

Preparing to implement Foundation Learning

A resource for
14–19 managers

Foundation Learning Support

LSIS LEARNING
AND SKILLS
IMPROVEMENT
SERVICE



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A resource for
14–19 managers

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Contents

Introduction	1
1 Scoping and planning delivery of Foundation Learning	6
2 Leading strategic partnerships for Foundation Learning	11
3 Communicating information on Foundation Learning	15
4 Facilitating the delivery of Foundation Learning	19
5 Supporting progression across the 14–19 phase	24
6 Monitoring and evaluating the implementation of Foundation Learning programmes	28

Introduction

Who will be interested in this resource?

This resource will be of interest to managers who are supporting the implementation of Foundation Learning across the 14–19 phase. This includes 14–19 consortia, partnerships and local authority managers. It may also interest senior leaders in schools, alongside the separate school-focused *Getting Started with Foundation Learning* (LSIS, 2009) publication.

This resource will help managers to:

- identify current strengths in their Foundation Learning provision
- identify where there is room for development
- suggest actions in these areas.

It will also support local authorities, 14–19 partnerships and consortia to work through the Gateway 4 process.¹ It should be read alongside *Foundation Learning Tier: 14–19 delivery guidance for 2009/10* (LSC/QCDA, August 2009). Managers involved in planning, commissioning and reviewing learning programmes will find this resource useful.

Learning at entry level and level 1 is currently delivered through a range of programmes, including:

- GCSEs (lower grades D–G)
- Key Stage 4 engagement programmes
- Entry to Employment (E2E)
- level 1 programmes in further education
- alternative provision
- programmes for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD).

These will fall within the Foundation Learning route, one of four routes through the 14–19 phase, including Apprenticeships, Diplomas and GCSE/A levels.

Learning at entry level and level 1 takes place in a range of settings that fall under local authority influence:

- mainstream schools
- further education² (FE) colleges, work-based learning providers and voluntary sector providers
- special schools
- pupil support units
- youth offending institutions.

Foundation Learning will bring greater coherence and clear progression routes through entry level and level 1 learning. It will also enable what we now know as ‘pre-entry’ learning to be accredited within a nationally recognised framework of qualifications.

1
Further guidance can be found at www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/index.cfm?go=site.home&sid=57&pid=498&lid=672&l4id=325&ptype=single&ctype=text

2
References to further education colleges within this resource should be considered to include sixth-form colleges.

What is Foundation Learning?

3

Foundation Learning Tier: 14–19 delivery guidance for 2009/10, Learning and Skills Council (LSC)/Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA), August 2009

4

Foundation Learning qualifications catalogue, QCDA, 2009, www.qcda.gov.uk/20389.aspx

5

Foundation Learning Tier: interim guidance, draft working version for 2009/10, LSC/Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), May 2009

Foundation Learning is one of the four national suites of provision within the government's qualifications strategy for learners aged 14–19 who are working predominantly at entry level or level 1. Foundation Learning programmes are designed to support progression to one of the three other national suites of provision: Apprenticeships, Diplomas or GCSE/A levels. For some learners, however, other destinations may be more appropriate, including employment with training, supported employment or independent living.³

Foundation Learning is a major part of the government's wider 14–19 reform programme to ensure that every learner has a high-quality learning route that enables them to participate, achieve and progress. It is also part of the reform to vocational qualifications, which aims to make it easier to understand and compare vocational qualifications and to make sure that the learners develop the skills employers need. Vocational qualifications will increasingly be accredited within the new Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). Foundation Learning programmes support individual progression through the achievement of an appropriate combination of qualifications from entry and level 1 of the QCF. Qualifications from the QCF that are confirmed as eligible and appropriate for inclusion within Foundation Learning programmes are identified in the *Foundation Learning qualifications catalogue*.⁴

Foundation Learning is important in ensuring there is an appropriate range of provision and support for learners who are predominantly working at entry level and level 1. It will build on some of the best practice that has been developed in each area. Foundation Learning will enable some of the most vulnerable students to access an exciting and engaging curriculum and will support authorities in their work to close the gap between the attainment of children from disadvantaged groups and support preparations for raising the participation age.

The overarching aims of Foundation Learning⁵ are to:

- support improved engagement, participation and achievement and progression through entry level and level 1 towards level 2
- bring coherence to programmes of study at entry level and level 1 and support progression to clearly defined destinations
- provide a sound foundation for employment and progression
- ensure that learners gain a minimum level and range of skills
- support the delivery of quality learning programmes that are personalised and appropriate to the learner's needs.

