methods*. London: CRC Press.

[46] Vedung, E. (1997). *Public Policy and Programme Evaluation*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers.

[47] Haddad, D. & Demsky, T. (1995). *Education Policy-Planning Process: An applied framework*. Paris: UNESCO.

[48] McDavid, J.C. & Hawthorn, L.R.L. (2005). *Programme Evaluation and Performance Measurement: An introduction to practice*. London: Sage.

evaluation of policy, and encourages policy-makers to use evidence in the development of policy as well as in making summative judgements about its success. Lunn argues that thinking more broadly about the role of evidence in policy-making offers advantages, noting that "evidence has the capacity to inform policy at every stage of the development of a policy, including the initial identification of the challenge that the policy is designed to meet".[49] The cyclical nature of the Lifelong Guidance Policy Cycle provides a framework for this kind of engagement with evidence and so can help to ensure that the evidence base continues to grow and to support continuous improvement.

It is important to recognise that guidance is often an embedded feature in broader policy development cycles. In such cases it is possible that other policy development frameworks, such as the EQAVET quality assurance tool[50] in the case of VET, may offer alternative frames for the development of guidance systems. However, there remains a challenge to ensure that where guidance is embedded in other systems it receives sufficient focus and attention as part of evaluations, and also that the lifelong policy frame is maintained. For example, evaluations of guidance within VET provision should not just examine how to make VET work more effectively, but should also identify impacts that might happen beyond the immediate frame of VET provision.

[49] Lunn, P.D. (2013). Researchers imply, policymakers infer: The relationship between evidence and policy. *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland*, XLII, 96-108.

[50] See the EQAVET website at http://www.eqavet.eu/index.html.

What is already known about the efficacy of lifelong guidance services?

There is a considerable evidence base in the area of lifelong guidance. A number of general studies exist which demonstrate that career guidance has impact. Evidence exists to demonstrate the positive impacts of career guidance on clients' reactions, learning, behaviour and results.

There is an extensive body of literature which has found that lifelong guidance delivers a range of impacts. Some of these impacts are demonstrated and quantified in a series of articles by Susan Whiston and her colleagues.[51]

Whiston *et al.*[52] undertook a meta-analysis which drew together 47 studies that utilised controls and involved a total of 4,660 participants. They identified that across all of the studies, which sought to identify a diverse range of impacts, participants who had received a guidance intervention were more likely than those who had not to display an identifiable impact. They found impacts across all types of career interventions, but individual career counselling was much the most effective for the client, whereas computer-based and classroom/group interventions were more cost-effective in terms of counsellor time.

There are many other literature reviews which describe the impacts of lifelong guidance on individuals' career building across a range of domains and life stages.[53] Such literature reviews build on studies which have repeatedly found that lifelong guidance can have positive impacts on individuals' life, learning and work.

[51] For example, see Whiston, S.C. & Blustein, D.L. (2013). *The Impact of Career Interventions: Preparing our citizens for the 21st century* (Policy Brief). Broken Arrow, OK: National Career Development Association and Society for Vocational Psychology. Also Whiston, S.C., Tai, W.L., Rahardja, D. & Eder, K. (2011). School counseling outcome: A meta-analytic examination of interventions. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 89(1): 37-55. And Whiston, S.C. & Rahardja, D. (2008). Vocational counseling process and outcome. In Brown, S.D. & Lent, R.W. (Eds), *Handbook of Counseling Psychology* (4th edn), 444-461. New York: Wiley. And Brown, S.D., Ryan Krane, N.E., Brecheisen, J., Castelino, P., Budisin, I., Miller, M. & Edens, L. (2003). Critical ingredients of career choice interventions: More analyses and new hypotheses. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 62(3): 411-428.

[52] Whiston, S.C., Sexton, T.L. & Lasoff, D.L. (1998). Career intervention outcome: A replication and extension of Oliver and Spokane (1988). *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 45(2): 150-165.

[53] An example is Hughes, D. & Gration, G. (2009). *Evidence and Impact: Careers and guidance-related interventions*. Reading: CfBT.

An example of evidence on the impact of career guidance is provided by Bimrose *et al.*[54] who undertook a five-year longitudinal tracking study of 50 career guidance clients. These clients initially encountered career guidance in a range of different settings including further education, higher education and public employment services. The study found that one-to-one guidance interventions were regarded as useful by clients, and that guidance services can support adults to make successful transitions in a turbulent labour market.

There is also research which has illustrated that the impacts of lifelong guidance can be brought about through a range of different approaches to delivery. Such research has highlighted the impacts of one-to-one counselling, paired counselling, group work, and telephone and online provision.

The NUOVE development project in Finland evaluated a pilot telephone guidance service for adults.[55] The evaluation found that lifelong guidance services were services suitable for phone-based provision. A range of positive impacts on clients were observed following their use of the service, including the clarification of their career objectives, accessing training and moving into employment. A similar study was conducted in the UK a few years earlier which also found positive impacts from telephone guidance.[56]

Online guidance has also been evaluated and found to be effective.

An evaluation of an internet-based system for self-directed career planning was undertaken in Croatia.[57] The system provided a rich career exploration environment offering information, advice and career assessment tools. The evaluation explored the experience of over 2,000 of the site's users. Users were satisfied with the guidance accessed through the system. The analysis supported the validity of online advice through an exploration of a variety of factors in the user data and the congruence between the advice provided by the system and that given by expert human counsellors.

Such research thus suggests that there is good empirical evidence to support the use of lifelong guidance to achieve a range of impacts.

3.1. Levels of impact

The idea of different levels of impact was introduced earlier in this guide (Section 1.3.1). There is evidence at each of the four levels: reaction; learning; behaviour; and results. Inevitably, however, it is more demanding to demonstrate level 4 impacts (that lifelong guidance has led to organisational, social or economic change) than level 1 impacts (that participants in guidance reported they had a good or useful experience). This section will provide examples of research that demonstrate the impact of lifelong guidance at each of these levels.

Ensuring a baseline of service quality. The QAE Framework offers a clear way to be sure of the baseline quality of service provision. It provides a framework through which the *inputs* (resources, time, human capital) and the *take-up* (breadth and depth of usage) of the services can be effectively monitored. The Framework also supports the gathering of evidence in relation to higher levels of impact. However, the careful mapping of the nature and usage of the service is essential in providing a framework for measuring the impact of services.

[54] Bimrose, J., Barnes, S-A. & Hughes, D. (2008). *Adult Career Progression and Advancement: A five-year study of the effectiveness of guidance.* Coventry/London: Warwick Institute for Employment Research/ Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills.

[55] Spangar, T., Arnkil, R., Keskinen, A., Vanhalakka-Ruoho, M., Heikkila, H. & Pitkanen, S. (2013). *Ohjauksen like Näkyviin – Tutka ja TE-toimistojen ohjauspalvelut* (*Making Movement in the Guidance Process Visible: The employment radar and guidance services of the Finnish PES*). Helsinki: Ministry of Employment and the Economy.

[56] Page, R., Newton, B., Hawthorn, R., Hunt, W. & Hillage, J. (2007). *An Evaluation of the Ufl/learndirectTelephone Guidance Trial.* London: Department for Education and Skills.

[57] Šverko, B., Akik, N., Babarović, T., Bčina, A. & Šverko, I. (2002). Validity of e-advice: The evaluation of an internet-based system for career planning. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 2(3): 193-215.

In Greece, a thorough process has been undertaken with respect to providing a strong framework for quality. The *National Framework for Quality Assurance of Lifelong Learning* has been used to provide a policy framework for this work alongside the ELGPN's QAE Framework. A mixed-methods approach has then been taken to evaluate services against this quality framework and to provide a benchmark for service improvement and future evaluation.[58]

Other countries including Austria[59], Finland and Ireland have also developed quality and evidence approaches: some of these have informed the development of the QAE Framework; others have built on this framework, adapting it for local needs.

Level 1 (Reaction) impacts describe how learners feel about the programmes in which they participate. Such evidence is commonly collected through feedback forms and customer satisfaction surveys. A wide range of studies demonstrate this kind of impact.

Voices of Users[60] provides a strong summary of the experience of career guidance clients across Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. The paper argues that identifying and understanding the experience of the service user should be a critical element of service design and evaluation. The study found that the majority of participants were satisfied with the service that they had received and felt that the counsellor with whom they had worked had been supportive and understanding.

Other examples of studies that have demonstrated positive client reactions to guidance interventions can be found in Croatia[61], England[62], Ireland[63] and a host of other countries. In general, such studies reveal that users value access to guidance services and report positively on their interactions with such services.

Level 2 (Learning) impacts seek to describe what has been learnt from the experience of participating in guidance. There are a number of studies that seek to measure such learning against a wide range of learning outcomes.

A literature review in the UK[64] identified 40 studies that examined the learning outcomes of guidance. It concluded that there was strong evidence that guidance led to a range of different outcomes, including increased self-awareness, opportunity awareness, decision-making skills and transition skills. It identified multiple studies in which each of these learning outcomes had been observed.

In the context of lifelong guidance interventions, the skills that are learnt are often described as career management skills.[65] These are the skills that individuals need to make career decisions, manage transitions, build their career and manage change and setbacks. An established literature details how lifelong guidance interventions can impact positively on career management skills.

Researchers in Finland conducted a randomised control trial to examine the impacts of a group intervention on career management, mental health, and job retention.[66] The intervention was based within employing organisations and sought to provide employees with better pre-

[58] Gaitanis, D. (2009). Preparatory study – survey for the observance of quality criteria in career guidance services of the education and initial VET sectors. 4th ELGPN Plenary Meeting, Luxembourg, 19-20 March. Jyväskylä : European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network.

[59] Härtel, P. (2005). *Study on Indicators and Benchmarks in Career Guidance.* Graz, Austria: Steirische Volkswirtschaftliche Gesellschaft.

[60] Vilhjálmsdóttir, G., Dofradóttir, A.G. & Kjartansdóttir, G.B. (2011). *Voice of Users – Promoting quality of guidance for adults in the Nordic countries.* Oriveden Kirjapaino, Finland: Nordic Network of Adult Learning.

[61] Ivanovic, M. & Grguric, S. (2011). Analiza učinkovitosti radionica kao oblika grupnog savjetovanja sa stajališta korisnika usluga odsjeka profesionalnog usmjeravanja i obrazovanja (Analysis of workshop efficiency as a form of group counselling from viewpoint of service users of division of vocational guidance and career counselling). In *80 Godina Cjeloživotnog Profesionalnog Usmjeravanja u Republici Hrvatskoj: Novi izazovi i pristupi* (*80 Years of Lifelong Career Guidance in the Republic of Croatia: New challenges and approaches*), 120-121. Hrvatski Zavod za Zapošljavanje (Croatian Employment Service).

[62] IFF Research Ltd (2012). *Next Step: Satisfaction and Progression Surveys*. London: BIS.

[63] Hayes, C. & Murray, M. (2007). *Perceptions of the General Public on Guidance and Guidance Services*. Dublin: National Guidance Forum.

[64] Killeen, J. & Kidd, J.M. (1991). *Learning Outcomes of Guidance: A review of recent research*. London: Department of Employment.

[65] See Gravina, D. & Lovšin, M. (2012) *Career Management Skills: Factors in implementing policy successfully.* Jyväskylä: European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network.

[66] Vuori, J., Toppinen-Tanner, S. & Mutanen, P. (2012). Effects of resource-building group intervention on career management and mental health in work organizations: Randomized controlled field trial. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 97(2): 273-286.

paredness to manage their own careers. A total of 718 eligible individuals were randomly assigned to either an intervention (N = 369) or a comparison group (N = 349). Those in the intervention group were invited to group intervention workshops, whereas those in the comparison group received printed information about career and health-related issues. The 7-month follow-up results demonstrated enhanced career management skills which led to significantly decreased depressive symptoms and intentions to retire early.

This example from Finland shows the links between different levels of impact, with the learning of career management skills being linked to a decrease in depressive symptoms that include individuals' behaviours.

Level 3 (Behaviour) impacts have also been found in a number of studies. To successfully identify changes in behaviour, it is important that studies return to clients after a period of time, and use sophisticated methods to ensure that actual behaviours as opposed to reported behaviours are being observed.

A Swiss study[67] examined the impact of career guidance over a year. The study used mixed methods to explore the long-term impacts of career guidance with 199 clients. It looked at participants' levels of decisiveness about their career, their satisfaction with their life, and their ability to act on their plans to impact positively on their career. Results indicated a continual decrease of career indecision in the long term, and stabilisation with regard to clients' satisfaction with life. Some of the benefits of guidance became more apparent over the longer term.

Such research suggests that career guidance interventions can lead people to become more decisive. But many behaviours, such as career decisiveness, are difficult to measure. Consequently, researchers often use established psychological tools to help them to understand and measure behaviours. This usually involves adopting questionnaires that have been developed by other researchers and found to reliably measure attitudes or behaviours.

A study in Portugal examined how guidance impacted on students' engagement with school and their ability to engage in career exploration.[68] The study examined students who had received guidance and those who had not by using the the Students' Engagement in School four-dimensional scale[69] and the Career Exploration Scale[70]. The study found that guidance was positively correlated both with engagement with school and with career exploration.

Level 4 (Results) have frequently been difficult to evidence in detail. However, there are studies which observe the systemic impacts of lifelong guidance on individuals' performance within learning and work organisations.

