

**BIS** | Department for Business  
Innovation & Skills

**EVALUATION OF THE  
ADVANCEMENT NETWORK  
PROTOTYPES**

Final Report

OCTOBER 2010

# **Evaluation of the Advancement Network Prototypes**

## **Final Report**

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# Executive Summary

In 2009, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) commissioned 10 Prototypes to develop and trial local solutions to support adults in their communities to access careers, employment and skills advice, as well as other forms of support. This report synthesises the findings from the three waves of qualitative evaluation activity.

Local bodies responded to the same brief in very different ways, and developed local solutions, tailored to the needs of their communities and integrated within existing local partnerships. Each of the 10 Prototypes had different partnership structures, operated differently, and targeted different client groups.

The Prototypes provided a range of benefits for delivery partners and individuals. While these differed between areas, overall the individuals who had received support from the Prototypes indicated high levels of satisfaction. Individuals felt that:

- they had received a personalised service, tailored to their needs and situation;
- they had gained a greater depth and breadth of support than had been available through mainstream provision;
- their confidence had increased leading to increased resilience and capacity to manage their situations and work towards their career goals;
- they had accessed training, for instance to support their job search or develop employability skills, which had not previously been available to them.

The benefits identified by organisations in the Prototypes' networks included:

- increased knowledge of other local support services that could help their clients, making them better placed to refer clients;
- being able to play to their strengths and use specialist support in the network to improve the offer to their clients;
- being able to identify and help those who may not ordinarily engage with mainstream employment and skills provision;
- utilising the skills, experience and resources of local public, third and private sector bodies some of which were not previously engaged in employability programmes.

While 10 Prototypes were commissioned it was common for them to have developed multiple networks, including strategic 'facilitating' networks and operational 'delivery' networks. The work of these latter networks ranged from supporting all adults, to targeted support for clients with housing, health or other support needs. Their scale and composition was consequently quite varied.

What unified the Prototypes was the high demand for their services from unemployed and inactive adults including lone parents, job seekers and other benefits claimants. Often the individuals they supported were at some distance from the labour market and could be described as 'hard to reach' or 'hard to help'.

Prototypes engaged in three overlapping types of delivery. It was common for more than one of these approaches to exist in each Prototype:

- making better use of existing resources through developing: diagnostic tools and directories of local services; procedures to support inter-agency working, such as the development of a network quality standard; and awareness of local organisations and encouraging client referrals
- outreach to engage with clients through trusted, often third sector, organisations. The clients engaged through outreach did not ordinarily seek support from mainstream services; and
- support to clients not ready to access mainstream services, where the network offered a significant depth of service to individuals to improve their capacity to engage with mainstream services in the future.

The development and delivery of the Prototypes was not without challenges, however, open and regular communication between organisations helped to overcome these. Some of the challenges encountered and the countermeasures applied or suggested by the research are detailed below. These may be of interest to local bodies seeking to develop and implement local support networks.

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### **Challenges and countermeasures for developing local support networks**

<b>Challenge</b>	<b>Countermeasure</b>
<b>Partnerships and networks</b>	
Developing and gaining a critical mass on databases and directories which documented networks	Simple means to document local support organisations, such as lists of booklets, appeared as effective in practice as developing bespoke ICT referral systems; they were also less costly. Many clients wanted access to local support rather than support at a distance therefore wanted information about the support available in their patch, rather than in a larger geography.
Competition with other initiatives offering similar support or targeting the same groups	Strategic work to co-ordinate approaches, reduce duplication and increase efficiency; scoping the local support landscape and delivering to the gaps.
Not having the buy-in of key partners at an operational level	Working regionally or nationally to secure strategic buy-in, and from that trying to build local operational support.
<b>Delivery</b>	
Advisers in networks keep hold of clients rather than refer them to other organisation	Build trust between advisers in different organisations operating within the networks, for example through information-sharing events and/or a quality mark for access to the network.
Developing ICT systems to record client needs assessment and to make referrals	Simple methods were effective: use telephone to make appointments and for client handover. Advisers prefer to lead their own client diagnostic to build trust than to use the result of one undertaken by another adviser.
Finding the balance between providing intensive support and referring to specialists or the mainstream	Sharing information about different sources of support available and building trust between organisations by providing networking opportunities. Giving the client continuity of support, but not necessarily with the same person.

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*Source: IES 2010*

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Guidance policy developments

1. In recent years there have been several key developments for employment and skills guidance policy that have led to the formation of a number of initiatives, including the Advancement Network Prototypes.
2. In 2004 Lord Leitch was tasked with conducting a review of skills<sup>1</sup>. The aim of the review was to 'identify the UK's optimal skills mix in 2020 to maximise economic growth, productivity and social justice, and to consider the policy implications of achieving the level of change required'. One of his main recommendations, taken forward by the government in *World Class Skills: Implementing the Leitch Review of Skills in England* (2006), was the aim to create a new integrated employment and skills service, in order to promote career development and sustainable employment.
3. At a similar time (also in 2004), John Denham mooted the idea of Advancement Agency Networks in a lecture to the Fabian Society<sup>2</sup>. This set out a vision of working adults receiving wide-ranging advice to support their needs and to enable them to develop their working life in ways that would lead to greater personal satisfaction and productivity. A group identified for this support was low-skilled employees, receiving Working Tax Credit, who can often experience limited job satisfaction and career development. Similar to the Leitch review (ibid.), employers' needs were also considered and Denham set out that they should also receive advice about how training could increase productivity and how releasing staff for training could be managed, which is particularly important for small employers.
4. A review of Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) services was commissioned in 2005 to assess the capacity of the system to deliver. Part of this IAG review was a trial extension of the telephone guidance offered by learndirect. Subsequently this trial was expanded to form an essential part of the guidance offer in England initially under the brand of learndirect guidance and later as the Careers Advice Service (CAS). Face-to-face adult IAG continued to be delivered under the **nextstep** branding.
5. The IAG review<sup>3</sup>, joined together key government departments and agencies including Department for Education and Skills (DfES)<sup>4</sup>, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC)<sup>5</sup>,

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<sup>1</sup> Leitch Review of Skills. 'Prosperity for all in the global economy – world class skills'. See: [www.dcsf.gov.uk/furthereducation/uploads/documents/2006-12%20LeitchReview1.pdf](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/furthereducation/uploads/documents/2006-12%20LeitchReview1.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> 'Making work work: creating chances across the labour market' Downloaded, 26 April 2009 from: [www.centreforexcellence.org.uk/UsersDoc/MakingWorkWork.pdf](http://www.centreforexcellence.org.uk/UsersDoc/MakingWorkWork.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Downloaded 26 April 2009 from: <http://www.iagreview.org.uk/>

<sup>4</sup> The work of DfES was subsequently split between two departments: Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS), and Children, Families and Schools (DCSF); at the same time, DTi became the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR). More recently DIUS and BERR have merged to become the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS).

<sup>5</sup> The Learning and Skills Council was restructured under Machinery of Government changes and became the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) in early 2010.

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Department for Trade and Industry (DTi), Jobcentre Plus, Ufi and the Sector Skills Development Agency. Its findings suggested that the guidance 'market' was confusing for clients who do not know their entitlement; that those most in need of help are often those who are least likely to seek it out; and that services tend to focus on progression in learning, rather than in work and careers outcomes. The extent of referrals between organisations was found to vary between IAG delivery agencies. Key recommendations included a single client-facing service available in person, by telephone or over the internet, with strong partnership links, entitlement to a 'skills MOT' and continuing support to assist progression. Employers' needs were recognised with particular note made of integration with the Train to Gain service and Business Link which provide support to employers to identify skills needs, as well as advice on the opportunities to train and develop their workers and in some cases, funding for this training.

6. Central to these developments, was the notion of an individual being able to progress in work and learning through a process that enabled them to overcome barriers and to seek opportunities that would deliver greater life satisfaction. A means to the achievement of this was the implementation of a universal careers service for adults, from August 2010. This service was temporarily known as the 'adult advancement and careers service' (aacs) while a new brand was developed. The intention to establish it was set out in the 2007 White Paper '*Opportunity, Employment and Progression*'. A focus of this paper was necessarily the interface between welfare and skills reform. Rather than all elements of a universal service, it suggested a shift in emphasis from work to *sustainable* work, with salary levels and opportunities for personal advancement as considerations.
7. A second White Paper, '*Work Skills*' published in June 2008, moved the agenda forward with its proposals for mainstreaming Skills Accounts and introducing an entitlement for funding for a first Level 3 qualification. The key message arising from the paper was the need for close partnership working and local flexibilities, to enable the system to be driven by the needs of 'people on the ground'.
8. The prospectus for the aacs, '*Shaping the Future*', was launched in October 2008<sup>1</sup>. This set out that it would be a single service, available to everyone (those in work and those who are not, ie unemployed, inactive or retired) delivered through three channels: internet, telephone and face-to-face. It was envisaged that aacs would be holistic and combine the provision of careers advice with targeted advice about other barriers to work and learning, such as suitable and affordable childcare, transport, housing, debt, and health. The prospectus proposed that aacs link together initiatives such as Train to Gain, Skills Accounts, and the Integrated Employment and Skills trials (explained in section 1.1.2). To do this, local partners would work together as 'a flexible network, sharing information and expertise to deliver a personalised service'.
9. *Fuelling Potential*<sup>2</sup>, published in spring 2010, provided the blueprint for Skills Accounts and the aacs (see Figure 1.1). It confirmed a single brand would be established and set out that Skills Accounts would unify online services and tools in addition to offering a personal space for individuals to manage their learning. The

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<sup>1</sup> Downloaded April 2009 from:  
[www.dius.gov.uk/news\\_and\\_speeches/announcements/~//media/publications/5/5203\\_1\\_dius\\_prospectus](http://www.dius.gov.uk/news_and_speeches/announcements/~//media/publications/5/5203_1_dius_prospectus)

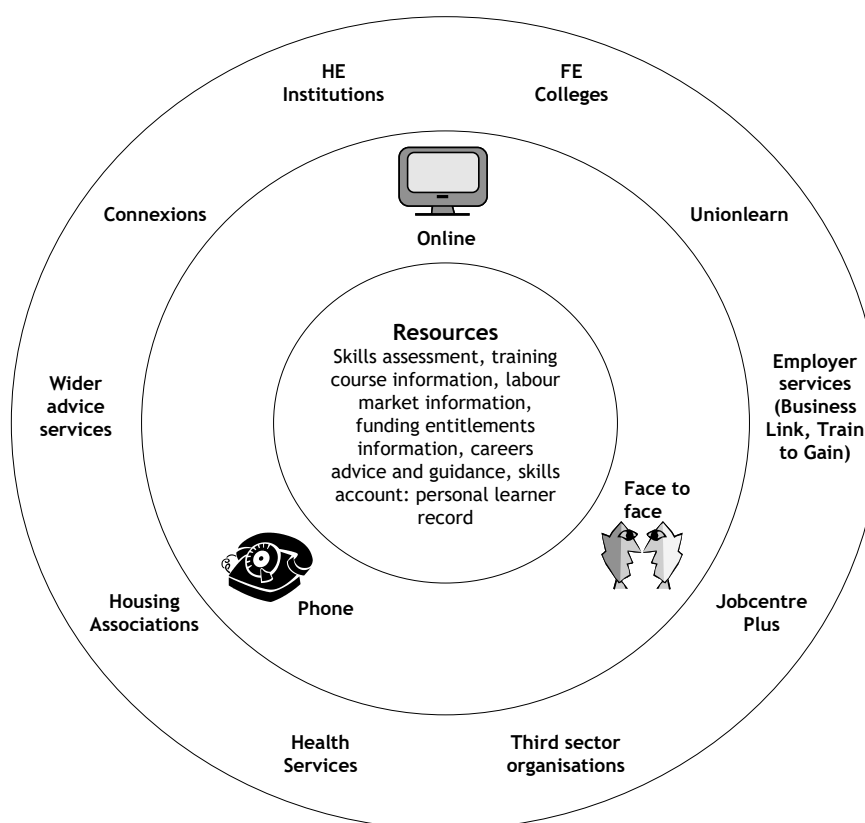
<sup>2</sup> Downloaded March 2010 from:  
<http://www.bis.gov.uk/policies/further-education-skills/skills-audit/skills-account-blueprint>



offer of personalised and client-centred support would be taken forward through a process of diagnosis to assess need, 'warm handover' between agencies, and establishment of protocols to share information.

