

# Review of Evidence

Research



**14-19 Agenda**

# Introduction

This review is an updated version, commissioned by LSIS, of part of a research project originally commissioned by the QIA. The project aimed to support QIA in adopting an evidence-based approach to the development of programmes and materials to support improvement in the post-16 system, and to ensure that future research, development and practice are based on awareness and understanding of the issues facing the further education system.

This review is one of a series which are intended to be useful to managers, practitioners and others working in the learning and skills sector. A thematic review was undertaken of current and recent research findings, relevant materials and resources. Items were selected that inform and support improvement.

Section one contains the key messages for improvement that emerge from the materials identified by the review. Section two contains a catalogue of those materials from which these messages have been drawn.

One of a series of reviews of evidence commissioned by LSIS in 2009. Produced by NIACE on behalf of LSIS  
**All the links in this document were checked in October 2010.**

# Section 1

## Summary of Key Messages for Improvement

### Improvement Messages for Providers

A description of the policy context for this theme follows the summary of key improvement messages. The numbers in brackets refer to items in the catalogue of materials containing improvement messages in relation to this theme, also created as part of the project, and which is contained in section 2 of this review.

- Successful partnership and collaboration is achieved and supported by:
  - building on existing partnerships and provision; or, if there is no history of partnerships, then providing strong direction and encouragement to all partners (1);
  - good communication;
  - good relationships between individuals and partners;
  - joint staff development;
  - identifying appropriate partners;
  - responding to local contexts;
  - a commitment to shared aims and common objectives;
  - a steering group, designated coordinator and management structure (1, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14).
- Regular meetings of senior LEA staff, LSC staff, employers, learning providers and community representatives, are essential to articulating a vision for the 14-19 phase, with the role of all stakeholders clearly outlined (5);
- Planning needs to be informed by national priorities and shaped by local need (4);
- There is effective and impartial IAG (4, 1 & 23);
- Programmes which are well targeted and truly collaborative can improve participation and progression (4, 10, 15, 12, 25);
- More needs to be done to develop high quality work-based learning routes. There should be a systematic approach to identifying and sharing good practice in work-based learning (19);
- Partnerships which involve employers achieve better outcomes (15).

#### Employers should:

- be represented on the partnership steering group;
- contribute to creating a service level agreement which identifies the role and responsibilities of all partners, including the employers themselves;

- be asked to provide a team of dedicated training mentors to work with students on work placements;
- be asked to provide sponsorship in the form of resources, materials, training and recreational facilities (20).
- Delivery arrangements should acknowledge the challenges faced by vulnerable learners (3);
- Learner voice should be accommodated in the evaluation process (23).

### **For operational and quality managers and practitioners**

- To improve 14-16 year olds' experience and success in further education:
  - there should be clear and impartial advice, guidance and support to help them remain in learning (4,1,15, 23);
  - there should be a clear selection process and staff from both school and college should be involved in selection (3, 13, 18, 17);
  - schools and colleges should share information about pupils (22);
  - school staff should be encouraged to accompany or visit pupils while at college, to improve working relationships and establish shared responsibility (11, 25);
  - the further education 'ethos' should be maintained (3);
  - there should be opportunities for independent learning (6, 10);
  - there should be a pooling of resources and planning to help overcome any potential sustainability issues (23).
- There should be real and clear progression routes for young people aged 14-19 and impartial support to help them understand the choices available (2, 5, 15, 17, 20, 22);
- Gender stereotyping should be tackled rigorously by:
  - analysing the choice of courses by gender;
  - demonstrating the range of choices available;
  - using role models of people making a non-traditional choice of job and using guest speakers from industries where there is a gender imbalance (17, 18, 20).
- Staff development should be available for college staff teaching 14-16 pupils (3, 13, 16).

## The Policy Context

The 14-19 curriculum and its delivery has been a centrepiece of government education policy for many years. Early concerns were improving staying-on rates, tackling disaffection, and broadening education and skills acquisition beyond 16. These were addressed through qualifications reform and structural change in both the schools and the further education sectors, which have gradually established common curricular ground and increased collaboration between them.

The 2000 *Learning and Skills Act* took all post 16 education and training other than higher education, but including school sixth forms, into a single sector. The 2001 white paper *Schools: Achieving Success* (DfES) included a review of 14-19 education, with greater curricular flexibility at key stage 4 and the possibility of pupils opting out of GCSE. The 2002 white paper *Success for All: Reforming Further Education and Training* (DfES), intended as a strategy for raising quality and effectiveness in the learning and skills sector, included a commitment to develop new facilities for 14-16 year olds outside school (20).

A series of programmes initiated by government sought to reconfigure local systems. The Increased Flexibility Programme, introduced in 2002, created partnership to improve vocational and work-related learning for 14-16 years old (11, 13, 14, 15, 12, 17). A new set of collaborative arrangements between schools, colleges and other stakeholders including employers, the 14-19 Pathfinders, was introduced, with the first phase beginning operation in January 2003 (10, 8, 9). At the same time, strategic area reviews initiated by the LSC led in some cases to some rationalisation or reconfiguration of provision as well as some greater collaboration (3).

The 2003 white paper *21st Century Skills: Realising our Potential* (DfES) proposed a policy for the whole age group: that all 14-19 year olds follow balanced programmes of learning covering key skills, specialist academic or vocational knowledge and 'supplementary learning' such as additional subjects to support specialist study. This was followed by *14-19 Education and Skills* (DfES, 2005) which proposed specialised diplomas to be introduced at levels 1, 2 and 3 from 2008 on.

The first skills white paper *Skills: Getting on in Business, Getting on at Work* (DfES, 2005) set targets for increasing the numbers of 14-19 year olds achieving full Level 2 qualifications and the 17+ participation rate. It focused on vocational training, proposing Skills Academies to form 'the linchpin of national, regional and local partnerships to provide better vocational training'.

Regional Skills Partnerships would review 'how they can best support the implementation of the 14-19 reforms' and schools would work with specialist schools, Centres of Vocational Excellence in further education and specialist facilities in higher education to deliver the full range of opportunities for students through the new specialised diplomas.

This was followed by the 14-19 Implementation Plan (DfES 2005) which looked to local organisation of provision: 'no single school could reasonably be expected to deliver the full range of options'. In January 2006 national guidance was issued on developing 14-19 local prospectuses, which were intended to be fully available in all areas by autumn 2007. Local authorities and local LSCs were attributed joint responsibility. National guidelines for the prospectus issued in May 2006 said that young people should be able to choose courses, not just institutions, with access to extensive information to inform their choice. The engagement of employers in developing such local arrangements has become increasingly important.

The 2006 white paper Further Education: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances proposed a new approach to funding for 14-19 year olds to enable the entitlement to be delivered through more than one provider. The LSC was to collaborate with local authorities on 14-19 strategies. The role of local authorities was strengthened in the 2006 Education and Inspections Act as 'strategic commissioners' of education services, with a role of encouraging schools and colleges to collaborate on 14-19 provision.

In May 2006, the DfES announced the Specialised Diploma Gateway. This would be 'the process through which we will assess the readiness of providers to offer the specialised diplomas and identify where the providers need to develop, and how we support them to ensure that they are ready and capable of delivering the diplomas to a high standard.' Consortia proposing to submit under the Gateway process would be expected to meet five key criteria:

- evidence of firm collaborative arrangements;
- collaborative delivery of impartial information, advice and guidance;
- appropriate physical resources;
- appropriate human resources including a central administrative hub;
- effective links with local employers and higher education institutions.

Local Authorities would be the commissioners of provision at local level.

The Education and Skills Bill 2007 aims to increase participation in learning by young people by raising the education leaving age to 18. Young people will have a duty to participate in education and training post-16, which they will be able to do through full-time education at school or college; work-based learning, such as an apprenticeship; or part-time education or training, if they are employed, self-employed or volunteering for more than 20 hours a week.

Central to the duty is the principle that young people may learn by attending more than one provider. This is at the heart of 14-19 reforms. The Bill therefore clarifies school governing bodies' power to arrange for young people to learn elsewhere than on the school site. The statutory responsibility for ensuring that there is provision of facilities for young people aged 16 or older, and to enable them to participate in valuable learning, lies with the Learning and Skills Council. The Bill requires local authorities to work to secure effective collaboration with providers of 14-19 education and training; it is expected that this duty will be fulfilled through existing 14-19 partnerships. The Bill also transfers the statutory responsibility for the service currently known as Connexions to local authorities.

*Delivering 14-19 Reform: Next Steps* was published by the DCSF in 2008. This document sets out how the Government wants to work with partners to create a system that will mean all young people can benefit from spending more time in education. The participation age will rise to 17 in 2013 and 18 in 2015. This document aims to take a learner centred approach, with suitable learning opportunities being made available and accessible to all. This document has 3 goals: to ensure that young people participate until they are 18; to ensure that they get the skills that the economy and the employers need and to close the achievement gap, so that ALL young people have the opportunity to succeed. In terms of the current position it is noted that 140 consortia are now delivering the Diplomas; functional skills qualification are being piloted and the September Guarantee of a suitable place in learning is now available to all 17 year olds. In terms of ongoing development, this document indicates that the 14-19 entitlement for all young people will include a high quality learning route with integrated services, strong local partnership and consortia arrangements with the right delivery at local, regional and national level.

In order to support this the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) will evolve into the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA). There will be a Common Application Process (CAP), linked to the prospectus, which will be in place by 2010. The DCSF and DIUS will continue to develop MIAP (Managing Information Across Partners) to improve data sharing, as learners move around the system.

In terms of financial support to learners, there is already the Education Maintenance Allowance and Care to Learn, but there is cross departmental work being undertaken to see how the wider package of financial support can help young learners. There will be a strengthening of the requirement for consortia to engage with the learners' voice. 14-19 partnerships will play an increasingly vital role, with Local Authorities being placed under a duty to co-operate with them and from 2010 the Local Authorities will assume full responsibility for the commissioning of 16-19 provision. The Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) will support sub regional groupings of LAs who will ensure that there is suitable provision available for those young people who learn out of area. Furthermore, there will be accountability at all levels: Local Area Agreements will be assessed against 14-19 and youth indicators. Multi Area Agreements will reflect collaboration between Local Authorities and a Framework for Excellence in FE and sixth form colleges is currently being piloted. From September 2009 this Framework for Excellence will also be piloted in School Sixth Forms.

A chronology and summary of policies, including those relating to schools and to 14-19 qualifications reform (which are not included above), is in Policies for 14-19 education and training in England, 1976 to the present day: a chronology, Wright, S. and Oancea, A., for the Nuffield Review of 14-19 Education and Training: <http://www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/cgi/documents/documents.cgi?t=template.htm&a=21>

The key policy drivers influencing the 14-19 agenda are:

- Broadening education and the range of choices for the 14-19 age group to encourage wider skills acquisition and bring the UK into line with other countries:
  - catering for 'academic excellence';
  - meeting the needs of more 14-19 year olds a wider choice of vocational routes and enhancing the status of vocational awards;
  - the development of 'balanced learning programmes' through the new diplomas.
  
- Removing the barriers between schools and further education and developing collaboration to ensure that there is the right mix of quality provision to meet learner and employer needs:
  - developing new facilities for 14-16 year olds outside school;
  - closer collaboration between schools, colleges, and training providers to provide more options and flexibility;
  - a collaborative network of providers in each part of the country;
  - complementary roles for local authorities and the LSC;
  - greater employer engagement.



- Introducing competition where an expansion of high quality provision is needed, to make it easier for new providers to enter the system.
- Encouraging local and sub-regional collaborative working arrangements that are focused and coherent. Collaboration needs to cover strategic planning and commissioning to delivery, with accountability at all levels.

## Section 2

# Catalogue of research, materials and resources

This catalogue lists the materials identified by the thematic review of current and recent research findings, relevant materials and resources. Items were selected that inform and support improvement.

### Scope of the research

For all themes, the focus was on research, policy or policy-related documents and materials produced since 2000, in English, relevant to the post-16 further education system in England, and readily accessible to provider organisations and other interested parties. Materials from other sectors and countries were not included, and all materials selected had to have been subject to quality assurance. Each review is designed to stand alone.