In a review of six studies examining the link between school counselling and educational attainment, Carey & Dimmit[71] found consistent evidence of a positive relationship between well-organised school counselling programmes and the educational outcomes of students.

A number of studies have explored the social and economic impacts of guidance[72]. For example, Hughes highlights potential impacts on GDP, public spending on education, social exclusion, social security benefit, policing, tax revenue, health care, incapac-

67 Perdrix, S., Stauffer, S., Masdonati, J., Massoudi, K. & Rossier, J. (2012). Effectiveness of career counseling: A one-year follow-up. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 80(2): 565-578.

68 Moura, H. (2014). Students' engagement in school and guidance activities. AIOSP conference, Montpelier, September.

69 Veiga, F.H. (2013). Envolvimento dos alunos na escola: Elaboração de uma nova escalade avaliação (Student engagement in school: Developing a new scale for assessment). *International Journal of Developmental and Educational Psychology*, 1(1): 441-450.

70 Taveira, M.C. (2000). *Exploração e Desenvolvimento Vocacional de Jovens – Estudo sobre as relações entre a exploração, a identidade e a indecisão vocacional* (*Career Exploration and Development in Adolescence – Relations between exploration, identity and career indecision*). Braga: University of Minho.

71 Carey, J. & Dimmitt, C. (2012). School counseling and student outcomes: summary of six statewide studies. *Professional School Counseling*, 16(2): 146-153.

72 For example, see Mayston, D. (2002). *Assessing the Benefits of Careers Guidance*. CeGS Occasional Paper. Derby: Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby.

ity benefits, stress, and supporting mobility.[73] By assuming a small impact from guidance on each of these areas, it is possible to conceptualise a substantial benefit to the economy. Thus, for example, if lifelong guidance makes people more likely to find appropriate work and less likely to make poor learning choices, its impacts will be found across the economy. A similar thought experiment was run by Taylor who modelled the impacts of a reduction in the availability of guidance to young people on the basis of a series of assumptions based on the observed impacts of lifelong guidance.[74]

A report in Northern Ireland examined the impact of the Educational Guidance Service for Adults on the Northern Ireland economy.[75] The study used a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods, including detailed analysis of the service's client data, to estimate the economic value of the service. This was estimated to be £9.02 net additional tax revenue for every £1 of public money invested. The study also identified the service's impacts in reducing unemployment and supporting progression within work. Such economic modelling of the overall impacts of guidance is useful, in part because it highlights the multifaceted range of impacts associated with guidance.

A study of the municipal educational guidance service of Dresden has been seeking to systematically map the cost-benefits (including capturing the economic outcomes in monetary terms) of its interventions. The research has included detailed observations of the service, with data-matching. The project is particularly valuable because it is based on cross-sectoral co-operation and so provides opportunities to capture lifelong impacts rather than merely sectoral ones. Managerial data from the municipal guidance service has been matched with data on the individual users' later occupational pathways taken from the official labour-market statistics. The study found that guidance had a clear positive effect on unemployed individuals' participation rate in continuing vocational education. It also suggested some (not statistically significant) economic impacts, and recommended that the study be repeated in future to aid more accurate quantification of these impacts.[76]

3.2. Interpreting the evidence

Key to understanding and making use of the evidence base in lifelong guidance is recognising how findings from the research evidence can be generalised.

Many studies on career guidance explore specific questions relating to the wide range of contexts in which lifelong guidance can be found.

Literature reviews and meta-analyses are particularly important in drawing out the conclusions from the research base.

The context within which guidance is undertaken has the potential to reshape the way in which it works and what we know about what is effective. What works in supporting young people to understand the world of work may not work in the same way for adults seeking labour market re-entry after being made redundant. What works in each case is likely to depend on the policy environment, the immediate context and the individual psychology of the individual. Of course, this does not mean that no generalisation is possible: in practice we will need to assume that some of what works in one context can be transferred. However, such considerations of the evidence base need to be handled carefully, so that we do not conclude that because a form of guidance worked once, it will always work. This can be illustrated by the following case-study.

[73] Hughes, D. (2004). *Investing in Career: Prosperity for citizens, windfalls for government*. Winchester: The Guidance Council.

[74] Taylor, L. (2013). *Cost to the Economy of Government Policy on Career Guidance: A business case for funding and strengthening career guidance in schools.* Careers England. Available from http://www.careersengland.org.uk/documents/public/Disc%20Paper%20Cost%20to%20the%20Economy%20250313.pdf [Accessed 1 February 2014].

[75] Regional Forecasts (2008). *Examining the Impact and Value of EGSA to the NI Economy*. Belfast: Regional Forecasts.

[76] Weyh, A. & Schanne, N. (2014). *Wirksamkeitsbetrachtung der Bildungsberatung der "Dresdner Bildungsbahnen": Eine quantitative studie im auftrag der Landeshauptstadt Dresden* (*An Analysis of the Effectiveness of the Educational Guidance of "Dresden Educational Paths": A quantitative study commissioned by the City of Dresden*). IAB Sachsen, IAB Hessen.

In *Career Guidance in Communities*[77], Thomsen used a qualitative research approach to examine how guidance could support a group of factory workers in Denmark who were being made redundant. The study found that in order to be effective, the guidance worker needed to leave her or his guidance corner and actively engage the workers in the spaces where they spent their time (such as the lunch space). Thomsen explained that by doing this, the guidance worker was able to engage the workers and to help them to work together to understand their situation and take practical action to address it.

From Thomsen's work, therefore, we might be able to make the following assumptions:

- It is possible to provide effective guidance in the workplace.
- Guidance can help workers who are being made redundant.
- Career guidance in the workplace may require a more active approach to engaging clients.
- There is value in providing guidance in a social context.

If a policy-maker or employer was considering introducing lifelong guidance into workplaces, they would be well-advised to be mindful of Thomsen's findings. In practice, however, it may be that in different kinds of workplace or in countries other than Denmark, things work out differently because, for example, workers are more used to accessing guidance in the workplace or because redundancy periods are shorter and require more intense interventions. Nonetheless, in the absence of other more specific information, such findings constitute useful evidence. If the approach set out in the Lifelong Guidance Policy Cycle is followed, such evidence can provide an informed place for the development of a policy or service which can then be subsequently checked. Even greater caution might be exerted about generalising Thomsen's findings to other contexts such as career guidance in schools or in higher education.

Research on lifelong guidance is therefore typically specific and this raises challenges in generalising findings. Fortunately there is another important type of study, known as a literature review, which seeks to overcome this. A literature review is a study of studies that seeks to identify patterns in what other researchers have found.

Hughes *et al.*[78] reviewed 27 research studies that examined lifelong guidance in the workplace. The review found that interventions fell into four categories, which it described as: (i) formal training/development, within and outside the workplace; (ii) informal training/development, within and outside the workplace; (iii) human-resource-led initiatives; and (iv) involvement of intermediaries. The review highlighted that access to lifelong guidance and the success of any interventions were highly dependent on the workplace context. It found considerable qualitative evidence for both employer and employee benefits, but concluded that further quantitative research was needed.

As can be seen in this example, literature reviews do more than just group together studies that have been done before. They also organise the findings conceptually and make an overall assessment of the strength of the evidence base. Literature reviews are therefore an important part of understanding the evidence base in lifelong guidance and are referred to extensively in this guide.

There is also a particular type of cross-study analysis known as a statistical meta-analysis which uses statistical methods to combine existing quantitative studies that have been carried out on a similar basis. Such studies have been important in establishing a robust evidence base in medicine and health-care through organisations like the Cochrane Collaboration.[79] The meta-analysis approach has been used on a number of occasions to investigate lifelong guidance.

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[77] Thomsen, R. (2012). *Career Guidance in Communities*. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press.

[78] Hughes, D., Bimrose, J., Barnes, S.A., Bowes, L. & Orton, M. (2005). *A Systematic Literature Review of Research into Career Development Interventions for Workforce Development*. Derby: University of Derby.

[79] Further information about the Cochrane Collaboration is available on the organisation's website at http://www.cochrane.org/. This includes some useful training materials explaining meta-analyses in more detail.

Baker and Taylor[80] used a statistical meta-analysis approach to explore the impact of career education interventions in schools on student outcomes. They combined the results of 12 studies conducted between 1983 to 1996, and were careful to only include studies that used control groups for comparison, that were published in refereed journals, and had participants from grades K–12. Their meta-analysis demonstrated that such interventions have a statistically verifiable impact on academic achievement.

The next two sections address guidance in learning and guidance for work. They will discuss the evidence base in the key contexts in which lifelong guidance exists. Each section will summarise what is known and then illustrate this with a brief case-study.

[80] Baker, S.B. & Taylor, J.G. (1998). Effects of career education interventions: A meta-analysis. *Career Development Quarterly*, 46(4): 376-385.

What is the evidence on guidance in lifelong learning?

Education remains a critical policy area, with considerable debate about its form and functions within society. The European Commission's Communication on Rethinking Education suggests that there is need for a more effective alignment between education and the labour market:

> *European education and training systems continue to fall short in providing the right skills for employability, and are not working adequately with business or employers to bring the learning experience closer to the reality of the working environment. These skills mismatches are a growing concern for European industry's competitiveness.*[81]

The Communication identifies lifelong guidance as an important tool in the realisation of this agenda. For example, it highlights trends to provide education through more "flexible and individualised pathways". Guidance can support individuals to make good decisions about their learning and progression pathways, and can enhance their career management skills to provide them with a greater capacity to manage the complexity that results from this enhanced flexibility.

Lifelong guidance has a long history of supporting the alignment of learning and work. Much lifelong guidance is located in learning organisations like schools, colleges, vocational education providers and universities. Learning organisations provide opportunities for lifelong guidance (a developmental ethos; the opportunity to provide the service alongside other kinds of learning and personal development) as well as challenges (the common disconnection of learning programmes from the labour market; the focus on subject-based curricula). This section will explore the evidence base for guidance in learning and explore how it can be effectively utilised.

[81] European Commission (2012). *Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes*. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Available from http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/news/communication-rethinking-education [Accessed 1 February 2014].

4.1. Schools

Guidance in schools is well-researched. Researchers have identified a range of impacts associated with school-based careers work. Guidance in schools can:

- ***increase students' engagement and success in school;***
- ***support their transitions from school;***
- ***help them to establish successful lives and careers.***

The evidence also suggests that such programmes are best implemented in ways that connect career learning to the curriculum, and within schools where they are supported by the school leadership and built into the wider school ethos.

Guidance has a long history in many European school systems. Such guidance is often addressed to wider concerns than career and may also include more broadly based pastoral work. This guide will focus on the strand of guidance that is focused around career and learning choices, including the career implications of learning decisions, and which helps people to move on from school and make successful transitions to further learning or work.

Guidance in schools can take many forms, but typically includes a mix of:

- career education (work in class groups around a career-related curriculum);
- one-to-one guidance and/or group-work provided by a specialist;
- provision of information;
- extra-curricular career support.

In some schools it may also include work experience and other direct connections with the labour market, often through parents, employers or alumni.

Guidance in schools has been researched extensively, demonstrating that well-run careers programmes can have impacts on learners' effectiveness within the school system, as well as their ability to make effective transitions to work or further learning and to build successful careers.

In *Fostering College and Career Readiness*[82], Hooley, Marriott & Sampson looked at over 100 studies on careers work in schools. They concluded that across this literature, four main types of impacts were associated with careers work. Where a school's programme was well-run, studies indicated that it would be possible to identify impacts on the school's retention rate, on the academic attainment of the students, on the ability of students to make successful transitions from school, and on their longer-term life and career success.

Researchers have identified statistically significant impacts from career education and guidance programmes and have explored a range of different kinds of impact including impacts on school attainment.[83]

A career workshop was developed in Switzerland to promote the career choice readiness of young adolescents. In an evaluation of the workshop with 334 Swiss students in the 7th grade, Hirschi & Läge found that three months after the workshop, participants reported significant impacts. In particular, they significantly increased their performance in terms of career decidedness, career planning, career exploration, and vocational identity.[84]

Studies have also highlighted the importance of including active experiences of workplaces in school-based guidance programmes.

A study in Portugal explored the provision of workplace-based experiences (internship/placement) within school-based vocational education.[85] The study found that where such experiences were high-quality and included auton-

[82] Hooley, T., Marriott, J. & Sampson, J.P. (2011). *Fostering College and Career Readiness: How career development activities in schools impact on graduation rates and students' life success.* Derby: International Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby.

[83] Babarović, T. & Sverko, I. (2011). Vocational maturity of primary school students in Croatia. *Contemporary Psychology*, 14(1): 91-109.

[84] Hirschi, A. & Läge, D. (2008). Increasing the career choice readiness of young adolescents: an evaluation study. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 8(2): 95-110.

[85] Gamboa, V., Paixao, M.P. & Neves de Jesus, S. (2013). Internship quality predicts career exploration of high school students. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 83(1): 78-87.

omy for the learners, good feedback and social support and opportunities for learning, there were strong benefits for students. The study used a longitudinal design and a sample of Portuguese high-school students (N = 346, twelfth grade). Overall, the results suggest that the quality of work experience is relevant for the vocational development of students.

A range of different research approaches have been used to demonstrate these impacts, including both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Quantitative approaches have often tried to trace the relationship between the implementation of a guidance programme and other observable data such as graduation rate, level of enrolment in post-secondary learning opportunities and post-school employment rate.

