



# Insights Report

Supporting better outcomes – professional career guidance for all New Zealanders

**OCTOBER 2021**



Tertiary Education  
Commission  
Te Amorangi Mātauranga Matua

**cdanz**  
The Career Development Association of New Zealand

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“There is now, more than ever, a need for strategic, co-ordinated professional career guidance that all New Zealanders can access from school to retirement, regardless of affordability and location, to help navigate disruption, and ensure a sustainable future-focused workforce.”

STAFF MEMBER, 2021



Whaia te iti  
Kahurangi:



We aim high.

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# Acknowledgements

The report draws on the experience of career development professionals working with the Direct Career Service as well as clients who have engaged with the service. Without their engagement in surveys and interviews it would not be possible to assess the impact of the service for New Zealanders whose work has been disrupted by the events of 2020 and 2021.

This report is written by Kate Peters from Fernhill Solutions, New Zealand, in close consultation with the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) and the Career Development Association of New Zealand (CDANZ). Special thanks for expert reviews from Heather Lowery-Kappes (CDANZ President) and Nina Ive (Tertiary Education Commission).



# 1 Building a Professional Career Guidance Service

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# Purpose of this report



In August 2020 as a response to COVID-19 and the expected rise in unemployment, the New Zealand Cabinet approved a proposal for a new limited-time service to support New Zealanders back to work. The service was implemented by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC)<sup>1</sup> in partnership with the Career Development Association of New Zealand (CDANZ)<sup>2</sup> and is known as the Direct Career Service (DCS).

This report draws on evidence from the first eight months of the DCS, from October 2020 to June 2021, focusing on its reach and early outcomes for New Zealanders.

It shows the value and depth of support that the CDANZ career development professionals (CDPs) have given to New Zealanders during times of uncertainty and stress, enabling many people to feel supported, confident and equipped to take the next step in their work and learning journey.

The report draws on qualitative and survey data from 240 clients of the DCS and 55 CDPs, coupled with anonymised booking data from over 1,000 clients. Kanohi ki te kanohi (face-to-face) semi-structured interviews with over 20 clients, CDPs and other staff contributed to the richness of the findings.

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1 The Tertiary Education Commission is a New Zealand Crown agency that leads the government's relationship with the tertiary education sector and provides career services from education to employment.

2 The Career Development Association of New Zealand is a national membership association for career development professionals with 540+ members. CDANZ is the only professional association in New Zealand dedicated to lifelong career development.

# The impact of COVID-19 on work and learning pathways

COVID-19 lockdown has disrupted traditional work and learning pathways for many New Zealanders while encouraging those living overseas to return home for personal, often family – and whānau-related, reasons.<sup>3</sup>

Lockdown, and the subsequent flow-on effects, has impacted employment security and options, as well as training and learning choices. This is particularly so for younger people, women and Māori. These disruptions are often coupled with financial and personal costs,<sup>4</sup> and New Zealanders who experienced job and income loss during lockdown reported lower levels of wellbeing than those who remained in employment, including higher rates of depression, higher levels of stress and an increased sense of loneliness.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the uncertainty of COVID-19, New Zealanders have retained high levels of trust in the Government and its response, and high levels of social connectedness.<sup>6</sup> And for many sectors, post-lockdown, there has been an unanticipated reversal of fortune with unemployment and underutilisation recently falling to almost record lows.

These rebounds, however, mask some more indirect challenges of COVID for New Zealanders including greater competition for jobs, a growing mismatch between skills and work, significant regional variations in employment fortunes, and high rates of young people not in employment, education or training. The unexpected disruption to everyday life has also caused many New Zealanders to question their work and learning choices, and seek more sustainable and meaningful future job matches.

To many New Zealanders, it wasn't clear how to navigate these changes, how to clarify and take their next step in work or learning, or even where to turn for support.

## Building a professional career guidance service to support all



The DCS was stood up in only eight weeks, drawing on an extensive network of CDANZ career development professionals (CDPs) already working throughout Aotearoa/New Zealand.

These professionals were contracted by TEC to deliver free phone and regional face-to-face career support to anyone whose work had been disrupted by COVID-19.

3 Kea, 2021. Whānau is a Māori word that encompasses family, family group, a familiar term of address to a number of people – the primary economic unit of traditional Māori society. In the modern context the term is sometimes used to include friends who may not have any kinship ties to other members (Māori Dictionary, maoridictionary.co.nz).

4 Bernston and Marklund, 2007; Qenani et al., 2014; McIlveen et al., n.d.

5 Prickett et al., 2020.

6 OECD, 2020, in Cook et al., 2020.

The employment of CDANZ members for the service was specifically to ensure a high level of quality and customer service by CDPs who are skilled in coaching and counselling tools and techniques. CDANZ professionals hold career-specific qualifications and have access to a Competency Framework, Code of Ethics, complaints process and professional development requirements, ensuring that they are experts in their field.<sup>7</sup>

A review of CDPs working for the service showed a highly skilled mix of practitioners:

- Over 40% had 11–20 years’ experience.
- Over 35% had more than 20 years’ experience.

