

SCRUTINY BOARD INQUIRY: 14-19(25) REVIEW

BACKGROUND TO THE REVIEW

Introduction

The 14+ Review was formally launched in July 2008 by the Director of Children's Services as part of a wider agenda around re-engineering secondary provision in Leeds. The Review is a response to some major challenges and opportunities facing the local authority: a major 14-19 curriculum reform; links between the 14+ agenda and inclusion; moves to more integrated localised working across children's and young people's services in Leeds; and the transfer of the Learning and Skills Council's funding responsibilities for post-16 to the local authority by September 2010.

This briefing paper seeks to outline some of the relevant developments nationally and within Leeds which have helped to shape the Review. We have grouped these developments in three core areas:

1. The 14-19 (25) Agenda
2. The Wider Every Child Matters (ECM) Agenda
3. The Regeneration Agenda

1. THE 14-19 (25) AGENDA

A major contributor to the 14+ Review has been the need to respond to major changes to the 14-19 curriculum and the raising of the participation age to 17 by 2013 and 18 by 2015. There are a number of new qualifications for young people which are being introduced from September 2008. The most significant of these are linked to The Diploma.

1.1 Diplomas

The Diplomas are a new composite qualification, which combine a number of components: functional skills in Maths, English and ICT; applied learning in a work-related sector and further study to enhance breadth or depth according to the learner's interest. There are 17 Diplomas available at three levels – foundation, higher and advanced. By 2013 all 14-19 year old learners will have an entitlement to study any of the Diplomas. The Secretary of State for Education, Ed Balls, describes the Diplomas as "mixing the best of theoretical and practical learning – real educational rigour mixed with a work-related experience".

Partnerships have to apply to pilot Diplomas through a process known as The Gateway. This is a very rigorous process and significant numbers of applications are not approved. Applications can only be submitted by Partnerships: no single institution can apply to deliver Diplomas.

Preparations for 2008 delivery has started with 130 learners recruited to both the Creative & Media and Construction & Built Environment Diplomas. From September 2009 we will also be delivering Society, Health & Development, Engineering, IT, Business, Administration & Finance and Hair & Beauty. Land-based and Environment has been given approval for 2010. By September 2009 there should be around 1,000 learners studying Diplomas in Leeds. We are aiming to submit further application for Diplomas to Gateway 3 in Autumn 2008 for Diplomas to start in 2010 in Sport & Leisure, Hospitality & Catering, Public Services, Manufacturing & Product Design, Retail and Travel & Tourism.

The growth in numbers of learners on Diploma courses will be considerable in coming years and by the time all 17 Diplomas become an entitlement in 2013, we could have in the region of 5,000 learners on programme.

There are steering groups for each Diploma line and an overarching city-wide steering group comprising existing Diploma leads and staff from Education Leeds. This group will steer Diploma roll out across the city and delivery of the Diploma entitlement. The capacity of the central team at Education Leeds is being expanded to ensure areas such as marketing, functional skills, workforce development, teaching and learning, quality assurance and city-wide protocols are consistently developed across Diploma lines. We are also currently funding staff in schools and colleges to co-ordinate the management and organisation of each Diploma line through Diploma development funding we are receiving.

Support for Diploma delivery is available using a combination of specific Diploma grant funding, Dedicated Schools Grant and mainstream pre and post 16 funding.

The general principles informing Diploma implementation are:

- A commitment from all partners to deliver the Diploma Entitlement - every young person in Leeds to be able to access all 17 Diplomas by 2013.
- All learners to have equality of access to Diploma
- All learners to receive high quality impartial, information, advice and guidance about Diplomas
- The Diploma delivery model will be based on viability, sustainability and quality.
- A 14-16 funding model that supports and promotes the delivery of Diplomas.
- Education Leeds and LSC will work with schools, colleges and other partners at strategic and operational level around the development and roll out of Diplomas to ensure that the necessary facilities and resources are available to support delivery.
- Schools, colleges and other providers will commit appropriate staffing and resource to support the successful development and delivery of the Diplomas.
- Quality of outcomes will be closely monitored and used to inform future planning and funding priorities.
- All schools and colleges will adopt the proposed common timetabling framework.