Lapan *et al.*[86] looked at implementation of a comprehensive school-based career education and guidance programme in the state of Missouri, USA. They examined data from 22,964 students attending 236 Missouri high schools. They found that schools with more fully implemented guidance programmes had students who were more likely to report that: (a) they had earned higher grades, (b) their education was better preparing them for their future, (c) their school made more career and college information available to them, and (d) their school had a more positive climate. These positive effects were found after removing differences due to school enrolment size, socio-economic status, and percentage of minority students in attendance.

The question of what kinds of career guidance programmes are effective in schools has also been addressed in the research literature. Hooley *et al.*[87] mapped all the different kinds of career interventions made in schools. They concluded that it was not any one of these interventions (e.g. work experience or one-to-one guidance) that was critical to the effectiveness of guidance in the school: rather it was how these interventions were connected together into a meaningful whole.

> *Schools may adopt a curriculum-led approach, in which career is seen as an important focal point for learning, with a body of knowledge, skills and pedagogic approaches connected with it. In a learning approach, the various careers work components are integrated into the mainstream curriculum to provide a coherent, meaningful and developmental education. There is evidence both from the UK and internationally demonstrating that this approach is the most effective mode of delivery for careers work in schools. However, given the centrality of the curriculum, these approaches require substantial buy-in from school leaders, with support from partners and in-school champions.*

Research indicates that progressive and programmatic career interventions are more effective that isolated single interventions. This conclusion has been demonstrated by a Portuguese study involving a controlled trial in which one group of school students received a single career information session and a second group received a six-week programme of career learning sessions.[88] A Danish literature study went further in identifying the features that contribute to effective school-based guidance.

A systematic study by the Danish Clearinghouse for Educational Research[89] examined the effectiveness of career education and guidance interventions in schools. It concluded that there is evidence that such interventions support individuals to clarify their career ideas and make effective decisions. It noted a number of features of effective provision, including the use of a range of interventions that are organised into a coherent whole and are well-connected to curriculum, the development of a strong personal connection between the career counsellor or career educator and the students, and the importance of well-trained and knowledgeable career professionals.

The importance of integrating career guidance in schools has been explored through a range of quan-

[86] Lapan, R.T., Gysbers, N.C. & Sun, Y. (1997). The impact of more fully implemented guidance programs on the school experiences of high school students: A statewide evaluation study. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 75(4): 292-302.

[87] Hooley, T., Marriott, J., Watts, A.G. & Coiffait, L. (2012). *Careers 2020: Options for future careers work in English schools.* London: Pearson.

[88] Nunes Janeiro, I., Mota, L.P. & Ribas, A.M. (2014). Effects of two types of career interventions on students with different career coping styles. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 85(1): 115-124.

[89] Christensen, G. & Søgaard Larsen, M. (2011). *Evidence on Guidance and Counseling*. Aarhus: Danish Clearinghouse for Educational Research.

titative and qualitative studies that have helped to illuminate how this can work in practice.

Research by Morris *et al.*[90] looked at the practice of career education and guidance in 30 schools across England. They found that career education and guidance could make a positive contribution to the effectiveness of a school, by providing a vehicle to refocus the curriculum, by supporting students' self-esteem and motivation, by reducing drop-out rates, and as a means of increasing the relevance of the curriculum to young people's lives. They also found that such benefits were strongest where there was strong buy-in across the schools' teachers and leadership.

The evidence base for careers work in schools is probably one of the best-developed elements of the overall lifelong guidance evidence base. Thus we have a good idea of what kinds of benefits are associated with such programmes (enhanced retention, achievement, transition and success) and how best to achieve them (strong connections to curriculum; integration into the school's wider ethos).

4.2. Vocational education

Lifelong guidance has an important role to play both in supporting individuals to consider vocational options and in helping those in vocational education to make the most of the skills and knowledge that they have learnt as they make their transitions to the labour market.

The existing evidence suggests that career guidance in vocational education is likely to be most effective where it is holistic and integrated into programmes.

Cedefop argues that "attractive, open, modern and inclusive vocational education and training (VET) is a pillar of knowledge economies".[91] Such claims highlight the importance of VET to the wider economy and stress the need to align education with the labour market. The Cedefop paper goes on to argue that lifelong guidance has a critical role in supporting this alignment and ensuring the development of an effective VET system.

The evidence base relating to guidance in vocational education is less developed than that in relation to schools. It also differs from career guidance within schools in an important way, as people may seek career guidance to help them to decide whether to enter vocational education as well as whilst they are within vocational education. Furthermore, the occupational focus of vocational education means that the nature of career conversations can be reframed from "what career should I pursue?" to "how can I most effectively pursue the career that I have chosen?" However, it is also important to recognise that not everyone pursues their vocational pathway into the directly related part of the labour market.

Much vocational education includes elements of career guidance in its core learning approach, notably work experience and support for the initial transition to the labour market. However, unless there is explicit opportunity to opportunity to engage in a career dialogue (guidance), the potential for career learning in vocational education is minimised.[92] Furthermore, in practice not all vocational programmes straightforwardly determine a career, nor do all vocational learners find that they want, or are able, to pursue their initial vocational ideas beyond the course.

Watts[93] concludes from the available evidence that the career guidance given prior to entry in VET is often inadequate. While this situation varies across different national contexts, there is a widespread tendency for schools (often in concert with parents and wider cultural values) to favour the academic route

[90] Morris, M., Rudd, P., Nelson, J. & Davies, D. (2000). *The Contribution of Careers Education and Guidance to School Effectiveness in "Partnership" Schools.* London: Department for Education and Employment.

[91] Cedefop (2012). *Trends in VET Policy in Europe 2010-12: Progress towards the Bruges Communiqué.* Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

[92] Kuijpers, M. & Meijers, F. (2012). Learning for now or later? Career competencies among students in higher vocational education in the Netherlands. *Studies in Higher Education*, 37(4): 449-467.

[93] Watts, A.G. (2009). *The Relationship of Career Guidance to VET*. Paris: OECD.

over the vocational one for many of their students. This may be combatted by providing students with access to external career guidance from outside the school. Such guidance should include the following information:

- The available VET options.
- The qualifications to which VET options lead and progression routes from these qualifications.
- The occupations to which these qualifications provide access and the likelihood of gaining work following obtaining the qualification.
- The salary/wages offered by these occupations.
- The projected demand for these occupations.

In this sense career guidance has an important role in ensuring that individuals and training routes are well connected to the labour market. Such provision can help to prevent vocational programmes failing to meet labour market needs.

Within vocational education, career guidance has another key role to play in supporting individuals to identify how they can best make use of the skills and knowledge they have received through vocational education in order to build fulfilling careers. In public-policy terms, this positions career guidance as part of a strategy to ensure a return on investment for public investment in vocational education. Despite these strong rationales for the involvement of career guidance in vocational education, practice is variable across Europe. However, research has demonstrated that career guidance can be a useful and effective part of vocational education programmes.

A quantitative study in the Netherlands investigated the impact of guidance and career learning within vocational education on the development of career management skills and career outcomes.[94] The study included 3,499 students and 166 teachers. It found that guidance, where it was based on dialogue, contributed to motivation, decision-making and career outcomes. It also demonstrated a positive relationship between career management skills and career outcomes.

A recent discussion of effective career guidance practice in vocational education published in Australia[95] summarises the features of effective practice as follows:

- Building the development of career management skills into all vocational education courses.
- Providing career information through online technologies.
- Providing a broad universal provision of guidance services, but with comprehensive career development services targeted at the most vulnerable learners.
- Developing comprehensive learner support services, with career development as a central focus.
- Building better approaches to sharing resources and expertise, especially through more effective networks and partnerships.
- Providing appropriate initial and ongoing training and professional development for career development professionals and others, especially those who are key influencers on career decisions.
- Providing pre-entry guidance.
- Involving employers in the delivery of both guidance and vocational education.
- Evaluating the quality and impact of guidance services.

Such research tends to suggest that there is much transferability to VET from what has been more systematically learnt in the case of career guidance

[94] Meijers, F., Kuijpers, M. & Gundy, C. (2013). The relationship between career competencies, career identity, motivation and quality of choice. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 13(1): 47-66.

[95] Guthrie, H. & Nechvoglod, L. (2011). *Identification of Issues that Impact upon the Provision of Effective Career Development Services for VET Learners*. Adelaide: National Centre for Vocational Education Research.

within schools. However, there is clearly a need to develop the evidence base more systematically in relation to career guidance prior to, within and on exit from VET.

4.3. Higher education

Career guidance is well-established within higher education in some countries. Provision is usually delivered through institutional careers services which provide students with a range of services.

There is good evidence to suggest that employer involvement and work-related learning opportunities support positive employment outcomes for students. Beyond this the research base is in need of development, but suggests that there are benefits in offering a diverse range of services that link both to the academic curriculum and to the needs of graduate employers.

Career guidance has a strong tradition in higher education within some countries, though less so in others. Higher education careers provision is often delivered by a careers service inside the institution, subsumed within the institution's general running costs, although there are other ways to resource such services, through public employment services or students' unions, for example. A summary of guidance across Europe is given by Katzensteiner *et al.*, including country reports and some analytical summaries of provision.[96]

Cullen[97] used a mixed-methods approach to review guidance across a range of European countries and made a series of proposals for best practice. The review was particularly interested in exploring how guidance could support non-traditional students to engage in higher education and make successful transitions to the labour market. The review found a high demand for guidance services.

OECD[98] also highlights the range of different approaches that are taken with respect to higher education career guidance across OECD countries (which it describes as counselling services, integrated student services, placement services and specialised careers services).

The tradition of higher education careers work in some countries (notably the UK and the USA) has been closely bound up with the needs and interests of large graduate recruiters, who have utilised higher education careers services as a key channel through which to access potential applicants for graduate schemes. Many higher education careers services retain strong links to such employers, although increasingly their activities have been extended to cover a broader range of destinations as well as supporting the acquisition of career management and employability skills.

The ELGPN Resource Kit discusses the issue of career management skills development in higher education, highlighting examples in France, Lithuania and Portugal. This issue is also addressed by Bridgstock who argues that career management skills must be seen as an essential graduate employability skill.[99] Rott draws together a series of case-studies which demonstrate how European higher education guidance services have been using the concept of career management to develop provision that is addressed to identified student needs and that aligns well with the learning cultures within higher education institutions.[100]

It is also worth noting that there is an important tradition of pre-entry guidance to higher education, which often links closely with that delivered through the school system. Such guidance, however, usually

[96] Katzensteiner, M., Ferrer-Sama, P. & Rott, G. (2007). *Guidance and Counselling in Higher Education in European Union Member States.* Aarhus, Denmark: Counselling and Support Centre, University of Aarhus.

[97] Cullen, J. (2013). *Guidance for Inclusion: Practices and needs in European universities*. The STAY IN Consortium.

[98] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2004). *Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the gap,* 52-54. Paris: OECD.

[99] Bridgstock, R. (2009). The graduate attributes we've overlooked: Enhancing graduate employability through career management skills. *Higher Education Research and Development,* 28(1): 31-44.

[100] Rott, G. (2013). Development of career management competence and the contribution of student services. In Rott, G. & Aastrup, W. (Eds), *Corner Stones of Higher Education in the 21st Century: Meeting challenges by the European higher education area.* Berlin: RAABE.

pays little or no attention to career guidance, including the career implications of course choices.[101]

Evidence on the impacts of higher education career services is still emergent. A recent study in Latvia highlights the need for the further development of guidance services in higher education.[102] It argues that the development of robust monitoring and evaluation is essential for the further development of the sector and proposes a series of performance indicators to support this.

Other research suggests that work experience, work-based learning and employer involvement in higher education impact on graduate employability.[103] Guidance can have a strong relationship with work experience, preparing students for placements, and supporting them to reflect on what they have learnt and to operationalise their career learning; though this is not always the case.

Further research explores the direct impact of guidance on higher education students.

A study in the USA found that both career counselling and career courses could have positive impacts on higher education students.[104] The study of 269 students participating in guidance activities identified impacts on career thinking and effective decision-making. The overwhelming majority of participants were also able to identify at least one change that they had made over the semester in reference to their career, including declaring a major, applying to a job or internship, or deciding on a career.

Research on higher education has tended to emphasise the following features of effective career guidance:

- Pre-entry provision, including a range of different services that are provided to individuals before they enrol at the institution.
- Provision of information and resources, including careers libraries and websites, vacancy information and broader kinds of labour market information.
- Career assessments and tests, including psychometrics, personality tests, interest inventories and other kinds of career assessment.
- One-to-one advice, coaching and counselling services, dash approaches delivered through a range of media dash face-to-face, phone and online.
- One-to-many/group interventions, including workshops, webinars and group counselling interventions.
- Curriculum-based interventions, including both stand-alone careers/employability modules and interventions which align with the existing subject-based curriculum.
- Provision of employer engagement opportunities, including careers fairs, employer talks and workshops.
- Provision of work-related and work-based learning, including placements and voluntary work.
- Provision of a framework for reflection, including e-portfolios, personal development planning (PDP) processes and other interventions designed to support reflection.
- Awards and other mechanisms to recognise and accredit experiences related to the development of career management skills.
- Graduate and alumni services, including a range of services provided to individuals following their graduation from the institution.

However, research in relation to guidance in higher education currently includes more description of what is needed and provided than empirically based assessments of what works and how it works. Higher education therefore represents another area where

[101] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2004). *Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the gap,* 52-54. Paris: OECD.

