

Young People's Education and Skills Board

Policy Update

Item No: 4

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Summary This paper outlines the key changes affecting 14-19 policy since the last Board meeting.

Recommendation YPES Board members are asked to note the information in this paper.

1 Background

- 1.1 This paper outlines the key policy statements, consultations, changes and interest items in relation to 14-19 education and training which have occurred since the last Board meeting.

2 Education Select Committee report - Careers guidance for young people: The impact of the new duty on schools¹

- 2.1 The House of Commons Education Select Committee, on Wednesday 23 January, published its findings and recommendations from an inquiry into careers guidance for young people. A total of 83 written submissions were received from a variety of organisations and individuals. Three formal oral evidence sessions were also held, where the Committee heard from a range of witnesses, including London Councils.
- 2.2 The Committee report highlights concerns about the consistency, quality, independence and impartiality of careers guidance now being offered, and the deterioration in the overall level of provision for young people.
- 2.3 It stated that the Government's decision to transfer responsibility for careers guidance to schools is regrettable; international evidence suggests such a model does not deliver the best provision for young people; the weaknesses of the school-based model have been compounded by the failure to transfer to schools any budget with which to provide the service; and that this has led, predictably, to a drop in the overall level of provision.
- 2.4 The Committee does not call for an overhaul of the new system. Instead, it outlines recommendations to address the weaknesses within the system. These include:
- 2.4.1 The Department for Education (DfE) should encourage local authorities to promote greater consistency in the provision of careers advice and guidance in their areas so that, while there is room for innovation and variation, all young

people have access to good quality, independent and impartial careers guidance, regardless of where they live or which school they attend.

- 2.4.2 A minimum of one personal careers interview with an independent adviser who is not a teacher should be available for every young person and that this is made explicit in the statutory guidance.
- 2.4.3 Expanding the role and remit of the National Careers Service to include:
 - 2.4.3.1 A duty to promote to schools the benefits of working to Quality in Careers Standards, using providers with the Matrix standard and that advice offered to young people is provided by a level 6 qualified careers advisors.
 - 2.4.3.2 Capacity-building and brokerage role for schools.
- 2.5 The report supports the London Councils call for independent and impartial face-to-face guidance to be available to all young people, and for the National Careers Service to have more involvement with young people's guidance. A briefing is available on the [London Councils members portal](#).

3 Youth Contract revised eligibility criteria²

- 3.1 The DfE has announced the widening of the eligibility criteria for the Youth Contract. It has stated that an extra 15,500 16 and 17 year-olds are now eligible for tailored help to return to work with training, school or college.
- 3.2 Originally 16 and 17 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET) with no GCSEs at A*-C were able to access support from the programme. However, the eligibility criteria has now been extended to include the following:
 - 3.2.1 Young people who are or were in care.
 - 3.2.2 Young people who have one GCSE at A*-C.
 - 3.2.3 Young offenders released from custody.
- 3.3 This is a disappointing response in the face of strong evidence presented by London Councils that the programme should be opened up to all young people NEET, to enable them to access valuable re-engagement support and for the programme to meet its targets.

4 Destination measures phase 1 evaluation report³

- 4.1 In July 2012, DfE published Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 Destination Measures data for the first time. The evaluation report summarises feedback received following the publication of the data and includes detailed responses to a survey evaluation that ran from the middle of July to early October. DfE received a total of 51 responses. In addition, 28 messages containing feedback were received via the dedicated Destination Measures mailbox in the same period. In general the Destination Measures were positively received by respondents.
- 4.2 The report outlines how the Department will respond to feedback and changes to be implemented for the phase 2 publication of Destination Measures during summer 2013. London Councils has pressed for the measures to include a broader range of universities, include data on employment as a destination, and provide characteristic breakdowns (e.g. Free School Meals). DfE have confirmed the key areas that are being explored for the 2013 publication:
 - 4.2.1 characteristic breakdowns;
 - 4.2.2 an alternative to Russell Group Universities;

- 4.2.3 employment and NEET breakdowns;
- 4.2.4 regional figures;
- 4.2.5 options to manipulate the data;
- 4.2.6 sharing the underlying data with schools prior to publication
- 4.3 The majority of the issues highlighted in the London Councils feedback on the published Destination Measures are being addressed by the DfE in the second publication.
- 4.4 At a recent National Steering Group Meeting the DfE confirmed that employment destinations will be included in the measures following an extensive matching exercise with local authority Client Caseload Information Systems data. Characteristic breakdowns that are likely to be available in the second publication are Free School Meals; gender; ethnicity and Special Educational Needs (for Key Stage 4 only).
- 4.5 The time lag between publication of the measures and the reporting year was also discussed. It was suggested that the Key Stage 4 Measure should be de-coupled from the Key Stage 5 Measure, which could bring reporting forward an entire academic year (the Key Stage 4 Measure is not reliant on Higher Education data). This is being investigated.

5 Government proposals to reform vocational qualifications for 16-19 year olds

- 5.1 Last year, following Professor Alison Wolf's review of vocational education, the DfE substantially reformed the list of qualifications taken by 14 to 16 year olds at Key Stage 4, to ensure that only high-value qualifications are counted in performance tables.
- 5.2 The Department is now consulting on proposals to establish standards for level 3 vocational qualifications taken by 16 to 19 year olds in schools and colleges from September 2014.
- 5.3 DfE is seeking views on proposals to:
 - 5.3.1 establish a process and set of characteristics by which vocational qualifications could be judged for inclusion in 16-19 performance tables;
 - 5.3.2 introduce two separate categories of vocational qualification – 'applied general' and 'occupational', in addition to academic qualifications; and
 - 5.3.3 only include applied general and occupational qualifications that meet pre-defined standards in future performance tables.
- 5.4 The consultation also seeks views on whether the Government should fund learners who are over 19 to take vocational qualifications that meet the new characteristics, but do not conform to the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF).
- 5.5 The YPES team is holding a Local Authority Forum meeting on 22 March to discuss the consultation in detail and to inform a YPES Board response. A DfE representative will attend to present the policy context for the consultation and to take questions. The deadline for the submission of responses is the 10 May and a draft submission will be circulated electronically to Board Members for comment with a view to securing Chair approval.

6 Children and young people with special educational needs - new health duty announced⁴

- 6.1 On 5 March Edward Timpson, Children and Families Minister and Health Minister Dr Dan Poulter, announced that a new legal duty on Clinical Commissioning Groups

(CCGs) will be introduced as an amendment to the Children and Families Bill. The new duty will mean that CCGs will by law have to secure services in education, health and care plans for children and young adults. This will include specialist services like physiotherapy, and speech and language therapy.

- 6.2 This is significant and welcome policy move and addresses a key concern identified in the Education Select Committee's report⁵ on its scrutiny of the draft Bill.
- 6.3 The London Councils Public Affairs team, working with the Local Government Association, will review the amendment and brief Members to ensure that the clause enables genuine joint commissioning and appropriate financial contributions from health to Education, Health and Care plans.

¹ <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmeduc/632/632.pdf>

² <http://www.education.gov.uk/inthenews/inthenews/a00220110/youth-contract-extended-to-more-young-people-who-are-neet>

³ <http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/d/destination%20measures%20phase%201%20evaluation%20report.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.education.gov.uk/inthenews/inthenews/a00222418/sen-legal-health-duty>

⁵ <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmeduc/631/63102.htm>