

CONTENTS

RPG Chair Update

Priorities for Next Period

RPG Activities

HR
LLDD
Funding and Commissioning

Partner Updates

ALPSE
AOSEC
NAS
Third Sector

Other Items

South East Regional 16-18
Year old Apprenticeship
Profile
January Guarantee
Investing in Potential
Raising Participation Age –
supporting local areas to
deliver

January 2009

REGIONAL PLANNING GROUP CHAIR UPDATE

The RPG met on the 13 January despite the best efforts of the weather. I am very grateful to all those able to attend whether in person or via the phone link. Our main discussions concerned the publication of the LSC's National Statement of Priorities and the draft of the South East's Regional Commissioning Statement. This is bringing out the considerable size of the funding transfer to Local Authorities and the impact upon learners.

Headlines from the National Statement of Priorities include:

- Total investment of over £8.5 billion for learning participation and support for young people, an increase of 5.9% over 2009-10
- Funding for participation increasing by 6.2% to over £7.5 billion, supporting over 1.6 million learners
- An increase of over 12% in Apprenticeship funding, for 21,000 extra learners
- Specialist provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities increasing by 12.7% to £267 million
- Capital funding increasing by over 26% to £270 million

On allocations we are expecting notification of the sustainable baseline allocations before the end of January. After this, discussions will be on the distribution of any remaining funding available for growth – in particular to target NEET and September Guarantee. The RPG will have an important role in these discussions.

The group also discussed LLDD provision, in particular looking at those young people accessing provision outside of their home area and the LLDD sub group were tasked with looking at this issue in more detail.

Many staff in the region are signed up to attend the REAct training. If there is anything you can do to encourage attendance at the event for Elected Members that would be welcome (see the REAct website for more dates and venues).

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to Cliff and Rosalind Turner for covering the chairing of the RPG at recent meetings. The South East DCSs are all committed to ensuring that the transition is a success, and we have made considerable progress. There is however still much work to do and as at the time of the meeting, only **78** days to go until the transfer happens.

PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT PERIOD (TO MARCH 2010)

- Regional Commissioning Statements published
- Invitations to tender (ITT) issued for youth provision
- NAS to provide National Apprenticeship Delivery Statement to shadow Regional Planning Groups, to summarise the Apprenticeship starts that will be procured by the Skills Funding Agency to deliver the Apprenticeship ambition set out in the Regional Commissioning Statement
- Final negotiated allocations to providers: 16–18 Learner Responsive (School Sixth Form and FE Youth)
- Final negotiated Maximum Contract Values: 16–18 Apprenticeships
- FE College Notices to Improve triggered

NEXT RPG MEETING

- 10 February 2010, Centrepont, London

PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL STATEMENT OF PRIORITIES

DCSF and the LSC have published the 16-19 Statement of Priorities 2010-11 which gives details of the planned investment in young people's learning. This is an important document as it marks the transfer of responsibility for planning and funding of young people's learning from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to Local Authorities from April 2010.

The Statement of Priorities sets out key issues to be taken into account by those planning and commissioning education and training for 16-19 year olds, and those aged 19-25 subject to a learning difficulty assessment, in the 2010/11 academic year. The Statement of Priorities is also intended as a source of information for education and training providers of all types. It also sets out the funding being made available in the financial year 2010-11 and the learner numbers for academic year 2010 / 11.

<http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/nat-statementofpriorities-jan10.pdf>

RPG ACTIVITIES

HR

The HR Subgroup met in December and will meet again in January and March. Key issues discussed have been shadowing, the trial period, travel/parking, pensions, and induction. Individual meetings have been held with most of the local authorities and these will continue through January. Most authorities have now met with the individuals who are transferring to them and provided them with an induction programme; measures letters have been issued. [DCSF have issued information to DCSs outlining the 2010-11 staffing budget allocation for each LA.](#)

The latest FAQs on staff transfer are available from DCSF here: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/index.cfm?go=site.home&sid=57&pid=505&lid=651&l4id=302&ptype=Single&ctype=FAQ>