The early face-to-face services or “pop ups” as they were known were hosted mainly by community libraries or the Ministry of Social Development (MSD).<sup>8</sup> These welcoming and safe community spaces enabled high visibility, good foot traffic and friendly face-to-face casual interactions. The pop ups enabled CDPs to engage in brief supportive conversations with clients, providing CV tips or light career development sessions. Due to time and space constraints, CDPs were encouraged to triage clients requiring longer engagement to the phone service.

The national phone service included up to 1.5 hours (two to three sessions) of free phone or online engagement. The service was client-driven, and requests for support could range from updating or creating CVs or cover letters, through to identification of transferable skills, and broader career development and planning.

During the first six weeks of operation, between October 2020 and December 2020, CDPs scheduled or completed 321 phone bookings, and spoke to 1,918 people across seven pop-up locations. Client feedback at this early stage indicated positive engagement and an average 4.8-star (out of a possible 5 stars) experience.



<sup>7</sup> Including 30 hours of career-specific professional development annually to maintain membership.

<sup>8</sup> The Ministry of Social Development is the public service department charged with advising government on social policy, and providing social services. It has offices across the country that are open to the public to access support and advice in regard to work and benefits.

# Changing service delivery to reflect community need

Supporting the rapid implementation of the DCS was a robust monitoring and evaluation system. This system enabled evidence-based analysis to support better service design.

By January 2021, less than three months into operation, feedback gathered via the monitoring and evaluation system was starting to show evidence that many New Zealanders valued and preferred face-to-face engagement, with an emphasis on building trusted relationships.<sup>9</sup> As one CDP noted,

“... people just want to talk to someone who has the time, empathy and experience to hear their stories...” – CDP SURVEY, 2020

Based on feedback from clients and staff, face-to-face services expanded in type, location, length and quality of contact, and partnerships with other agencies or community organisations. This included expansion of MSD sites including Connected and Work and Income offices,<sup>10</sup> as well as community trusts and other locations.

Between 18 January and 30 June 2021, the total number of locations offering longer face-to-face professional career guidance for clients grew to 38, including two libraries, 27 MSD Connected sites, seven MSD Work and Income sites and two community centres. These services were located from Kaitiāia in the north to Invercargill in the south, working alongside the national phone service.

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9 The importance of trust in situations of vulnerability is highlighted in a recent report of life during lockdown. Those respondents who experienced job loss during lockdown were more likely to experience loneliness yet less likely to reach out for help. Prickett et al., 2020.

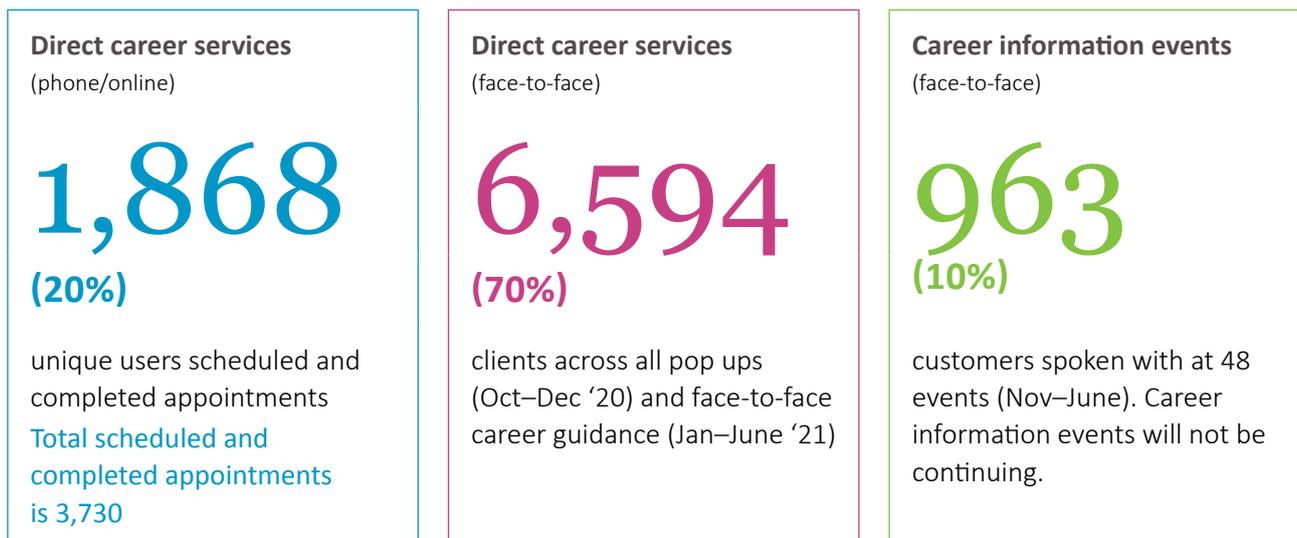
10 MSD Connected supports regional employment, training and education initiatives to connect with the right people; MSD Work and Income supports New Zealanders wanting to find work or receive a temporary benefit.

# Engaging with New Zealanders

By 30 June 2021, approximately eight months after the launch, over 75 CDANZ CDPs had engaged with 9,425 people across Aotearoa, 70% with a face-to-face service. Clients who engaged with CDPs came from all walks of life with unique personal and whānau journeys.

Clients of all services were predominantly female. Phone services had a high call rate for European New Zealanders, Indian New Zealanders and Other Europeans (for example German and Italian nationals). Māori were more likely to access services face-to-face rather than via phone (39% face-to-face vs 6% phone).

