

# Qualifications and professionalism in career development

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# Outline



Purpose of the report



Research approach



Key findings



Recommendations



What next?

# Why this research?

Report commissioned in 2024 by CDI

- Complexity of sector
- Funding issues
- Need for professionalisation

# What were we looking at?

- What different routes and pathways exist through which people can become trained and qualified as career development practitioners or professionals?
- How are the different career-related qualifications perceived by stakeholders in the sector and beyond it? What labour market advantage do they afford to those who take them?
- What are people's experiences of studying for career-related qualifications or employing people who have been awarded these qualifications? What barriers have been faced by practitioners and aspiring professionals in acquiring qualifications and skills?
- What opportunities exist for continuing professional development (CPD) within the career development sector? Is there a strong enough framework and sufficient opportunities for CPD in the sector?

\*For the purpose of this report we regard a practitioner as someone who is actively engaged in career development practice and a professional as someone who has formal recognised qualifications in career development at the level recommended by the CDI (level 6 or above).

# Research methods



Stakeholder interviews



Surveys



Roundtables

# Findings...

# Sector perceptions



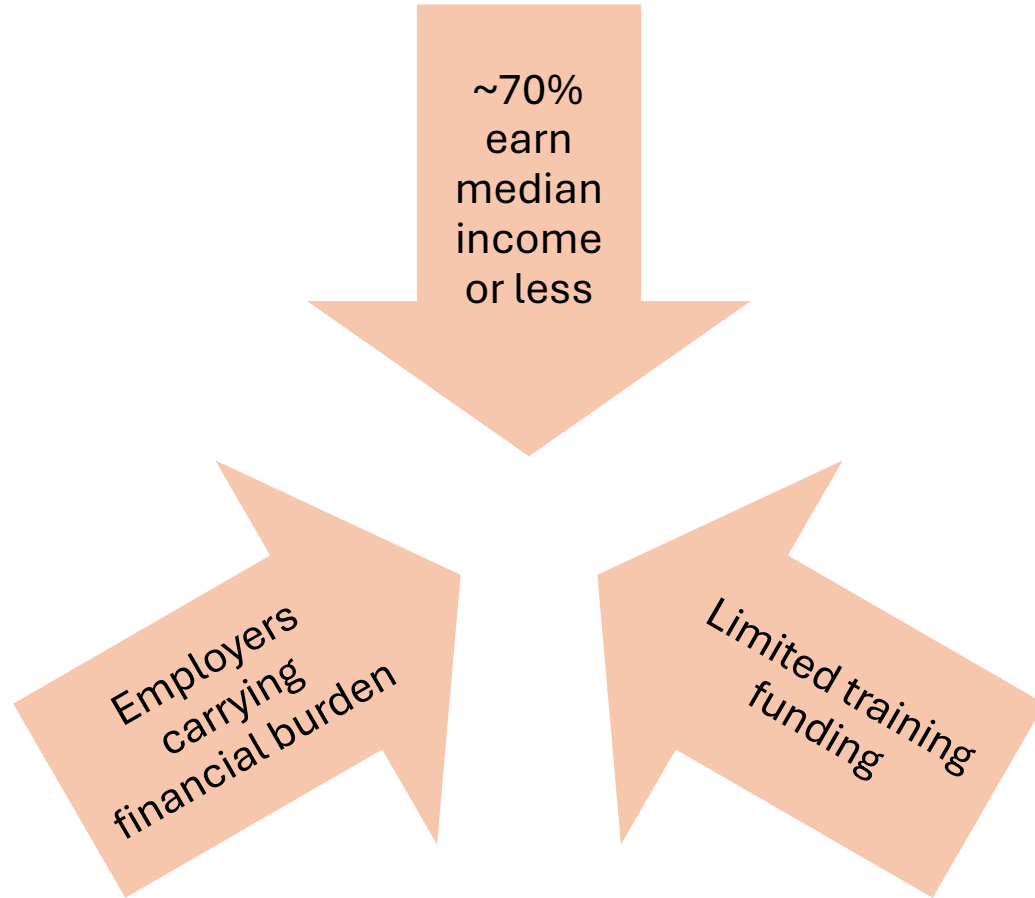
Valuable work, but poor public image



Confusion around roles and qualifications

*87% strongly disagreed/disagreed that there was a good public understanding of qualifications in the sector*

# Pay and funding



- Based on the ONS UK median income for full time employees, around 70% of respondents were earning the median income or less
- 47% did not think they were fairly paid and there was concern over pay differences across the sector i.e. school vs HE
- 48% thought better access to funding for training and qualifications would encourage people into the sector
- Employers and training providers also acknowledged issues – unappealing pay affecting recruitment and retention

# Recruitment issues



68% of employers struggle to recruit adequately qualified staff



36% use un/underqualified staff

# Training system issues

Complex  
pathways to  
qualification

Low clarity  
across levels

Need for  
reform

# Progression

Support for newly qualified career development professionals (mentoring and/or probationary period)

More support to undertake CPD (specialisation in SEND/ALN/ASN)

Sector is very flat in terms of progression pathways

# Recommendations...

# So what needs to happen?



Professionalisation - Renew commitment to professionalism and improve image of the sector



Pay and funding - Improve pay and create government-backed funding mechanisms



Qualification reform - Simplify pathways and strengthen academic and work-based routes



Post qualification – Codify and expand early-career support and CPD

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# THANK YOU

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