10. The new service would aim to promote aspiration and to convey positive and motivational messages. It would aim to empower clients to improve their skills and overcome barriers. The provision of impartial and expert advice about careers and overcoming barriers, delivered by the services best placed to support individuals was seen as crucial, therefore regional and local links were critical to success.
11. To guarantee that individuals would have access to high-quality labour market information, the service would draw upon key partners, such as sectoral, regional and local bodies. Finally, *Fuelling Potential* noted the key partner role of Jobcentre Plus in ensuring that those seeking work 'receive a service from employment and skills organisations which gives them the best chance of success and responds to their needs'. The aacs and Jobcentre Plus would have distinct roles and boundaries but would be tasked to work together, with shared commitment, to support individuals' routes in sustainable employment.

**Figure 1.1: The aacs system**



Source: *Fuelling Potential*, 2010

### 1.1.1 Moving towards an adult careers service

12. In August 2010, the newly branded service became available. It is known as Next Step and is accessible in person, by telephone and over the internet. The services previously known as Careers Advice Service (CAS) and **nextstep** provide the core of this service; the internet channel was in development at the time of writing.

13. The previous administration anticipated that the local networks outlined in *Fuelling Potential* (ibid.), would require a longer development timeline, although hoped these would begin to establish from summer 2010. At the time of writing, the coalition government had yet to confirm its intentions towards the networked aspects of the service.

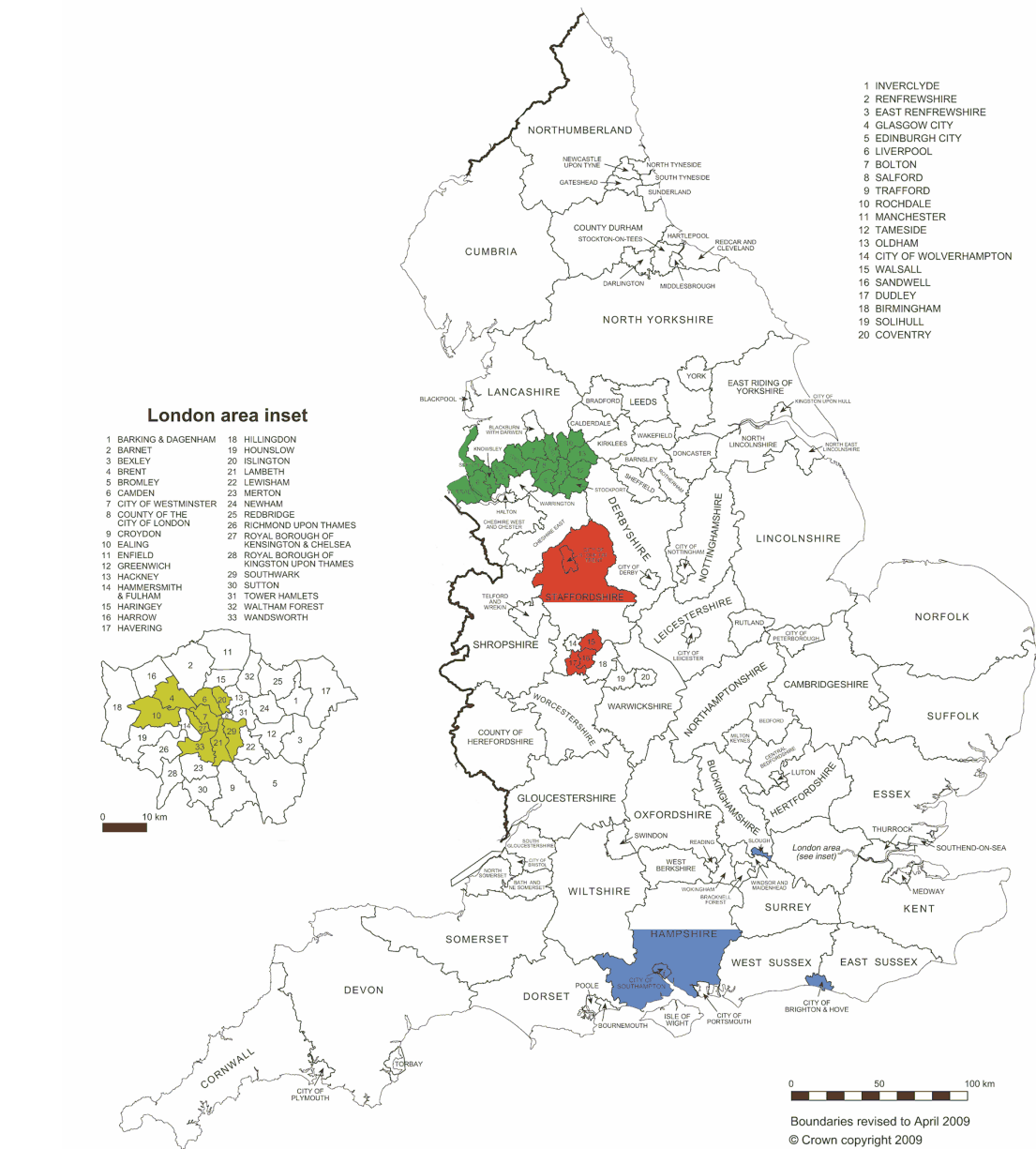
### 1.1.2 Trials for the adult careers service

14. As part of developments towards the new service, two trials were commissioned. The Integrated Employment and Skills trials led by the Department for Work and Pensions and subject to a separate evaluation, have piloted ways to integrate the provision of employment and skills advice through promoting closer links between Jobcentre Plus and what was the **nextstep** service. These trials were introduced in November 2008 and operated in 12 Jobcentre Plus districts in four regions of England. Claimants might be referred or signposted to careers advice by their Jobcentre Plus adviser at critical stages: immediately upon claim, at 13 weeks into their claim and/or after they have been receiving benefits for 26 weeks. The careers adviser delivers a Skills Health Check which diagnoses the claimant's support needs and forms the basis for advice and/or onwards referral. The approach is being taken forward under the title of 'Access to Work Focused Training'.
15. The second trial, the Advancement Network Prototypes, which is the subject of this report, tested the means through which an adult careers service might 'connect to the full range of other services that provide advice for adults on a diverse range of needs'<sup>1</sup>. The Prototypes were tasked to provide clients with access to a wide source of advice, such as childcare and benefit entitlements, and to provide access to advice sources to meet local area priorities. Figure 1.2 shows the geographical spread of the Prototypes.
16. While the new name for the national careers advice has now been introduced, at the time when the evaluation fieldwork was conducted, the telephone and face-to-face channels operated under separate brands. For this reason, and as a shorthand to differentiate between the telephone and face-to-face IAG delivery, we have used the previous brands of CAS and **nextstep** throughout this report.

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<sup>1</sup> ITT for the Advancement Network Prototypes (LSC, 2008).

**Figure 1.2: Prototypes spread across four regions of England**



- North West (Greater Manchester and Great Merseyside)
- West Midlands (Stoke on Trent, North Staffordshire and the Black Country).
- London (Brent and Ealing; Lambeth, Southwark and Wandsworth; Islington, Camden, Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea)
- South East (Brighton and Hove, South Hampshire, and Slough)

Source: IES, 2010

### 1.1.3 Overview of the Prototypes

17. The 10 Prototypes were highly diverse in their approach and aims, delivery models and leadership. A short summary for each is provided here. A detailed case study of each is contained within the technical report for this evaluation.

- The Black Country Prototype was led by a consortium of Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and had aims to help clients with housing needs to access careers, employment and skills guidance, as well as support for wider barriers.
- The Brent and Ealing Prototype operated differently in each borough. It was testing the delivery of integrated housing and employment advice. The Catalyst Housing Association was the lead body for the Prototype.
- The Brighton and Hove Prototype was local authority-led and offered a 'universal' service. This was delivered through three established hubs on deprived communities.
- The East Staffordshire Prototype aimed to develop a housing-focused network in East Staffordshire, a health-focused network in North Staffordshire, and support to ex-offenders, although this latter element did not establish. The Prototype developed an 'advancement wheel' tool for work with clients.
- The Greater Manchester Prototype was led by the **nextstep** prime contractor for the region which acted as a hub for inter-agency liaison. The 10 local authorities supported the Prototype and were tasked to develop local networks. The emphasis was on frontline staff training, establishing a referral directory, a diagnostic tool and a client relationship management system.
- The Greater Merseyside Prototype was led by Blackburne House, the lead body for the Voluntary Organisations Learning Association (VOLA), which is a consortium of 150 third sector support agencies. It aimed to demonstrate the role of the third sector in leading advancement networks and to deliver 'no wrong door' access.
- The Islington, Camden, Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea (ICWKC) Prototype had a different delivery model in each of the boroughs. Common priorities included improving the outcomes for vulnerable groups, and addressing worklessness. It had developed an 'outcomes star' for work with clients.
- The Slough Prototype was led by the Borough Council. It aimed to establish four different approaches, which it termed test beds. These were a health-focused network, one focused on supporting offenders (which did not establish), another exploring work placement as a means to support progression, and a final one offering individuals the opportunity to work with a buddy.
- The South Hampshire Prototype was based upon a sub-group of the Multi Area Agreement (MAA) formation and involved four local authorities. It built on priorities identified within the MAA and delivered a universal offer, with the same level of service to individuals, across the whole area. It worked from two new hubs, and two established hubs. Its advisers also took the Prototype's service out to communities through co-locating with organisations within each locality's networks.
- The Southwark, Lambeth and Wandsworth Prototype aimed to deliver IAG within Children's Centres and Extended Schools in order to reach parents on low incomes. The three Local Authorities contracted delivery to Women Like Us (WLU), a social enterprise which assists women to return to work following childbirth.

