

Minutes



Leading learning and skills

Date 24 November 2005
Subject Adult Learning Committee
Location Meeting room
Time 10:00
LSC office National Office (London)
Publication intent Public

Present Frances O'Grady
Richard Atkins
Sandra Burslem
Tony Chandler
Giles Clarke
Deborah Fern
Anthony Massouras
Pat McMullan
Pat Passley
Graham Taylor
Alan Tuckett

In attendance Paula Chapman (Head of Planning and Contracts - item 6 only)
Shirley Cramer (Chair, Equality and Diversity Committee, item 4 only)
John Landeryou (ALI)
Peter Lauener (DfES)
Clive Mitchell (Jobcentre Plus)
Rebecca Rhodes (Skills Director - Sectors, CoVE and Academies - item 7 only)
Simon Shaw (Mindset - item 6 only)

LSC staff Jaine Clarke (Director of Skills Strategy and Planning)
Jon Gamble (Director, Adult Learning)
Priya Gossain (Policy Manager)
Sue Randall (Clerk)
David Way (National Director of Skills)

Apologies Apologies have been received from:
Judith Armitt
Chris Humphries
Alex Pratt
Caroline Neville
Susan Pember

Item 1. Welcome and introductions

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed Shirley Cramer to the meeting as she was attending to give a presentation about the work of the Equality and Diversity Committee. She also welcomed two new employer members of the Committee whose first meeting it was: Pat McMullan and Anthony Massouras. The Chair welcomed Peter Lauener as the new DfES observer on the Committee.

Item 2. Minutes of the last meeting

- 2.1 These were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

Item 3. Matters arising

- 3.1 Committee forward work plan: an item on this appeared later in the agenda.
- 3.2 Detailed performance paper: it was noted that this had been circulated to members before the meeting.

Item 4. Work of the Equality and Diversity Committee and Race Equality

- 4.1 Shirley Cramer joined the meeting to give an overview of the work of the Equality and Diversity Committee in the year since its inception. She explained that the Committee had:
- Looked at the diversity of local councils
 - Looked at ways of improving data and its collection
 - Set up a task group to look at age discrimination
 - Been monitoring the implementation of the Little review.
- 4.2 It was agreed that an Adult Learning Committee member should be on the group looking at Little review implementation, and also on the task group on Equality and Diversity Impact Measures. It was **agreed** that this would be considered outside of the meeting.
- 4.3 On the Race Equality Scheme, the Committee noted that the consultant company, SHM, had undertaken a consultation with employers. It was heartening to note that the consultation revealed much motivation and commitment to a diverse workforce. The consultation also concluded that access to quality employment alone was not sufficient, rather, potential employees needed long term employment prospects to be able to succeed.
- 4.4 The Chair thanked Shirley Cramer for giving up her time to attend the meeting. Committee members were invited to comment or ask questions. The following key points were made:
- Care must be taken to ensure that those members of society who are traditionally marginalised receive the most suitable training and

development for them. Traditional qualifications may not always be the most suitable route

- Public sector training involving learners with learning difficulties and disabilities remains very contentious at a local level. Clarity of who funds what is required
- Best practice guides on assisting Muslim learners would be an extremely useful thing to develop
- The link between specialist colleges and charities needs developing
- The responsibility of making funding decisions for specialist residential provision should not lie with local colleges and LSCs. These types of decisions should be made at a higher level
- Employers can be encouraged to use positive action, which is lawful, rather than positive discrimination, which is not, in their recruitment

4.5 The Chair outlined the areas in which the two Committees' work can link in future: public sector skills (a big Black and Ethnic Minority employer); procurement; and improving skills to ensure "a quality job".

Item 5. Migration and Skills (Paper ALC 24/2005)

5.1 The Director of Skills Strategy and Planning presented this paper that provided a policy and research perspective on learning and skills issues related to migrants. The Committee was asked to provide a policy steer and to identify issues to explore further.

5.2 The Committee made a number of points in relation to learning and skills for migrants.

5.3 Refugees experience difficulty in getting their existing qualifications recognised. This presents the dual risk of them becoming quickly disillusioned and disengaged, and that their skills are consequently under-used in the labour-market. Simple access to information about prior or foreign qualifications is crucial for this group of people.

5.4 It would be useful to see more consideration in the paper of the European Union's work on migration issues.

5.5 Colleges and providers do need to have a flexible enough approach to differentiate between indigenous people with English language problems and migrants.

5.6 It was agreed that a task group be created to look at this whole issue and come up with real steers. The task group should look at areas like: strategy and policy; planning; funding and ESOL provision; design and comparability.

