



Attending:

Alison Wolf (Chair)
Frank Bowley, (BIS)
Andrew Dickerson (Uni. of Sheffield)
Claudia Hupkau (CVER)
Stephen Machin (CEP, LSE)
Sandra McNally (CVER Director)

Kate Murphy (BIS)
Harriet Ogborn (CVER Administrator)
Bev Robinson (Blackpool and The Fylde College)
Donna Ward (DfE)

Apologies

Frank McLoughlin (City and Islington College)
Stephen Nickell (University of Oxford)
Nigel Rogers (CEP Manager)

Minutes from September steering group and action points

No further comments.

Presentation on Progress of the CVER Programme (Sandra McNally)

[Presentation attached]

1. Sandra McNally reported that good progress has been made on the Overarching Strand, and she expected outputs in the Summer. Research here was also leading to other ideas, including a review of adult basic skills, which was welcomed by the Steering Group.
2. Sandra noted that there were still issues with delays in accessing data which was seriously affecting progress throughout the programme. She asked for BIS and DfE support in speeding up the process.
3. *Project 1.1.* Bev Robinson asked whether the data linking NPD-ILR-HESA and earnings had already been made available. Frank Bowley answered that while this was in the pipeline, for the moment it was also important to look at linked ILR-wage data to replicate/validate work done by Peter Urwin and colleagues – and to understand differences with survey data.
4. *Project 2.1.2.* [Slide 6] Bev highlighted that FE colleges were not 'public' but private organisations. However, Frank recognised that FE colleges are not like profit seeking companies. Sandra added that the researchers will include this paper in broader research so need a point of comparison, i.e. CEOs in public and private sector, which can be understood in an international context. SG asked for a more appropriate term to be used (for instance non-profit sector). (**Action point:** Review language as part of the peer-review process).
5. *Project 2.1.3.* [Slide 6] Bev warned that Value Added for FE colleges meant something different than what had been proposed in the project report. Claudia and Steve highlight that the approach is consistent with the economics of education literature. Alison Wolf said that it would be crucial to incorporate outcomes that are used by funding bodies to assess performance of providers (**Action point:** Claudia Hupkau to contact BIS/SFA to ask for exact measures of outcomes used for colleges).
6. *Projects under 2.1* [Slide 6] Donna Ward raised the question about whether projects under Strand 2 should be thought of in the same overall project – of estimating a production function. Sandra clarified that the term 'education production function' was being used in a rather loose way here. Projects under 2.1 could all be cast in the broad conceptual framework of an 'education production function'. However, the way this is specified will vary by project.
7. Frank suggested that linking SIR and ILR can be useful to assess the link between teacher quality and outcomes. Claudia answered that we already had this data and that we would explore it in the future to assess the role of teachers.
8. *Project 2.1.2.* Bev said that the forthcoming area reviews will structurally alter colleges and that this might affect the role of leadership. For instance, if colleges merge then college principals will have to manage much larger organisations (**Action point:** Claudia follow up with Bev).
9. *Project 2.3.* Sandra asked for help in getting access to data on remarked GCSEs. (**Action point:** Frank says he will follow up on this).
10. *Project 2.3.* Frank Bowley noted with interest the issue of people with low skills going into HE (referring to the recent OECD report launched at CVER/CEP, whilst emphasising issues with sample size in the report had).

11. *Project 3.2.* [Slides 9 and 10] Sandra asked for specific SG feedback on this project. In response to categories of learning activities, Bev said that study programmes will make the categorisation of learners much easier because there are strict rules as to what kind of learning people can undertake. Sandra responded that our analysis was retrospective and looked at earlier cohorts. Bev agreed the categories as proposed were sensible.
12. [Slide 11] Bev highlighted that the Level 3 qualifications are not all of the same size and that we have to use guided learning hours/size in order to get at the 'main' qualification taken (**Action Point:** Claudia to adjust the calculation of main qualification for size of qualification).
13. [Slide 12] Alison Wolf highlighted the interest in the group of learners at below level 2 and that it would be good to add a measure of churn or 'being stuck'. She asked whether people could be followed below level 2 year by year, as it would be very interesting to look at churn patterns among low achievers. (**Action Point:** Sandra agreed that we would do this as one of our next steps and is discussing this with Stefan Speckesser).
14. Frank asked for the destination tables the other way round: looking at the composition of those ending up in a certain outcome (where they had been at age 17). (**Action Point:** Sandra confirms that we will address this in the discussion paper).
15. Steve Machin mentioned people cycling in and out of low paid jobs studied in the labour literature, the methodology of which could be applied to the churn in lower level education. (**Action point:** Sandra to follow this up with Steve).
16. *Project 0.2* Alison said that the paper on careers advice is hugely relevant and it would be great if more work could be done on this. Frank mentioned the Careers and Enterprise Company recently set up. Sandra added that this will be a focus of the CVER Conference on 5-6 September with keynote speakers. (**Action point:** Alison asks whether Sandra can scope out a rough proposal for possible ideas on what could be done here and the Steering Group would provide input. Sandra agrees to do this and emphasises that implementing any project will need to be very carefully planned).
17. Frank mentioned efforts to assess the value of university degrees that could be used for information and careers guidance. Publication projected to come out in autumn.