We have an Employer Engagement Coordinator based at Leeds Chamber funded by Education Leeds/LSC to develop employers engagement with the Diplomas. Employer Ambassador subgroups of the Leeds Skills Board have been established for the Diplomas and major employer events have been organised for the Diplomas.

The West Yorkshire Lifelong Learning network is currently engaged in a three-year programme to build progression routes for Diploma learners, whether through Foundation Degrees or through securing the agreement of local HEIs (sub-regional) around their entry requirements. The Leeds 14-19 Team are closely linked to this work. The University of Leeds, Leeds Metropolitan University, Leeds Trinity and All Saints and Leeds College of Art and Design have all been highly proactive in their involvement with Diploma development at local level. Representatives of most of these institutions are present at all the Diploma development meetings. The University of Leeds, spurred on by the work of Diploma Champion Vice-Chancellor Michael Arthur, is very generous in offering its facilities and personnel to support Diploma development and delivery.

1.2 Foundation Learning Tier

Foundation Learning Tier is qualifications at entry level and level 1 within the QCF (Qualifications and Credit Framework). Within the Foundation Learning Tier, Progression Pathways will be the main organising structures. They are frameworks for learning built from qualifications that are themselves drawn from Entry Level and Level 1. Each pathway will include:

- vocational knowledge, skills and understanding
- functional skills and
- personal and social development

The progression destinations of the three Progression Pathways relevant to the 14-19 sector identified for early development and phased implementation from September 2008 are to:

- **a level 2 apprenticeship framework** – a ‘pre-apprenticeship’ developed as both a Progression Pathway and as part of the ‘Apprenticeship Family’. This pathway will therefore form part of the apprenticeship entitlement and so is focused initially on 16 to 18 year olds - but potentially over time extending to 19 to 25 year olds
- **independent living or supported employment** – targeted at learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and age-appropriate for both 16 to 18 year olds and 19 to 25 year old learners
- **level 1 Diplomas** - an offer at Entry Level specifically targeted at 14 to 16 year old learners (QCA lead).

There is a fourth Progression Pathway specifically for adults

- **a first full Level 2** – initially for adults and anticipated to support achievement and progression to Level 2 for adults

In Leeds the implementation of the Foundation Learning Tier is likely to progress as follows:

1. Mapping of current sub level 2 provision for 14-19 years olds in Leeds, by occupational sector, level and area of the city
2. Cross referencing existing provision against the frameworks of the four Progression Pathways and identifying gaps by Progression Pathway, level, area of the city and occupational sector (where relevant). Identifying effective and high quality provision.
3. Where possible, securing adjustments to delivery below level 2 to ensure that existing good practice is supported and effective Progression Pathways developed.
4. Commissioning appropriately to ensure all Progression Pathways are viable and accessible to all learners across Leeds.

1.3 Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are emerging as a key national priority, with increased emphasis in the coming period, with the advent of a National Apprenticeship Service (NAS). Significant changes will come into effect over the next year, with the National Apprenticeship Service scheduled to be fully functional in April 2009. The NAS will take responsibility for end to end delivery of apprenticeships, including engaging with employers, management of the delivery system and relationships with providers and other key partners, including local authorities and providers of Information Advice and Guidance (IAG). National Apprenticeship Vacancy Matching Service (NAVMS), which will be rolled out nationally from November 2008, will become the mechanism through which employers offer apprenticeship vacancies and prospective apprentices are able to find an appropriate vacancy and apply.

The national target is to offer all young people an entitlement to an apprenticeship by 2013, and 1 in 5 young people to be in an apprenticeship by 2020, a significant increase from the current figure of 1 in 15. In the Leeds 14-19 Education Plan 20% of young people aged 16-18 are projected to be on apprenticeships by 2013. This equates to approximately 4000 young people from a projected cohort of 20000. In 2007/08 there were 1,300 16-18 year olds on apprenticeships a decrease of 6% on the previous year. However there were around 1200 learners on apprenticeships an increase of 35% on the previous year. There are a number of challenges and opportunities linked to the apprenticeship agenda.

