

Raising Expectations: enabling the system to deliver (Joint DCSF/DIUS consultation) Consultation Response Form

The closing date for this consultation is: 9 June
2008

Your comments must reach us by that date.

department for
children, schools and families

Department for
**Innovation,
Universities &
Skills**

THIS FORM IS NOT INTERACTIVE. If you wish to respond electronically please use the online or offline response facility available on the Department for Children, Schools, and Families e-consultation website (<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations>).

The information you provide in your response will be subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations, which allow public access to information held by the Department. This does not necessarily mean that your response can be made available to the public as there are exemptions relating to information provided in confidence and information to which the Data Protection Act 1998 applies. You may request confidentiality by ticking the box provided, but you should note that neither this, nor an automatically-generated e-mail confidentiality statement, will necessarily exclude the public right of access.

Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential. ☐

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If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation you can contact James Addy on:

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e-mail: James.Addy@dcfs.gsi.gov.uk

If you have a query relating to the consultation process you can contact the Consultation Unit on:

Telephone: 01928 794888

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Please tick the box that best describes you as a respondent.

<input type="checkbox"/> Young person (under 18)	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent or carer	<input type="checkbox"/> Adult learner
<input type="checkbox"/> Teaching staff	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional working with young people	<input type="checkbox"/> Headteacher/college principal/leader of educational institution
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local authority	<input type="checkbox"/> School	<input type="checkbox"/> General Further Education College
<input type="checkbox"/> Private sector organisation	<input type="checkbox"/> Sixth Form College	<input type="checkbox"/> Voluntary and community sector organisation
<input type="checkbox"/> Tertiary College	<input type="checkbox"/> Work-based learning provider	<input type="checkbox"/> Large employer
<input type="checkbox"/> Small or medium-sized employer	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)	

Please Specify:

Nottinghamshire LA

Chapter 2: Local authorities commissioning provision to meet the needs of young people

1 Do you agree that transferring funding from the LSC to local authorities to create a single local strategic leader for 14-19 education and training is the right approach?

X Yes

☐ No

☐ Not Sure

Comments:

This approach will strengthen the links between Children's Services and the new role of the LA in delivering the ECM outcomes.

Agree with the need for a single point of local accountability. As all young people stay longer in full time education or training they need support and information to access a greater range of opportunities linked to more coherent support.

Chapter 3: Operational models for commissioning

2 Do you agree that the model we have proposed for transferring funding to the local authority is the best way to give local authorities effective powers to commission, to balance the budget, create coherence for providers and retain the national funding formula?

X Yes

☐ No

☐ Not Sure

Comments:

Yes, but with some concerns.

Tensions remain with this agenda and the relationship with schools regarding future growth and provision, particularly of A-levels in school 6th forms.

However this will help with the LA's role in commissioning with schools and with challenging the autonomy of schools.

The move to a national 14-19 funding model would support greater coherence and consistency avoiding the pre/post 16 division.

It could also create tensions with FE colleague who currently purchase / provide individual services

Do you agree that there is a need for:

3 a) Sub-regional groupings of local authorities for commissioning?

X Yes

☐ No

☐ Not Sure

Comments:

Yes – for us it will start with Nottingham City, but we will also need to develop links with Derbyshire, Lincolnshire, S. Yorkshire and probably Leicestershire. There is a need to strategically plan learner access to the entitlement across travel to learn areas so increasingly cross border activity will become the norm.

Will need to work alongside neighbouring Local Authority's to provided cross border transport

3 b) Authorities to come together regionally to consider plans collectively?

X Yes

☐ No

☐ Not Sure

Comments:

Clarification needed on definition of a 'region' –support the sub-regional groupings outlined in 3a which also imply links outside GOEM.

Our priority will be to work with Nottingham City to ensure collective plans for the City and County Conurbation.

Unclear as to the role of GOEM and RDA in this planning.

3 c) A slim national 14-19 agency with reserve powers to balance the budget and step in if needed?

X Yes

☐

No

☐

Not Sure

Comments:

Welcome this, but feel it should be on a time limited / interim basis and LA's to take on role as soon as possible.

4 Do you agree that we have described the way that these bodies would function in broadly the right way? Is the balance of responsibilities between them right?

X Yes

☐

No

☐

Not Sure

Comments:

Balance about right but with the caveat that there will still be cross "regional" border planning necessary at times.

5 Do you agree that there is a need for a single local authority to lead the conversation with each provider?

X Yes

☐

No

☐

Not Sure

Comments:

This would need to be negotiated at a local level.