### 14-19 Agenda

This catalogue is concerned with the 14-19 agenda, in particular focusing on effective curriculum design and the delivery infrastructure for 14-19 provision. It does not deal with teaching and learning techniques or qualification design. The 14-19 change agenda is a policy priority and has featured in successive policy documents. The Increased Flexibility Programme for 14-16 year olds and the Pathfinders initiative require collaboration between providers, employers and other stakeholders to deliver a broader curriculum designed to improve vocational and work-related learning, address key skills and widen choice. New funding arrangements and new qualifications are in train and the statutory age for leaving education and/or training is to be raised to eighteen.

## General 14-19

### Item no: 1

#### Reference type:

Research report

#### Author:

Haynes G.  
(University of Exeter)

Year: 2009

#### Title:

National Evaluation of  
Diplomas: Preparation for  
2008 delivery

Publisher: DCSF

#### Commissioning body:

HM Government

#### Notes:

This national evaluation of Diplomas had two main aims:

- to review the implementation and delivery of the Diplomas;
- to assess the impact of the Diplomas on young people.

A mixed method approach of surveys, case studies and analysis of external datasets was used. The findings in the report highlight the challenges experienced by Gateway 1 consortia in preparing to deliver the Diplomas, the potential areas for improvement, and the lessons learned, that will be useful for future consortia.

#### Messages for consortia and practitioners

##### Developing partnership working

- The rationale for the Diploma offer and models of delivery should be considered carefully, as should methods to encourage staff to embrace change. (Section 4.2.1)
- Consideration should be given to whether the most effective management structures are in place, roles are clearly defined, and whether the staff involved are fully committed. (Section 4.2.1)
- If there is no history of partnership working, consortium leads need to provide strong direction and encouragement to institutions to consider the benefits to their learners of collaboration. (Section 2.2)
- New consortia should learn from the experiences of Gateway 1 consortia. Key messages and lessons learned should be shared by Gateway 1 consortia and there should be opportunities for networking between consortia. (Section 2.2)
- Sufficient dedicated time should be allowed for staff in management and practitioner roles. (Sections 2.3 and 4.2.1)
- Any potential barriers associated with partnership working and collaboration should be addressed by, for example, partners meeting and communicating regularly. (Section 4.2.1)
- Consortia should consider how to maximise employer engagement, for example, by involving EBPOs (Education Business Partnership Organisations) to manage the demands on employers and/or by encouraging FE colleges to offer placements within their departments. Consortia should also consider creative ways of providing work experience that address issues such as health and safety. (Sections 3.3.2 and 4.1.5)

### **Continuing Professional Development**

- Consortia should consider whether staff have the necessary skills to teach all elements of the Diploma, and the implications of this for training and recruitment of staff. (Section 3.2)
- Those in leadership roles should consider the ongoing support needs of staff in Diploma centres, which might relate to functional skills delivery, assessment, additional and specialist learning qualification combinations, and approaches to practical delivery.
- Examples of teaching approaches, lesson plans and resources should be shared between and within consortia in the future. (Section 7.4)

### **Diploma delivery**

- Possible solutions to the logistical challenges of partnership delivery should be shared across consortia, including aligned timetables, transport strategies and teachers/tutors travelling to teach (rather than learners travelling). (Sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.2)
- The implications of co-teaching of Level 1 and 2 classes should be considered. At a local level, consortia need to ensure that learners are adequately briefed and advised about this, as the outcome could have implications for their learning experience and progression. (Section 4.1.1)
- Consortia should consider the options available for additional and specialist learning and possible opportunities to expand the offer, to ensure that learners have sufficient opportunities to add breadth and/or depth to their learning, depending on their choice of pathway. (Section 4.1.4) 12

### **Promotion of the Diplomas and IAG for learners**

- All staff, learners and parents should be fully informed about relevant Diploma developments, in order to address misconceptions and to maximise potential take-up. Given the role that school and IAG staff play in informing learners' choices, consortia should ensure that they provide sufficient information about Diplomas to enable staff to give accurate and impartial IAG to young people. (Section 5.1.3)
- There is scope for improving the information and guidance given to young people about Diplomas, as the majority of learners do not recall receiving information about key aspects of Diplomas, and many had a limited understanding of the qualification. (Sections 5.2.1 and 5.3)
- Partners across and within consortia should consider how to communicate information to learners, so that they fully engage with and understand Diplomas in order to make informed choices. For example, learners need to be clear about the course content and mode of learning in order to make an informed choice. (Sections 5.3 and 6.4.2)

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- There needs to be greater consistency in IAG standards across and within consortia and where necessary, more opportunities for training for staff who advise young people should be provided, with protected time to attend such training. (Section 5.1.3)

Link: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/DCSF-RW079.pdf>

**Item no: 2**

**Reference type:**

Research report

**Author:**

Hayward G., Wilde S.  
and Williams R.

**Year:** 2008

**Title:**

Rathbone/Nuffield Review  
Engaging Youth Enquiry

**Publisher:** Nuffield

**Commissioning body:**

Nuffield/Rathbone

**Notes:**

This research was inspired by 2 key questions:

- 1 Why is it so difficult to persuade some young people of the merits of staying in education and training?
- 2 Why do so many young people who want to work not find employment?

The research findings are based on a series of 36 workshops run with young people who were, or who were at risk of being NEET (not in education, employment or training) as well as work with youth workers, Connexions advisers, magistrates and others who work with these young people on a daily basis.

The key message is that those who are classified as NEET are a highly heterogeneous and frequently changing group, that their experience of schooling must be taken into account when re-integration strategies are planned and that there should be first rung learning opportunities, comprehensive outreach work and contextualised learning with real and clear progression opportunities for the young adults.

A meaningful learning experience can only be achieved if it is truly personalised and the young adults and their needs are placed at the centre of the planning. Off the shelf approaches and “ghettoes of provision” fail to recognise the complex diversity of the group. It is also suggested that “It is debatable whether such alienation can be addressed solely by further vocationalism driven by a narrowly defined skills agenda.”

**Findings relevant to improvement**

**Definition of the term NEET**

Recognising the unique needs of the individuals who are classified as NEET has clear implications for practice.

The Engaging Youth Enquiry (EYE) suggests that sustainable progression for these young people will be more likely if they are viewed as individuals trying to construct life trajectories and narratives, rather than as a problem. They must be recognised as “presences rather than absences.”

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The EYE emphasises the heterogeneous nature of the NEET group. NEETs may share common experiences of social and economic disadvantage, low educational attainment, relative underachievement and alienation from the education and training system, which results for many in low levels of self confidence. However, as individuals they are uniquely different and diverse.

It is reinforced that this is a rapidly changing group that is not homogenous, and for whom readymade solutions will not work. It is indicated that learning opportunities should be bespoke solutions that are learner focused, respond to individual need and are truly personalised.

### **Understanding of social and economic context**

The EYE notes that the young people want what most people want: a home, a family and a job. It is suggested that “the issue is perhaps less about raising aspirations, and more about providing the means to realise those aspirations.”

The report draws attention to the social indicators that contribute to the probability of becoming NEET, for example, over the whole of England, white working class males are more likely to be classified as NEET, but in London there are large concentrations of NEET young people in minority ethnic groups. Furthermore, it considers the multiple barriers that are faced by the young people, such as poor educational attainment, poverty, inner city living, poor labour market experiences, teenage parenthood etc. It examines the presence of gangs and how the gang leader can become the “significant other” in a young person’s life and how gang activity can create “no-go” areas for the young people. It also considers drug use and notes the need to challenge the glamorisation of the gang and drug related lifestyle. The fact that many 16-18 year olds are expected to fend for themselves and find somewhere to live is also acknowledged. Young people want jobs, but many have the inability to cope with the authority structures that underpin schooling and absenting themselves has been a rational response to their situation.

Helping these young people means going beyond the illusion of inclusion and genuinely listening to them. It means:

- Giving them time to reflect upon and discuss their progression route, rather than imposing a readymade solution upon them.
- Providing a response that is tailored to actual rather than perceived need.
- Respecting local circumstances (i.e. unwillingness to travel into some areas).
- Avoiding “ghettoes of provision” for some groups.
- Basing the response on listening to the learner and then being truly personalised.

### **The need for variety and flexibility**

Responses designed to engage these young adults need to be learner centred, personalised and based on an understanding, rather than a perception of individual need. Feelings of alienation were cited and at one of the workshops the theme of being treated with respect and being able to learn in a way that they thought suited them emerged.

There is a need for:

- Bespoke learning opportunities, but with the recognition that collaboration between providers could be problematic for some of the more vulnerable learners: “If you keep dotting yourself around all of the time, friends don’t go there, so you don’t go there.”
- The young people also seemed more hostile to the assessment regime and control structures, rather than the “traditional” subjects: “...a primary reason for disengagement from schooling may be an inability to cope with school’s power and authority structures, rather than the curriculum alone.”
- Good transitional support, together with IAG delivered outside of the school/college context.

An example of a collaborative approach in Wolverhampton is cited.

### **The need to maintain distinct purpose**

- Distinct roles should be maintained by professionals and organisations.

“Whilst integrated forms of learning may be desirable, the maintenance of distinct roles by professionals (such as youth workers and teachers) and organisations (such as schools and youth groups) working with young people is imperative. Organisations should retain their own discrete roles, but they should work in partnership together to ensure a wide range of opportunities for young people, with multiple providers.”

### **Key messages**

- Respect the jobs that the young people want, listen to their needs and avoid imposing choices upon them.
- Provide opportunities for practical forms of learning in places that the young people feel safe to go to, such as the local youth club.
- Avoid conflating vocational with practical learning.
- Consider the young people who are classified as NEET to be a presence rather than an absence.

Link: <http://www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/files/documents/196-1.pdf>

**Item no: 3****Reference type:**

Research report

**Author:**

McCrone T., Wade P.  
and Golden S.

**Year:** 2007

**Title:**

The impact of 14–16 year olds  
on further education colleges

**Place of publication:** Slough

**Publisher:**

National Foundation for  
Educational Research

**Notes:**

This research focuses on the strategies used by colleges to integrate 14-16 year old learners into the traditional profile of further education and to explore the impact of these learners on colleges, staff and older learners.

The research is based on case-study visits to five colleges representing a range of geographical areas in England and with substantial experience in offering courses to 14-16 year olds. Interviews were carried out with 14-16 year olds, 16-19 year olds and older learners, lecturers with and without experience of working with pre-16 students, heads of faculties and curriculum and quality managers. Research visits took place during May and June 2007.

Overall findings suggest that there have been significant successes in developing strategies for integrating 14-16 learners into FE environments. Although problems related to maturity and behaviour were highlighted, in general, staff and older learners were positive about the inclusion of this age group. Evidence from all case studies showed that strategies adopted depended on issues such as college context, historical considerations, teaching and learning strategies and building capacity.

**Findings relevant to improvement****Staff engagement with 14-16 year olds**

CPD is important to ensuring success in the integration of 14-16 year olds. Staff development, in areas such as behaviour management and health and safety, improves staff confidence in working with 14-16 year olds. Seminars and cascading techniques could be used to ensure that all staff working with this age group are well informed.

Benefits are reaped by both lecturers and students, if the former opt to work with this age group. Staff showed higher levels of commitment. Some staff refused to work with this age group, but others reported that after just one year of teaching the age group they felt better equipped and more able to respond to their needs.

It is important to involve college staff fully in the process of 'selecting' pupils.

**Collaborative working between schools and colleges**

All case study colleges had progressively moved from a position of ad-hoc recruitment (which resulted in significant numbers of students taking up courses, without appropriate assessment of prior commitment and interest in the course, leading to significant levels of drop out) to a more structured and 'selective' process.



### Item no: 3 *Continued*

Effective strategies to better match students to courses, to address the issue of retention and to raise standards include:

- schools taking on a more 'shepherding role' in directing students to suitable courses;
- the completion of application forms by students including a focus on motivations for doing the course;
- colleges carrying out interviews with individual pupils to address their commitment;
- students' applications being accompanied by a report from the school;
- providing substantial information before interviews and application for school staff, parents and students through the attendance of college staff at Year 9 option evenings, 'taster days' for students;
- parents and students attending college for a meeting with FE staff as a part of the application process;
- students being allocated to courses based on entry criteria and a learning agreement which is signed by the student and their parent/guardian;
- using the knowledge of college staff to provide advice on the best courses for students;
- providing leaflets on college courses which were included as an integral part of the schools' option booklet.