LLDD

The work stream met on 9th December 2009 - it is now chaired by David Sword, West Sussex County Council. Membership consists of individuals nominated by Directors of Children's Services to represent their local authority. There was the opportunity to review and discuss the opportunities and implications of local authority duties and powers arising from the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act and the statutory guidance, 'Assessments relating to people with learning difficulties, Guidance to Local Authorities'. The Guidance was published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families in November 2009 (www.dcsf.gov.uk). Its aim is to support local authorities in commissioning assessments relating to learning difficulties to ensure the assessment of an individual's educational and training needs and the provision required to meet them is evidence based and consistently applied.

The Department proposes that the 139(A) or learning difficulty assessment is the determining factor for whether a learner with LDD at 19 through to 25 and wishing to continue in education and training, remains the responsibility of the local authority rather than transferring to be the responsibility of a learning provider and through this the Skills Funding Agency. It recommends local authorities determine how they will identify those learners who will benefit from continuing LA support in anticipation of this change and suggest that there may need to be a review of learners aged 19-25 with learning difficulties and/or disabilities leading to a s139(A) assessment where it is established that a learner will benefit from LA support.

The guidance is clear that it is for a local authority to decide how to organise the provision of assessments in their area. The work stream was keen to act regionally and build on work already underway in a number of authorities and across sub regional groups and agree a common assessment for the region.

The priority for all local authorities and their Connexions Service now is to:

- 1) Identify the volume of learners requiring placements at independent specialist colleges (ISPs) and to notify the LSC via Joanne Cooke (joanne.cooke@lsc.gov.uk). A return was requested by 8th January 2010. This will help the regional planning group in modelling the demand against the available budget.
- 2) Submit requests for funding at ISPs to the LSC LLDD team in time for decisions to be made by 31st March 2010.

Support for the 16-25 transfer of responsibility continues - there will be a follow on workshop organised by the Transition Support Team on 23rd February 10-1pm, venue to be confirmed. Contact - Chantal.Homan@scpct.nhs.uk

Funding and Commissioning

The Sub-Group on Funding and Commissioning has worked with the LSC to develop the proposed South East Regional priorities, which were taken to the Regional Planning Group on 13/1/10 for agreement and then publication on the LSC website. These priorities have been informed by local 16-19 Commissioning Priorities for each Sub-Regional Group and Local Authorities' 14-19 Plans.

The Sub-Group will be working with the Regional Planning Group to develop the SE response to the draft National Commissioning Framework for 2011 onwards and to inform work preparing for 2010-11.

For further information, please contact Frank Offer, Chair of Funding and Commissioning Sub-Group, frank.offer@surreycc.gov.uk

PARTNER UPDATES

Association of Learning Providers South East

Background to Association of Learning Providers for the South East (ALPSE)

The aim of ALPSE is to encourage all Work Based Learning (WBL) providers in South East England to come together as a strong and credible voice in order to champion work based learning and to consult and negotiate with all relevant policy making organisations to influence regional strategy.

ALPSE provides a central communication mechanism to enable efficient two-way communication between contracted providers, the Learning and Skills Council, NAS and other interested parties. The central hub encourages members to share resources and, where appropriate, support initiatives through collaborative working.

ALPSE comprises five members; each of these is the Chair of one of the five South East work based learning networks (Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, Kent, Surrey, Sussex and Thames Valley Region). Membership is open to recognised local learning provider networks in the South East. ALPSE currently has a thriving network representing the vast majority of the 150 South East Learning Providers. Providers have varying contracts within and beyond the Government 14-19 funded learning agenda including: Apprenticeships, Entry to Employment (e2e), EOTAS, Train to Gain and European Social Fund supporting many thousands of people to achieve through access to and support in upgrading skills pertinent to the workplace.

ALPSE provides an easy and efficient way for external partners to communicate and work with the various work based learning providers across the region. To find out more about the network or to make contact please go to the ALPSE website at: <http://www.alpse.co.uk/> or contact the network managers at info@aspirelearning.co.uk.

