

## STRAND 4: MONITORING AND CHALLENGE

1.	Making sure the 14-19 reforms happen
2.	Local Area Agreements
3.	14-19 Progress Checks
4.	Learner Voice
5.	Improving the FE sector/colleges:
	- <i>Framework for Excellence</i>
	- <i>Minimum levels of performance</i>
	- <i>Improving leadership</i>
6.	Improving schools: School Sixth Form support and challenge
7.	The New Standard
8.	Post-16 progression measures
9.	Joint Area Reviews
10.	Diploma Gateway process
11.	LSC Single Equality Scheme

### 1.0 Making sure the 14-19 reforms happen

Various measures are in place to promote high quality learning in the 14-19 phase. As with funding, the picture is complicated because 14-19 straddles two very different systems: schools and FE, and quality assurance is no exception.

Quality assurance is a multi-pronged process, involving many diverse activities, such as:

- Feedback from young people ('learner voice')
- measures of success, success rates, value added<sup>1</sup> (e.g. Learner Achievement Tracker<sup>2</sup>)
- high quality qualifications and credit framework
- school sixth form support and challenge
- Progress Checks
- Diploma readiness reports
- Joint Area Reviews
- strategic plans, e.g. Local Area Agreements, 14-19 Plans
- Ofsted inspections
- Provider self-assessments and plans

<sup>1</sup> [http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/Updated\\_VADT\\_Briefing\\_document\\_09.06.pdf](http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/Updated_VADT_Briefing_document_09.06.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/P\\_G\\_LAT\\_tutorial\\_ver3.0\\_approved.ppt](http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/P_G_LAT_tutorial_ver3.0_approved.ppt)

- the evaluations of pathfinders and pilots
- measures to share good practice, e.g. Learning Visits, case studies, Manual of Good Practice
- workforce development projects: support for leaders and managers; expansion of vocational skills staff; the development of subject specific resources; training in functional skills.

Steering policy from the top, the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) establishes how performance will be managed across government, and sets out national targets. These targets underpin Public Service Agreements (PSAs). The PSAs then percolate into other systems such as the National Indicator Set used by local councils in developing their Local Area Agreements.

## 2.0 Local Area Agreements (LAA)

A Local Area Agreement (LAA) is a three year agreement, based on local Sustainable Community Strategies' It sets out the priorities for a local area agreed between Central Government, represented by the Government Office (GO), and a local area, represented by the lead local authority and other key partners through Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs).

The new arrangements in place for 2008-2011 represent a fundamental change. These aim to place LAAs at the heart of local partnership work. These changes will:

- include a new legal duty on other public services to co-operate with councils in negotiating and implementing LAAs
- be the only place where government can agree targets with councils and local partnerships
- require that the LAA will be the core of what is assessed through the forthcoming 'comprehensive area assessment' (CAA)<sup>3</sup> (This will replace the 'comprehensive performance assessment'<sup>4</sup> in 2009, and will look at the performance of councils and the other organisations with a 'duty to co-operate').
- not require 'Blocks' as in the 2005-2008 LAAs

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/cpa/cpatransition.asp>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/cpa/>

- require that mainstream funding is geared to the targets (no ring fenced funds), though there will be an element of performance-related 'reward funding'

The National Indicator Set includes 16 education and early years targets, plus up to 35 more targets to be negotiated with the local Government Office (GO). 7 Indicators relate directly to the 14-19 agenda. If required, LAAs can include locally relevant targets from outside the National Indicator Set.

The Public Sector Agreements will be within the scope of Local Area Agreements, and inspectorates' Comprehensive Area Assessment. From April 2009, Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) will replace Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). The CAA will look at the public services in an area delivered by councils and their partners including the private and voluntary sectors. It will assess how well-run local public services are and how effectively they use taxpayers' money, and will focus on issues important to the community, such as crime, community cohesion, a sustainable environment or public health issues, e.g. obesity.

<http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/cpa/cpatransition.asp>

### 3.0 Progress checks

Regional Government Offices monitor the progress of the 14-19 reforms, in particular how well local authorities meet their new responsibilities to provide access to the Diploma lines. This is carried out through a system of 'Progress Checks'.

The **official government office guidance**<sup>5</sup> is as follows:

The changes to the curriculum and qualifications are very significant, as is the way 14-19 education and training will be delivered in practice. Local Authorities, local LSCs, schools, colleges and training providers will all be accountable for their contributions to delivery. In support of this, Ministers have agreed that there is a need for a co-ordinated system to measure the progress of all areas of the country in implementing the reforms.

