



## AGENDA

### SELECT COMMITTEE - STUDENT JOURNEY

Wednesday, 27 April 2011, at 2.00 pm

Ask for: Theresa  
Grayell/Gaetano  
Romagnuolo

Bowl Room, Sessions House, County Hall  
Maidstone

Telephone (01622) 694277/(01622)  
694292

*Tea/Coffee will be available before the meeting*

#### Membership

Mr A R Chell, Mr I S Chittenden, Mr M C Dance, Mr P J Homewood, Mr R J Lees (co-optee)  
, Mr S Manion, Mr M J Northey, Mr K Smith Mrs C J Waters

#### **UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**

*(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)*

#### Item No

1. Membership - to agree to co-opt Mr R J Lees on to the Committee
2. Election of Chairman
3. Terms of Reference and Scope (pages 1 – 6)
4. Administrative issues
5. Background Reading for Members (pages 7 – 52)

#### **EXEMPT ITEMS**

*(At the time of preparing the agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public)*

Peter Sass  
Head of Democratic Services and Local Leadership  
(01622) 694002

Friday, 15 April 2011

This page is intentionally left blank

By: Gaetano Romagnuolo, Policy Overview Research Officer  
To: The Student Journey Select Committee  
Subject: Address the employability of school leavers  
Date: Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2011

---

Summary: To discuss and agree Terms of Reference and Scope for the Review

---

## Introduction

Young people are the future of England and its economy. Raising their aspirations and creating the right opportunities to improve their skills and attitudes and to enter sustainable employment are crucial for their independence and the quality of their lives, as well as for the country's economic recovery and growth.

Global economic recession has resulted in falling youth employment. The proportion of unemployed young people aged 18 to 24 in Kent has risen dramatically, with an increase of over 100% of those claiming Job Seekers' Allowance between 2008 and 2010. But youth unemployment is not a single issue requiring one solution. Young people embark on different student journeys, and the issues for those who lack qualifications or work experience are different from those who hold vocational or academic qualifications.

Also, for many years the English education system has given much greater emphasis to purely academic achievements than to practical, vocational training, leaving a shortage of appropriately trained and educated young people to fulfil the different business needs. Formal qualifications are often a necessary but not sufficient condition for obtaining the types of jobs which young people aspire to.

Addressing the employability of young people is a crucial task if we want to contribute to the country's economic recovery as well as give the best possible prospects for future generations of workers in Kent.

## **Committee Membership**

The Select Committee consists of eight elected Members of Kent County Council:

Mr A Chell

Mr I Chittenden

Mr M Dance

Mr P Homewood

Mr S Manion

Mr M Northey

Mr K Smith (Chairman Designate)

Mrs C Waters

(Please note: Mr Richard Lees may serve as a co-opted member of the Select Committee; the discussion and agreement of his appointment will take place during the first meeting of the Committee)

## **Terms of Reference**

1. To investigate the extent to which learning and skills providers in Kent prepare young people for work, and enable them to apply their learning in a new context.
2. To explore the relevance of training and skills provision for young people against local labour market needs and growth industries in Kent.
3. To seek out and to listen to the students' voice, in relation to students' views about, and experiences with, their preparedness for work and their employability.
4. To examine the efficacy of partnerships between local businesses and local educators, and the opportunities that exist in Kent for young people hoping to enter the labour market at key transition points of their educational journey.
5. To look into the extent to which career information, advice and guidance (IAG) enables young people to make informed choices about their future education and employment at key transition points.
6. To consider the potential impact of changes in national policy on the educational and employment opportunities and choices of young people in Kent.
7. For The Student Journey Select Committee to make recommendations after having gathered evidence and information throughout the review.

## Scope

The breadth and complexity of this topic requires a clear and focused approach. Possible key themes and aspects to be covered by the review are detailed below:

1. To investigate the extent to which learning and skills providers in Kent prepare young people for work, and enable them to apply their learning in the work-place context.
  - a. To consider the extent to which the content of courses in secondary schools, colleges and universities in Kent prepare young people for the world of work.
  - b. To investigate the extent to which secondary schools, colleges and universities in Kent adapt the structure of their courses to enable students to develop work-place skills and occupational experience.
2. To explore the relevance of vocational training and skills provision for young people against local labour market needs and growth industries in Kent.
  - a. To explore the extent to which current vocational training, apprenticeship and work experience schemes meet local market needs and the expectations of growth industries in Kent.
  - b. To consider whether additional training schemes, courses and qualifications are necessary in order to meet local market needs.
3. To seek out and to listen to the students' voice, in relation to students' views about, and experiences with, their preparedness for work and their employability.
  - a. To record the diversity of educational journeys that students take from dependent childhood into employment.
  - b. From the viewpoint of students, explore their views about, and experiences with, their preparedness for work and their employability.
4. To examine the efficacy of partnerships between local businesses and local educators, and the opportunities that exist in Kent for young people hoping to enter the labour market at key transition points of their educational journeys.
  - a. To investigate the effectiveness of current partnerships between employers and educators in Kent in helping young people access the labour market.
  - b. To consider the job opportunities that exist in Kent for young people at key transition points in their educational journeys (around 14, 16, 17/18 and 21 years).

5. To look into the extent to which career information, advice and guidance (IAG) enables young people to make informed choices about their future education and employment at key transition points.
  - a. To explore current policy and practices in relation to career IAG provision for young people in schools, colleges and universities in Kent at key transition points (around 14, 16, 17/18 and 21 years).
  - b. To consider whether the quality and reach of this provision could be enhanced.
  
6. To consider the potential impact of changes in national policy on the educational and employment opportunities and choices of young people in Kent.
  - a. To observe, during the review, whether national policy changes will take place in relation to the educational and employment opportunities and choices of young people in Kent.
  - b. To consider the potential impact of these changes – if any - on the educational and employment opportunities, and choices, of young people in Kent.
  
7. For The Student Journey Select Committee to make recommendations after having gathered evidence and information throughout the review.

## Timetable

**February/March 2011:** research and preparation.

**27 April 2011:** first meeting of Select Committee, to appoint the Chairman and to discuss and agree the Terms of Reference of the review.

**May:** contact and organise hearings and visits.

**June to October:** hearings and visits.

**November:** Committee meets to identify key issues and to make recommendations.

**December 2011/January 2012:** report writing, production of first draft.

**February:** Committee discusses first draft of report and suggests amendments. Amendments carried out accordingly. A meeting involving all key stakeholders may take place at this stage.

**March:** report shared with relevant Cabinet Members.

**March:** despatch for Corporate Management Team (CMT).

**March/April:** CMT meeting.

**April:** despatch for Cabinet. Report becomes "public".

**April:** report presented to Cabinet.

**April/May 2012:** despatch for County Council.

**May 2012:** report presented to County Council.

## **Witnesses (oral/written evidence)**

Evidence may be requested from the following:

- Statistically valid data and appropriate research methodology.
- Young people aged between 14 and 21 years.
- Representatives of secondary schools, Further Education colleges and universities.
- Employers and organisations representing businesses.
- KCC senior officers, particularly those involved in employment and education for young people.
- Representatives of additional external organisations that can contribute with information and evidence to The Student Journey review.
- Academics, professionals, other witnesses who can make relevant contributions.

## **Site Visits**

Visits may be organised as part of the evidence gathering process.

### **Recommendation;**

To agree the Terms of Reference and the general approach to The Student Journey Select Committee review.

### **Contacts:**

Gaetano Romagnuolo  
Policy Overview Research Officer  
Tel: 01622 694292  
Email: [gaetano.romagnuolo@kent.gov.uk](mailto:gaetano.romagnuolo@kent.gov.uk)

Theresa Grayell  
Democratic Services Officer  
Tel: 01622 694277  
Email: [theresa.grayell@kent.gov.uk](mailto:theresa.grayell@kent.gov.uk)

# Young people in the labour market

Ed Potton

## The recession has hit the young particularly hard. Will targeted policies be effective in the long run?

The effect of the recession and downturn in the UK has been particularly felt by young people in the labour market. 929,000 people aged 16-24 were unemployed in December-February 2010, equivalent to 13% of the whole age group and a rise of 220,000 compared to three years ago. Although there have been significant rises across all age groups, young people make up 38% of the 2.5 million people of working age who are unemployed.

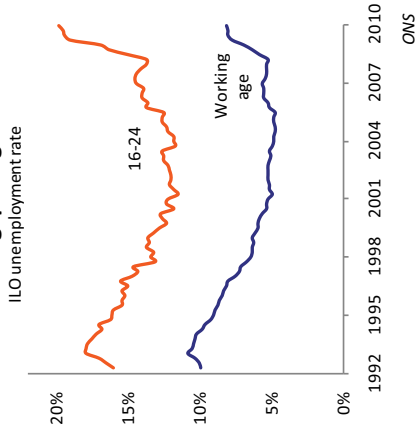
Recessions can have a stronger effect on the employment of young people than others:

- Employers may reduce or freeze recruitment. Opportunities for new entrants to the labour market may therefore be disproportionately reduced.
- It may be easier and cheaper to make less experienced employees redundant. Employers may also be more inclined to retain more experienced and trained employees in whom they have invested more. Younger employees may therefore be more likely to lose their jobs.

