**COICE Annual Report 2023-24**

The 2023-24 school year has been a steady but significant period for COICE with much of the time and focus dedicated to reviewing the terms of reference, refreshing the purpose and remit, as well as group composition.

The group convened quarterly throughout the year (September, December, March and June) with nine careers education expert members currently (capacity 12). COICE has representation from three of the four home nations through key public service organisations for careers education in the Careers & Enterprise Company, Skills Development Scotland and Careers Wales. The group is actively seeking suitable representation from Northern Ireland.

Kath Wright (co-founder and previous chair) and Mark Fox sadly left COICE this year due to retirement and workload commitments respectively. We are incredibly grateful to Kath and Mark for all their contributions to COICE and careers education throughout their time in the group. Sandra Cheyne joined COICE In March 2024, we look forward to benefiting from Sandra’s knowledge and experience, as well as the perspective from Scotland policy and practice.

**2023-24 activity**

Updated Terms of Reference: This was a substantial piece of work to refresh the purpose, scope and remit of the group 10 years from inception. The retrieval of the inaugural COICE meeting notes and terms of reference provided a helpful opportunity to review which activities are still current and which are no longer required due to policy changes. Individual discussions between CDI Chief Executive David Morgan and each of the COICE volunteers helped to share any thoughts on the future needs of COICE. In March 2024 the exercise was completed with the new Terms of References now complete and uploaded to a dedicated COICE area of the CDI website: <https://www.thecdi.net/communities-and-networks/communities-of-interest/community-of-interest-for-careers-education-(coice)> as well as profiles for each current COICE member.

CDI response to Ofsted’s Big Listen Survey: Following recent scrutiny of the nature of Ofsted’s inspection and the appointment of new Chief Inspector Sir Martyn Oliver, Ofsted invited feedback from educators as well as the general public. Michelle Stewart led a survey response from the CDI, supported by COICE. COICE Chair and resident Ofsted expert Janet Colledge met with Michelle over Teams and the COICE group were tasked to complete a Microsoft Forms questionnaire to aggregate the COICE thoughts and scores.

Support for National Careers Leaders’ Conference: The joint CDI and ICEGS National Careers Leaders’ Conference was well attended with keynote addresses from Ryan Gibson (Gatsby Foundation), Tom Corry (CDI Career Leader of the Year 2023) and Professor Tristram Hooley (ICEGS). CDI Chief Executive David Morgan sought views of COICE members ahead of the conference in a consultative capacity to support the overall theme. One of the suggestions from COICE was for a ‘quality panel’ discussion from different approaches in England to include the Careers Impact System, Matrix and the Quality in Careers Standard. This suggestion was adopted and worked well on the day.

Career Impact System awareness session: COICE member Marie Jobson provided a helpful update on the Careers and Enterprise Company’s Career Impact System. This was most helpful in understanding the similarities and differences compared to other frameworks in the current careers quality ecosystem.

Resurgence of Briefing Paper series: With a renewed focus following the updated terms of reference exercise the group felt that a commitment to regular briefing papers would be helpful to careers education practitioners. The papers will be dedicated to phenomena’s within careers education, drawing on evidence of policy and practice in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales as well as international evidence. They are predominantly for secondary schools, specialist settings and further education but could be differentiated to support readers working with primary aged learners.

Work-Based Learning Briefing Paper: The first of the new briefing series is on work-based learning, a paper lead by COICE members John Ambrose, Anthony Barnes and Claire Nix, supported by the broader team. The paper defines ‘work-based learning’, highlighting the benefits as well as best practice delivery in schools with signposts to further information, advice and resources. The briefing paper will be published in autumn 2024.

Quality Assurance Briefing Paper: a further paper is already underway on quality assurance approaches to careers education and guidance in schools and colleges. COICE member David Andrews is leading on the paper, with support from the COICE team and wider stakeholders in career development. The paper is expected to be published by the end of 2024.

**Actions for 2024/25 Academic Year**

* Continue to support the CDI to champion improved careers education funding and coverage throughout the UK
* Introduce a clear, equal and fair recruitment process to enable the next generation of careers education expertise to represent COICE
* Recruit at least three new members to COICE ensuring each member brings sufficient specialist knowledge to the group. Ensuring coverage of current under-represented areas such as Northern Ireland as well as sector specialism weakness areas e.g. FE/HE and third sector.
* Review current CDI membership of Career Leaders and Registered Careers Leaders considering appropriate platform to feed into COICE (review of Career Leader Community of Practice)
* Continue support for Career Leader Conference, as well as responses to policy developments.
* Publishing quality assurance briefing paper and further areas of best practice.
* Championing careers education through a considered response to the national curriculum review in England.

John Ambrose

COICE Chair, September 2024