Differences in accessing services could reflect the more recent co-location of the DCS with MSD Work and Income and other government sites. These sites support easy access for New Zealanders already looking to get back into work or training, and allow warm handovers by MSD staff to CDP support. Similarly, the value of whanaungatanga<sup>11</sup> and establishing trusted connections with career practitioners, particularly for Māori, may help explain their higher engagement with face-to-face services.<sup>12</sup>



9,425 total DCS customers<sup>13</sup>

11 Whanaungatanga is a Māori concept referring to relationship, kinship and sense of family connection – a relationship through shared experiences and working together which provides people with a sense of belonging (Māori Dictionary, maoridictionary.co.nz).

12 Some visa holders are not supported by benefits from MSD; MSD–TEC partnerships are also based on areas of high need that often includes longer-term unemployment as well as COVID disruption.

13 This represents a total increase of 4,180 people since the March 2021 reporting period.

# Extending the service to June 2022

Although the evidence in this report reflects on findings to June 2021, the DCS has been approved for extension until June 2022 and will continue to support New Zealanders via both its national phone service and at face-to-face locations across 30 MSD Connected sites.

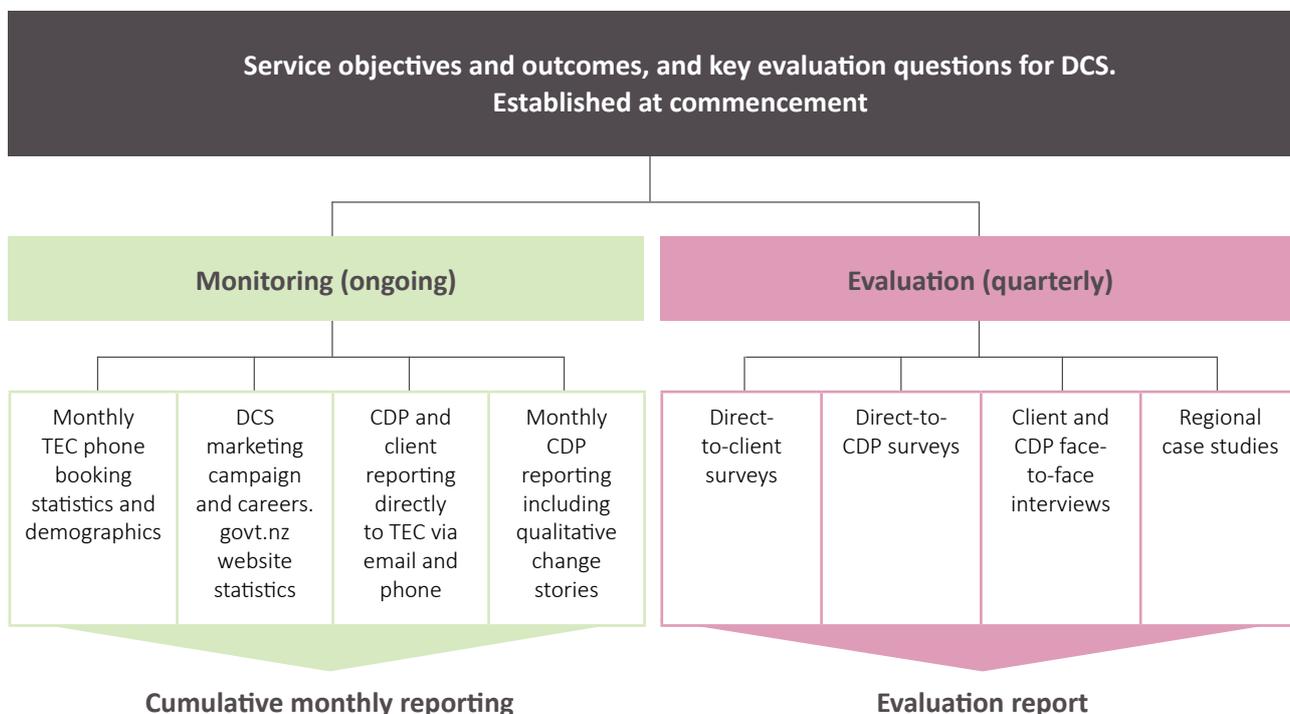
Insights will continue to be collected via its monitoring and evaluation system.

## A note on data collection and access to services

The DCS monitoring and evaluation system was built on the principles of mana-enhancing<sup>14</sup> data collection, respecting the heightened sensitivity that many New Zealanders were feeling in regard to their employment and future security, and prioritising client–CDP connections over data collection.

A relationship-based model of trust meant client surveys remained anonymous and opt-in only with demographic data kept to a minimum.

FIGURE 1: DCS MONITORING AND EVALUATION APPROACH



14 Mana is a Māori term that is richly defined and includes concepts of authority, control, power, influence, status, spiritual power, charisma (Māori Dictionary, maoridictionary.co.nz). A fuller definition of concepts of mana-enhancing practice can be found in Huriwai and Baker, 2016.