- The target of 1 in every 5 young people accessing apprenticeships provision by 2020 is challenging and will mean increased focus on promoting and facilitating apprenticeships by all relevant partners, including schools and IAG providers. The current economic climate present a particular challenge in the short / medium term.
- The focus that the NAS (National Apprenticeship Service) will bring to apprenticeships will ensure that a dedicated workforce exists to drive up apprenticeship numbers, but partners will need to support this.

- There are a number of examples of very successful apprenticeship schemes currently, and the recent focus on quality of provision has reduced any poor performance amongst work based learning providers. It is important that apprenticeships are promoted to young people as a high quality progression route of choice. This must be reflected in the IAG offered to young people in schools and in the way apprenticeships are promoted.
- Key local strategic partners need to ensure that they make use of their leverage to ensure that new employers entering Leeds through regeneration activity provide realistic employment opportunities for local young people, with a major focus on apprenticeship opportunities.
- Employer engagement links and mechanisms need to be optimised to ensure that as many local employers are offering apprenticeship programmes to local young people. This must include a focus on the larger companies in Leeds.
- Commitments from new employers to provide apprenticeships to local people need to be secured and monitored.
- The increasing emphasis on apprenticeships in the public sector
- The possible integration of diplomas with apprenticeships, as outlined in Promoting achievement, valuing success: a strategy for 14-19 qualifications, is likely to be more appropriate in some occupational sectors than others. Leeds partners need to engage with these developments.
- The Common Application Process (CAP) and Area Prospectus (AP) will need to integrate fully with the National Apprenticeship Vacancy Matching Service (NAVMS) to ensure young people are provided with the best IAG to make the best possible choices.

1.4 Implications of Partnership Working

It will be clear from the above that we cannot fulfill these challenging and exciting opportunities without much stronger collaborative arrangements between schools, colleges, work-based learning providers and employers. Following an extensive consultation process during the summer term 2008, we are proposing a 'confederation' model of 14-19 (25) partnership working across Leeds. The confederation model resembles and reflects comparable localised partnership structures set up across the country to enable providers to deliver education, training, information, advice and guidance (IAG) to young people aged 14-19 (25) within an over-arching local authority and city-wide framework. It can also provide a coherent model which complements planning and provision at a sub-regional level.

There are good examples of 14-19 partnerships nationally, as evidenced by a range of Joint Area Reviews: *"All secondary schools and colleges belong to local collegiates which work together well to provide a good range of well planned opportunities for young people. Work-based learning providers are well represented on the relevant management committees and steering groups"* (Birmingham, 2006); *"Good progress has been made in developing 14-19 provision in the city. Effective partnership working is contributing to an appropriate range of vocational courses and coherent progression routes,*

encouraging more young people to participate in education and training and improve their qualifications. (Nottingham, 2007) “Progress in collaborative activity for the 14–16 age group is at an early stage and developing well. The evolving ‘super collaboratives’, or area partnerships, form an appropriate response to tackling the wider remit of 14–19 provision. They build on existing partnership activity and successful submissions for vocational diploma schemes. Agreement has been reached between partners to introduce a common application form and common timetable approach to accommodate the vocational curriculum at Key Stage 4 and for elements of post-16 provision.” (Liverpool, 2008).

The lead responsibility for implementing the confederation approach will be shared within Leeds Local Authority and also with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) schools, education and training providers, the voluntary, faith and community sector, employers and learners themselves. This level of partnership will be necessary to delivery the full learner entitlement, and could also provide a framework for a range of commissioning activities as 14-19 funding arrangements transfer from the LSC to the local authority.

The key aims of the confederation approach for learners are to enable:

- more choice of learning and training opportunities – within a ‘travel to learn partnership’ and at city-wide level
- wider participation and personalisation – partnerships can respond more flexibly and bring more resources to bear much more efficiently to support and meet individual learner needs
- better outcomes – in terms of skills, qualifications and progression routes into further education, training and employment.

‘Confederations’ are partnerships of providers. They can include secondary schools, specialist inclusive learning centres (SILCS), further education, training providers, employers, the voluntary, community and faith sector (VCFS) and higher education (HEI). A confederation agrees to work together in a formal way to plan and deliver aspects of 14+ provision within clear city-wide strategic protocols. Some partners may have ‘associate’ status. Partners retain their distinctive ethos and identity: the majority of 14+ provision will be delivered by single providers. However, a significant proportion of provision may be delivered across a partnership and learners may travel to another site to access a component of their curriculum.

