

Protocol for establishing a consortia approach to PLWEP (Personalised Learning and Work Experience Programme) for young people, aged 16 – 24, with High Needs



York College

Summary

The City of York education partners are expanding our local provision to meet the needs of more LLDD young people aged 16 – 24 with high needs – typically those young people who, in the future, will hold an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC).

In expanding the local offer, we have recognised that for a small but growing number of those young people with high needs a Personalised Learning and Work Experience Programme (PLWEP) is the most appropriate option. The key to a PLWEP in York is that it takes a consortia approach around the delivery of an individual's learning programme in order to best meet that particular learner's set of interests, aspirations and needs. Typically, a lead institution works with partners to design and deliver the learning experience that best meets individual learner needs. Thus partners recognise where they are best placed to meet some of the needs for a young person and where another organisation(s) is better placed to meet other needs.

This project brought the key York partners together to write and agree a protocol for the operation of PLWEPs for 2013/14 onwards. The protocol covers who will be the 'lead' provider; responsibility for monitoring, quality and audit; the importance of the Progress Tutor; review process; costing and transfer of funding; role and links to Connexions staff.

A PLWEP will have a sustained period of work experience at its core (whenever possible and appropriate) reflecting the young person's vocational interests and aspirations. The learning elements are designed to support the young person's success in this placement and will include employability skills, as well as functional skills and vocational learning working at different levels in each area according to ability to accommodate spikey profiles. This current practice aligns well with the new Study Programmes and education funding reforms for 2013-14.

Key lessons learned

This case study will be useful for

- Colleges of Further Education (FE), Special Schools, Training Providers and other organisations working in partnership in a given local area to meet the needs of young people aged 16 - 24 with learning difficulties and or disabilities.
- Local Authority Officers with responsibility for strategic planning of provision for this group of young people.

Introduction

About the organisations involved

The key partners involved in the project are York College (large General FE College), Askham Bryan College (North of England Land Based College), York Learning, York Training Centre (local training provider), Applefields School (11-19 Special School), Blueberry Academy (Supported Employment Agency) and key senior officers from the local authority. In addition important links are in place with the Danesgate Community which provides pre 16 education for some of our most disadvantaged, challenging and vulnerable learners in the City.

The City of York has attainment levels at age 16 and age 19 well above national figures. Around 1800 young people complete Year 11 each year. Progression rates at 95% for 16 year olds and 90% for 17 year olds place the York area in the top decile for progression to post 16 study. Of those currently not progressing after Year 11 we know we have a high proportion of learners with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) and Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC) – for some of this group a PLWEP will give them the best chance of success.

What we wanted to achieve

We already have a small number, around 10 each year, of young people undertaking Post 16 PLWEPs. The identification, design and implementation of the PLWEPs to date has tended to rely on one key officer in the Local Authority. The purpose of the protocol was to enable providers, working together, to take full ownership of PLWEPs and understand the process, roles and responsibilities without the need of the key Local Authority officer role.

Implementation

Planning our approach and what we did

During the early part of 2013 Graeme Murdoch (Deputy Principal, York College) co-ordinated a project group in writing an agreement of the PLWEP Consortia Protocol. The final document went through numerous versions and refinements and was completed in June 2013.

The York PLWEP Consortia Protocol – our output

What we achieved

Below is the full version of the protocol Nos 1- 5:

Protocol for establishing a consortia approach to PLWEP (Personalised Learning and Work Experience Programme) for young people, aged 16 – 24, with High Needs in York

1. Background

- A High Needs Student (HNS) is one whose support needs (financially) are more than £10,000. This is based on the costs required to support the student during the period of

their Personalised Learning and Work Experience Programme (PLWEP).

- The EFA (Education Funding Agency) provides the funding for Element 1 (approximately £4,000 - £5,000) - 'Programme Funding' and Element 2 (£6,000) – 'High Needs' funding (HNS). The Local Authority provides the Element 3 funding, by negotiation with the Lead Provider, (i.e. learning support funding over the £6,000 Element 2).
- This protocol applies where the education programme (and associated support) is best provided through more than one provider. One provider will hold the contract for the funding, acting as 'lead' on the individual learner programme and HNS contract but 'transfer' funds to other contributors in accordance with their contribution to the education programme of the young person.
- The protocol is designed to provide information for education providers and other professionals.

2. Lead providers

- Must be an Education Funding Agency (EFA) provider.
- Lead Provider to be identified as the organisation which leads on larger portion of provision/holds the progression plan for individuals.
- Lead provider will be responsible for the Quality and Audit of the provision provided.
- The lead provider will be responsible for coordinating the activities associated with progression planning and the overseeing of the quality of the individual's programme.