The approach was justified – clients often commented that prior to engaging with CDPs either over the phone or face-to-face their confidence and self-worth was at a relatively low point, and they felt anxious at the prospect of going to see a service they knew little about,

“I didn’t know what to expect from the CDP and was nervous ... I felt I must be doing something wrong to have all that experience and not be getting a job. But she sat down and explained everything really well. Having the career practitioner helped me point out why my CV wasn’t getting across the line – she taught me a lot ... I came away feeling confident and now have two job interviews.” – CLIENT INTERVIEW, 2021

“I would just like to thank you again for your time and patience in helping me. Those two 15–30 minute sessions made a huge difference in everything.” – CLIENT FEEDBACK, 2021

# 2 The Voice of Clients

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# The Value of Professional Career Guidance

Analysis of survey data and qualitative feedback shows that engaging with CDANZ CDPs through both the phone and face-to-face service has supported a wide range of New Zealanders with the knowledge, skills and confidence to take the next step in their work and learning journey.

This was particularly true for New Zealanders:

- whose work and learning trajectory has been disrupted or thrown a curve ball
- feeling without direction or hope
- struggling with finding their next step
- searching for a change in their work or learning
- planning their future and looking for specific work and learning opportunities.

Only an estimated 10% of all clients had previously engaged with a CDP. The majority were looking for support with job applications/CVs, but also for direction and guidance after losing a job or finishing their tertiary studies, or when concerned about the lack of response to their job applications.

“I would’ve been a lot better off if I’d had it right out of school. She was friendly, and easy to connect with, and professional – some of my friends could have done a lot better in life if they’d had this kind of support.” – CLIENT SURVEY, 2020

Many clients were surprised at the supportive manner and high quality of guidance they received, particularly with CVs, cover letters and interview skills. Some reflected how different it was to other career advice they had received either through schooling or other support agencies.

“I was blown away by the career advice I had given today. I got so much detailed information, helpful direction ... the consultation was in a pleasant and welcoming place ... It was easy to follow ... I would rather say, I resolved all my doubts, getting answers to my confusing questions ... I am more excited for the next adventure with my updated resume and cover letter.” – CLIENT SURVEY, 2021

# Career conversations support change

Clients were asked to reflect on their knowledge, skills and/or confidence before engaging with CDPs, and then directly afterwards.

Early survey results from clients suggest improvements across all three areas. Although subjective and immediate in nature, early results reflect the value of short interventions from the perspective of participants.

	Before session	After session
I have some clear next steps to take in work or study	A little	Very
I am confident to take the next step in my career or training	A little	Very
I am able to think positively about my future	A little	Very
I understand my transferable skills	A little	Very
I know how to develop a good CV	Moderately	Very

Based on before and after survey responses for phone/DCS between Mar-June 2021 n=56 and June 21 career practitioner surveys.

As one CDP summarised, “I have witnessed clients walking in with heads down and speaking of no hope, then leaving with their heads held high, with positivity about their future direction and possibilities.”

The key finding from qualitative analysis of over 400 client and CDP comments is that very short interventions (up to 1.5 hours) led by CDPs are resulting in considerable change for clients. There are three main categories of impact:

- **Guided, strength-based conversations** get to the heart of the matter.
- Building job-seeking **knowledge and skills** supports self-management.
- **Motivation and confidence** are key to moving forward and taking the next steps.

These categories are explored further below.

# Guided, strength-based conversations

Building relationships and connection is a critical part of CDPs’ toolkit in supporting people in vulnerable or disrupted circumstances. CDANZ professionals take a guided, holistic, strength-based approach to client engagement.

This approach values the capacity, skills, knowledge, connection and potential that people bring with them into supporting their subjective wellbeing or recovery, and develops goals and outcomes in line with what is meaningful for clients.

Working to build an individual’s awareness and understanding of their own strengths and capabilities has been shown to promote an increased sense of subjective wellbeing and engagement.<sup>15</sup>

## She actually cared about what I thought ...<sup>16</sup>

The majority of feedback from clients highlighted the respectful, expert and guided engagement they received focusing on their strengths, needs, talents and aspirations. Clients found the approach refreshing and unexpected, and it immediately contributed to trusted engagement.

“I’m grateful for the meeting I had with you ... the smile & handshake that put me at ease ... complemented by your professionalism.”

— CLIENT FEEDBACK, 2021

## My needs were quickly identified and solutions offered ...

Clients noted once they felt at ease with the CDP, the guided conversations were professional and clear, quickly focusing on their individual work and learning needs, and identifying solutions. Conversations were adapted to suit the clients – ranging from focusing on building a CV to validating their own pathways. As one client noted,

“It’s been fantastic, exactly the kind of professional feedback I was needing and validation over where I need to be going.”

— CLIENT FEEDBACK, 2021

<sup>15</sup> Park and Peterson, 2006.

<sup>16</sup> These headings are quotes from clients, staff or CDPs involved in the DCS.

This often distinguished the DCS experience for clients from previous experiences attending generic and impersonal career sessions led by well-meaning but unqualified or resource-limited career advisors.

“She also offered to see me as a one to one – I’ve never have that offered in my life – and that face to face is so important – usually it’s all just online and not personal.” – CLIENT INTERVIEW, 2021

### You allowed me to discover and see myself ...

CDPs were skilled in the art of guided career conversations that empowered people to see themselves in a new light. Not only did they build knowledge and skills, but their many methods to engaging with people reflected back to clients their existing skillsets and pathways in a new light.

