

***London – Being the Best:
The Vision for Young People’s Education and Skills in London***

London Councils: Young People's Education and Skills

London Councils: Young People's Education & Skills (YPES) provides a discreet focus on youth employment, education and skills.

Its Board, made up of key stakeholders in London and chaired by the executive member for children and young people, is the lead strategic body for 14-19 education and training in the capital.

There are a number of key strategic partners in education and training in London.

Schools, academies, colleges and providers (we use the term 'learning institutions' in this document) have more freedom and accountability in the light of recent government reforms. They are responsible for providing high quality teaching and for supporting young people in their programmes of education and skills.

Local authorities are the champions of their residents and bear ultimate responsibility for ensuring that all young people have a suitable place in education – and this responsibility will extend to cover all people up to the age of 17 in 2013 and 18 in 2015.

The Mayor has expressed his unwavering support for young people in London, particularly in the current economic climate.

Businesses have the opportunity to express their needs and expectations of young people and to provide an input into the system to improve its quality and effectiveness.

Learners; irrespective of how well they are taught or how well the whole system of education and skills works in London, we will not succeed unless learners are engaged in and take responsibility for their learning and aim to achieve the best that they possibly can.

Parents, carers and families play a vital role in providing young people with encouragement to continue their studies.

Government, through the Department for Education (DfE) is committed to transforming England's education system so that all children, regardless of their background, thrive and prosper. The Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA)¹ champions education and training for young people. The Skills Funding Agency works similarly to meet the skills needs of adults in the labour market.

We all have a role in transforming education and skills in London

The aim of this consultation is to confirm the vision for post-16 learning in London, consult on how we achieve our ambition 'to be the best' and to lead the sector in a call to action.

¹ The Education Funding Agency will take over responsibility from the YPLA on 1st April 2012 for the funding of young people's education and training, including the increasing number of Academies.

London – Being the Best: The Vision for London

“Our ambition is to be world-class”

Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Education in 'The Importance of Teaching – The Schools White Paper', DfE 2010

Successful Learners

We believe that all young Londoners should be able to get the best results from their education:

- the education and skills that they need to set themselves up for life;
- the opportunity to reach their potential; and
- the chance to shine in their chosen career-path.

We believe that London's learning system should enable all young people to succeed and the gaps that currently exist between the achievements of young people based on their background should be closed.

Successful, competitive businesses

We believe that young Londoners should stand out as the best when compared with other young people in Britain and abroad. We believe they should be able to contribute to their local community and for their skills, knowledge and talents to be valued.

As young Londoners achieve their best and contribute to the pool of talent in local communities and England as a whole, they will enable businesses to succeed in increasingly competitive national and global markets - and in this way we believe that education, economic growth and London's regeneration influence each other.

Successful communities in a successful city

Education brings people together and historically proved to be a great leveller in society. Alongside young Londoners achieving their best, our vision is of society in London being resilient to challenge and coming together as never before.

We believe that London is a role model for other cities and regions, and should show the world how education and skills makes a difference in the recovery of the country's economic fortune.

London – Being the Best: The Vision for London

Young people face an uncertain future. Participation in education and training, though important, is not enough on its own; the key is success – progression into jobs and further and higher education. The stark economic situation and its impact on employment, coupled with increased University fees, presents very different choices for young people as they progress to adulthood. For those young people looking for work, the labour market will see different types of jobs in the future and competition for them will be stronger than ever. Whatever their choices, education and skills will be crucial in providing London's young people with the best possible advantage in life.

As we move towards full participation in education of all young people up to the age of 18, young people will need new opportunities, options and choices to succeed.

London plays a leading role on the international stage so being better than average simply will not do. What is clear is that the main ambition for London and young Londoners is to **be the best**.

What does 'being the best' actually mean?

'Being the best' means **young Londoners getting the best out of their educational experience**, adding to the skills and knowledge base in London and contributing fully in society.

It means having the **best learning system** that inspires young people to make the best for themselves out of the opportunities available to them.

It requires everyone involved in education to refuse to settle for second-best and always strive to **do their best**.