Communication/Output:

18. The SG has no objections to the planned research outputs, both in nature and timing [Slides 13-15]. Sandra stressed the importance of a rigorous peer-review process to ensure the quality of output.
19. Frank asked whether it would be possible to have some policy relevant outputs coming out of the more academic projects published sooner to inform on-going policy debate e.g on post-16 chances.
20. Alison said that the Centre should help increase the factual knowledge about the sector through its outputs. Sandra suggested that the briefing notes can contribute to this, highlighting them also in the newsletter.
21. Bev suggests submitting some of the papers to the AoC annual conference 15-17 November (**Action point:** Sandra to review what to submit).
22. Bev suggests hosting webinars (**Action point:** Harriet Ogborn to investigate)
23. Frank and Kate suggest that we should try to get our findings into major newspapers. Harriet highlighted that all our media output needed to be backed up by substantive research.
24. Sandra noted that all suggestions were well taken and we would attempt to implement them in the ways suggested, using the existing expertise of CEP.

Data:

25. Claudia highlights the good communication and collaboration with the data team at BIS but stresses the problems the Centre has faced with linked data request to NPD that have exceeded expected turnaround times. Claudia highlights that these issues have been escalated within BIS.
26. Frank asks whether we can submit one big data request to speed up data receipt. Sandra replies that this is not possible and that a separate request has to be made for each project.
27. Donna asks whether we could send a list of requests so we can figure out whether there is a general structural problem in DfE that we can address. (**Action point:** Claudia send list of outstanding requests.)

The next meeting of the Steering Group is 21 June 2016 (1–2.30pm).

Centre for Vocational Education Research: Steering Group Meeting, 11 February 2016

Sandra McNally

Outline

1. Brief overview of research
2. Post-16 choices
3. Outputs

CVER programme: main strands

1. Facilitating Strand – Data
2. Overarching Strand – Descriptive overview of VE sector and policy issues
3. Impact of VE on individuals, firms and growth
4. Quality of VE provision
5. Individual participation decisions and the costs and benefits of VE

Overarching Strand: Descriptive Overview and Policy Issues

O.1: Further Education Providers in England: An analysis of the evolution of providers, learners and funding (Hupkau, Ventura).

O.2: Careers information and guidance: recent literature on interventions (McNally).

O.3 Analysis of duration and achievement for a recent cohort of apprentices (Speckesser, Nafilyan).

3.2. Descriptive analysis of post-16 choices (CEP and IES)

1.4. Employer demand for skills: Characteristics of firms with training (accredited and non-accredited) (Speckesser and Williams).

1.3. Descriptive analysis of incidence of publicly funded training leading to formally recognised qualifications (Conlon).

* Timeline of changes to qualifications (Hilary Steedman)

* Improving Adult Basic Skills/Adult Literacy and Numeracy



Impact of VE on individuals, firms and growth

- 1.1. Private returns to VE (Conlon and McIntosh).
- 1.2. Post-apprenticeship benefits of individual apprentices to employers (Nafilyan and Speckesser).
- 1.3. Firm-level decision to engage in publicly funded training (Conlon).
- 1.4. The impact of vocational education and training on firms: New evidence from linked administrative data (Speckesser and Williams).
- 1.5 Procuring a Skilled Workforce for the Automotive Sector: International Case Studies of Strategy and Organisation (Steedman).