18. There are a few points to make about the Prototypes which aid understanding of the analysis presented in this report:

- While 10 Prototypes were commissioned, it was common for a number of approaches to exist with a Prototype. In some, this has been a deliberate strategy to test different ways of working (for instance, in Slough Prototype where four test beds, or trials, have been established). Whereas in other Prototypes this multiplicity in implementation reflects differences in strategy between local authorities which joined together for the purposes of funding (for example, Brent and Ealing, and ICWKC Prototypes).
  - Prototypes took different approaches to their involvement with supporting individuals. Most proposed to work directly with clients as part of their delivery model (eg South Hampshire, Black Country, and Slough amongst others) although a small number focused their efforts upon infrastructure for networking (eg Greater Manchester and to a lesser extent, Greater Merseyside).
  - The majority of Prototypes proposed targeted work in some regard: on particular client groups (eg housing clients in Black Country), or on particular types of barrier (eg housing, or health).
  - The scale of the Prototypes varied considerably with some operating across sub-regions (eg Greater Manchester, Greater Merseyside and South Hampshire), some located within one local authority (eg Brighton and Hove and Slough), and others offering ward-based approaches (eg some aspects of Islington, Camden, Westminster, Kensington and Chelsea Prototype).
19. These factors make it challenging to quantify the extent of different approaches, and as a result, to compare progress. The evaluation therefore seeks to identify the learning arising from the multitude of delivery styles and models and to provide information that may be useful to the operation of an adult careers service. The aims set for the evaluation, are outlined in the next section.

## **1.2 Aims for evaluating the Prototypes**

20. The purpose of the evaluation was to provide the BIS/SFA with information about:
- the ways in which the Prototypes enable people to advance; what advancement means, and how it can be measured, for different groups
  - implications for the concept and operation of the advancement networks associated with the economic downturn
  - effective joint working including planning and setting targets, managing information and referrals, communication between partners, and joint marketing
  - lessons arising from the Prototypes' work with particular groups
  - the opportunities and barriers to employer involvement in the advancement agenda
  - the extent, and ways in which, the capacity of advisers has been supported and developed to deal with a greater volume and diversity of clients
  - how 'seamless client journeys' are developed and 'no wrong door access' is implemented. This theme will include Prototypes' interaction with other initiatives such as Skills Accounts, Train to Gain, the Skills Health Check and the IES trials
  - the perceived cost-effectiveness of the Prototypes' models

- the perceived impacts of the Prototypes including the outcomes for individuals
- how the local Prototypes work with young people's services to best support transitions to adulthood to inform the development of the planned all-age strategy.

### **1.3 Evaluation methodology**

21. The evaluation was conducted across the course of three phases of research. These phases are summarised in the sections below.

#### **1.3.1 Phase 1**

22. The evaluation commenced in spring 2009 with a scoping visit to each of the Prototypes to confirm the critical issues for the research, refine the evaluation framework and the research methods, and to establish a baseline from which to assess developments. The phase comprised:

- Review of key documents covering Prototypes' proposals, operational/business plans and other relevant material.
- Interviews with between six and eight key representatives from all of the 10 operating Prototypes. This included strategic and operational managers as well as interviews with managers with responsibility for data capture.
- Interviews with 10 representatives from relevant national government departments, agencies and other interested parties which were recommended to us by the policy leads including face-to-face guidance prime contractors and regional LSC staff.

#### **1.3.2 Phase 2**

23. The focus for the Phase 2 research was to explore progress with delivery. This phase of work was completed between April and October 2009. The research comprised two days of qualitative research in each Prototype to understand the progress made strategically and 'on the ground', the opportunities and barriers to development and progress, changes and transitions in the planned delivery model, and future directions and plans.

24. As part of the research a range of staff were interviewed, as were clients. Between seven and eight in-depth interviews were completed in each Prototype. The composition of the respondent group varied by Prototype, to take account of local circumstances and arrangements, however the work in interviewees generally included:

- key strategic and management staff
- Prototype advisers and advancement experts
- advice service clients.

25. In addition, key events were attended such as adviser feedback meetings, launch events and local steering group meetings which drew together key staff involved in delivery. Further to this, some Prototypes made available local monitoring and evaluation reports, and outputs from their management information systems.

### 1.3.3 Phase 3

26. Two strands of qualitative research were undertaken as part of the third phase of the evaluation which was completed between January and March 2010.
27. Firstly, a final one-day research visit was made to each Prototype to gather perceptions of the progress made by the final stage of the funding period, and to assess the impact and sustainability of the implementations. These visits encompassed interviews with key strategic and management staff in the Prototypes.
28. The second strand of work was formed of detailed case studies in five of the Prototypes. The five selected, and the rationale for their selection, were:
  - Black Country: to focus on a Prototype which aimed to overcome housing barriers
  - Brighton and Hove: to provide information about a local authority-led Prototype operating within a Local Area Agreement
  - East Staffordshire: to focus on a Prototype which aimed to overcome health barriers
  - Greater Manchester: to provide information about a Prototype operating across a Multi Area Agreement, which was focused upon making best use of existing networks, and led by **nextstep**
  - South Hampshire: to focus on a Prototype operating across a Multi Area Agreement which offered a universal service
29. The research in each of the selected case studies varied in scope and scale, and consequently respondent types. Research was conducted across approximately five days of research in each area and included between 20 and 30 interviews with different types of respondent.
30. In four of the case study Prototypes, namely Black Country, Brighton and Hove, South Hampshire and Staffordshire, 'matched' or 'nested' case study research, centred on clients, was undertaken. These took the individual as the focus, and where they gave permission their advancement adviser and, if available, another specialist adviser who had supported them, were interviewed to gain a close understanding of how Prototype advice, and networking, supported individuals.
31. The Greater Manchester Prototype case study did not include client research since its aims were to support networking rather than work directly with individuals. Consequently, the research focused on strategic perspectives of progress, as well as gathered the perspectives of organisations involved in the networks, eg Local Authority staff, staff from advice agencies and the third sector.

### 1.4 Structure of this report

32. This report presents an analysis of the findings from the final stage of research integrating the learning arising from the previous phases. Chapter 2 provides a summary of the progress made by the Prototypes across the funding period. It considers the extent of networking that developed as well as progress made with delivery; the legacy and sustainability of the Prototypes is also considered. A fuller analysis of the progress made by the Prototypes may be found in the technical report. The technical report also contains the client tools developed by some

Prototypes and a 'pen portrait' of development in each of the 10 Prototypes. The third chapter seeks to assess the extent to which the Prototypes met the requirements of their specification and explores some policy questions that were set out for them to test. Finally, Chapter 4 sets out the lessons that emerge for development of the adult careers service and sets some risks and countermeasures for the policy.



## 2 Distance Travelled

33. In this chapter a summary of the progress made by the Prototypes is presented. This reviews their progress with establishing networks, developing infrastructure and supporting clients. The analysis commences with a review of their progress against their aims and plans. A more detailed account may be found in the technical report for the evaluation.

### 2.1 Delivering on aims and plans

34. *Shaping the Future*, the national prospectus for the adult careers service, identified five issues which could act as barriers to advancement. These were housing, health, understanding employment rights, money concerns and childcare needs; although it recognised that other types of barrier might exist. The aim of the Prototypes was to test the offer of support, and to identify if there were other barriers, where an adult careers service could make a difference.
35. While the different Prototypes targeted different groups (see section 1.1.2), a common theme was access to careers advice, in addition to support for (particular) barriers to progression. Prototypes also shared an emphasis on employment and employability. There had been little substantive change to the aims of the Prototypes during the course of their funding. However, in some the relative weight attached to different aims had changed over time.
36. These adjustments were made for a number of reasons, including the practicalities of engaging partners and the difficulties of forming effective relationships; the impact of the recession; greater demand for some services, partnerships and networks than others; and changing an ineffective delivery model.
37. The importance of project managers to rapidly respond to challenges to planned delivery, and to facilitate communication, networking and sharing of information across organisations, emerged from the research. Furthermore, working through existing partnerships structures helped to minimise the time it took to promote inter-agency approaches.

### 2.2 Strategic and operational networks

38. All Prototypes operated a strategic network which had oversight of the implementation and operational networks with responsibility for delivery.
39. The composition of the Prototype strategic networks varied a little although membership was relatively limited. It was common for participants to come from Jobcentre Plus; the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC); and Local Authorities. Depending on the barriers that were being explored and the leadership model of the Prototype, Primary Care Trusts (PCT), and organisations from the community and voluntary sector might also be part of the strategic network.
40. In contrast, operational networks were much more varied in scale and composition since the Prototypes had adopted, and evolved, very different approaches to

delivery which required different local network formations. These approaches could be described as:

- Individual agencies/caseworker: organisations adopted a caseworker or super coach approach to working intensively with a client to address their multiple needs.
  - Key partnerships: where key partners provided employability support and support for a particular barrier.
  - Thematic networks: where appropriate key partners were organised around specific areas of identified need.
  - Localised networks: networks formed by providers across a relatively small area drawing across a range of local provision to meet the multiple needs of residents.
  - Full networks: more complete networks which cross-cut themes and locality.
41. The scope of operational networks was dependent on the delivery model, with the number of organisations involved varying from single organisations, to looser networks of upwards of 40 organisations.
42. Where a larger number of services were involved, networking had been highly beneficial, if only to raise awareness amongst staff of the range of support that was available.

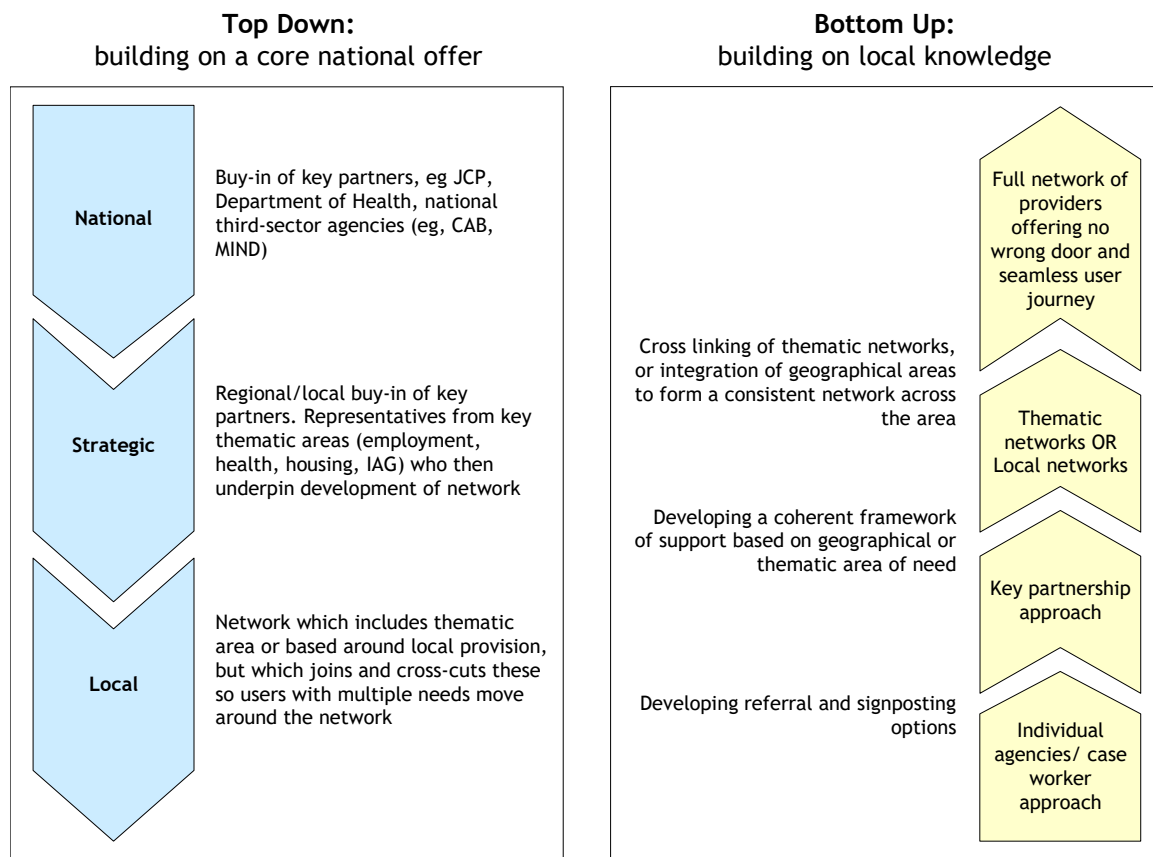
*'The Prototype has opened up the eyes of the frontline workers to just how vast the range of support is.'*