Association of South East Colleges

AOSEC is drafting a response to the National Commissioning Framework consultation on behalf of the SE colleges, although individual colleges will also respond. Questions still remain over the architecture and the application and interpretation of the principles locally but the underlying focus on the learner, addressing their various needs and choice, a national funding rate and funding following the learner are endorsed.

It is felt that the key to the new arrangements benefiting all 14-19 learners in a given area is the quality of the strategic relationships fully utilising the experience of the providers working closely with the local authority. Our emphasis in the next few months will be to support the ongoing development of those partnerships.

Unfortunately, the SE colleges' event planned for 12 January was cancelled due to the weather. It was intended to brief the college principals and senior college staff on the YPLA structure, the proposals for commissioning and to look at good practice working with local authorities. A new date in the next few weeks is currently being arranged. We would welcome the DCSs or the 14-19 local authority leads being at the meeting to join in the discussion and once the new date is confirmed invitations will be circulated.

AOSEC has recently met with the SE group of independent specialist colleges in order to update them on the work of the RPG. After some debate it was felt that the specialist colleges would benefit from their own representation at the RPG. AOSEC will be putting this suggestion forward.

National Apprenticeship Service

The South East National Apprenticeship Service team have been working hard with Local Authority colleagues to ensure there is a signed Memorandum of Understanding with each LA, there are still a couple to be signed & returned, however NAS would like to thank all that have been involved for their hard work thus far and look forward to progressing the work outlined in the documents. NAS have, alongside LSC colleagues, been involved in the briefing events for Providers through December and there has been a growing interest in the Apprenticeship agenda and particularly how it fits into the commissioning cycle. Key activity that NAS is working on at the moment includes: growing apprenticeships in the public sector (including engagement with schools as employers); contacting young people in jobs without training to see if they are interested in taking up an Apprenticeship; and working with EBPs so when we contact employers we are able to offer a wide range of ways of working with young people. If you have queries about any of these or anything else to do with the Apprenticeship programme please contact David Wales at David.Wales@apprenticeships.gov.uk

Third Sector

INVOLVE South East is an exciting new partnership initiative supported by Learning Curve and involving third sector organisations across the region. The Partners in this project include: Community Action Hampshire, Surrey Community Action, The Brighton and Hove Working Together Project, Slough CVS, OCVA (Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action), RAISE (Regional Action and Involvement South East), Milton Keynes CVS, VAWK (Voluntary Action Wider Kent), The Sussex VCS Learning Consortium. Additional members of the Involve South East Advisory Group include NIACE, LSC, GOSE and Job Centre Plus.

The inaugural meeting of the INVOLVE South East Advisory Group was held in December, chaired by Sue Dovey, Chief Executive of Community Action Hampshire. One of the first tasks for partners is to gather information on what is already happening at both regional and sub regional level in order to provide a clearer picture and to help organisations work together more easily.

A series of themed regional and sub regional events are planned up to the end of 2010. The three themes are: young people, skills, and employment. The first newsletter will be going out to members shortly.

In addition, INVOLVE South East is working with the Third Sector European Network to put on a conference in March around the European theme for 2010 'combating poverty and exclusion', the conference will be concentrating on how learning in the third sector can help people towards inclusion and employment – more information about this conference will be available shortly.

For any further information please contact the project co-ordinator, Marisa McClelland marisa@learningcurve.org.uk

REAct

Training and Development Programme – book now!

We have had over 1000 bookings for the React Training and Development Programme as at 31st Dec 2009. This is great progress but we are concerned that a third of Councils have still to take up their places for training on:

- Finance and Commissioning
- Data and Information Management
- Performance Management
- Vulnerable Young People

Part of the readiness checks that DCSF will be carrying out on local authorities will be an assessment around staff training so it is essential that Directors of Children's Service are proactive in nominating staff for the events which start on January 12th!

Ideally the representatives for each event would be a mix of senior local authority colleagues and LSC transferees, but either way, attendees at the courses will be key in ensuring that content from the courses, including the materials, are fed back to colleagues and partners.

