

Notes

RPG - Operational Sub-group

Date 4 February 2011 **Venue** London Councils, Room 4
Meeting Chair Mary Vine-Morris
Contact Officer: Peter O'Brien
Telephone: 020 7934 9743 **Email:** Peter.Obrien@londoncouncils.gov.uk

Attendees

<i>Chair:</i> Mary Vine-Morris (MVM)	RPG
Jo Baty (JB)	ESF/Redbridge
Nick Brenton (NB)	ALDCS
Diana Choulerton (DC)	South West Cluster/Ealing
Wendy Forest (WF)	Improving Choice/ Tower Hamlets
John Galligan (JG)	West Central Cluster/Brent
Eamonn Gilbert (EG)	SWLSEP/RB of Kingston
Ruth Griffiths (RG)	South Cluster/Lewisham
Jon Hegerty (JHe)	Central Cluster/RBKC
Jenny Holmes (JHo)	GLA/LSEB
Ali Kaye (AK)	WBLA
Alison Moore (AM)	North West Cluster/Hillingdon
Mike Pettifer (MP)	YPLA
Judith Smyth (JS)	Association of Colleges (AoC)
Richard Tanton (RT)	Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL)
Peter O'Brien (POB)	RPG
Jonathan Rallings (JR)	RPG

Apologies

Yolande Burgess (YB)	RPG
Trevor Cook (TC)	North East Cluster / Havering
Colin Jones (CJ)	LDA
Neil Larkin (NL)	North Cluster/Waltham Forest
Helen McNulty (HMcN)	LLDD/Hackney

1 Notes of the last meeting and action points, matters arising

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed Richard Tanton (from the ASCL) and Judith Smyth (from AoC) to their first meeting and invited the other OSG members to introduce themselves.
- 1.2 The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd December were agreed as a true record. There were no outstanding action points from the previous meeting.
- 1.3 The OSG expressed its appreciation of the RPG's input into London Council's intervention in the Parliamentary debate on the withdrawal of the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA). MVM confirmed that there would also be a London Councils contribution to the Education select committee investigation into 16-19 participation which would be circulated to OSG members in advance. The GLA and authorities piloting RPA were also considering submitting evidence to the Inquiry

ACTION (62): MVM to circulate to OSG London Councils' contribution to the Select Committee investigation into 16-19 participation.

2 Role of the RPG

- 2.1 MVM introduced discussion on the independent review of the RPG that had previously been considered by the Group and which is covered more fully in a paper prepared by JR - circulated in advance of the meeting to assist the OSG in its further discussion.
- 2.2 MVM invited OSG members to comment on the proposals, in particular on any perceived difficulties or omissions in the RPG revised responsibilities, adding that the OSG's comments would be taken into account when recommending an appropriate response to the review to the RPG Board. To further assist debate, MVM tabled a short paper that demonstrated the major workstreams that the RPG proposed taking forward.
- 2.3 In discussion, OSG members endorsed the proposed new role and remit and made the following points:
 - 2.3.1 The RPG could not "enable" consistent local scrutiny and challenge, but it could inform the development of consistent standards that would be applied in local challenge/ scrutiny processes;
 - 2.3.2 It would not be possible for the RPG to ensure that all young people receive impartial careers education, information, advice and guidance, but it could more usefully provide intelligence about the CEIAG landscape in London. OSG members expressed concern about the threat to continued provision of IAG services across that capital. There was a consensus of opinion that reduction in Connexions Services would have a negative impact and members expressed concern about how the reductions would affect learners who were not resident in their authority area. In these cases, young people who became NEET would remain the responsibility of their home borough. MVM confirmed that the RPG was about to conduct field work into this area;
 - 2.3.3 The function concerning specialist provision could be more explicit (e.g. make it clear that it covers both provision specifically for LLDD and the RPG's responsibility for Capel Manor College). Many OSG members expressed the view that the OSG should be given more explicit responsibilities for LLDD;
 - 2.3.4 The RPG's role in leading the relationship with the YPLA in London on data that supports planning was not clear from the functions listed. MP confirmed that the YPLA was devoting greater effort nationally and in London to improving the way it shares data with local authorities;
 - 2.3.5 The RPG could have a specific role in identifying and responding to the potential over-supply of places resulting from the introduction of lagged learner numbers.

MVM undertook to make revisions to the document, which would be provided to the RPG Board for their agreement, as suggested at this meeting,

ACTION (63): MVM to prepare a paper for the RPG Board (to be held 14th February – papers to be circulated 7th February) on future role and functions.