Shared in-service education and training (INSET) days may be used to reflect on issues of shared concern such as discipline, and practical considerations such as conformity of approach with regard to students' absence and students' expectations as to how and to whom they should report.

#### **Supporting 14-16 year old learners**

The following are important means of supporting students:

- pastoral support;
- SEN support;
- ticketing for free school meals so that students still have entitlement when at college;
- bus passes;
- a college-wide induction process to make students feel a part of the wider community.

#### **Physical capacity of the building**

Colleges need to consider whether changes to the use of building space are required in order to cater for 14-16 year olds, including social facilities such as a common room.

### **Further education ethos**

Colleges should consider how they will maintain a balance of age groups, in order to maintain the further education experience.

### **Teaching and learning**

Different approaches for integrating pre-16 learners into the college day both have advantages and disadvantages. Both had their advantages and disadvantages. Teaching in discrete groups enables teaching approaches to be focused on them, but students may miss out on the college experience. The practice of 'in-filling' into lessons ensures that they benefit from contact with older students, but the balance of age groups within learning groups needs to be closely monitored.

### **Health and Safety**

Colleges need to be aware that staff and the college environment are not equipped for young learners. Possible strategies are:

- a short lunch break, restricting the time for pre -16 students to go off site;
- breaks at different times and short lunch breaks to reduce contact with older learners;
- half- rather than full-day sessions.

### **Management issues**

Colleges have prioritised inclusivity and the Every Child Matters agenda, but find more needs to be done in relation to entitlements, for example to free school meals, and health and safety.

Link: [http://www.nfer.ac.uk/nfer/publications/ICL01/ICL01\\_home.cfm?publicationID=23&title=impact%20of%2014-16%20year%20olds%20on%20further%20education%20colleges](http://www.nfer.ac.uk/nfer/publications/ICL01/ICL01_home.cfm?publicationID=23&title=impact%20of%2014-16%20year%20olds%20on%20further%20education%20colleges)

**Item no: 4****Reference type:**  
Inspectorate report**Author:** Ofsted**Year:** September 2008**Title:**Implementation of 14-19  
Reforms: An evaluation of  
progress**Publisher:** Ofsted**Commissioning body:**  
HM Government**Notes:**

This report, which evaluates the progress being made in implementing 14–19 reforms, is based on survey visits to 16 local authority areas between April 2007 and March 2008. In each area, inspectors met officers from the local authority, the Learning and Skills Council, the Connexions service and local employers, and visited schools, colleges and work-based learning organisations. Inspectors assessed the effectiveness of strategies in raising achievement, participation and retention in education and training; the range and accessibility of the curriculum; the quality of information, advice, guidance and support for young people; and the effectiveness of strategic leadership and management in taking forward the 14–19 agenda. Additional evidence was drawn from 15 joint area reviews of services for children and young people, the reports of which were published in the same period.

It notes that partnerships were well established in almost all the areas visited and collaboration was effective in providing a broad range of courses, particularly in Key Stage 4. However, it goes on to note that progression opportunities from 14 to 19 need to be made clearer and more coherent, particularly for those on vocational programmes.

**Findings relevant to improvement****Summary**

Providers need to ensure that there is a coherent pattern of provision which provides continuity post 16, and offers clear progression pathways. Furthermore, a full range of provision needs to be available for all young people within an area; there are currently gaps in provision at entry level and level 1 and the monitoring systems need to be sufficiently robust to ensure that all learners receive their entitlement to education and training. All young people need to receive impartial advice about the opportunities that are available to them.

**Recommendations**

This report evaluates progress being made with the gradual implementation of 14-19 reforms, therefore, the recommendations focus on strategic planning and implementation. A higher proportion of recommendations are for partnerships and there is less focus on individual providers. Features which are relevant to improvement focus on the provider as part of a wider collaborative approach.

**Partnerships should:**

- Clarify and promote the learning pathways available to all young people across the age range from 14 to 19 to ensure continuity and progression in their education and training.

## Item no: 4 *Continued*

- Fully map out the 14–19 curriculum available in the local authority area and ensure that any gaps in provision are filled;
- Exploit further collaborative opportunities to broaden post-16 provision;
- Implement robust processes to assure the quality of all provision in the area.

### **Providers should:**

- Ensure that all young people receive impartial advice about the full range of available 14–19 options in the area.

### **Key words are:**

Collaboration, continuity, progression, impartial IAG, flexible courses, quality assurance.

### **Local Strategies to raise achievement, participation and retention**

#### **Provision should:**

- Be developed in collaboration with key partners and it should be flexibly delivered.
- Provide real opportunities for progression.
- Be available to all learners.

Improvements in raising achievement, and increasing participation and retention were most often associated with good collaborative provision and a wider range of curriculum opportunities.

Flexible provision in KS4, which enables young people at risk of disengagement to spend time in employment or FE is well received by the young people. It encourages progression onto post 16 courses or employment with training opportunities. The wider experience and increased responsibility, which is encouraged through flexible programmes, increased aspirations, confidence, independence and the social skills of the young people.

Thus, the improvements in achievement were, in part, attributed to the increased number of students following vocational courses or work based learning opportunities, with the Young Apprenticeship scheme emerging as a strength. However, it was noted that Young People with learning difficulties and/or disabilities should also have the opportunity to participate in work based learning and be supported into employment.

### **Curriculum Range, Access and Development**

The most significant features of good provision include:

- access for most young people to a broad choice of appropriate academic and vocational options;

- effective collaboration between schools, colleges and training providers;
- a flexible approach to meeting the needs of vulnerable young people.

### **Collaborative provision was a recognised feature of good practice**

Collaboration enhances the range of curriculum available and collaborative partnerships are most successful when they build effectively on previous experience and draw on the specialism of the partners involved. Good links with employers enhance the curriculum and enable young people to develop and apply generic work skills and to develop specific vocational skills. Practical arrangements such as common timetabling and travel need to be considered within the planning process.

### **The curriculum needs to meet the needs of the individual learners**

An effective, tailored curriculum that meets the needs of vulnerable young people, with flexible courses developed in collaboration with Connexions can have a positive impact on learners. Flexible, tailored programmes, well matched to individual needs, need to be available to learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It is noted that the best alternative curriculum were imaginative, innovative and engaging projects that improved the young people's chances of employment and fostered positive attitudes to learning.

### **Curriculum opportunities need to be available to all learners**

Vocational qualifications need to be offered to more young people across the ability range, ensuring that there is sufficient entry level, level 1, pre-entry to employment and workplace learning programmes.

The curriculum needs to be mapped across the 14-19 phase, with clearly developed learning pathways and young people; Young People need to be consistently made aware of their curriculum entitlement and the wider range of curriculum opportunities that are becoming available.

Initiatives to make specialist expertise and resources available to the learner include:

- Skills centres;
- VLEs and e-learning;
- Peripatetic vocational teachers;
- Co-location of facilities to rationalise and extend provision.

### **Information, Advice and Guidance**

**There should be collaboration between schools, colleges, work based learning providers and Connexions to provide comprehensive IAG to the learners.**

Best practice involves schools, colleges and work-based learning providers liaising effectively with the local Connexions service and one another to provide a comprehensive programme of individual advice and mentoring, careers awareness events, discussions and taster days to help young people make well informed choices about their futures. Advice needs to be impartial and there needs to be a clear understanding of 14-19 vocational routes.

**There should be good personal support for individual young people.**

Working collaboratively with Connexions and support services has proved to be essential in raising the aspirations of young people and helping them to secure opportunities for progression. Good personal support for young people makes important differences to individuals. In the best areas there is evidence of highly productive work across schools, Connexions, Social Services and other agencies to identify young people's needs, including excellent support for those leaving care.

**Involvement with programmes to raise aspirations can add value.**

Programmes to raise aspirations, such as Aim Higher, were leading to an increase in the number of students from lower socio-economic groups applying for HE.

### **Strategic Leadership and Management**

**A clear strategic direction and a strong commitment to working together are essential.**

Effective leadership and partnerships between the LA and the LSC, with established data sharing between Connexions, was firmly established in the most effective examples.

**Planning needs to recognise the wider context.**

Best practice indicated planning that was informed by national 14–19 priorities and was shaped according to local need. 14–19 plans linked appropriately to the local authorities' Children and Young People Plan. The best plans had synergy with wider plans within an authority, such as those for workforce development, or they contributed to authority-wide priorities for regeneration and economic development.

#### Item no: 4 *Continued*

#### **Clearly defined partnerships that build on previous relationships, where possible.**

The most effective partnerships were often those which had been established for a number of years. Clear, specific action plans formed an agenda for their work. Their roles and responsibilities, relative to the local authority strategic partnership, were clearly defined. They included all providers and met regularly to establish how each could contribute to establish young people's entitlement to provision across the area. Such groups were developing and exchanging data between partnership members and had an effective level of delegation to implement their plans locally.

#### **Quality Assurance procedures need to be robust.**

Approaches to quality assurance are varied at present. There is a need for robust quality assurance systems to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of collaborative provision, which contributes to the ongoing cycle of improvement and there needs to be a rigorous analysis of data as part of this process.

Link: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Documents-by-type/Thematic-reports/Implementation-of-14-19-reforms-an-evaluation-of-progress>

#### Item no: 5

##### **Reference type:**

Inspectorate report

**Author:** Ofsted

**Year:** November 2005

##### **Title:**

Developing a coherent 14-19 phase of education and training

**Publisher:** Ofsted

**Commissioning body:**  
HM Government

##### **Notes:**

In summer 2003 Ofsted began a programme of inspections to evaluate the quality of education and training and the effectiveness of strategic planning for 14-19 year olds across local areas. This report draws on the outcomes of 30 area inspections carried out between summer 2003 and spring 2005 and some additional visits.

##### **Findings relevant to improvement**

##### **Student support and information**

The level of impartial and well-informed advice offered to young people in helping them to select courses needs to be improved.

Young people need to be supported further in understanding the settings and opportunities for learning that are available to them post 16. Clear progression routes need to be made available for all students. This is particularly evident at the post-16 stage for disabled students where progression routes for students remains unclear.

Local authorities (LAs) and local LSCs need to take more of an active role in promoting clear learning routes and ensuring that duplication, gaps and inequalities are addressed. This would include a review of provision for people with profound or multiple learning difficulties and a better understanding of learning routes specific to them.

Further collaboration is needed between schools and colleges to make sure that information about learners' support needs and past achievements are well communicated.

### **Leadership and management**

Joint leadership between LAs and local LSCs needs to be better co-ordinated in order to develop 14-19 strategies, in the light of factors such as funding regimes, statutory powers and responsibilities, and national policy imperatives. It is recommended that clearer guidance on joint working should be provided by organisations such as the DCSF.

Where chief and senior officers have met regularly to consider joint approaches, a better vision for the 14-19 phase has been developed with clearer input from employers, learning providers and community representatives. This would include developing clearer frameworks for joint working and quality assurance as well as a clearer local implementation strategy for 14-19. An example is the publication of a strategy document to support all stakeholders, outlining challenges and a way forward.

Results of implementing such clear strategies include the extension of access to vocational courses; the introduction of substantial work-based learning at key stage 4; an improvement in overall results at key stage 4 at a higher rate than the national average; and a sharp decline in the number of young people not in education, employment or training.

### **Collaborative working**

Although LAs and local LSCs have succeeded in promoting a climate of collaboration between providers, more work needs to be done as evidence shows that the impact on young people remains limited. Strategies need to be put in place to improve collaboration and to ensure that it is sustainable.

Better systems of stakeholder engagement need to be developed. This should take the approach of a forum which acts as a means of providing oversight for 14-19 strategies, including input from senior LA members and local LSC officers.