We also need bookings for the councillor briefing sessions which are taking place in each region. These are open to any councillors with an interest in children and young people or economic regeneration. As with the training events they are free. Four councillor places are available to each council. Please encourage lead members and other councillors with relevant interests to attend. All details are available on our website:

<http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pagelId=5756149>

For further information on training sessions, contact jo.baty@lga.gov.uk or john.hannah@lga.gov.uk

For further information on councillor briefing sessions contact isabel.fowler@idea.gov.uk or alison.miller@lga.gov.uk

High-Level Guide

The December edition of the High-Level Guide is available on the React website:

<http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pagelId=4920946>. This version will be updated very shortly, with a final update in February. The High-Level Guide will be finalised and published in print form in March for the year April 2010 to March 2011. So if you have any comments on drafts, or ideas for improvement, now is the time to send them to James Huke at james.huke@lga.gov.uk with HLG in the subject line.

Other React News included in the 8th January Bulletin includes staff transfer news, 16-19 funding for 2009/10 and 2010/11.

The React bulletin is available on our website www.lga.gov.uk/react

OTHER ITEMS

South East Regional 16-18 Year old Apprenticeship Profile

The 'South East -16-18 year old Apprenticeship Profile' has been published by the SE LSC to support the Local Authority 16-18 Apprenticeship profiles. The report provides an overview of recent policy drivers and examines apprenticeship provision for 16-18 year olds in the region. Topics include participation levels, learner characteristics, employment and sectoral analysis, examination of the main providers, success rates and contextual information, including identifying sectors most likely to offer apprenticeship expansion opportunities. If you would like a copy, please email: david.gardenerhaig@lsc.gov.uk

January Guarantee

On 18 November 2009, the Prime Minister announced plans to build on the September Guarantee approach by guaranteeing the offer of a place on an Entry to Employment (E2E) programme to all 16- and 17-year-olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) in January 2010. The Guarantee aims to help young people to re-engage quickly in positive and productive learning, and reduce the risk of long-term disengagement.

The January Guarantee is backed by £40m of additional investment from the DCSF, including £26.5 million for an additional 10,000 E2E places, £7.2 million for Education Maintenance Allowance and Care to Learn, and £6 million for local authorities to ensure that Connexions has the capacity to undertake the additional activity. For more information see:

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/publications/documents/laejanuaryguarantee/>

Investing in Potential

The joint DCSF/DWP/BIS 'Investing in Potential' strategy sets out the Government's NEET strategy for 16-24 year olds. The 16-18 component is in part an update of the previous DCSF NEET strategy and will be largely familiar, but it does include new components such as the January Guarantee. Its joint nature brings out the range of actions for SFA/NAS, LAs JC+, Connexions etc. It also recognises that preventative action needs to be taken pre-16. Key announcements include:

- An extra £202m in post 16 participation, on top of the funding announced in the 2009 Budget, leading to an additional 142,500 learners having the opportunity to learn as part of the September Guarantee
- An extra 80,000 learners able to claim Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) from 2010-11
- Providing an extended January Guarantee in 2010 so that every 16-17 year old who is not in education, employment or training will receive an offer of a place with an E2E provider and EMA to go with this.
- Provide employer subsidies to support more 16 and 17 year olds to take up an Apprenticeship place.
- Bringing forward the Young Person's Guarantee so that all 18-24 year olds still unemployed after six months will be guaranteed access to a job, training or work experience.

See link for publication:

<http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-01145-2009>

Raising Participation Age – supporting local areas to deliver

The Raising of the Participation Age (RPA) means that all young people will continue in education or training to 17 from 2013 and to 18 from 2015. This will be the first time in nearly forty years that the education leaving age has been raised. This summary document brings together key commitments from recent Departmental reports and strategies, and signals the next steps required in preparing for successful delivery of full participation. See link for publication:

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/news-and-communications/news/151209nirpa/>

For further information please contact David Gardener-Haig on 01273 783655 Email: david.gardenerhaig@lsc.gov.uk

if you would no longer like to receive this email, please email david.gardenerhaig@lsc.gov.uk