

# Key stage 4 engagement programmes



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## About this guidance

This guidance has been written to:

- update previous, more detailed guidance written to support the key stage 4 engagement programme in 2007 (still available from [www.qca.org.uk/qca\\_18399.aspx](http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_18399.aspx)).
- accompany a series of short film clips that can be viewed at [www.qca.org.uk/qca\\_18360.aspx](http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_18360.aspx).

It should be read in conjunction with the following companion publications:

- *Economic wellbeing 11–19: career, work-related learning and enterprise* (download from [www.qca.org.uk/qca\\_17872.aspx](http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_17872.aspx))
- *Career, work-related learning and enterprise 11–19: a framework to support economic wellbeing (supporting guidance)* (download from [www.qca.org.uk/qca\\_20339.aspx](http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_20339.aspx)).

Advice within this document is offered to all staff working with young people at key stage 4 who are:

- from mainstream or special schools, academies, pupil referral units, colleges, training providers or employers offering work experience
- involved in developing the foundation learning tier (FLT)<sup>1</sup>
- working within a range of diverse settings.

The guidance draws heavily on the lessons distilled from the key stage 4 engagement programme,<sup>2</sup> a centrally funded pilot programme that has been running since September 2006 with initially around 6,000 young people in 21 local area partnerships, which grew to include 101 partnerships providing 21,500 learner places across the country from September 2008. Further lessons were drawn from discussions with curriculum advisers from local authorities, and from a Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) focus group in November 2008, which gathered intelligence from schools in different parts of the country that had developed effective provision for disaffected learners without the benefit of additional resources.

Since funding for these kinds of engagement activities is now allocated equitably to all areas nationally through a formula, all local authorities and schools can now manage available resources in the best interests of young people. The guidance is therefore relevant to all schools, local authorities and their partners in all parts of England.

# Introduction

The raising of the participation age, to 17 by 2013 and to 18 by 2015, has significant implications for all of us working in the 14–19 field. Within our society, the transition from childhood to adulthood is, for any young person, an extended process, not a single event – and differs for each individual. Within our education system, this transition process has traditionally been marked by an increasing focus on post-16 routes and opportunities and on developing an awareness of the world of work, across years 9, 10 and 11. This transitional period now needs to be progressively extended, and the individual nature of transition pathways and progression routes secured.

Over this notional transitional period, the young person's new, adult identity emerges from a series of experiences – whether positive or negative – which define and shape their sense of self as an adult, and equally importantly, as an adult learner and member of the national workforce. All of these experiences are continuously being mediated and interpreted (whether consciously or not) within one or more cultural, social or occupational frameworks. Within each of these frameworks the role of a 'trusted adult' or mentor in mediating these experiences is critical for the young learner in their role as student, trainee or apprentice.

Some young learners, for various reasons, are disaffected with the regular curriculum offered in our schools. It is for these learners that 'engagement programmes' of one kind or another have been developed and refined over recent years – and it is for them, among others, that the foundation learning tier (FLT)<sup>3</sup> is being developed.

As our collective understanding of the critical identity-forming processes for disaffected and disengaged learners continues to grow, the lessons we have learned from engagement programmes are seen to have a direct application to the wider introduction of the FLT from September 2009.

## Key messages and themes

The key messages drawn from the key stage 4 engagement programme pilots that are relevant to the FLT are presented here in relation to eight key themes that can be used to inform further development:

- 1. *Identifying and recruiting students*** – those who would benefit most from an engagement programme.
- 2. *Flexible curriculum models*** – which match provision to learner needs, and secure entitlements and desired outcomes for the identified group, in relation to functional, occupational and generic skills.
- 3. *Collaboration between organisations and effective partnership working*** – which deliver the flexible curriculum while achieving best value from available resources.
- 4. *Assessment and accreditation of learning*** – using assessment information to both shape the curriculum and recognise achievement, in relation to functional, occupational and generic skills.
- 5. *Securing effective careers education and information, advice and guidance (IAG)*** – structuring programmes and enabling the trusted adults within a range of different contexts.
- 6. *Maximising the motivational power of work-focused learning*** – exploring fresh and challenging contexts and enabling mutually respectful relationships.
- 7. *Effective engagement of local employers*** – recruiting and retaining our key partners in the delivery of work-focused programmes.
- 8. *Evidence of impact*** – how do we know that these programmes are improving engagement, attendance, outcomes (including accreditation) and sustainable progression post-16 and on an equitable basis?