From September 2006, Government Offices will therefore be expected to work with LSCs and their Local Authorities in running a set of Progress Checks which will measure the performance of every Local Authority in the progress they are making in delivering the reform programme in preparation for the introduction of the specialised Diplomas and the new national entitlement.

The purpose of the Progress Checks will be:

- To provide termly reports to Ministers on whether 14-19 progress is on track in the short and long term;
- To highlight what progress is being made across the country, to understand the effect of the reform programme and to allow DfES to make adjustments to the programme where

<sup>5</sup> <https://newintranet.lsc.gov.uk/doccentre/North%20West/Final%20PC%20guidance%2028-9-07.doc>

necessary;

- To encourage areas to review and evaluate their performance and what aspects of their work might need closer attention;
- To offer support and assistance to areas where necessary to ensure the key objectives of the reform programme are met.

#### 4.0 Learner Voice

By September 2007, all FE colleges and work based learning providers should have had in place a **Learner Involvement Strategy**<sup>6</sup>. The Handbook for the FE Sector (published in June 2007) includes the following:

The FE White Paper Further Education: Raising skills, improving life chances (DfES, 2006c) sets out the expectation that all colleges and providers will publish and monitor strategies for involving learners. Learner involvement covers a wide variety of practices that seek to enable, equip and motivate learners to voice their views and actively shape their learning, as the following examples illustrate.

- Learners can be involved in many different kinds of discussion and decision. For example, this might cover the learning experience, the support they need, the facilities that are available, or the strategy and direction of the organisation to which they belong.
- Learners can be involved individually or collectively, on their own behalf or as representatives, as customers, partners or experts.
- Learner involvement may be initiated by the provider, as when a provider uses a satisfaction survey to gather data, or it may be initiated by the learner, for instance when learners act collectively through a student association or committee, or individually as expert learners to shape their learning experiences and environment.

Since November 2006, the **National Learner Panel**<sup>7</sup> has been advising the government on how proposed changes in further education in England will affect learners. It's made up of volunteers involved in further education as learners. Panel members are part-time, independent volunteers. Anyone in further education is eligible to apply to join the panel - all

---

<sup>6</sup> <http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/nat-281718-learn-strat-may07.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/AdultLearning/DG\\_068290](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/AdultLearning/DG_068290)

that's needed is an interest in further education and a commitment to making sure it meets the needs of learners. Panel members reflect the wide variety of learners in further education, and are drawn from across the sector, including learners at college and in work-based learning. Members' ages range from 17 to 67, including those who have just left school, those who are returning to learning later in life to boost their career prospects and those who have retired and are learning for pleasure.

## 5.0 Improving the FE Sector

### Framework for Excellence<sup>8</sup>

LSC is piloting the prototype Framework for Excellence (the Framework) from September 2007 to March 2008, with 100 colleges and work-based learning (WBL) providers (including 8 from the East of England). A **Guidance Document Version 1.7**<sup>9</sup> was published on 8 March 2008.

The Framework for Excellence is designed to be an effective and trusted method of raising standards within the FE system, and to inform choice and improve the quality of decision-making for learners and employers. It will provide a single, unified framework for assessing and reporting achievement in all key areas of performance.

The basis of the Framework is a scorecard of seven Key Performance Areas (KPA's) that can be brought together to describe the three key dimensions of a college's or provider's performance:

- Responsiveness – to learners and to employers.
- Effectiveness of provision – quality of outcomes, quality of provision.
- Finance – financial health, financial control, use of resources.

They will be scored on each and then receive an overall rating which they will be able to compare against a national average.

The Framework will be operational in colleges and work-based learning providers from September 2008, and across the whole FE system from September 2009.

---

<sup>8</sup> <http://ffe.lsc.gov.uk/>

<sup>9</sup> <http://ffe.lsc.gov.uk/LSCGOVUK/Scripts/PublicationDownload.aspx?id=6adcb83d-a88f-406f-a8c7-ef436bb7476c>

### Minimum levels of performance<sup>10</sup>

LSC introduced minimum levels of performance in 2007-08, the rationale being to 'identify and then remove funding from poor-quality providers'. The aim is to 'eliminate inadequate provision across the FE system by 2008'.