Quality of VE provision

2.1. Estimating the VE Education Production Function

2.1.1 Effects of University Technical Colleges on Student Performance (CEP, Machin, McNally, Terrier).

2.1.2 Effectiveness of CEOs in the Public Sector: evidence from Further Education Colleges (CEP, Ruiz-Valenzuela, Terrier).

2.1.3 The value added of further education providers in England (CEP, Hupkau, Aucejo).

2.1.4 The impact of capital expenditure on college performance (CEP, Gibbons, Hupkau, McNally, Overman).

Quality of VE provision (continued)

2.2. Case study of Apprenticeships in AMRC, University of Sheffield (McIntosh).

2.3. Importance of Maths and English in gaining access to 'high quality' VE routes (Machin, McNally and Ruiz-Valenzuela).

Individual participation decisions and the costs and benefits of VE

3.1. The demand for VE skills, and the choices individuals make (Dickerson).

3.2. Access and Returns to Apprenticeships and classroom-based FE (project led by McNally in CEP and Speckesser in IES).

Selected presentation of outputs:
Project 3.2: Access and Returns to Apprenticeships and
classroom-based FE

- We have created a categorisation of learning activities at ages 17 and 18 based on feedback received during last SG
- The categorisation allows for a detailed analysis of students' learning engagement and their progression pathways, without being too narrow and specific
- We have applied this categorisation to the cohort of 2010 KS4 completers and followed them up to age 20
- We find heterogeneity across qualifications within the same level in terms of progression, which other categorisations that rely on levels do not reveal

Categories of Learning Activities ages 17 and 18

Category of Activity	Description
Above Level 3	Individuals engaged in any activity above Level 3 (including Higher Education).
Mainly A-Levels	Individuals engaged mainly in A-levels or AS levels.
Mainly Applied Generals	Individuals engaged mainly in Applied General vocational qualification. These are vocational qualifications of broader scope that should facilitate progression either to employment or higher education.
Mainly Tech Levels	Individuals engaged mainly in Tech Levels vocational qualifications. These are technical vocational qualifications which are thought to facilitate progression to employment.
Mainly Key Skills (or Functional Skills) or NVQs	Individuals mainly engaged in Key Skills/Functional Skills at Level 3 or National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs), which are recognised vocational qualifications related to an industry or sector.
Mainly Other level 3	Being engaged mainly in qualifications at level 3 other than the ones above.
Tech Certificate (Level 2)	Individuals who are not engaged in any Level 3 learning and are engaged in some qualifications falling into the DfE category Tech Certificate.
Other vocational at Level 2	Individuals who are not engaged in any level 3 learning and are engaged in a qualifications at Level 2 other than Tech Certificates.
Key/Functional Skills at Level 2	Individuals who are not engaged in any level 3 learning and are engaged in Key/Functional Skills at Level 2, and not Tech Certificates or other vocational qualifications at Level 2 as define above.
GCSEs	Individuals who are not engaged in any level 3 learning and are engaged in GCSEs, and not Tech Certificates, other vocational qualifications at Level 2 as defined above or Key/Functional Skills at Level 2.
Below Level 2	Those students only engaged in qualifications that are below Level 2.

Education engagement by age - Cohort completing KS4 in 2010

Activity	Age 16	Age 17	Age 18	Age 19	Age 20
	%	%	%	%	%
Above level 3	0	0.02	0.07	25.78	36.32
Level 3 qualifications					
Mainly A-Levels	2.29	46.11	39.86	6.43	0.32
Mainly Applied Generals	0	5.29	8.98	5.63	1.41
Mainly Tech Levels	0	4.51	7.34	5.4	2.91
Mainly KS/NVQ Level 3	0.09	0.64	1.8	2.86	2.91
Mainly other Level 3	1.92	3.67	6.37	5	3.44
Level 2 qualifications					
Tech certificate	0.03	2.21	2.62	1.88	1.35
Other vocational at level 2	2.15	14	13.03	10.84	8.46
Key/Functional Skills Level 2	0.04	0.49	0.34	0.36	0.26
GCSEs	91.41	0.64	0.17	0.2	0.16
Level 1 and entry level					
Below level 2	0.48	10.89	5.97	4.75	3.84
Unknown	0	5.49	1.65	0	0
Not observed	1.58	6.04	11.82	30.88	38.63
Total	575,057	575,057	575,057	575,057	575,057

