

# **The role of school staff in careers work:**

## **A comparison of England, Ireland, and Scotland**

**Symposium at the IAEVG conference**

**Jyväskylä 2024**



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Napier University, Scotland [**Chair**]

# The format

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Introduction

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Paper presentations

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1. Ireland      Petra Elftorp

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2. England      David Morgan

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3. Scotland      Pete Robertson

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Questions, discussion, sharing  
good practice

# Objectives

**To identify key features of the job design and roles of school staff involved in career education and guidance for secondary school pupils**

**To identify strengths and weaknesses of different roles in context**

**To provide a model for international comparison of roles**

# Framework for role comparison

## **Professional identity**

- Role labels
- Role definitions
- Team context

## **Standards**

- Regulation and/or legislation
- Training and skills requirements, and associated support structures
- Curriculum frameworks
- Quality frameworks

## **Managing boundaries and tensions**

- Career and pastoral support
- Career education and other subject areas
- Careers work and employer liaison work
- Support for the most and least advantaged pupils

## **Advantages/disadvantages of the model**

## **Prospects for the future**

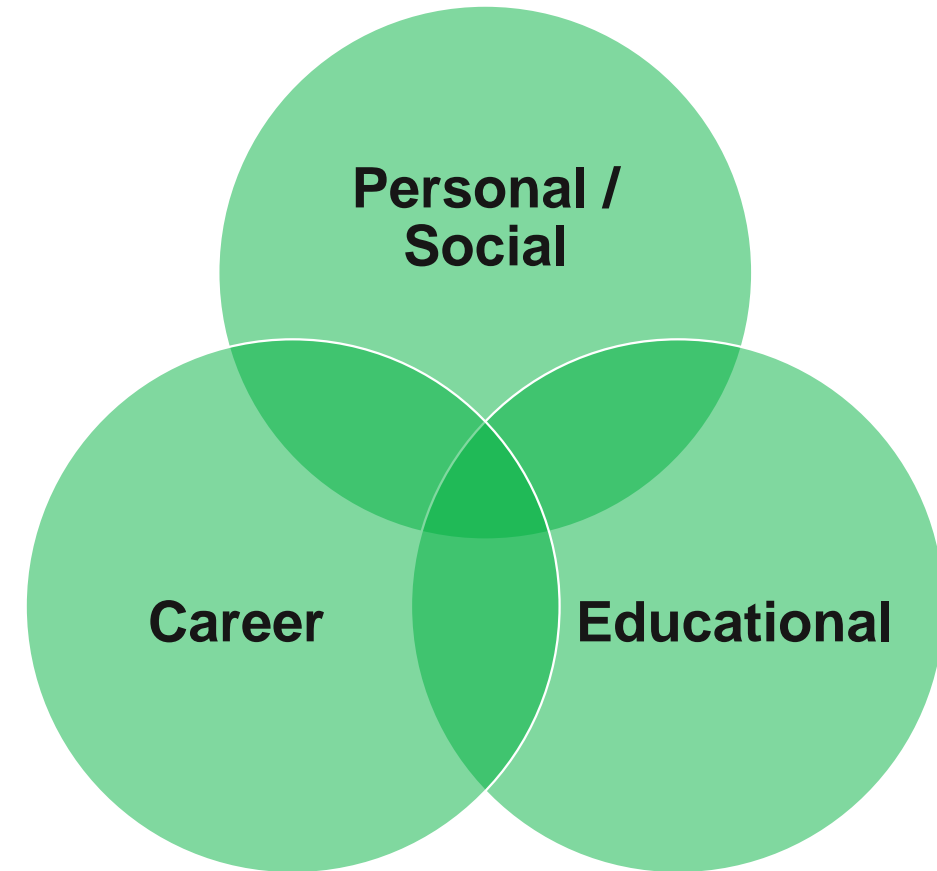
# Ireland

Dr. Petra Elftorp



“Guidance facilitates people throughout their lives to manage their own **educational, training, occupational, personal, social, and life choices**

so that they reach their full potential and contribute to the development of a better **society**” (National Guidance Forum 2007)



Title: Guidance Counsellor (many ‘incorrect’ labels - causing frustration)