“I really appreciate your assistance in trying to help me figure out what I find fulfilling in a career – I think I was an especially frustrating case because of my lack of self-awareness in what motivates me ... I’m emailing to let you know that my job search is over and I’ve accepted a graphic designer role.” – EMAIL TO CDP, 2020

# Building job-seeking knowledge and skills

Research shows that engaging with CDPs supports rapid, cost-effective transitions back into work or learning. People who engage in job search interventions such as setting goals, improving job-seeking skills and building self-efficacy are 2.67 times more likely to secure a job than had they not engaged.<sup>17</sup>

CDPs deliver much more than just information, advice and support. One of the aims of career guidance is to build skills and independence that enable clients to manage their own career pathways. This often requires career development professionals to help clients understand the “why” behind skills such as writing a CV or developing a cover letter, and how this is more than information on a page, but aims to make meaning out of choices we make about work and learning.<sup>18</sup>

The holistic, personalised, reflective engagement with knowledge and skills is what distinguishes the DCS from other advice or information workshops and meetings that clients had attended. Clients were able to start reflecting on their skills and transferable skills, making meaning out of the vast array of work and learning choices, and understanding how choices interact with identity, culture and other personal motivations. As such, CVs took on a whole new meaning for many clients, with one client noting she would keep it on her fridge so she could reflect on her skills each morning, where previously she felt she had nothing to give.

## Exactly the kind of professional feedback I was needing ...

The majority of clients commented on the value of updating their job-seeking skills, including working with the CDP to update CVs, cover letters, interview and networking skills. This was a much more holistic process than they had experienced previously, with high engagement, strategic questioning, teasing apart life and work aspirations, and reflecting these onto the page. It was beyond a “process” of words on a page and reflected their true self.

“The career practitioner pulled together all my skills and reflected back to me what I could do. This built my confidence to apply for work and get qualified. She connected the dots in my life and made it a cohesive story.” – CLIENT INTERVIEW, 2021

17 McIlveen et al., pp. 6–7; Liu, Huang and Wang, 2014.

18 Vaughan et al., 2006; Bruce et al., 2017.

## I now, at 59, have my first CV ...

Some clients had worked their whole lives in industries that sourced their staff via word of mouth, or did not require formalised CVs. CDPs were seeing clients who had either very outdated CVs or none at all, who suddenly were required to apply for a job online for the first time in their life.

Services delivered from MSD offices saw higher numbers of lower-skilled clients who had never been able to access or afford professional career guidance prior to this opportunity.

Many times, clients lacked the digital skills to apply online, or felt overwhelmed by where to start. Client stories exemplify the diversity of experiences CDPs encountered, and how rapid, professional support can redirect and re-engage clients. Some clients were older, such as the 59-year-old with her first CV; however, many younger people also required support.

“I had a young lady who ... has been living in her car since August, with no smart phone or access to internet/Wi-Fi. She has ambitions of becoming an Early Childhood Teacher, and her CV and experience was not reflecting her at the level she is currently.

“I walked her through the process, built an action plan for her career and used the support she could access – she was so excited to know there was such support offered. I made sure she knew other resources (where to print off her CV), and how easy the process can be for her. She was truly happy, and walked away with confidence and dignity!”

— CDP FEEDBACK, 2021

## Career pathways have changed so much so it was very helpful to be updated ...

Clients commented that they received timely and up-to-date career knowledge, and insights into the online world of work. It was particularly important that CDPs were engaged with the regional economies in which they worked, many having expert knowledge and connections within their local communities.

A story from a South Island CDP shows how a holistic approach coupled with local insights can support successful transitions.

“My client is a middle-age NZ Chinese woman who was recently made redundant after 20+ years working as a [job removed]. She received the Covid Income Relief Payment for 12 weeks and realised that with only two factories remaining in the area now, she really needs to look for new career options. While she is of retirement age, she would like to continue working – even part-time.

“We looked at her interest areas and our country’s current projected growth areas which led her to focus on retraining for a career in healthcare. She was surprised and empowered learning about job-shadowing as a proactive way of approaching/visiting prospective employers, checking out the realities of the work first-hand, and identifying her preferred work environment. At last sighting, she was intent on trying this approach with local rest homes and enrolling in a relevant healthcare certificate course.

“Given her displacement due to Covid, it was heart-warming to see her enthusiasm for managing her transition, embarking on a new career path, exploring new job search strategies, and retraining to gain a relevant qualification – all free. Thanks so much for offering this service to our people.” – CDP FEEDBACK, 2021

# Motivation and confidence are key to moving forward

Research shows the interlinked nature of wellbeing, life satisfaction and employability.

Not only does meaningful work contribute to higher levels of life satisfaction, but conversely, higher levels of life satisfaction contribute to the likelihood of full-time work.<sup>19</sup> Job loss in particular can be a psychological blow for many people, disrupting their confidence and motivation; understanding the impact of wellbeing on choices and career self-management supports better decision-making.<sup>20</sup>

One of the direct effects of career guidance on subjective wellbeing may be in supporting clients to look forward and develop plans and goals, and enabling them with skills and knowledge to achieve goals, while also enabling clients to reflect and reconstruct their past with renewed meaning.<sup>21</sup> Client feedback from DCS has supported the impact of CDPs on clients' motivation and confidence to get back on track, clarify and take the next step, apply for work, or go with renewed confidence into interviews. Much of this was based on actively reflecting on their work and learning journey to date, and seeing it in a new, more positive light.