6
 Your child, your schools, our future: building a 21st century schools system, summary, DCSF, 2009, para 6

7
www.qcda.gov.uk/20389.aspx

8
 Foundation Learning Tier: 14–19 delivery guidance for 2009/10, LSC/QCDA, August 2009

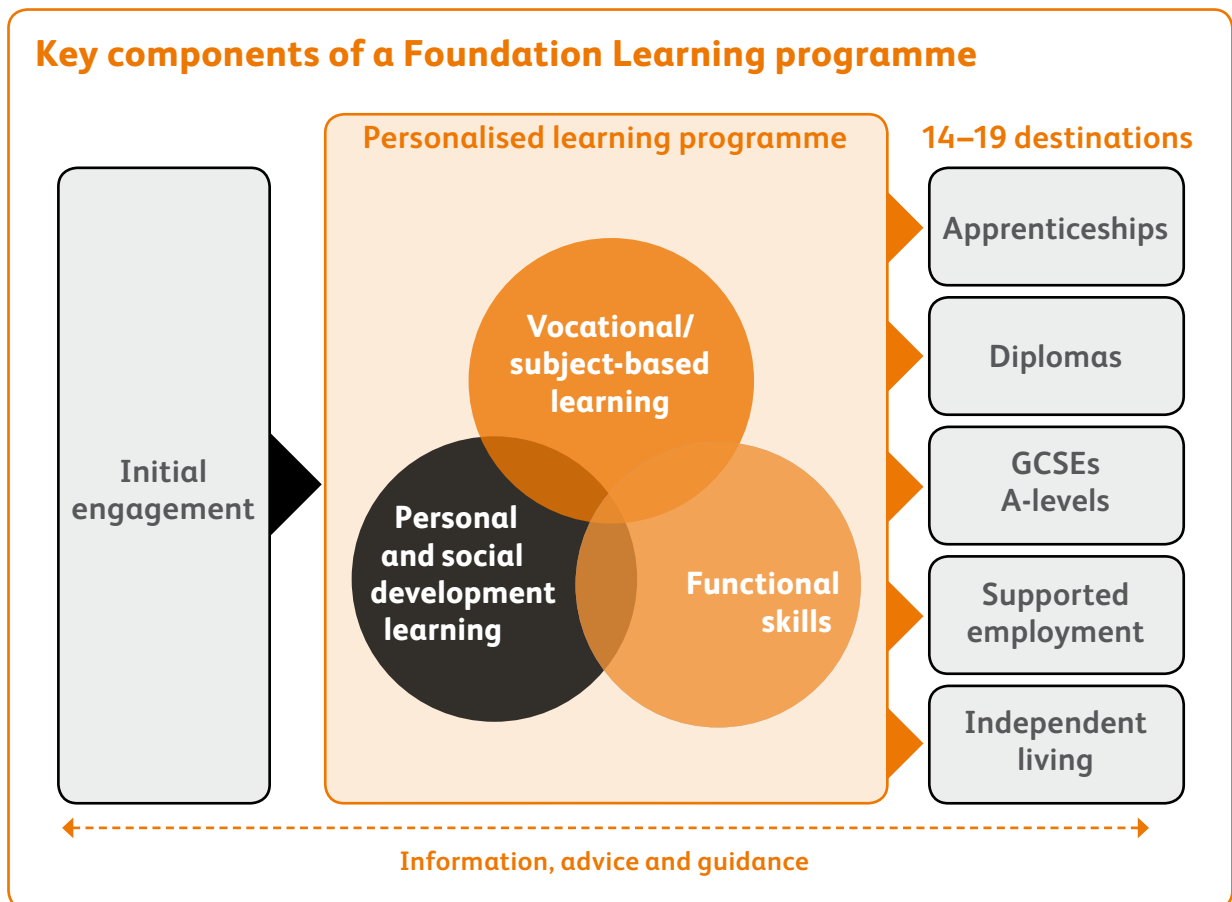
Programmes will support the implementation of the Pupil Guarantee⁶ to personalised learning and support for every young person. They will support individual progression through the achievement of an appropriate combination of functional skills and QCF qualifications. QCF qualifications approved for use with learners at Key Stage 4 and post-16 are identified in the *Foundation Learning qualifications catalogue*.⁷

Foundation Learning programmes encompass three distinct components:

- vocational/subject knowledge, skills and understanding
- personal and social development learning
- functional skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT).

These components are supported by a ‘wrap-around’ of support, information, advice and guidance (IAG), effective initial assessment, comprehensive ongoing review and provider collaboration (see Figure 1). The expectations of this wrap-around are detailed in *Foundation Learning Tier: 14–19 delivery guidance for 2009/10*.⁸

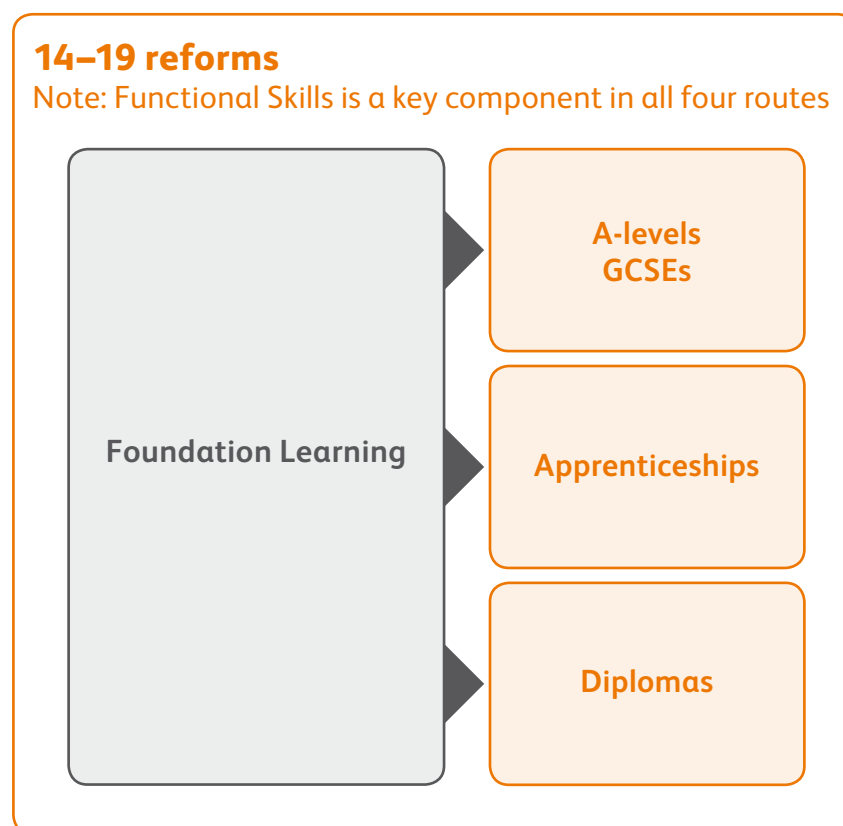
Figure 1. Foundation Learning for young people



The 14–19 entitlement

From 2013, all learners will have access to an entitlement curriculum that will suit their needs and interests and which will provide them with the skills they need for adulthood. Also from 2013, all learners will participate in education until the end of the academic year in which they turn 17. From 2015, that age will rise to 18. Raising the participation age will require local authorities to ensure that a curriculum offer is in place to meet the needs of all learners. Foundation Learning will have an important role to play within the curriculum offer.

Figure 2. How Foundation Learning sits alongside other 14–19 reforms



The government's 14–19 reforms identify Foundation Learning programmes as one of the four entitlement routes through the 14–19 phase (see Figure 2).

