



A policy update from DCSF to providers of Entry to Employment (E2E)

focusing on the January Guarantee, the
Youth Community Action initiative and the
transition from E2E to Foundation Learning

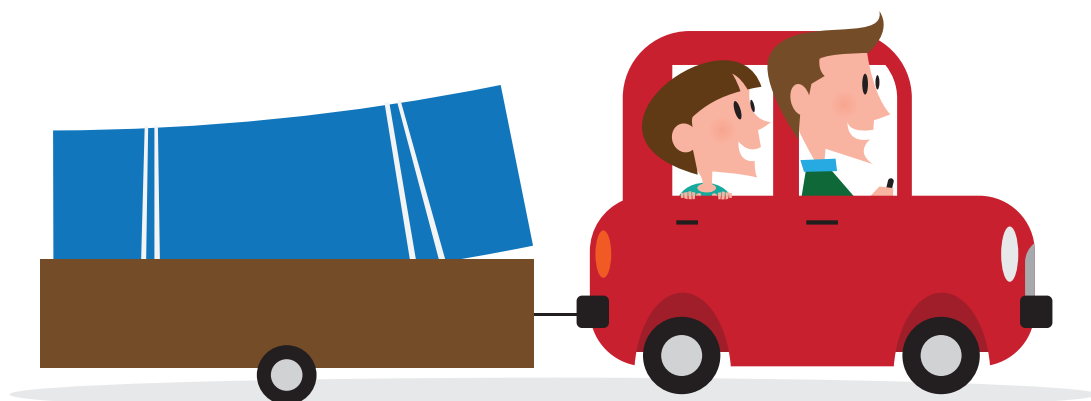
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Contents

1 Introduction	2
2 The 2010 January Guarantee	3
3 The Youth Community Action Initiative	6
4 The Transition from E2E to Foundation Learning	9
5 Support for E2E Providers – An Overview	11
Annex: Key Messages on Youth Community Action	12



1. Introduction

The work you do as Entry to Employment (E2E) providers is central to our wider, collective ambitions for all young people to participate in learning until 17 and eventually 18. Raising the participation age requires a range of learning routes that meet young people's needs and can lead on to further or higher education or skilled employment. The current economic climate puts this even more sharply into focus, making it essential that the different parts of our learning system work together to meet the needs of all young people.

We are at a particularly important point in implementing this agenda. This year, the first cohorts will achieve strengthened and reformed A levels and we will have the first full cohort of Diploma achievers. Fourteen new Diplomas will be taught for the first time and Apprenticeships are being expanded by a further 35,000 places this year as we work towards the entitlement. Revised GCSEs have also been introduced and 2010 is the year Foundation Learning goes national.

Those of you who deliver Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes are making a significant contribution to these reforms by ensuring young people have worthwhile and engaging learning experiences. You are further extending opportunity and choice to young people through the January Guarantee and the new Youth Community Action initiative. And you are delivering all this at a time of transition and change. In April, Local Authorities formally become responsible for commissioning of 16-19¹ provision, working with the YPLA, and there will be a managed transition from E2E to Foundation Learning.

Our collective task is to ensure that engagement and other positive activities are linked to learning; and when in learning, that young people have the right opportunities to develop skills and gain qualifications that will equip them for life, further learning and work, including in challenging times. Positive activities delivered as part of the *Aiming High* strategy, the Youth Community Action initiative and integrating 'engagement' provision into personalised Foundation Learning programmes are all ways to make a reality of the choice and flexibility at the heart of our reform agenda. Some of the learners who will benefit most from Foundation Learning are those young people least likely to participate and achieve post-16 and who may be most at risk in challenging economic conditions. The breadth of learning and focus on progression that are integral to Foundation Learning – and common to the other 14-19 reforms – are particularly relevant for these young people.

Against this backdrop, the purpose of this policy update – specifically for E2E providers – is to summarise key messages and expectations in relation to programmes that you're delivering; and to signpost the support that will help you make a success of 2010, for you and your learners.

¹ Up to 25 for learners with an assessed learning difficulty and/or disability.