Joint provision between schools for Key Stage 4 curriculum delivery needs to be developed, including better use of school specialisms. One way of addressing this may be to produce guidelines on the contribution and expectations of the role of specialist schools in pushing forward the 14-19 agenda.

The radical approach of establishing specialist skills centres to serve the needs of pupils from many different schools at key stage 4 has been adopted in some areas. These have proved to be successful in motivating pupils and boosting retention rates.



## Item no: 5 *Continued*

Working collaboratively with organisations such as Connexions has proved key to providing support to vulnerable young people and helping them to remain in learning.

### **Quality assurance**

Quality assurance procedures need to be better developed to ensure proper monitoring and support. The example of 6th form colleges was particularly emphasised. LAs and LSCs could work with establishments to monitor data related to performance.

Better information concerning work based learning provision, what it is and what it entails needs to be provided to both parents and students. In some areas the quality of provision was poor.

### **Strategic Area Reviews (StAR)**

The reviews, where they were thorough, have provided strategic partners with much valuable information. The best approaches have incorporated a detailed curriculum mapping exercise and the results have been used by LAs and local LSCs to establish key 14-19 priorities.

These priorities include addressing curriculum gaps or duplication, improving the effectiveness of collaborative working and providing a greater focus on the needs of specific groups of learners.

As a result of the completion of StAR reviews in some areas, the LSC has been able to draw up and consult on options for change, particularly in the configuration of learning providers.

Where the StAR process has been less thorough or has moved at too slow a pace, this has inhibited the development of robust, joint plans with the local LA.

Link: <http://publications.education.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=HMI+2442&>

**Item no: 6****Reference type:**  
Inspectorate report**Author:** Ofsted**Year:** July 2004**Title:**

Focused provision 16 to 19: A survey of colleges with sixth form centres

**Place of publication:** London**Publisher:** Ofsted**Commissioning body:**  
HM Government**Notes:**

This report examines the arrangements made by some general further education (GFE) and tertiary colleges to provide at least some of their provision for 16 to 19 year-old students in a focused way, notably through the establishment of sixth form centres. The report covers the findings of a survey by Ofsted of a sample of such colleges during October 2003 to February 2004. The survey sought to identify the extent to which the provision of sixth form centres enhances the experiences of 16 to 19 year-old learners, particularly in relation to the range of provision available, the quality of guidance and support, the quality of teaching and learning and the pattern of students' achievement.

The survey is based on inspectors' visits to 18 GFE and tertiary colleges in England that had established sixth form centres catering for 16 to 19 year olds; discussions with managers, teachers and students; colleges' previous Ofsted reports together with self-assessment reports provided by the colleges; comparisons with general findings from Ofsted inspections of all colleges.

The report found that the predominant pattern is for the sixth form centres to focus on GCE AS and A2 courses. There is considerable variation in the extent to which colleges offer students a broad combination of academic and vocational programmes. Even where such arrangements are made, colleges report little success with this approach and some have instigated a movement back towards a more academic focus in their provision or a separation of academic and vocational routes possibly within the same centre.

**Findings relevant to improvement**

The report notes that improvement models would need to take into account that Sixth Form Centres vary in terms of physical location within colleges and in the size and the scope and range of provision for which they are responsible.

**Leadership and Management**

Improvements are needed in collaborative work which involves local schools and colleges and in particular, the relationship between curriculum developments with schools in the 14 to 16 phase.

Few colleges carry out extensive analysis of the cost effectiveness of provision (although high recruitment patterns indicate good value for money).

Improvements can be made by raising the quality threshold: teaching in the sixth form centres is generally characterised by competent, well-planned and well-managed lessons, but few that are outstanding or exemplary.

## Item no: 6 *Continued*

Colleges should optimise independent study time. Colleges in the sample did not generally make effective arrangements to enable students to study on their own while attending the centre. In several colleges, gaps in students' timetables during the day were not used positively.

Improvements in retention and achievement are linked to arrangements for student support, including tutorial provision; target-setting; and inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.

Colleges need to improve the development and embedding of Information Learning Technology (ILT). The report found only embryonic use of the intranet/virtual learning environment as a structured learning tool.

There should be greater commitment to the 'personalisation' agenda, as this reports suggests it is underutilised.

In a multi-site college, resources need to be better coordinated so that learners have access to the resources is needed.

### **Curriculum provision**

There are examples of good practice in colleges offering a good range of programmes available for students who do not have the necessary skills to undertake level 2 or 3 programmes. These include life skills, GNVQ intermediate programmes and a first diploma in sports.

Key skills provision needs improvement. The report found examples of ineffective management arrangements and poor achievement by students in key skills, particularly in terms of portfolio completion. The majority of colleges reported a struggle to convince students of the importance of key skills, particularly to those following GCE A level programmes.

Link: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Education/Providers/Sixth-forms-in-schools/Focused-provision-16-to-19-a-survey-of-colleges-with-sixth-form-centres>

**Item no: 7****Reference type:**

Inspectorate report

**Author:** Ofsted

Year: July 2003

**Title:**

Key Stage 4: towards a flexible curriculum

**Place of publication:** London**Publisher:** Ofsted**Commissioning body:**

HM Government

**Notes:**

This survey aims to:

- examine the changes being made by schools to the curriculum in Key Stage 4 and the effects these have had on pupils' achievement;
- explore the use of programmes to motivate those young people who have lost interest in school and become disengaged from learning;
- assess the quality of provision made outside school for young people who have absented themselves or have been excluded from school;
- evaluate the links between schools, other providers and local education authorities (LEAs).

**Findings relevant to improvement**

Schools need to make use of the flexibility in the Key Stage 4 to plan across the curriculum as a whole paying particular attention to improving basic skills.

The range of vocational qualifications and alternative provision needs to be expanded for pre-16 learners.

National guidelines are needed to define the curriculum that should be offered in alternative education programmes.

Better information for purposes of accountability and progress should be provided on students attending alternative courses away from school.

LEAs and Local LSCs should review the funding of places for alternative provision.

Alternative education providers should be registered and the DfES needs to consider how the quality of their programmes can be monitored.

LEAs should ensure that all alternative education centres managed by them are registered as pupil referral units.

Better systems for tracking pupils missing from school rolls should be put in place and maintained.

Link: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Forms-and-guidance/Browse-all-by/Other/General/Key-Stage-4-towards-a-flexible-curriculum>

**Item no: 8****Reference type:**  
Guidance Manual**Author:** Various**Year:** 2009**Title:** 14-19 Skills:  
Good Practice**Publisher:** Department  
of Children, Schools and  
Families (DCSF)**Commissioning body:** DCSF**Notes:**

This web based manual provides information to support the development of 14-19 provision. The site focuses on the development and sharing of good practice in relation to 14-19 provision and enables strategic planners and practitioners to do this through a professional dialogue which is facilitated through learning visits and for consortia to be able to do this through the twinning network. It also enables consortia and members of the consortia to do this by learning from others through the case studies which cover: Employer engagement, Collaboration, Common timetabling and Information, Advice and Guidance. This is supplemented by a selection of short videos. The component parts of this web based resource are not described as “evidence” but they do exemplify good practice and messages for improvement can be taken from them.

**Findings relevant to improvement**

Individual case studies outline the consortia and its location, the barriers faced, the solutions and the outcomes.

**Generic Critical Success Factors are identified for:****Collaboration**

- Collaborative unit size should facilitate regular contact/frequent interactions between institutions, the LA, LSC and other partners. This will enable cohesion and a secure basis of trust to be developed from which a common mission can evolve.
- Funding streams incentivise collaborative provision and collaborative working practices embedded through all major areas of LLSCs work and Federation activities.
- Locally available provision and timetabling arrangements which allow transfer between sites.
- Efficient and effective transport arrangements which minimise costs and inconvenience to students.
- Clear lead from senior staff and strong links between operational staff in partner institutions.

**Curriculum Development**

- Align school timetables to provide common options slots so that students from different schools can access off-site provision without it cutting across their main subjects.
- Involve teachers in planning provision with providers from the start. To ensure they have a clear understanding of what is going to be delivered, and how it can be used to support learning in school.

## Item no: 8 *Continued*

- Establish clear reporting and communication channels between schools and providers to ensure that individual student progress can be closely monitored, and any problems dealt with immediately and consistently.
- Make available a comprehensive range of support materials which help providers to plan and deliver the provision.
- An independent, impartial local area coordinator with the right credentials is essential to work with senior staff in schools, colleges and training providers to support INSET, local planning and data collection.
- Establish a framework for a 14-19 database which can be integrated with the broad range of relevant management information systems and linked to students' personalised learning plans. Develop trust between partners to ensure the database's currency and validity is maintained.
- Weave personalisation of the curriculum into an agreed 14-19 learning entitlement.

Weblink: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/>

### **Additional documents**

The following documents may also be relevant to this theme: Hayward G., Hodgson A., Johnson J., Oancea A., Pring R., Spours K., Wilde S. and Wright S. The Nuffield Review, 14-19 Education and Training, Annual Report 2004-05, October 2005, University of Oxford.

The second year of the report builds upon the first year but seeks to respond to the following issues:

- Aims, values and the language of education
- Quality of learning experience
- Heeding the voice of the learner
- Progression into FE and HE or into employment with training
- New diploma
- Teachers
- Failure of the system to meet expectations
- Raising participation rates
- Regulating the youth labour market
- A competitive and weakly collaborative system
- Policy initiatives
- Learning from past and other national experiences

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Plato P., *Nuffield Review of 14-19 Education and Training Briefing Paper 17, THE EXPERIENCE OF CURRENT 14-19 POLICY IN SURREY: A CASE STUDY*, July 2006, the Nuffield Foundation

This briefing paper discusses key aspects related to the Surrey 14-19 strategy which is a joint development between the county council, the LSC and Connexions.

Pring R. and Roberts M., *Nuffield Review of 14-19 Education and Training Briefing Paper 12, CASE STUDY: KENT* July 2006 the Nuffield Foundation

This paper outlines five major developments in the delivery of the 14-19 agenda within Kent. It includes a discussion of the experiences of different cluster/consortia partnerships

Pring R., *Nuffield Review of 14-19 Education and Training Briefing Paper 14, 14-19 PARTNERSHIPS: STEVENAGE Note of the visit on 20 May 2006*, August 2006, The Nuffield Foundation

This paper gives an overview of a the experiences of four establishments visited in Stevenage and which form part of a larger partnership which initially formed to respond to 16-19 provision but which has extended to respond to the 14-19 agenda. The partnership is a part of the 14-19 Pathfinder initiative.

West, A., *Nuffield Review of Education and Training Briefing Paper 10, Case Study: Lewisham College* June 2006, the Nuffield Foundation.

This briefing paper discusses the achievements and challenges of Lewisham College within the context of 14-19 delivery. It outlines successes in partnership delivery and places the college in the wider borough and national context. The paper does not describe itself as evidence, but messages for improvement may be taken from its example.

## Pathfinders

**Item no:** 9

**Reference type:**  
Evaluation report

**Author:**

Higham J., and Yeomans D.  
(University of Leeds)

**Year:** 2006

**Title:**

Collaborative Approaches to  
14-19 Provision: an Evaluation  
of the Second Year of the 14-  
19 Pathfinder Initiative

**Place of publication:**

Nottingham

**Publisher:**

Department for Education  
and Skills (DfES)

**Commissioning body:**

Department for Education  
and Skills and the Learning  
and Skills Council

**Notes:**

This report is an evaluation of the second year of the Pathfinders initiative (see item 3 for the first year evaluation) and describes the progress of the 39 pathfinders (and the 2 non pathfinder funded) partnerships. As above, the report focuses on intentions, plans and early developments.

### Findings relevant to improvement

#### Collaboration

The forms taken by collaboration in individual pathfinders were brought about by interaction between national, local and institutional policies and local contextual factors. Collaboration varied in institutional inclusivity, the levels at which it operates, its substantive focus and its geographical scope. It was still too early to assess the impact of collaboration on student participation, retention, achievement and progression but it had brought a significant broadening of curriculum provision and enhanced student information, support and guidance processes.