Collaborative working is an important part of the entitlement curriculum. Local authorities and the Learning and Skills Council have set up 14–19 partnerships to coordinate the delivery of the full range of curriculum choices, including Apprenticeships and Diplomas, and to provide high-quality IAG to learners. Partnerships and local delivery consortia now need to consider their role in supporting the implementation of Foundation Learning.

How to use this resource

This resource has been designed to support the development of a Foundation Learning implementation plan. It can be used in a variety of ways:

- to undertake a review of existing arrangements for Foundation Learning across a 14–19 partnership
- to develop a vision and strategy for implementing Foundation Learning programmes
- to review existing local authority 14–19 implementation plans and identify areas to strengthen planning at entry level and level 1
- to establish links with local authority systems and processes
- as a framework for describing the role of a Foundation Learning implementation group.

The resource focuses on six areas:

- scoping and planning delivery
- leading strategic partnerships and collaboration
- communicating information
- facilitating delivery
- supporting progression across the 14–19 phase
- monitoring and evaluating the implementation.

You may wish to identify one or two areas to review or you may prefer to review your current arrangements in all six areas. The resource will help you to identify where you have already made progress, priorities for development and specific action points that you will need to take forward. Any actions that you identify should be transferred to your Foundation Learning implementation plan, which preferably links to your local authority 14–19 implementation plan. These actions should then filter through to consortia and institutional plans.

The Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) has developed an online Foundation Learning Readiness Tool to assist local authority managers in considering their current state of readiness to implement Foundation Learning. The tool can be accessed at www.excellencegateway.org.uk/foundationlearning.

1

Scoping and planning delivery of Foundation Learning

What do I need to consider?

All areas will deliver some Foundation Learning for 14–19-year-old learners by 2010. Local authorities and 14–19 partnerships will lead this process, working with consortia where appropriate and bringing in all schools, colleges and other relevant providers in 2011/12 and 2012/13.⁹

9
Foundation Learning Tier: 14–19 delivery guidance for 2009/10, LSC/QCDA, August 2009, p3

10
14–19 partnerships and planning, DCSF, January 2009, p15

Local authority 14–19 managers have a key role in planning with providers to prepare to implement Foundation Learning programmes. Many local authorities have chosen to develop a Foundation Learning implementation plan.

11
14–19 partnerships and planning, DCSF, January 2009, p15

Developing a Foundation Learning implementation plan

An implementation plan should describe the actions you plan to take to build the capability and capacity to offer Foundation Learning programmes as one of the entitlement¹⁰ routes through the 14–19 phase. The plan will assist partners in seeing how early delivery can be scaled to meet the likely demand. The plan should be based on an audit of likely demand and existing provision at entry level and level 1. The first stage of the planning process for many local authorities will be to use the LSIS Foundation Learning Readiness Tool. This will provide a basis for further collaboration and the development of a comprehensive implementation plan. As work progresses, the plan or plans are likely to require revision during the spring and summer terms in 2010.

It may be more appropriate to include your implementation plan as part of your overarching 14–19 plan¹¹ or as an annexe to it. Some authorities have chosen to revise their existing 14–19 plans to ensure that they fully reflect the work that will be required to implement Foundation Learning. Whatever approach is chosen, the plan(s) will provide a basis for tracking progress in implementing Foundation Learning. Actions in the plan(s) should filter through to local consortia and institutional implementation plans.

Your plan is likely to include:

- strategic priorities for Foundation Learning provision
- stakeholder engagement (including employers, Connexions and the third sector)
- planning for IAG to support the implementation of Foundation Learning
- actions to join up the learning and support offer
- a focus on reaching and engaging priority learners
- workforce development
- access to Foundation Learning as part of the 14–19 entitlement
- facilities and resources to support delivery.

Scoping the demand for learning at entry level and level 1

12
The number of learners on existing programmes, across the 14–19 phase, will provide an indication of the likely demand for Foundation Learning and existing supply arrangements. Foundation Learning is likely to extend beyond the current cohorts, due to factors such as the need to reduce NEET rates and the raising of the participation age, and managers may wish to consider this when making projections.

Planning should be based on a clear understanding of the likely demand for programmes at entry level and level 1 across the 14–19 phase. You will need to consider the characteristics of priority groups, working at entry level and level 1, that you want to reach and engage. You may wish to review data¹² and projections on:

- the 14–19 population in your area
- the number of learners not achieving the level 2 threshold (five GCSEs at A*–C grades)
- LDD/special educational needs (SEN) learners (including those aged up to 25 with a section 140, soon to be 139, assessment)
- not in education, employment or training (NEET) rates
- E2E learners
- Key Stage 4 engagement programme participation
- learners on entry level programmes in FE
- learners on level 1 vocational programmes in FE
- learners unsuited to programmes focused solely on GCSEs.

You will need to consider the implications of raising the participation age and involving young people, who would previously have gone into jobs without training, in Foundation Learning programmes. As the raising of the participation age is implemented, the statutory responsibility of local authorities to secure suitable learning provision will be extended to include new age groups.

Scoping current provision at entry level and level 1

Planning should be informed by a review of the supply of entry level and level 1 learning programmes. This should include arrangements with:

- schools, including special schools
- colleges
- work-based learning providers
- alternative settings, including pupil referral/support units.

Existing collaborative arrangements and their suitability for supporting implementation should also be considered. In many areas, FE providers and schools have begun to offer some QCF or functional skills qualifications; this early delivery should be captured within the review. Any gaps in provision should be identified and opportunities to pilot Foundation Learning should be considered.

Piloting Foundation Learning in Key Stage 4 engagement and E2E programmes

Establishing pilot programmes will allow you to begin using QCF qualifications, consider the advantages of different delivery models and allow providers to develop their arrangements to implement the wrap-around of IAG, effective initial assessment, ongoing review and support. Many of these factors will distinguish Foundation Learning from previous programmes.

Key Stage 4 engagement and E2E programmes provide opportunities to develop pilot or transitional programmes. The Key Stage 4 engagement programme is in its last year as a discrete programme and from 2010/11 will be integrated into Foundation Learning. Similarly, E2E will be integrated into Foundation Learning from 2010/11. Many post-16 providers, including E2E providers, are already working towards an aspiration of 30% of their entry level and level 1 learners, who began their learning programme in September 2009, being on Foundation Learning programmes.