Firms retained more employees than many economists expected during the recession. However, this could mean that young people lose out in the long run, with firms slow to build up staffing levels during the recovery.

The youth unemployment rate now exceeds that recorded after the end of the last recession, although in terms of absolute numbers it is at about the same level. Historically, the youth unemployment rate has been higher than the working age rate,

Youth unemployment has long been above the overall rate - and this gap has grown



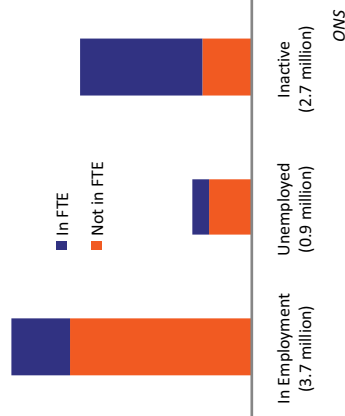
although they have followed the same broad trend. However, the gap between the two has been increasing since 2004, in particular over the last two years.

### ECONOMIC INACTIVITY

Underlying this story of rising youth unemployment is a more complex picture of falling employment, rising unemployment and rising economic inactivity (to complicate matters, students are also classified as either employed, unemployed or inactive, and education participation has been rising).

Unemployment rates exclude those who choose to become inactive in the labour market: 2.7 million people aged 16-24

Only half of 16-24s are employed - but most of those who aren't are in education



are inactive, 33% of the total for all ages. Inactivity has fallen for the working age population overall over the last three years but risen for 16-24 year olds. However, 1.9 million of the 2.7 million inactive 16-24s are in full time education.

An alternative indicator of youth unemployment is the number of NEETs (Not in Employment, Education or Training). For 16-18 year-olds, NEET rates (based on Labour Force Survey data) have been relatively stable over recent years, with 9.3% of that age group NEET in Q4 2009: lower than at the same time in 2008. However, those aged 19-24 have fared worse, with just under a fifth (17.4%) of that age group being NEET at the end of 2009 (up from 16.0% in Q4 2008).

### IMPACT OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Persistent and growing youth unemployment is recognised as a problem with long-term risks. Apart from the time spent in lower wage employment or on state support, unemployment in youth can have longer term effects such as wage scarring that can persist long into adult life, as well as wider societal problems.

The last Government implemented a package of measures to address rising youth unemployment called the Young Person's Guarantee, although it was not fully introduced until January 2010 and it is therefore too early to fully judge its effectiveness. It promised 18-24 year olds who have been claiming Jobseeker's Allowance for six months a job, training or work experience. It is scheduled to run until March 2012.

The rise in youth unemployment, as well as working age unemployment, has stabilised since mid-2009, perhaps suggesting that the worst may be over. However, those that have left the labour market will return at some stage, meaning the problem may just have been postponed. The threat of a "jobless" or slow recovery only adds to the concerns about the longer term impact on young people, with youth unemployment levels likely to be closely monitored for several years to come.

This page is intentionally left blank

## Alison Wolf Review

April 2011

### Post-14 Research and Innovation

Institute of Education

University of London, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1H 0AL

## Reviewing Vocational Education

Alison Wolf

Professor of Public Sector Management, King's  
College London

Visiting Professor, Institute of Education, London

Review commissioned by Secretary  
of State for Education, Michael Gove  
MP

September 2010 - March 2011

Government response not yet  
published

## Alison Wolf Review

To consider how we can improve vocational education for 14-19 year olds and thereby promote successful progression into the labour market and into higher level education and training routes.

### A little history...

- Constant reviews of technical and vocational education from 1868 onwards
- Under recent Labour administrations, major Skills Commission reports for Education/Employment Dept superseded 5 years later by Leitch Review/Report for Treasury
- Effective nationalisation of vocational qualifications in late 80s/early 90s
- Formal vocational and quasi-vocational education in school sixth forms with GNVQs, in KS4 (or even younger) much more recently

## Social and education change

- Rise in educational participation post-16
- Increase in numbers entering HE and in numbers aspiring to it
- Collapse of youth labour market
- Belief in ever-increasing demand for 'skills' and in number of highly skilled jobs. Reality of 'hour-glass' economy and decline in mid-level skilled occupations

## Educational context

- Recent reforms focused heavily on qualifications – NVQs, GNVQs, Diploma, QCF and equivalencies
- Central accountability regime: behaviour of schools driven by KS4 league tables
- Post-16 funding by qualification with strong element of payment-by-results. (Pre-16 essentially per-pupil.)
- Size and complexity – about 600,000 in each age cohort, due to fall in short term, rise in medium term
- Institutional complexity

### Key Research (1)

- Very low average returns to NVQs
- High returns to apprenticeships
- High returns to English and Maths
- High returns to employment
- Motivation is crucial - effective learning requires it

### Key Research (2)

- Young people change jobs, occupations and sectors very frequently.
- Among lower-achieving students there is a great deal of 'churn' post-GCSE, in and out of education and employment. Very few are 'NEET' for a year or more.
- There is no clear or conclusive evidence to support the idea that practical and vocational courses are inherently more motivating for lower-attaining or disengaged students.

### Key research (3)

- The courses which schools and colleges offer, and the steer they give to young people, are driven to a significant degree by league table and funding pressures, and not only by students' best interests.

Focus of review and  
recommendations:

setting ground rules  
simplification  
decentralisation

## Underlying assumptions (1)

- Early specialisation is undesirable. 14-16 year olds should all follow a broad and largely common curriculum which does not pre-empt later choices. (This implies changes to the 'four pathways' approach inherited from the last government.)
- Achieving Maths and English at C and above should be given priority post-16 as well as pre-16 because of their central and increasing importance.

## Underlying assumptions (2)

- "Forced" equivalences (and speeches about 'parity of esteem') do nothing positive for the respect in which different qualifications and skills are held.
- Courses which are 'non-academic' or 'vocational' gain respect from their value – i.e. because they teach difficult and valued skills to a high level, lead onto desirable future opportunities or both. So that is what we should encourage and aim at.

### Underlying assumptions (3)

- Employers are far and away the best source of quality control/quality assurance for vocational programmes.
- Vocational and practical programmes need to be taught by genuine experts.
- Competition between institutions can be extremely valuable provided the underlying incentives encourage competition on quality and provided students and their families are given good and accurate information.
- Most 16-19 year old students, and the families of most 14-19 year olds, can and do make use of information in a sophisticated way.

### Conceptualising 14-19 Education: Recommendations 1 -10

- Moving conceptualisation and control of qualifications away from centralised quangoes
- Opening up pathways – improving and increasing the general education component in vocational programmes
- Developing programmes post-16, not accumulations of separate qualifications: but allowing this to happen bottom-up, not through yet another centralised development of new qualifications

### Funding and Institutional Arrangements: Recommendations 11-21

- Addressing major shortfalls in provision, especially apprenticeships for 16-18 year olds and genuine work placements
- Making it easier to provide quality vocational instruction – through teacher mobility and by making institutional collaboration easier at a fundamental ‘system’ level
- Improving information

### Reforming the regulatory framework: Recommendations 22-27

- Rethinking Ofqual
- Rethinking quality assurance
- Rethinking the incentives built into accountability and league table measures

## Accepted to date - Recommendations

- To allow qualified further education lecturers to teach in school classrooms on the same basis as qualified school teachers.
- To clarify the rules on allowing industry professionals to teach in schools.
- To allow any vocational qualification offered by a regulated awarding body to be taken by 14-to19-year-olds.
- To allow established high-quality vocational qualifications that have not been accredited to be offered in schools and colleges in September 2011.

## Alison Wolf Review

### Recommendations

#### Recommendation 1

The DfE should distinguish clearly between those qualifications, both vocational and academic, which can contribute to performance indicators at Key Stage 4, and those which cannot. The decision criteria should be explicit and public. They will include considerations of depth and breadth (including consultation with/endorsement by relevant outside bodies), but also assessment and verification arrangements which ensure that national standards are applied to all candidates.

#### Recommendation 2

At Key Stage 4, schools should be free to offer any qualifications they wish from a regulated Awarding Body whether or not these are approved for performance measurement purposes, subject to statutory/health and safety requirements.

#### Recommendation 3

Non-GCSE/iGCSE qualifications from the approved list (recommendation 1 above) should make a limited contribution to an individual student's score on any performance measures that use accumulated and averaged point scores. This will safeguard pupils' access to a common general core as a basis for progression. At the same time, any point based measures should also be structured so that schools do not have a strong incentive to pile up huge numbers of qualifications per student, and therefore are free to offer all students practical and vocational courses as part of their programme.