[102] Jaunzeme, I. (2011). *Improvement of Career Management and Guidance System in Higher Education: Case of Latvia*. PhD thesis, University of Latvia.

[103] Mason, G., Williams, G. & Cranmer, S. (2009). Employability skills initiatives in higher education: What effects do they have on graduate labour market outcomes? *Education Economics,* 17(1): 1-30.

[104] McClair, V. (2010). *Career Counseling and Career Courses: Process, impact and outcomes.* PhD thesis, University of Illinois.

policy-makers and leaders within the higher education sector need to encourage further research.

4.4. Adult education

Lifelong guidance has a central place in adult learning. It can support adult learners to consider their return to learning, enhance their career management skills and employability, and aid in the utilisation of their learning.

The evidence in this area is emergent, in part because guidance interventions in this area are often strongly embedded in other provision. However, there is research that demonstrates the benefits of guidance for confidence and progression.

Lifelong guidance can play an important role in supporting adults to return to learning and to realise the potential of the learning in which they engage. The European Council Resolution of 2008[105] locates lifelong guidance within the framework of lifelong learning. More recently, the Council of the European Union has developed a Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning as a response to the economic crisis.[106] This Resolution also locates lifelong guidance as a key component of adult learning, and articulates the aims of adult learning in ways that align well with the objectives of lifelong guidance. Adult learning provides a means of upskilling or reskilling those affected by unemployment, restructuring and career transitions, as well as making an important contribution to social inclusion, active citizenship and personal development. The focus on adult learning is also picked up in the EU 2020 targets and in Education & Training 2020.

Adult education is a highly diverse sector which ranges from basic literacy provision through to advanced professional development and liberal arts programmes. The place of guidance within this system is likely to vary across different programmes.

Guidance within adult education typically takes three forms:

- Pre-entry guidance which supports adults to consider whether to participate in adult learning and what programmes might be right for them.
- Guidance as an integral part of adult education programmes. Some adult education programmes are strongly focused on career planning or on the development of employability and career management skills: in these cases lifelong guidance is often built into the core of the programme.
- Exit guidance which supports graduates of adult education programmes to consider how they can use what they have learnt to support their progress in further learning and work.

There are a range of ways to organise guidance services within and around adult education, as outlined in the ELGPN Resource Kit. The Adult Educational Guidance Service in Ireland offers a strong model which has been evaluated and found to be effective.[107] The service is quality-assured to ensure its impartiality.

There has been limited research on the impact of lifelong guidance in adult education. In part this is because it is often so difficult to separate out the guidance and the educational parts of the experience. Much of the existing research has highlighted the distinctive challenges associated with talking to adults about their career, in relation to working with young people. Research has also identified a number of clear benefits from such guidance, related to confidence and progression in learning and work.

[105] Council of the European Union (2008). Council Resolution on better integrating lifelong guidance into lifelong learning strategies. 2905th Education, Youth and Culture Council meeting, Brussels, 21 November.

[106] Council of the European Union (2011). Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning (2011/C 372/01).

[107] Phillips, S. & Eustace, A. (2010). *Overarching Research on the Adult Educational Guidance Initiative 2000-2006*. Dublin: National Centre for Guidance in Education.

In a mixed-methods study of and adult guidance service in Ireland, Hearne found that the overwhelming majority of clients reported benefits from engaging with the service.[108] Clients described the benefits that they had experienced as being in the areas of: personal development, access to professional expertise, information provision, signposting of options and appropriate referral. An overwhelming majority had experienced changes in their situation (usually in terms of accessing education or career development) following guidance, with most attributing these changes to the help received from the guidance service.

[108] Hearne, L. (2005). *"Opening a Door": Evaluating the benefits of guidance for the adult client.* Available from http://repository.wit.ie/515/1/ncge_article.pdf [Accessed 27 January 2014].

What is the evidence on guidance for work?

While lifelong guidance activities are often embedded in the education system, there is also a strong tradition of activity and associated research that seeks to support individuals to find and keep work. This section will discuss this activity in relation to youth transitions (where there has been a considerable policy focus), unemployed adults, individuals returning to the labour market after a break in employment, provision in the workplace, and interventions designed to support the tapering of work and the transition to retirement.

The European Commission has published an Agenda for New Skills and Jobs[109] which highlights many of the key challenges for employment in Europe. It stresses the importance of a flexible labour market within which employment transitions are supported, the skills of the workforce are developed and job quality and employee engagement are increased. The role of guidance in achieving this is explicitly spelled out as follows:

> *A clear policy recommendation emerges. Promoting upwards careers, for instance by supporting continuous vocational education and training for all categories of workers, should become an essential ingredient of modern active labour market policy. Employment services also have to care not only for a quick placement but also for sustainable placements with high productivity potential and the prospect of more stable careers. The potential for increasing productivity in employment services, especially in career guidance, through information and communication technologies (e.g. e-profiling based on competencies) is still underexploited.* (p.26)

This section will show that there is considerably evidence to support the use of guidance as part of this Agenda. It will also provide insights into how such policies can best be operationalised.

5.1. From unemployment to work

Career guidance is frequently used as a way to engage unemployed adults in the labour market. As such, it forms a key part of active labour market policies.

[109] Directorate-General for Research and Innovation (2012). *New Skills and Jobs in Europe: Pathways towards full employment*. Brussels: European Commission.

The evidence suggests that within the bounds of the broader performance of the labour market, career guidance can be effective in re-engaging the unemployed in work.

Guidance acts on the individual to increase their motivation and make them more work-ready.

There is also evidence which provides insights into effective implementation, suggesting that practitioner competence, employer engagement and holistic and networked service provision are important to service effectiveness.

In addition, there is a literature which suggests that career guidance is important in helping individuals to manage career breaks and periods of caring responsibility.

Career guidance can play a number of roles for adults who are not in work. It can help them to build confidence, to examine their skills, to gain an assessment of the labour market and to understand processes of transitions. It can also help adults to identify and weigh up the value of further postponing labour market re-entry in favour of further education and training.

In policy terms, when addressed to unemployment, career guidance is frequently subsumed within broader active labour market policies (including training and wage subsidies). In particular, there is an extensive body of research and thinking about how lifelong guidance services should relate to public employment services (PES).[110]

Active labour market policy describes governments' aspirations to manage unemployment by "activating" individuals to re-engage with the labour market. Active labour market approaches have been criticised for failing to acknowledge the existence of the structural and systemic factors that contribute to unemployment, and for locating the responsibility solely with the individual. The evidence which addresses the contribution of career guidance in this area frequently wrestles with these questions: about how much it is possible to expect such an intervention to achieve in a challenging labour market or in relation to sub-optimally organised education and training systems.

There is clear evidence that it can have impact on unemployed people. One area that the evidence highlights is the role that career guidance can play in enhancing unemployed individuals' direction, purpose and confidence.

Research in Canada has found that a careful combination of career practitioner assessment and self-help career development resources leads to an identifiable impact for users of public employment services. Following a needs assessment, individuals were given a four-week programme of guidance based on self-help resources. Participants improved in skills, knowledge and attributes at statistically and clinically significant levels. They were also more likely to find employment that fitted with their career aspirations. The overwhelming majority of participants indicated that the improvements were due to their participation in the programme.[111]

An evaluation of a career guidance intervention in Wales[112] for unemployed clients found that it had a number of identifiable benefits. The majority of participants had increased knowledge and confidence in job searching and had applied for a job. Around half had received an interview, and some had successfully transitioned back to the workforce. Participants were generally positive about the experience of engaging with career guidance, and felt that it had helped them to improve their career direction.

Other research in Australia also finds that unemployed people find career guidance useful. This research indicates that career guidance supports unemployed people to improve their confidence, find a career direction and generate possibilities for job searching.[113]

[110] See, for example, Duell, N. & Volger-Ludwig, K. (2011). *The Role of Public Employment Services in Youth Integration: A review of good practice*. Available from http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=10316&langId=en [Accessed 27 January 2014]. Also Sultana, R.G. & Watts, A.G. (2006). Career guidance in Public Employment Services across Europe. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 6(1): 29-46.

[111] Redekopp, D., Hopkins, S. & Hiebert, B. (2013). *Assessing the Impact of Career Development Resources and Practitioner Support across the Employability Dimensions*. Ottawa: Canadian Career Development Foundation.

[112] Powell, P. (2011). *Evaluation of the Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) Project*. Birmingham: BMG Research.

[113] Donohue, R. & Patton, W. (1998). The effectiveness of a career guidance program with long-term unemployed individuals. *Journal of Employment Counseling*, 35(4): 179-194.

Research by Hawthorn & Alloway[114] suggests a number of key success factors that guidance services should attend to when working with unemployed and disadvantaged adults:

- Services should understand, assess and attend to clients' needs. This means taking a holistic approach to people's problems rather than simply focusing on finding a job, and requires strong inter-personal skills from advisers.
- Services need to devote resources to reaching and engaging their target groups.
- Clients need to make clear progress throughout their interaction with a guidance service.
- Staff need to be well-trained and able to empathise with their clients.
- Encouraging clients to take up volunteering opportunities and work experience can be an effective strategy to help them to re-engage.
- Close relationships with employers are essential for achieving good client outcomes.
- Links need to be made with other relevant support agencies to support appropriate referral.
- Services need to be well-managed, engage with quality enhancement through a quality-assurance process, and committed to evaluating their impact.

5.1.1. Other kinds of return to work

Not all people without work fall into traditional conceptions of unemployment. Individuals can experience breaks in their career for a variety of reasons and purposes, including injury or disability, periods of caring responsibilities and as the beginning of a career change or shift. How individuals who are going through a process of withdrawal and re-entry to the labour market manage this process is a key concern for individuals, employers and public policy. If such career breaks are managed poorly, there is a danger that human capital is lost. Guidance can play an important role in avoiding this loss.

While for some the idea of the career break is an active choice, for others it is compelled through personal circumstances. Where the individual has low levels of educational, financial and cultural capital, such enforced disconnection from the labour market can be highly challenging. In this case, as with individuals who are outside the labour market for extended periods of time, guidance can play an important role in ensuring that a disconnection from the labour market does not become permanent.

Much of the literature in this area is focused on vocational rehabilitation following an injury or period of illness (both mental and physical). In such cases guidance is often delivered as part of a package of support, often including support delivered by health-care professionals. The guidance component of such interventions is usually concerned with helping individuals to think through their changed circumstances, identify how this might shift their relationship with work, and consider how any barriers to working can be overcome. There is an extensive research base for guidance in this context, with much of it specific to particular types of injury, illness or disability.

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program in Utah provides services to individuals with disabilities to assist them in preparing for and obtaining employment. Assistance is provided through numerous services including assessment, counselling and guidance, restoration, training, job development, and job placement. An evaluation of the programme found that it had a positive impact on employment outcomes and the earnings of the clients served. The evaluation also concluded that in addition to the private benefits of the programme, the state of Utah also benefits from the increased earnings through additional tax revenue and a reduction in public benefits to participants.[115]

[114] Hawthorn, R. & Alloway, J. (2009). *Smoothing the Path: Advice about learning and work for disadvantaged adults*. Reading: CfBT Education Trust.

[115] Wilhelm, S. & Robinson, J. L. (2013). The economic impact of Utah's Vocational Rehabilitation Program. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*, 24(3): 148-157.

Beyond the area of vocational rehabilitation, the research base examining career breaks and return to work is still emergent. However, there is evidence[116] which suggests that career guidance may have an important role to play in supporting women to consider how best to manage periods of maternity leave and the subsequent return to work.

5.2. Youth transitions to work

Guidance has an obvious utility for young people who have failed to make successful transitions to the labour market. This is recognised by many European governments, who typically build guidance into policy responses to youth unemployment.

The evidence base suggests that this can be an effective strategy, particularly where it is possible to develop approaches that recognise the diversity of the youth population and that seek to pre-empt and/or to manage failed transitions.

However, the evidence base also highlights the lack of systematic evaluations in this area, suggesting that policy-makers should attend more to this in the design of future services.

Many young people find the initial transition to the labour market difficult, especially during periods of high youth unemployment. This has led to the provision of services and interventions designed to help young people to understand the education and employment system, to make wise decisions about it and to participate in it successfully. Lifelong guidance policies address these aspirations.

During periods of high youth unemployment, governments frequently respond with a range of active labour market interventions, that may include various forms of career guidance. Hughes & Borbély-Pecze[117] reviewed current European policies to address youth unemployment. They noted a range of approaches that are being employed, including work experience, improving the relationship between education and employers (by targeted programmes linking disadvantaged learners to employers), youth guarantees, job-search support, promotion of entrepreneurship, provision of careers information, careers fairs, seminars and events, in-school, college and university career guidance/counselling programmes, apprenticeships, internships, personal training records, active citizenship and volunteer activities. A further recent ELGPN review[118] has focused in on the Youth Guarantee Initiative and again has identified a wide range of practices that utilise guidance as part of strategies to re-engage young people. From this it is clear that lifelong guidance policies form a key element of the policy-maker's tool-kit for addressing concerns about youth transitions.

A recent cross-European study published by Cedefop[119] identified the use of lifelong guidance policies across a range of European countries to address concerns about youth unemployment and disengagement from learning. The study used a mixture of policy analysis and country-specific case-studies to build up a picture of policy implementation. It highlighted that to be effective, guidance needed to link closely to other agencies with which young people were interfacing. It was also important for guidance interventions to recognise that young people in transition are a heterogeneous group, from diverse backgrounds and with varied needs and aspirations. The report argued that effective guidance policies should not simply seek to solve individuals' crises for them, but rather should empower them by utilising their existing personal resources and developing their aspirations and capacity to work.