Foundation Learning programmes will extend beyond programmes such as E2E and Key Stage 4 engagement that are likely to be the focus for pilot activity and will include:

- entry level and level 1 programmes post-16
- programmes for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including some special school provision
- alternative provision at Key Stage 4.

Pilot programmes can provide an opportunity to explore:

- school and post-16 delivery models
- the use of QCF and functional skills qualifications
- partnership arrangements including collaborative delivery
- local progression routes from Foundation Learning to Apprenticeships, 14–19 Diplomas, GCSEs and employment
- wrap-around support for learners.¹³

PROVIDER EXAMPLE

Warwickshire County Council

Warwickshire County Council is delivering Foundation Learning. It has established a Foundation Learning implementation group. The group includes representatives from schools, pupil referral units and special schools and colleges. The group has raised awareness of Foundation Learning with more than 180 other local stakeholders through a Foundation Learning conference. Eight schools have agreed proposals with the local authority's 14–19 manager to run pilot programmes from September 2009. Many of these pilots involve collaborative working with local colleges.

Actions you should consider taking

- Read *Foundation Learning Tier: 14–19 delivery guidance for 2009/10* (LSC/QCDA, August 2009) and *Foundation Learning Tier: interim guidance* (LSC/QCA, May 2009).
- Collate data on pupils who have not reached the five GCSE A*–C threshold and the numbers undertaking learning at entry level and level 1 in schools and the FE system.
- Collate information on the current offer to learners working at entry level and level 1.
- Identify any schools or providers in your area who are already involved in the piloting of Foundation Learning programmes.
- Establish pilot Foundation Learning programmes in some centres.

Additional sources of information

The following documents are likely to assist you in scoping and planning the delivery:

- *Foundation Learning Tier: 14–19 delivery guidance for 2009/10*, LSC/QCDA, August 2009
- *Effective partnership working within Foundation Learning*, LSIS, 2009,
- *Foundation Learning Tier: interim guidance*, draft working version for 2009/10, LSC/QCA, May 2009
- *14–19 partnerships and planning*, DCSF, January 2009
- *Your child, your schools, our future: building a 21st century schools system*, summary, DCSF, 2009, para 6.

LSIS Foundation Learning Support provides a range of opportunities and resources for local authorities and organisations working across the 14–19 phase. Contact your LSIS regional contact for further information:
www.excellencegateway.org.uk/foundationlearning

2

Leading strategic partnerships for Foundation Learning

What do I need to consider?

14
Foundation Learning
Tier: 14–19 delivery
guidance for
2009/10, LSC/QCDA,
August 2009, p13

Successful partnership working is expected to include joint planning to facilitate recruitment, retention and progression of learners through and beyond the 14–19 phase, sharing expertise, resources, facilities and staff development activities, and developing common processes.¹⁴

Local authorities will fulfil a key role in securing strategic leadership and collaboration on Foundation Learning through the 14–19 Partnership.

Over the next two years they will coordinate arrangements for involving all schools/providers in preparing for collaborative delivery, building on 14–19 consortia arrangements where appropriate. They will work with consortia to ensure coherence and continuity across the 14–19 phase. In addition, local authorities will work with LSIS to make the most of the Foundation Learning Support programme.

Partnerships

Foundation Learning should be aligned with existing strategic partnerships. The implementation plan should identify who will lead the implementation of Foundation Learning within the local authority and identify other related roles and responsibilities. Partnerships will need to address how they will develop:

- a common vision of local needs, shared objectives and how to respond to them, which can be developed in an area
- opportunities to plan programmes that join up and work across the 14–19 phase and across the four entitlement routes
- opportunities to pool resources, effort and managerial time
- opportunities to develop new and innovative provision.

Your implementation plan should be overseen and taken forward by a Foundation Learning implementation group. This group is likely to involve:

- schools – curriculum deputies and Foundation Learning leads
- special schools/LDD provider representatives
- third sector providers
- post-16 providers
- IAG providers/Connexions
- providers of alternative provision and other support agencies
- school improvement partners.

Strategic planning

15
The indicators are reflected through the 14–19 Progress Health Checks, Ofsted inspection, Framework for Excellence, School and College Achievement and Attainment Table points and local area agreements.

Foundation Learning is a key part of the 14–19 reforms. Developing a Foundation Learning implementation plan will contribute to your capacity to:

- work towards the key indicators that measure attainment below level 2 and progression to achievement at level 2¹⁵
- ensure that there is a clear focus on priority groups
- ensure that learning providers and the workforce can support the needs of all young people
- develop a comprehensive 14–19 prospectus.

Your implementation plan should form part of your 14–19 plan. It may be separate or integrated within the Children and Young People’s Plan. The plan will include high-level strategy and priorities for Foundation Learning as part of the:

- 14–19 learning entitlement
- raising of the participation age
- skills and knowledge required by the workforce.

Your plan should help you to make progress towards commissioning services that will provide a coherent learning and support offer. Your plan should explain and reflect:

- likely learner demand patterns
- a schedule for developing sufficient Foundation Learning capacity
- how learners will be equipped to understand and choose appropriate programmes at entry level and level 1 (IAG)
- how you will ensure effective access to Foundation Learning across the area
- how you will involve employers, particularly those currently offering jobs without training
- how you will provide access to facilities for learners

- how you will ensure that learners are given the fullest opportunity to progress to level 2 learning, including Diplomas
- how you will support transport arrangements to facilitate collaboration
- how you will coordinate continuing professional development support and development opportunities for staff that include accessing the LSIS Foundation Learning Support offer.

Consortia arrangements

Foundation Learning, in common with other 14–19 developments, has an expectation that partners will often work within consortia. Strategic partnerships should encourage local consortium to ensure that existing protocols support the implementation of Foundation Learning. Protocols that are reviewed and aligned with the Foundation Learning delivery guidance will support implementation.