#### Recommendation 4

DfE should review current policies for the lowest-attaining quintile of pupils at Key Stage 4, with a view to greatly increasing the proportion who are able to progress directly onto Level 2 programmes at age 16. Performance management indicators and systems should not give schools incentives to divert low-attaining pupils onto courses and qualifications which are not recognised by employers or accepted by colleges for progression purposes.

#### Recommendation 5

The overall study programmes of all 16-18 year olds in 'vocational' programmes (i.e. currently everything other than A levels, pre-U and IB, and including 'Foundation Learning') should be governed by a set of general principles relating primarily to content, general structure, assessment arrangements and contact time. Provided

## Alison Wolf Review

these are met (and see recommendation 6 below), institutions should be free to offer any qualifications they please from a recognised (i.e. regulated) awarding body, and encouraged to include non-qualifications-based activity.

### Recommendation 6

16-19 year old students pursuing full time courses of study should not follow a programme which is entirely 'occupational', or based solely on courses which directly reflect, and do not go beyond, the content of National Occupational Standards. Their programmes should also include at least one qualification of substantial size (in terms of teaching time) which offers clear potential for progression either in education or into skilled employment. Arrangements for part-time students and work-based 16-18 year olds will be different but the design of learning programmes for such students should also be considered.

### Recommendation 7

Programmes for the lowest attaining learners – including many with LDD as well as those highly disaffected with formal education – should concentrate on the core academic skills of English and Maths, and on work experience. Funding and performance measures should be amended to promote a focus on these core areas and on employment outcomes rather than on the accrual of qualifications.

### Recommendation 8

The DfE and BIS should evaluate the extent to which the current general education components of apprenticeship frameworks are adequate for 16-19 year olds apprentices, many of whom may wish to progress to further and higher education. It does not appear appropriate, given this Government's commitment to progression through apprenticeship, that frameworks should, as at present, be drawn up entirely by SSCs, who conceive their role in relation to current employers, and current, occupationally specific job requirements. The review of frameworks should also consider ways to increase flexibility and responsiveness to local labour markets and conditions.

### Recommendation 9

Students who are under 19 and do not have GCSE A\*-C in English and/or Maths should be required, as part of their programme, to pursue a course which either leads directly to these qualifications, or which provide significant progress towards future GCSE entry and success. The latter should be based around other Maths and English qualifications which have demonstrated substantial content and coverage; and Key Skills should not be considered a suitable qualification in this context. DfE and BIS should consider how best to introduce a comparable requirement into apprenticeship frameworks.

## Alison Wolf Review

### Recommendation 10

DfE should continue and if possible increase its current level of support for CPD for mathematics teachers, and give particular attention to staff who are teaching post-16 students in colleges and schools. DfE and BIS should discuss the possibility of joint funding for post-16 CPD activities in English and Mathematics, especially as they relate to apprentices and to general FE colleges recruiting adults as well as young people.

### Recommendation 11

Funding for full-time students age 16-18 should be on a programme basis, with a given level of funding per student. (This can and should be adjusted for differences in the content-related cost of courses, and for particular groups of high-need student.) The funding should follow the student.

### Recommendation 12

There should continue to be no restrictions placed on a young person's programme in terms of which level or type of qualification they can pursue. If it is appropriate for a student or apprentice to move sideways (or indeed 'downwards') in order to change subject or sector, that is their choice.

### Recommendation 13

Young people who do not use up their time-based entitlement to education (including apprenticeship) by the time they are 19 should be entitled to a corresponding credit towards education at a later date. The existing system of unique student numbers plus the learning accounts being developed by BIS should make this straightforward.

### Recommendation 14

Employers who take on 16-18 year old apprentices should be eligible for payments (direct or indirect), because and when they bear some of the cost of education for an age-group with a right to free full-time participation. Such payments should be made only where 16-18 year old apprentices receive clearly identified off-the-job training and education, with broad transferable elements.

### Recommendation 15

DfE and BIS should review contracting arrangements for apprenticeships, drawing on best practice internationally, with a view to increasing efficiency, controlling unit costs and driving out any frictional expenditure associated with brokerage or middleman activities that do not add value.

## Alison Wolf Review

### Recommendation 16

DfE and BIS should discuss and consult urgently on alternative ways for groups of smaller employers to become direct providers of training and so receive 'training provider' payments, possibly through the encouragement of Group Training Associations (GTAs).

### Recommendation 17

At present teachers with QTS can teach in FE colleges; the FE equivalent – QTLS – should be recognised in schools, which is currently not the case. This will enable schools to recruit qualified professionals to teach courses at school level (rather than bussing pupils to colleges) with clear efficiency gains.

### Recommendation 18

Clarify and evaluate rules relating to the teaching of vocational content by qualified professionals who are not primarily teachers/do not hold QTLS. Many schools believe that it is impossible to bring professionals in to demonstrate/teach even part of a course without requiring the presence of additional, salaried teaching staff. This further reduces the incidence of high quality vocational teaching, delivered to the standards that industries actually require.

### Recommendation 19

Make explicit the legal right of colleges to enrol students under 16 and ensure that funding procedures make this practically possible. Colleges enrolling students in this age group should be required to offer them a full KS4 programme, either alone or in collaboration with schools, and be subject to the same performance monitoring regime (including performance indicators) as schools.

### Recommendation 20

All institutions enrolling students age 16-18 (post-KS4), and those offering a dedicated entry route for 14-year old entrants, should be required to publish the previous institutions and, where relevant, the qualifications and average grades at the time of enrolment of previous entrants. (This should be done on a course-related rather than an institution-wide basis)

### Recommendation 21

DfE should evaluate models for supplying genuine work experience to 16-18 year olds who are enrolled as full-time students, not apprentices, and for reimbursing local employers in a flexible way, using core funds. Schools and colleges should be encouraged to prioritise longer internships for older students, reflecting the fact that almost no young people move into full-time employment at 16; and government should correspondingly remove their statutory duty to provide every young person at KS4 with a standard amount of "work-related learning".

## Alison Wolf Review

### Recommendation 22

DfE should encourage Ofqual to move as quickly as possible away from regulating individual vocational qualifications and concentrate on regulating awarding bodies. When there is reason for concern about a particular qualification, Ofqual should continue to intervene.

### Recommendation 23

DfE should confirm and clarify that qualifications offered to 14-19 year olds and funded through YPLA will not in future need to be either QCF-compliant or belong to a specified group with additional approval criteria (GCSE, A Level, Diploma etc). They should, however, be offered by a regulated awarding body. As an immediate and temporary measure the Secretary of State should use his powers, under Section 96, to approve the funding of key established qualifications which have not been approved by SSCs, and have therefore not been accredited, but which are recognised by DfE as playing an important role in the country's vocational education system, and which are clearly valued by employers and/or higher education.

### Recommendation 24

DfE and BIS should discuss and consult on the appropriate future and role of National Occupational Standards in education and training for young people, and on whether and how both national employer bodies – including but not only SSCs – and local employers should contribute to qualification design.

### Recommendation 25

The legislation governing Ofqual should be examined and where necessary amended, in order to clarify the respective responsibilities of the regulator and the Secretary of State

### Recommendation 26

DfE should introduce a performance indicator which focuses on the whole distribution of performance within a school, including those at the top and bottom ends of the distribution.

### Recommendation 27

At college and school level the assessment and awarding processes used for vocational awards should involve local employers on a regular basis. Awarding bodies should demonstrate, when seeking recognition, how employers are involved directly in development and specification of qualifications.

# **The Student Journey Select Committee**

## **Review of Vocational Education – The Wolf Report**

### **Executive Summary**

In England, today, around two and a half million young people are aged 14 to 19. The vast majority are engaged full or part time in education, and they are growing up in a world where long periods of study and formal credentials are the norm. Vocational education is an important part of that world. Most English young people now take some vocational courses before they are 16; and post-16 the majority follow courses which are largely or entirely vocational.

Vocational education today includes, as it always has, courses and programmes which teach important and valuable skills to a very high standard. It offers a direct route into higher education which has been followed by hundreds of thousands of young people; and prestigious apprenticeships which are massively over-subscribed. Conventional academic study encompasses only part of what the labour market values and demands: vocational education can offer different content, different skills, different forms of teaching. Good vocational programmes are, therefore, respected, valuable and an important part of our, and any other country's, educational provision.

But many vocational students are not following courses of this type. Alongside the many young people for whom vocational education offers a successful pathway into employment or higher education, there are hundreds of thousands for whom it does not.