### Improving leadership and quality

The Quality Improvement Agency (QIA) (launched April 2006) and the Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL) (launched October 2003) have both offered a range of support to the sector. QIA's job was to raise quality and standards, through supporting colleges and other providers, and leading the development of the National Improvement Strategy. CEL fostered and supported leadership improvement across the sector.

With expectations rising and greater emphasis being placed on self-regulation, QIA and CEL have merged to create a new sector-owned organisation, capable of bringing together organisational development and leadership. It will build on the 2007 merger between Ofsted and the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) to form a new Ofsted. That consolidation also transferred ALI's quality responsibilities to QIA. The original consultation document<sup>11</sup> contains useful background information

## 6.0 Improving Schools

Under the New Relationship with Schools, School Improvement Partners (SIPs) are the first element in a new framework of sharper challenge and better support for schools. They will support and challenge the school's process of self-evaluation in order to help the school arrive at an accurate judgement of how well it is serving its pupils and what it needs to do to improve. This judgement will be validated by Ofsted, as part of a new inspection system which will provide more timely and more focussed information on a school's capacity to improve.

School Improvement Partners (SIPs)<sup>12</sup> are deployed to challenge and support the school's self-evaluation and planning, in order to build the school's capacity to improve the attainment of pupils. A SIP acts as a critical professional friend to a school, helping its leaders to evaluate the school's performance, identify priorities for improvement, plan effective change

---

<sup>10</sup> [http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/nat-identifyingmanagingunderperformance\\_yr2\\_pt1-jan08.pdf](http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/nat-identifyingmanagingunderperformance_yr2_pt1-jan08.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.feimprovement.co.uk/consultation%20final.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> [www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/newrelationship](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/newrelationship)

and discuss with the school any additional support it may need. SIPs work to national standards and are accountable to local authorities.

SIPs should alert the local authority to their concerns and their view of the support required by the school, so that early action can be taken. If the SIP's concerns relate to a school sixth form, the local authority should inform the Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) funds sixth form provision. Ministers have asked the LSC to work jointly with local authorities on a Support and Challenge programme for school sixth forms. This will result in a jointly agreed list of school sixth form priorities for school improvement partners (SIPs) to take forward with the schools they work with. It would not be responsible for the LSC to support growth in any areas quoted as an improvement priority until the underlying issues have been rectified; therefore the LSC will not allocate any growth for **school sixth forms**<sup>13</sup> for specific provision quoted as a SIP improvement priority.

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) may put forward proposals for the reorganisation of 16-19 provision in an area as a result of an area-wide inspection of post-16 provision. The LSC can also make proposals relating to school sixth forms, where the proposals are made with a view to promoting one of the following objectives:

- an improvement in the achievement of 16 to 19 year-olds
- an increase in participation amongst 16 to 19 year-olds
- an expansion of the learning opportunities open to 16 to 19 year-olds

In all cases, it is important for the LSC to consider all alternatives to reorganisation, by encouraging, for example, more collaborative working between sixth forms and the FE sector. However, where the LSC proposes reorganisation, proposals may involve the closure of one or more sixth forms, the opening of new sixth forms, or alterations such as a change in the age range or enlargement of premises. The LSC may also propose the establishment of 16-19 institutions under schools regulations or as FE institutions.

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) will work with local authorities to support the improvement of sixth-form provision. The LSC's powers of intervention are enacted in the Learning and Skills Act 2000 and the Education Act 2002.

---

<sup>13</sup> <http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/nat-16-18-adult-learner-and-employer-responsive-funding-models.pdf>

Where a school sixth form has been judged to require significant Improvement in two consecutive Ofsted inspections, or where a maintained school for 16-19 year olds has been judged to require Special Measures in two consecutive Ofsted inspections, the LSC may propose closure.

#### 7.0 The Learning and Skills Council: **The New Standard**

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has now introduced a new quality standard for vocational training providers in England with the working title 'New Standard'. This is the LSC's response to the 2006 Further Education Reform White Paper and the Leitch Review of Skills which recommended a single quality standard to replace the existing centre of vocational excellence (CoVE) and quality mark badges.

The New Standard is a framework and an assessment and accreditation process which recognises and celebrates the best organisations delivering training and development solutions to employers. The standard has been designed to reflect employers' priorities and expectations in sourcing training and development solutions, and the practices of the organisations proven to be the best at delivering them.