2. The January Guarantee

Summary points – as an E2E provider, you are central to:

- ensuring this additional investment is used effectively to get young people back on track for learning or work
- developing flexible, innovative provision to match their needs e.g. using the Foundation Learning model, integrating Youth Community Action, including Level 2 elements, building on successful European Social Fund approaches
- working closely with Connexions services and others to ensure each young person makes a positive progression by the Autumn.

This extra investment to get young people back on track...

The Prime Minister announced in November 2009 that all young people of academic age 16 and 17 not in education, employment or training (NEET) in January 2010 would be offered a place with an E2E provider. This builds on the success of the September Guarantee in ensuring that all young people have the opportunity to participate in learning. An extra £33 million is being made available to fund additional places with E2E providers for 10,000 learners (including EMA) and a further £6 million is for increased Connexions capacity.

...means you need to work closely with Connexions and others...

Successful implementation of the January Guarantee at a local level involves:

- E2E providers delivering personalised and effective provision, developing new and flexible approaches to engage young people
- Connexions services using their extra resource to contact and work with those young people who were NEET in January, signposting and supporting them towards appropriate local learning opportunities with E2E providers
- Forensic analysis of the learning needs of young people. This will require close working between providers, Connexions, local authorities, other relevant youth support agencies and LSC Partnership Teams to ensure that learning opportunities genuinely meet learners' needs.

...focusing on learners' individual needs...

The young people in scope for the January Guarantee are a diverse group. Some, including very able Level 2+ students, will have left programmes begun in September because the course did not meet their expectations or they felt they had made a wrong choice. Others may have chosen not to apply for learning in September, or have lost their jobs after Christmas. Some will already have been through 'traditional' E2E courses without achieving sustained positive progression. For the January Guarantee to be successful, there needs to be a wide range of provision on offer that reflects the needs of young people in your area.

...‘flexing’ your offer/developing new provision to meet those needs...

You are therefore strongly encouraged to develop innovative and collaborative approaches to their offer, including:

- using the **Foundation Learning** model: i.e. personalised programmes of vocational/subject learning, personal and social development and functional skills; with achievements captured in QCF qualifications that:
 - can cover softer outcomes, previously considered outside any formal recognition framework – allowing provision that helps re-engage young people to be incorporated into their learning programmes
 - are fully flexible to allow learners to achieve at their own pace, while ensuring wherever possible that learners are motivated and rewarded by the early achievement of units
 - enable providers to design coherent programmes that align with learners’ changing needs e.g. some learners may respond best initially to a focus on personal and social development arising from team/group work, career planning, sports and health activities etc.
- incorporate **Youth Community Action opportunities** (see page 6) to help engage young people in a practical way – evidence from delivery so far suggests these activities can provide a new and rewarding learner experience that can reshape young people’s views of learning, themselves and their future aspirations
- use **collaborative arrangements** with local partners to tailor provision to learner needs e.g. working with providers specialising in re-engagement provision or incorporating Level 1 provision or elements of Level 2 provision where this is appropriate
- explore and build on successful approaches delivered through ESF funded provision where they meet the specification for E2E.

Examples of flexible, innovative delivery under the January Guarantee

- supporting young people in more remote areas by bringing provision to them, offering a number of learning places in a local community venue to allow easy access
- sub-contracting local third sector organisations with a proven record of re-engaging young people. They are able to work closely with young people in their communities to support them back into education, training and sustainable employment.

...and ensuring these learners should be back on track by the Autumn.

All 16 year olds offered a place under the January Guarantee will be entitled to a further offer to continue learning in September, and the aim should be that all 16 and 17 year olds taking up an offer under the January Guarantee are supported/enabled to progress to further learning, or to work, as soon as possible and certainly by the Autumn. You should be working with Connexions services to help young people find a suitable follow-on opportunity before they leave E2E and/or develop job-search skills for those planning to go into the labour market.