Skills Development Manager, Prototype Stakeholder

### **2.3 Lessons for developing networks**

43. The diverse network approaches suggested that while local flexibility was important, it was equally important to prescribe, to some extent, the form of strategic and operational networks. There needs to be a clear vision for, and shared understanding of, the purpose of the network.
44. The Prototypes suggest that networks may be developed through top-down or bottom-up approaches (see Figure 2.1).
- In a top-down approach, partnerships forged at national level are cascaded down to delivery level, and complemented by local provision. This has the advantage of securing the buy-in of key statutory partners, leading to a consistent offer.
  - In a bottom-up approach, networks are encouraged to grow organically through the closer integration of local organisations/services. This has the potential to be more reflective of, and responsive to, local needs.
45. In practice, a combination of approaches may be desirable. A strategic network of key statutory partners could encourage the development of local thematic, key partner and full networks in order to meet the needs of different communities or to target specific barriers. It could also provide the interface between core guidance services and localised networks and facilitate local relationships between key national agencies eg employment, health, benefits and housing.

**Figure 2.1: Approaches to network development**



Source: IES 2010

46. The evidence suggested that established partnerships, including those for Local Area Agreements (LAA) and Multi Area Agreements (MAA), and those for existing projects, provided an effective underpinning for Prototype activity. These helped to reduce duplication, increase the breadth of networks and gain buy-in from local organisations. It was apparent that established partnerships were critical to the effectiveness of 'bottom up' networks.
47. However, these existing partnerships were effective because of the extent of engagement of local partners along with a shared sense of purpose which acted to drive forward the implementation:

*'All authorities signed up to it [the MAA] ... and they [the Prototype] were able to present to very senior levels and that was about getting buy-in and ownership and understanding the context that it wasn't just a little initiative around advice and guidance.'*

Stakeholder, Greater Manchester Prototype

### 2.3.1 Working in the context of other initiatives

48. The **Integrated Employment and Skills (IES) trial**<sup>1</sup>, an initiative which promoted closer and better co-ordinated working at strategic and operational levels between Jobcentre Plus and **nextstep**<sup>2</sup>, was implemented in the same areas as four Prototypes. The extent to which the IES trials and the Prototypes were linked varied and in some areas, the two worked entirely separately. Where a link had been established there was some evidence of competition between the services having emerged. This required careful management at a strategic level, which emphasises the need for facilitation at strategic network level.

*'We have referred lots of customers to IES but we find that Fast Forward is able to move people on more and we can still refer them to IES if they still need specific employment and skills help. Fast Forward provides broader support than IES which we value such as opportunities for confidence courses but also support with other things such as housing.'*

Stakeholder, South Hampshire Prototype

49. **Total Place Pilots** explored how a 'whole area' approach to public services can lead to better services at less cost. They sought to identify and reduce duplication between organisations, thereby delivering a step change in service improvement and efficiency. One of these pilots overlapped with one of the Prototypes, however the aims of the two were not complementary since the Total Place Pilot was focused on children while the Prototype was focused on adults. This means there was no evidence to assess whether Total Place could promote efficiency within adult guidance delivery.

## 2.4 The three delivery models

50. The evaluation identified three delivery models, one or more of which were being implemented in each of the Prototypes. These models were:
- making better use of existing resources
  - engaging clients through outreach; and
  - supporting clients who were not ready to access mainstream services.
51. To make better use of existing resources the Prototypes focused on co-ordinating their networks: some developed tools and procedures to support inter-agency working while others built capacity in IAG delivery, through development of directories and referral systems. This latter approach led to the creation of data as the Prototypes recorded their knowledge of local services. This data was stored in different ways.
52. Some prototypes developed databases or directories ie formal means to record this data. Others relied upon less formal means ie advisers stored the networks through whatever means suited them. The formal procedures meant that the network was

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<sup>1</sup> The Integrated Employment and Skills Trials (IES) ended in spring 2010, however the underlying approach is being rolled out through the Access to Work Focused Training initiative.

<sup>2</sup> In August 2010, the **nextstep** branding was dismantled and the face-to-face IAG service became part of Next Step, along with the telephone IAG service formerly known as Careers Advice Service (CAS). The former brands are used in the report as a shorthand for the face-to-face and telephone elements of the core service.

recorded and accessible, and could continue to flourish when personnel left an organisation, whereas informal mechanisms meant there was a risk that the resource could be lost. However, formal databases require administrative resource to ensure their currency since this is all-important to their effectiveness. If documented networks are taken forward, consideration should be given to which organisation is best placed to co-ordinate them.

53. Some barriers were encountered to making best use of resources. These included partners' wishes to keep hold of, rather than refer clients, the level of service offered by the Prototypes and the time required to develop systems to underpin networks. Data protection was also challenging with partners unclear about the implications of the act for a networked approach. Finally, eligibility criteria might apply to some services in the network which acted to exclude certain groups eg by postcode, employment or family status.
54. The second delivery model was outreach to engage with clients through trusted organisations, not usually associated with careers IAG (see Box 1). This took place through social housing providers, Children's Centres, and community centres and generally worked well. This model demonstrated the importance of taking IAG services to communities through trusted organisations. However, other initiatives were also trialling outreach and co-location in community bases. Despite sharing similar objectives, competition had emerged between the Prototypes and these other initiatives and this took time to resolve. This indicated a need to co-ordinate approaches to reduce duplication and achieve greater efficiencies for all organisations involved.

#### **Box 1: Accessing the Prototype through outreach**

Jenni was engaged by the Prototype as a result of a home visit by an Employment Development Officer (a new role created by the Prototype in the housing association leading the initiative). The visit was scheduled to discuss her housing situation however the adviser introduced the Open Door Service (the Prototype's brand) and what it could offer as part of the discussion. Since Jenni had been made redundant 16 months previously she was keen to gain support to move back into employment. After the initial session Jenni started attending the job club at the housing association twice a week. During the sessions she could access one-to-one support from an adviser when she needed it. She preferred to access Open Reach through the housing association job club although knew that the adviser would visit her home if she preferred. Jenni appreciated having a choice about how to access the service which had made it feel flexible, friendly and informal.

55. Supporting clients not yet ready to access mainstream support services involved offering a significant depth of support, with the intention that eventually clients would achieve their aim or be ready to engage with mainstream IAG services. The intensity of the support delivered and the number of sessions needed for each client was dependent on the individual's needs. However, this delivery model led to adviser caseloads being rapidly filled as well as fewer referrals than seen in the other delivery models. 'Finding the balance' between intensive support as opposed to referral appeared challenging. Furthermore, there was a risk of replacing or duplicating other services rather than assisting individuals to engage with them.

## 2.5 Working with clients

56. The scale of the Prototypes' work with clients varied considerably. In some, close to 2,000 individuals had been supported whereas in others the number was nearer to 100. In all of the Prototypes demand was highest from workless groups and many clients were at some distance from the labour market.
57. Employed individuals formed only a small part of the Prototypes' client group and there was limited engagement with employer-facing bodies, such as Business Link: where contact had established it was on the basis of an individual's needs. It is apparent that lessons will have to be drawn from elsewhere on how best to link holistic services with employer-facing bodies and support employers and their workers.
58. Prototype advisers noted the importance of 'warm referrals' for their clients who would be unlikely to pursue specialist advice and support independently. A 'warm referral' entailed helping clients to understand the purpose and benefits of seeing a specialist adviser, and making an appointment on their behalf. In some cases, advisers would also attend initial referral appointments with clients.
59. While some Prototypes had planned to establish ICT facilitated referrals, development of these systems had taken longer than anticipated and systems were largely untested by the end of the funded period. Instead, more informal means had proved effective.
60. The analysis identified three types of Prototype client and associated need, an example of each is given in Box 2:
  - **Work-ready group:** those recently made redundant or those who had engaged in training or voluntary work. This group had clear goals, and often qualifications and experience. They approached the Prototypes to gain advice on refining to their job-seeking approach.
  - **IAG group:** this group was not work ready although did not have complex barriers to overcome. Common reasons to seek support included a need for training or development in a new work area, advice on career directions, confidence building and guidance on how to improve the presentation of their existing skills in job applications and on their CV.
  - **Complex barriers group:** This group had been unemployed for a lengthier period, and had complex barriers which hindered their (re-)engagement in work. Barriers included homelessness or insecure housing, substance misuse, health conditions and childcare problems. This group was not able to consider moving into the labour market until their barriers had been addressed. Referral to specialist provision and support was most common for this group.

## **Box 2: Examples of the three types of client**

**Work Ready:** Charlotte was employed as a care worker for the elderly. Her role involved late shifts and night shifts. She was looking for a new career direction, and asked at one of the housing associations involved in the Prototype if any work was available. This led to a frontline worker referring her to the Prototype's service. Charlotte met an adviser once and discussed her future work plans. This established that she would still like to work in the care sector but would prefer an administrative role. The adviser agreed to send Charlotte any relevant jobs she saw and also offered Charlotte a referral to careers IAG in order that she gain a better understanding of care-sector administration and the work opportunities that might exist. Charlotte did not want to take this up immediately, instead preferring to look for work under her own steam. Charlotte knew that if she needed further advice she could get back in touch with her adviser, however, she was happy with the service she received and thought it had been extremely helpful simply to have an initial discussion.

**IAG:** Rayna had worked all her life, mainly in sales, but had been made redundant 14 months prior to contact with the Prototype. She had been shocked to find she was not able to walk straight into a new job. The lengthy period without work meant that Rayna found she was unable to manage her debts and consequently had moved into a housing association property. It was through this that she started to access the services of the Prototype. Rayna wanted advice about where she was going wrong in her job search and had need of financial advice in order to manage and pay off her debts. She was unsure about the kind of work she wanted to pursue but was interested in finding employment which would enable her to help people who had been in a similar situation to her own. Rayna and her Prototype adviser explored training options. She was reluctant to pursue training due to her financial situation; however she and her adviser discussed the potential costs and benefits of training which helped. Over the course of a few months, and through regular contact with her adviser, Rayna felt able to embark on training and was looking for suitable courses. She was particularly interested in gaining IAG and/or advocacy work.