## Identifying and recruiting students

Engagement programmes tend to be expensive, typically costing more per student than is allocated to schools (on a per pupil basis) via the Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU).<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, the real costs – both social and financial – of not engaging disaffected learners and of allowing them to continue on the default route to becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) when they leave school, are far higher.

Engagement programmes also offer a way for schools – including those within the National Challenge programme – to boost their accreditation ‘points scores’. Learners who, arguably, would have achieved very little by way of accreditation if they had not been ‘engaged’ are frequently enabled to achieve recognised qualifications within the programmes. This will be even more likely within the new FLT framework, and the wider Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF)<sup>5</sup> framework, with their flexible, unitised accreditation structures.

To secure best value from allocated resources, and to ensure that those learners are included who will benefit most from the planned programme, specific criteria for admission to the programme are needed. It is better if selection criteria are phrased in positive language (perhaps focusing on learners’ practical bias) rather than negative language (typically focusing on poor behaviour or failure within academic programme), since this helps to shape learners’ self identities constructively.

Involvement of parents/carers at the preparatory stage is also useful in shaping their perceptions of the positive value of activities and qualifications offered before the programme actually starts. Parent/carer perceptions of the value of the programme also affect learner self identity.

Another essential part of the recruitment and selection process is the provision of initial information, advice and guidance (IAG). Learners need to be able to make an informed choice right from the start and be seen, by their parents/carers and themselves as well as school staff, as making a positive choice to enrol.

Where learners start with a negative perception of the programme – perhaps because it has been identified as appropriate for them by means of a deficit model, ie they are students who can’t ... or don’t ... – it is possible to change the initial perception, but this can be difficult and some of the value of the programme may be lost at the start.

## Flexible curriculum models

The aim to increase flexibility and personalisation within the new secondary curriculum makes the early identification of potential disengaged learners at year 9 critical. Continuously developing assessment for learning<sup>6</sup> and assessing pupils' progress (APP)<sup>7</sup> processes within schools also help to make this easier. Increasing personalisation of assessment and the curriculum should also help to reduce the numbers of learners who become disaffected in the first place.

Early identification of likely vocational interests is also needed to ensure that there is time for effective planning of provision at key stage 4. This is often achieved in many schools/areas through a structured 'vocational taster' programme in year 9, which forms part of the school's careers education and IAG provision.

The engagement programme itself should also be integrated into a school's overall curriculum offer for key stage 4 – which includes core and foundation subjects, and any specific courses. It should not be 'bolt on' or seen as a 'dumping ground'.

When functional skills (English, mathematics, and information and communication technology (ICT)) are embedded into real life and vocational activities, they are perceived as more relevant to young people.

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Personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) are also best developed within contexts that are relevant and meaningful to the learner.

Employability skills are most effectively developed within real-life vocational contexts.

Staff in all settings can help to ensure that young people are aware of the transferability of all of these skills – across settings and, in many cases, across vocational areas.

If the programme is goal orientated, then young people are better able to understand what qualifications, progression routes and careers the programme can lead to.

Some provision for disengaged learners can be short-term and may be discontinued when re-engagement has been achieved and a clear progression pathway secured. The two-year programmes that were a feature of the official key stage 4 programme are not always the answer.

Flexibility in curriculum design is also needed to enable individual learners to move on to and between the three different progression pathways of the FLT as and when it is appropriate.

In the most effective programmes, shared understanding of the learners' preferred, essentially practical, learning style is also used to shape the teaching of core and foundation subjects within the wider curriculum.