It is proposed that there should be five confederations in Leeds. These will align with the existing wedge/area-based children’s services which are developing the Children’s Trust arrangements to deliver a wide range of services to children and young people. A further rationale for using the five wedge model is that the numbers of 14-19 learners in each area, and the existing and planned provision, would justify a significant locus of learning partnership activity. This is particularly true for the effective delivery of the foundation learning tier (FLT), diploma-based activity, and a significant number of post-16 Level 3 advanced level courses. A further rationale for this approach is the likelihood that 16+ and possibly 14+ funding and commissioning arrangements after 2010 will be through consortia of providers to ensure the greatest choice of high quality, viable and cost-effective learning opportunities.

The 'wedge' based approach does not always neatly correspond to every existing 14-19 local delivery partnership (LDP), although the majority of these do align very well within the confederation structure. We need to be flexible in enabling these partnerships to make the most of the confederation approach.

The confederation approach is based on the assumption that there will be central and/or city-wide provision of specialisms and alternative choice for learners, principally through the FE sector and through work-based learning, VCFS and employer routes. Inner city learners will thus be well placed to take advantage of both 'central' provision, and the emerging confederation-based provision at area-level. We anticipate that some of the 'spoke' provision indicated in the LSC consultation document 'Excellence and Inclusion' could take the form of purpose-built 14+ vocational facilities, possibly co-financed by the LSC, BSF, local authority and Diploma Capital funding streams.

There is a structured programme and project management approach to the implementation of confederations across Leeds, which began with an initial consultation and 'mobilisation' phase during the summer term 2008, and will continue during 2008-9 until full implementation from September 2009. Funding has been made available to emerging confederations to mobilise confederation activity, address key issues raised in the review so far, anticipate key workstream activities over 2008-9 and model a confederation approach to planning and commissioning. Working within clear city-wide protocols and workstreams, responsibility will be initially with wedge secondary headteachers, SILC principals and heads of wedge-based provision to:

- build collaborative relationships with partners (particularly FE, training providers, VCFS and employers),
- agree delivery and learner outcomes,
- develop leadership, management and governance models,
- manage communication and consultation with learners, parents/carers, governors
- co-ordinate a confederation response and process to support provision planning and delivery arrangements, supported by agreed, transparent and relevant data
- agree a range of co-ordination arrangements (action-planning, common timetabling, careers and IAG, ICT/learning platform, reporting, assessment, learner tracking, calendar, transport, premises and facilities, etc)
- develop agreed quality assurance arrangements which are transparent and manageable, evidence-based and maintain focus on the shared goal to improve outcomes for young people in Leeds.

2. THE WIDER ECM AGENDA

The 14-19 agenda and our proposals for responding to it are key components of the wider ECM agenda. As part of the new Children and Young People's Plan, emerging priorities reflect the importance of a coherent 14-19 approach: GCSE floor targets; qualifications at 19; the importance of 'narrowing the gap' for key groups of young people – looked after children; black and minority ethnic (BME) youngsters; those entitled to free school meals; and those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Linked to this are some of the symptoms of disengagement with universally effective 14+ provision: teenage conception rates; persistent absence; fixed term exclusions; and the numbers of NEET youngsters – those not in education, employment or training.

2.1 “All children and young people are thriving in learning”

This key theme of the CYPP recognises some of the significant improvements that have taken place in terms of outcomes in secondary schools. However, lower outcomes are more common in deprived areas, for looked after children and some black and minority ethnic groups. A relatively high proportion (8%) of young people in Leeds are not in learning or work after the age of 16. Qualification levels at age 19 in Leeds are below the average for similar areas. Nearly 1 in 10 learners in secondary schools are 'persistently absent'.

To address these challenges, the local authority aims to achieve the following by 2014: all learners will have an Individual Learning Plan, and dedicated support from a coach or mentor; all young people will be learning up to the age of 18; there will be a Leeds Learner Entitlement providing greater choice of learning routes and pathways for all learners. In order to deliver this, there will be a rich variety of schools, colleges and other providers working in close collaborative partnerships through the confederations. The investment of LSC and BSF capital, allied to other funding streams (such as Diploma Capital), will also ensure that the learning environments in colleges and schools will be transformational and fit for purpose.