3. Funding

- Joint Panel Post Maintained Education (JP PME) may recommend the provision of a PLWEP (Personalised Learning and Work Experience Programme). Alternatively a direct referral via Young Peoples Services, not involving JP PME, may identify the need for a PLWEP.
- The initial top up funding/costs will be informed by the 139a LDA (or EHC in the future), and consortia provider assessments of meeting needs for each individual PLWEP. The lead provider will negotiate this initial funding with the Local Authority. Actual costs incurred will be reviewed, and revised where necessary, during the delivery stage through negotiation with the Local Authority.
- Element 3 High Needs Block learning support funding is held by the Local Authority. Contracted funding with each lead provider will be reviewed via Joint Panel PME, as the commissioning body on at least an annual basis.
- The lead provider will review costs and monitor learning support spend for individual students against the Local Authority contract. Lead providers are responsible for responding to Local Authority requests for information relating to students for whom they are responsible.

4. Programme

- Each student will have a 'Progress Tutor' (Key Worker/Mentor) employed by the Lead Provider who will take responsibility for overseeing the quality of the student's study programme and progress.
- Progress will be reviewed and reported to the JP PME. Such a review, of a young person's progress, will generally involve all those contributing to the programme of study, and any others involved with the young person. Reviews will, ordinarily, take place every three months, chaired by the Lead Provider. 'Progress Tutor' (Key Worker/Mentor) reviews will happen more frequently, usually on a weekly basis and the PLWEP updated.
- The lead provider, when working with partners, will work with these partners to cost the provision. Cross charges will then be agreed between partners and reviewed on an ongoing basis.
- Any employer involved in the delivery of the personalised programme may be reimbursed for the support provided to the young person on an individual basis, negotiated by the lead provider.

5. Referrals

Referrals for individual learning programmes from the post-16 HNS (High Needs Student):

- Every student who is HNS should have access to IAG (Information, Advice and Guidance) through Connexions and a Health Education Care Plan (or 139a learning Disability Assessment) which identifies the young person's interests and aspirations, as well as their needs and abilities to inform transition and progression planning.
- If the student is from 'out of area', Young People's Services will identify the link Connexions Adviser for the student. The identified Connexions Adviser will then consider the full range of provision available to the young person within the Local Authority area.
- The Connexions Adviser will make a referral to the Local Authority which will involve an informal discussion regarding the likelihood of funding level and provision available and likely preferred progression route.
- The Connexions Adviser will liaise with the likely provider(s) and formulate discussions re the appropriate progression/transition route. A lead provider will be agreed through these discussions, who will lead on the establishment of the PLWEP.
- This process will be underpinned by half termly meeting of the Curriculum Alignment Group which will consider the personalised provision available.

What we learned

Considerable time was given to discussion and clarifying exactly for which group of learners this approach is appropriate for. The final written document is important but just as important, in fact a pre-requisite, was all providers committing to this approach.

What we are taking forward

Only once we move into the new academic year will we really see to what extent the group of providers are now able to own the whole process for PLWEPS across the City.

Key Local Authority Officers will keep an overview of the overall volume of PLWEPS and provide on-going support during the early part of 2013/14.

What advice we would give to others

Some learners with high needs may benefit from an individually designed learning pathway delivered by more than one institution in a given local area.

The key pre-requisite for any group of organisations in adopting a PLWEP approach is that working relationships must be firmly built upon shared knowledge, openness, trust, and mutual respect with a commitment to always putting the learner's needs first – yet working to a sustainable financial model.

Date published : June 2013

Provider name(s) : The key partners involved are York College (large GFE College), Askham Bryan College (North of England Land Based College), York Learning, York Training Centre (Local Training Provider), Applefields School (11-19 Special School), Blueberry Academy (Supported Employment Agency) as well as an increasing number of third sector and voluntary organisations in the City – it is these organisations that can often add the real diversity of different learning environments and opportunities. In addition important links are in place with the Danesgate Community which provides pre 16 education for some of our most disadvantaged, challenging and vulnerable learners in the City.

Sector coverage : FE Colleges, 11-19 Special Schools, Work Based / Training Providers, Pupil Referral Units and 3rd Sector/community organisations involved in the delivery of learning and work experience for young people aged 16-24 with LDD.

Contact information :

Graeme Murdoch (Deputy Principal, York College) gmurdoch@yorkcollege.ac.uk

Gary Robinson (City of York LA, 16-19 Education Manager) gary.robinson@york.gov.uk

Jan Goodall (City of York LA, 14-19 Support Adviser) jan.goodall@york.gov.uk