## Collaboration between organisations and effective partnership working

The most cost-effective way of planning and delivering a learner-centred and work-focused engagement programme is through collaboration. Among other benefits, collaboration enables programme managers to deal effectively with the often fluctuating numbers choosing particular vocational options on a year-by-year basis (a fluctuation evident at school, and even local authority, level) by retaining key staff in particular vocational areas.

This collaboration needs to be developed between schools and with further education colleges, training providers, local employers, Connexions and local authority services working to the Every Child Matters<sup>8</sup> agenda. It also needs to be consciously and continuously nurtured and invested in. The role of the local authority in supporting this collaboration is often critical.

In some areas (eg Greater Manchester and the West Midlands – see case studies 2 and 7 below), schools and local authorities are finding that cross-local-authority collaboration through the medium of an independent organisation brings several additional rewards and economies of scale.

A management steering group, with an overall responsibility for organising the programme, should represent all stakeholders.

The partnership should develop, and periodically review, quality frameworks for all aspects of the programme.

Partnership budget planning for the programme should include all elements, including staff, transport and administration costs, and there should be a clear understanding of who pays what. Where costs are shared between partners, there is greater ownership of and commitment to the programme and therefore a greater expectation of success.

If expectations of all partners are recorded – including contracts, with sanctions and rewards – in the form of a handbook, there is clarity for all.

# Assessment and accreditation of learning

Initial assessment should aim to determine a learner's needs, interests, aspirations and any potential barriers to learning, and to identify any additional learning support required. (See also QCA guidance on assessment for learning<sup>9</sup> & APP<sup>10</sup>.)

Learning styles awareness sessions (for both staff and learners) can help to ensure that each learner understands the approaches used within the programme and that the learner comes to value their own unique identity as a learner.

An individual learning plan helps to focus and reassure learners that they are at the centre of the curriculum. In many areas, these plans are now being stored and managed via an area website for all key stage 4 learners.

Nationally accredited programmes and qualifications ensure that learners have goals and work towards developing employability skills.

Vocational skills can be developed pre-16. Working towards qualifications in vocational areas is motivating and real: first aid, health and safety, and manual handling are all achievable.

Records of small steps of progression, including self-assessment, show learners how they are progressing. The FLT structure will enhance this process.

Electronic monitoring of attendance and progress is gradually becoming universal. Effective systems are currently in use in many areas, for example, Bournemouth and Telford and Wrekin.

Additional benefits for the learner and staff working with them arise if learner achievements can be celebrated with the training provider/employer as well as the school.

**Nationally accredited programmes and qualifications ensure that learners have goals and work towards developing employability skills.**

## Securing effective careers education and information, advice and guidance

High-quality programmes of careers education and IAG<sup>11</sup> should be planned for all learners, to involve them in reflecting on and articulating what they are learning from all aspects of the programme – and from their lives outside school hours – and to plan their own ‘next steps’ and longer-term routes.

Learners also need access to ongoing and informal support, advice and information – and sometimes just a sympathetic listener.

The type of staff involved in providing both structured programmes and one-to-one or group opportunities is a significant success factor for the learners themselves. A wide range of staff, not exclusively teachers, was frequently mentioned by learners and programme managers as being significant and helpful. Staff in both formal and informal situations were able to spend time with individual learners as situations arose and thus were able to ensure that functional and generic skills (whether or not assessed and accredited) had been embedded into the learners’ understanding.

These ‘trusted adults’ were often also able to give information and offer advice, through the medium of their developing relationship, which would not have been listened to or taken on board if it was part of a formal programme.

High levels of support for transport (particularly in rural areas), core curriculum activities and counselling are often required – even if only for short or occasional periods – so that disabled learners or those at risk of dropping out can be helped via some targeted early intervention and support.

For groups where learner-to-learner interactions are problematic or even dysfunctional, common start and finish dates are helpful in building group identity and maintaining positive group dynamics. If individuals join later, this tends to alter the dynamic. However, roll on/roll off programmes can be made to work in most cases – if the processes are well managed – and often best meet the needs of learners for flexibility.

Some specialised careers education and IAG may be needed for some learners with disabilities.