Partnership protocols or agreements will vary depending on the size of the consortium, its purpose, and the role of member organisations. Strategic partnerships are likely to require more formal agreements covering areas such as:

- a statement of purpose and supporting documentation
- an overview of the range of collaborative activities
- a description of roles and responsibilities
- how resources will be allocated
- how different operational procedures will be reconciled
- communication protocols
- agreed staff development policies
- formal agreements setting out working arrangements
- how the partnership will be monitored, reviewed and evaluated
- the use and ownership of mutually developed resources.

PROVIDER EXAMPLE

Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council

Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council has established Foundation Learning steering and operational groups as sub-groups to its 14–19 executive. The purpose of the Foundation Learning steering group is to use the QCF and *Foundation Learning: 14–19 delivery guidance for 2009/10* (LSC/QCDA, August 2009) to test and trial the suitability of Foundation Learning programmes.

Knowsley is also collaborating strategically with the five other authorities in the Merseyside sub-region to support the implementation of Foundation Learning and identify opportunities for cross-border collaboration.

Actions you should consider taking

- Invite stakeholders to form a Foundation Learning implementation group.
- Discuss support opportunities with your LSIS regional contact.
- Consider how your 14–19 partnership will oversee the implementation of Foundation Learning.
- Develop a Foundation Learning implementation plan or revise existing 14–19 plans to fully reflect the action required to implement Foundation Learning.

Additional sources of information

The following documents are likely to assist you in leading strategic partnerships:

- *Foundation Learning Tier: 14–19 delivery guidance for 2009/10*, LSC/QCDA, August 2009
- *Diploma Gateway 4: guidance on strategic local planning for the Diploma entitlement*, DCSF, July 2009
- *Effective partnership working within Foundation Learning*, LSIS, 2009
- *Foundation Learning Tier: interim guidance, draft working version for 2009/10*, LSC/QCA, May 2009
- *14–19 partnerships and planning*, DCSF, January 2009.

3

Communicating information on Foundation Learning

What do I need to consider?

16
Action plan for the
14–19 Prospectus
and Common
Application Process,
DCSF, 2009, p4

The 14–19 Prospectus and the Common Application Process (CAP) are critical to bringing the benefits of the 14–19 reforms to young people by providing information to inform and drive choice and enabling a more responsive, customer focused-system.¹⁶

The local 14–19 Prospectus will increasingly play an important role in providing information about Foundation Learning to learners and their parents/carers. As we move towards the 2013 entitlement, local authorities will undertake a vital role in disseminating information to ensure that stakeholders across the local authority recognise their role in the implementation of Foundation Learning and the characteristics of effective delivery.

Developing a ‘case’ for Foundation Learning

The case for Foundation Learning will be based on your analysis of local demand and supply. The extent to which curriculum leaders and teachers buy into Foundation Learning will depend on their understanding of:

- how it allows for progression to Diplomas, Apprenticeships and GCSEs
- how QCF qualifications are being designed in partnership with employers
- how functional skills provide a ladder of accreditation
- the flexibility of QCF qualifications to enable achievement at different levels within a single qualification (‘spiky profiles’)
- the capacity of the QCF to accredit work that would previously have been non-accredited
- how it is underpinned by a wrap-around of IAG, support and personalisation
- how it enables access to a more inclusive qualifications framework, incorporating what would previously have been considered as pre-entry learning.

Disseminating information about Foundation Learning

A Foundation Learning implementation plan should include arrangements for disseminating information about the purpose and construction of Foundation Learning programmes. This will need to be appropriate for learners and their parents/carers as well as school, college and provider staff.

Providers of level 2 learning programmes will also require information on Foundation Learning. They will need to ensure access to their programmes and align their entry criteria with the qualifications used in Foundation Learning. Providers of Foundation Learning post-16 will similarly need to consider their offer to ensure that learners do not unnecessarily repeat learning, and that any existing functional skills and QCF achievements are built on.

Local authority staff will require information on Foundation Learning and its relationship to the wider 14–19 reforms and implications for commissioning arrangements. Information will be required by a variety of teams, such as those involved with:

- commissioning
- 14–19 implementation
- advising on core subjects at Key Stages 3 and 4
- school improvement professionals
- work-related learning and Key Stage 4 engagement
- IAG.

You may wish to encourage existing groups that are linked to your 14–19 planning to include Foundation Learning as a standing or regular agenda item. You may also wish to include information about Foundation Learning within local authority bulletins.

Foundation Learning Support

Your implementation plan should identify opportunities to draw on LSIS Foundation Learning Support. This could include support for local authority planning and those involved in the Foundation Learning Extended Pilot. Many existing networks may require support as they plan routes through entry level and level 1 to level 2 learning. Support is also available for post-16 providers.¹⁷

17
www.excellencegateway.org.uk/foundationlearning

Targeting Foundation Learning information

Local consortia may require briefings and opportunities to understand Foundation Learning. Pre- and post-16 providers are likely to have different support needs. Local authorities will wish to develop the capacity to meet these needs and ensure that pre- and post-16 routes through Foundation Learning programmes are coherent.

PROVIDER EXAMPLE

Devon County Council

Devon County Council has established a standing agenda item at Foundation Learning implementation group meetings which requires pilot centres to give feedback on emerging issues and successes. These key messages are considered at a strategic level within the authority to inform wider 14–19 planning and to prepare for more extensive Foundation Learning roll-out from 2010 onwards. The authority has held a Foundation Learning event for advisers as well as senior leaders and practitioners from schools, colleges and training providers. The event allowed pilot centres to share their experiences of Foundation Learning delivery through workshops and a market place arena. Year 2 of the Devon County Council Foundation Learning pilot has been informed by consultation with learners, teachers and senior leaders.

Actions you should consider taking

- Develop straightforward guidance on Foundation Learning for learners and parents/carers.
- Provide information for schools/providers on how they could get involved in Foundation Learning.
- Ensure that colleagues responsible for developing your 14–19 Prospectus and CAP are involved in the development of Foundation Learning.
- Ensure that providers of IAG have access to appropriate information on Foundation Learning.
- Help schools and centres to identify learner groups that will be prioritised.
- Grow school and provider involvement in Foundation Learning.