For example:

- Many of our 16 and 17 year olds move in and out of education and short-term employment. They are churning between the two in an attempt to find either a course which offers a real chance for progress, or a permanent job, and are finding neither.
- The staple offer for between a quarter and a third of the post-16 cohort is a diet of low-level vocational qualifications, most of which have little to no labour market value. Among 16 to 19 year olds, the Review estimates that at least 350,000 get little to no benefit from the post-16 education system.
- English and Maths GCSE (at grades A\*-C) are fundamental to young people's employment and education prospects. Yet less than 50% of students have both at the end of Key Stage 4 (age 15/16); and at age

18 the figure is still below 50%. Only 4% of the cohort achieve this key credential during their 16-18 education. Worse, the funding and accountability systems established by government create perverse incentives to steer 16+ students into inferior alternative qualifications.

The result is that many of England's 14-19 year olds do not, at present, progress successfully into either secure employment or higher-level education and training. Many of them leave education without the skills that will enable them to progress at a later date. The Review received many hundred submissions from individuals and groups with extensive knowledge of our vocational education system. Many highlighted its strengths and achievements. But none wanted to leave things as they are; nor did they believe that minor changes were enough. This is surely correct.

## **What we want to achieve**

Our society believes in equality of opportunity for all its citizens. That means equipping young people for a world in which their education makes a critical difference to their future lives, and for an economy undergoing constant and largely unpredictable change. We need to make sure that vocational education for 14-19 year olds really does serve the purpose of creating and maintaining opportunities for all young people.

This review makes a number of detailed recommendations to that end. Underlying them are three very clear organising principles for reform.

**First**, our system has no business tracking and steering 14 year olds, or 16 year olds, into programmes which are effectively dead-end. Any young person's programme of study, whether 'academic' or 'vocational', should provide for labour market and educational progress on a wide front, whether immediately or later in life.

**Second**, we should tell citizens the truth. That means providing people with accurate and useful information, so that they can make decisions accordingly. Good information becomes more critical the more important the decisions. For young people, which vocational course, qualification or institution they choose really can be life- determining. 14-19 education is funded and provided for their sakes, not for the sake of the institutions who provide it. This may be a truism; but it is one which policy too often seems to ignore.

In recent years, both academic and vocational education in England have been bedevilled by well-meaning attempts to pretend that everything is worth the same as everything else. Students and families all know this is nonsense. But they are not all equally well placed to know the likely consequences of particular choices, or which courses and institutions are of high quality. Making that information available to *everybody* is the government's responsibility. Too often, it, and its agencies, have failed at this task.

At issue here is not simply good general careers guidance and advice to individuals, to which everyone signs up happily. It is also, and fundamentally, about how government oversees and reports on performance. Vocational education has been micro-managed from the centre for decades. This is a bad idea, and not just because it is inherently ineffective. It also means that government takes direct public responsibility for success and failure, and finds it correspondingly impossible to be honest.

*Third*, the system needs to be simplified dramatically, as a precondition for giving people good and accurate information, to free up resources for teaching and learning, and to encourage innovation and efficiency. English vocational education is extraordinarily complex and opaque by European and international standards. This is because of central government: its repeated, overlapping directives, and the complex, expensive and counterproductive structures that result. We have had over twenty years of micro-management and mounting bureaucratic costs, and it is time this changed.

Of course, good information is only helpful if people are able to act upon it. The institutional framework for 14-19 education is one in which most young people are already able to exercise a considerable degree of choice – and do. However, the review also looked at constraints on institutions' ability to respond efficiently to students' preferences and demand.

## **The wider environment**

We know from well-based research studies that 30 or 40 years ago vocational routes offered young people better and more secure prospects than is the case today. It is always tempting to look back at a golden age; but trying to recreate 1960s education is not the answer. It was a different world and, above all, a different economy and labour market.

Today's vocational education system must respond to five key labour market characteristics. *First*, full-time education or training to age 18 is now the dominant pattern. In England, virtually everyone stays on post-GCSE, and an overwhelming majority participate to age 18. This change has knock-on effects for the labour market and is also in part a response to (and not just the mirror image of) the implosion of the youth labour market.

This change in the youth labour market is the *second* critical aspect of today's labour market which vocational education must recognise. It is quite recent and involves a dramatic change in teenagers' options. Even twenty years ago, there were very large numbers of jobs available for 16 and 17 year olds. Today, this is not true, for a variety of reasons including changes in employment-related regulation and employers' assumptions about school-leavers' skills. In this and other respects, the English labour market is more and more like that of our major European neighbours.

*Third*, employers nonetheless continue to value and reward employment experience and not just formal credentials. Good apprenticeships are valuable

as much for the general skills they teach as for the specific ones; and employment of any sort has value for people's later careers and chances. Even though formal credentials are seen as increasingly important, they are not, in fact, all-determining. Work experiences still offer an alternative progression route, while many formal qualifications are not worth having at all.

*Fourth*, good levels of English and Mathematics continue to be the most generally useful and valuable vocational skills on offer. They are a necessary precondition for access to selective, demanding and desirable courses, whether these are 'vocational' or 'academic'; and they are rewarded directly by the labour market throughout people's careers.

*Fifth*, young people change jobs very frequently, within a labour market which is also in constant flux. So students need general skills; and the educational system needs to respond quickly and flexibly to change. All five of these developments need to inform vocational as much as academic curricula.

## **The way forward**

Today's labour market conditions bear very hard on young people. Underlying structural trends have been made worse by recession. We need to ensure that students have every opportunity to gain the most important and generalisable skills, including those gained in employment. This means making certain that institutions focus on students' demands and needs, not those of government agencies, and that the funding and oversight regime for 14-19 year olds helps institutions to be flexible, efficient, and directly responsive to labour market changes. Government should focus on its key roles of monitoring and ensuring quality, and providing objective information, and withdraw from micro-management.

To that end, the Review proposes some major changes. Funding should be on a per-student basis post-16 as well as pre-16, and institutions should be expected to offer and provide coherent programmes of study, within broad parameters, rather than being funded on the basis on individual qualifications. Post-16, English and Mathematics should be a required component of study programmes for those without good GCSEs in these subjects. Programmes will vary in how they organise this, depending on the students concerned. For some, intensive remedial reading will be required; for others, alternative qualifications such as the Free-standing Mathematics qualifications will be appropriate; for others, immediate GCSE re-sits. Every other country in the developed world concentrates on improving the language and mathematics skills of its post-16 vocational students, and so, belatedly, should England.

At the same time, there should be much greater freedom for awarding bodies to develop and for institutions to offer the vocational qualifications they prefer for 16-19 year old students. Regulation should move away from qualification accreditation towards awarding body oversight, and there should be no

obligation for vocational qualifications for 16-19 year olds to be part of the Qualifications and Credit Framework.

Pre-16, it is critical that young people not be tracked in irreversible ways. High quality vocational qualifications can and should be identified by the government, as part of its task of providing objective information to citizens. Only those qualifications – both vocational and academic – that meet stringent quality criteria should form part of the performance management regime for schools. However, schools should also be free to offer whatever other qualifications they wish from regulated awarding bodies. Performance measures should also reinforce the commitment to a common core of study at Key Stage 4, with vocational specialisation normally confined to 20% of a pupil's timetable; and should remove incentives for schools to pile up large numbers of qualifications for 'accountability' reasons. This retention of a large common core is, the Review notes, consistent with recent developments and current practice among our European and other OECD partner nations.

The proposed changes to funding and accountability regimes should remove the perverse incentives which currently encourage schools and colleges to steer young people into easy options, rather than ones which will help them progress. This should reduce costs, and allow closer and more direct links among awarding bodies, employers and 'providers' (i.e. schools, colleges and training providers.) In addition, the Review suggests a number of other measures which should improve the quality and efficiency of provision.

Clarifying and activating the legal right of colleges to enrol students under 16 should increase 14-16 year olds' access to high quality vocational provision, and increase the range of institutional innovation. The Review also recommends reforms in teacher qualification requirements and that QTLS (the FE equivalent of Qualified Teacher Status) should be recognised in schools. It recommends that employers should be directly involved in quality assurance and assessment activities at local level, and argues that this is the most important guarantor of high quality vocational provision. The proposed funding changes should also make it easier for institutions to collaborate in innovative ways.

Last but by no means least major efforts should be made to provide greater access to the workplace for 16-18 year olds. Apprenticeship offers great opportunities to young people, and this government is, like its predecessor, committed to increasing apprenticeship numbers. However current trends underline the difficulty of doing so rapidly for those under 19. The Review therefore recommends subsidies to employers when they are involved in general education rather than specific skill training. It calls for apprenticeship contracting arrangements to be aligned with international best practice, through joint activity by DfE and BIS. It also recommends, as a matter of urgency, that more 16-19 year olds be given opportunities to spend substantial periods in the workplace, undertaking genuine workplace activities, in order to develop the general skills which the labour market demonstrably values.

Vocational education already offers great benefits to many of our young people, and makes enormous contributions to the economy and to their lives. The recommendations of this Review are designed to extend these benefits, and offer better education and training, better prospects, and continued opportunities for progression to all English young people.