We believe that **being the best** should be at the heart of the system, because this challenges all of us who are involved in education and skills in our city to put the needs of young people first.

Priorities and challenges for London

Taking into account the needs of Londoners, our overarching objective remains to make sure that every young person has a personal route to success and the skills to secure a better future for themselves and their communities. We will make sure each young person has the right learning option and the right package of support.

We continue to champion the needs of young Londoners and promote excellence in:

- Participation rates;
- Achievement rates;
- Progression rates into further and higher education, apprenticeships and employment.

We are committed to meeting the needs of London's young people and to securing the future prosperity of the capital.

Background

The transfer of responsibilities for post-16 education and skills to local authorities last year was followed soon afterwards by the election of the coalition government with a fresh agenda for the sector. Since then the government has focused on three duties for local authorities:

- To secure sufficient suitable education and training opportunities to meet the reasonable needs of young people in their area
- To encourage, enable and assist young people to participate in education and training
- To act as champions for young people in their area

Given this, boroughs have been taking responsibility for shaping education and training provision in their area, not merely to fulfil their statutory duties but to ensure that young people can progress and enjoy successful lives, in successful communities.

Working with local authorities and key partners we have developed a strong evidence base that highlights the key issues London needs to address to ensure that *all* young people succeed.

Realising The Vision

We are confident that our three priorities remain unchanged:

- Participation
- Achievement
- Progression into further and higher education, apprenticeships and employment

London still faces challenges in making significant progress on these priorities. Among the most critical challenges are:

- Unlike most other parts of England, local provision serves highly mobile young people across the whole of London and has to provide them with the education and skills fit for living, learning and working in one of the major international cities in the world.
- Young people in London are much more likely to cross local authority boundaries to access education and training at age 14-19. This presents challenges in ensuring that local provision fits together to provide young Londoners with a full menu of choices across the capital.
- Overall, participation in education or training by London residents aged 16 and 17 increased from 90% to 96% between 2007 and 2009. Despite an increase in 17 year old participation, it remains 6% lower than 16 year old participation and drop-out at 17 has been a long standing issue in London. This is the main challenge associated with raising the participation age in London.
- Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds tend to achieve less and have fewer life chances at the age of 19 than those from better off families.
- Worklessness among young people is a major feature of society today.
 - The proportion of young people aged 16-18 not in education, employment and training (NEET) in London made a welcome, if surprising, decrease from 6% to 4.7% (August 2010 – August 2011). The national average also decreased, from 7.8% to 7.5%. At the same time, the average volume of young people NEET in London reduced from 9,351 to 7,655. Of concern though, the proportion of Not Knowns in London has increased from 4.2% to 7.4% (August 2010 – August 2011). However, based on recent changes in the methodology for calculating 16-18 NEET (based on academic age and on residency) the August 2011 NEET figure has been recalculated as 12,596 (5.2%) and 29,171 for Not Knowns (11.6%). This compares to 128,901 (7.6%) NEET and 208,338 (11.5%) nationally.
 - Between April to June 2011 there was an average of 74,600 16-24 year-olds who were unemployed and not in full-time education. However, using the ILO definition of unemployed, which includes those in full-time education, 117,800 (23.6% of the age group, compared with 20% nationally) were unemployed. This is 23.6% of the age group, which compares with the national average of 20%. The number of people aged

18-24 who were unemployed and claiming benefit increased from 52,610 to 59,900 between September 2010 and September 2011 (the number claiming for over six months increased from 7,885 to 13,750 in the same period).

- There is a body of reporting that shows a sharp reduction in the number of employment opportunities open to young people over the age of 16; despite increased demand for work experience and internship opportunities. Apprenticeships – even though the take-up has greatly improved in recent years – are proving to be increasingly difficult to secure.