Additional sources of information

The following documents are likely to assist you in communicating information:

- *Getting Started: a guide for colleges and providers preparing for implementation of Foundation Learning*, LSIS 2009
- *Foundation Learning Tier: 14–19 delivery guidance for 2009/10*, LSC/QCDA, August 2009
- *Talking Foundation Learning – A5 cardset*, LSIS, 2009
- *Foundation Learning Tier: interim guidance, draft working version for 2009/10*, LSC/QCA, May 2009
- *LSC funding guidance 2009/10*, LSC, July 2009.

4

Facilitating the delivery of Foundation Learning

What do I need to consider?

18
*Foundation Learning
Tier: 14–19 delivery
guidance for
2009/10, LSC/QCDA,
August 2009, p5*

Personalised, destination-led learning programmes are expected to be of appropriate content and flexible duration to support individual progression and raise expectations of achievement.¹⁸

19
*Foundation Learning
Tier: 14–19 delivery
guidance for
2009/10, LSC/QCDA,
August 2009, p11*

Local authorities have an important role in supporting schools and other providers to develop the capability and capacity to deliver personalised learning programmes. This will involve facilitation and brokerage of collaborative development, including sharing of facilities, common timetabling, moves towards pooled funding and the development of common referral processes. They will wish to ensure that any support reflects the LSIS-supported audit work on readiness and the local plans for delivering Foundation Learning across the 14–19 phase.

Identifying the support requirements of centres preparing to implement Foundation Learning

Foundation Learning programmes will be delivered by schools, colleges and other providers working with learners aged 14–19. These programmes will build on existing practice and will also introduce new approaches, including:

- the development of personalised learning programmes
- best practice guidance on the wrap-around of support and IAG¹⁹
- the introduction of QCF qualifications
- the delivery and achievement of functional skills qualifications.

Your implementation plan should consider the support needs of these centres and any barriers to implementation. You may have identified these as part of the Gateway 4 process.

Supporting providers to implement Foundation Learning

20
www.fssupport.org

21
The *Foundation Learning qualifications catalogue* (QCDA, 2009) uses the term 'combined' to refer to qualifications that can be considered to count as both vocational and personal and social development qualifications.

Foundation Learning programmes include functional skills, which will be at a range of levels according to the needs and starting points of the learner. For some SEN/LDD learners, the entry level 1 common units are a substitute for functional skills. To date, much of the work done to support the delivery of functional skills has prioritised level 1 and level 2. Many centres will require support to implement entry level functional skills. National Strategies colleagues will be able to support work with schools in this area. Post-16 providers are able to access support for functional skills through the Functional Skills Support Programme.²⁰

Foundation Learning programmes are accredited through QCF vocational, personal and social development and combined qualifications.²¹ Some learners will also continue to undertake some GCSE qualifications as part of their learning experience. Most centres will require support to develop an understanding of the QCF, how it works and the advantages it offers in meeting learner needs and supporting progression. Many centres will require support to identify appropriate qualifications. There are advantages in local consortia identifying some qualifications that will be offered by all providers. This maximises the flexibilities offered by the QCF and ensures that learners can reuse and build on units achieved if they move between providers. Some centres, especially schools, may also require support to consider how QCF qualifications can sit alongside GCSEs or other qualifications, such as components of the Diploma.

Your implementation plan should consider how you will facilitate training and development opportunities appropriate to different roles within schools/providers. Senior managers, exams officers and teachers/trainers will all require development opportunities. Based on experience from the LSIS support programme, some of the most frequently requested areas for training include:

- functional skills delivery at entry level and level 1
- identifying and using appropriate QCF qualifications
- planning and delivering personalised learning programmes
- reaching and engaging priority learners
- partnership working at entry level and level 1.

Agreeing timelines

Preparing to deliver Foundation Learning programmes involves identifying and even stimulating the likely demand for programmes. The LSIS support available to post-16 providers will help them to identify the implications of raising the participation age and the likely additional demand for learning opportunities from learners currently in jobs without training. Implementing Foundation Learning will involve transforming existing programmes into Foundation Learning and taking action to fill the gap between current supply and anticipated demand.

All local authorities are expected to be delivering some Foundation Learning from 2010/11. Building the capability to offer programmes and the capacity to provide an entitlement, by 2013, at entry level and level 1 may involve a phased approach to implementing Foundation Learning across centres. Your implementation plan may identify delivery targets for Foundation Learning at consortium or centre level. This may include agreeing which schools/colleges will be introducing Foundation Learning programmes and when. The raising of the participation age in 2013²² demands a strategic approach to ensure that the Year 10 cohort in 2011/12 is offered an appropriately engaging Key Stage 4 experience. It will be important to build the interest and motivation of these learners in staying on to the age of 17.

Disseminating existing good practice

Foundation Learning programmes will build on existing good practice at entry level and level 1. You will wish to ensure that programmes with a track record of supporting successful progression to level 2 learning are reviewed to identify effective practice. You will also wish to identify features of effective practice of programmes for learners working at the lowest entry levels. Many special schools have a track record of personalisation and working in partnership that might inform the thinking of other stakeholders.

Your implementation plan should consider how you will:

- identify effective practice
- draw on the experiences of local authorities involved in piloting Foundation Learning during 2008/09
- disseminate effective practice.

22
The participation age will be raised to 17 in 2013 and to 18 in 2015.

PROVIDER EXAMPLE

Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council

Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council is building the capability to deliver Foundation Learning programmes across schools. An original group of four pilot schools have shared their experiences of implementing Foundation Learning programmes through an event for all schools. In the second year of pilot activity, eight schools have implemented Foundation Learning programmes with the remaining schools preparing to deliver from autumn 2010. Schools are working with a wider network of work-based learning providers and the college to access vocational learning opportunities. A workforce support programme has provided opportunities for managers and teaching staff to develop their understanding of functional skills and QCF qualifications and begin to put in place a 'wrap-around' of IAG, support and progress reviews.

PROVIDER EXAMPLE

Devon County Council

Devon County Council set down specific functional skills delivery targets for centres to achieve within year 1 of the Foundation Learning pilot. These include, as a baseline, each learner achieving at least one functional skill at a level that was appropriate for them. This enabled centres to engage early on with functional skills delivery and assessment, particularly at entry level, and to consider the implications this would present for wider cohorts of learners from 2010 onwards.