## **Recommendations**

### **Recommendation 1**

The DfE should distinguish clearly between those qualifications, both vocational and academic, which can contribute to performance indicators at Key Stage 4, and those which cannot. The decision criteria should be explicit and public. They will include considerations of depth and breadth (including consultation with/endorsement by relevant outside bodies), but also assessment and verification arrangements which ensure that national standards are applied to all candidates.

### **Recommendation 2**

At Key Stage 4, schools should be free to offer any qualifications they wish from a regulated Awarding Body whether or not these are approved for performance measurement purposes, subject to statutory/health and safety requirements.

### **Recommendation 3**

Non-GCSE/iGCSE qualifications from the approved list (recommendation 1 above) should make a limited contribution to an individual student's score on any performance measures that use accumulated and averaged point scores. This will safeguard pupils' access to a common general core as a basis for progression. At the same time, any pointbased measures should also be structured so that schools do not have a strong incentive to pile up huge numbers of qualifications per student, and therefore are free to offer all students practical and vocational courses as part of their programme. (See also Recommendation 26 below).

#### **Recommendation 4**

DfE should review current policies for the lowest-attaining quintile of pupils at Key Stage 4, with a view to greatly increasing the proportion who are able to progress directly onto Level 2 programmes at age 16. Performance management indicators and systems should not give schools incentives to divert low-attaining pupils onto courses and qualifications which are not recognised by employers or accepted by colleges for progression purposes (See also recommendation 28).

#### **Recommendation 5**

The overall study programmes of all 16-18 year olds in 'vocational' programmes (i.e. currently everything other than A levels, pre-U and IB, and including 'Foundation Learning') should be governed by a set of general principles relating primarily to content, general structure, assessment arrangements and contact time. Provided these are met (and see recommendation 6 below), institutions should be free to offer any qualifications they please from a recognised (i.e. regulated) awarding body, and encouraged to include non-qualifications-based activity.

#### **Recommendation 6**

16-19 year old students pursuing full time courses of study should not follow a programme which is entirely 'occupational', or based solely on courses which directly reflect, and do not go beyond, the content of National Occupational Standards. Their programmes should also include at least one qualification of substantial size (in terms of teaching time) which offers clear potential for progression either in education or into skilled employment. Arrangements for part-time students and work-based 16-18 year olds will be different but the design of learning programmes for such students should also be considered.

#### **Recommendation 7**

Programmes for the lowest attaining learners – including many with LDD as well as those highly disaffected with formal education – should concentrate on the core academic skills of English and Maths, and on work experience. Funding and performance measures should be amended to promote a focus on these core areas and on employment outcomes rather than on the accrual of qualifications.

## **Recommendation 8**

The DfE and BIS should evaluate the extent to which the current general education components of apprenticeship frameworks are adequate for 16-19 year old apprentices, many of whom may wish to progress to further and higher education. It does not appear appropriate, given this Government's commitment to progression through apprenticeship, that frameworks should, as at present, be drawn up entirely by SSCs, who conceive their role in relation to *current* employers, and current, occupationally specific job requirements. The review of frameworks should also consider ways to increase flexibility and responsiveness to local labour markets and conditions.

## **Recommendation 9**

Students who are under 19 and do not have GCSE A\*-C in English and/or Maths should be required, as part of their programme, to pursue a course which either leads directly to these qualifications, or which provide significant progress towards future GCSE entry and success. The latter should be based around other Maths and English qualifications which have demonstrated substantial content and coverage; and Key Skills should not be considered a suitable qualification in this context. DfE and BIS should consider how best to introduce a comparable requirement into apprenticeship frameworks.

## **Recommendation 10**

DfE should continue and if possible increase its current level of support for CPD for mathematics teachers, and give particular attention to staff who are teaching post-16 students in colleges and schools. DfE and BIS should discuss the possibility of joint funding for post-16 CPD activities in English and Mathematics, especially as they relate to apprentices and to general FE colleges recruiting adults as well as young people.

## **Recommendation 11**

Funding for full-time students age 16-18 should be on a programme basis, with a given level of funding per student. (This can and should be adjusted for differences in the content-related cost of courses, and for particular groups of high-need student.) The funding should follow the student.

## **Recommendation 12**

There should continue to be no restrictions placed on a young person's programme in terms of which level or type of qualification they can pursue. If it is appropriate for a student or apprentice to move sideways (or indeed 'downwards') in order to change subject or sector, that is their choice.

### **Recommendation 13**

Young people who do not use up their time-based entitlement to education (including apprenticeship) by the time they are 19 should be entitled to a corresponding credit towards education at a later date. The existing system of unique student numbers plus the learning accounts being developed by BIS should make this straightforward.

### **Recommendation 14**

Employers who take on 16-18 year old apprentices should be eligible for payments (direct or indirect), because and when they bear some of the cost of education for an age-group with a right to free full- time participation. Such payments should be made only where 16-18 year old apprentices receive clearly identified off-the-job training and education, with broad transferable elements.

### **Recommendation 15**

DfE and BIS should review contracting arrangements for apprenticeships, drawing on best practice internationally, with a view to increasing efficiency, controlling unit costs and driving out any frictional expenditure associated with brokerage or middleman activities that do not add value.

### **Recommendation 16**

DfE and BIS should discuss and consult urgently on alternative ways for groups of smaller employers to become direct providers of training and so receive 'training provider' payments, possibly through the encouragement of Group Training Associations (GTAs).

### **Recommendation 17**

At present teachers with QTS can teach in FE colleges; the FE equivalent – QTLS – should be recognised in schools, which is currently not the case. This will enable schools to recruit qualified professionals to teach courses at school level (rather than bussing pupils to colleges) with clear efficiency gains.

### **Recommendation 18**

Clarify and evaluate rules relating to the teaching of vocational content by qualified professionals who are not primarily teachers/do not hold QTLS. Many schools believe that it is impossible to bring professionals in to demonstrate/teach even part of a course without requiring the presence of additional, salaried teaching staff. This further reduces the incidence of high quality vocational teaching, delivered to the standards that industries actually require.

### **Recommendation 19**

Make explicit the legal right of colleges to enrol students under 16 and ensure that funding procedures make this practically possible. Colleges enrolling students in this age group should be required to offer them a full KS4 programme, either alone or in collaboration with schools, and be subject to the same performance monitoring regime (including performance indicators) as schools.

### **Recommendation 20**

All institutions enrolling students age 16-18 (post-KS4), and those offering a dedicated entry route for 14-year old entrants, should be required to publish the previous institutions and, where relevant, the qualifications and average grades at the time of enrolment of previous entrants. (This should be done on a course-related rather than an institution-wide basis).

### **Recommendation 21**

DfE should evaluate models for supplying genuine work experience to 16-18 year olds who are enrolled as full-time students, not apprentices, and for reimbursing local employers in a flexible way, using core funds. Schools and colleges should be encouraged to prioritise longer internships for older students, reflecting the fact that almost no young people move into full-time employment at 16; and government should correspondingly remove their statutory duty to provide every young person at KS4 with a standard amount of “work-related learning”.

### **Recommendation 22**

DfE should encourage Ofqual to move as quickly as possible away from regulating individual vocational qualifications and concentrate on regulating awarding bodies. When there is reason for concern about a particular qualification, Ofqual should continue to intervene.

### **Recommendation 23**

DfE should confirm and clarify that qualifications offered to 14-19 year olds and funded through YPLA will not in future need to be either QCF-compliant or belong to a specified group with additional approval criteria (GCSE, A Level, Diploma etc). They should, however, be offered by a regulated awarding body. As an immediate and temporary measure the Secretary of State should use his powers, under Section 96, to approve the funding of key established qualifications which have not been approved by SSCs, and have therefore not been accredited, but which are recognised by DfE as playing an important role in the country's vocational education system, and which are clearly valued by employers and/or higher education.

### **Recommendation 24**

DfE and BIS should discuss and consult on the appropriate future and role of National Occupational Standards in education and training for young people, and on whether and how both national employer bodies – including but not only SSCs – and local employers should contribute to qualification design.

### **Recommendation 25**

The legislation governing Ofqual should be examined and where necessary amended, in order to clarify the respective responsibilities of the regulator and the Secretary of State.

### **Recommendation 26**

DfE should introduce a performance indicator which focuses on the whole distribution of performance within a school, including those at the top and bottom ends of the distribution.

### **Recommendation 27**

At college and school level the assessment and awarding processes used for vocational awards should involve local employers on a regular basis. Awarding bodies should demonstrate, when seeking recognition, how employers are involved directly in development and specification of qualifications.

## Scope

The purpose of this review is:

To consider how we can improve vocational education for 14-19 year olds and thereby promote successful progression into the labour market and into higher level education and training routes.