Education engagement at age 17 and learning outcomes at 18 to 20 - Cohort completing KS4 in 2010

	Staying on at age 18	Qualification at Level 3+ at age 18-20	Commences Bachelor's Degree by age 20	Ever in a Level 4+ learning activity (not bachelor degree)	Ever started Apprenticeship (17-20)	Ever in a Level 3+ apprenticeship	Total
<i>Activity at age 17</i>	%	%	%	%	%	%	No.
Level 3							
Mainly A-Levels	97	95.73	61.53	4.31	13.07	6	265004
Mainly Applied Generals	93.67	89.09	27.02	7.9	24.15	9.45	30405
Mainly Tech Levels	93.03	89.35	24.29	11.57	24.84	12.8	25880
Mainly KS/NVQ Level 3	94.8	91.4	4.55	12.52	92.76	90.61	3647
Mainly other Level 3	92.55	86.38	14.6	7.74	29.23	13.46	21007
Level 2							
Tech certificate	82.41	60.04	1.37	1.94	37.45	13.11	12731
Other voc. at level 2	84.92	53.62	4.92	2.69	46.4	15.1	80498
Key/Functional Skills L2	87.39	44.07	2.27	0.85	28.05	11.19	2816
GCSEs	84.42	44	7.89	1.53	15.26	3.58	3664
Below level 2	80.43	23.41	0.75	0.52	18.43	3.96	62642
Unknown	85.75	58.61	16.19	2.79	18.58	6.09	31544
Not observed	35.49	20.09	5.31	1.24	15.98	3.63	34753
Total	88.18	72.96	33.53	4.01	21.64	8.39	100
	507025	419491	192779	23046	124500	48212	574591

Outputs - general

‘Discussion paper series’

Should we split this into categories? e.g. research papers (intended for academic publication) and policy papers.

Example:

IFS distinguishes between the following outputs (amongst others)

- **Reports:** “Reports provide in-depth coverage of findings from substantive research with long-term policy relevance. They are aimed at non-specialists, as well as academics.”
- **Working papers:** “Our working papers include policy-relevant material intended for academic publication ”

Outputs - general

Briefing notes:

Short articles (e.g. 4-5 pages), usually based on discussion papers – for a general audience.

Blogs:

More journalistic short pieces about research/policy targeted at a general audience.

We currently have 13 entries (7,500 page views)

Outputs – what to expect in the next few months (subject to data!)

Strand	Projects	Expected submission
Overarching Strand	0.1 Further Education Providers in England: An analysis of the evolution of providers, learners and funding (Hupkau, Ventura)	DP by June 2016
	0.2 Careers information and guidance: (McNally)	DP as soon as published
	0.3 An Analysis of duration and achievement for a recent cohort of apprentices (Speckesser, Nafilyan)	DP by July 2016
1. Impact of VE on individuals, firms and growth	1.1 Private returns to VE (Conlon and McIntosh)	3-4 DPs by end of 2016
	1.2 Post-apprenticeship benefits of individual apprentices to employers (Speckesser, Nafilyan)	July 2016 (conference submission)
	1.3 Firm decision to engage in publicly funded training (Conlon)	DP November 2016
	1.4 The impact of vocational education and training on firms: New evidence from linked administrative data (Speckesser)	DP December 2016
	1.5 Procuring a Skilled Workforce: Automotive Sector: (Steedman)	DP February 2017
2. Quality of VE provision	2.1.1 Effects of UTCs (Machin, McNally, Terrier).	1 DP by end of 2016 2-3 DPs by May 2017
	2.1.2 Effectiveness of CEOs in the Public Sector: evidence from Further Education Colleges (Ruiz-Valenzuela, Terrier)	
	2.1.3 Value added of FE providers in England (Hupkau, Aucejo)	
	2.1.4 The impact of capital expenditure on college performance	
	2.2 Case study of Apprenticeships in AMRC (McIntosh)	First outputs May 2017
	2.3 Maths and English: gaining access to 'high quality' VE routes (Machin, McNally, Ruiz-Valenzuela)	1 DP by end of 2016
3. Individual participation decisions etc.	3.1 The demand for VE skills, and the choices individuals make (Dickerson)	2-3 DPs between Sept 2016 and March 2017
	3.2 Access and Returns to Apprenticeships and classroom-based FE (CEP, IES)	2 DPs March-June 2016