Actions you should consider taking

- Develop an implementation plan for the delivery of Foundation Learning programmes.
- Identify delivery models for Foundation Learning (pre- and post-16).
- Identify the specific requirements of special schools and alternative providers.
- Identify qualifications that will provide flexibility and progression opportunities across schools/providers.
- Pilot Foundation Learning in Key Stage 4 engagement and E2E programmes (in 2009/10 their final year).
- Encourage schools and providers to develop an organisational implementation plan that outlines how they are going to introduce and develop Foundation Learning personalised learning programmes.
- Identify opportunities to build on existing good practice.

Additional sources of information

The following documents are likely to assist you in facilitating the delivery of Foundation Learning:

- *Foundation Learning Tier: 14–19 delivery guidance for 2009/10*, LSC/QCDA, August 2009
- *LSC funding guidance 2009/10*, version 4.0, LSC, 2009
- *Foundation Learning and the learner journey: a guide for colleges and providers*, LSIS, 2009
- *Features of effective practice in building the Foundation Learning curriculum*, LSIS, 2009
- *Personalising the curriculum for 14–25s with learning difficulties*, QCA, 2007 www.qcda.gov.uk/13985.aspx

5

Supporting progression across the 14–19 phase

What do I need to consider?

23
Foundation
Learning Tier:
14–19 delivery
guidance, LSC/
QCDA, August
2009, p3

Foundation Learning is all about progression, with learners and practitioners jointly agreeing an intended 'destination', wherever possible to level 2 (Diplomas, Apprenticeships, GCSEs) or, for some learners, to independent living or supported employment. With the right level of support all but a very small minority of learners will have the capacity to progress to positive outcomes. Foundation Learning should enable more young people, including many who are vulnerable or at risk of drop-out, to achieve greater economic and social well-being.²³

Supporting progression will involve the development of progression routes through entry level and level 1 learning. This will require developing an appropriate curriculum offer and considering how learning will be planned and tracked.

Identifying progression routes

Foundation Learning will rely on appropriate and timely IAG being given to support learners in making the right choices at 14 and 16. Many learners are likely to access Foundation Learning programmes at the transition from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4 and at the end of Year 11. Some learners will need to enter programmes at non-traditional points in the year. Some pilot schools have offered Foundation Learning as a short-term intervention to support progression on to Diploma learning or to enable reintegration from a pupil support unit to a mainstream school. Your implementation plan should consider the progression routes into and from Foundation Learning programmes.

Some learners will have undertaken Foundation Learning at Key Stage 4 prior to progressing into post-16 learning. For these learners it will be important to maximise opportunities for them to:

- build on QCF units and qualifications previously achieved
- work towards functional skills at the next level
- review and enhance their programme based on their anticipated progression destination.

Some learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities will require opportunities to consolidate their learning in new settings.

Your implementation plan should consider routes through entry level and level 1 learning to:

- Apprenticeships
- Diplomas
- GCSEs
- employment with accredited training (given the raising of the participation age)
- supported employment
- independent living.

Increasingly, Foundation Learning will provide opportunities for learners in jobs without training to access and accredit learning as they work. The raising of the participation age will require such learners to participate in a minimum amount of accredited learning per year.

Developing the curriculum offer to support progression across Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5

A Foundation Learning implementation plan should identify and close gaps in provision while improving the links between pre- and post-16 learning at entry level and level 1. Supporting progression across the 14–19 phase will require a coordinated approach to the development of a curriculum offer.

Some local authorities have brought together senior and middle managers from local schools, colleges and other providers to identify key features of the curriculum offer. Groups may wish to consider:

- the role of the QCF
- the role of functional skills
- the use of entry level 1 common units
- opportunities to use personal and social development qualifications to accredit some personal, social and health education and engagement provision previously considered as ‘non-formal’
- advantages of using common qualifications within a consortium to allow QCF credit to be accumulated and transferred between providers
- thematic approaches to delivering Foundation Learning based on new approaches at Key Stage 3
- the entry requirements for level 2 learning programmes.

The curriculum offer should consider the needs of priority learners and be part of a coherent learning and support offer for young people. The curriculum offer should be included in the 14–19 Prospectus setting out the courses and support available.

Tracking progress

Supporting progression across the 14–19 phase will require tracking of learner needs and achievements. Progress will be tracked in a variety of ways. You will wish to ensure that, where a programme is delivered through collaborative arrangements, tracking systems can be accessed and updated by all staff to ensure that a clear picture of the learner’s journey is available to each partner.

Centres will wish to build on existing systems to ensure that progress towards QCF units and functional skills accreditation is appropriately recorded, so learners and staff can see what has been achieved and what needs to happen next.

At an individual level, an individual learning plan is the key tool used to plan and record the learner’s personalised programme.

Individual learning plans

Individual learning plans (ILPs) can take a variety of formats and they may be part of your planning for a CAP.²⁴ Some schools have expertise in developing individual education plans (IEPs) as part of their statutory responsibilities for statemented learners. Many of the processes for developing IEPs can be transferred to support the implementation of ILPs. Irrespective of their format, ILPs are likely to include:

- information on learners’ skills, learning and support needs
- their anticipated progression route, any long-term targets and the qualifications they are working towards
- a record of their progress and any interim targets they are working towards
- learners’ reflections and views on their learning experience and progress.

Your implementation plan should consider how you will ensure that ILPs are easily accessed, with the young person’s consent, by all those working to deliver the learner’s programme.

24
*Action plan for the
14–19 Prospectus
and Common
Application Process,*
DCSF, 2009, p4

PROVIDER EXAMPLES

Hackney Learning Trust

Devon County Council

Northumberland County Council

During the first year of the pilot, several local authorities identified the need to establish common systems and processes for tracking learning progress and recording achievement. This became particularly important where Foundation Learning programmes were delivered via partnerships and where learners were accessing provision across more than one centre. For example, Hackney Learning Trust, Devon County Council and Northumberland each trialled the development of a common ILP for learners. The ILPs were co-constructed and refined by pilot centres, and were made available electronically within each of the authorities for pilot centres to use from September 2009.