Priorities in the CYPP are therefore to improve learning outcomes for 16 year olds, with a focus on 'narrowing the gap'; improving learning outcomes and skills levels for 19 year-olds; increasing the proportion of vulnerable young people (14 – 25) engaged in education, training and employment. The actions needed to achieve these are summarised in: our 14-19 Education Plan, particularly with regard to the roll-out of Diplomas and the development of Apprenticeships; our National Challenge Action Plans; in our NEET Strategy; and in our commitment to fully developing employer engagement.

There are also links between our 14+ Review and the Leeds Inclusive learning Strategy, particularly focused on the need to audit the range of provision available to meet the needs of young people (14-25) with Learning Difficulties or Disabilities, and securing agreement on appropriate programmes to be commissioned to meet any identified gaps.

2.1 “ All young children and young people make the right choices”

A coherent and confederated approach to 14+ planning and provision can also make a major contribution to this important theme in the CYPP. The local authority vision for 2014 aims to achieve comprehensive, accessible information advice and guidance (IAG) services, using a network of ‘one stop shop’ advice and guidance centres that will be delivered online and through schools and community settings. There will be an integrated Targeted Youth Support Service for all young people who need extra help, and Integrated Youth Provision in the city centre.

Priorities include the need to reduce teenage conception and improve sexual health; improving psychological mental health services, and reducing offending by managing offending behaviour better. There are a range of emerging strategies to fulfil these priorities, ranging from Targeted Youth Support to Teenage Pregnancy, new IAG services, and Youth Crime Action and Taskforce Action Plans.

The development of the 14+ confederation model thus links to a wider local authority agenda which aims to align service delivery at a more localised level to achieve greater community cohesion by reflecting local priorities and which can commission providers to deliver outcomes for learners and communities in a more responsive and accountable way.

3. THE REGENERATION AGENDA

The 14-19 agenda can only be achieved through strong partnerships with employers and an awareness of how our approaches can support regeneration in Leeds.

3.1 Employer engagement in Leeds in relation to 14-19 reform

Leeds is a vibrant city and with many employers in both the public and private sectors. Education Leeds has developed models of excellence in employer engagement designed to meet local needs and the demands of government initiatives. There are many agencies involved in employer engagement in the city, working with different cohorts of learners, in different areas and delivering on different agendas such as attainment, enterprise, regeneration and social inclusion. Most agencies involved in employer engagement report that the city has a good tradition of partnership working.

There is a wealth of experience in delivering excellent employer engagement programmes, managing relationships and creating models that can be shared across the city. This good practice can be found in:

- Collaboration between the Education Leeds 14-19 Team, Leeds Chamber of Commerce and the Skills Board around employer engagement with Diplomas
- Further Education college links with employers around Apprenticeships and skills training
- Leeds Mentoring, providing several mentoring models that have proven benefits to young people in terms of improved grades at GCSE

- Education Leeds Education Business Partnership's whole school approach to employer engagement
- Leeds Ahead's ability to engage businesses on inner city projects
- The Chamber of Commerce's access to business and potential for marketing and communication
- Leeds Voice which creates opportunities to work with young people who have disengaged or who are in danger of doing so
- IGEN's provision of structured career plans for young people

Employer engagement activity has developed organically over a number of years and has been led primarily by funding schemes and local and national government initiatives. 14 to 19 reforms in secondary education require much greater involvement from employers and so there is a need to a more coherent approach to employer engagement in schools and colleges.

The picture that is emerging suggests there are many positive initiatives, but no real overall co-ordination, which leads to a duplication of roles and services.

3.2 The Way Forward

A recent independent report commissioned by Education Leeds has highlighted a great deal of good practice in the city, but has also identified a number of recommendations that would improve employer engagement.