‘Vocational education’ for 14-19 year olds can incorporate a wide range of provision, with very different purposes and outcomes. We have never, in this country, adopted an official definition. We do, however, have a relevant working one available. 14-19 is a highly regulated phase of education dominated by formal qualifications; and regulators currently require that all these qualifications other than GCSEs, A levels, iGCSEs and the IB incorporate clear vocational content and referencing. This rule usefully delineates the scope of this enquiry as involving, at a minimum, any such qualifications delivered to 14-19 year olds, and all young people on courses leading to them. This group of students is the focus of the Review.

## Conclusions and Destinations

This review was charged with considering how we can improve vocational education for 14-19 year olds and thereby promote successful progression into the labour market and into higher level education and training routes.

In the previous pages, I have discussed at length the economic, social and educational context within which English vocational education currently operates and whether it responds effectively to individual aspirations and labour market realities. An 'audit of current provision' identified a number of ways in which current arrangements create perverse incentives that serve young people ill, are unnecessarily expensive and bureaucratic, and fail to recognise the specific needs of 14-19 year olds compared to adults. In response to these, the review makes 27 specific recommendations, some wide-ranging and some highly specific.

More broadly, what we should be trying to achieve for young people participating in vocational courses? And how will the recommendations promote these ends?

**First**, all young people should receive a high quality core education which equips them to progress, whether immediately or later, to a very wide range of further study, training and employment. As a society, we are committed to equality of opportunity for all, and families, as we have seen, have very high aspirations for their children. The period from 14-19 should be one when those remain alive, and not, as is so often the case at present, a time when options close and aspirations shrink. *We have no business, as a society, placing 16 year olds, let alone 14 year olds, in tracks which they cannot leave.*

The recommendations here are designed to deliver the most important skills which every young person needs for progression, and to make them central to every vocational programme. That means that 14-16 year olds all need to follow a broad education and avoid premature specialisation. It means that any young people who reach the end of Key Stage 4 with weak maths and English should continue with them. It means that the vocational qualifications which we encourage schools to offer, and which give them credit within performance management systems, must be of a quality and rigour which develop new skills and encourage progression, whether in engineering or accountancy, IT or design. Achieving this will do far more for the status and respect accorded to vocational qualifications, and the prospects of those who take them, than several thousand speeches proclaiming the importance of 'parity of esteem', or the current discredited system of equivalences.

It is for the same reasons that the review has emphasised the importance of developing *programmes* for young people, conceptualised as such. It is in large part for this reason that it proposes moving away from the current and peculiarly English regime of funding on the basis of aggregated individual qualifications towards per-student funding post-16 as well as pre-16. This changed emphasis demands and expects that schools and colleges will think hard about what they should offer. The changes should make it far easier for

them to do so. Meanwhile, government needs to ensure that awarding bodies are regulated properly, and that good and accurate information is available to young people about what they are being offered.

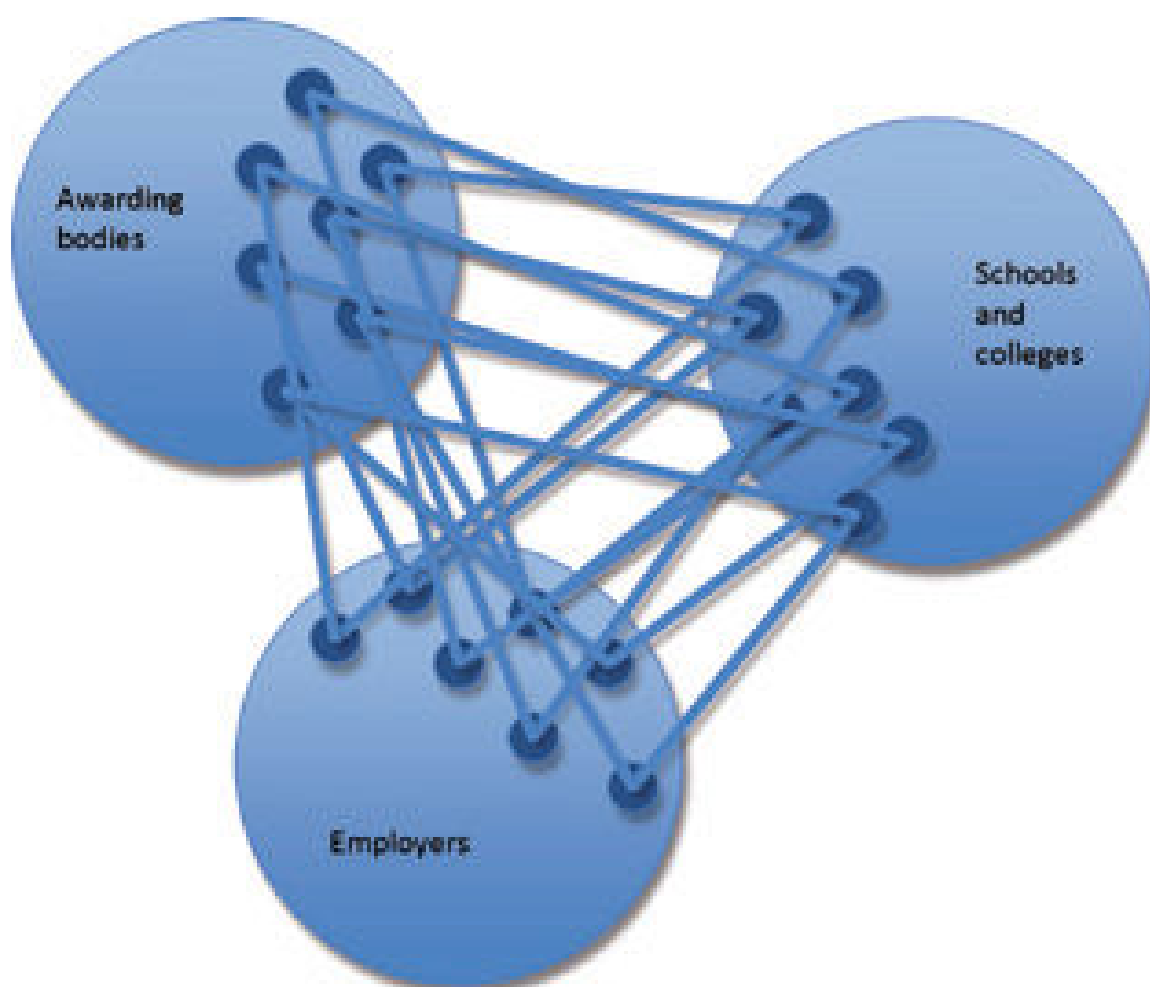
**Second**, the system should enable and encourage variety, innovation, and flexibility, including different opportunities for specialisation: limited pre-16, much greater thereafter. That means moving away from highly detailed prescription of the content and format of qualifications, which inevitably creates delays and rigidities, and does little for the quality of provision. If the Review's recommendations on this point are accepted, it should be easier for specialised provision to develop which is of very high and distinctive quality.

Alongside today's specialist music schools and the emerging group of UTCs, it should become *easier* to create institutions with specialist strengths, whether in creative arts (like London's successful BRIT school), IT, commerce or catering. The proposal to facilitate enrolment of under-16s in colleges has the same objective, since it will make specialist facilities available to a far larger group of young people, and indeed should encourage the critical mass of provision which high quality specialist institutions require. What is necessary is that, alongside specialisation, the commitment to maths, English and the pre-16 common core be maintained; and that awarding bodies' assessment practices – not their qualification content – be carefully regulated and monitored.

Innovation and flexibility should also apply to the institutional structures within which vocational education is offered. Schools, colleges and providers demonstrate their amazing speed of adaptation every time that accountability and financial incentives change. They have done so multiple times in the last three decades, and I am confident that changes in the funding regime, and in recognition of teacher qualifications, should encourage many more locally-based developments and partnerships, that match the best practice that has developed in spite of our over-regulated regime.

It is also critical that institutions – whether highly specialised or general in their vocational orientation – maintain close links with local employers. Indeed our **third** major objective should be to recreate and strengthen genuine links between vocational education and the labour market; and especially, in the case of young people, the local labour market. Employers are the only really reliable source of quality assurance in vocational areas, and, in spite of lip service, have been progressively frozen out of the way vocational education operates. Figure 7 above represented the way that players in vocational education have operated and interacted in recent years. Figure 8, below, shows the close links that we need to create and re-create if we are to have a genuinely high quality, up-to-date vocational education system linked to an ever-changing economy. The recommendations of this review should do a great deal to move us from one to the other.

**Figure 8: The interconnections that promote high quality**



**Fourth** and finally we need to do far more, far more actively, to help young people to enter the labour market and obtain genuine employment experience. This will be the hardest task of all. Whereas the school-leavers of the 1960s and 1970s entered a labour market which was happy to offer young people a job, today's job market is very different. Some of this is beyond the power of any education policy to alter. It is a direct result of the ever-larger numbers who stay in fulltime programmes to 18, or 21, and of labour market regulations and policies which are beyond an education department's remit.

