

Notes

RPG - Operational Sub-group

Date	18 March 2011	Venue	London Councils, Room 4
Meeting Chair	Mary Vine-Morris		
Contact Officer:	Jonathan Rallings		
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Attendees

Chair: Mary Vine-Morris (MVM)
 Nick Brenton (NB)
 Diana Choulerton (DC)
 Trevor Cook (TC)
 Wendy Forest (WF)
 John Galligan (JG)
 Ruth Griffiths (RG)
 Jon Hegerty (JHe)
 Ali Kaye (AK)
 Mike Pettifer (MP)
 Helen Richardson (HR)
 Judith Smyth (JS)
 Richard Tanton (RT)
 Yolande Burgess (YB)
 Jonathan Rallings (JR)

RPG
 ALDCS
 South West Cluster/Ealing
 North East Cluster / Havering
 Improving Choice/ Tower Hamlets
 West Central Cluster/Brent
 South Cluster/Lewisham
 Central Cluster/RBKC
 WBLA
 YPLA
 Apprenticeship Sub-group/Barking And Dagenham
 Association of Colleges (AoC)
 Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL)
 RPG
 RPG

Apologies

Jo Baty (JB)
 Eamonn Gilbert (EG)
 Colin Jones (CJ)
 Neil Larkin (NL)
 Alison Moore (AM)
 Alan Parnum (AP)
 Richard Tanton (RT)

ESF/Redbridge
 SWLSEP/RB of Kingston
 LDA
 North Cluster/Waltham Forest
 North West Cluster/Hillingdon
 YPLA
 Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL)

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

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed Helen Richardson who was returning to the group to take over from WF as Local Authority Apprenticeship Group representative.
- 1.2 The minutes of the meeting held on 4 February were agreed as a true record. There were no outstanding action points from the previous meeting.
- 1.3 DC promised to circulate Ealing's submission on EMA to the group. DC also highlighted that a new round of locally led RPA Delivery projects had been announced with a deadline for applications of 31 March 2011.

ACTION (69): DC to circulate Ealing's submission on EMA to OSG members.

- 1.4 MVM circulated minutes from the exceptional meeting of local authority members of OSG. It was proposed that forum meetings would be instituted to bring together all local authority representatives for discussions – although it needs to be stressed this would *not* replicate the former Regional Allocations Group (RAG).
- 1.5 JG asked if RPG was still planning to write to DCSs to ascertain borough changes in 14-19 teams, plans for connexions budgets, and views on LLDD budgets. MVM confirmed Frankie Sulke would be speaking to ALDCS on these points at their next meeting on 21 March, and a follow-up letter would be sent thereafter.

ACTION (70): MVM to write to DCSs to ascertain borough changes.

2 Feedback from RPG Board 14.2.11

- 2.1 MVM reported on the RPG board meeting of 14 February. The group agreed to the proposed new role and remit and agreed to change the name of RPG to *London Councils: Young People's Education and Skills* (YPES). The constitution has been amended accordingly, and YPES will officially come into being on 1 April. The 14-19 Leads Conference on the 8th April will be used to launch the new identity.
- 2.2 HMc felt that the constitution should reflect the fact that although the Department of Education will no longer sit on the group they will continue to be sent YPES minutes and papers.
- 2.3 JG requested that RPG/YPES Board membership be sent to OSG members. This was agreed, and JR also mentioned that updated membership of groups would be posted online as part of the YPES launch.
- 2.4 It was reported that the new format for the 14-19 Bulletin had been well-received and confirmed that the next one will be sent out after the forthcoming 14-19 Conference.

ACTION (71): Circulate RPG/YPES Board membership to OSG.

3 YPLA 2011/12 Allocation Update

- 3.1 MP presented this item covering the present projections of London 2011/12 Learner number allocations.
- 3.2 HMc asked whether it would be possible to see other regions' data which MP thought would be possible. JH queried about whether YPLA intended to send details of the SLN to learner number ratios other than for School Sixth Forms. MP said not in the first instance although ultimately these will all be published - the pressing task was ensuring all allocations were issued by the end of March.

3.3 WF asked how far the figures in the report could be used to draw conclusions about NEETs given the Work-Based Learning places were decreasing in proportion this year? MP replied that it was clear that School Sixth Forms and Academies were primarily offering Level 3 courses, but not exclusively. The trend to academy growth largely reflects the number of schools converting to academy status, not necessarily the number of students choosing to access provision in academies per se. DC said that having apprenticeship figures included would be helpful in assimilating the wider picture. MP agreed that these could be included in the final report.

3.4 TC asked if there was any further information about 14-16 funding and the relation with Education Business Partnerships (EBP). MP responded that there was none as yet. JG pointed out it was very difficult for EBPs to set a budget in the present climate. MP appreciated this and said that the YPLA had made representation to put pressure on for London, but no definitive information was available yet.