- The local authority must provide a clear vision and leadership on employer engagement. The focus of this vision and leadership should be the guiding principles of the Leeds 14-19 strategy.
- All parties interviewed for the report have identified a need for a more coherent approach to the delivery of employer engagement on the ground. In other areas this is achieved through a strong education business partnership network, which delivers enterprise activity, work experience, mentoring services.
- Relationship management is key to success with employer engagement. The relationship between employers and educators has to be managed on both sides.
- We recommend all Education Business Link Organisations (EBLOs) in the city audit their offerings and produce a directory of what is on offer. This information can then be shared through the proposed Enterprise Exchange tool being developed by the ELEBP (Education Leeds Education Business Partnership). The Enterprise Exchange is a tool that allows online matching of the needs of schools with what businesses can offer. It also offers physical networking opportunities to schools, colleges and businesses through events.
- The main issue dividing EBLOs in the city is funding. All of the EBLOs work separately because they are working to agendas set by different funding streams. Funding of these organisations is a key issue that should be examined by the local authority. Changes to funding streams with the demise of the LSCs may provide an opportunity to create a more cohesive service.

- Businesses have expressed frustration at the number of organisations contacting them to take part in employer engagement activities. The ideal solution would be the one body communicating effectively with businesses on behalf of schools and on behalf of other EBLOs. If this is not possible all parties should agree to a co-ordinated approach.
- Businesses have said they are willing to support education but they need to know exactly how they can help and what is expected of them. Businesses must be approached with specific requests, clearly defined by the education institution wishing to engage their support via the agency selected to engage businesses.
- Diplomas provide an opportunity to focus partnership working in the city and to bring a more coherent approach to employer engagement.
- There are many benefits to employer engagement for employers. Large organisations may be happy to take part in employer engagement activity as it meets the needs of their corporate social responsibility programmes. This will rarely be the case for small businesses. The education sectors should consider the benefits it may be able to offer small businesses in exchange for their support. These could include subsidised training, use of facilities in schools and colleges. Colleges, schools and city learning centres have state of the art technology which may be of use to companies that, for example, need help with developing their website or may want to use facilities to help with training needs.
- Leeds City Council could further influence employer engagement by making corporate social responsibility a requirement for companies that tender for contracts.

3.3 Regeneration and the needs of the economy

The 14+ Review of provision and the wider 14-19 agenda are key contributors to supporting city-wide and regional economic development and regeneration. Although we cannot predict the wider repercussions of the current economic and financial climate, there is a general expectation that it will delay rather than halt the need to prepare young people for both high volume and high level skills jobs in the future.

There are strong public and private sector partnerships in Leeds which are helping to shape employment and regeneration opportunities. A number of projects will have significant impact in different areas of the city: Aire Valley Leeds and EASEL in the south-east and east of the city; The West Leeds Gateway plan and Leeds/Bradford Housing Corridor in the west; the Holbeck Urban Village Development in the south; and the PFI housing investment in Little London in the north-west.

A confederated approach to 14+ provision could have the potential to align well over the longer term in helping to focus learning and training opportunities alongside these major regeneration projects. We believe there is potential for strong area committee engagement with the confederation approach to ensure strong alignment with this agenda.

Jobs in Leeds grew by 19% between 1996 and 2006, accounting for over 60% of all the new jobs created in West Yorkshire, and almost 24% of the jobs created in Yorkshire and The Humber. According to the Experian Business Strategies

Database for Yorkshire Futures (EBS/YF), the prediction for 2008-2018 is that total employment will grow by 5.7%, creating an additional 26,000 jobs in Leeds. 92% of these are projected to be in the finance and business services and public services. According to the most recent available data in The Leeds Economy Handbook (2008), the high volume jobs in Leeds are to be found in public administration, education and health (26.9%), banking and finance (26.9%, compared with 21.4 nationally), distribution, hotels and restaurants (20.2). There are relatively marginal differences in other sectors: manufacturing (9.4% compared with 10.9% nationally), construction (5.9%: 4.8%) and transport and communications (5.3%: 5.9%). The latter three sectors have all declined over recent years.

3.4 What is our understanding of the needs of employers?

According to EBS/YF, employment growth is expected to be dominated by managerial and professional occupations, with smaller increases in personal services, sales and elementary occupations. Operative occupations will continue to decline.

