

# London Councils: Young People's Education and Skills Board

## Policy Update

Item no: 4

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**Summary** This paper outlines the key changes affecting 16-19 policy since the last YPES meeting.

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

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### 1. Background

- 1.1 This paper outlines the key policy changes in relation to 16-19 education and training which have occurred since the last London Councils: Young People's Education and Skills (YPES) meeting.
- 1.2 All published responses referred to in this paper can be accessed in full on London Councils' website:  
<http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/policylobbying/children/consultationsandresponses/default.htm>

### 2. School Admissions

- 2.1 In May the DfE launched its consultation on a new draft School Admissions Code and School Admission Appeals Code. There are a number of new changes which will have an impact on local authorities but the key ones are:
  - Permission for schools to raise their Published Admission Number without local authority approval. They must, however, inform the local authority of any change and make reference to it on the school website.
  - Academies and Free Schools, but not maintained schools, will be permitted to prioritise pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium within their admissions policy.
  - The requirement for local authorities to co-ordinate in-year admissions will be removed – parents will arrange their own in-year admissions by approaching schools directly.

- Schools will be able to prioritise school staff in their oversubscription criteria.
  - Various changes designed to simplify and improve the appeals process are put forward, including giving parents 30 (rather than 10) days from receiving an offer to lodge an appeal.
- 2.2 London Councils' response stressed the importance of local authorities being involved in decisions around school expansion and strongly opposed their losing the role as intermediary between school and parents in co-ordinating in-year admissions. The Government response is expected later in the autumn.

### **3. School Funding Consultations**

- 3.1 In July the Government launched three separate consultations looking at various aspects of school funding.
- 3.2 Local Authority Central Spend Equivalent Grant (LACSEG) – this consultation reconsidered the appropriate reduction to local authority funding to be made in 2011/12 and 2012/13 to reflect the transfer of central services from local authorities to academies and Free Schools. London Councils submitted a response urging that any transfer of funding accurately reflected *clearly demonstrable savings* local authorities made by schools converting to academy status. It also called for transparency in how these calculations are made.
- 3.3 School Revenue Funding – this consultation presented a number of proposals to reform the current funding system for schools, early years, high costs pupils and academies. In 2011/12 London will receive over £6 billion in grant funding for these services and any changes to the way this funding is distributed could have significant ramifications for London local authorities and schools.
- 3.4 YPES fed into London Councils' response which agrees with the overriding principle and objectives of the consultation that school funding should be distributed on a fair and transparent basis to support the needs of all pupils. However, there was also a concern that a number of proposals in the consultation do not meet these objectives. As such the London Councils response calls for:
- maximum local flexibility to cater for and respond to changing pupil needs;
  - reform of the current academy funding system which results in inconsistency, unfairness and unnecessary bureaucracy; and
  - a funding distribution method that is robust, transparent and evidence-based, reflecting a pupil's particular circumstances and ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- 3.5 School Capital Funding – this consultation considered the Government's response to the James Review published in June, which looked at the future funding for school building projects following the removal of the BSF programme.
- 3.6 Given the pressure on school places in London, London Councils strongly supported the recommendation that funding should be directed towards need, in particular focusing on ensuring there are sufficient high quality school

places. Additionally the response suggested capital funding for Free Schools is separated to ensure local authorities can fulfil their duties as strategic commissioner.

#### **4. Vocational Education and Wolf Review follow-up**

4.1 At its last board meeting in May YPES members discussed the Wolf Review and the Government's subsequent response in which it accepted all recommendations. The government has recognised the far-reaching nature of Professor Wolf's recommendations and has signalled its intent to move ahead in close dialogue with the sector. This is demonstrated by a mix of formal and informal consultation that is currently underway.

4.2 In August 2011, DfE launched a short and specific consultation document *Qualifications for 14-16 year olds and Performance tables*<sup>1</sup>, looking at which qualifications should be currency at Key Stage 4. The consultation states that:

*"All full course GCSEs, AS Levels, and existing and approved Level 1/Level 2 certificates regulated by Ofqual (commonly known as 'iGCSEs') will continue to be included in performance measures."*

4.3 Other qualifications will need to be assessed against four defined standards in order for them to be counted in performance tables:

- *Good progression* – must offer progression routes to a range of further courses post-16 rather than limiting choice to specialist/occupational areas.
- *Appropriate size* – must offer at least the size of a GCSE, although there will be no 'upper' limit.
- *Challenge and external assessment* – must provide evidence of substantial amount of external assessment, together with synoptic assessment that demonstrates pupils' broad understanding of what they have studied.
- *Proven track record* – must be able to demonstrate positive feedback from schools, colleges, young people and employers, and high levels of take up by pupils.

