

## **The remit of Yorkshire and the Humber Regional Planning Group (RPG)**

### **Membership**

**Chair:** named nominee from directors of children's services (currently Edna Sutton, Barnsley MBC)

**Vice chair:** named nominee from Yorkshire Forward (currently Ruth Adams, director of skills, economic and regional strategy)

**Members:** one representative from each local authority with the power to make decisions on behalf of the authority (typically director of children's service or relevant second tier officer); Government Office regional director for children and learners; director of the Young People's Learning Agency for Yorkshire and the Humber; regional lead for the National Apprenticeship Service; one representative from the Skills Funding Agency; and one representative from the Provider Sub Group.

### **Terms of Reference**

The regional planning group is a body without legal or statutory powers. It will operate under the principle that responsibility for planning provision in each locality lies with the local authority and, where delegated, with the sub regional grouping. The RPG is there to support local decision making and to facilitate regional co-ordination of local and sub regional decision making. The RPG will operate within national systems and processes determined by the Department of Children Schools and Families.

### **The regional planning group's purpose is to provide:**

- regional oversight of the commissioning of 16-19 learning provision, support and challenge to local authorities and their sub regional groups, to help them make collaborative commissioning decisions that meet regional learning, economic development and skills priorities and are coherent across travel to learn patterns; and
- assurance to the YPLA that plans have been endorsed and meet the YPLA's requirements, as set out in the National Commissioning Framework and associated guidance.

### **The regional planning group will be responsible for:**

- supporting the efficient transfer of responsibilities from the LSC to local authorities, the YPLA and Government Office in April 2010;
- building on and influencing regional strategies (e.g. the regional integrated strategy) to set and communicate regional strategic priorities to ensure the integration of planning for 16-19 year olds with wider regional and longer term economic strategies;
- providing endorsed 16-19 commissioning plans, which meet regional priorities, to the YPLA;
- regional oversight of the commissioning of 16-19 provision;
- securing a co-ordinated 14-19 learning entitlement across a regional area taking account of cross regional flows;
- ensuring 16-19 education and training priorities are collectively identified and met across Yorkshire and the Humber;
- ensuring 16-25 education and training priorities for learners with learning difficulties and or disabilities (LLDD) are collectively met across Yorkshire and the Humber;
- identifying relevant priorities for the region to support the Regional Economic Strategy and to meet employer needs;
- publishing a Regional Statement of Priorities, setting out the regional response to the national statements of priorities and the local and sub regional priorities;

- agreeing and cohering plans at the regional level – moderating 16 - 19 commissioning plans at a regional level;
- identifying and spreading good practice and promoting peer capacity building;
- resolving and arbitrating any cross regional or regional issues;
- helping to foster the exchange of good practice;
- aligning funding and planning decisions across the region and outside the region where required;
- identifying commissioning best undertaken at a regional or national level;
- identifying regional views on the national agenda which are best communicated from a Regional level; and
- reviewing and agreeing changes to this remit.

**To support these functions the RPG will be responsible for:**

- receiving and analysing reports on the supply and demand and the quality of young people's learning at regional level and identifying data requirements;
- approving regionally agreed approaches to 14-19 planning and commissioning (e.g. content of standard data sets);
- addressing cross boundary issues referred to the RPG by local authorities or sub regional clusters;
- identifying and addressing issues of shortages and surpluses of supply that are most appropriately dealt with at the regional level;
- agreeing regional arrangements for commissioning provision for vulnerable learners including LLDD, young offenders and teenage mothers;
- liaising with the National Apprenticeship Service to ensure there is sufficient high quality apprenticeship provision for young people available across the region; and
- where appropriate, agreeing the strategic approach to discretionary and/or non-mainstream funding.

**Frequency of meetings**

The group will meet approximately quarterly following a cycle aligned with key commissioning decisions.

**Convening and servicing of meetings**

It will be the responsibility of the YPLA to co-ordinate, support, service and provide the secretariat for these meetings on behalf of the chair and the executive.

**Executive**

A smaller executive group will be convened to address regional issues arising between meetings as required. Where there is complete consensus amongst this group it will be empowered to make decisions on behalf of the RPG between meetings. Such decisions may be via face to face meetings or via electronic communication. Membership of the executive group will comprise:

- one representative from each sub regional grouping from whom the chair will normally be drawn;
- one representative from Government Office;
- one member of the RPG with particular expertise on LLDD issues;
- one representative from YPLA; and
- one representative from NAS.