# Professional Identity

- ‘Whole school approach’ – on paper, but in reality?
- Student Support Team, Home-School-Community Liaison officer (teacher), Chaplain, Year Heads, teachers
- Professional Identity: Engagement, Knowledge of the Profession, Attitudes and Values, Philosophy of the Profession (Woo and Henfield (2015))
  - surprisingly strong! (Elftorp *et al*, 2024)

# Standards

- Education Act 1998, section 9c: schools must ensure that 'students have access to **appropriate guidance** to assist them in their educational and career choices'
- Dual qualification: Teacher AND Guidance Counsellor (postgraduate level)
- Move to more local decisions since 2012 → much more variation
- Often teach classes such as Wellbeing, Social Political Health Education (SPHE) as part of their guidance role
- Some schools offer timetabled 'careers classes' or 'guidance classes'

# Managing boundaries and tensions

Boundaries for those in a dual role – wearing different hats at different times

Tensions in the staff room – confidentiality, perceptions

Pastoral support – shared sometimes with a chaplain, and sometimes, when funded by the school, a therapeutic counsellor

Prioritising: Career v. pastoral support? (OECD critique)

# Advantages/disadvantages of the Irish model

- Humanistic approach – careers and personal aspects as intertwined

Autonomy ----- Burnout

- Different sides of the same coin!
- Highly dependent on the values and awareness of the school management/principal

## Dual role practitioners:

- “I became a better teacher since I qualified as a guidance counsellor”
- + Build up relationship with students, well known in the school
- Conflicting roles (discipline v. person-centred supportive approach)

## Prospects for the future

- Emphasis on Career Management Skills – but who's responsibility?
- Counsellors (therapeutic) in schools may be introduced → Debate: will this take the pressure off the guidance counsellor, or 'reduce' their role to careers educators?
- Emphasis on inclusion

# England

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**November 2024**

# Professional identity

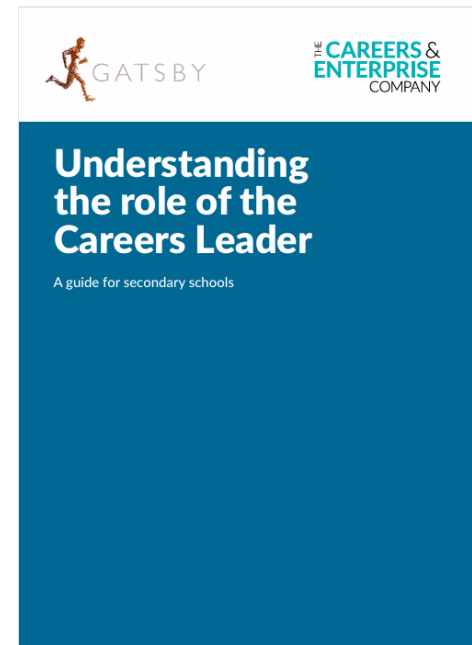
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## Role labels:

- Careers Leader is the in-school role responsible for careers.
- May be supported by;
  - Careers Coordinator
  - Careers Adviser to carry out personal guidance interviews
- In a multi-academy trust, may have responsibility for multiple schools.
- Supported by Careers Hubs and Enterprise Advisers.

## Career Leader role:

- Develop and deliver the career guidance programme.
- Are most often teaching staff with careers as an added responsibility.
- Some are also qualified Careers Advisers and may cover both roles.



# Standards

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## Legislation:

- Statutory Guidance for schools and colleges (Jan 2023) covers careers guidance.
- Schools and colleges 'are expected' to appoint a Careers Leader with their name and contact details on the school website.
- Responsible and accountable for the delivery of the careers programme.
- Government-funded Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) summarises the role as;
  - Leadership.
  - Management.
  - Coordination.
  - Networking.

## Careers guidance and access for education and training providers

Statutory guidance for schools and  
guidance for further education colleges  
and sixth form colleges

January 2023

# Standards

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## Training and skills requirements:

- No mandatory background to be able to work as a Careers Leader.
- Most have completed a fully-funded Careers Leader training via the CEC.
- Makes them eligible to join the UK Register as a Registered Careers Leader.
- ‘Top-up’ funded training for Careers Leaders qualified before 2020.