3. The Youth Community Action Initiative

Summary points: as an E2E provider, we are looking to you to:

- encourage more of your learners to contribute some time for the benefit of others within their learning community, a particular grouping (social, cultural, geographic, age-related etc) or more widely
- work with local groups/organisations (public, private, third sector or informal community groups) to develop relevant opportunities that appeal to your learners and help them to look outwards
- make the most of what you're already doing – many of you are already delivering relevant provision but may not have realised it
- contact your local vteam for support in developing opportunities (see below) and/or sign up for the LSIS/v workshops in March/April.

We want more 14 to 19-year-olds to contribute to their community...

This initiative, announced by the Prime Minister in April 2009, aims for all young people over time to contribute 50 hours to the community by age 19. E2E/ Foundation Learning is a key area of investment, with a target of 20,000 young people participating this academic year and another 20,000 in 2010/11. Other strands of the initiative include piloting opportunities for all 14 to 16-year-olds in five local authority areas and expanding local support teams in every area. Although lots of E2E delivery is already underway, the overall initiative is likely to be launched formally soon, when the new name will be confirmed. We're also looking at developing links to other elements of the 14-19 reforms.

...realising benefits for learners, providers and more widely

Learners are benefiting from opportunities to gain confidence, skills and experience; many providers are finding this an impetus for innovative provision especially in the current economic climate; and there are wider direct benefits for host organisations and the community. See the draft key messages in the Annex on page 12, which should help you communicate these benefits.

Many of you are working with a wide range of partner organisations and groups to integrate Youth Community Action opportunities into their learning offer. And you receive a £100 payment for each E2E learner who contributes 16+ hours of their time – whether over a couple of days or several weeks.

The scope of provision that 'counts' is broader than you might think...

Three-quarters of all E2E providers are involved or keen to be involved in delivering Youth Community Action opportunities. But some of you are finding it harder than expected to deliver. As this initiative will run until at least March 2011, it's worth investing some time and energy to develop.

There is a very wide range of relevant activities (see box below) – learners certainly don't have to be in voluntary/third sector settings and many opportunities are being delivered internally, with schools, youth clubs, early years, sports and leisure services, conservation projects etc.

Did you know...? Have you thought about...?

- learners developing their own project? e.g. some Salford learners organised a concert with a residential centre for older people, others arranged day trips for a local youth club. vcashpoint awards or 'grass roots' grants² might help support a project.
- discussing with learners what they'd like to focus on? For example, music could lead to DJ-ing for hospital radio; sport might point to helping out at local sports clubs. Fund-raising can be given an extra dimension by, for example, linking up with a local personality or community centre, or by giving a local flavour to participation in a national campaign.
- identifying existing/potential youth community action within your own organisation? For example, representing learners' views in student councils or other fora; or in larger organisations, supporting activities in your creche or community learning centre.
- making links with other local initiatives that involve volunteering? For example, as part of local authorities' "youth offer" to promote young people's access to positive activities;³ the Future Jobs Fund; or the Flexible New Deal Community Task Force.
- finding ways for learners to get involved in promoting community action to others? For example, a group in Brent helped their local volunteers forum prepare for a 'Funders Fair'.
- seeking support from a scheme to promote volunteering for people with disabilities⁴ – currently operating in London, West Midlands and the North West.

And bear in mind that QCF qualifications can be used to recognise learning achievements from youth community action – whether specific to volunteering or reflecting wider vocational, personal and social outcomes. Browse the Foundation Learning catalogue at www.qcda.gov.uk/26859.aspx.

² <http://vinspired.com/rewards/vcashpoint>; www.communityfoundation.org.uk/funds/grassrootsgrants

³ www.plings.net or see your local council's website for positive activities for young people, children's information services or the Family's Information Directory.

⁴ www.accessstovolunteering.org

...and there is support to help you develop more opportunities

Please do make good use of:

- **v** the National Agency for Youth Volunteering: **v** services include 107 local teams that can help identify opportunities. To contact your local team, see <http://vinspired.com/about-us/find-vinvolved>
- regional events in March/April, organised by LSIS together with **v**, specifically to support E2E providers on youth community action and the wider transition into Foundation Learning. For further details, see attached flyer or www.excellencegateway.org.uk/foundationlearning

Finally, safeguarding should be a key concern but not a barrier

You will find useful information, including on health and safety and child protection issues, in the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) guidance on work-related learning: see www.teachernet.gov.uk/news/?id=2002 – an updated version will be published in March. On CRB checks, this outlines they are mainly required for adults with “unsupervised access” to your learners. The same applies to learners whose work or community action experience may involve spending time with children or vulnerable adults – unless there may be “unsupervised access”, CRB checks for them may not be required. Please refer to the guidance for more detail.