4 Wolf Report

4.1 MVM tabled a commentary paper prepared by RPG summarising the key points raised in the Wolf Review. She stressed that this was a very long and complex report which had provoked differing responses even just within the RPG team! However, London Councils was preparing a response to ministers around issues relating to employment skills in London.

4.2 MP reminded the group that whilst the review was important, the government's response to it and the recommendations they accept will be the key bit. JH felt that the message seemed to be that there would be no more '14-19' phase – instead there would be a core curriculum to 16 and then specialisation after this.

4.3 DC remarked that as college lecturers begin working in schools this may raise issues over the pay/worktime disparities between them and teachers. This could in turn discourage some head teachers from bringing vocational lecturers into schools.

4.4 TC was concerned that the report was dismissive of young apprenticeships but they are actually pretty cost effective. YB agreed and added that they were a route to full apprenticeships which has currency with employers.

4.5 JG said that young people are telling us that they want to gain employability skills earlier, but Wolf does not seem to reflect the voice of the young learner. Although the report recognises the problems in the labour market restricting access to young people, there are no suggestions for how this might be overcome – or recognition that it is these problems which underpin the value in vocational learning at an earlier age.

4.6 MP questioned whether more funding for apprenticeships would encourage more small/medium enterprises (SMEs) to take on apprentices? AK added that the lowest retention and success rates for apprenticeships were currently in SMEs.

4.7 YB postulated that the review might make government pull post-16 education funding into the wider schools funding consultation it is holding, although MP thought this was unlikely. WF commented that it would be welcome if all post-16 provision was funded at the same rate as A-levels, although the group agreed this outcome would be unlikely.

4.8 MVM felt there was a tension between the Wolf review's conviction that some young people were being misled into taking worthless vocational courses to bring money into institutions, whilst present government policy was devolving increased responsibility to provider's professional judgement. Perverse incentives would have to be closely monitored.

- 4.9 NB remarked there was very little in the report about Diplomas which had, in part, triggered the review; although it was recognised that the report did not set out to discuss individual qualifications.

5 OSG Terms of Reference

- 5.1 JR presented updated terms of reference (ToR) for the OSG reflecting comments made at the last OSG meeting and the newly revised RPG/YPES constitution.
- 5.2 HMc asked why there was only one representative on OSG for the GLA and LEP. JR replied this had always been the case – LDA had a separate place reflecting their role in administering ESF, but in time it is anticipated this will be rolled into one representative for the London Government family.
- 5.3 MVM pointed out that the new constitution provides for a vice-chair to be elected and this process would be organised by RPG soon. YB let people know that OSG's sub-groups ToRs would be revised in line with the new OSG ToR in the coming months.

OSG Terms of Reference Agreed.

ACTION (72): Nominations for OSG Vice-chair to be sent to JR/RPG prior to next meeting.

6 RPG workplan monitoring

6.1 ***Data***

There is a meeting of the group scheduled for 24th March which has a full and interesting agenda.

6.2 ***Improving Choices for Young People***

The group was meeting together again regularly. There is, though, currently a need for some sense of direction of travel for the all-age careers service to progress forward.

6.3 ***ESF***

MVM confirmed that, subject to final negotiations, the LDA would be passing ESF funds to the SFA to create a £15million NEETs programme for London - hoping to get a final recommendation to RPG soon. There will need to be another PQQ and invitation to tender process but provisional timetable should secure provision in place for September 2011.

6.4 ***Learners with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities***

HMc tabled a summary of the recently published SEN Green paper prepared for consideration by the working group. The group agreed proposals for a full regional consultation – on the most relevant of the 57 consultation questions. DC commented she had received confirmation that the proposed personal budgets for LLDD young people would exclude the cost of their school place.

7 WorldSkills London 2011

- 7.1 MVM circulated promotional materials for the event. Schools are now signing up for the event – in particular nearly 5,000 young people from primary schools in London are coming to the Junior World Skills morning. The event is still low on volunteers at this stage. The six Olympic host boroughs are being invited to participate in the One School, One Country initiative and MVM would be writing to seek support for promotion in primary schools.

ACTION (73): MVM to distribute information on schools take-up by borough.

8 14-19 Leads Conference 8 April 2011

- 8.1 The 14-19 Leads Conference was to be held next month at Friends Meeting House in Euston and cover a number of topics including the Wolf Review, RPA, Financial Capability, LLDD and allocations.

9 AOB

- 9.1 JH asked for RPG to confirm what it was planning to do around supporting the bulk purchasing of LPUK or ALP services. MVM reported that the results of borough responses were being collated and would be used to seek a negotiated London rate with ALPS and LPUK. JH indicated that MIME was also of interest to a number of boroughs.

Next meeting: Friday 6th May, 10 -12noon, Room 4, London Councils