**Complex Barriers:** Jane had a mental health condition and two children with health conditions. She had been accessing an existing service at the centre from which the Prototype operated for a number of years in order to have some time out of the house. Through the Prototype she had been referred to services that had helped her to explore managing her own and her children's health conditions. She would have liked counselling support but it was too expensive and the Prototype could not find funding for it. Her Prototype adviser had offered her some basic training but Jane's health had been too poor to take this up. Jane felt that she was being supported and was happy with the service. She felt that she was making progress however was hampered by relapses in her health condition. She remained a considerable distance from the labour market.

## 2.6 Approaches to offering a universal service

61. The Prototypes indicated three concepts of a universal approach, some examples of which are given in Box 3.
- Some Prototypes had implemented a **universally accessible** service which aimed to support individuals from a range of backgrounds and circumstances. The majority of their clients, however, were either unemployed or inactive adults. It was reported that it was possible to assist any individual since the ethos was to refer clients to the most appropriate support or provision.
  - Another interpretation of universality was the offer of a **'complete' service** to clients, which could assist with a range of needs. Advisers acted as a central point for support, and through the Prototype, clients were able to access services that would help them. However, Prototypes could not facilitate access to the services that some people needed because of the eligibility criteria that operated in relation to postcode, employment or family status.
  - A further definition of universal was the offer of **as much or as little support as a client needed**. It was apparent that support might range from a five-minute update every few weeks to a lengthy, one-to-one session on a weekly basis. In this latter approach the intensity of support could lessen over time as barriers were overcome and plans for progression came to fruition. It was apparent that clients appreciated someone they could update about their situation, even if they had progressed into work, training or a voluntary position.

### **Box 3: Examples of 'universal' support**

#### ***Referral in order to progress work goals***

Chris was a young man (under the age of 25) who had left school with Level 2 qualifications and had entered a further education performing arts course following school. He withdrew from the course when his partner became pregnant, in order to find work to help support his child. He found a casual security job, however, due to the recession the work had dried up. Chris was ambitious and had a number of ideas for a career. His main aim was to become an actor but he was also interested in starting his own business to offer safe-sex workshops for schools targeted at young men. His Prototype adviser admitted she was a bit puzzled about how to progress with these aims, since they were quite specific and unusual. The adviser decided to refer Chris to the Prince's Trust, and through their services he had been able to develop a business plan, and start making contacts which would enable him to forge a network within local schools to offer the workshops. Through the local network developed by the Prototype the adviser was able to refer Chris to a service that could offer support with unusual employment requests.



### ***Referral to personal development***

Steve was a young man who was outwardly confident and had a number of qualifications in photojournalism. His career aim was to move into the police force. Through regular meetings with his adviser Steve eventually disclosed that he suffered from depression and anxiety. He had previously had a stint as a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) however had left this job because it did not meet his expectations, and he had suffered a relapse in his mental health condition. While working with his Prototype adviser it became apparent that despite appearing confident, Steve had very low levels of self-esteem and had not fully recovered from his depression. To address his needs, the adviser persuaded Steve to join a local job club in order to meet new people, get out of the house and start to build his confidence. Group support was working for Steve and he was gradually building up his confidence. The relationship developed with his adviser meant he felt comfortable to disclose when he was having periods of depression which meant he could be better supported.

## **2.7 Adviser roles and trust**

62. The provision of 'holistic' support and advice was a key part of Prototype advisers' roles. Their work involved the delivery of one-to-one support to clients, although some experimented with group sessions on occasion to manage demand. In many respects, advisers acted as a 'key worker' for clients. This has implications for the 'no wrong door' concept since it was apparent that advisers were providing 'the right door' and co-ordinating the client's experience rather than relying purely upon inter-agency working.

*'Those referrals are not that we are referring people to provider X for support, it's more that we're referring people and then they're coming back to us, it's parallel.'*

Adviser, Southwark, Lambeth and Wandsworth Prototype

63. Advisers reported the importance of establishing a bond and developing trust with clients. The quality of support and provision that individuals were referred to was critical since advisers required reassurance that their client relationship would not be jeopardised by poor service in another agency. This could have the effect of limiting the services advisers worked with, and could lead to a reliance on key partner networks formed of a small group of trusted organisations. This also drove the use of 'warm referrals' since these were more likely to guarantee a smooth transition for clients.

*'We have developed a service that has managed to engage people from a number of backgrounds – our success came around because we were not so much target focused, we were able to spend quite a bit quality time with clients and were able to follow up clients who didn't turn up to appointments as opposed to agencies who are more target focused [but] haven't got the time to follow those up.'*

Black Country Prototype

## 2.8 Infrastructure developments

64. The Prototypes took a number of approaches to developing the infrastructure for the delivery of their services. These included the development of community and city/town centre hubs (physical centres for the location of advice services with co-located services), development of advice service directories, management information systems, and tools to assist the client and adviser.
- The evidence suggested that different approaches to co-location in advice hubs were appropriate depending upon the aims of the network. Where a universally accessible service operated, it was appropriate to co-locate a larger number of agencies in order to meet diverse needs. Where the network was targeted, a tailored range of agencies could work together. This latter model linked more strongly to the aims of thematic and key partner networks.
  - The tools developed and used by some Prototypes to 'diagnose' needs required clients to review and score different aspects of their situation with their adviser. It was anticipated that clients would take the tool to referral appointments where it would be reviewed and updated. Results were mixed. Positively, the tools provided a means to link the holistic support which the Prototypes delivered. However, client feedback indicated that some aspects were intrusive since they extended beyond immediate needs. Furthermore, clients might not take the tool to referral appointments and if they did the specialist might not have the time available to complete it with them.
  - Other tools developed or used by Prototypes included tailored job descriptions relevant to the local labour market and client group; Better Off in Work Calculations (BOWC); and the CSCS (Construction Skills Certification Scheme) practice software. Some of these risked duplicating existing sources, for instance there is a wealth of job profiles available from the DirectGov website.
  - The development of ICT-facilitated advice service directories was subject to delays and the two Prototypes which had focused on developing these had yet to fully launch their systems. Challenges surrounded: gaining a 'critical mass' of organisations registered on the systems to make them worthwhile; encouraging advisers to use the systems rather than rely on existing ways of working; and the resource required to keep systems up to date.
  - A variety of methods were used to record management information. Most Prototypes recorded clients' needs and action plans. However, Prototypes did not record client 'journeys' and soft outcomes (ie referrals and distance travelled), which may have been the key outputs from their work.

## 2.9 Sustainability and future plans

65. Three approaches emerged to the continuation of the Prototypes' work: one group was looking towards incorporation into the adult careers service; the second was seeking alternative funding to enable continuation and the third would cease to operate and instead would 'signpost' clients to other initiatives.
- Prototypes which were looking towards incorporation into the careers service were seeking to transfer capacity to the core through a subcontracting arrangement. However, these did not know the result of their bids to subcontract the service nor whether the service would be commissioned in the guise envisaged prior to the election in spring 2010.

- Some Prototypes had secured alternative sources of funding which enabled some continuation of their service. Sources included welfare to work funding, and funding from local authorities. These brought a new set of priorities into their work and could constrain the ability to continue the comprehensive service that had previously developed.
- Other Prototypes reported that without funding their work could not continue. Transition arrangements were made eg by placing clients with, or signposting them to, other services such as employment and skills initiatives funded by local authorities. While these other services may not have offered the depth or breadth of service that the Prototypes had, this arrangement suggests that local support mechanisms could have been better utilised during the funded period.

## 2.10 Perceived impacts

66. Perceived impacts of the Prototypes' services included lessons about ways of working to broaden access to IAG and other support, improved quality of service, and enhanced systems for networking. By the end-stage of funding, advisers had achieved qualifications and organisations had received or were working towards accreditation in a quality standard. Through these means the Prototypes had enhanced and increased the capacity in IAG services.
67. Client feedback was very positive. It was apparent that many had been struggling alone with the barriers prior to the Prototypes' implementation. Gaining support and access to advice on careers in addition to their other barriers therefore had a high impact. Important to clients was the non-mandatory nature of the support, and support delivered in trusted environments. The support offered helped individuals to resolve many of their own challenges, to engage with mainstream services and to move closer to the labour market.
68. Many Prototype stakeholders reported '*a real desire*' to sustain relationships within their networks, since the benefits of the approach were well recognised; however some were fearful that without resource to facilitate the networks, momentum would be lost.

*'It's been a real eye opener to see how many clients are coming through the door [of children's centres] in such a short space of time. That's been a real success and something we'd like to integrate into our work going forward'.*

Prototype Manager

## 3 Meeting the Prototype Specification

### 3.1 The Prototypes' specification

69. The specification for the Prototypes set out suggestions and ambitions for the way in which they would work to enhance access to advice for adults, and to improve and strengthen inter-agency and partnership working. The specification was not prescriptive and it allowed local areas, through different types of partnership and models of delivery, to develop innovative solutions tailored to the needs of their communities.
70. It was envisaged that the Prototypes would reflect the context of Local Area and/or Multi Area Agreements (LAA/MAA), and focus on integrating the range of advisory services (to include as a minimum: advice on housing, employment rights, childcare, health as well as skills and jobs) and align these with the work of Jobcentre Plus and neighbourhood strategies. By joining up advisory services, Prototypes would bring about improvements to tackling community disadvantage, raising aspirations, addressing barriers to progression and enabling individuals to reach their full potential.
71. The Prototypes would be relevant to the whole population and provide links into business, the workforce, community development activities and young people's careers services (eg Connexions Service but also Further and Higher Education advice services). A key feature of the approach was to establish 'no wrong door' access to advice on skills and careers, and to ensure individuals could quickly access a range of advisory services no matter which organisation they used as their initial entry point.
72. Local determination meant that advancement networks could be set up in different ways which might include: advancement experts acting as a focal point in the wider system of advice; development of service standards across careers and wider advice services; and/or full or partial co-location of careers and wider advice services. Through the operation of the Prototypes, it was hoped good practice would emerge which could be carried forward into the adult advancement and career service (aacs) on issues surrounding:
  - the effectiveness of different approaches in improving access to advice, supporting individuals and enabling them to 'advance'
  - linking the work of different agencies through networks and co-location
  - the groups who most benefit from the support offered, and the impacts they experience.
73. The criteria for the assessment of the bids to implement Prototypes included the role and commitment of local authorities and evidence of joint investment. Further to this, judgements were made with regard to:

- innovative approaches to improving access for **nextstep**<sup>1</sup> clients to advice on overcoming the full range of potential barriers to learning and work
  - strong partnership and commitment to joint working between advice agencies, working with Jobcentre Plus, and the third sector
  - built-in development of capacity/capability to develop a sustainable approach.
74. There was also recognition that Prototype models needed the opportunity to change as they embedded within their localities since this would enable them to learn from, and develop on the basis of their experience. In the following sections, we explore the extent to which the Prototypes provided the learning indicated by their specification.