#### Curriculum development and progression

Different pathfinders gave different emphases to different aspects of curriculum provision. Most pathfinders focused strongly on the promotion of work-related learning and innovative vocational learning and most emphasised broadening the 14-16 curriculum. A minority emphasised curriculum broadening at 16-19.

Only some pathfinders focused upon developments in work-based learning, enterprise learning and variations in the pace of learning but where these were the foci significant progress was been made.

There was increased attention to the development and promotion of 14-19 progression routes and on the development of the 14-19 phase as a whole. Pathfinders varied in the emphasis they gave to promoting post-19 progression and, where this was a focus, attention was almost always directed to progression into higher education.

#### Engagement of learners and support

A wide range of young people was engaged in pathfinder activities although many continued to be drawn from the lower achieving groups and from students who are disaffected and disengaged. A minority of pathfinders involved higher achieving students through the provision of accelerated learning. There was some evidence that pathfinders' activities were impacting positively on student attendance and behaviour but this had not been systematically tested.



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There was innovative curricular and pedagogical development, especially in Phase Two pathfinders. The importance of enhanced information, advice and guidance was widely recognised with substantial development work taking place. Partnerships between individual institutions and the Connexions service became grounded in increased understanding of respective roles. Provision of information, guidance and advice at institutional levels appeared to continue to vary in quality and quantity. The development of Individual Learning Plans s continued to be variable although considerable development work was undertaken.

### Other issues

Case studies identified the following issues and experiences of interest:

- the high cost of working collaboratively. In one example, collaborative working had resulted in the employment of consortia consultants;
- transport costs and the logistics of transport; one suggestion was the development of local skills centres offering vocational learning. This would reduce the need for transport between areas;
- the need for a fair and equitable fee and registration system which reflected the contribution of individual institutions;
- the need to develop employer involvement;
- a continuing balance in favour of academic rather than vocational work, resulting in the participation from some groups remaining unaffected;
- a focus on generic skills in order to protect learners against unanticipated shifts in local skills gaps;
- a pathfinder acting in a brokerage role between schools and the occupational sector, ensuring that the curriculum was developed in response to the particular regeneration needs of the area concerned;
- a pathfinder building links with just two public service sectors. It was felt that this resulted in a better analysis of skill gaps;
- the complexity of strategic management in a pathfinder which covered a large geographical area. This was further affected by the tug of countywide objectives against consortia objectives;
- anticipated funding problems if off-site funding becomes the responsibility of schools.

Link: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR642.pdf>

**Item no: 10****Reference type:**  
Evaluation report**Author:**Higham J. and Yeomans D.  
(University of Leeds)**Year:** November 2005**Title:**Emerging Provision and  
Practice in 14-19 Education  
and Training: A Report on the  
Evaluation of the Third Year of  
the 14-19 Pathfinder Initiative.**Place of publication:**

Nottingham

**Publisher:**Department for Education  
and Skills (DfES)**Commissioning body:**

DfES and LSC

**Notes:**

This report builds on the evaluation carried out into the pathfinders' initiative (item 3 & 4). It looks at legacies from the initiative and key factors for effective working and sustainability.

**Findings relevant to Improvement****Curriculum changes resulting from collaborative working**

The Pathfinders initiative has been successful in broadening the curriculum; that is, improving range and provision, as well as promoting vocational learning, through collaborative arrangements. This is a direct result of the interplay between the agencies involved (schools, colleges, skills centres, training providers, workplaces) and the modes of learning (the enrichment of subjects and courses, hands on practical activities, e-learning, task-based learning). This is mainly the result of collaborative activity, which is considered to have resulted in learning gains. The authors go as far as to state that there have been learning gains as a result of collaborative working, a point which was also identified through Increased Flexibility Programme (IFP) evaluations.

The changes in curriculum provision could provide a potential framework for collaborative curriculum planning and support and guidance for students.

Changes in modes of learning resulted in increased CPD. Most of this was done at a local level in response to local needs although survey responses showed that training at a national level was also desired.

**Collaboration leading to stronger progression routes**

The pathfinders have contributed significantly to the strengthening of 14-19 progression routes.

**Pathfinder legacies**

The programme has led to:

- growing and stronger emphasis on 14-19 as a coherent phase with clearly defined and appropriate progression routes;
- the emergence of the concept of a 14-19 entitlement in many areas;
- broader, more relevant curricula giving learners greater choice and access to a much wider range of sites and modes of learning leading to increasing curricular differentiation from age 14;
- the development of substantial collaborative arrangements frequently drawing in a wide range of partners and tackling a broad range of 14- 19 issues;
- the development of a variety of forms of innovative learning for some learners;

**Item no: 10** *Continued*

- the development of strategic, collaborative leadership within the structural complexities of the 14-19 phase and in the context of high levels of institutional autonomy;
- the establishment of organisational infrastructures which supported collaborative working;
- the development of staff with networking skills able to facilitate collaboration within the 14-19 phase.

Link: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR737.pdf>

## Increased Flexibility Programmes

**Item no: 11**

**Reference type:**

Research report

**Author:**

Golden S., Nelson J.,  
O'Donnell L. and Rudd P.,  
(National Foundation for  
Educational Research)

**Year:** 2004

**Title:**

Implementing the Increased  
Flexibility for 14 to 16  
Year Olds Programme: The  
Experience of Partnerships  
and Students

**Place of publication:**

Nottingham

**Publisher:**

Department for Education  
and Skills (DfES)

**Commissioning body:**

Department for Education  
and Skills (DfES)

**Notes:**

The Increased Flexibility Programme (IFP) was introduced in 2002 by the DfES with the aim of improving vocational and work related learning opportunities for 14-16 year olds. Partnerships were established in 2002.

This summary is a part of an evaluation undertaken by the NFER and commissioned by the DfES into the first and second cohorts of students of the IFP programme. This summary presents the main findings from interviews conducted during follow-up visits to nine partnerships.

Improvement messages taken from this report have been done so in the light of findings from other reports under the same 'theme' undertaken by the NFER. The findings below are those that are different from, or additional to, the findings given for items 8, 9, 10, 11.

### Findings relevant to improvement

#### Partnership working

Key elements of partnership working are good communication, good relationships between individuals involved and partners who agreed and were committed to shared aims and objectives. In partnerships where there were high numbers of students discontinuing courses or being dissatisfied with courses, some elements of good partnership working as stated were missing.

#### Learning off-site

Off site learning is recognised as contributing to students' personal and social development as well as to a sense of maturity. However, there are challenges, such as logistical complexities, in achieving this. Partnerships have explored solutions, including increased delivery in schools. However, ensuring that students can experience and benefit from off-site learning in further education colleges needs to be kept in focus.

### **Teachers or Learning Support Assistants accompanying or visiting students**

Although a challenge to schools in terms of staff time and resources, there are benefits and this approach should be developed. The benefits are: improving relationships between schools and college staff; a means by which student attendance, behaviour and progress can be monitored; making college tutors feel more supported; showing pupils that they are valued; showing colleges that schools extend their responsibility for students beyond the school environment.

### **Informing staff better about the Increased Flexibility Programme**

All staff, including those not working on IFP, should be better informed of the programme in order to comment more intelligently on its benefits.

The profile of vocational training needs to be raised to ensure that it is valued across institutions. This would contribute towards such training becoming an integral part of ethos and curriculum.

### **Policy Implications**

More needs to be done by the DfES, IFP partnerships, LSCs, Education Business Partnerships and other employer organisations to involve employers on programmes.

Extra resources should be available to schools and colleges to allow them to have a dedicated member of staff to liaise with employers.

There should be more time for teacher development for working with 14-19 year olds.

National and regional organisations as well as school managers need to commit themselves to raising the profile of IFP.

Good guidance and information for students is needed to address discontinuation rates.

Link: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR562.pdf>

**Item no: 12****Reference type:**  
Evaluation report**Author:**Golden S., O'Donnell L.,  
Benton T. and Rudd P.,  
(National Foundation for  
Educational Research)**Year:** 2006**Title:**Evaluation of Increased  
Flexibility for 14 to 16 Year  
Olds Programme: Outcomes  
for the Second Cohort**Place of publication:**

Nottingham

**Publisher:**Department for Education  
and Skills (DfES)**Commissioning body:**Department for Education  
and Skills (DfES)**Notes:**

This summary focuses on the outcomes of the second cohort participating in the IFP programme (2003 to 2005). It is set against a backdrop of change in 14-19 policy. Attainment was measured against that of similar students who had not participated in the programme.

**Findings relevant to improvement****Progression to further training post-16**

87 per cent of participants on IFP (second cohort) had continued in education and training. Although it is hard to conclude exactly how IFP contributed to this or what students may have done if they had not been involved in IFP, it would be interesting to investigate if these transitions are sustained and to understand the factors that contribute to this.

Findings suggest that different outcomes may be evident for students who study different courses under IFP (that is, not studying NVQs, GNVQs and GCSEs in vocational subjects). These students were more likely to continue post-16 compared to similar students who had taken other courses but not within the IFP programme.

**Under achievement at Level 2**

Partnerships need to consider ways in which they offer support to students in core subjects (maths and English) particularly where courses are missed as a result of participation in IFP. Students in the second cohort were found to have a lower probability of achieving the level 2 threshold. Good practice and effective timetabling needs to be identified.

**Discontinuation**

Partnerships need to develop ways of targeting and providing additional support to the minority of lower attainers who dropped out of IFP before the end of Year 11. These students tended to be those on the SEN register or eligible for free school meals.

Link: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR786.pdf>

**Item no: 13****Reference type:**  
Evaluation report**Author:**Golden S., Nelson J.,  
O'Donnell L. and Morris M.,  
(National Foundation for  
Educational Research)**Year:** 2005**Title:**Evaluation of Increased  
Flexibilities for 14-16 Year  
Olds: The First Year**Place of publication:**

Nottingham

**Publisher:**Department for Education  
and Skills (DfES)**Commissioning body:**

HM Government

**Notes:**

This research commissioned by the DfES is an evaluation of the first year of participants in the Increased Flexibility Programme (IFP), introduced by the DfES in 2002. Findings in the report are based on a summary of the first year's surveys, which were carried out in the spring term of 2003.

The evaluation aims to assess:

- the effectiveness and cost effectiveness of the implementation of IFP and those models, strategies and practices which are the most least effective;
- the extent to which IFP has fulfilled its national aims and objectives;
- the impact of vocational qualifications and new work-related opportunities on young people's skill's, knowledge, attitudes, attendance, attainment and post -16 progression.

Findings were based on questionnaires sent to a representative sample of Year 10 students participating in IFP of whom 51 per cent replied, to schools attended by the sampled students and to the external organisations attended by the sample students. These surveys were used as a baseline, with students to be followed up in the spring of 2004 on completion of their courses. Data was also gathered from schools on student course choices and background characteristics, a telephone survey of parents of students and a report of case study visits to nine partnerships also inform findings.

**Findings relevant to improvement messages****Managing IFP**

The majority of partnerships had organised themselves into steering groups with senior managers from schools and colleges being represented. In most cases, an individual had been identified to be responsible for co-ordinating IFP. This individual generally had prior experience of working in partnership with external agencies.

Time is needed to ensure optimal communication and outcomes. Most respondents felt that more time was needed to maintain good contact with partners, manage paperwork, establish courses and oversee students.

In most partnerships the funding received for IFP was subsidised most often from school as opposed to college budgets. These additional funds were used to fund core elements of delivery, for example course material, as well as for management and staff development. The report suggests that approaches to sustaining subsidised funding and partnership approaches to addressing this in the future should be investigated.

## Item no: 13 *Continued*

Partnerships found that travel was one of the greatest challenges in managing the programme. Much of the subsidised funding was directed towards the cost of transporting students to their place of study. The approaches adopted by partners in response to this were varied and need to be followed up.

### **Working in Partnership**

No model of partnership working appeared to be more effective than others at this stage. Examples included: schools, colleges and training providers linking with similar organisations for strategic planning; working in partnership with other organisations for staff development or shared delivery; forming links outside IFP to deliver vocational courses.

Surveys revealed that partnership working had developed along three key lines:

- shared teaching for at least one of the qualifications students were taking;
- informal contact regarding students' progress;
- the involvement of schools in identifying qualifications for their students.