## The value of a great CV

For clients accessing career guidance, building their CV was one of their main concerns. Some clients had never had a CV prior to engaging with the service, and others had always received knock-backs from applications, or felt they had no skills to offer on a page.

The skill and empathy of career development professionals helped them to not only unpick their own capabilities and experience, but also their future direction:

“The most significant change that I see in all clients, regardless of their level of education is the result of career development conversations post redundancy and the skills of writing their CV. Both these stages in my interventions seem transformational in terms of clients realising that they have a wide range of transferable skills ...

“As for the CV, for many it is a hard learning curve, being rejected time and time again, very often because they apply for the wrong positions or because their CV does not adequately target the skills required. ... These generate lightbulb moments that are critical for jobseekers who are facing redundancy or have already been made redundant and find their situation extremely stressful.

“These moments are not only heart-warming but also key to their success in securing work as promptly as possible and in taking ownership of their employment future.” – CDP FEEDBACK, 2021

19 Longhi et al., 2018.

20 Gowan, 2012; McIlveen, n.d.

21 Robertson, 2013.

## This gave me new strength and confidence towards my job search ...

Clients, particularly in face-to-face services, noted they came away renewed and empowered, confident and motivated to take the next steps. Often this was the result of only a short session in which career experts guided clients through their work history, highlighting and drawing out their skills and capabilities. As one CDP noted, “I am very surprised at how many clients who appear to be so well skilled and experienced, seem to lack confidence in themselves and their abilities ... perhaps this is another way COVID has impacted us?”

Highly experienced clients who had returned from overseas or those made redundant locally found support to re-enter the New Zealand job market – despite significant experience, many clients had not applied or been interviewed for a job for many years, and felt downcast by rejections. Updating their knowledge and skills was all that many required to kick-start their new careers.

“The career practitioner taught me so much, and she was encouraging and positive – you can have all the years’ experience but these job skills are ones I’ve never learnt previously ... I came away feeling confident and now have two job interviews.” – CLIENT FEEDBACK, 2021

## I would’ve just let it go, but I think she changed my life ...

Some clients noted that during the sessions with CDPs they were able to achieve something that had taken them years to get motivated to do, for example, apply for a driver licence or apply for a particular job.

This motivation stemmed from a refreshed understanding of both their work and learning history, and being re-inspired with new or refreshed goals. However, often CDPs also recognised that for some clients, they needed to walk alongside them a little more proactively before they were able to independently achieve their goals. For example, one client noted the impact of this approach:

“I don’t think I’d be putting in my application without her. I’ve had some people try to help me, but never really had the motivation until now ... she showed me, and asked me if it’s what I really wanted to do, jumped on the laptop and filled it out.” – CLIENT FEEDBACK, 2021

## Adults struggle too ... it’s hard to find a starting point

Many clients seeing CDPs were aged between 25 and 39. Phone booking data showed that callers were mainly requesting help with job applications, followed by potentially losing their job, finishing their degree, or being unsuccessful in job applications. For some respondents being supported to explore options that aligned with their values built their confidence moving forward.

“You provided customised advice and mentoring based on thorough understanding of my unique career situation. This gave me new strength and confidence towards my job search.” – CLIENT FEEDBACK, 2021

# 3

## The Voice of Professionals

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# Enhancing Access and Engagement

It's clear that the work of the TEC and CDANZ career development professionals is making a difference. However, the service design and location of a national career guidance service plays a critical role in helping people feel comfortable and supported in reaching out for help, and knowing where to receive help.

Research shows that for those who might find themselves in vulnerable circumstances, such as sudden unemployment, seeking help is not necessarily straightforward. A report by the Commission for Financial Capability found that just over 40% of those surveyed did not seek outside support during COVID-19 lockdown even when falling into arrears.<sup>22</sup>

Similarly, a Wellington report showed that those who experienced job loss during lockdown were more likely to experience loneliness yet less likely to reach out for help.<sup>23</sup> As noted, many clients to the service had not engaged previously with CDPs and were unaware of what they offered. This reflects OECD findings that many people did not know of the existence of CDPs (or what they did), did not see themselves in need of help, or relied solely on informal networks such as friends and family.<sup>24</sup>

It was, therefore, very important to adapt the service to regional needs, in order to entice as many people as possible to “give it a try” while working within time and resource constraints. The monitoring and evaluation system provided evidence to support its several iterations, and feedback highlighted four key service-design elements that helped support improved access and outcomes for clients. These included:

- **The value of a zero-cost price tag.** Clients were more likely to try a free service, especially given the majority had little to no experience with CDPs prior and did not understand what they could offer.
- **Effective community-focused partnerships and triage.** The alignment with community libraries, government agencies, community trusts and other other community locations helped locals access integrated, well triaged services.
- **Building cross-sector capability and sharing expertise.** Both CDPs and co-located staff such as MSD case managers, librarians, and MSD work brokers learned valuable skills from each other and the clients. This shared expertise also supported better integrated and aligned service delivery, and also raised the profile of CDPs in government services directly engaged with New Zealanders looking for work.
- **Digital is a tool, but people are the answer.** A multi-channel approach was the best solution for Aotearoa/New Zealand, with 70% of clients accessing face-to-face services. Clients used digital tools as a support, while CDPs helped them navigate the online tools.