Actions you should consider taking

- Identify clear progression routes into and out of Foundation Learning programmes.
- Develop systems to track the progress of learners and ensure that achievement is appropriately recorded.
- Ensure ILPs are easily accessed by all those working to deliver a personalised learning programme.
- Implement working parties made up of senior leaders and middle managers from local schools, colleges and other providers to discuss the curriculum offer at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 to ensure that progression is achievable.

Additional sources of information

The following documents are likely to assist you in supporting progression through Foundation Learning:

- *Foundation Learning Tier: 14–19 delivery guidance for 2009/10*, LSC/QCDA, August 2009
- *Foundation Learning Tier: interim guidance*, draft working version for 2009/10, LSC/QCA, May 2009
- *From here to entitlement: a self-assessment toolkit for 14–19 partnerships*, LSC, August 2009.
- *Individual learning plans in Foundation Learning at Key Stage 4*, LSIS 2009
- *Your child, your schools, our future: building a 21st century schools system*, summary, DCSF, 2009

6

Monitoring and evaluating the implementation of Foundation Learning programmes

What do I need to consider?

25
Foundation Learning Tier: 14–19 delivery guidance for 2009/10, LSC/QCDA, August 2009, p4

Foundation Learning should motivate and enable more young people, including many who are vulnerable or at risk of drop-out, to achieve greater economic and social well-being. In doing so, successful Foundation Learning provision should reduce the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) or in jobs without training, in line with the aims of the raising of the participation age agenda.²⁵

Local authorities will wish to monitor the implementation and impact of Foundation Learning. This will include progress being made towards Foundation Learning forming part of the 14–19 entitlement. It will also include evaluating the impact of Foundation Learning on learner participation, achievement and progression to level 2 learning including Apprenticeships and Diplomas.

Measuring the roll-out of Foundation Learning

Foundation Learning is part of the 14–19 learning entitlement. You will wish to ensure that your plans support the implementation of the entitlement by 2013. You must prioritise pilot delivery during 2009/10 with a phased roll-out across all schools and providers, preferably by 2011/12, for Year 10s, given the raising of the participation age in 2013.

Local authority managers will also wish to ensure that opportunities to maximise the impact of Foundation Learning on the 14–19 performance indicators are considered. These cover five key areas:

- 1 Participation** – Many learners who are NEET are struggling to maintain their engagement with learning or are in jobs without training. Foundation Learning will provide the flexibility to develop creative and engaging programmes. It can provide the first steps on a ladder to sustainable participation.
- 2 Progression** – Foundation Learning, particularly functional skills and QCF qualifications, provide opportunities for learners to make step-by-step accredited progress through the qualification framework.

- 3 Attainment** – Foundation Learning provides opportunities to support learners in building the skills they will need to sustain learning and succeed at level 2.
- 4 Collaboration** – Existing collaborative arrangements will need to consider the implications of Foundation Learning. Local IAG services and the area prospectus will need to meet the demands of an emerging Foundation Learning offer.
- 5 Provision** – The introduction of Foundation Learning will have an impact on the breadth of provision and will have implications for the demand for facilities and specific workforce skills. Opportunities to develop specific programmes based on Foundation Learning to target specific groups should not be overlooked.

Establishing baselines for the success of current provision

A Foundation Learning implementation plan should incorporate baselines against which the impact of new programmes can be assessed. These measures may include participation, qualification achievement and progression data for learners across the 14–19 phase. This may include collecting information on:

- NEET rates
- Key Stage 4 engagement programme participation
- SEN learners currently having access to nationally recognised accreditation (many currently do not have access to appropriate and nationally recognised qualifications)
- learner perceptions and feedback on their experience (learner voice)
- levels of provider involvement.

You may also wish to consider identifying baseline qualification achievement, such as the:

- number of learners not achieving the level 2 threshold (five GCSEs with A*–C grades) at the end of Key Stage 4 and by age 19
- number of learners gaining English (literacy) and mathematics (numeracy qualifications) and at what level in E2E, Key Stage 4 engagement and other programmes below level 2
- number of learners gaining level 1 qualifications.

You may wish to consider measures of learner progression, such as:

- progression rates from Key Stage 4 engagement programmes to level 1 and level 2 learning in FE
- progression from E2E to Apprenticeships and level 1 or level 2 learning in FE
- progression to supported employment for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (where appropriate)
- progression to the level 2 threshold by the age of 19.

Agreeing service standards so that provision is of a consistently high quality

A Foundation Learning implementation plan should include arrangements to ensure that learner programmes are of a consistently high quality. This may include establishing minimum delivery standards and quality monitoring mechanisms. The characteristics of effective delivery²⁶ based on the wrap-around of support and IAG will support planning in these areas.

PROVIDER EXAMPLE

Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council

Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council has seconded a curriculum deputy to support and oversee the implementation of Foundation Learning provision. The deputy had developed experience of delivering a pilot Foundation Learning programme during 2008/09. Part of the role involves visits to schools and providers to discuss strategic and operational issues relating to implementation as well as to glean effective practice to be shared across the partnership. The role will involve supporting the authority's Foundation Learning Operations Group, which meets twice each term. The aim is to monitor processes for communicating information, developing pathways through learning at entry level and level 1 and making use of qualifications that allow learners to transfer and accumulate QCF credit as they move between different organisations. The authority is producing regular progress reports on the implementation of Foundation Learning programmes, which feed into the overarching 14–19 management group.

Actions you should consider taking

- Establish baselines against which the impact of Foundation Learning can be evaluated.
- Evidence how engagement with Foundation Learning is enabling you to meet key performance indicators.

Additional sources of information

The following documents are likely to assist you in considering the monitoring and evaluation of Foundation Learning:

- *Foundation Learning Tier: 14–19 delivery guidance for 2009/10*, LSC/QCDA, August 2009
- *Foundation Learning Tier: interim guidance*, draft working version for 2009/10, LSC/QCA, May 2009
- *14–19 partnerships and planning*, DCSF, January 2009
- *Diploma Gateway 4: guidance on strategic local planning for the Diploma entitlement*, DCSF, July 2009.

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