4. The Transition from E2E to Foundation Learning

Summary points: as an E2E provider, we are expecting you to:

- be piloting Foundation Learning, including QCF qualifications, in some of your provision this year ahead of scaling up; from September 2010, all programmes at this level will be funded/delivered as Foundation Learning (except related provision for Foundation Diplomas which offer starting points or progression opportunities for learners at this level)
- develop increasingly collaborative approaches including linking up with your Local Authority 14-19 team, the 14-19 Partnership and consortia, schools and providers of local Level 2 learning opportunities
- make full use of the resources and support offered by LSIS on planning and implementing Foundation Learning – see below for an overview.

The move to Foundation Learning stands to benefit everyone...

Evidence from pilot and early delivery of Foundation Learning points to some real benefits for everyone:

- **learners** are gaining from flexible and inclusive opportunities for recognition, the emphasis on progression and the development of a local 14-19 offer to smooth out transitions
- **practitioners and providers** are welcoming the increased focus on this cohort of learners as an integral part of the 14-19 reforms and the opportunity to ensure learners progress
- **employers and further learning providers** will gain from the coherent framework for accreditation and a wider pool of more confident young people better prepared for life, learning and work.

...especially through the focus on recognition and progression

Crucial to all this is how Foundation Learning fits with the wider 14-19 agenda. Wherever possible, learners are supported and encouraged to progress on to one of the other 14-19 pathways: Diplomas, Apprenticeships or GCSEs. And common to all four pathways is the emphasis on a broad, personalised curriculum, including functional skills and wider personal and social development. For Foundation Learning, the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) – which now includes over 700 qualifications at Entry level and Level 1 – is lowering the ‘hurdle’ into accredited learning and offering flexible and inclusive ways to capture each learner’s achievements.

Local collaboration in planning and delivery is vital

The Foundation Learning offer is developing in each local area, as an integral part of the 14-19 reforms. Local authorities, who are taking on commissioning of all 16-19⁵ provision, are leading this process, together with the 14-19 partnerships,

⁵ Up to 25 for learners with an assessed learning difficulty and/or disability.

and involving schools in every area in 2010/11. We expect the 14-19 offer to be developed/delivered on an increasingly collaborative basis, including through the consortia previously focused only on Diplomas. This should help ensure genuine progression routes across 14 to 19.

Some funding/qualifications developments are particularly key for you

- the QCF now includes over 700 flexible, inclusive qualifications for Foundation Learning, allowing learners to work through units – at different levels where appropriate – to achieve full qualifications, and even add units to ‘grow’ a small qualification into a larger one. Go to www.qcda.gov.uk/26859.aspx to browse the qualifications available. For some learners, an early focus on personal and social development or community action activities may be the most effective starting point – and there are small qualifications that can capture these sorts of softer outcomes. Other provision is in development and QCDA is working to bring non-accredited awards into the QCF
- the move to ‘learner responsive’ funding means for the first time that all full-time 16-18 learners, including those in work-based learning, trigger additional ‘entitlement funding’
- the LSC/YPLA has increased the budget for Foundation Learning in 2010/11 by £12 million to allow providers to extend their guided learning hours in line with the Foundation Learning model; they have also increased the ALS budget by over 8 per cent for next year
- arrangements to ease the transition to ‘learner responsive’ funding in 2010/11 whereby providers will be able to base up to 10% of their Foundation Learning allocations on a weekly rate – for example, for the early phase of programmes for the most disengaged young people. Details will be set out in the forthcoming YPLA funding guidance for 2010/11
- that guidance will also explain funding for Functional Skills qualifications – to be offered at an ‘unlisted’ rate, giving more flexibility (within your overall allocations) for teaching and learning time to be personalised to learners’ individual needs.