“People seeking help have their own barriers and needs, and having a holistic approach means clients are supported, coached, mentored and empowered with the skills to move forward.” – MSD STAFF, 2021

Each of the four key service design elements is further investigated below.

22 Ibid.

23 [www.wgtn.ac.nz/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0010/1865512/WP-20-03-covid-19-life-in-lockdown.pdf](http://www.wgtn.ac.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/1865512/WP-20-03-covid-19-life-in-lockdown.pdf)

24 OECD, 2021.

# The value of a zero-cost price tag

Client engagement was closely aligned to affordability of the service.

Career development professionals estimated that for 90% of clients the “zero-cost” price tag was extremely important in accessing the service.<sup>25</sup> This was evident in the higher interaction on social media when the word “free” was inserted into the advertising campaign:

“So many of the clients coming in have no CV at all, so it is extremely difficult for them applying for jobs in the online world. They are very grateful and full of renewed hope that they will now have a CV and the opportunity to apply for jobs online. Many can’t believe that it is a free service and are able to call the 0800 number for continued professional support.” – CDP FEEDBACK, 2021

Free career guidance had the twin benefit of not only supporting more equitable access, but raising awareness of how a professional career guidance service can support job and training goals.

“This being a free service was huge for giving people confidence and knowledge at changing or starting a career – the consultation was far more informative than I thought it would be – it was in-depth and well structured.” – CLIENT FEEDBACK, 2021

Initial survey feedback shows an increase in clients’ knowledge about how a CDP can support job and training goals from “a little” to “very good” after only one session.

## Free access

For 90% of clients free access to a career practitioner was very important

Less than 10% had used the services of a career practitioner previously

	Before session	After session
I am knowledgeable about how a CP can support my job and training goals	A little	Very

<sup>25</sup> Based on before and after survey responses for phone/DCS March–June 2021, n=45, CDP surveys June ’21. An OECD survey across six countries noted four out of ten adults had spoke to a career advisor during the previous five years; however, gaps were found between younger and older users, city vs rural, highly and low educated adults, men and women, employed and unemployed. OECD, 2021.

## Effective community-focused partnerships and triage

Delivering career guidance on-site at libraries and MSD Work and Income/Connected sites relies on developing strong, committed and mutually respectful working relationships. Over 80% of all CDPs working on site said they had established easy working relationships with staff that facilitated positive client access.

Although the volume of walk-in traffic was relatively good across community locations, more targeted initiatives opened up opportunities for longer career guidance sessions, and a more diverse group of clients.

CDPs at co-located sites had to work to establish new relationships for effective client triage. For some, there was already a strong, existing relationship, whereas others were new. Qualitative feedback from CDPs noted that relationships worked best within certain shared expectations. These included:

- **a shared vision** for a flourishing community connecting clients and whānau to meaningful and sustainable employment
- **a shared culture** of respect and kindness towards each other and clients
- **respectful relationships** in which all staff were supported to work to their strengths, and collaborate across areas of expertise and speciality knowledge
- **deep community connections** and knowledge about community needs, services, opportunities and ways of working
- **a willingness to learn** from each other's strengths and differences, and build capability.

As one CDP noted in her collaboration with the government agencies:

“We respectfully and collaboratively work together acknowledging the specialty knowledge and competencies of each other's roles, and how these complement each other, allowing us to provide an individualised multi-disciplinary wrap around service, with the client at the centre ... There is so much more to say, about how we all value diversity, inclusiveness and work in partnership in line with the principles of te Tiriti o Waitangi ...” – CDP FEEDBACK, 2021

How this working relationship directly impacts client access and outcomes is illustrated in the following vignette.

1.

**JOB REDUNDANCY**

“Last Thursday afternoon a guy rushed into the [office] and was looking around the kiosks. He’d just been made redundant from his job that day.

2.

**NO CV AND DESPERATE TO WORK**

He has three young children and a wife and said he was desperate to get a new job, he’d been in the same job for 10 years and didn’t have a CV.

3.

**IMMEDIATE ACCESS TO CDP AND NEW CV**

The CDP was available that day and worked with him straight away and had his CV ready the same day.

4.

**IMMEDIATE MSD JOB CONNECTIONS**

An MSD Employment Case Manager started looking at the jobs available through Work and Income.

5.

**CDP USES COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS**

At the same time, the CDP heard about a potential job that would be a good fit.

6.

**MEETING WITH EMPLOYER**

The staff arranged for him to meet with an employer on Wednesday morning. The employer said he had a great attitude, and they were keen to take him on.

7.

**ACCEPTED NEW JOB**

... he is accepting the job.”

“... a very positive result that he could go straight into work without needing financial support” – STAFF EMAIL TO TEC, JUNE 2021

# Building cross-sector capability and sharing expertise

Staff interviewed in co-located government and library sites noted that access to CDPs improved client outcomes and also built their own skills and capabilities.