### 3.2 Links to Local and Multi Area Agreements

75. The Local Area and Multi Area Agreements (LAA/MAA) had been used by many Prototypes to identify groups and barriers to target. The evidence suggested that the partnerships established for LAA/MAA provided an effective underpinning for Prototype activity. It was apparent that there was potential to avoid or reduce duplication by working through these partnerships and to increase the breadth of network through the partnership's reputation. However, other types of pre-existing partnership had been as effective in supporting the Prototypes' work and to reducing the time needed to gain the co-operation of key agencies and services.
76. There was evidence that LAA/MAA structures might have better supported some Prototypes by providing links to mainstream partners such as Jobcentre Plus, and promoting greater similarities in the offer across local authority boundaries. However, unless there was some level of interest for cross-boundary working the Prototypes did not provide sufficient impetus for local authorities to work together.
77. What was more apparent to the Prototypes was that they needed a funding source to continue their work. By the final stage, however, it was unclear in many cases whether MAA/LAA or other partnerships were able or intended to release resource to them. This may indicate that Prototypes did not demonstrate sufficiently the cost effectiveness of their approach. An alternative view might be that there is not sufficient policy direction to lead these partnerships to prioritise the Prototypes' work.
78. Furthermore, no clear picture emerged about the desirability of cross-boundary working over work within a local authority (or smaller geographic area). The larger, often MAA-supported Prototypes showed greater consistency of service and offered flexibility in their activities 'on the ground' which allowed some tailoring to the needs of local communities. Smaller-scale implementations appeared as appealing to their communities and stakeholders as larger-scale ones. What can be said with more certainty is that local authorities had a key role in determining the support necessary for the community, linked to local employment and skills priorities and in facilitating networks.

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<sup>1</sup> In August 2010, the **nextstep** branding was dismantled and the face-to-face IAG service became part of Next Step, along with the telephone IAG service formerly known as Careers Advice Service (CAS). The former brands are used in the report as a shorthand for the face-to-face and telephone elements of the core service.

### 3.3 Linking to statutory agencies

79. At a strategic level, most Prototypes had established links with statutory agencies, although 'the mix' of partners varied in each according to the aims and targets. Strategic networks frequently included some but not all of the following: Local Authorities, Jobcentre Plus, the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC), Primary Care Trusts (PCT), and organisations from the community and voluntary sector.
80. It was apparent that certain partners were highly valuable in the strategic network. In addition to Local Authorities, Jobcentre Plus involvement strategically and 'on the ground' was important since the majority of clients supported by the Prototypes were unemployed or inactive. Jobcentre Plus and the benefits agencies could be a source of referral; more importantly, these agencies provided some of the specialist advice clients required. It was apparent that Prototypes could support clients to better navigate these agencies' systems. Furthermore, close liaison with Jobcentre Plus could avoid duplication of effort and thereby deliver efficiencies. This particularly applied to outreach work in Children's Centres and community venues. The analysis of network models suggests that links forged at a strategic level tended to facilitate more consistent practice locally, although in practice even where this existed it was apparent that there could be conflicts and duplication, dependent on local staff interest.
81. Links with **nextstep** varied considerably across the Prototypes. While the specification set out that the Prototypes would test 'innovative approaches to improving access for **nextstep** clients to advice on overcoming the full range of potential barriers to learning and work' it was apparent that referrals from **nextstep** to the Prototypes had not taken hold. This might be attributed to a lack of strategic and/or local links. It appeared that **nextstep** services could have worked more closely with the Prototypes. Similarly, the extent to which Prototypes referred clients to **nextstep** was highly variable. Across the piece the relationship with **nextstep**, which is part of the core for the adult careers service, was under-developed.
82. Working with **nextstep** is a key consideration in avoiding the duplication of mainstream services. If this is put in the context of the new competency frameworks which envisage a tiered system of advisers, **nextstep** careers IAG is the key professional source for face-to-face careers guidance. However, many Prototypes had created careers IAG capacity by funding the qualification of staff. It was unclear how this additional capacity would be used in the future. It was also apparent that Prototypes were well placed to provide the 'para-professional' support envisaged by the new standards, and a key worker role to support clients to access **nextstep** (in the professional role), and ongoing support once they had. Overall, it appeared there was opportunity for Prototypes to capitalise further on links with **nextstep** and vice versa.
83. The Prototypes lacked knowledge of the Careers Advice Service (CAS)<sup>1</sup> and none had made formal links to it. Advisers reported that a telephone service would not be appropriate for their clients, who were often 'hard to reach', 'hard to help', lacked confidence and resources, and lacked the drive to seek careers IAG without support. These concerns have validity and reinforce findings from other research

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<sup>1</sup> In August 2010, the Careers Advice Service and **nextstep** brands were dismantled and these services were united under the brand of Next Step.

exploring the provision of guidance to disadvantaged and marginalised adults<sup>1</sup>. It was apparent, however, that more Prototypes could have made use of CAS resources available through the DirectGov website which would have avoided duplication of effort and gone some way to empowering individual clients to become more self-supporting in future.

84. Looking forward to the adult careers service it is difficult to envisage how CAS would link to networks unless these can be scoped and documented into a resource similar to the 'learning opportunities' database<sup>2</sup>. However, the diversity and fluidity of the Prototypes and their networks, in their scale and footprint, suggest it would be challenging to implement such an approach. That issue aside, it may be the case that the client groups for the CAS and networked services are quite different. CAS clients, having independently sourced IAG through telephoning CAS, may be able to source any 'holistic' support they need if they are supplied with information about which national organisation to contact ie through signposting. The effectiveness of this would require testing as research undertaken for CAS<sup>3</sup> indicated that the response locally of national organisations can vary which may undermine signposting as a response to individual's needs. At present, there is a lack of evidence to determine policy recommendations in this regard.
85. To support networks for the adult careers service, it is likely that national facilitation will be needed, in order to: link with statutory agencies; ensure greater consistency in composition and coverage of needs; and ensure support from those best placed to deliver it. This will avoid duplication of effort. However, the scale of networks requires consideration for example, to determine: the nature of any connection between networks and CAS and how this can be managed; and how relationships might be strengthened with **nextstep**.

### **3.4 Linking networks of wider agencies**

86. While established partnerships had provided effective underpinning to networks, it was beneficial to scope local services in order to support the broader aims of the Prototypes' work. Most advisers and hubs had a network of some form, although this required extension to meet the needs of the Prototypes. Time invested in this activity had reaped benefits for the Prototypes, although the resource required for this work should not be under-estimated. It was apparent that some networks continued to flourish and grow across the Prototypes' funding period, in part driven by high demand for, and increasing awareness of, the network's operation. As the Prototypes gained knowledge of the different agencies available to support individuals locally, and the quality of that support, it led to the better use of existing resources through referrals.
87. What undermined this, however, was the limited resource of some key agencies, for example the Citizens Advice Bureau which is a trusted source of financial advice, Further Education (FE) colleges for learning/training advice and Primary Healthcare Trusts for health advice. The challenges were linked to the (limited) scale of some

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Hawthorn R, Alloway J (2009), *Smoothing the path: advice about learning and work for disadvantaged adults*, funded by City and Guilds Centre for Skills Development and CfBT Education Trust.

<sup>2</sup> The challenges of maintaining the learning opportunities system cannot be overlooked.

<sup>3</sup> Newton B, Page R, Oakley J, Rahim N (2009), *Careers Advice Service: Progression Insight*, Learning and Skills Council (unpublished report).

operational networks and the lack of resource in these organisations to extend their work. Some larger, universal networks overcame this by using alternative sources eg financial advice through credit unions and IVA<sup>1</sup> providers. However, the smaller networks were more reliant upon these organisations. It may be the case that a strategic network, such as the LAA/MAA, could have facilitated more effective links with these key organisations. However, it is unclear what could guarantee that a resource would be made available in organisations to support the Prototypes' clients and a 'warm referral' approach.

88. Using formal means to allow organisations into the Prototypes' networks had mixed results. The first four elements of the Matrix accreditation worked well in one Prototype and acted as a quality badge, whereas in another establishing Service Level Agreements with wider agencies had proved to be problematic. More Prototypes had taken forward informal links and had experienced few difficulties. These links had resulted from initial work to scope services and continued liaison led by Prototype advisers.
89. Inter-agency working gathered momentum as the benefits for clients and organisations became apparent; this was demonstrated by cross-referral within the network. Wider agencies valued a service that focused on employment, skills and progression and provided the interface with other areas of holistic support, since this often sat well with their own objectives. It was also apparent that it was an efficient way of working, enabling Prototype and specialist agency advisers to play to their strengths and use alternative sources where issues were outside their remit.

### **3.5 Achieving 'no wrong door' access and developing referral systems**

90. The 'no wrong door' approach that most frequently emerged might be better described as 'through right door' approach. This involved passing clients into the Prototypes where their case would be co-ordinated by an adviser. Linking this concept to the new competency frameworks, the Prototypes demonstrated how frontline staff could signpost and refer clients to more specialised staff (often matched to the new 'para-professional' role) who would lead a diagnosis and arrange onward referral, to other para-professionals or to guidance 'professionals'. Most Prototypes operated a system of warm referrals. The warm referral system required Prototype staff to make contact with a specialist and make an appointment on behalf of the client. In some cases, Prototype staff would accompany the client to their specialist appointments. This has significant resource implications for Lifelong Learning UK's (LLUK's) para-professional role.
91. Where a broader 'networked' approach had been proposed the evidence was as yet unclear about impact and effectiveness for the 'no wrong door' approach. In one example, a hub which brought together over 25 different advice organisations had been operating only a short time by the final stage of the evaluation, although early indications suggested it promoted efficiency. In two other Prototypes, ICT systems to support larger networks had yet to launch fully which undermined an examination of effectiveness: although clients were being supported in these examples, their 'journey' was not facilitated by, or recorded on, the ICT system.
92. As statutory and wider agencies became knowledgeable about the Prototypes and saw the impacts of their work on clients, referrals into the Prototype became more frequent. As organisations understood the benefits of inter-agency working, this led

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<sup>1</sup> An 'Individual Voluntary Arrangement' to manage debt.



to their support of clients who had entered the Prototype through other doors. The evidence suggested that informal means of referral, for instance through a telephone call, worked as effectively as formal means (although the evaluation was unable to compare these to ICT-facilitated referrals for the reasons noted above).

93. There was mixed success in the implementation of tools to support the client journey: action planning between Prototype advisers and clients worked well and Client Relationship Management or Management Information (CRM or MI) systems such as Meganexus and PDMTracker<sup>1</sup> had been effective in supporting this. The 'needs analysis' tools (see section 2 of the technical report) were effective where trust had established between the Prototype advisers and the clients, however, use of these tools was low among the specialists to whom clients might be referred. This was a result of clients choosing not to share the tool with specialists, and to specialists' use of other systems and lack of resource to integrate another into their sessions. Furthermore, specialists preferred to lead their own diagnosis session with the client, as a means to build trust, rather than rely on information supplied by someone else in the network. Combined, the evidence suggests that sharing extensive information to create a 'seamless' client journey is unnecessary to a 'no wrong door' approach.
94. More generally, it appeared that networks may be better supported through information-sharing and awareness-raising among advisers, with less focus on (ICT) systems to share client information or information about local service provision.