Interventions that are designed to address problematic youth transitions can seek either to pre-empt

[116] For example: Lemmer, E.M. (1991). Untidy careers: occupational profiles of re-entry women. *International Journal of Career Management*, 3(1): 8-16. Also Houston, D.M. & Marks, G. (2003). The role of planning and workplace support in returning to work after maternity leave. *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 41(2): 197-214.

[117] Hughes, D. & Borbély-Pecze, T.B. (2012). *Youth Unemployment: A crisis in our midst: The role of lifelong guidance policies in addressing labour supply and demand*. Jyväskylä, Finland: ELGPN.

[118] Borbély-Pecze, T.B. & Hutchinson, J. (2013). *The Youth Guarantee and Lifelong Guidance*. Jyväskylä, Finland: ELGPN.

[119] Cedefop (2010). *Guiding At-Risk Youth through Learning to Work: Lessons from across Europe.* Thessaloniki: Cedefop. http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/5503_en.pdf

failed transitions (in which case they typically interface with the education system) and/or to manage the transitions (in which case they more typically interface with benefits systems and public employment services). Considerable research has examined both of these types of intervention.

The Federal programme "Coaching for the Transition to Work" (Berufseinstiegsbegleitung nach §431s SGB III) in Germany provides a coach to help young people achieve their school-leaving qualification and avoid drop-out. The coach also supports transition by helping the young person to find an apprenticeship placement and ensuring the stability of the apprenticeship. The evaluation of the programme is based on quantitative and qualitative data derived from multiple perspectives including data from different stakeholders and actors involved (school principals, teachers, parents, PES, etc.) and using various methods including controlled trials. The evaluation is ongoing, but the interim results have identified a range of impacts, including higher attainment, more realistic career goals and more successful transitions. Further impacts will be identified when the longitudinal aspects of the evaluation are reported.[120]

Pre-emptive interventions to address failed youth transitions frequently build on the kinds of practices already described in relation to school-based careers work. In addition, there is often an attempt to identify individuals who may have difficulty in making such transitions.

Filmer-Sankey & McCrone[121] have described a range of processes being utilised in England to identify this group. They argued that such processes need to help school staff to identify the *causes* of potential disengagement, the *effects* of disengagement, and the *solution* (i.e. the appropriate intervention that could be used to re-engage the young person).

Research on disengaged 16- and 17-year-olds in England[122] highlighted the need to segment services aimed at disengaged young people, to recognise the diversity of this population. The research emphasised the importance of providing career information and guidance services to young people before they leave education or employment, to prevent them from becoming disengaged.

For those young people who have failed to make successful post-school transitions, there are a range of services and programmes that seek to support their transitions and help government to manage youth unemployment. The evidence provides some insights into what may determine the effectiveness of such interventions.

Qualitative research examining the role of personal advisers (PAs) from England's Connexions service[123] found that they could be influential in supporting young people to access opportunities and resources. The research highlighted the importance of the relationship built by the personal adviser with the young person, arguing that for some young people faced with complex and challenging circumstances, the relationship with their PA provided a uniquely stable and valued source of support.

In general, the research in this area highlights the importance of effective mentoring and providing young people with access to the social and educational resources that can help them to re-engage. But it also strongly highlights the structural and systemic factors that contribute to youth unemployment, and cautions against assuming that guidance can resolve youth unemployment without any wider changes.

A number of studies in this area also highlight the diversity of young people. In particular, there are studies which note the importance of providing spe-

[120] Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales BMA, S. (2013). *Evaluation der Berufseinstiegsbegleitung nach §431s SGBIII (Evaluation of the Federal Programme "Coaching for the Transition to Work").* Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales (BMAS).

[121] Filmer-Sankey, C. & McCrone, T. (2012). *Developing Indicators for Early Identification of Young People at Risk of Temporary Disconnection from Learning.* Slough: NFER.

[122] Spielhofer, T., Benton, T., Evans, K., Featherstone, G., Golden, S., Nelson, J. & Smith, P. (2009). *Increasing Participation: Understanding young people who do not participate in education or training at 16 and 17*. DCSF Research Report 072. London: Department for Children, Schools and Families.

[123] Sheehy, K., Kumrai, R. & Woodhead, M. (2011). Young people's experiences of personal advisors and the Connexions service. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: an International Journal*, 30(3): 168-182.

cific guidance services for young people with mental and/or physical disabilities.[124]

The PATHS (Postschool Achievement Through Higher Skills) programme is a career education intervention in the USA aimed at young women with disabilities and other barriers. During PATHS participants undertake modules on self-awareness, disability issues, gender identity, and career and college planning. An evaluation of the pilot progamme with 110 participants showed increases in vocational self-efficacy, social efficacy, and awareness of disability/gender issues related to career planning, whereas those in the comparison group did not make similar gains. Qualitative findings from focus groups (N = 68) revealed that PATHS participants improved in self-confidence, self-awareness, ability to identify strengths, knowledge of multiple career options, and the capacity to set goals and plan for future careers.[125]

Despite the existence of research examining the impacts and efficacy of guidance policies in relation to failed youth transitions, a recent review has critiqued the strength of the evidence base, noting that policy-makers too rarely build robust evaluation into such programmes.

Research for the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions[126] found that lifelong guidance and other active labour market interventions are a common policy response to youth unemployment by European governments. Such interventions are typically poorly evaluated. However, the balance of evidence suggests that they are broadly successful. The research highlights the fact that diverse interventions are needed, due to the heterogeneity of young people in transition.

Such evidence therefore suggests that guidance is an important element of a strategy to address youth unemployment. However, it is also clear that evaluation should be more strongly built into the delivery of such programmes.

5.3. Guidance for working people

Guidance has an important role to play for working people by helping individuals to think about how best to utilise their skills and progress within their workplace and the wider labour market.

The evidence in this area suggests that working people appreciate the opportunity to access lifelong guidance services.

There is also a range of guidance provision that is delivered within the workplace by employers, unions or other stakeholders (discussed further in Section 5.3.1).

Most people spend most of their life in employment. The span of working lives varies, but it is not unusual for an individual to be employed for 40-50 years. During this time, most individuals will have to deal with a range of personal and economic changes which may affect their career and working lives. Some might decide to actively develop their careers through pursuing further learning, changing career direction, changing employer, taking on further responsibilities or seeking promotion. For others, their career may develop more pragmatically in response to changes in their circumstances, the organisation or the wider environment. Lifelong guidance interventions aimed at working people help individuals to manage such changes and develop their careers.

Some countries provide access to guidance services for those in work as well as the unemployed, through the provision of a public career guidance service. While in some cases such services are located within public employment services[127], in other cases they

[124] Miles Morgan Australia (2012). *Effective Career Development Services for Young People (15-24) with Disability*. Newcastle: Miles Morgan and CICA. Lindstrom, L. Kahn, L.G. & Lindsey, H. (2013). Navigating the early career years: Barriers and strategies for young adults with disabilities. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation,* 39(1): 1-12. Chen, C.P. & Chan, J. (2014). Career guidance for learning-disabled youth. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, Online First, 1-17.

[125] Lindstrom, L., Doren, B., Post, C. & Lombardi, A. (2013). Building Career PATHS (Postschool Achievement Through Higher Skills) for young women with disabilities. *Career Development Quarterly*, 61(4): 330-338.

[126] Hawley, J., Hall, A.-M. & Weber, T. (2012). *Effectiveness of Policy Measures to Increase the Employment Participation of Young People*. Dublin: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.

[127] Sultana, R.G. & Watts, A.G. (2006). Career guidance in Public Employment Services across Europe. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 6: 29-46.

are organisationally distinct. There is evidence which highlights the positive reactions of adults who have used such services.

An evaluation of career centres in Norway found that the centres are often accessed by groups of adults who are in vulnerable job situations or who have limited education.[128] The users are very satisfied with the available provision, and report that the guidance they get has had a positive effect. More than half of the users have engaged in education after receiving guidance. Nearly as many have changed their job situation, either by starting a job after having been unemployed, by changing jobs, or by a change (i.e. promotion) in their current job. The users state that the guidance received has been a crucial factor for change.

While public career guidance services provide a route for many adults to access guidance, this is dependent on national policies on entitlement to such services. However, many working adults also access services through the workplace.

5.3.1. Guidance in the workplace

The evidence on lifelong guidance in the workplace suggests that there are considerable benefits for both the individual and their employer.

A number of key business benefits related to the use of career guidance have been identified, including increasing employee satisfaction and engagement, and supporting knowledge transfer and cohesion within the organisation.

A range of strategies are used to deliver such benefits: generally these involve building internal capacity to deliver lifelong guidance, alongside the strategic use of external specialists.

Career interventions within the workplace are usually, but not exclusively, paid for by the employer (alternative ways to resource such services include provision by trade unions or professional associations, or services purchased directly by the individual; there may also be support from public funding). Accordingly, much of the evidence gathering has focused on how such interventions advance the interests of the employer by enhancing employee engagement, retention or productivity.

In a series of linked research projects in Canada, a number of workplace-based guidance interventions were piloted and evaluated.[129] The evaluation used a mixed-methods approach to capture the impacts on a range of beneficiaries including both employers and employees. The study found that when employees examine their own competencies, reflect on their career goals, and become more aware of job possibilities within their current organisations, their job satisfaction increases and they are more likely to remain within their current employment setting. Consequently, promoting employee career self-management is likely to have a positive effect both on the employee and on the organisation.

Hirsh & Jackson[130] have articulated the main benefits to employers engaging in career development for their employees as including:

- Careers are how higher-level and business-specific skills and knowledge are acquired. Employees undertaking sequences of work experiences progressively grow these skills.
- Careers are how skills and knowledge are deployed and spread in organisations, as employees move from one job to another in response to where they are needed.
- Such deployment and knowledge sharing are critical to organisational flexibility. Career movement is also how culture and values – the "glue" of the organisation – are transmitted, and how personal networks are extended and strengthened. Corporate culture and networks are often key to rapid and effective action.

[128] Guthu, L., Engh, L.W. & Gravås T.F. (2012). *Karriereveiledning Viser Vei!* [*Career Guidance for Change*]. Oslo: Vox.

[129] Canadian Research Working Group on Evidence-Based Practice in Career Development (CRWGDRC) (2010). *Meeting Workplace Skills: The career development contribution*. CRWGDRC.

[130] Hirsh, W. & Jackson, C. (2004). *Managing Careers in Large Organisations*. London: The Work Foundation.

- Career development is a major tool for attracting, motivating and retaining good-quality employees.

In a small-scale quantitative study of 90 employees in Australia, Barnett & Bradley[131] explored the link between workplace guidance and employee career management and satisfaction. They found that where employees reported their organisations as offering guidance programmes, they were more likely to actively manage their careers and to report career satisfaction.

Hooley et al.[132] also highlight the important role that lifelong guidance can have in the recruitment of new talent, the management of existing talent, and supporting individuals and organisations through periods of redundancy and redeployment. There is evidence relating to the effectiveness of lifelong guidance with workers in a wide range of occupations and at all skills levels. For example, a study in Portugal highlighted the positive impacts that a guidance intervention can have on very high-skill workers within universities.[133] There has been considerable research that has explored these issues from the perspectives of the individual and the employer, and the overlap in their interests.

A survey of 28,000 employees by Scales[134] found that employers who provide career development opportunities have better employee engagement, are less likely to lose talent and are more productive than equivalent organisations that do not.

Hirsh[135] notes that very few organisations pay people to work full-time delivering lifelong guidance to their employees. However, she also summarises the range of strategies that are used to deliver effective lifelong guidance in the workplace. These include:

- increasing the capacity of line managers to provide career support for their staff;
- human relations (HR) professionals delivering one-to-one career discussions or career workshops for groups;
- providing self-help information on career options and learning opportunities;
- providing online career planning tools;
- use of volunteer "career coaches", usually a sub-set of HR people and/or line-managers, who are given special training to provide career support, often to people they do not know, in addition to their normal work roles;
- utilising external lifelong guidance specialists to deliver expert services to staff (such external specialist services are often used extensively during periods of large-scale redundancy or redeployment).

Guidance therefore can play an important role in the workplace, addressing under-employment, supporting progression and easing organisational transitions. Guidance in the workplace is frequently less dependent on public-policy interventions, but can be encouraged and supported by them.

5.4. Supporting mobility

Guidance plays an important role in supporting migration and mobility. Such guidance may take place in the home or host country and can aid in decisions to move, integration into the host country and effective skills utilisation.

131 Barnett, B.R. & Bradley, L. (2007). The impact of organisational support for career development on career satisfaction. *Career Development International*, 12(7): 617-636.

132 Hooley, T., Devins, D., Watts, A.G., Hutchinson, J., Marriott, J. & Walton, F. (2012). *Tackling Unemployment, Supporting Business and Developing Careers.* London: UKCES.

133 Pinto, J.C. (2010). *Gestão Pessoal da Carreira: Estudo de um modelo de intervenção psicológica com bolseiros de investigação* (*Self-Career Management: Study of a psychological intervention model with research grant holders*). PhD thesis, University of Minho.

134 Scales, M.J. (2010). *Developing Talent: How career opportunities drive business performance*. London: Right Management.