But there are things we can do, and they offer enormous benefits to young people in a world which values and rewards the skills learned in 'real' employment. The review therefore makes recommendations to prioritise and develop not only the growth of full apprenticeships, but also other forms of supported and subsidised workplace experience or employment. Increasing genuine employer involvement in local colleges should also have important positive effects.

Would implementing this review end disaffection and under-achievement, raise the economic growth rate dramatically, abolish skill shortages, and ensure that every single vocational qualification had a positive labour market return? No, of course not. But implementing its recommendations should raise the quality of provision, increase the time spent teaching and thinking about students, reduce the money and time spent on pointless bureaucracy, increase young people's skills in critically important areas, and make a real difference to young people's ability to obtain employment. All of which are, surely, well worth the attempt.

## **Subject: Draft Apprenticeships Strategy and Action Plan 2011 - 2014**

Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2011

---

### **1. Background**

This Apprenticeship strategy outlines what we want to achieve in the next four years across Kent. Through this strategy our primary objective is to increase the number of Apprenticeships that are undertaken by young people in Kent. We will work in partnership with a number of organisations both internal and external to KCC, promoting the benefits of Apprenticeships but also filling gaps in delivery such as helping employers, particularly small employers overcome the hurdles of recruiting Apprentices.

This strategy will have a key role in delivering Bold Steps for Kent, with its work impacting on all three priorities. Whether it is delivering a skilled workforce to help the economy grow, helping tackle disadvantage by developing specialist apprenticeship models for vulnerable young people, or giving them the tools to take control of their lives.

The strategy itself is ambitious and will build upon the partnership already established in Kent between Kent County Council, the Kent Association of Training Providers (KATO) and the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS). We will also strengthen the links internally between the Supporting Independence Programme, the 14 to 19 innovation Team and Personnel & Development to ensure that the transition from school into Apprenticeships is seen as a real, viable option for the young people of Kent.

### **2. Current Status**

The strategy has been presented to, and agreed by; the Apprenticeship Steering Group, Communities Senior Management Team and key internal partners who have had the opportunity to input. The Learning & Skills Board agreed the strategy on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2011.

### **3. Next Step**

We are now consulting with a range of partners and will be collating responses to the Strategy before taking the paper to KCC's Corporate Management Team in May.

Feedback is required by the close of play on **19<sup>th</sup> April 2011**.

# Kent County Council Apprenticeship Strategy 2011 - 2014

## 1. Introduction

*“Kent County Council is central to meeting the skills challenge. Through its place shaping mandate and leadership role across the public sector, it can act as a key link between education provision and the sub-regional economic demand for young people with appropriate work related skills.....”*

*It is our belief that applied learning through an apprenticeship is the best way to provide young people with applied skills that businesses need whilst gaining a relevant vocational qualification. This provides the best financial returns for the individual and society.”*

*Skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: No more wasted opportunities*

Apprenticeships remain central to providing a skilled workforce and KCC is in a unique position to be able to promote and provide advice in Kent as well as influence and support businesses in all sectors to take on Apprentices.

Through this strategy our primary objective is to increase the number of Apprenticeships that are undertaken by young people in Kent. We will work in partnership with a number of organisations both internal and external to KCC, promoting the benefits of Apprenticeships but also filling gaps in delivery such as helping employers, particularly small employers overcome the hurdles of recruiting Apprentices.

This strategy will have a key role in delivering Bold Steps for Kent, with its work impacting on all three priorities. Whether it is delivering a skilled workforce to help the economy grow, helping tackle disadvantage by developing specialist apprenticeship models for the most, or giving young people the tools to take control of their lives.

The strategy predominantly looks at the development of Apprenticeship opportunities for young people aged 16 to 24 however, it recognises the need to look beyond 24 at adult Apprenticeships and also influence young people at 14 when they are taking key decisions with regards to their future.

Currently the training element of Apprenticeships is fully funded for 16 to 18 year olds, 50% covered for 19 to 24 year olds and not funded at all for 25+ year olds (apart from in a few selected sectors). This means that for young people aged over 19, employers will be required to pay either 50 or 100 per cent of the training costs associated with an Apprenticeship which is a challenge for many employers.

The national Apprenticeship landscape is changing and we will ensure that this strategy is flexible enough to meet the needs of national policy.

## **2. Opportunities for growth**

If we want to increase the number of young people who benefit from an apprenticeship opportunity there are a number of areas where progress can and should be made. Here we will examine some of these areas, whilst discussing below potential solutions.

### **2.1 SME Support**

At present the National Apprenticeship Service has the responsibility for providing advice and support to the business community who may be interested in taking on a young person. However due to their limited resources they have naturally decided to focus on employers with over 250 members of staff, as these are fewer and potentially offer a quick win. However for the Kent economy this will not deliver the numbers we are looking for because in Kent 98% of our 50,000 businesses employ less than 100 people.

It is vital to support SMEs as many are put off taking an Apprentice because of the perceived and real bureaucracy involved.

### **2.2 Knowledge of Apprenticeships**

There is currently a lack of understanding around Apprenticeships by employers and young people as there have been many changes in recent years. Many employers have outdated knowledge of Apprenticeships and do not understand the current qualification and this in turn puts them off from taking on an Apprentice. Parents and teachers do not know the range of Apprenticeships that are available and still hold views that Apprentices are not a positive progression route from school.

### **2.3 Progression**

Apprenticeships are not necessarily viewed as part of a career pathway for many jobs. Progression through the different levels of Apprenticeships is not actively promoted in all cases and relevant courses at Higher Apprenticeship level are currently very limited.

Young people do not currently have the option to apply for an Apprenticeship as they do for college or sixth form. This is mainly due to employers not aligning their opportunities with the academic year.

This also means that there are limited opportunities for young people undertaking vocational courses aged 14-16 to progress into an Apprenticeship post 16.

### **2.4 Procurement**

The public sector spends a large amount on procurement and potentially this will increase if we are to become a strategic commissioning organisation.

Currently there is no way of guaranteeing that this spend delivers benefits to the community.

### **3. Kent Success (KCC Apprenticeship Model)**

#### **3.1 Development of current offer**

When KCC introduced Kent success four years ago the take up of apprenticeships within the council was limited, and the limited delivery was very much on an ad hoc basis. Over the years the programme has developed and grown so that now there are approximately 80 apprentices employed at any one time.

KCC has come to accept apprentices as a valuable commodity, and has recently changed its recruitment policy so that the three entry level grades can only be recruited from an apprenticeship pool, unless there is a strong business case not to do so and having considered employees who are at risk of redundancy.

We will continue to deliver and improve the existing Kent Success programme.

To build on this very successful programme we will work with business units to develop career pathways in areas where there are, or are likely to be, skill shortages. These pathways should be designed to allow young people to understand how they can progress from entry level to expert.

Possible areas include:

- Trading standards
- Social work
- Youth work
- Early years
- Learning Support within schools
- Planning
- Highways
- Customer Service (Lib, Gateways , Contact Centre)
- IT
- Personnel

We will look at the progression from Level 2 to Level 3 Apprenticeships within our Kent Success programme to ensure that KCC's Apprentices are progressing and reaching their potential.

#### **3.2 Wider Development of Kent Success**

Where previously we have worked closely with public sector colleagues to promote apprenticeships, we would now want to develop the Kent Success programme to deliver apprentices to these organisations. This would enable

them to train and develop the staff that they need without having to develop the infrastructure, but allowing them access to our knowledge and experience.

#### **4. Procurement**

The public sector is a large procurer of services within the county.

Kent County Council will include in its contracts over £1 million a requirement that the provider must deliver 1 apprenticeship opportunity per £1m spend on labour.

We will provide support and guidance for bidders and contract winners on how they can meet these obligations.

Where contracts are less than £1m, but where the council has an aggregate spend higher than this, we will support Members and senior officers to promote apprenticeships to these suppliers.

Once this process is up and running we will work with other public sector partners in Kent to support them to implement similar procedures within their organisations. We will also look to influence national and regional procurement contracts such as the Community Payback contract.

#### **5. Employers**

To achieve our ambition of increasing the number of young people participating in an Apprenticeship across the public and private sector, employer engagement and support is vital.

KCC will work with the National Apprenticeship Service to deliver a service to the small and medium size businesses in Kent from initial engagement with employers through to the appointment of an Apprentice.

We will develop a one stop shop for SME employers to ensure that the employment of an Apprentice is a simple and straightforward process. KCC will provide one to one support for employers, guiding them through the process, providing draft contracts and facilitating the relationship with the training provider.