Please make the most of the LSIS support programme...

Flexible support is available for post-16 managers and practitioners to help you to prepare for Foundation Learning delivery, including a bespoke consultancy service. For more details on how to access this support – plus a comprehensive overview of all relevant materials from LSIS and others – see page 11 or go to www.excellencegateway.org.uk/foundationlearning

...and note that Foundation Learning is relevant for adult learners too

Foundation Learning is a curriculum model for adult learners too, supported by learner/employer responsive funding as well as Skills for Life and Developmental Learning budgets. This means there is continuity for learners whose programmes don’t finish by 19 (25). The principles are the same except that adults will not necessarily need the breadth (all three components) entailed in the 14-19 approach. The LSC/Skills Funding Agency will publish details shortly.

5. Support for E2E Providers – An Overview

All relevant resources, information and contact details are available via www.excellencegateway.org.uk/foundationlearning

The LSIS workforce support programme for Foundation Learning provides information, resources, case studies and support for local authorities, schools and post-16 providers. The website provides a comprehensive overview of all relevant materials, by LSIS and others, and is being redeveloped to help you quickly identify what's most relevant – whatever stage you're at in developing and delivering Foundation Learning.

Flexible support is available for managers and practitioners to help you to prepare for Foundation Learning delivery, including organisational health-checks, action planning visits, and bespoke training.

There are also opportunities to work with peers and share emerging practice through our regional networks and Foundation Learning champions' training programme.

Some new resources will be published in February/March including on the LSIS website:

- QCDA curriculum guidance, with a range of case studies to follow
- a communications tool-kit to help you integrate key messages about Foundation Learning into your information for and communications with learners.

And looking further ahead, there will also be guidance later in the year on effective re-engagement provision within Foundation Learning and good practice in progression to Apprenticeships.

And don't forget these new events specifically designed for you

Regional LSIS/v workshops are being developed specifically for E2E providers to support your delivery within the Youth Community Action initiative and the wider transition to Foundation Learning.

Dates already on offer are below; for more information see the attached flyer or go to www.excellencegateway.org.uk/foundationlearning

- 23 March, Birmingham
- 29 March, Leeds
- 31 March, Manchester
- 8 April, London.

Annex. Draft Key Messages On Youth Community Action

Key messages for young people

- By getting involved in Youth Community Action, you can improve your life skills and gain valuable experience for your CV
- By taking part in Youth Community Action, you can have a good time and meet new people; you may be able to take part with your friends
- Lots of young people give time in their school, college or community – about half of young people already do some kind of community action
- You can make a real difference by taking part in Youth Community Action
- There is a recognition⁶ scheme for Youth Community Action – so you get credit for the time you give.

Key messages for parents and carers

- By getting involved in Youth Community Action, young people can get valuable experience for their CV
- By taking part in Youth Community Action, young people can develop life skills
- Research shows that young people who take part in community activities gain confidence and self-esteem
- Giving time in their school or community is part of growing up – about half of young people already do some kind of community action
- Youth Community Action can help young people do better at school, it's an important chance for them to gain skills and experience that will help them in the world of work and more widely
- You can be proud of young people for making a difference in the community
- There is a recognition initiative for Youth Community Action – so young people get credit for their contribution
- Schools, colleges, providers of opportunities, v The National Young Volunteers Service and the government will make sure that young people are safe while doing Youth Community Action.

⁶ Using v's award scheme and/or through the range of relevant QCF qualifications available.

Key messages for potential host/partner organisations [i.e. the types of groups/organisations you might work with to identify/develop options]:

- Youth Community Action will allow you to make a difference to young people by providing them with stimulating opportunities.
- Young people can make energetic and useful volunteers, who can help your organisation meet its objectives.
- Youth Community Action is an opportunity for you to support your delivery of services, build a volunteer base among young people and embed the habit of volunteering early.
- Youth Community Action will enable you to develop your links with schools, colleges, parents, employers and v.
- Youth Community Action will give you the chance to influence the Youth Community action agenda.





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