The percentage of people of working age in employment is higher than the national picture – 75.4% compared with 74.3%; the skills profile is comparable: percentage of working age population qualified at NVQ L2+ 63.5% (64.5%); NVQ L3+ 46.3% (46.4%); and Level 4+ 27.6% (28.6%). Our aspirational targets for young people in Leeds will contribute significantly to raising qualification levels at L2+ and L3+, which will in turn contribute to increased qualification levels at L4+. By 2015 learner outcomes will be transformed to ensure that 60% of learners achieve a level 3 qualification by 19; 80% achieve 5 A* - C GCSE grades or Level 2 qualifications; 65% achieve 5 A* - C GCSE grades including English and maths; and 100% achieve 1A* - G GCSE grades.

The new 14-19 curriculum, with a stronger emphasis on applied learning through The Diploma, The Foundation Learning Tier pathways aimed at all learners over the age of 14 working below Level 2, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and the range of vocational learning opportunities and work-based learning can only be delivered effectively through strong provider partnerships.

By working together more collaboratively to shape and quality assure provision around the needs and aspirations of learners, providers can ensure greater curriculum choice, improved outcomes, wider participation and better transition and progression routes. Stronger employer engagement in provision, both in colleges and schools, can help make the learning experience more focused. For example, work experience of at least ten days is common to all Diplomas. This will also have an important role in introducing young people to work culture and employer expectations. More than that, at least half of the principal learning which relates to the specific subject of study must be work-related, providing many opportunities for employers to get involved with schools and colleges to shape the education of young people. There is a menu of activities available including mentoring, designing student projects, coming into schools to speak to classes, hosting visiting from young people at workplaces. There is also an important role for employers to play in helping teachers to build and maintain their knowledge of industry, for example, through work shadowing.

3. 5 How are schools and other learning providers preparing young adults for their destination and opportunities?

Schools and learning providers prepare young adults for their destinations and opportunities in a variety of ways: through the curriculum offer; through appropriate training and work-based learning such as apprenticeships; and by helping to develop a range of more generic skills needed in life and work: teamworking, communication, problem-solving, decision-making and personal organisation. Supporting this is the expectation that schools and other learning providers are committed to improving Skills for Life: literacy, language, numeracy and e-skills. Expectations of providers are clearly laid out in The Leeds Learner Entitlement.

Young people also need access to good quality, comprehensive and impartial Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) to support their transition to adulthood, raise their aspirations and help them make informed decisions about education, employment and training opportunities. This is increasingly important as the 14-19 reforms broaden the range of learning options available to young people.

Children's trusts, schools and colleges will work in partnership to commission IAG services and agree on new arrangements. We expect these organisations to work in collaboration at a confederation level to plan and implement arrangements in a way that supports delivery of the 14-19 entitlement.

3.6 How do we challenge providers of learning to rethink the curriculum offer?

There are some key challenges for learning providers in responding to the 14-19 agenda. One of the most demanding will be the need to plan and deliver provision much more transparently and collaboratively, with clear thresholds of choice, quality and viability. There will be more opportunities to create learning environments which reflect the most effective teaching and learning strategies across a range of courses – including applied and vocational learning, training and practical skills.

The workforce will become more flexible in meeting learners' needs in delivering a much more varied curriculum offer post-14 than has traditionally been the case. The needs of the learner, reflected in the Leeds Learner Entitlement, as opposed to the perceived institutional desires of the provider, will drive the curriculum offer, and we will need to ensure impartial and timely information, advice and guidance at key transition points, particularly at 14+ and 16+. The Individual Learning Plan and a Common Application Process will play key roles in supporting the development of personalised learning pathways for young people.

Providers will sometimes need to be supported in developing better levels of trust between them, and brokering robust, transparent arrangements for quality assurance, data-sharing and co-ordination. There are key challenges too in developing accountable and robust leadership, management and governance arrangements, at institutional, local and city-wide levels.

There are significant opportunities as well as challenges. First and foremost are the opportunities to engage young people much more in a relevant curriculum offer which will enable them have more choice, achieve better outcomes, and progress more successfully into further or higher education, training and employment. There will be a stronger sense of 'learner voice' in curriculum design and learning approaches. Collaborative approaches to creating facilities and resources, curriculum planning and workforce development across schools, colleges and other providers will enhance the learner experience and lead to sharing of good and emerging practice more fully.