To overcome these challenges and make real progress on the priorities for London, the sector must continue to work together on a wide ranging and challenging agenda:

- Ensuring excellent teaching that enables young people to succeed
Schools, colleges and other providers will need to lead improvements in teaching and learning to keep pace with the changing education and skills landscape.
- Engaging young people so that they take responsibility for their learning, fulfilling their potential and reaching their ambitions
Individual study programmes will require learning providers to be ever more responsive to young people needs, but also place a greater responsibility on young people for shaping their own education and skills journey.
- Providing courses that help people get on in life
Provision that gives young people the education, skills and confidence to achieve their chosen destinations in a fast-paced world will need to include more than ever the skills for managing and adapting to change - resilience, confidence and self-reliance
- Creating a system that is committed to excellence and where leadership drives young peoples' success
Leadership is crucial in bringing about improvement and change. The Association of Director of Children's Services sector-led programme of improvement, peer challenge and support offers opportunities for creating an environment of success for all young people.
- Working together with employers to help young Londoners succeed.
Forging effective partnerships with business will be needed to ensure a varied education and skills offer for young people and a skills offer that meets local employment needs; we need to listen to employers and bring them into the offer.
- Maintaining collaborative working in the interests of young people
With increased freedom, it is important for institutions to increasingly work together in order to meet the needs of every young person.
- Supporting all young people so that they have every chance to succeed
Vulnerable and disadvantaged young people in London in particular, will need us to deliver a coordinated approach to ensure they have an equal chance of success in an increasingly complex world.
- Raising aspirations, so that informed young people, exercising informed choices, reach their potential and succeed
Schools will shortly gain a vital role in providing careers education, guidance and support to young people; local partners will need to consider how they

support their schools in providing young people with the very best careers guidance

- Working in a system and an environment that is fit for the 21st century, puts young people at its heart and is resourced to enable young people to succeed *London is facing challenges in providing sufficient places in learning and teaching environments that are fit for the delivering skills for the 21st century. Everyone involved in supporting young people to succeed need to shape the lobby for policy change and a fair level of resource.*

Our Call To Action!

Implementing the full scale of reforms in education and training, making them work in the interests of young people, reaching full participation and achieving better outcomes for London cannot be achieved by one organisation or type of organisation alone. These fundamental changes require everybody with a stake in the education and training system in the capital to work better and work together differently. This consultation is therefore about confirming the vision for the future and developing a strategy to reach that vision. We are therefore encouraging every organisation to take part.

We propose that London should '**Be The Best**' and we are confident that this is a goal to which the sector in London does and should aspire.

The aim of this consultation is to confirm the vision for post-16 learning in London, consult on how we achieve our ambition 'to be the best' and to call for action across the sector.

This is an exciting time to be working in the arena of education and skills of young people in London. New responsibilities, new relationships and new ways of working are becoming embedded. Whilst facing unprecedented challenges as we adjust to the post-recession economy, London continues to offer tremendous opportunities to young people; especially the London 2012 Olympic & Paralympic Games and their legacies. These sit alongside the number of regeneration projects such as Crossrail and the huge number of retail and housing developments that are taking place across London.

Taking into account the challenges and opportunities the sector faces in London, we are consulting on how to achieve the ambition to **be the best**.

We are setting out the task of education and skills in London as we drive forward towards full participation and improved achievement for young people. We want to involve everyone engaged in education to debate this task and to contribute to our consultation, so that we can come to a consensus on what we all need to do so that London – and young Londoners – can **be the best**.

How do I get involved?

Talk to us

- We want to engage in dialogue with key stakeholder organisations during spring / summer 2012 and act on their feedback.

Look out for events

- We will be working with partners to consult; including workshops, conference, scenario planning, round tables, 'big discussions', thought papers and research.

Log on

- Our on-line consultation, including how to respond by Twitter, is at: <http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/policylobbying/children/education14to19/younglearners/default.htm>. If you are 14-19 you can follow us on Twitter and have your say @learnervoiceldn and our Learner Blog is at <http://learnervoicelondon.org.uk>. We are especially keen to ensure that the learner voice is heard and enables young people to shape delivery of the vision.

Inform us

- We will use our wider circle of contacts to gather feedback on specific themes, allowing appropriate expert, specialist and technical input into the consultation.