### **3.6 Supporting and resourcing networks**

95. It was apparent that networking demanded support, which had been led by Prototype staff and project managers. In the early stages, the work involved the scoping of local support and provision. Once contact had been established with support agencies, ongoing resource was needed to raise awareness of other local organisations and the Prototypes' services in order for inter-agency working to gather impetus. This resource covered training and information-sharing events for local partners.
96. Other resources required by the Prototypes' approaches included those to finance hubs and their associated overheads. This applied to the existing hubs of third sector organisations as well as newly established advice centres. One Prototype had developed an innovative funding model whereby co-located organisations paid a small annual fee, to supplement the 'core' funding made available by the two key partners (an FE College and Local Authority). This may provide a model for co-located networks, however also indicates that some funding is a requirement to operate hubs.

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<sup>1</sup> Client tracking software developed for use by **nextstep**

## 4 Lessons for networked and integrated support

97. The Prototypes were commissioned by a Labour Government which had a vision for an adult advancement and careers service (aacs) supported by networks. The Labour Government commissioned the core service which launched in August 2010. This unifies the services previously known as: **nextstep**, which will provide face-to-face IAG, and the Careers Advice Service, which will provide telephone and web-based IAG.
98. The May 2010 election resulted in a Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition government, which has different priorities than the former government. At the time of writing, policy was in transition and public spending cuts were being negotiated. There was a commitment to an adult careers service, but a lack of information about the role of networks, the 'advancement' concept and an integrated approach to employment and skills. Prior to the coalition agreement, an all-age careers service was proposed by the Conservative policy, a concept which was supported by the Liberal Democrats. However, it is as yet unclear whether the coalition will pursue this. Without firm information about policy direction it is challenging to draw out the lessons from the Prototypes.
99. With this, and potential funding reductions in mind, this section reviews the concept of advancement and then explores the potential lessons arising from the Prototypes' implementation for an adult or all-age careers service.

### 4.1 The advancement concept

100. The term advancement gained prevalence as a result of John Denham's lecture to the Fabian Society in 2004, and it was Denham who oversaw the development of the Prototypes when he was Secretary of State at the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills. While advancement draws upon similar themes to the Leitch review, specifically the integration of employment and skills policies, its definition is broader. Self-improvement was a key dimension and Denham made it clear that advancement would encompass all aspects of life, although there was an emphasis on improving working lives through addressing under-employment, improving work conditions, enabling people to attract better pay and to enter sustainable employment.

*'The paths to self-improvement ... are likely to be complex and different for each individual. People are starting from very different types of employment; different levels of skills; and different senses of what they can achieve ... In short, it is a challenging task for anyone to undertake, let alone someone who lacks the confidence and self-belief to think they can move forward.'*

'Making work work: creating chances across the labour market',  
John Denham Lecture to The Fabian Society, 2004

101. A core service, focused on careers, employment and skills, with enablers surrounding it, was proposed by a national level stakeholder and many others agreed with this view:

*'At its core is careers, jobs and skills but it has to include health as well as change and it has to be able to help anyone ... it's hard to define ... It's a broad offer and the target is everyone – those who feel they have a need and those who are ok but want the service when they find out it's available.'*

National Stakeholder

102. A number of stakeholders stated or implied a *'social justice and well-being'* element to advancement whereby individuals could be supported to work towards greater life satisfaction. This could include learning for its own sake, rather than for career development.
103. Denham's advancement speech was made at a time of high employment and the change in the economic climate that took place during the time the Prototypes were operating is one issue that national stakeholders felt had affected the understanding of the advancement concept in its operation: *'due to economy there is a shift from advancement in life to sharper focus on employment and skills'*. There was consensus, however, that advancement will mean different things to different people, depending on their situations and aspirations.
104. What was clear was that no single notion of advancement governed the implementation of the Prototypes. There was consensus about the need to be able to provide a holistic service that could link together the different types of advice that individuals required and there was understanding that advancement will mean different things for different client groups. Underpinning this was an agreement, in part as a result of the recession, that the priority for advancement was movement towards, into or upwards in the labour market.

**Question 1:** Has advancement in its most holistic sense still got a place in light of the recession and public spending reductions? It is apparent that the Prototypes were focused upon advancement in or to work rather than some of the 'wider life' concerns of the original concept. Should the focus of public funding be on the potential benefits for the economy and therefore give a greater emphasis to employment and learning outcomes linked to careers? Or in a fair society, that promotes social mobility, should all individuals who want to move forward, no matter how far they are from the labour market, be supported to advance? If 'advancement' is a term that still has some traction, what can be learned from the Prototypes?

## **4.2 Lessons arising for network-based approaches**

105. This section summarises the lessons arising from the Prototypes for the development of network-based approaches. The lessons presented are dependent on the delivery models followed by the Prototypes. We start by exploring the areas where the Prototypes have been able to provide some learning for the adult careers service and following this identify some gaps in learning presented by their implementation.

### **4.2.1 Target groups and barriers: the depth of service required**

106. Bottom-up network development, and local determination of priorities, led some Prototypes to identify a need to provide an additional, significant depth of support to some target groups. These Prototypes created new service levels rather than

providing linkages between existing services. The organisations delivering the Prototypes tended to work with individuals that were some distance from the labour market and who had significant barriers to work. Several of the Prototypes targeted specific client groups, for example: people with mental health issues; parents; or residents on a specific housing estate.

107. Currently the core IAG service offers an individual a limited number of advice sessions, and limited duration appointments with their adviser. *Fuelling Potential* outlined a number of national priority groups for intensive and ongoing face-to-face work. Many of these, such as people with mental health conditions, people claiming out of work benefits, and low-skilled adults are those that have been supported by the Prototypes. The Prototypes suggest that the depth of service offered by the core IAG service is insufficient for these client groups.
108. The sustainability of the in-depth service models operated by Prototypes is unclear. Some have now ceased delivery, whereas others have accessed other funding streams to enable continuation. It is likely that organisations outside the mainstream will continue to access funding on an ad-hoc, project basis to work with these client groups, but it is questionable, given the current funding environment, whether this depth of service could be supported by the adult careers service. The evidence from the Prototypes suggests that even if the core IAG service provided this depth of service, outreach is necessary to lead hard-to-reach clients to use services, and this is most effectively led by trusted organisations within local communities.

#### 4.2.2 Links to the core

109. Limited evidence was available about integration between the Prototypes and **nextstep**<sup>1</sup>. While one Prototype was managed by the **nextstep** prime contractor<sup>2</sup>, many more had not established any link to the service. It was also apparent that a linkage with **nextstep** established in one locality of a Prototype did not guarantee this relationship would roll out across the patch.
110. Furthermore, the extent and effectiveness of the relationship with **nextstep** depended upon the design of the Prototype. Some Prototypes provided 'wrap-around' services for clients accessing Jobcentre Plus and **nextstep** advice services, whereby advisers supported the individuals before, during and after they accessed core IAG services. In others, the intention was to work with clients until they were able to access mainstream services, and could be referred onwards. Other Prototypes rarely accessed the services offered by the core careers, employment and skills advice organisations, for their clients.
111. For these reasons, it is worth considering whether cross-referrals are expected between core services and local networks, and how this would work. At a local level partners described how there needed to be a common sense of purpose to hold interest in and shape involvement in networks. The same is likely to be true of the interface between local networks and the core IAG services. There will need to be a

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<sup>1</sup> In August 2010, the **nextstep** branding was dismantled and the face-to-face IAG service became part of Next Step, along with the telephone IAG service formerly known as Careers Advice Service (CAS). The former brands are used in the report as a shorthand for the face-to-face and telephone elements of the core service.

<sup>2</sup> In Greater Manchester, **nextstep** acted as the hub of Prototype activities and worked with the 10 local authorities in the sub-region.

level of trust and understanding about what each service can provide and the potential benefit for clients of inter-agency working.

### 4.2.3 Networks

112. The boundaries of Prototypes implementing large network-based models typically mirrored those of previously established MAA geographies and the scale of the network was influenced by these partnerships. However, localised operational networks had flourished beneath these cross-boundary strategic networks. This suggests that rather than region-wide approaches to contracting networks (for example mirroring the **nextstep** Prime Contract model), a more local and varied approach might be appropriate. If a region-wide approach was administratively desirable, then an expectation should be set for the region-wide contractor to establish and mobilise 'local satellite' or sub-regional networks in order to ensure that localised solutions are achieved.
113. The Prototypes were instructive about the different layers of network that may be required. The Prototypes demonstrated that effective networking was required at a strategic level, involving Local Authorities and their departments, Jobcentre Plus, **nextstep**, and health and/or other services (depending on the barriers targeted), and practice could be cascaded down to delivery level from these. However, other aspects of the Prototypes' work illustrated that local networking may also be required particularly to develop the optimal mix of partners for each locality, and to ensure the engagement of small, and often, third sector organisations and services.

### 4.2.4 Resourcing

114. *Fuelling Potential* stated that, if resources allowed, the Skills Funding Agency would provide some funding, in each region of England to support the establishment of networks. This would cover initial investment in staffing and support, with the aim that the networks would become self-sustaining over time. The availability of this funding will depend on future government spending plans, and has not been confirmed.
115. Understanding the cost-effectiveness of Prototypes' delivery is problematic given their different emphases on client groups, differing intentions towards intensive support and different aspirations for infrastructural development. Also, complicating any analysis is separating their effect when they have drawn on other resources such as LAA/MAA, or worked through other existing partnerships. The way in which the funding has been used to extend established project working, or pooled into funding pots within Local Authorities to support adviser roles, further complicates any assessment.
116. The funding awarded to the Prototypes tends to have been used to cover staff costs (eg of advancement advisers), the expansion of the service into new physical access points, or for the development of infrastructure, such as ICT-facilitated advice directories and client relationship management systems. A significant amount of time and resources from partners of the Prototypes has been invested to support these developments. Several of the Prototypes have not been sustainable beyond the lifetime of the funding period, whereas others have found new sources of funding to support their activities. None has continued without securing additional funding or contracts. Combined, this evidence implies that the services the Prototypes have been delivering need financial resources.

117. Depending on the vision for networks, it may be possible for an existing organisation to support and lead the network and if the benefits of participation to partners are perceived to be substantial enough (for example in the number of referrals or better access to support for clients) then they may contribute the time of their staff in kind. This was the case in the Greater Manchester case study where Local Authorities committed resources to support the development of local networks. However, not all of the Local Authorities could support the required level of investment and this clearly risks a patchwork approach.
118. Defining the purpose and remit of a network may help to gain the buy-in of organisations. The most successful and widest reaching networks in the Prototypes seem also to have been underpinned by shared resources; the development and maintenance of these had a cost associated with them.

**Question 2:** The Prototypes had mixed success in developing the type and scale of networks envisaged by national policy. In light of this, the cost effectiveness of their approaches is not clear. Should networks continue to be a priority with limited public resources? How might they operate with limited (or no) funding?

