

London Councils: Young People's Education and Skills

First year review



who we are

London Councils: Young People's Education and Skills (YPES) exists to provide strategic leadership for 16-19 education and training in London; to support London boroughs in their statutory duties around post-16 learning; and to fight for the best possible provision and resources for London's learners.

Membership of the YPES Board includes local authorities; Greater London Authority; London Enterprise Partnership; Young People's Learning Agency; Skills Funding Agency; National Apprenticeship Service; Association of Colleges; Association of School and College Leaders; and London Work-based Learning Alliance.

The then 'Regional Planning Group' was originally established in 2008 to support local authorities with new statutory duties for commissioning 16-19 education provision. However, following extensive reforms to the education and skills landscape since the election of the coalition government, it became important to continue to maintain the group's relevance in a changing world.

An independent review was launched during autumn 2010 to establish how best to support the sector. The views received led to a name change to 'London Councils: Young People's Education and Skills' and helped refocus the purpose of the group. The full aims are listed in the YPES constitution¹ but can broadly be summarised within five key areas of work:

- Leading the vision for London
- Lobbying for London
- Helping young people
- Supporting local authorities
- Value for London

This short report reviews the work and achievements of the Young People's Education and Skills Board during its first full year of operation. For further information, visit www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/14-19

¹ [Read more about the YPES Board and constitution](#)



leading the vision for London

One of the strengths of London Councils: Young People's Education and Skills is its ability to bring together diverse and often disparate partners to one table, to agree the vision and strategy for London. A key challenge for the YPES Board over the past 18 months has been to help shape a new approach in London to strategic commissioning, following government decisions to give greater autonomy to providers and to simplify the funding of post-16 education.

In November 2010, YPES published its statement of priorities: *Choice, Support, Success: Priorities for 16-19 education and learning in London 2011/12*², designed to assist London boroughs and providers in planning an appropriate post-16 curriculum to meet the needs of all young Londoners. A refresh for 2012/13 is set to be published shortly.

YPES is about to embark on a round of consultation with all the capital's stakeholders – including young people – to develop a fresh vision for London's 16-19 education and training landscape to 2015.

YPES has helped to lead the thinking in shaping other aspects of London provision through our three sub-groups:

- **Learners with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities group:** this looks to address the challenges that young people with learning difficulties and disabilities face in being able to fully access post-16 education and training.
- **Data Advisory group:** this brings together colleagues from various agencies to ensure intelligence used to plan 16-19 provision is robust, accessible and valuable.
- **Improving Choices for Young People group:** this looks at how London can improve careers education and guidance for the capital's young people.
- **ESF sub-group:** this brings key partners and co-financing organisations together to enable an integrated commissioning approach for the ESF youth programme for London.

In addition, YPES has also developed close links with the London Borough Apprenticeship Sub-Group, with both bodies being represented on each other's operational sub-groups.

CASE STUDY

To support local authorities and secondary schools in London to prepare for delivering impartial careers guidance under proposed new statutory arrangements for 2012, the YPES team has prepared a [Careers Guidance Transition Framework for London](#). The development of the framework has been led by the Improving Choices for Young People group; members of the group have generously contributed both their time and expertise to its development. The framework has been developed in response to a growing number of requests from local authority colleagues for a steer on the key changes proposed in the Education Bill and how those changes may impact authorities, schools and young people. The Department for Education has used the framework as a case study of best practice and local authorities nationally are already starting to use it as a resource.

² *Choice, Support, Success: Priorities for 16-19 education and learning in London 2011/12*

lobbying for London

As the pan-regional body leading the vision for London, a key function of YPES is to tell the London story nationally and ensure the capital receives adequate support and resources to maintain high quality provision and the highest rates of post-16 participation in the country.

YPES has responded to a large number of government consultations during 2010/11 on a wide variety of topics including:

- The removal of Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)/Introduction of 16-19 Bursary Fund
- The Wolf Review into Vocational Education
- The Special Educational Needs (SEN) Green Paper
- School Funding Reform
- 14-16 Qualifications and Performance tables
- Reform of the Care To Learn programme

The YPES is represented on a number of different bodies, boards, and steering groups both regionally and nationally including:

- The Department for Education's Ministerial Advisory Group
- Young People's Learning Agency Board
- Local Government Association
- Association of Colleges London Region
- Greater London Authority

YPES has also played an important role in representing the London 16-19 sector by speaking at a number of conferences and events regionally and nationally, for example:

- The Big Skills Debate
- Learning Plus UK Conference
- Institute of Education Conference on Learners, Providers, Schools, Colleges and Work-Based Learning
- Pan-London Youth Aspiration Conference
- Capita 14-19 Conference

YPES has been gathering the views of colleagues from local authorities and schools on the Department for Education's Key Stage 4 and 5 destination measures. As a result, YPES has been asked to sit on the national stakeholder group for this initiative. YPES was also asked by the Department for Work and Pensions to survey the views of London local authorities on the government's cross-departmental Participation Strategy in relation to young people.



supporting local authorities

As a body owned collectively by London's boroughs, a key function of YPES is to make sure that the city's local authorities are adequately supported in their duties in relation to 16-19 education and training.

To help disseminate information and ensure a common approach, YPES holds regular 14-19 leads conferences. All boroughs are invited to attend the conferences, which offer the opportunity to receive expert information, advice and opinion from sector specialists, government departments and agencies, and to network with other colleagues.

Additionally YPES holds regular forums and roundtables to discuss specific areas of interest – whether they be new information-sharing protocols; the future of work-based learning; or strategies to achieve Raising the Participation Age.