6 Do you agree with the proposed approach for Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities?

X Yes

☐

No

X Not Sure

Comments:

Welcome the approach which would give LA's more flexibility to meet the needs of LLDD. However, we have concerns over the level of funding available to support this area.

Accessing specialised provisions – very costly. What funding is available?

7 a) Do you agree that local authorities should be responsible for commissioning provision for young offenders in custodial institutions?

X Yes

☐

No

☐

Not Sure

Comments:

Key part of the LA role and drive to integrated services.

7 b) Do you favour the 'host' funding model, or the model where 'home' authorities are charged?

X Host

☐

Home

☐

Not Sure

Comments:

We feel this would be the least bureaucratic and most effective option.

7 c) Are there planning or legislative levers other than funding systems which would create the right responsibilities and incentives to promote the best outcomes for this group of young people?

☐ Yes

☐ No

X Not Sure

Comments:

Local 14-19 Plan needs to have a bigger influence on provision, particularly in schools. This should happen prior to the introduction of the full 14-19 Commissioning Plan.

Need to link to other key strategies i.e. Young Persons Travel strategy

Chapter 4: Management of the system

Do you agree with:

8 a) Proposals to ensure that informed learner choices should be a key part of shaping the system?

X Yes

☐ No

☐ Not Sure

Comments:

LA now has greater influence on IAG for learners in schools.

8 b) The proposed approach to a common performance management framework based on the Framework for Excellence?

X Yes

☐ No

☐ Not Sure

Comments:

There is a need for a common framework across all providers as increasingly learners will start to access more than one provider dependent on their learning programme.

9 Do you agree with the proposals for managing changes to 16-19 organisation and adjusting the arrangements for 16-19 competitions and presumptions?

X Yes

☐ No

☐ Not Sure

Comments:

Need for rationalisation with a focus on quality and avoidance of duplication. There is the need to continue to build in strong collaborative delivery partnerships that will include a range of different providers. This will reduce the need for 16-19 competitions.

Chapter 5: Funding

Are you content with the proposals:

10 a) To retain a national funding formula based closely on the existing one?

X Yes

☐

No

X Not Sure

Comments:

Agree with the need for a national formula, but will it provide sufficient funding for all areas of Nottinghamshire and deliver the entitlement?

Needs to be simple and transparent.

Needs to be on a financial year basis.

10 b) For funding to flow to institutions on the basis described?

X Yes

☐

No

☐

Not Sure

Comments:

Can funds be retained for provisions of transport services or will this be a buy-in option?

11 Would you support a move to a single national 14-19 funding system?

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not Sure

Comments:

On the whole we support a move to a single national 14-19 funding system.

More details of the formula would be needed.

At the moment, post-16 funding doesn't align with the 3 year school budget. This would need to be addressed.

12 Do you agree with the proposals for capital funding?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☒ Not Sure

Comments:

There are tensions with the LA having BSF funding, and the LAA/LSC having other Capital funding. All capital funding and planning needs to be aligned in order to deliver an area-wide entitlement. This will need to be resolved in regional planning.

Chapter 6: Implementation

13 Do these proposals about timescale and transition appear reasonable?

X Yes

☐ No

☐ Not Sure

Comments:

Timelines are tight but necessary - much will depend on the commitment, co-operation and energy of officers from the LA's and LSC.

There is a need for continuity between local and regional demands.

An efficient and effective model for strategic planning and commissioning is needed as soon as possible. There is a need to retain the confidence of learners and providers during the transition. In addition the establishment of a process by which LSC staff can secure their own future prospects.

Chapter 7: Reforming the post-19 skills system to secure better outcomes for adults

14 Do you agree with the proposal to create a new Skills Funding Agency to replace the Learning and Skills Council post-19?

X Yes

☐ No

☐ Not Sure

Comments:

Broadly agree.

There is a danger that the SFA will sit in isolation and with the promotion of demand led solutions, planning and prioritising will be inappropriately relegated.

Partner organisations including the local authorities will need to understand where they fit into the process and how linkages / relationships can sensibly be made between the 14-19 responsibilities and those for adults.

The SFA will need to engage with the development and delivery of the LAA's and the sub-regional responsibilities of partners to effect change in (local) skills agenda.

Will this include LLDD students?

15 Do you agree with the proposed role of the Agency?

☐ Yes

☐ No

X Not Sure

Comments:

There is not a clear infrastructure to replace the existing LSC structures and this needs some further consideration.

Although there are advantages to the proposed demand lead system proposed, the strategic development relative to future skills needs should be embedded within the role of the sub regional area groups.

It is important that measures of progression and quality span both pre and post 19 provision.