In our work with employers, both internal and external, we will encourage them to align the appointment of Apprentices with the academic year so that young people can register an interest in undertaking an Apprenticeship in November, will be interviewed by employers in March and will start their Apprenticeship in September – thus making this route a real progression from school. The period between March and September can be used to prepare the young person for employment.

To increase the number of employers taking on Apprentices, we will work with NAS to develop an integrated marketing strategy. We will ensure that employers have access to the most up to date information regarding

Apprenticeships, understand what an Apprenticeship entails and what the benefits to them as an employer are, and know what support is available to them.

## **6. Young People**

Kent has a proven track record of delivering vocational courses for 14 – 16 years olds, we will look to increase the number of these young people progressing into apprenticeships.

To ensure young people understand the benefits and opportunities that apprenticeships offer we will work with schools, and other influencers of young people to provide them with up to date and relevant information, including how to access further advice.

Once we have employers on board with September starts we will promote these opportunities via schools and websites.

## **7. Specialist Delivery**

We will continue to support vulnerable young people into Apprenticeships building on the lessons that we learn through this project. We will then look to target specific areas and groups who would benefit from this type of programme and support, attracting external funding where possible.

## **8. Training Development**

It is important that Apprenticeships are viewed as part of career pathways, we will work with the Local Enterprise Partnership to identify key skill areas for the Kent economy and identify how Apprenticeships can be used to fill these gaps.

We will work with training providers, colleges and universities in Kent to develop appropriate training, at all levels, which is relevant to Kent Employers.

## **9. Conclusion**

It is clear that Apprenticeships offer excellent opportunities for both businesses and young people and that they will be at the heart of the Government's skills agenda moving forward. Kent has traditionally led the way and by implementing the strategy outlined above we can continue to do so.

## Apprenticeship Strategy – Action Plan 2011/12 (to be refreshed for 2012/13)

Project / Development	A/C Manager	Key Actions	Outcomes	Target Dates	
1.	<b>Kent Success (KCC Apprenticeship Model)</b>				
1.1	Oversee current supernumerary programme	Lucy Bett	Recruit young people and match to vacancies utilising RMS where feasible	75 recruited (four year target of 350, but accepting that 2011/12 will see major changes across the council the in year target reflects this)	March 2012
1.2	Embed the changes to recruitment procedures across the council	Nigel Fairburn	Deliver apprenticeship opportunities through KR 2-4 vacancies	75% of all suitable vacancies that are openly recruited are filled by apprentices	March 2012
1.3	Explore opportunities for developing career pathways within KCC utilising apprenticeships	Lucy Bett	Discuss with relevant managers and P & D Develop processes	One pilot scheme implemented	Sept 2011
1.4	Evaluate introduction of pilot in 1.3, and expand	Lucy Bett	Work with training providers, managers and schools to develop pathways	Recruitment processes up and running for September starts	Feb 2012
1.5	Deliver a Kent Success service on behalf of public sector agencies	Lucy Bett/ P&D	Work with public sector partners to explore desirability	One partnership up and running	March 2012

Project / Development	A/C Manager	Key Actions	Outcomes	Target Dates	
2.	<b>Procurement</b>				
2.1	Implement procurement policy regarding apprenticeships	Procurement Unit	Ensure through the tendering process that where appropriate (£1m labour spend) apprenticeship places are secured.	All appropriate contracts comply	March 2012
2.2	Support potential suppliers with meeting the apprenticeship requirements	Lucy Bett	Provide advice to potential suppliers	Briefing sheet on apprenticeships	May 2011
2.3	Members/senior officers to champion apprenticeships to suppliers who are outside of procurement levels	Lucy Bett	Inform these key groups and offer support	All members/tier 1 & 2 officers informed, and aware of who to contact for support	Sept 2011
2.4	Promote KCCs procurement model to other public sector partners in	SIP Manager	Engage with public sector bodies	Discussed at appropriate Kent Forum board – follow up as	Sept 2011

Project / Development		A/C Manager	Key Actions	Outcomes	Target Dates
	Kent, regionally and nationally			necessary	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Employer Engagement &amp; Support</b>				
3.1	Develop an end to end service to support SMEs to recruit apprentices	SIP Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop partnership with NAS to understand level of need and build on their existing provision.</li> <li>• Engage with employers to understand their needs</li> <li>• Develop process and supporting material</li> <li>• Identify existing employer support</li> </ul>	Clear understanding of need and proposed model	May 2011
3.2	Implement service model	SIP Manager	Align resources to enable delivery	SMEs receive end to end service	July 2011
3.3	Align appointment of apprentices with academic year	Lucy Bett	Promote benefits of planning recruitment e.g attracting high achievers	Opportunities available (100)/recruitment procedures in place for Sept 2012 recruitment	March 2012

Project / Development		A/C Manager	Key Actions	Outcomes	Target Dates
3.4	Integrated marketing strategy to business	SIP Manager	Ensuring employers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have up to date information</li> <li>• understand what an apprenticeship entails</li> <li>• understand the benefits to their organisation</li> <li>• know what support is available to them</li> </ul>	Marketing strategy implemented	September 2011
<b>4.</b>	<b>Young People</b>				
4.1	Strengthen links between vocational delivery and the apprenticeship offer	Lucy Bett/Sue Dunn	Work with vocational centres/schools to ensure students understand progression routes	Increase number of students progressing from vocational course to apprenticeships	Sept 2012 (progress to be reviewed March 2012)
4.2	Integrated Marketing Strategy to young people and their influencers	Lucy Bett/Sue Dunn	Ensuring young people and their influencers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have up to date information</li> <li>• understand what an apprenticeship entails</li> <li>• understand the benefits to them</li> <li>• know what support is available to them and where to access it</li> </ul>	Increased number of young people registering an interest in apprenticeships	March 2012

Project / Development		A/C Manager	Key Actions	Outcomes	Target Dates
4.3 (link with 3.3)	Promote apprenticeship opportunities	Martin Blicow	Establish mechanism for advertising apprenticeship employment opportunities to enable young people to apply	Young people applying for opportunities	Nov 2012
4.4	Support implementation of actions arising from Student Journey Select Committee	SIP Manager	As arising		March 2012
<b>5.</b>	<b>Specialist Delivery</b>				
5.1	Continue to support vulnerable young people into apprenticeships	Lucy Bett	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with Internal/External partners to develop opportunities for young people.</li> <li>• Support existing VL Apprentices in their placements</li> <li>• Introduce job coaching for VL apprentices approaching end of placement</li> </ul>	80 vulnerable young people undertaking work based training	March 2012
5.2	Implement recommendations from interim evaluation report	Lucy Bett	As arise	Improved programme	June 2012

Project / Development		A/C Manager	Key Actions	Outcomes	Target Dates
5.3	Examine opportunities to extend scheme where appropriate	Lucy Bett	Work with external funding team/international office	Funding secured	March 2012
5.4	Align with Work Programme opportunities/community based budgeting	Lucy Bett	Ensure project is known and understood by relevant organisations	This approach is incorporated into the work of these providers	March 2012
5.5	Developing area specific projects targeting on areas of need	SIP Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish target areas</li> <li>• Develop appropriate offers</li> <li>• Identify suitable funding/delivery partners</li> </ul>	Area specific project in place	March 2012
<b>6.</b>	<b>Strategic Development</b>				
6.1	Developing career pathways ensuring that they are deliverable in Kent	Lucy Bett	Work with training providers, colleges, universities to develop appropriate opportunities	Career progression to level 4 is available in skills areas important to the Kent economy	Review March 2012
6.2	KCC to take responsibility for the marketing and matching service in Kent	SIP Manager/ David Whittle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop proposition</li> <li>• Lobby government</li> </ul>	Proposition developed, lobbying begun	Sept 2011

Project / Development		A/C Manager	Key Actions	Outcomes	Target Dates
6.3	Use findings from vulnerable learners project to improve apprenticeship offer national	Lucy Bett/David Godfrey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate project</li> <li>• Identify areas for improvement</li> <li>• Make recommendations</li> <li>• Lobby government</li> </ul>	Changes to national policy	Evaluation begins April 2012.  Lobbying July 2012
6.4	Promotion of KCC work to national/international audiences	SIP Manager/ Lucy Bett	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend conferences</li> <li>• Take part in studies</li> <li>• Offer support to other organisations</li> </ul>	Work of KCC is recognised as innovative and progressive	Review March 2012
6.5	Explore opportunities for external funding to further this work	SIP Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify opportunities</li> <li>• Apply for funding where appropriate</li> </ul>	One funding bid made	March 2012

*Contacts:*

Wayne Gough, Interim SIP Manager  
[Wayne.gough@kent.gov.uk](mailto:Wayne.gough@kent.gov.uk)  
 01622 221877

Lucy-Ann Bett, Project Manager, SIP  
[Lucyann.bett@kent.gov.uk](mailto:Lucyann.bett@kent.gov.uk)  
 01622 696939

This page is intentionally left blank