Perhaps most importantly though, YPES has helped galvanise pan-London working. In a region so geographically compact and intrinsically linked, London's local authorities know that working at a regional level is as important as working at local level. YPES works actively with local authorities to address gaps across the capital to ensure young people, wherever they live in London, get an equal deal.

YPES maintains specialist groups that bring together experts in local authorities on European Social Fund (ESF) funding; careers education and guidance; and learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD).

YPES provides the data and regional intelligence to support local authorities in delivering their statutory duties related to young people and to provide local strategic leadership. Examples of this support include, participation on the [London Skills and Employment Observatory](#); development of the [ESF Cluster Data Analysis Tool](#); and the production of [pan-London themed reports](#) and [14-19 and London: an evidence base](#) with the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA). YPES has also commissioned pieces of work with organisations such as Learning Plus UK and Mime Consulting to create new insights and further evidence concerning young people, including the Travel to Success reports and forecasting the number of young people with LLDD in London.

CASE STUDY

The LLDD Working Group, supported by YPES officers, has produced a series of protocols to streamline pan-London working and achieve greater consistency across London. One of the processes, The London Review Panel Process, offers learners and their families a method of securing an independent review of a local authority decision. The process is designed to support local authorities with their decision-making procedures and with improving arrangements for young people and their families for education placements and support. Barnet council was very involved in testing the process and, as a result, has modified their local arrangements.

Barnet says: "Barnet was the first London borough to engage in independent review activity with London Councils. This was recognised as a bold, innovative and valuable step to take in helping to ensure that our processes were fair and robust. Barnet officers were grateful to the members of the independent review panel for the professionalism they brought to the task."

We recognised that the panel were thorough and remained objective during the process. Feedback provided was interesting, challenging, supportive and informative. It identified our current good practice and potential improvements for our policies and procedures."

helping young people

YPES has played a part in directly providing help and support to young people. A key initiative embarked on in 2010/11 has been the development of the Learner Voice London website and blog, specifically designed to collect the views of young learners in London to feed into YPES work, including lobbying. Using the internet and social networking was suggested by young people during a consultation to find the best ways that YPES could incorporate the learner voice into its work. The site is currently being trialled with selected groups of young people and is expected to go live across London early in 2012.

YPES has allocated funding to boroughs for the Young Parents To Be programme. Part of Foundation Learning, this programme offers young people aged 16-18 an opportunity to return to formal learning and improve their prospects and those of their family. To date, 440 young people have taken part in the programme, of which 50 per cent met their qualification aim (usually in better parenting) and many have subsequently returned to formal study, apprenticeships or employment.

YPES has been heavily involved in the planning and organisation of World Skills London 2011 – the world's largest international skills competition and exhibition. YPES developed 'Junior Worldskills', successfully attracting almost 15,000 London primary school pupils from Years 5 and 6 – the first time this had ever happened at World Skills – and has been instrumental in facilitating the One School One Country project linking London primary schools with competitors from different nations. All members of the YPES team volunteered to help out at the event itself, in a variety of roles from competition assistance to crowd control!

YPES has worked with partners in London to shape two major programmes funded by the ESF. One is aimed at people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) while the other is for young people who are at risk of becoming NEET. Together they represent an investment in excess of £30 million, providing support to some of the most vulnerable young people in the capital.

CASE STUDY

The Young Parents To Be (YPTB) programme, which YPES has been instrumental in funding, has made a tangible difference to a number of vulnerable young people's lives, such as GC, who was referred late to the programme. She was signposted by her health visitor as she was suffering from post-natal depression and has since completed the programme in a short space of time. Participating in YPTB has helped raise her confidence and reduced her post-natal depression. Through the support and help of the YPTB tutor, she is now at college and her son attends the college nursery. At the graduation speech, she stood up in front of everyone to reiterate how important the course was to her and what a difference it has made to her and her son.

value for London

Like all parts of the public sector, 14-19 education is facing tight restrictions as central government cuts spending to reduce the budget deficit.

YPES has helped London's boroughs to save money and 'do more for less' by both supporting the work of boroughs and acting on their collective behalf. For example, YPES has enabled London's 33 local authorities to bargain collectively for services and to achieve economies of scale, such as additional services for London from Learning Plus UK.

YPES has, on behalf of local authorities, commissioned provision within Capel Manor College – London's specialist horticultural college – helping to maximise the provision available across the college's six sites in five different London boroughs.

The Choice website, offering a pan-London prospectus of post-16 options for young people including college courses and apprenticeship opportunities, was due to close in 2011 due to lack of funding. YPES successfully negotiated for the prospectus to be taken over by UCAS for 2011/12 and helped with the transition to UCAS Progress (www.ucasprogress.com) which continues to offer this important resource to young people in London.

YPES works closely with the Department for Education (DfE) to ensure that London challenges, shapes and influences emerging policy. DfE *"...welcomes London Councils commitment to the overall strategic challenge of raising the participation age, promoting participation and addressing and shaping gaps in provision to deliver in the best interests of young people"*.

Both the YPES Board and team bring distinct, focussed leadership to London that is credible and valued. Colleagues across London have noted that YPES: *"has provided a framework that gives local authorities confidence in which to make local decisions"*; provides *"high quality support from the central team"*; and *"keeps colleagues on the ground informed through excellent communication and administration"*.

Through bringing the key London players to the table to agree a coherent and integrated approach to supporting young people, YPES will always strive to add value for young Londoners.



London Councils
59½ Southwark Street
London SE1 0AL
www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/14-19
020 7934 9999