135 Hirsh, W. (2007). Career development in employing organisations: practices and challenges from a UK perspective. Based on input to the Guidance for Workforce Development Conference, held by CEDEFOP in Thessaloniki. Available from http://www.employment-studies.co.uk/pdflibrary/hrp1.pdf [Accessed 18 October 2013].

Lifelong guidance plays an important role in supporting migrant workers. While in their country of origin, guidance can contribute to their thinking about the opportunities that might exist elsewhere. Guidance also supports them in understanding the processes of mobility and the challenges that they might experience. Once they have moved, guidance helps people to re-orientate themselves in a new culture and labour market, supports credentialing processes and aids successful integration.

In research on migrant women in the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany and the UK, Clayton[136] found that access to lifelong guidance both in the home country (before migration) and in the host country (after migration) supported women's self-confidence and their ability to successfully operate in the host country's labour and learning markets. Where such services did not exist, the migrants often found it difficult to access basic support services (such as language classes) and consequently found integration to be more challenging.

The literature on guidance and mobility recognises the diversity of migrants (economically, culturally, linguistically and motivationally) and suggests that lifelong guidance services need to recognise and respond to this diversity. The research in this area also tends to view lifelong guidance as part of a holistic range of support services including cultural orientation, language classes, training and re-credentialisation.

5.5. Older workers

The role of guidance with older workers is increasingly recognised. Such services remain relatively new, so the evidence base is emergent. However, strong policy interest in this area suggests that it is likely to develop rapidly.

Existing evidence indicates that guidance is effective in supporting older workers to engage in learning and actively manage their careers.

Evidence also suggests that efforts need to be made to stimulate understanding of and demand for such provision.

Guidance for older workers is most effective when it is placed in the context of a lifelong guidance strategy.

Europe is experiencing twin processes of increased longevity and falling fertility.[137] The concept of active ageing policy therefore has both economic and social rationales. Key to this is the idea that workers will need to remain in the labour market longer and successfully manage a range of career shifts and changes as they move towards retirement and beyond. Late career decisions, including those that take place after paid work has ceased, are still career decisions and can be supported by lifelong guidance.

Older workers are frequently neglected in discussions about career guidance. However, late career workers have a range of key decisions to make, notably about how long work will be prolonged, how engagement with work might be tapered, how and when to cease paid work, and what activities might take the place of paid work. Guidance can support older workers to work through these decisions in ways that support active ageing policies.

The evidence in this area is developing rapidly due to considerable policy interest. A range of interventions are being developed or piloted and there is a growing body of evidence that suggests their effectiveness.

[136] Clayton, P. (2005). Blank slates or hidden treasure? Assessing and building on the experiential learning of migrant and refugee women in European countries. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 24(3): 227-242.

[137] Eurostat (2011). *Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations: A statistical portrait of the European Union 2012.* Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

A study of guidance for older people in Scotland[138] indicated that they appreciated how guidance helped them to manage uncertainty and change in the current employment climate. The intervention had supported individuals through a series of stages to reflect on past experiences, build confidence and motivation for future planning and learning, and encourage goal-setting. Levels of engagement in lifelong learning were variable and associated with background and prior educational ability. Thus career guidance can support social-equity goals in relation to lifelong learning and older people.

However, it is also clear that there is a lack of understanding amongst many individuals about the role of guidance in relation to the careers of older workers. Mitton & Hull[139] argue that there is a need to stimulate demand for such provision amongst older workers.

There have been a number of recent international reviews of practice in guidance of older workers. A study from New Zealand has reviewed practice across the English-speaking world[140], while a Cedefop study[141] has explored successful European policy implementations. The Cedefop report highlights successful practice from France, Portugal, Scotland and Sweden, and sets out three key principles that should underpin the design of such services:

- Guidance should be conceived as a lifelong process. A key aspect of this is to recognise that inter-generational career development needs might be complementary: for example, if older workers are supported to mentor younger workers, there may be career benefits for both parties.
- Guidance provision should be accessible, comprehensive and systemic. Key to achieving this is the development of strategies to tailor guidance to individuals' needs, at the same time as identifying and addressing systemic barriers to older workers' career development.
- Guidance provision should involve all stakeholders including employees, employers, local and national governments (the social partners), and others.

The New Zealand review makes similar points based on an exploration of practice in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK and the USA. It stresses the importance of guidance services being organised on a lifelong basis, of engaging participants in service design, and of ensuring that guidance services link to other support services.

[138] Smith, G. (2012). *Engendering Learning and Guidance in Later Life: An empirical study.* Available from http://dialogue.eucen.eu/sites/dialogue.eucen.eu/files/P2-UK_CS_Guidance\%20in\%20later\%20life.pdf [Accessed 20 October 2013].

[139] Mitton, L. & Hull, C. (2006). The information, advice and guidance needs of older workers. *Social Policy and Society*, 5(4): 541-550.

[140] Research New Zealand (2006). *45 Plus: Choices in the labour market: Final report – Stage 1 review of literature on programmes of career information, advice and guidance for mature non-participants.* Wellington: Department of Labour.

[141] Cedefop (2011). *Working and Ageing: Guidance and counselling for mature learners.* Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Recommendations for further evidence gathering

The evidence base for lifelong guidance is substantial and diverse. The rest of this guide has highlighted its strengths and sought to draw out what it tells us about the impacts of lifelong guidance and the most effective approaches to delivery. However, the evidence base is far from complete. Consequently there is an ongoing need for research in this area.

The Lifelong Guidance Policy Cycle and the QAE Framework both provide useful tools for thinking about how the evidence base can be further developed to support policy aims.

This guide has provided an introduction to the existing evidence base. However, even in the most developed aspects of the lifelong guidance evidence base, it is possible to identify areas in which researchers or policy-makers would like more answers. A recent study in the Netherlands highlighted these limits and argued that policy-makers should "encourage and co-ordinate continuous scientific and practice-based research for an ongoing investigation of what works".[142]

[142] Oomen, A., van den Dungen, M., Pijls, T. & Egelie, J. (2012). *Career Development in the Netherlands: State of play*. Hertogenbosch: Euroguidance Netherlands.

It is hoped that some of these concerns are addressed by the current guide's efforts to bring together the European and international evidence base. While evidence is often patchy in a single country, there are frequently examples of relevant evidence from elsewhere in Europe and the wider world that can support effective policy-making. Caution should be exerted in applying such examples across countries, as it is important to recognise the contingent and contextual nature of all learning interventions and the research that examines them. However, there is also much that can be learnt from international sharing of experiences. The international evidence, as presented in this guide, is far stronger than that the evidence that exists in any one country.

Through the QAE Framework, ELGPN has already established some key areas of focus for the enhancement of the quality of services and the development of the evidence base. The Framework provides a useful starting point for policy-makers seeking to develop evidence related to their policies. However, the evidence base will always be work in progress: hence the Lifelong Guidance Policy Cycle set out in Section 2.1. Taken together, the QAE Framework and

the Lifelong Guidance Policy Cycle provide a practical approach to the development of evidence-based policy in this area.

Table 1 provides a summary of the existing evidence base and suggests a range of areas on which further research might focus.

Table 1: *Understanding and extending the lifelong guidance evidence base*

	Key strengths	Areas for development
Schools	Extensive range of studies which describe the activity and set out impacts and guidance on efficacy.	More quantitative impact studies and detail on the return on investment for different ways of organising guidance in schools.
Vocational education	Emergent literature which is helping to define activity within the area.	Increase the range and extent of studies in this area.
Higher education	Extensive range of studies which describe the activity and set out impacts and guidance on efficacy.	More detailed research looking at the impacts on student employment rates and other factors.
Adult education	Emergent literature which is helping to define activity within the area.	Increase the range and extent of studies in this area, including ones that specifically address the guidance elements of adult education.
Unemployment to work	Extensive range of studies which describe the activity and set out impacts and guidance on efficacy.	Need to disentangle the impact of career guidance from that of a broader range of active labour market policies. Also need to explore returns to work following career breaks.
Youth transitions to work	Growing range of studies which describe the activity and set out impacts and guidance on efficacy.	Need to disentangle the impact of career guidance from that of a broader range of active labour market policies. Also need to more clearly define the long-term impacts of such interventions.
Mobility	A select number of high-quality studies.	Increase the range of studies to explore the impacts of both home and host country guidance.
Workplace	Growing range of studies which describe the activity and set out impacts and guidance on efficacy.	Need to disentangle the impact of career guidance from that of a broader range of human resource development approaches. Further work on return-on-investment, of interest to employers who typically fund delivery.
Older workers	Emergent literature which is helping to define activity within the area.	Increase the range and extent of studies in this area.

A recent literature review by the Danish Clearinghouse for Educational Research, though focused on guidance in schools, identified a number of areas that are worth considering in relation to the broader literature:

- the optimum timing of guidance interventions (not too early and not too late);
- the role that the duration of the guidance process has for its effects;
- the longer-term effects of guidance.

Such research questions could prove useful for future studies.

It is also arguable that the existing literature is too narrow methodologically and that it is important to broaden the range and types of studies as the evidence base is developed. A number of researchers have argued[143] that there is a need for further research using randomised control groups to evaluate impact more thoroughly. Solberg *et al.*[144] link this to policy, with a call for a more systematic examination of the impact of career development and the development of national metrics through which impact could be measured. The ELGPN's QAE Framework provides a good example of a shared framework for evaluation that is now being applied in a number of countries across Europe. In the context of discussion about how the evidence base could be improved, it is also worth mentioning the What Works Clearinghouse's WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook, which sets out detailed, robust and useful standards that could be used to shape further efforts to gather evidence in this area[145].

Hooley *et al.*[146] argue that the future research agenda for lifelong guidance needs to include:

- new meta-analyses based on recent research;
- randomised control trials examining career development interventions;
- further longitudinal work based on longer time periods than in much of the existing research;
- further studies examining the nature, role and impact of technologically-mediated career development.

The final point also raises the possibility of new methodological approaches which utilise naturally occurring data produced during online interactions as part of the measurement of their impact.

It is also important to continue to develop systemic studies of the economic impacts of guidance, both through the development of economic modelling approaches and through empirical work designed to increase understanding about the scale of impacts of guidance in various policy areas and their financial value.

On this basis, it would be possible to begin to design a more strategic research programme for future work in this area. The production of such a document could be one of the first tasks of any new European initiative on evidence for lifelong guidance.

[143] See Hughes, K.L. & Mechur Karp, M. (2004). *School-Based Career Development: A synthesis of the literature.* New York: Institute on Education and the Economy, Teachers College, Columbia University. Also McGannon, W., Carey, J. & Dimmit, C. (2005). *The Current Status of School Counseling Outcome Research.* Amherst: Center for School Counseling Outcome Research, University of Massachusetts.

[144] Solberg, V.S., Wills, J.L. & Niles, S.G. (2009). *Establishing Accountability Metrics for Evaluating the Impact of Career Guidance Services on Academic, Career Development and Workforce Readiness Outcomes.* Available from http://www.forum-beratung.de/cms/upload/Internationales/Netzwerke/Solberg_Wills_Niles_metrics_position_paper_for_National_Collaborative_13_may_09.docxmetrics_position_paper_for_National_Collaborative_13_may_09.pdf [Accessed 22 April 2014].

[145] What Works Clearinghouse (2008). *WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook*. Available from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/documentsum.aspx?sid=19 [Accessed 9 April 2013].

[146] Hooley, T., Marriott, J. & Sampson, J.P. (2011). *Fostering College and Career Readiness: How career development activities in schools impact on graduation rates and students' life success*. Derby: International Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby.

What are the implications of the evidence base for policy and practice in lifelong guidance?

An examination of the evidence base in lifelong guidance suggests a number of areas of action for policy-makers and their partners. This section will first consider what the evidence tell us about the design of a lifelong guidance system, and then how the Lifelong Guidance Policy Cycle and the desire to develop the evidence base can be addressed as part of such system design.

7.1. Implications for the design of an effective lifelong guidance system

The evidence base in lifelong guidance is highly contextual. Nonetheless, it is possible to draw out a number of key principles that should inform the design of lifelong guidance systems.

In general, these principles emphasise lifelong, integrated provision which connects meaningfully to other aspects of an individual's life and develops their capacity to manage their own careers.

It also emphasises the importance of well-trained professionals who have the capacity to work with other professionals to deliver holistic services in order to meet client needs.

The evidence base in lifelong guidance is complex and contextually bounded. Different facets of the lifelong guidance system have been understood in different ways, and there are differing levels of evidence depending on where one looks in the system. Nonetheless, it is possible to observe some patterns across the entire evidence base and to summarise some principles that should influence system design.

Firstly, it is possible to argue that there is strong evidence that well-designed interventions can support individuals to increase their understanding of themselves and of the labour and learning markets and to take action to develop their careers. Such interventions can act on both individuals' career decidedness ("what do I want to do with my life?") and their career management ability ("how do I go

about building my life, learning and work in a way that works for me?").

It is possible to identify both individual benefits from such interventions and social benefits, and to make the argument, as OECD[147] does, that there are three main public-policy rationales for the delivery of careers education and guidance: firstly, that it supports engagement with learning and improves the functioning of the education and training system; secondly, that it contributes to the effective operation of the labour market; and thirdly, that it supports social equity and facilitates social inclusion and social mobility.