General information about the New Standard is available at a **dedicated website**<sup>14</sup>

#### 8.0 **Post 16 Progression Measures**<sup>15</sup>

These aim to:

- Ensure impartial information and guidance about post 16 opportunities
- Give further impetus to achievement at Key Stage 3 and choices at Key Stage 4
- Promote collaboration between providers

Initially, the progression measures will be:

- The proportion of young people leaving school at 16 go to achieve level 2 by 19
- The proportion of young people leaving school at 16 go to achieve level 3 by 19

DCSF will provide schools with this information in 2008, and will publish it in the School Profile from 2008-09.

---

<sup>14</sup> [www.newstandard.co.uk](http://www.newstandard.co.uk)

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/14-19/index.cfm?sid=42&pid=355&ctype=TEXT&ptype=Single>

DCSF has published a summary of the [responses to the consultation](#).<sup>16</sup>

## 9.0 Joint Area Reviews

The joint area review (JAR) is a three-year programme running until December 2008 and all 150 local authority areas will have one joint area review during this time.

A joint area review judges the contribution that the council and its partners in the local area are making to improve outcomes for children and young people. Joint area reviews gather evidence during on-site fieldwork investigations into the contributions local services make to improving outcomes for some of the most vulnerable groups of children and young people, and those groups of children and young people who are not doing well enough, or who are at risk of underachieving. They also follow up areas of weakness identified in the annual performance assessment.

The on-site fieldwork investigations include gathering evidence directly from children, young people, their parents and carers, front-line workers, senior managers, elected council members and the council's partner agencies and organisations. Inspectors also scrutinise a number of randomly selected case files relating to some of the most vulnerable children and young people in the area to examine how far services work together to address the specific needs of these children and young people and promote their well-being.

Joint area reviews are proportionate to risk, so higher performing areas receive fewer on-site fieldwork investigations and a smaller inspection team than poorer performing areas which have a greater number of on-site fieldwork investigations and a larger inspection team.

Joint area reviews are normally carried out at the same time as the Audit Commission's corporate assessment of each council. The joint area review is also aligned with the inspection of youth offending teams undertaken by HMI of Probation. An enhanced youth inspection is also carried out at the same time as a joint area review if a local authority's youth service has not been inspected since 2005.

A joint area review results in a number of graded and non graded judgements, which are published as part of a report at the end of the joint area review process. The reports for joint

---

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/documents/progression.doc>

area reviews that have taken place can be found in [inspection report section of Ofsted's website](#).<sup>17</sup> The matrix includes information about which local authorities in the East of England have been inspected.

## 10.0 Diploma Gateway Process

In order to ensure high quality delivery of the new qualifications from the outset, the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), has put in place a Gateway process to assess proposals for early Diploma delivery. The first Gateway took place between autumn 2006 and spring 2007. Consortia in a good position for 2009 Diploma delivery had to apply to the second round of the Gateway by the deadline of 3rd December 2007.

Detailed [Guidance](#)<sup>18</sup> is available which explains who should consider applying to the Gateway, the role of local 14-19 Partnerships, and the process that applicants should follow. The [results of Gateway 2](#)<sup>19</sup> were announced in March 2008

## 11.0 LSC Single Equality Scheme<sup>20</sup>

In May 2007, the Learning and Skills Council launched a Single Equality Scheme, which brought together the LSC's policies on race, gender and disability, to create a coherent framework for promoting equality and diversity within the organisation and across the learning and skills sector. The scheme describes in a single document how the LSC will fulfil its statutory duties to promote equality of opportunity and avoid discrimination, demonstrating its commitment to placing the promotion of equality and diversity at the centre of every aspect of its work. The new scheme also links closely into the LSC's *agenda for change* programme, which aims to positively transform the learning and skills system in England. The scheme is effective from 30 April 2007 – 29 April 2010.

LSC had already taken significant steps toward remedying past disadvantage and exclusion, for example in its national strategy for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities - *Learning for Living and Work*.

---

<sup>17</sup>

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/portal/site/Internet/menuitem.4ee124d1333d1e23b218d71008c08a0c/?vgnnextoid=15df764e0f32b010VgnVCM100000960f430aRCRD>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/14-19/documents/DiplomaGatewayGuidance.pdf.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> [http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/documents/g2\\_ee\\_grid.doc](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/documents/g2_ee_grid.doc)

<sup>20</sup> <http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/nat-singleequalityscheme-30apr07.pdf>