Chapter 8: Funding and commissioning

16 Do you agree with the funding and commissioning role proposed for the Skills Funding Agency?

X Yes

☐ No

☐ Not Sure

Comments:

There is a general concern that the funding allocated will not meet the targets set by Leitch. Many existing providers are not engaging with Train to Gain because the funding is seen to be inadequate.

There are concerns among providers around the progression and funding for student spanning pre and post 19 provision.

Some sector skills development is more expensive than others because of associated overheads. Where skills are vital to the development of the economy (in particular the knowledge economy) provision should be prioritised accordingly.

There may be an argument for commissioning provision to the same geographical area as the LA funding, hence enabling strategic planning of progression routes. This ties generally with the reference at 8.21 to ensure a clear relationship with the SNR and LAA process; we agree this would be very sensible.

In reference to the SFA working with existing Employment & Skills Boards,

some consideration should be given to the potential changes in their structure and geographical coverage relative the SNR and LAA. Some further guidance on this may be helpful.

Many Employment & Skills Boards have already recognised key sectors skills. This work might usefully be taken into account when regional sector skills plans are produced.

In some instances a regional approach would not suit the needs of the local areas where there is a significant demand for specific sector skills. In such cases the SFA should have the flexibility to respond.

With the emphasis on travel to training, it is important to ensure that there are not deserts of provision away from urban areas. Many of these areas are areas of deprivation, certainly across the County Council's area. This policy may therefore compound the problem, increasing the inequality of opportunity in these communities.

17 Do the proposals in this chapter reflect the right balance of strategic commissioning and individual customer choice?

☐

Yes

☐

No

X Not Sure

Comments:

Given their significance to employment generally and certainly locally, SMEs should be engaged in the development of this strategy.

It is not clear how the employer lead Train to Gain will fit with the learner owned Skills Accounts - where does the learner's choice end and the employer's choice begin?

Chapter 9: Sponsorship of the FE system

18 Do you agree with the proposals on performance management and the performance intervention role of the Skills Funding Agency?

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not Sure

Comments:

The LA welcomes the opportunity to engage in this process.

When looking at the performance of colleges, we would echo the perspective that consideration be made of the social / economic context of the area within which colleges sit (ref para 9.16). As mentioned previously, there is a concern that we may move towards deserts of provision in some of our most deprived wards.

19 Have we got the right approach to sponsorship of the FE sector as a whole?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☒ Not Sure

Comments:

20 Do you agree that each of the functions in this chapter should be performed by the Skills Funding Agency?

☐

Yes

☐

No

X Not Sure

Comments:

Where will pre- and post -19 business engagement be managed?

In addition to the National Employer Service it may be argued that there should be some additional emphasis placed on the engagement and support of SMEs, where the majority of private sector employment lies

Chapter 11: An integrated system: how the Skills Funding Agency fits into the wider skills landscape

21 Do you agree with this description of the wider skills landscape within which the Skills Funding Agency will operate?

X Yes

☐

No

☐

Not Sure

Comments:

We are keen to see improved pathways from FE to HE provision and would like to this aspect reinforced in the process of development.

22 Have you any further comments?

Comments:

What will be the relationship with the Skills Agency and the Young Peoples Agency?

More clarity needed on the relationship between pre and post-19

It would be useful to see some additional thinking on :

- The nature of the relationship between the Skills Agency and the Young Peoples Agency;
- How employers will be engaged with the post-19 provision and how FE Colleges in particular will be awarded the capacity to engage with employers;
- The role of the RDAs, of sub-regional entities and the LA and its LAA in this context, in the light of the SNR;
- What support structures and guidance might be put in place now if sub-regional groups need to be approved by early next year. This could reference the role, expectations and governance.
- Pre-level 2 foundation tier funding for the initial engagement of learners

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply X

Here at the Department for Children Schools and Families we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, would it be alright if we were to contact you again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

☐

Yes

XNo

All UK national public consultations are required to conform to the following standards:

1. Consult widely throughout the process, allowing a minimum of 12 weeks for written consultation at least once during the development of the policy.
2. Be clear about what your proposals are, who may be affected, what questions are being asked and the timescale for responses.
3. Ensure that your consultation is clear, concise and widely accessible.
4. Give feedback regarding the responses received and how the consultation process influenced the policy.
5. Monitor your department's effectiveness at consultation, including through the use of a designated consultation co-ordinator.
6. Ensure your consultation follows better regulation best practice, including carrying out a Regulatory Impact Assessment if appropriate.

Further information on the Code of Practice can be accessed through the Cabinet Office Website: <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/regulation/consultation-guidance/content/introduction/index.asp>

Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.

Completed questionnaires and other responses should be sent to the address shown below by 9 June 2008

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