The evidence base also offers considerable insights about what works, highlighting that effective services:

- **focus on the individual** by enabling individuals to develop and be supported across the life course whilst recognising their distinctive experiences and diversity;
- **support learning and progression** by developing individuals' career management skills through a range of interventions organised in a programmatic way;
- **ensure quality** through the use of skilled practitioners and robust quality-assurance processes such as those set out in the ELGPN QAE Framework.

Table 2 sets out evidence-based principles that should inform the design of lifelong guidance services.

Table 2: *Ten evidence-based principles for the design of lifelong guidance services*

Focus on the individual	Support learning and progression	Ensure quality
Lifelong guidance is most effective where it is genuinely lifelong and progressive. Lifelong guidance is most effective where it connects meaningfully to the wider experience and lives of the individuals who participate in it. Lifelong guidance is most effective where it recognises the diversity of individuals and relates services to individual needs.	Lifelong guidance is not one intervention, but many, and works most effectively when a range of interventions are combined. A key aim of lifelong guidance programmes should be the acquisition of career management skills. Lifelong guidance needs to be holistic and well-integrated into other support services. Lifelong guidance should involve employers and working people, and provide active experiences of workplaces.	The skills, training and dispositions of the practitioners who deliver lifelong guidance are critical to its success. Lifelong guidance is dependent on access to good-quality career information. Lifelong guidance should be quality-assured and evaluated to ensure its effectiveness and to support continuous improvement.

[147] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2004). *Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the gap*. Paris: OECD.

7.1.1. Focus on the individual

- **Lifelong guidance is most effective where it is genuinely lifelong and progressive.** The evidence demonstrates that in many cases guidance services are fragmented and poorly connected. It also suggests that as career is built across the life-course, guidance services need to support this process rather than simply focusing on a single life-stage.
- **Lifelong guidance is most effective where it connects meaningfully to the wider experience and life of the individuals who participate in it.** In learning, this includes building a meaningful connection to the curriculum; in work, to wider human resource management processes. However, the value of connecting guidance to the individual's context is broader than this, and may include a host of other contextual factors (community, family, hobbies and interests).
- **Lifelong guidance is most effective where it recognises the diversity of individuals and relates services to individual needs.** The recognition that career is an individual experience and that individuals bring a range of resources, interests, barriers and concerns to guidance processes needs to be built into the design of the lifelong guidance system.
- **Lifelong guidance should involve employers and working people, and provide active experiences of workplaces.** Understanding the world of work is central to the purpose of lifelong guidance. The involvement of employers and working people helps to inform programmes and inspire clients. Work experience and work-related learning are also critical for individuals' career learning.

7.1.2. Support learning and progression

- **Lifelong guidance is not one intervention, but many, and works most effectively when a range of interventions are combined.** The recognition that a diverse range of strategies can be used to support individuals to develop their careers is repeatedly endorsed across the evidence base. There are also benefits where these interventions are combined and sequenced in a programmatic fashion and are well integrated into wider educational and active labour market interventions.
- **A key aim of lifelong guidance programmes should be the acquisition of career management skills.** Lifelong guidance should seek to empower individuals and to provide them with the personal resources, skills and abilities with which to develop their own careers. Such an empowered populace are more likely to be able to positively manage economic and political changes.
- **Lifelong guidance needs to be holistic and well-integrated into other support services.** Whilst there is value in distinctive career-focused services, the boundaries of career support are permeable. A wide range of life issues has the potential to impact on individuals' capacity to build effective careers. Thus it is important that individuals' problems are identified holistically and that lifelong guidance services are able where appropriate to refer clients to services where their other needs can be met.

7.1.3. Ensure quality

- **The skills, training and dispositions of the practitioners who deliver lifelong guidance are critical to its success**. A recurring theme in the evidence base is that the success of guidance processes is strongly influenced by the initial training, continuing professional devel-

opment, competencies and personal capacities of the professionals that deliver it.[148]

- **Lifelong guidance is dependent on access to good-quality career information.** The capacity to make meaningful decisions about participation in learning and the labour market requires a reliable information base to allow judgements to be made about the outcomes of different actions.
- **Lifelong guidance should be quality-assured and evaluated to ensure its effectiveness and to support continuous improvement.** Effective services can learn from customer feedback, the observation of outcomes and the wider evidence base.

Such principles have been derived from the evidence base and can be utilised to support the design of lifelong guidance systems.

7.2. Implications for ensuring efficacy

There is a strong imperative for policy-makers and service designers to build efficacy into service design.

This requires the development of an evaluation strategy which takes into account the distinction between monitoring and evaluation, and which considers both how evaluation can enhance service delivery and where it might impact negatively on the experience of the individuals using the service.

Such an evaluation strategy should identify clear aims, approaches and levels of resourcing for the evaluation and set out how the findings of any evaluation should be used. The Lifelong Guidance Policy Cycle provides a useful framework for developing such strategies.

While the evidence base is useful for developing lifelong guidance services, it is also clear that evidence gathering has frequently been ad hoc rather than systematic. Policy-makers now have the opportunity to consider approaches that embed evaluation more strategically into the design of lifelong guidance systems.

As a first step in this direction, it is important that what is known about effective provision is made use of during the implementation of lifelong guidance services, so that research knowledge about efficacy is transformed into practice. Neary & Hutchinson[149] found that career practitioners rarely made use of this kind of research; it is not clear whether their managers or those charged with service development or design are any more regularly engaged with current research. Given this, efforts need to be made to ensure that those involved in service delivery have both the incentive and the opportunity to understand what the evidence base says about effective practice and to consider its implications for their own practice.

In Ireland the National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) has developed the School Guidance Handbook as an online resource to provide practitioners and schools with access to key evidence to support practice.[150] Content developed for the Handbook has been written by experts in the disciplines of guidance, education, psychology, law, and other related subjects, and has been approved by an editorial panel. Alongside this, the NCGE has also published a handbook setting out case-studies which demonstrate how guidance practitioners can develop an evidence-based approach to guidance in schools.[151] Taken together, these two resources are designed to support strong practitioner engagement with evidence.

[148] Research undertaken in Italy suggests that well-trained career practitioners had greater confidence in their ability to conceptualise vocational problems, deal with career indecision concerns, and provide educational counselling. Soresi, S., Nota, L. & Lent, R.W. (2004). Relation of type and amount of training to career counseling self-efficacy in Italy. *Career Development Quarterly*, 52(3): 194-201.

[149] Neary, S. & Hutchinson, J. (2009). More questions than answers: the role of practitioner research in professional practice. In Reid, H. (Ed.), *Constructing the Future: Career guidance for changing contexts*, 42-50. Stourbridge: Institute of Career Guidance.

[150] National Centre for Guidance in Education (2009). *School Guidance Handbook* (online resource). Available from http://schoolguidance-handbook.ncge.ie/ [Accessed 16 April 2014].

[151] Darbey, L., McNiff, J. & Fields, P. (Eds.) (2013). *Evidence Based Handbook: Guidance case studies.* Dublin: NCGE.

Beyond the question of how the existing evidence base informs policy, service design and practice, there are important questions about how it can be enhanced and developed in ways that support the delivery of lifelong guidance.

The inclusion of the QAE Framework in the normal practice of careers services ensures a culture of data gathering, use of client feedback, and continuous service improvement, which can provide a good baseline for research studies and national evaluations. The Framework also helps to ensure that services are mindful of evaluation whilst they are developing their monitoring criteria. There are some clear advantages in building evaluation into service monitoring. If it is possible to collect evaluation data at the point of service delivery, this makes it possible to collect large amounts of data without any need for sampling. If it is possible to talk to everyone who has used a service, the picture that is built up will inevitably be more accurate than if one only talks to a few people.

However, building evaluation into service design becomes more problematic as one moves up Kirkpatrick's hierarchy of impacts (see Section 1.1). So it is relatively easy to ask client to give a reaction to the service that they have received and to routinely record this as a part of monitoring. Such forms of evaluation can provide useful ongoing management information, including meeting service targets (e.g. to consistently achieve an 80% customer satisfaction rating). However, it is far more difficult to routinely investigate learning, behaviour or results of services, as these generally happen outside the normal service interaction. Whether someone leaves a career guidance session and actually goes on to implement what they have discussed, for example, is not normally information that is available to those involved in service delivery, and requires additional resourcing to collect.

There are also further difficulties in combining monitoring and evaluation. If handled improperly, bringing in more routine monitoring can skew service design and impinge on the customer experience. For example, it might be desirable, from the perspective of evaluation, to have every client complete their programme by sitting an examination on their career management skills. However, this may not be desirable from the perspective of the clients themselves. Similarly, if evaluation gets too tied up with monitoring that is linked with contract compliance and payment by results, the reliability of the evaluation is likely to be reduced.

Consequently, policy-makers, funders and service designers have an important role in balancing monitoring and evaluation, and making wise decisions about what issues are to be investigated through each. Most critically, this question addresses how far it is appropriate to adjust service delivery to ensure robust evaluation processes. Given this, it is likely that the development of an evaluation strategy for a lifelong guidance intervention will seek to make distinctions between what should be routinely monitored (e.g. client throughput; initial reaction) and what information might be collected in a more purposeful way from a sample of clients (levels of career management skills acquired; longer-term impacts). There are therefore key decisions to be taken about what kinds of information falls into each of these categories. For example, should the first (and even the second) employment destination of client be routinely monitored? There is a cost to all data-collection processes: it is important that such costs are considered and weighed against possible efficacy benefits.

An alternative, or perhaps complementary, strategy is to seek to foster a culture of evaluation within the career profession itself. If career professionals are trained, managed and expected to understand the evidence base, adapt their practice in line with it, and seek to extend it through their own activities, then the development of the evidence base is assured. While this does not negate the value of national or service-level initiatives, it can have the advantage of ensuring that evaluation is strongly related to the delivery of services and that national evaluations have a stronger picture of effective practice to build upon. Given this, it is suggested that a key element of lifelong guidance service design should be the

development of an evaluation strategy and the identification of resources to support such a strategy. In particular, such a document could address the following questions:

- How does our evaluation approach fit with national and European approaches to evaluation? In particular, how can it be aligned with the ELGPN's QAE Framework?
- What level of impact data should funders require and how should the collection and analysis of data be funded? What level of resourcing is needed to support both monitoring and evaluation?
- What are the objectives of service evaluation? What kinds of impacts can and should be identified? How can Kirkpatrick's four levels (reaction, learning, behaviour, results) be used to help to refine evaluation aims?
- What should be monitored routinely? How will such monitoring data be used to inform service development? How will such data be used to provide a basis for evaluation?
- How will evaluation be used summatively to explore the impacts of the service and to identify the return on investment?
- How will evaluation be used formatively to support service development? How will findings be fed in to support strategy development? How will findings be fed back into service delivery?
- How will practitioners and managers be engaged in understanding, acting and developing the evidence base for the services that they deliver?
- Who will be responsible for conducting the evaluation? Will professional evaluators be utilised? Will an independent, external agency be responsible for overseeing or undertaking the evaluation?
- How will results from the evaluation be published to contribute to the broader evidence base in the field?
- How will evaluations connect to wider policy goals in a way that supports the development of evidence-based policy?

In conclusion, it is useful to return to the Lifelong Guidance Policy Cycle. Arguably, such an approach of continuous and incremental development of the evidence base should underpin the development of all lifelong guidance provision.

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Appendix: Quality-Assurance and Evidence-Base (QAE) Framework

Quality assurance and evidence-based policies and practices to support lifelong guidance systems and services operate in six broad contexts: schools, vocational education and training (VET), higher education, adult education, employment settings, and social inclusion initiatives. This Framework is designed to build upon earlier work undertaken by the ELGPN (2009/10) and to extend this further in the form of a common set of **quality elements, criteria, indicators** and **possible sources of data** that can be utilised and further developed by policy-makers and other interested parties to jointly assess progress being made in relation to these six broad areas of lifelong guidance policy development.

The Framework can be used:

1. As a **simple checklist,** to jointly assess and record what information, if any, already exists within your country.
2. To **list the sources of data that currently provide the type of information** which are available at national, regional and/or local levels and reflect on where gaps exist and how they can be addressed as part of a continuing improvement plan.
3. To identify **any known sources of data that could potentially be used by policy-makers** that have not been used so far in quality-assurance and impact-assessment developments within your country. This might include, for example, a PISA study report, National Youth Cohort studies, regional assessment reports on lifelong guidance services, local/regional/national kitemark results, etc.
4. To **note the context in which these quality elements, criteria and indicators are being applied,** where this is possible, i.e. schools, higher education, VET, adult education, public employment services, social inclusion initiatives.
5. To **consider whether or not there is scope for improved "read across"** to develop more coherent and consistent lifelong guidance policies and practices.

The Framework is designed not as a "perfect scientific approach" but rather as a useful starting-point for countries to begin a practical assessment of the extent to which they have access to available data and where the gaps are in present arrangements. It is not advisable for policy-makers to use it as a comparative assessment tool between countries. Each country has its own unique and varying set of circumstances, including diversity in size, population and geographical context, and these factors are strong influences on lifelong guidance service design and delivery.

Across Europe there are several quality-assurance and evidence-base frameworks being used or developed. This Framework is designed to support and complement these, taking into account the current data-collection and quality-assurance approaches adopted in each country. The primary aim here is to produce a European QA framework that will enable policy-makers to identify *robust* and *useful* quality assurance and evidence-based policies, including impact measures such as cost-benefits to governments and individuals. A key goal is to develop a strong culture of evidence-based policies that recognise cross-cutting themes within a lifelong guidance policy context.