However, more collaborative working is needed to identify pupils for working in IFP, for example: the opportunity for students to meet with provider staff before embarking on courses; the involvement of colleges and training providers in identifying students; the interviewing of potential participants by providers.

Developing joint staff training sessions between schools, colleges and training providers can help staff from colleges and other external providers to learn from schools on how best to work with 14 to 16 year olds.

### **Delivery of IFP**

The negative effects of timetabling, such as students missing out on other subjects, were counterbalanced by other gains. Missing subjects is an issue which needs to be addressed and in part depends upon the capacity of individual students to manage their time. However, parents, students and staff commented on the benefits for certain students working off site in terms of preference, interest and motivation. Partnerships need to work to overcome timetabling issues and to find ways of ensuring that students can catch up on lessons if any are missed.

Link: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR511.pdf>



**Item no: 14****Reference type:**  
Evaluation report**Author:**Golden S., O'Donnell L.,  
Rudd P., (National Foundation  
for Educational Research)**Year:** 2005**Title:**Evaluation of Increased  
Flexibility for 14 to 16 Year  
Olds Programme: The  
Second Year**Place of publication:**

Nottingham

**Publisher:**Department for Education  
and Skills (DfES)**Commissioning body:**Department for Education  
and Skills (DfES)**Notes:**

This research commissioned by the DfES is an evaluation of the first year of participants in the Increased Flexibility Programme (IFP), introduced by the DfES in 2002. Findings in the report are based on a summary of the first years' surveys, which were carried out in the spring term of 2003 (see **Item no: 14**).

The evaluation aims to assess:

- the effectiveness and cost effectiveness of the implementation of IFP and those models, strategies and practices which are the most and least effective;
- the extent to which IFP has fulfilled its national aims and objectives;
- the impact of vocational qualifications and new work-related opportunities on young people's skill's, knowledge, attitudes, attendance, attainment and post -16 progression.

Building on the methodology for the first year, students and organisations were sent follow-up questionnaires in the spring term of 2004 when the students were in Year 11. The data presented in this summary is based on responses from:

- 2,616 students who replied in both 2003 and 2004;
- 248 schools, 115 of whom replied in 2003 and 2004, 78 colleges and training providers, 62 of whom replied in both years;
- 61 of the respondents in 2004 were lead partners.

Findings commented on here differ from or are in addition to those found at the end of the first year (item 8).

**Findings relevant to improvement messages****Partnership working**

The second cohort saw the consolidation of partnerships. Individual relationships within these had become more established. This was identified as an important factor in working effectively in partnership. Formal mechanisms for sharing information had also been improved.

However, issues concerning impact on staff time and workload in implementing IFP and liaising between parties needs to be addressed, with implications for the allocation of time and resources as the programme continues to develop.



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### Management and delivery of the programme

Staff in external providers were more satisfied with the second cohort in terms of their participation in ensuring that students had the right information about courses as a means of matching them more appropriately to courses. They also felt that they were better informed about students as a result of having more information about them.

### Policy implication for future practice based on findings

There should be an increase in core funding in order to reduce the need for lead partners to subsidise programmes.

Funding should be directed at time management of the programme (i.e. staff time) and also at the cost implications of a staff member accompanying pupils off site.

There should be guidance for partnerships on timetable arrangements; lessening the negative impact on other Key Stage 4 courses; and transport between sites.

There should be improved guidance and information for students before embarking on IFP and at the end of the course at the point of post-16 transition.

Link: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR609.pdf>

## Item no: 15

**Reference type:**  
Evaluation report

**Author:**  
Golden S., O'Donnell L.,  
Benton T. and Rudd P.,  
(National Foundation for  
Educational Research)

**Year:** 2005

**Title:**  
Evaluation of Increased  
Flexibility for 14 to 16 Year  
Olds Programme: Outcomes  
for the First Cohort

**Place of publication:**  
Nottingham

**Publisher:**  
Department for Education  
and Skills (DfES)

**Commissioning body:**  
Department for Education  
and Skills (DfES)

### Notes:

This research commissioned by the DfES, is an evaluation of the first cohort of participants on the Increased Flexibility for 14-16 year olds Programme (IFP), introduced by the DfES in 2002. The evaluation presents key findings on the progression, attainment, attendance and attitudes of the first cohort (2002-2004). In particular the evaluation aims to assess:

- the effectiveness and cost effectiveness of the implementation of IFP and those models, strategies and practices which are the most least effective;
- the extent to which IFP has fulfilled its national aims and objectives;
- the impact of vocational qualifications and new work-related opportunities on young people's skills, knowledge, attitudes, attendance, attainment and post -16 progression.

Four previous reports evaluated the nature of the cohort and partnerships, outcomes in terms of the development of skills, the experience of partnerships and students of implementing and participating in IFP and changes in attitudes at the end of the second year.

The evaluation in this report drew on a range of sources: baseline data on schools and individuals participating in the first cohort; surveys of a representative sample of 11, 500 students from a range of schools and providers of vocational courses; a follow up survey; data on attendance, achievement and post 16 data collected from schools; case studies and interviews with nine partnerships; telephone interviews with parents of participants, employers and staff of higher education institutions.

### **Findings relevant to improvement**

#### **Targeting students**

Evidence of achievement at the end of Key Stage 4 indicates that participation in the IFP should be targeted at those who achieve level 5 or lower at Key stage 3. This suggestion is made based on an evaluation of the characteristics of those who benefited from participation in the programme in comparison to their peers. It was found that students from the first cohort with a level 5 or below at Key Stage 3 and who studied GCSE's in vocational subjects, NVQs and other vocational qualifications benefited more in terms of the total points they achieved at the end of Key Stage 4 than students with higher attainment.

However, this also implies that schools and colleges need to work in partnership to ensure that courses are matched appropriately to the ability of higher attainers.

#### **Student engagement**

Steps need to be taken in the delivery of programmes to address student interest and motivation and hence improve attitudes to learning and participation. One example is the provision of a teacher or tutor to discuss the progress of their course with students.

Teachers and tutors should incorporate approaches into the delivery of programmes to ensure student engagement. This may be supported by the sharing of good practice across the sector.

#### **Further Guidance**

Nearly half of all respondents to the post-16 survey would have liked more guidance in choosing courses and routes.

The provision of a tutor, teacher or appropriate adult to provide guidance and support is an important factor in influencing students to continue in training or education post-16. Young people who were in education and training post-16 were able to refer to adult guidance (including from employers) which had influenced their choice and guided them in selecting an appropriate course. The need for such guidance was particularly identified by those students who wanted to choose a work-based learning route, and who needed support in identifying appropriate work based training such as an Apprenticeship.

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**Working in partnership**

Findings indicate that the delivery of the IFP influenced the outcomes of students. Those who studied their IFP at school gained more points than similar students who took the same types of qualifications with an external provider.

It was also found that IFPs delivered in partnerships between a school and an external provider achieved better outcomes than through other approaches to delivery, such as a school or an external provider delivering the programme independently. This implies that further collaboration in developing and delivering courses, including shared teaching approaches, would be beneficial to student success.

The nature of partnerships may also need to be considered. Findings suggest that students in large partnerships, that is with more than five schools, achieved less than similar students in smaller partnerships. It was also found that partnerships which had involved employers and Education Business Partnerships in their steering groups and where employers had provided guest speakers, achieved better outcomes than those where this was not the case.

The report does not reject the idea of working in larger partnerships but rather suggests that more creative and effective ways of adopting this approach need to be explored to support the future development of IFP.

Link: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR668.pdf>

**Item no: 16**

**Reference type:**  
Inspectorate report

**Author:** Ofsted

**Year:** June 2005

**Title:**  
Increased flexibility  
programme at Key Stage 4

**Place of publication:** London

**Publisher:** Ofsted

**Commissioning body:**  
HM Government

**Notes:**

This report evaluates the progress of the IFP during its first two years, and builds on an interim report published in 2004.

**Findings relevant to improvement**

**Way forward for Partnerships**

A greater number of training organisations and employers should be involved in partnerships.

Partnerships should review the provision of work based learning with a view to its improvement.

Attendance on out-of-school IFP courses should be improved.

Partnerships should establish better systems for monitoring student progress. This should include improved reporting by colleges and training providers on pupils' progress against preset targets.

### **Way forward for schools**

Schools should improve the quality of teaching and learning on vocational courses by developing teacher understanding of industrial and commercial practices.

Schools should improve links between work experience and vocational subjects. They should prepare students and employers more effectively for work experience placements and evaluate the learning that has taken place.

### **Way forward for colleges**

Colleges should provide additional training for teachers on issues such as: teaching 14-16 year olds; child protection; health and safety; and understanding data related to performance at Key stage 3.

They should improve monitoring of student progress and provide feedback to schools and parents.

They should improve the careers education and guidance provision received by IFP students.

### **Way forward for training organisations**

Training organisations need to become more involved in IFP partnerships in order to offer a wider range of courses.

They should become more involved in schools careers education and guidance programmes to raise the profile of work-based learning routes.

Link: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Education/Key-stages-and-transition/Key-Stage-4/Increased-Flexibility-Programme-at-Key-Stage-4-the-first-two-years>

### **Additional documents**

The following document may also be relevant to this theme:

*Increased Flexibility Case Studies in Improving Practice*, March 2004, Learning and Skills Council

This guide presents 38 case studies of successful practice in local contexts recorded under the IFP for 14-16 year olds.

**Item no: 17****Reference type:**  
Inspectorate report**Author:** Ofsted**Year:** May 2004**Title:**Increased flexibility  
programme at Key Stage 4:  
Evaluation of the first year**Place of publication:** London**Publisher:** Ofsted**Commissioning body:**  
HM Government**Notes:**

This report presents findings from a two year survey to evaluate the impact of the IFP on the attainment, progress, learning and social development of those young people at Key Stage 4.

The report is based on: visits to a sample of IFP partnerships from the summer 2002 to summer 2003 to monitor readiness for IFP; follow up visits to a further 50 partnerships; visits to further education colleges, work based learners and secondary schools. Interviews were undertaken with pupils, their teachers and trainers, careers education staff, and senior managers of schools, colleges and training providers. Written and practical work was closely examined. Lesson observation records spanning one year were used to evaluate work experience, work based learning and the introduction of GCSEs in vocational subjects. An evaluation of work experience and work-related learning was carried out during the summer of 2003 with the voluntary support of a panel of employers.

**Findings relevant to improvement****Improving partnership working**

Partnership working needs developing. There needs to be joint decision-making on timetabling issues, courses to be provided and progression opportunities available to pupils. Clearer protocols need to be established with schools becoming more involved in the decisions about the types of course and when and where they will be offered.

Partnerships need to improve the sharing of information on pupil's prior attainment to ensure that pupils are placed on the appropriate course. There should be agreement on sharing of knowledge before pupils are placed. Teachers in colleges and training providers would benefit from training to help them to understand how data is used in schools.

Expectations of pupils' abilities need to be raised; conversely, better support is needed for pupils who found learning difficult. Teachers in colleges and training providers need training to help them to set clear targets for the standard of pupil work and to provide regular reports on progress.

More partnerships need to develop better systems of quality assurance. There was little evidence of this.

Partnerships need to work towards better curriculum planning to provide shared curriculum opportunities and to align timetables to minimise the risk of pupils missing out on learning opportunities through missed subjects. Where lessons are missed partnerships need to find strategies for pupils to catch up on lessons.

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Partnerships need to find more creative ways to respond to curriculum organisation which de-motivates pupils, for example having a full day devoted to one vocational course. Partners proved that in spite of timetable restrictions and travel they were able to find ways around this.

### **Selection and Guidance**

Criteria for selection and the provision of advice and guidance need to be developed. Pupils were often selected based on ambiguous criteria such as poor attendance or behaviour at school.

It is recommended that partnerships plan their programmes in advance to ensure that enough information is available to Year 9 pupils during their option process. This would support a move towards offering places based on aptitude, behaviour and attendance.

### **Gender issues**

Gender issues need to be addressed on the selection of types of courses by boys and girls

### **Funding**

Partnerships should allocate funds more equitably with a focus on course costs or support rather than excessive emphasis on the coordination of the programme.

