

# Minutes

**Date** 14 September 2011  
**Subject** Skills Funding Agency Advisory Board  
**Attendees** As per Annex  
**Publication Number** © Skills Funding Agency – P– 110228

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## **1. Welcome and Introductions**

1.1 Geoff Russell welcomed members to the sixth meeting of the Advisory Board and gave a particular welcome to Toni Pearce from the National Union of Students who had joined the Board succeeding Shane Chowen.

## **2. Minutes and matters arising**

2.1 The minutes of the last meeting held on 15 June 2011 were agreed and these would now be published on the Agency's website.

2.2 The discussion item at the last meeting had been on the topic of 'NEETs' i.e. those who are aged 16 to 24 who are Not in Employment, Education and Training, recognising that the Agency only has responsibility for those aged 19 and over. As a follow up to this item, Kim Thorneywork had circulated a note with the papers on the recent procurement activity by the Agency targeting 19 to 24 year olds who are not in employment, education or training and will be Apprentices. She explained how the Board's comments from the last meeting had been used to shape the tender specification. There had been significant interest in this tender and contracts would be awarded in the next few weeks. The procurement process had improved following some teething problems in the last procurement round.

2.3 Les Walton asked about consortia arrangements and how new ideas can be generated. Geoff Russell responded that the procurement process looks at the track record of individual organisations in a consortium and there are also entry routes into the market. Minimum contract values are in place, however new providers can sub-contract with a prime contractor and if they demonstrate good delivery and pass the minimum threshold, they could get a direct contract.

2.4 Martin Doel commented on the need to manage change through this process and asked about TUPE arrangements when a contract changes. Kim responded that the Agency's role is to advise and this was for colleges and providers to deal with and to consider their responsibilities as a result of gaining new contracts.

2.5 The Board discussed the availability of jobs to support Apprenticeship places and how Access to Apprenticeship support will assist those young people

who need employability skills. The Chair reminded the Board that the Agency was piloting the job outcome payment in this academic year and there was a need to consider the definition of outcomes linking in to the DWP approach. The sector would also need to meet their stakeholders' needs and the outcomes they desire. The Agency was collecting good practice where there are colleges and providers that are doing this well.

### **3. Discussion item: 'Riots and Social Inclusion'**

3.1 GR opened the main item by commenting that since the last meeting the public disorder incidents had taken place and that he thought it would be helpful to set out what the sector is already doing in the area of social inclusion and access, as well as consider what more can be done.

3.2 Verity Bullough gave a short presentation to set the scene and explained that it was not the Agency's role to lead on any response to the riots but to build on and promote what colleges are already doing, as well as remove any barriers.

3.3 In discussion the following points were made:

- The fundamental issue for 18-24 year olds is remedial intervention. For pre 19, this is the responsibility of the Department for Education rather than the Agency.
- We can only focus on some individuals so suggest this is those in the strongest position as well as those at the other extreme i.e. those in custody.
- Need to avoid 'ambulance chasing' and take a considered view.
- College engagement with 14-16 year olds is critical, however this activity is declining.
- Advice and guidance is important and colleges can be career hubs for all age groups.
- It would be helpful to speed up and reconsider the aim of the forthcoming tendering for offender learning provision.
- There is a high degree of illiteracy in habitual offenders and there should be a change of focus of offender learning provision.
- Tighter funding rules on ESF has meant the loss of ability to innovate and develop a variety of solutions. There is also the loss of intrinsic incentives for individuals to re-engage in learning e.g. training allowances for 19 plus.
- It is critical to look at leadership in a community and educational institutions have a key role to play in this.
- Targeting certain types of young people can be divisive and we need to focus on the whole community.
- Outcomes for progression are important and FE is doing this, however schools tend to focus on exam results.
- The fee changes for those on inactive benefits has helped already in reaching out to communities. However, colleges still need to interpret the needs of their communities and address these.

- Large employers are taking on graduates, but we need to convince them to take on the 'hard to reach'.
- Employers are college governors and on boards of providers so need to ensure they see themselves as community leaders and not just running a business.
- There are examples of colleges working well in some of the 'hot spots' that can be shared with others.
- We need to let employers work with colleges and employers on bespoke solutions.
- Employers need to have an investment in the community to take on the responsibility of leading the response.
- In a recession employers have no need for recruitment, so the focus should be on progression in employment.
- Focus on Apprenticeships should be on new recruits rather than those in work converting to an Apprenticeship.
- There is a need for a participation strategy as employers do not recruit 16 to 18 year olds.
- There is a need to support flexible/ part time employment and learning during the recession.
- There is a need to communicate more holistically to young people who do not recognise agencies and government departmental boundaries.
- There is a need to focus on the personal development of young people, who feel targeted.
- Benefits and training support must support part-time training and employment.

3.4 The Chair thanked the Board for the helpful discussion. He added that if members had any suggestions for future discussion items to let him know.

#### **4. Any Other Business**

4.1 There was no other business and the meeting drew to a close.

## ANNEX

### List of attendees on 14 September 2011

#### Members:

Geoff Russell (CHAIR)	Skills Funding Agency
Graham Hoyle	AELP
Martin Doel	AOC
Tim Ward	Learning Curve/ TSNLA
Michael Davies	UKCES
Mark Farrar	Construction Skills
Jon Graham	CIPFA
Toni Pearce	NUS
Les Walton	YPLA

#### In Attendance:

Verity Bullough	Skills Funding Agency
Priya Gossain	Skills Funding Agency
Julie Robson	Skills Funding Agency
Kim Thorneywork	Skills Funding Agency

#### Apologies:

Philip Rutnam	BIS
Prof Ruth Farwell	Bucks New University
Derrick Anderson	Lambeth Borough Council
Frances O'Grady	TUC
Ian Forward	Kent County Council/ LEAFEA
John Longworth	BCC
James Fothergill	CBI
Scott Johnson	CBI SME Council
Isobel Stephens/ Jacinda Humphrey	Jobcentre Plus