## **Sub groups and working groups**

Wherever possible the RPG will liaise with existing regional and sub regional groups and will avoid duplication of planning groups. The RPG will establish sub groups or working groups where specific funding sources, specific project work or specific specialist strands of work require this. Members of the RPG will have the right to have a representative on any sub group or working group. Initially working groups will be established as follows:

### **1. A provider's group**

This will be an advisory group to facilitate communication of national and regional policy changes to providers and enable providers to communicate their views on the national allocation system and its implications to the RPG and the YPLA. This group does not replace local authority provider or sub regional representative mechanisms but is designed to enable the RPG to be kept informed of provider perspectives on national or regional issues.

Representation is on behalf of a sector not an individual institution or organisation and will be:

- one general FE college from each sub regional cluster;
- one sixth form college from each sub regional cluster;
- one sixth form school/academy from each sub regional cluster;
- one work based learning provider based in each sub regional cluster;
- one voluntary sector organisation from each sub regional cluster;
- one LA representative from each sub regional cluster (one to chair – chair drawn from RPG);
- YPLA representative + officers attending as required; and
- Government Office representative.

This group will focus solely on national and regional policy and strategy issues. The group will exist to provide a further channel for providers to discuss and influence key issues of national and regional policy, such as the annual statement of priorities and the regional commissioning plan. The group will provide a mechanism to enable providers to communicate their collective views to the RPG and the YPLA. Provider representatives will be there on behalf of the collective of organisations in that sub region and not in their own right as individual institutions. Nominations will be drawn from sub regional groupings in line with the RPG sub regional groupings not the provider groupings.

### **2. An operational group**

The YPLA will convene a group comprising one member of staff from each authority leading on the implementation of the business cycle for allocations. This group will meet on a monthly basis between September and April and by need between May and August.

The purpose of the group will be to ensure that all partners have a shared understanding of the latest information about what is happening nationally, regionally and locally about the main allocation and planning processes and to support the resolution of practical planning issues as they arise. This will be a practical communication group focused on ensuring collective understanding of the processes required to support commissioning. The group will receive updates on spreadsheets and deadlines and review the practical implications of national decisions about implementing the annual business cycle. Decisions on any regional issues will be via consensus with issues requiring resolution being normally the responsibility of local authorities or sub regional groups and regional issues of controversy being referred by exception to the RPG.

### **3. Learners with learning difficulties and or disabilities/vulnerable learners**

Meeting approximately quarterly to strengthen co-ordination of the identification of the needs for specialist provision within local authorities and the commissioning of this provision from specialist providers by the YPLA. Decisions will be via consensus with issues requiring

resolution being referred by exception to the RPG. The detailed remit of this group is available in an accompanying document.

### **Sub regional groups**

The region's sub regional groupings are:

North and East Yorkshire: East Riding, Kingston Upon Hull, North Yorkshire and York;  
North and NE Lincolnshire: North Lincolnshire and NE Lincolnshire;  
South Yorkshire: Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham, Sheffield; and  
West Yorkshire: Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds, Wakefield.

Sub regional groups are not sub groups of the RPG. The RPG is there to serve the needs of local authorities and sub regional groups. SRGs responsibilities are delegated to them by the local authorities not by the RPG.

### **Local authorities**

The key decision makers in the new arrangements are the local authorities and guidance on the division of responsibilities is set out in the following annex. Local authorities and sub regional groups across the region have developed their own structures for decision making and for provider representation and the RPG structures are devised to support these processes where a regional perspective would be most helpful. The RPG is not there to replace local authority decision making but to support it.

## **Annex One**

### **The role and the Young People's Learning Agency and the local authorities in the new 14-19 delivery system**

#### **Introduction**

From April 2010, responsibility for securing sufficient education and training provision for all young people, including those aged 16-19, and 19-25 year olds being assessed for a learning difficulty and/or disability, as well as juveniles in custody will pass from the Learning and Skills Council to local authorities. In addition, the Young People's Learning agency (YPLA) will be established as a non-departmental public body to support local authorities discharge their planning and commissioning functions and to ensure funding and budgetary control within the system.

#### **Context for the changes**

The government's long term strategy for children is to make the UK the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up. The changes in the current delivery arrangements that we are making will:

- place 0-19 commissioning under the leadership of local authorities enabling local decision –making at the right level;
- more fully integrate the commissioning of services and provision for young people to support delivery of the new Participation Age and access to the 14-19 entitlements;
- provide greater focus on strengthening the role of local authorities and Children's Trust as champions of young people; and
- provide greater impetus for implementing the Common Application Process.