### **Progression opportunities**

A broader range of qualifications should be available to ensure pupils have progression opportunities if they complete courses in Year 10 or early in Year 11.

Link: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Education/Key-stages-and-transition/Key-Stage-4/Increased-Flexibility-Programme-at-Key-Stage-4-interim-report>

**Item no: 18****Reference type:**

Guidance handbook

**Author:** Devitt K. and Roker D.**Year:** November 2005**Title:**

The Increased Flexibility Programme: learning from schools and colleges

**Place of publication:** Brighton**Publisher:**

Trust for the study of Adolescence

**Notes:**

This booklet is based on research undertaken by the authors during 2003-2005 that explores different views of the government's IFP for 14-16 year olds. This booklet summarises the part of the research that looked at the experiences of school and college staff.

**Findings relevant to improvement****Success factors in the IFP programme**

Success has been attributed to:

- having strong links between schools and colleges;
- having one person responsible for IF in each school and college;
- developing and implementing a more refined selection process;
- offering taster courses, or sample days;
- being more student-centred, through offering more help and support to students that need it.

**Challenges for improvement in the IFP programme:**

To improve the organisation of IFP:

- timetable issues should be addressed;
- there should be more consistent visits from schools on students IF college days;
- there should be more information from colleges concerning availability of IF courses;
- there should be better communication between schools and colleges.

Colleges felt that 'dumping' students was a problem.

Training is important for college tutors teaching 14-19 year olds. Training needs to be standardised and consistent.

The profile of IFP needs to be raised, so that it is viewed better. This includes raising the profile of vocational training.

Too much time was dedicated to formulating strategies and more time needs to be spent rather on action.

**Other Future actions**

Students should be offered taster courses.

Connexions should be involved earlier and more extensively.

Link: <http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/VLSP-23726>



## Work related learning

**Item no:** 19

**Reference type:**  
Research report

**Author:**  
Department for Children,  
Schools and Families (DCSF)

**Year:** 2007

**Title:**  
Building on the Best: Final  
Report and Implementation  
Plan of the review of 14-19  
Work-related Learning

**Place of publication:**  
Nottingham

**Publisher:** DCSF

**Commissioning body:** DCSF

### Notes:

This report is a review of work-related learning (WRL). Its focus is on improvements needed to build the capacity and quality of employer engagement, in relation to the challenges brought about by the 14-19 education and skills reforms. The document is primarily intended for key stakeholders involved in working with employers to deliver opportunities for work related learning. It is also of interest to those involved in delivering a work related curriculum in schools, colleges and independent learning providers.

The report is based on: a review of the literature, analysis of available management information, interviews and workshops with stakeholders, questionnaire surveys, and fieldwork in three local authority areas.

The report refers to Ofsted findings that a small proportion of work experience placements did not lead to effective learning; that students did not enjoy their placements; and that a minority of schools did not see WRL as applying to all students.

Expectations of employers are to support:

- around 15,000 students participating in the Key Stage 4 engagement programme in 2007/08 (with placements in future to be sought for all those in the key stage 4 cohort);
- an additional 180,000 apprenticeship places over and above the existing 220,000;
- places for around 13,500 young people to receive 50 days of work experience as part of the Young Apprenticeships programme in 2007/08;
- at least 20,000 Personal Development Programme placements for teachers and other staff;
- a minimum of 10 days work experience for both pre- and post-16 learners as part of the Diploma delivery requirement.

The report recommends that there should be a new approach to local funding and delivery needs to be implemented to deal with the complexities of local delivery chains for WRL, better co-ordinating WRL provision and establishing a strategic approach at a local level. It suggests that this can be addressed by placing responsibility for planning and commissioning WRL in local areas with the 14-19 strategic partnerships. These partnerships will be expected to:

- give strong leadership in planning and commissioning WRL;
- map WRL resources in their area and work in partnership to use those resources to the greatest effect including ensuring the statutory requirement is met;
- determine who to contract with for delivery of opportunities for WRL services and what contract management arrangements they want to use to deliver best value;



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- ensure quality standards for intermediaries are met, drawing on existing models until a new national standard is in place;
- examine where databases can be linked locally and/or regionally;
- make links between different employer engagement activities, such as Train to Gain for adults, and WRL.

The DCSF proposes to work with partners and stakeholders to produce guidance on roles and responsibilities in WRL. This will include taking the requirement of Diplomas and a revision by the QCA of the framework for WRL

National standards need to be developed for WRL, because quality standards for Education Business Link Organisations (EBLOs) and systematic assessment of quality are not yet in place.

**Findings relevant to improvement**

**Employer engagement in work-related learning**

Employers need more support in fully understanding the role that they play in WRL and in dealing with issues such as health and safety, insurance and Criminal Record Bureau Checks.

There should be a more systematic approach to identifying, sharing and rewarding good practice, for example through bringing together work related learning co-ordinators; supporting local activity through national campaign and employer champion activities; supporting rural areas experiencing capacity issues.

Link: [http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/documents/14-19workrelatedlearning\\_web.pdf](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/documents/14-19workrelatedlearning_web.pdf)

**Item no: 20**

**Reference type:**

Inspectorate report

**Author:** Ofsted

**Year:** December 2007

**Title:**

The Young Apprenticeships programme 2004–07: an evaluation

**Place of publication:** London

**Publisher:** Ofsted

**Commissioning body:** HM Government

**Notes:**

This report is an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Young Apprenticeships programme launched by the then Department for Education and Skills (DfES) from its introduction in 2004 to delivery in 2006/07. The Young Apprenticeship programme allows students with average and above average ability to study for nationally recognised vocational qualifications. From its introduction, schools were able to offer a more flexible curriculum for 14 to 16 year olds and work related learning became a statutory requirement for this age range (Key stage 4).

Findings for this evaluation were gathered from Ofsted Inspectorate visits to 18 partnerships in the academic year 2004/05, 24 in 2005/06 and 14 in 2006/07 involving students from the first three cohorts. The partnerships represented a range of vocational areas.

## Findings relevant to improvement

### Prior attainment and the use of student information

Key stage 3 data needs to be used more effectively to ensure that activities are better matched to student ability and that clear and challenging targets are set. Target setting in 6 of the partnerships was too broad or directed at groups of students rather than at individual students. Both approaches were felt to inhibit student progress.

Individual learning plans need to be used more effectively.

Better use of time needs to be made between sessions to ensure that students extend and consolidate their learning.

### Gender issues

Gender stereotyping needs to be tackled more rigorously in different vocational areas

### Knowledge and understanding of the vocational sector

Students' knowledge and understanding of the vocational sector should be improved in order to support their participation on courses. One partnership achieved this by including:

- visits to local companies and public sector organisations;
- presentations and talks by local employers;
- students' own research for assignments on aspects of the vocational sector;
- teaching programmes which focused on different aspects of the vocational area;
- careers information and interviews with the Connexions service;
- tutors and teachers with recent experience of the vocational sector;
- work placements.

### Independent Learning

Providing students with opportunities for independent learning benefits participants. It enables students to be proactive in planning work and getting on with tasks without direct supervision and to take more responsibility over their learning. The growing independence of students was supported by the development of study skills by half of the partnerships.

### Key skills

Key skills provision needs to be developed. Overall planning for key skills was identified as a weakness across partners.

### **Employer links**

Links with employers need to be developed further. Working with partners is most effective when:

- employers are represented on the partnership steering group;
- employers help draw up a service level agreement which identifies the role and responsibilities of all partners, including the employers themselves;
- employers provide a team of dedicated training mentors to work with students on work placements;
- employers provide sponsorship to provide resources, materials, training and recreational facilities;
- local education business partnerships build on existing links with employers and help provide high quality work placements;
- employers are guided as to what activities and experiences in the workplace best meet individual students' needs and contribute to the qualifications students are trying to achieve;
- there are formal procedures for ascertaining employers' views of the programme;
- the recruitment and selection of young apprentices involves employers.

Employers saw the programme in a positive light, seeing benefits both to students and to the organisations.

### **Advice and Guidance**

A continued focus on providing advice and guidance to both students and parents about course requirements is important in influencing motivation and commitment. This can be achieved through the provision of clear information alongside other option choices; information on progression routes; and organising parent evenings. These interventions contribute to reducing dropout rates.

### **Self Evaluation**

The quality of self-evaluation in partnerships was identified as needing improvement.

Link: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Education/Youth-services-and-careers/The-Young-Apprenticeships-programme-2004-07-an-evaluation>

**Item no: 21****Reference type:**  
Inspectorate report**Author:** Ofsted**Year:** May 2007**Title:**The Key Stage 4 Curriculum:  
Increased Flexibility and  
work-related learning**Place of publication:** London**Publisher:** Ofsted**Commissioning body:**  
HM Government**Notes:**

This survey is being published at the end of a two-year Ofsted survey looking at flexibility in the Key Stage 4 curriculum and work related learning. The interim report published at the end of the first year can be found in this catalogue (Item 15). The survey sample of 155 schools was broadly representative of secondary schools nationally.

Findings noted here take into account earlier findings described above.

**Findings relevant to improvement****Action by the DfES**

The Department for Education and Skills in consultation with the local Learning and Skills Councils should allocate funding in a way that encourages schools in an area to work together to improve the curriculum.

**Action by local authorities**

Local Authorities (LAs) should:

- support schools and other providers in strengthening 14 to 19 strategies for all young people so that progression routes are flexible enough to meet their needs;
- continue to broker arrangements amongst schools, colleges and other educational partners.

**Action by schools**

Schools should:

- offer a broad curriculum to all students which provides sufficient choice, meets their needs and makes vocational options available to all;
- collaborate effectively with other educational partners in an area to ensure that a wide range of curriculum options is provided for all students;
- provide sufficient training for staff to teach new courses;
- monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and benefits of work-related learning and enterprise education.

Link: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Documents-by-type/Thematic-reports/The-Key-Stage-4-curriculum-increased-flexibility-and-work-related-learning>

**Item no: 22****Reference type:**  
Inspectorate report**Author:** Ofsted**Year:** November 2005**Title:**The Key Stage 4 Curriculum:  
Increased flexibility, work  
related learning and Young  
Apprenticeship programmes**Place of publication:** London**Publisher:** Ofsted**Commissioning body:**  
HM Government**Notes:**

This interim report which can be read in relation to the Ofsted documents numbers 14 and 16 in this catalogue. It is a summary of the effectiveness of changes to the curriculum and work-related learning in the first year of IFP.

Inspectors visited six local authority based partnerships involving eight colleges and 63 linked schools, as well as 67 schools selected on a nationally representative basis. In addition, visits were made to 18 Young Apprenticeship partnerships.

Messages taken from this report are those which are different to or in addition to those identified in other related reports in this catalogue document (item 14, 16 & 17).

**Findings relevant to improvement****Worked Related Learning (WRL)**

Guidance is needed on developing a statement or clear definition of entitlement to WRL.

The profile of WRL learning needs improving as staff and governors fail to see the relevance for high achievers.

**Young Apprenticeship Programme (YAP)**

Links between the YAP and vocational courses need developing.

The minimum standard needed for students to participate in YAP needs to be respected. A third of partnerships had not respected this.

Partnerships need to improve the implementation of YAP. It was found that the requirement for the number of days of work experience was ignored, along with advice to both students and parents about the nature of courses.

Students need to be encouraged to become independent learners. This was lacking in many YAP programmes.

**Capacity building**

Teachers need to be better trained to acquire the required knowledge and skills for courses.

More funding is needed to support providers in providing adequate resources including buildings.

**Student Support and Guidance**

Student guidance needs to be improved in relation to option choice and work experience. Individual needs are not being met and schools and colleges are failing to share information.

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## The role of Local Authorities (LAs)

LAs need to take a greater role in supporting partnerships. In general, partnership working needs to be developed.