4.4 YPES held a specific roundtable meeting for local authority 14-19 leads to discuss the consultation in September, which included a presentation from the Department for Education. The key elements of London Councils' response were as follows:

- That the government considers the whole curriculum for learners 14-19 and not develop vocational and academic pathways separately;
- That whilst the Wolf Review recommends pre-16 programmes of learning should be 80% academic and 20% vocational, institutions may judge that a different balance may be in the best interests of some students;
- That work experience pre-16 is not undervalued and that government recognises in many cases it has proved to be a good way of developing the maturity and employability of many young people;
- That the DfE looks to rationalise existing qualifications before piloting new ones;

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.education.gov.uk/consultations/downloadableDocs/14-16%20policy%20paper%20for%20consultation%20-%20MG%20\(3\)%20final.pdf](http://www.education.gov.uk/consultations/downloadableDocs/14-16%20policy%20paper%20for%20consultation%20-%20MG%20(3)%20final.pdf)

- That the DfE is completely transparent on the evidence it uses in reaching decisions about which vocational qualifications are 'good' and consults separately with front-line practitioners on the qualifications it proposes to list and recognise in league tables.

## 5. Care To Learn

- 5.1 Currently parents under 20 who meet the scheme requirements can claim up to £160 a week (£175 a week in London) for childcare and related transport costs under the programme. The Government has recently consulted on changing the eligibility for the scheme highlighting that without changes to the scheme, there is a risk that the available resources may not be able to meet rising demand as the participation age is raised.
- 5.2 The consultation outlined four possible options for the future of Care to Learn:
- 1: Moving to a discretionary fund
  - 2: Linking support to income
  - 3: Lowering the weekly rates paid
  - 4: Lowering the age limit for eligibility from 19 to 18
- 5.3 Whilst arguing against any diminution of support, considered analysis by the YPES team has shown that option four would be least disruptive to young learners in London who face higher childcare costs than other parts of the country. London Councils has responded to the consultation stating this. It is understood this is also the Government's preferred option of reform.

## 6. Upcoming consultations for response

- 6.1 Recently several other consultations have recently been launched which YPES will be responding to between now and the next meeting.
- Common Inspection Framework 2012 - In September Ofsted launched a consultation on proposals for revised inspection arrangements for further education and skills providers from September 2012. The bulk of the consultation is focussed around what the emphasis of inspection should be and is more abstract looking at how to appropriate balance factors such as 'outcomes', 'achievement', 'effectiveness of leadership and management' and others. It is not intended for YPES to comment in detail on every part of this consultation but it will submit a response. The consultation closes on 24th November 2011.
  - 16-19 Funding Formula Review – On 6 October the Government launched a consultation on the Secretary of State's intention to review the 16-19 Funding Formula in the Young People's Learning Agency's 16-19 Funding Statement published in December 2010. Proposals in the consultation include moving away from the current complex system of funding on the basis of 'payment per qualification' to introduce a much simpler system of funding at the level of the learner. This is in line with the Government's aims of reducing bureaucracy for education providers and making the funding system simpler, more transparent and readily understood by all. The consultation closes on Wednesday 4 January 2012. This consultation will be discussed in more detail in item 5 of the agenda.
  - Removing the statutory duty to deliver work related learning at key stage 4 - On 6 October the government launched a consultation on its proposals to remove the statutory duty on local authorities to ensure young people in years 10 and 11 access work experience. Schools will still be free to determine whether or how work experience at Key Stage 4 is provided.

These proposals are in line with the Wolf Review recommendations in terms of reducing the amount of vocational learning pre-16. The consultation closes on 12 January 2012.

- Study Programmes for 16-19 year olds – The consultation follows on from the recommendations of the Wolf Review and sets out the Governments proposals to ensure that all 16-19 year olds study coherent, well thought out programmes which offer them breadth and depth and do not limit their options for future study or work. This new approach, planned to be introduced at the same time as a new funding formula in 2013, will give providers substantially more freedom in designing full time course provision for students between the age of 16 and 19. The consultation closes on 4 January 2012. This will be discussed more fully in Item 5 of the agenda.

6.2. Additionally there is one consultation launched which Board members should note, but which YPES will not be responding to.

- Revised statutory guidance on the roles and responsibilities of the Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member for Children's Services – The Children Act 2004 requires local authorities to appoint a Director of Children's Services (DCS) and Lead Member for Children's Services (LMCS) for the purposes of discharging the education and children's social services functions of the local authority. This consultation seeks views on revised statutory guidance for local authorities on the roles and responsibilities of the DCS and LMCS. Following consultation, the guidance will be revised and will replace the version issued in 2009. The consultation closes on Friday 6 January 2012. Although London Councils is not proposing to submit a response, it will be encouraging boroughs to do so individually.

## **7. Recommendation**

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