## Curriculum framework:

- Gatsby Benchmarks – non-statutory but forms the basis of careers programmes.
  1. A stable careers programme
  2. Learning from career and labour market information
  3. Addressing the needs of each student
  4. Linking curriculum learning and careers
  5. Encounters with employers and employees
  6. Experiences of workplaces
  7. Encounters with further and higher education
  8. Personal guidance.
- CDI Career Development Framework – outcomes for careers programmes.

## Quality frameworks:

- Ofsted legally required to comment on careers provision.
- Compass – CEC’s free online evaluation tool.
- Quality in Careers Standard – national quality standard - ‘strongly recommended’ to work towards it.

# Managing boundaries and tensions

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- The Careers Leader role is only concerned with provision of careers support. No wider counselling or pastoral support role.
- The Careers Leader qualification does not equip them to work as a Careers Adviser.
- The Careers Leader works with senior leadership and teachers to build careers education into the curriculum.
- Works with employers, Enterprise Advisers and Careers Hub on work-related learning.
- Engages with designated teachers and professionals supporting vulnerable children.

# Advantages/disadvantages

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- Schools have autonomy to tailor careers provision to meet the needs of their pupils
- But requires a lot of regulation and guidance is largely 'expected' rather than mandatory.
- Careers Leader training is fully funded and high quality.
- Funding is not ring-fenced for Careers Leaders, they have other school duties and may be part-time.
- So, have variations in depth and quality of delivery.
- Schools in areas of disadvantage more likely to lack resources.
- Benchmarks set out clear activities, but not outcomes. Career Development Framework gives guidance on outcomes but is not mandated.
- Benchmarks are well integrated across the system.
- Careers Hubs and Enterprise Adviser Network offer valuable support.

# Prospects for the future

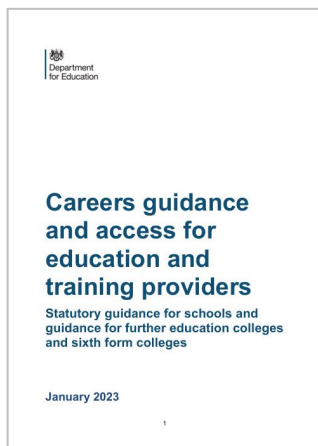
New government has an increased focus on careers guidance.

Unlikely to be much more funding, but lower risk of less money being available.

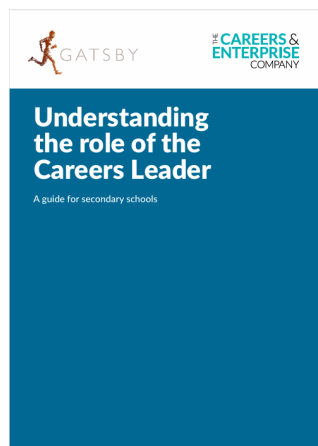
Key policy areas being developed are:

- Recruit 1,000 additional Careers Advisers in schools by 2029.
- Embed two weeks' worth of high-quality work experience.

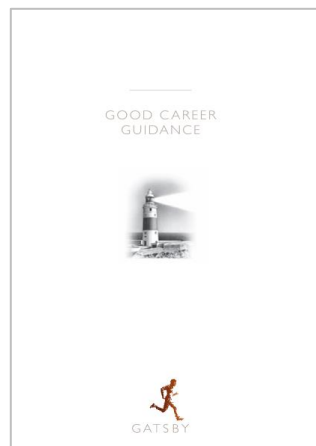
Gatsby Benchmarks have been reviewed and will be launched on 18<sup>th</sup> November.