COUNTRY: ..... **KEY CONTACT PERSON:** .....

POLICY SECTOR: (1) Schools; (2) VET; (3) Higher Education; (4) Adult Education; (5) Employment; (6) Social Inclusion

COMPLETED BY .....

COMPLETION DATE:..... **REVIEWED BY**.....

Quality Element	Criteria	Indicator	Examples of Possible Data	Policy Review Comments
1. Practitioner competence	1.1. Recognised qualifications relevant to careers sector	**Qualification level specified**[153] • **Careers Sector requirements** % fully qualified % partially qualified % none qualified below a certain level	• National regulations / legislative requirements • Careers Professionals National Register • Provider reports • Funder reports • Government database	
	1.2. Engaged in Continuing Professional Development	**Nos. of CPD hours undertaken in 1 year at a:** • careers practitioner level[154] • manager of career development services level[155]	• National database • Outsourcing reports • National Kitemark • National quality standards report(s) • Application of CEDEFOP Competence Framework (2009) • Inspection report(s)	
		Nos. signed up to a professional code of ethics at a: careers practitioner level	• National Kitemark • National quality standards report(s) • National Register of Careers Practitioners	

[153] Please note specific details, where possible, in your response within the comments section.

[154] Please comment on the requirements for CPD and name of the organisation or government department that sets this specific requirement.

[155] Ditto above.

	1.3. Membership level of Careers Professional Association(s)	**Total in careers sector workforce** • % members of Careers Professional Association(s) e.g. membership of 1; 2; 3; 3+	• Policy reports • Provider reports • Inspection reports • Careers Professional Association(s) • Self-reporting	
2. Citizen/user involvement	2.1. Ease of access to relevant services and products	**Actual numbers of citizens/users accessing the services:** • **on the web** (*nos. of visits including differing types of careers support services being accessed*); • **by telephone** (*nos. of callers*); • **individual sessions** (*nos. of clients*); • **group sessions** (*nos. of clients*) **Specific policy and targets set for equality and diversity in service design and delivery** • % of citizens from diverse backgrounds representing their views on careers service design and delivery **Careers dedicated staff to client ratio** e.g. *nos. of clients in set time period divided by nos. of staff hours in set time period* **Cost per intervention** e.g. *nos of staff hours and overhead costs divided by nos. of differing types of interventions*	• Careers practitioner and management data, including time spent on searches and IP address • On-line and updated career portfolios • Service performance reports and self-reporting e.g. in-house systems; ICT tracking systems e.g. Google Analytics • Action planning reports • Records of clients' involvement in careers service design and delivery • Equality and diversity policy • Client self-reporting • Inspection reports • Human resource data • Client throughput data • Practitioner feedback reports • Management information e.g. datasets on differing types of interventions, including timings and costs.	
	2.2. Client satisfaction with services provided, including level of awareness in differing sectors e.g. schools, VET, HE, adult education, employment settings and social inclusion initiatives	**An agreed level of client satisfaction expressed as a percentage (%)** Follow-up telephone or online surveys at agreed set intervals e.g. 3, 6 *and/or 12 months+* **An up-to-date customer charter or entitlement statement**	• Client satisfaction surveys online and off-line • Appointment lead-in times • Practitioner and/or independent evaluation surveys • Quality kitemark • Client survey response	

	2.3. Participation of users in planning and programming of service's activities and action plan	**An agreed percentage of citizen/end-user representatives informing the management team responsible for the annual and long-term planning**	• Annual planning with quantitative and qualitative set targets • Action plan • Minutes of meeting of the Board of Directors etc • Focus Group reports	
	2.4. Participation of users in self- and external evaluation of the service	**An agreed level of user participation in follow-up evaluation surveys** **An agreed percentage of user representatives involved in controlling bodies**	• Client evaluation surveys • External evaluation reports (e.g. ISO reports) • Quality standards feedback reports	
3. Service provision and improvement	3.1. Learning and applying career management skills (CMS)	**Learning outcomes related to specific aspects of CMS** e.g. *career management competencies linked to national "Blueprint for CMS"*	• Pre- and post- treatment assessment/ evaluations	
	3.2. Quality management system (QMS)[156]	**Evidence of a QMS to an agreed national common standard to include measures of:** (i) *practitioner competence;* (ii) *citizen/user involvement;* (iii) *connectivity to education and labour markets;* (iv) *benchmarking and actions for continuing improvement*	• Inspection and audits in-house, as well as by independent verifier • Self-reporting • Client usage figures and satisfaction surveys • Labour market intelligence reports • Online LMI portal data • Human resource information	
	3.3. Appropriate ICT tools and software	**Level of financial investment in ICT equipment and software** e.g. *breakdown of actual costs compared to previous year*	• Expenditure costs • Assessment reports on "added-value returns"	

[156] This may refer to a national, sectoral, service and/or provider setting.

	3.4. Up-to-date knowledge in and expertise of education and labour markets	**Level of investment in labour market information resources and training** e.g. access to national, EU and international databases on learning and work opportunities / qualification equivalences / job descriptions e.g. breakdown of costs for developing on-line and off-line publications and materials e.g. staff time spent on LMI training and resource developments compared with option of buying in consultancy expertise	• Expenditure costs • Assessment reports on added-value returns	
	3.5. Profile and characteristics of service user groups (*clearly defined linked to policy target groups*)	**Level of investment in staff training** e.g. % *nos. of staff trained and associated costs* e.g. *on-the-job training; HEI training; other* e.g. *% nos. supported to attend conferences and CPD events and associated costs* e.g. *% nos. of staff investing in their own attendance at conferences and CPD events*	• In-house training audit system	

4. Cost-benefits to governments	4.1. Immediate, medium and long-term savings to public purse from specific forms of interventions[157]	**Percentage of users progressing into employment, education/ training, unemployed** including evidence of follow-up **Duration and rate of progression into learning and/or work** e.g. *duration of time spent on unemployment register or prolonged staying on rates in education* Keeping track of the progress of individual advisees to the next stage of their employment, career path or of the education and training process e.g. *nos of individuals no longer claiming benefits as a direct result of specific intervention* e.g. *nos of reduced drop-out rates from schooling, FE and/or HEIs and cost implications* e.g. *transfer rates from NEETs into education, training and/or employment*	• Destination measures • NEET monitoring system • Balance Score Card system • Longitudinal studies • Control Group studies • Register of clients • Breakdown of intervention measures • Costs or cost savings linked to telephone or web-based approaches • Pre and post- treatment assessment	
	4.2. Savings on expenditure • national telephone helpline service • national web portal for careers service • face-to-face delivery	Annual expenditure costs on: e.g. *national telephone helpline service* e.g. *national web portal for careers service* e.g. *face-to-face delivery*	• Audit report • Business accounts	
5. Cost-benefits to individuals	5.1. Increase in household income	**Reduced dependency on welfare benefits through employment** e.g. *higher earnings/ salary information captured by careers practitioners*	• Annual performance and reporting plans	

[157] Section 4 can be adapted to focus on a range of differing lifelong guidance interventions including cost-benefit returns to employers and government(s).

Glossary

ELGPN has already produced a glossary to provide a common set of definitions for lifelong guidance (LLG) policy development and related guidance terminology. This glossary is available on the EPGPN website at http://www.elgpn.eu/glossary. Where appropriate, terms from the existing glossary have been reproduced here.

The following glossary is designed to explain some of the technical terms associated with research and evaluation that are contained within this guide. Definitions are given in the context of lifelong guidance.

Balanced scorecard. This is a strategy performance management tool which uses a semi-standard structured report and series of monitoring tools. Policymakers and managers can use a balanced scorecard to keep track of the activities within their control and to monitor the consequences arising from these actions.

Before-and-after studies. Taking two snapshots before and after implementation of the programme, to try and identify what changes have happened as a result.

Behaviour (impact level). Any changes that it is possible to observe in how participants act following a guidance intervention.

Benchmarking. Taking a snapshot of what is happening and comparing it to a target or goal. Benchmarks can be defined either theoretically (what should be happening) or empirically (what has happened when this has been tried elsewhere).

Beneficiaries. The individuals and groups who may gain from lifelong guidance.

Controlled trials. Comparison of what happens to a cohort of clients who access career development services (the experimental group) in comparison to another similar cohort who do not use them (the control group). Researchers' confidence in this kind of study increases if individuals can be randomly allocated to these different groups (Randomised control trial).

Cost-benefit analyses. Comparative analysis of the costs and benefits of a guidance service or particular

guidance activity – and of the value of that service or activity – to select the most financially beneficial solution.

Economic and social outcomes of guidance. In particular, improving the efficiency and effectiveness of education, training and the labour market through its contribution to reducing drop-out, preventing skill mismatches, increasing job tenure and boosting productivity; and also addressing social equity and social inclusion.

Effectiveness. Extent to which the objectives of a policy or an intervention are achieved, usually without reference to costs.

Evaluation. An assessment of an ongoing or completed development intervention.

Evidence. The information presented to support a finding or conclusion. Evidence should be sufficient, competent and relevant. There are four main types of evidence: observations (obtained through direct observation of people or events); documentary (obtained from written information); analytical (based on computations and comparisons); and self-reported (obtained through, for example, surveys).

Evidence-based policy and practice. The conscientious, explicit and judicious use of current evidence of what works best, and most cost-effectively, to inform lifelong guidance policy and practice. More generally, any activity, intervention or way of working that has been designed on the basis of evidence that demonstrates the effectiveness of the particular approach (policy or practice) being used.

Guidance outcomes. Guidance has economic, social and learning outcomes, and these reflect both its personal impact and the wider societal benefits.

Impact. General term used to describe the effects of a programme, policy or socioeconomic change. Impact can be positive or negative, as well as foreseen or unforeseen.

Indicator. Quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, to reflect the changes connected to an intervention, or to help assess the performance of a development actor.

Intervention. A deliberate and organised attempt to impact on the career of an individual or group.

Learning (impact level). The set of knowledge, skills and/or competences an individual has acquired and/or is able to demonstrate after completion of a guidance activity or through participation in the guidance process.

Literature review. A study of other studies that seeks to identify patterns in what other researchers have found.

Longitudinal tracking. Ongoing engagement with research participants to explore change as it happens.

Monitoring. The routine collection, analysis and use of information about an ongoing development intervention.

Outcome. Positive or negative longer-term socioeconomic change or impact that occurs directly or indirectly from an intervention's input, activities and output.

Output. Immediate and direct tangible result of an intervention.

Performance measures/indicators. Data, usually quantitative, that provide a measure of an individual's, team's or organisation's level of attainment, against which the level of others can be compared.

Qualitative methods. Research methods employed in many academic disciplines which seek to describe and understand phenomena.

Quantitative methods. Research methods employed in many academic disciplines which seek to measure what is happening through the collection of numerical information.

Quality assurance. Activities involving planning, implementation, evaluation, reporting, and quality improvement, implemented to ensure that guidance activities (content of programmes, design, assessment and validation of outcomes, etc.) meet the quality requirements expected by stakeholders.

Quality-assurance framework. Set of common principles, guidelines, criteria and tools adopted by a group at a local, regional, national or international level in order to develop and assure quality in guidance delivery and in relation to the qualification of guidance practitioners.

Randomised control trial. See **Controlled trials.**

Reaction (Impact level). How participants in guidance describe their experience.

Research methods. An approach to collecting and analysing data for the purpose of exploring an issue or answering a question.

Results (impact level). Whether it is possible to observe any changes to systems, organisations and individuals following a guidance intervention.

Snapshots. Taking a picture of what is happening (using a survey, series of interviews or observation) and identifying whether stakeholders feel that it is useful.

Statistical meta-analysis. A study which uses statistical methods to combine existing quantitative studies that have been carried out on a similar basis.

Then-and-now studies. Asking research participants to identify what has changed and to remember back to what things were like before implementation.

EUROPEAN LIFELONG GUIDANCE POLICY NETWORK (ELGPN) aims to assist the European Union Member States (and the neighbouring countries eligible for the Lifelong Learning Programme) and the European Commission in developing European co-operation on lifelong guidance in both the education and the employment sectors. The purpose of the Network is to promote co-operation and systems development at member-country level in implementing the priorities identified in EU 2020 strategies and EU Resolutions on Lifelong Guidance (2004; 2008). The Network was established in 2007 by the Member States; the Commission supports its activities under the Lifelong Learning Programme.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS EVIDENCE GUIDE is to present the existing international research base on the impact of lifelong guidance, including its educational outcomes, economic and employment outcomes, and social outcomes. The guide has been prepared for ELGPN by Professor Tristram Hooley, International Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby, UK. It builds on the work undertaken by the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN) during 2008–14, including the Quality-Assurance and Evidence-Base (QAE) Framework which provides an approach for policy-makers to address quality assurance and evidence-based policy and system development. The guide synthesises the existing impact evidence. It suggests that guidance is most effective when it is conceived as a lifelong system and that policy-makers should continue to develop this evidence base to ensure that policies are based on the best evidence available.

ELGPN represents a major development in support of national lifelong guidance policy development in Europe. It currently has 31 member-countries (AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LV, LT, LU, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, TR, UK), with an additional country as an observer (CH). The participating countries designate their representatives in the Network, and are encouraged to include both governmental and non-governmental representatives. As a Member-State-driven network, it represents an innovative form of the Open Method of Co-ordination within the European Union (EU).

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