Link: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Education/Providers/Secondary-schools/The-Key-Stage-4-curriculum-Increased-Flexibility-Work-related-Learning-and-Young-Apprenticeship-Programmes>

## Collaboration for 14-19

Item no: 23

**Reference type:**  
Research report

**Author:**  
Smith D. and Waxman D.

**Year:** August 2008

**Title:**  
Better Brighter Futures:  
14-19 Reform Beacon  
Scheme Round 9

**Publisher:** EMIE at NFER

**Commissioning body:**  
Local Government Association

### Notes:

This report is the outcome of qualitative research. It identifies the key elements and ways of working towards the government's 14-19 reforms in education and training in three Beacon Authorities and three others where good practice has been identified. A key aim of the Beacon scheme is to share best practice among local authorities and this report is a contribution to that process.

It contains a list of critical success factors, a clear indication of what would be effective practice, with brief examples from participating authorities to illustrate the points and a series of appendices containing supplementary information about the contributors and appropriate contact details.

### Findings relevant to improvement

#### Summary

Delivering the 14-19 reforms requires effective leadership and change management; collaboration and thorough planning. Broadening curriculum opportunities is seen to encourage those not motivated by current provision, as well as those who would benefit from different types and styles of curriculum. However, the learners must be able to access this curriculum offer, which requires timetable alignment (NOT common timetabling, but an agreement on principles of the overall pattern of provision), transport arrangements and protocols and ensuring that provision is tailored to individual needs. Furthermore, that ICT is used to support learning (for example through VLEs) and that quality assurance is in place to ensure a consistent learning experience. The document identifies a range of replicable critical success factors and is supplemented by appendices which outline specific examples of practice.

#### Critical Success Factors, that can be replicated, include:

- Developing a strategic vision that encompasses and is accepted by business, culture, leisure learning and social interest, and that incorporates maximum integrated planning.
- Focusing on learners, not institutional self interest; defining entitlement, gauging demand, promoting pedagogy and experiential learning; remembering vulnerable groups.

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- Investing in developing the aims and values of the partnership so that partners are genuine stakeholders and equally valued. Making sure that all partners can identify the benefits for them.
- Developing genuine area wide collaboration and building trust and confidence between partners. Ensuring that collaboration always promotes effectiveness and never requires unnecessary compromise.
- Building an area infrastructure with full timetable alignment as the foundation, giving specialist providers the capacity to deliver across the area and affording all learners access to that specialist expertise.
- Involving key employers and being specific about what you want from them.
- Investing in a 14-19 team. Establishing effective leadership and management by empowering the team to turn rhetoric into reality. Ensuring that meetings are effective, and that decisions are made.
- Giving priority in your strategy to ensuring the impartiality of information, advice and guidance and ensuring that there are systems and mechanisms in place to secure and measure its impartiality.
- Planning to make targets realistic and allowing time for confidence in new developments to grow. Doing lots of small things, reviewing them frequently, terminating failing projects without blame, building on success and learning from mistakes.
- Commissioning the best provision, ensuring that it is authentic and applying persuasive and manageable quality assurance processes to it. Ensuring a real role for learners in evaluation.
- Pooling 14-19 funding streams. Planning from the start to overcome potential sustainability issues.
- With Diplomas, concentrating on quality not quantity. Investing in Diploma Champions. Working with practitioners and winning hearts and minds.
- Developing a comprehensive and inclusive workforce development strategy.
- Using ICT to support learning and its management and to communicate effectively with partners, including learners.
- Showing a strong determination to effect agreed changes in learners' best interest.

LINK: [http://www.nfer.ac.uk/nfer/research/projects/beacon-scheme-round-9/beacon-scheme-round-9\\_home.cfm](http://www.nfer.ac.uk/nfer/research/projects/beacon-scheme-round-9/beacon-scheme-round-9_home.cfm)



**Item no: 24****Reference type:**

Research report

**Author:** Hardman J.**Year:** July 2006**Title:**

Collaborating for success; collaborative arrangements for 14–19 provision in the West Midlands - summary and analysis of research findings from six case studies.

**Place of publication:** London**Publisher:**

The Learning and Skills Network

**Commissioning body:**

Learning and Skills Council (LSC)

**Notes:**

This project was designed to support LSC planning in a changing policy context and to highlight good practice in collaborative arrangements.

Findings from the six case studies have been used to:

- examine how 14-19 collaborative arrangements have developed and responded to local circumstances;
- assess the impact of developments on curriculum offer, learner choice and participation;
- identify the main success factors for starting and sustaining effective 14-19 collaborations.

**Findings relevant to improvement****Developing approaches to effective partnership working**

Moves to establish joint governance of 14-19 collaborative provision are apparent in 3 of the case study areas. Where this is most developed protocols have been formulated and agreed, with committees comprising school governors, and college representatives with LSC staff in an advisory role.

Two case studies have developed a brokerage role within the partnership. This facilitates an overall map of provision where learner applications can be received, assessed and matched up centrally.

**Work based training providers' associations**

Several case studies show that private work based training providers find it hard to complete with public providers because of staff availability, a lack of time; and barriers related to cultural differences and lack of knowledge about the role of work based training providers.

Three case studies show private providers coming together under an umbrella organisation, which they fund to represent and negotiate with partners on their behalf. This proved beneficial in supporting providers in making an impact on planning and collaborative working.

**Transparency in funding and data sharing**

All partnerships are addressing issues related to the transparency of information in terms of funding and data, for example retention and the cost effectiveness of programmes.

There are examples of case studies looking for alternative funding streams in the event of money being no longer available. For example, partners are agreeing to jointly fund posts. Such alternatives may be difficult for smaller schools in rural areas.



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**Employer engagement**

Issues remain about the engagement of employers. Building contacts with employers in the first stages is resource-intensive without guaranteed gains. Initiatives in this area need to be government led.

**Inclusion and the learners' voice**

The voice of learners and learners' parents in shaping and planning the programme remains limited. Two case studies show good practice in establishing young people's focus groups and forums.

Two projects using specially assigned co-ordinators and a social inclusion panel are working towards better provision for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Link: [http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/search/detailmini.jsp?\\_nfpb=true&\\_ERICExtSearch\\_SearchValue\\_0=ED502032&ERICExtSearch\\_SearchType\\_0=no&accno=ED502032](http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/search/detailmini.jsp?_nfpb=true&_ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=ED502032&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=no&accno=ED502032)

**Item no: 25**

**Reference type:** Briefing paper

**Author:** Roberts M.

**Year:** July 2006

**Title:**

Nuffield Review of 14-19  
Education and Training  
Briefing Paper 13, July 2006  
CASE STUDY: OXFORDSHIRE

**Publisher:**

The Nuffield Foundation

**Commissioning body:**

The Nuffield Foundation

**Notes:**

This paper outlines collaborative working in Oxfordshire. It places the county's experience within the context of its long history of collaboration between schools and other educational providers and its response to the implementation of the 14-19 agenda.

The paper responds to questions asked by the Nuffield Review and describes what works in the Oxfordshire context, where 14-19 education and training is being provided both collaboratively and separately. Although the paper does not present itself as a document giving evidence of good practice in the delivery and design of curriculum for 14-19, it does have examples to support improvement.

Following wide consultation Oxfordshire published a 14-19 strategy document 'Developing young people', which argued for sustained collaboration between schools, colleges, the LEA and the local LSC to raise aspirations and attainment for 14-19. It includes a clear outline of roles for each of these groups and steps towards securing strong area partnerships.

Eight partnerships have already been established (one e-learning) with targeted funding streams.

A co-ordinating group, the Oxfordshire 14-19 Strategy Group (OSFG) was established, consisting of the executive director of the local LSC, the county council director of learning and culture, the manager of the Oxfordshire learning partnership, the president of the Oxfordshire chamber of commerce, and the strategic executive manager.

**Item no: 25** *Continued*

The group assigned a consultant to each partnership offering 5-7 days consultancy time (June 2005 to March 2007). Each partnership has completed a self-assessment form to identify where provision is strong and where gaps exist.

Between 2005 and 2006, the county achieved: effective needs analysis by the seven partnerships to support curriculum design; a better understanding by partners of local work based learning and training providers; the creation of a children's and young people's database; clearly focused careers guidance; partnerships being more proactive in NEET (young people not in education, employment or training) prevention and intervention.

**Findings relevant to improvement**

**Collaborative working in practice**

Collaboration works best when institutions have the same priorities.

Working collaboratively has improved participation at level 3, attainment and progression between courses (including level 1 & 2).

The most needed courses are at Foundation Level and Level 1. Head teachers feel that these would be better in school but evidence shows that many 14 and 15 years old flourish and achieve better in a college environment because of new possibilities.

Head teachers are influenced by providing for the best interests of pupils as well as maintaining the status of the institution in the eyes of parents when promoting education and training. As a result, collaboration and advocating of new work-related courses may not be the best approach when recruiting from Year 7 in a time of falling rolls.

Travelling, timetabling and funding are the main obstacles to delivering 14-19.

Consortia have improved participation at Level 3 by enabling students to take subjects appropriate to their interests.

The seven local partnerships have undertaken the necessary needs-analysis on which to base their curriculum planning and schools now have a better understanding of local work-based-learning and training providers.

Careers education and guidance is clearly focused and partnerships are much more proactive in NEET prevention and intervention.

Link: <http://www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/files/documents150-1.pdf>

**Item no: 26****Reference type:**

Other: Discussion paper

**Author:**

Hodgson A. and Spours K.

**Year:** November 2007**Title:**ISSUES PAPER 2 14-19  
Partnerships: From Weakly  
Collaborative Arrangement  
to Strongly Collaborative  
Local Learning Systems**Publisher:**

Nuffield Foundation

**Commissioning body:**

Nuffield Foundation

**Notes:**

Issues Papers are published as a part of the Nuffield review with the aim of continuing the debate on 14-19 education. This Issues Paper looks at partnerships in the context of 14 and 19 and asks: what systems of government and organisation are needed to support inclusive and future orientated learning for all 14-19 learners. It argues that there is an identified need for a move from 'weak collaborations' to 'strong collaborations'. The paper considers the characteristics of these two different collaborative experiences.

The paper draws attention to conflicting government policy which seeks to encourage collaboration whilst creating an environment where individual institutions are competing for pupil, funding and resources.

The paper argues that future policy interventions should consider a six-point programme for creating strong collaboration:

- 1** Recognise that institutional collaboration helps and competition hinders learners' prospects in 14-19 education and training.
- 2** Strengthen the leadership capacity of Local Authorities while also exploring the role for regional bodies in co-ordinating those aspects of 14-19 development that go beyond local authority boundaries.
- 3** Introduce area-wide accountability measures to provide common goals for partnership institutions.
- 4** Encourage institutional collaboration to develop the learning opportunities for all 14-19 year olds.
- 5** Provide a focus for a wider range of teachers, college lecturers and work-based trainers to collaborate locally around improving the quality of learning.
- 6** Be prepared to make all institutions (including Academies) accountable locally and regionally and consider the rationalisation of post-16 institutions to promote choice of provision, equity and efficiency.

Link: <http://www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/files/news54-1.pdf>

**Item no: 27**

**Reference type:**

Other: Discussion paper

**Author:**

Higham J. and Yeomans D.

**Year:** May 2005

**Title:**

Seminar 2: 17 May

2005, Discussion Paper 9

Collaborative approaches to  
14-19 Education and Training  
Provision

**Commissioning body:**

The Nuffield Foundation

**Notes:**

This paper discusses the evaluation carried out into the Pathfinders initiative (see above items 3, 4, and 5). It describes the policy context and summarises the situation on the ground as shown through the evaluations. It discusses the nature of collaboration (weak/strong), its nature and also the areas which were being focused on by partners through collaborative work such as curriculum and work-related learning.

The paper points to the need to take account of the complex geographical and local policy contexts that collaborations are operating in. These are further accentuated by a myriad of national policies and the need for clear values and aims in the 14-19 agenda. Schools maintain a relative level of autonomy within collaboration and can engage selectively. Appropriate incentives may be needed and clear leadership structures at a local level. This raises the issues of how leadership can be best located and what capacity exists for taking on leadership roles.

It argues that issues of choice will need to be addressed. At present greater choice is not equally distributed amongst the student population and greater choice if not well-supported can lead to disengagement. Better systems of guidance and advice will be needed to support an environment of choice.

Link: <http://www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/files/documents141-1.pdf>

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