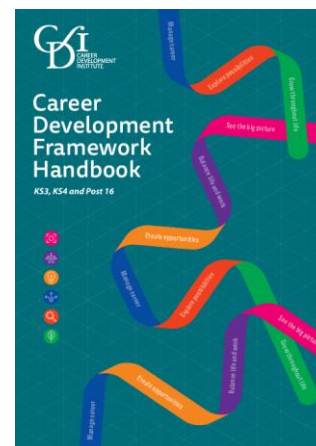
[Careers guidance and access for education and training providers - GOV.UK](#)



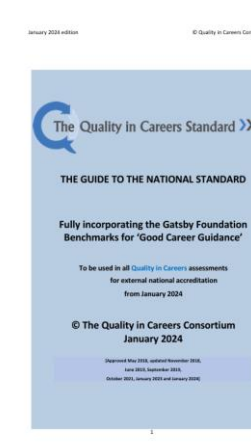
[understanding-careers-leader-role-careers-enterprise.pdf](#)



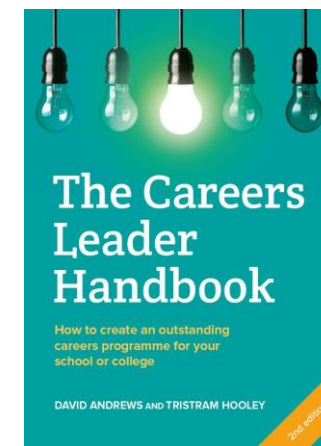
[Implementing the Gatsby benchmarks](#)



[CDI Framework - Career Development Institute](#)



[Guide-to-the-National-Standard-January-2024.pdf](#)



[The Careers Leader Handbook 2nd Edition – Trotman Indigo Publishing](#)

# Paper 3

## Scotland: The role of the 'Guidance Teacher'

Based on a study by  
Robertson, Meldrum &  
Earnshaw (forthcoming)

*Careers work in Scottish  
state secondary schools:  
The guidance teacher as  
pastoral firefighter*



Literature review



10 interviews with  
guidance teachers



5 interviews with  
'expert informants'

# The role of the guidance teacher

- Qualified teachers; often experienced & promoted
- Responsible for social, personal, educational and career guidance
- ‘House’ system = know the senior phase pupils well
- Work in a team
- Teach Personal & Social Education (PSE) lessons
- Liaise closely with external agencies, notably:
  - The national career service (Skills Development Scotland)
  - Local partnerships supporting work experience & school-business links

# Standards

- No legislation for careers work
- No standard job description
- No training required beyond initial teacher training
- ‘Curriculum for Excellence’ framework but career education weakly represented
- Benchmarks available to define expectations for career learning & work experience, but not closely followed

Strong contrast with Scotland’s national career service in terms of training & quality

# Managing boundaries & tensions

- Not usually required to teach another subject
- Big focus on most disadvantaged students; limits support to others
- Pastoral care is always more urgent and important than careers work
- Local partnership support for work experience and employer links varies in quality

Post COVID growth of mental health issues increased pastoral care workload

COVID undermined work experience

# Strengths: What works

- Often experienced and committed staff
- Supportive teams in school
- Positive relationships with external agencies
- Guidance teachers get to know pupils well
- Pupil tracking systems
- Strong focus on preventing youth unemployment

# Weaknesses

- Role too broad & pastoral demands growing
- Crisis management prevents careers work
- Lack of training & support
- Over-reliance on external agencies
- Career education not a legal entitlement
- Some guidance teachers doing it for the promotion
- Too many policies, documents & initiatives
- Inconsistent local support arrangements

# Prospects for the future

- Education Scotland is reviewing career education as a cross-curricular theme in Curriculum for Excellence
- Extensive changes to post 16 education may impact on arrangements for Scotland national career service (SDS)
- No plans to change the role

# Framework for role comparison

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## **Advantages/disadvantages of the model**

## **Prospects for the future**

# Questions for reflection

- How can we learn from model(s) in another country?
- How can we recognise and mitigate the weaknesses in our own model?
- What can we learn from arrangements in your country?
- How can we recognise and build on the strengths in our model?

# Two sources for international comparison

Hooley, T. (2022). *Exploring the roles, qualifications and skills of career guidance professionals in schools. An international review*. Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills.

Einarsdottir et al (2023). Career Education in the Nordic Countries: A Comparison of National Legislation and Compulsory School Curricula. *Nordic Journal of Transitions, Careers and Guidance*, 4(1), pp. 97–112.

## Contact or follow us



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