Decision: A proposed remit and membership for this task group to be drawn up.

Action: Jaine Clarke

Item 6. National Employer Service (Paper ALC 25/2005)

6.1 The National Director of Skills (David Way) introduced this item that set out key research findings into the needs of large national employers and the implications for the National Employers Service (NES). Paula Chapman

(Head of Planning and Contracts) and Simon Shaw (Mindset) joined the meeting.

6.2 The Committee noted an assessment of “where we are now” in terms of engaging large employers, including a three-fold increase in the numbers of young people in apprenticeships since the NES’ inception, and 32 new employers engaged in the last 12 months.

6.3 Key findings of Mindset’s research were grouped into three main headings:

- Skills planning and development
- Involvement with the LSC
- NES relations with partners.

Research had established what employers value.

6.4 From this research, it would be possible to formulate a core remit for an NES, including relationships with employers, contract management, clarity of role, data and communications.

6.5 The Committee welcomed the update and commented as follows:

- An NES cannot work effectively without private sector engagement
- Regional/sub-regional – one of the major internal challenges for the LSC was to ensure that employers were handled effectively at all levels of the organisation
- Further engagement with trade unions and public service employers should be pursued
- Engagement of small, as well as large, employers, should be pursued

6.6 The Chair thanked Paula Chapman and Simon Shaw for the update, and added that the Committee would take on the role of champion of this work.

Item 7. Centres of Vocational Excellence (Paper ALC 26/2005)

7.1 The Skills Director – Sectors, CoVEs and Academies (Rebecca Rhodes), joined the meeting to present this paper that proposed arrangements for the transfer of oversight of CoVE policy from the CoVE Policy and Selection Panel to the Committee.

7.2 It was proposed that a sub-group be established to oversee the handover period between the Panel and the Committee.

7.3 In looking at the future of CoVEs, the Committee noted that the current, blanket set of criteria for becoming a CoVE is unhelpful, and the aim is now to make CoVEs a sectoral network. There would still be opportunities for entry.

7.4 The links between skills academies and specialist schools will be established, and it will be ensured that data collection is sound. Inspection will review this regularly and duplication will be avoided.

7.5 The LSC lead on CoVEs will be a designated regional skills colleague.

7.6 The structure, role and remit of the Committee in taking forward the CoVE programme was approved. The Chair agreed to consult colleagues outside of

the meeting before making a firm decision on who should join the proposed sub-group.

Item 8. Learning and Skills Report (Paper ALC 27/2005)

8.1 David Way and the Director of Adult Learning (Jon Gamble) introduced this paper that provided the Committee with a general summary of current work being undertaken by teams in both the Learning and Skills groups. The Committee's attention was drawn in particular to:

- The announcement of four Skills Academies
- Train to Gain is the new name for National Employer Training Programme
- The PSA target for apprenticeships has been achieved
- City Summits and the importance of bringing skills and employment planning together
- Conclusions around the effectiveness of Skills for Life will be brought back to the Committee at an appropriate point
- The second RDA annual conference has been held, in which issues of joint working were discussed including a joint approach to the next spending review
- The LSC is to lead on the trialling of the Framework for Achievement to discover how it works in practice
- Priorities for Success – the policy measures in place are the best fit for those below Level 2 to access learning.

8.2 The Committee was grateful for the update, and in particular for the progress being made with Priorities for Success and on ETP funding details. The Committee also welcomed the transfer of Offender Learning and Skills responsibility to the LSC.

Item 9. Committee Priorities and Work Programme (Paper ALC 28/2005)

9.1 The Policy Manager (Priya Gossain) presented this paper that asked the Committee to comment on and agree the planned schedule and the proposed themes of meetings in 2006.

9.2 The Committee noted that there were three main proposed themes for meetings: public services; reviving an ILA mechanism; and co-funding.

9.3 In response to the concerns of some Committee members, the Chair confirmed that key topics such as adult engagement and Skills for Life would not disappear from the agenda, but would be discussed as part of whichever future meeting was deemed appropriate.

9.4 Committee members **agreed** to consider which themes they would like to lead and send their expressions of interest to either Priya Gossain or Frances O'Grady as soon as possible.

Item 10. Any other business

10.1 There was none.

Item 11. Date of next meeting

11.1 This would be 9 February 2006.

Publication no.	LSC-P-NAT-060230
Meeting chair	Frances O'Grady
Minute taker	Sue Randall
Date created	28 November 2005
Document ref.	G:\Chairmans Division\Secretariat\COMMITTEES\ALC\Meetings\2005 meetings\051124\cho-adultlearningcommittee- publicminutes-24nov2005.doc