#### 4.2.5 Gaps in learning from the Prototypes

119. Some Prototypes did not appear to have a good understanding of national policy with regard to the previous administration's plans for an adult advancement and careers service and the place of networks. This may have been a result of the opportunity they had to develop local solutions. However, it may also suggest that national and local concepts of what is required in adult guidance services are not entirely complementary.
120. This has some relevance to the development model that may be taken forward (see section 2.3). If a top-down approach were pursued it might encourage greater consistency whereas a bottom-up model might be more responsive to local needs and priorities. It is in part due to this that the Prototypes did not provide learning about how to network and link with some key organisations' national policy intended to be part of the adult careers service. These include:
- Careers provision in Higher and Further Education (strategic and/or operational relationships had taken hold in only a small minority of localities<sup>1</sup> which constrained learning that might arise about facilitating factors for this, also the benefits and drawbacks of such linkages).
  - Young people's services, particularly about how transitions would be managed between young person and adult services. If the new coalition government goes ahead with an all-age careers service, the Prototypes will not be able to offer any significant learning on how to go about this.
  - The full range of adults which would include employees, employers and relevant employer-funded provision, such as Train to Gain (there was some limited work within the NHS and some limited involvement with unions).
121. These represent significant gaps in learning arising from the Prototypes. Figure 4.1 illustrates where the Prototypes have provided learning to inform a networked adult

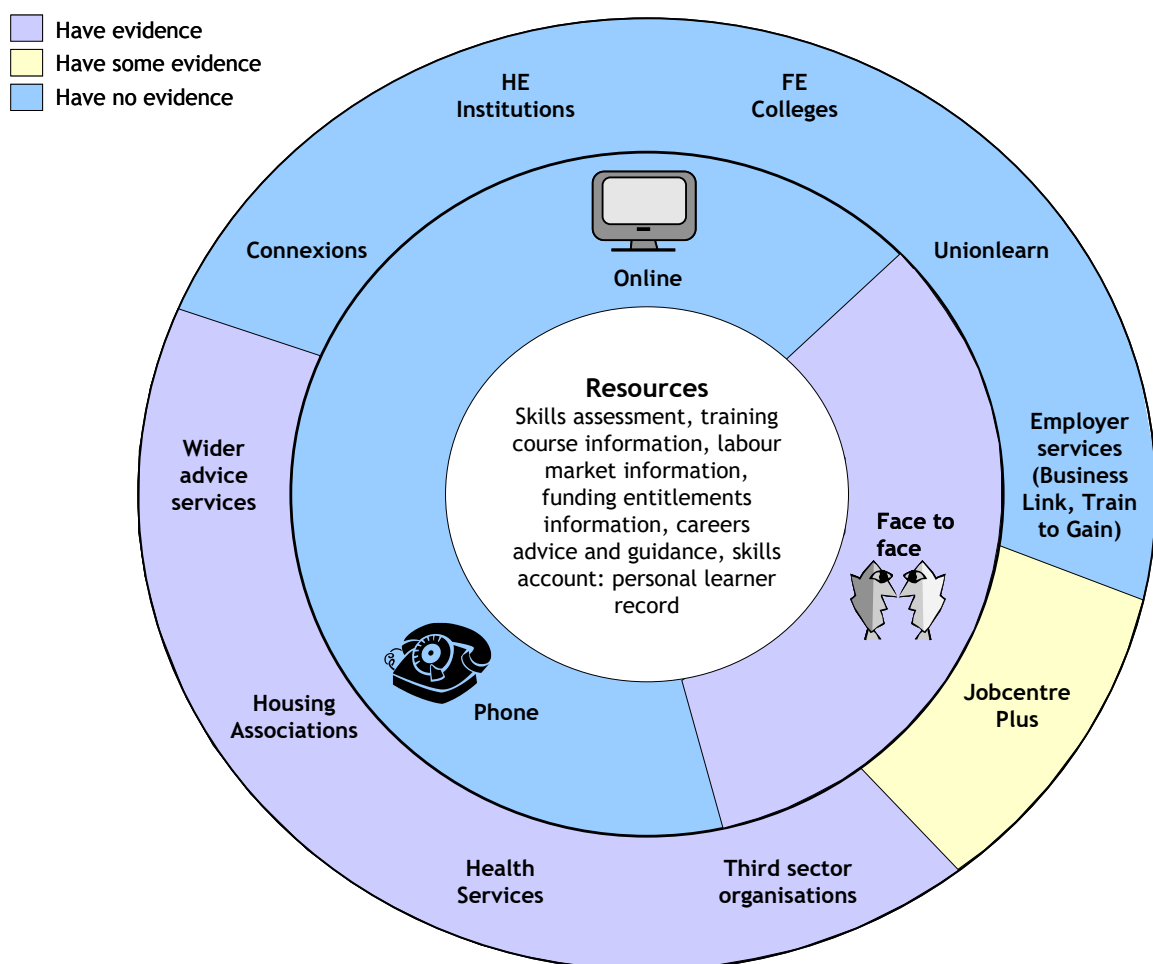
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<sup>1</sup> For example, in a city centre hub operated by the South Hampshire Prototype.

careers service system (indicated by lilac), where there is patchy learning (indicated by cream) and where there are gaps (indicated by blue). Information from research elsewhere, and other projects such as the Integrated Employment and Skills Trials, may help to fill these gaps.

122. The original Denham vision of advancement had a broad view of a service that could support people at different life-stages. There has been little structured development through the Prototypes towards understanding and supporting the needs of some groups of adults, for example those who want to bring about some change in their life perhaps moving sideways in their current employment, or shifting down to part-time work or into retirement. The Prototypes also cannot provide information about what it will mean to offer a service in rural locations where services are more dispersed, since none were experimenting with this.

**Figure 4.1: The reach of Prototypes within the aacs system**



Source: IES, adapted from *Fuelling Potential*, 2010

#### 4.2.6 The adult careers service system

123. To a greater or lesser extent the Prototypes have struggled to put the concept of advancement into practice, particularly providing the extent of networks across the envisaged aacs system (see Figure 4.1). In this section we draw together the learning from the Prototypes that relate to this proposed system.

124. Most of the organisations leading the Prototypes were in the bottom left-hand part of the system and were: wider advice services; housing associations; health services; and third sector organisations. These organisations were effective at leading initial discussions about careers, employment and skills with clients that they were supporting with other matters. However, in some cases the extent to which they linked to core IAG or other services, could be limited. There was a tendency to ‘keep hold’ of clients and to provide a range of services for the client through one adviser or key partner arrangements, reflecting the perceived ‘hard to help’ status of those they worked with.
125. It is not clear from Figure 4.1 whether organisations in the outer ring would be expected to work with and refer to each other, or whether the direction of referral would be into and from the core service. *Fuelling Potential* states that professionals at local level who deliver advice to individuals to help them tackle specific barriers (housing, health, finance, disability, and others) would have a role in helping clients to widen their field of vision; proactively make and receive referrals; and see advancement as a call to action behind which they, and other professionals, can unite. The Prototypes suggest that the clients that some organisations in the outer circle work with, are not able to access mainstream services, and require a significant depth of support that the core does not offer. While this was not the role envisaged for networks within *Fuelling Potential* it raises the question of whether organisations in the outer circle would provide careers, employment and skills advice and if so, whether this would displace or duplicate the core service.

**Question 3:** The Prototypes have shown a significant level of demand for a very in-depth service. If this service is not provided as part of the adult careers service, would ‘hard to reach’ clients receive the support they need? Where this in-depth support is required, who should deliver it since it is beyond the remit of careers IAG?

#### **4.3 Potential risks and countermeasures to moving forward with networks**

126. Based on the learning arising from the Prototypes we present some potential risks in taking forward a network-based approach alongside the core IAG service, and some potential countermeasures (Table 4.1).



**Table 4.1: Risks and countermeasures for developing local support networks**

Risk	Countermeasure
<b>Forming networks</b>	
Lack of buy-in from partners	<p>The networks established by the Prototypes demonstrated that a common purpose and shared vision was crucial. MAA/LAA and other existing partnership structures have been useful to gain buy-in.</p> <p>It was difficult to gain buy-in if some partners were funded for partnership work and others were not, unless the perceived benefits to involvement outweigh the costs.</p> <p>Some national organisations were difficult to sign up to local networks which meant that coverage was patchy and determined by local interest. Establishing national level commitment, which could then flow through to regional and local level commitments would be helpful.</p>
Credibility of network lead	<p>Some Prototypes found it difficult to gain buy-in from partners. The lead organisation must be well-placed and well-known within existing local networks and have long-term/secure funding.</p>
Short timescales	<p>Some stakeholders found it difficult to gain buy-in to a network that had a finite timeframe. Having an extensive timeframe and period of commitment to a network-based approach would facilitate network formation.</p>
Fluctuating funding	<p>Funding has long been subject to change, as contracts are won or lost. As a result, networks may be hard to sustain since organisations gain contracts which enable them to offer support, and then at the end of the funding period, need to withdraw that support. As government contracts with service providers in the private and voluntary sectors change, the network needs to be able to be aware of and adapt to these changes. Lengthier funding periods for particular types of work may better support networked models of advice.</p> <p>As funding changes and margins are squeezed, particularly in the current public spending environment, the resources that organisations have to commit to networks may be more limited than in the past. If networks required this resource, this must be stipulated in contracts.</p>
<b>Delivery of services</b>	
Duplication of services between the core and network	<p>Some Prototypes delivered a significant depth of service and seemed reluctant to refer clients to other organisations. The development of capacity meant that Prototypes could deliver IAG. The services offered by the networks and the core need to be distinct from each other.</p>
<b>Making referrals from the network to the core</b>	
Lack of links and trust between the core and networks undermine referrals to the core	<p>Few Prototypes linked to core service with much success. This was particularly the case for the Careers Advice Service and to a lesser extent with <b>nextstep</b>. Building adviser understanding about the remit of the core service, and building trust about the core as a quality service would help to encourage referrals. Referrals might be encouraged if the depth of support offered could be flexible, dependent on individual need and therefore meet the needs of clients networked organisations work with.</p>

Risk	Countermeasure
Difficult to make referrals to the core in practice	<p>The Prototypes used a range of formal and informal referral techniques, as well as signposting, and several built relationships with individual advisers within partner organisations. The type of clients served by the Prototype and degree of support they require suggests that warm handovers are essential for building trust and increasing the likelihood that the client will take up the referral. <i>Fuelling Potential</i> describes a client relationship management system for the core but it is not clear whether and how this might be accessible to the networks. Waiting times and the capacity of the core to deal with referrals from networks needs to be considered in the business planning of the core, as at times within the pilot some Prototypes were reluctant to refer to core services due to waiting times.</p>
Lack of knowledge and understanding among advisers to make referrals	<p>Advisers in networked organisations will have an important (and new) role in diagnosing client needs beyond their immediate issue (ie housing) and then making appropriate referrals. To encourage advisers to make referrals, and for those referrals to be appropriate, advisers need to be aware of organisations that can help clients, how to diagnose needs and be able to explain to clients the service they can expect from the organisation they are referred to and the potential benefits for them of using such a service. Adviser training and awareness raising and simple advice directories (rather than bespoke ICT-facilitated directories), offer approaches which increase adviser knowledge and support them in making appropriate referrals.</p>
<b>Sustainability of a networked approach</b>	
Networks expensive to run	<p>It was envisaged that even if pump-priming funding was available, the networks would become self-sustaining. There were few, if any, examples of Prototypes' networks continuing following the cessation of funding, without other sources of money having been established. This indicates that running a network, and associated infrastructure, is not without cost and requires a resource. Running a network could be built into the remit (and existing funding) of an organisation if they can be convinced of the benefits of the approach. The Prototypes which linked to LAA/MAA priorities and partnerships appeared more likely to have had a positive impact on key local partners who might support ongoing operation in some regard.</p>

Source: IES 2010