Not only were they able to see their clients in a new light, but also start having different career conversations with clients based on new knowledge gained through workshops with career development professionals. These conversations did not replace CDPs, but supported a more integrated and targeted service.

## I am more confident of placing clients into a role ...

Although well versed in case management, busy government staff were relieved to have expert support and immediate access to CDPs. This meant not only a more holistic approach to understanding client needs, but a quicker development of targeted job-seeking tools such as updated CVs and cover letters.

“The career practitioner understands the client more holistically and does not put them into any job ... without her I estimate I would be spending 3 hours instead of 1 to get to the same point; that’s only 2 clients a day ... she is not making them more dependent but setting clients up with the tools and confidence to make them independent in their job searches.” – STAFF MEMBER, 2021

## This was a lightbulb moment, maybe I’m having the wrong conversations ...

On-site CDPs with strong working relationships also shared their expertise with co-located staff, contributing to their professional development and knowledge of CDP skills and approaches. This was available to both library staff, who often had customers come to them with CV and other questions due to the free access to computers, and MSD staff who could build their career capability. Staff interviews at selected sites showed the value of this engagement to their own professional capabilities.

“The Career Practitioner provided a 45 min talk about service and empowering clients using the Job Hunters’ Workbook, how people don’t get shortlisted if their CV’s are generic and so on ... it was a lightbulb moment, maybe I’m having the wrong conversations ... I feel more knowledgeable and confident to facilitate client conversations now.” – STAFF MEMBER, 2021

## **I have learnt so much from this experience – about my role, clients and myself ...**

Similarly, over 70% of CDPs described their experience on the phone or in co-located sites as being beneficial to their own professional development, including new insights into regional challenges, and particularly reaching a diversity of New Zealanders they would not normally engage with in their daily job. This broadened their skill levels and ability to engage with diverse clientele in their future practice.

“I have gained a much better understanding of the issues facing people who are disadvantaged and vulnerable. Also, a better understanding of Work and Income’s operation and service. It has been very satisfying helping people who have never had the opportunity to talk about their career before.” – CDP FEEDBACK, 2021

# Digital is a tool, people are the answer

By the end of June 2021, 70% of clients of the DCS had accessed the face-to-face services. Although CDPs had a wealth of online tools to share with clients to help guide them through career decisions, the highlight for many clients was using these in collaboration with a highly experienced practitioner.

This aligns with research that shows computer-based interventions have the least effect when delivered as a stand-alone solution; however, with the engagement of a CDP their impact is enhanced.<sup>26</sup> This includes helping clients make sense of the online world of work and feedback from online tools, and clients not feeling overwhelmed with information.

Although clients directly commented on the value of online tools and resources they were shown, the real added value lay in the relationship-based approach with the CDPs to tease out their work and learning pathways from this information. Given the CDPs' skill level and experience, this was not a protracted process, but targeted, focused and cost-effective.

This was particularly evident for some clients with limited digital literacy, who CDPs worked patiently with to establish their online profile, including job search accounts, an online CV or online applications. These clients had knowledge of the digital tools but still required support working through them, not only establishing their online presence, but gaining tangible work outcomes as a direct result, as exemplified by this final client story.

“The client came in to MSD reception. He asked for help with his CV. He is computer illiterate and his CV was so outdated. We suggested the connected space ... and granted him some bus money to get over to do it. When he went to see the ladies this was his experience ...

“The lady who I saw was so nice. She asked me about my life story and made me feel not so stupid when I explained that I didn't understand computers. I gave her my old CV and she asked me details about every previous experience then made some changes but checked in with me to see if I liked them. I was unsure at first but felt good once I had finished with my new CV.’

“One month later he came back into the office looking 10 years younger advising that he has secured full time employment at [company] starting this Monday. He is extremely grateful for the service that he received and has recommended it to some of his whānau/friends who are also in the same situation. The happiness that he now has is infectious and a reminder of why we do what we do.” – STAFF FEEDBACK, 2021

26 McIlveen, n.d.

# 4 Moving Forward

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# An Integrated National Approach to Professional Career Guidance

Although initially a short-term intervention, the value and impact of professional career guidance has helped support the service's 12-month extension for TEC in joint partnership with the Ministry of Social Development. It remains a stand-alone initiative while the National Career System Strategy continues to be developed.

The role of CDANZ career development professionals cannot be underestimated in the impact of the DCS for clients. Career work is complex, and poor career advice has ramifications for both an individual and the broader economy. The specialised work of a CDP is underpinned by their knowledge and application of established career theories, an in-depth understanding of the local labour market, and identification of the skills, interests and values of their client to support them to make good decisions around their lives, learning and work.

CDPs are the experts in job search interventions that result in not only getting and maintaining a job, but getting and maintaining work that is meaningful, secure and sustainable for individuals and their whānau.

Clients who have contributed to the findings in this report highlight time and again the value of this engagement with CDPs, often contrasting DCS with previous experiences with less qualified advisors.

Moving forward, the service will continue to be monitored for impact, adding to and expanding the findings in this report. In particular, survey work will enable longer-term tracking of work and learning outcomes that can help build a clearer picture of key career intervention points in a person's life. This evidence can help support a more integrated future approach to delivering professional career guidance from school to retirement for all New Zealanders.

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