These changes need to be set alongside initiatives to improve learning routes and support to integrate services for young people, and are crucial to the successful delivery of the historic raising of the participation age to 17 by 2013 and 18 by 2015. The 16-19 transfer will put in place the infrastructure to enable every young person to access individually appropriate, engaging and high quality provision - and will give local authorities the tools they need to deliver the best outcomes for young people.

#### **The role of the local authorities**

Local authorities are at the heart of the new network. They are best placed to secure services for their communities – they are close to their communities, have experience of strategic local leadership and are democratically accountable to local people. Collaborative groupings at sub-regional and regional level will be crucial to ensure that strategic planning and effective commissioning decision making across areas is aligned and comprehensive.

Local authorities' roles as strategic planners will encompass:

- planning to meet local resident learning needs;
- planning to meet collective learning needs across travel to learn patterns (this includes advocating for young people who travel across boundaries to learn to drive up quality, retention and achievement);
- planning to take account of multi-stakeholder requirements – parents and carers, employer, communities and partner agencies; and
- convening and supporting collaborative working through the Local Area Agreements, Children's Trusts and 14-19 partnerships.

Their role as lead commissioners within sub-regional groupings will comprise:

- meeting the needs of all who learn in local authority areas through a sustainable provider bases (this includes learners with specific needs – e.g., LLDD and Young Offenders);

- collaboratively agreeing learning required across travel to learn patterns by working sub-regionally and regionally; and
- working with colleges and other providers as strategic planning partners and by agreeing high quality provision through negotiation and dialogue.

In addition to the above they will have a crucial role to raise aspirations through:

- delivering the new participation age, improving attainment targets for Level 2 and 3, and reducing the NEET cohort;
- effectively delivering every child matters outcomes for all Young People by joining up services and leveraging the strategic commissioning role within Children's Trusts;
- managing the environment to enable transition throughout a learners' journey; and
- managing the market and ensuring provider quality is maintained and raised for 16-19 learning provision.

Local authorities already have considerable expertise and capacity in relation to their wider commissioning role – for example in commissioning childcare places and targeted young support services. To enable local authorities to take on their new duties we intend to transfer staff with the appropriate expertise, knowledge and skills to deliver. We will also ensure that local authorities are supported through the developing role of the YPLA.

### **The role of the YPLA**

The YPLA will be a behind the scenes slim line body with a fundamentally different remit to the LSC in relation to learners aged 16-19. It will principally be a supporting and enabling body, designed to support local authorities in fulfilling their new duties. The YPLA will:

- ensure budgetary control of the £7 billion being transferred to local authorities to enable them to carry out their new functions;
- provide a national commissioning framework to help local authorities commission provision;
- promote consistency and simplicity in planning by providing a national statement of priorities and developing and operating the national funding formula;
- provide strategic analysis services to support the planning and commissioning process;
- provide data on participation, attainment and economic development in local, sub-regional and regional areas;
- work with the RDA's and other regional partners to provide information on future skills needs in an area for both young people and adults, as well as any other economic and labour market intelligence;
- co-ordinate the support and provide secretarial services for the RPG; and
- work with local authorities to support and facilitate the production of commissioning plans at local, sub-regional and regional levels to ensure their coherence and fit within the national budget.

The YPLA will take on responsibility for the performance management of open Academies on behalf of the Secretary of State. Posts will transfer to the YPLA from the Department for Children, Schools and Families to undertake this work and will augment the delivery of other business. The YPLA's core functions in relation to open academies will be concerned with funding. It will calculate and make payments of grants, supervise and ensure financial control of budgets, and monitor and enforce the Funding Agreement. Whilst the precise arrangements are still to be worked through, it is clear that no other body is better placed to bring that support and challenge linked to the overall funding and commissioning process, and the YPLA is the best organisation to ensure that academies get the support and challenge that they require.

### **The role of Government Office (GOs)**

The transfer of funding from the LSC to local authorities means that there will be no single line of accountability for the achievement of key participation, attainment and PSA targets from provider through local, regional and national structures.

The GOs already have a key role carrying out progress checks and supporting and challenging local authority performance. This role will become even more important to ensure the new delivery arrangements achieve the range of improved outcomes envisaged for young people. LSC staff played an important part in supporting the GO network, and additional post in GOs will provide the necessary 16-19 learning and commissioning expertise to ensure the best interests of young learners are at the heart of the new performance management arrangements and that these arrangements support local authorities in the delivery of the entitlement and attainment and Not in Education, Employment or Training PSA targets.