3 Local Authority Update

- 3.1 In response to an invite from the Chair for OSG members from local authorities to give an update of events in their clusters, or otherwise from their perspective, the following points arose:
- 3.1.1 A large number of boroughs had made or were planning reductions in the size of their 14-19 teams. Some were closing the departments all together, while others were restructuring their children's services directorates.
 - 3.1.2 There was a consensus that the resultant staffing reductions in local authorities would put considerable pressure on the support provided to students with SEN / LLDD and the impetus that was growing on the implementation of the Learning for Living and Working framework.
 - 3.1.3 The general feeling of members was one of concern over the risk of degradation to the data on the Choice database as a result of its future being uncertain;
 - 3.1.4 The status of local 14-19 strategic partnerships reported at the meeting was variable, as was the state of development of the cluster groups as vehicles for productive inter-borough dialogues
 - 3.1.5 The meeting received reports that schools' views of the future were polarised. In some boroughs, virtually all schools wanted to convert to academies and introduce or expand their sixth form provision; whereas in other boroughs schools were concerned about the budgetary effects of the government's reforms and wanted to work more closely with the local authority as they assumed greater accountability.

4 Education Bill

- 4.1 A briefing paper written by JR had been circulated before the meeting to introduce discussion. Following discussion at the OSG, the paper was intended to be put to the RPG Board.
- 4.2 OSG members thanked JR for the paper and recommended that the following additional points from the Bill be incorporated in the paper to be put to the Board:
- 4.2.1 add references to an overarching post-16 measure of success and the power of the Secretary of State to require schools to participate in international comparisons;
 - 4.2.2 include a cross-reference to the cuts in funding for school sixth forms that will arise from convergence of funding rates with colleges.
- 4.3 The meeting also noted that the drive to introduce market forces in education could result in increased collaboration as well as competition among providers, and that schools have frequently operated their sixth forms at a loss so that they can attract staff who want to teach A Levels.

ACTION (64): JR to incorporate the necessary changes in the paper for the RPG Board (to be held 14th February – papers to be circulated 7th February)

5 YPLA Guidance – role of LA and indicative learner numbers 2011/12

- 5.1 The meeting noted that the publications "16-19 Funding Statement" and "Statutory Guidance: Funding Arrangements for 16-19 Education and Training", had both been produced by the YPLA in December 2010. MP reported the following to the meeting:
- 5.1.1 Briefings on the allocations process had been held with schools and colleges – academies would be briefed separately;

- 5.1.2 Most indicative allocations of learner numbers had been issued by 31st January, with the remainder being issued in the subsequent days.
- 5.1.3 Excluding academies, which have separate funding arrangements, indicative figures suggested there had been a 0.6% drop in the places allocated in London in 2011/12 compared with 2010/11 (1025 places). The reduction in places was not evenly spread across provider-types (reductions of 4% and 19% in GFE Colleges and independent providers respectively; while there were increases of 2.5% in school sixth forms, 3% in sixth form colleges and 'other' post-16 providers, and 12% in academies).
- 5.1.4 MP referred to the reduction in places at GFEs and said that the reduction could reflect overplanning of numbers in 2010/11. He reminded the meeting that the indicative allocations had not been converted into cash allocations at this stage.
- 5.1.5 MP undertook to confirm whether the published school success rates had been revised following the appeals process
- 5.2 YB had prepared a draft paper "Local Authority Commissioning - Shaping 16-18 Provision from 2011/12" circulated to the meeting in advance, which was well received at the meeting. It was agreed that a separate meeting of LA cluster representatives would be convened to consider this paper in greater depth.
- ACTION (65):** MP to confirm whether the published success rates had been changed following the appeals process.
- ACTION (66):** Anna-Maria Volpicelli to convene a meeting of LA cluster representatives to consider in greater depth the paper prepared by YB.

6 Role of LA OSG Cluster Representatives

- 6.1 As an aid to discussion, which OSG members had previously requested, the terms of reference of the OSG had been circulated in advance of the meeting. After a brief debate, during which differing views were expressed, it was agreed that JR should revise the terms of reference of the OSG, clarifying whether the LA cluster representatives were representatives expected to express the views of their cluster or delegates empowered to take individual positions on subjects. It was agreed that these views could usefully first be discussed at a separate meeting of LA cluster representatives before having a full debate at a subsequent OSG meeting.
- ACTION (67):** JR to revise the terms of reference of the OSG in line with the meeting's comments.

7 Success in schools in London

- 7.1 POB distributed a slightly revised version of the paper circulated in advance of the meeting. The paper referred to London's performance in the main GCSE measures (including the new English Baccalaureate), which was better than the national average; the performance at A-Level, which was below the national average; and the continuing concerns at the disparities between both boroughs and schools. It was requested that a similar analysis be produced of success rates across provider types in London.
- ACTION (68):** POB to produce a paper on success rates for future meeting of the OSG

8 RPG workplan monitoring

- 8.1 A paper setting out progress on the RPG's 2010/11 work streams had been circulated in advance. MVM noted the concerns expressed about Choice.

Next meeting: Friday 18th March, 10 -12noon