## Maximising the motivational power of work-focused learning

Although the motivational power of work-focused learning is well documented and an essential element within any successful engagement programme, work-focused learning processes need to be managed in a careful and learner-centred way, as for other programme elements.

An initial assessment of learner needs, interests and aspirations – along with high-quality IAG to inform learner decision making right from the start – is essential if we are to ensure that we have a clear view of the sort of employer placement or school/college/training provider programme that will best suit the learner.

On the basis of this initial assessment, three key factors should then guide the creation of a work-focused learning programme:

- learner choice – ie the vocational area is one that the learner values and is interested in (at least initially – a positive outcome could be for the learner to decide that this is not the right vocation for him/her)
- the right learning environment – it is safe, welcoming and geared up to offer hands-on experience, on-the-job training and information/advice from experienced workers within the field
- the right qualifications – matched carefully to the learner's competence levels and leading to the learner's preferred progression route.

A work-focused learning programme can be developed to offer a number of varying degrees of personal challenge, along a continuum that includes work simulations and enterprise education programmes<sup>12</sup> at school, vocational and similar courses at further education colleges, vocational training providers, and employer-based work experience placements. Each of these environments offers a different level of challenge and support, through the differing demands each makes for learners to function independently and the varying levels of support for self-management that each routinely offers.

The degree of challenge/support presented to each individual learner can be adjusted by selecting different points along the continuum – perhaps at different times in the programme as learner confidence/capability develops – on the basis of initial and ongoing assessment and IAG activities.

Similarly, for particular learners – perhaps those with a disability (see Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) guidance<sup>13</sup>) – it may be necessary to make some ‘reasonable adjustments’ to the nature of the work, the organisation of the environment, or the availability of support, in order to secure and maintain a placement within particular environment. Schools and colleges have specific duties in relation to the DDA, which they are responsible for discharging even when learners are working in alternative settings – ie with training providers and employers.

Any specialised accommodation used must be fit for purpose, particularly for formal teaching. This means not only checking on disability access requirements (see DDA guidance<sup>14</sup>) but also simple things like checking that there are adequate toilet facilities for both women and men, so that gender stereotyping within particular occupational groups is not reinforced by default.

Learners and employers/training providers need to be briefed, supported and trained in relation to:

- health and safety issues associated with young learners – particularly with disabled learners
- how to maximise learning, accreditation, information/advice giving, and other potential benefits from the placement experience for both learners and employers/trainers.

Follow-up activities back in school are also essential, both for assessing the learning that is occurring in the work placement or with the training provider and for identifying any issues that may be emerging from the learner’s ongoing interaction with the environment.

Learners also need to know if any specialised equipment or clothing is required – and who will pay.

**An initial assessment of learner needs, interests and aspirations – along with high-quality IAG to inform learner decision making right from the start – is essential if we are to ensure that we have a clear view of the sort of employer placement or school/college/training provider programme that will best suit the learner.**

## Effective engagement of local employers

If the work-focused aspect of an engagement programme is to be effective, then the active participation of local employers is essential.

Employer participation in programme development, management and delivery can take many forms:

- as members of a partnership steering group or management committee
- as providers of work placements – for example on a day or two day per week basis throughout the year, as well as via the traditional one/two-week block in the summer term
- as partners in the development of supportive materials – for example training packs, accreditation units
- as active recruiters of other employers through organisations such as chambers of commerce and employers associations.

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Employer recruitment is clearly important – and dynamic, committed individuals are a key factor in finding new employers to match the placement needs of a particular individual learner.

Local education business partnership organisations have also traditionally been both a good source of new contacts for schools and a local area focus for recruiting new employers.

However, in many areas, schools and local authorities already have longstanding links and well-established relationships with a range of local employers. The key tasks, where this is the case, are therefore:

- to retain the engagement of existing employers
- to ensure that the concerns of any employers who have been disengaged by their previous experiences are addressed and issues resolved to their satisfaction so that they return to the partnership
- to extend the range and kinds of activities that existing employers are engaged with.

All of these tasks require that a significant investment in relationships with employers be made – in terms of both time and inputs from skilled, dedicated personnel with appropriate and highly developed interactive skills. These are of particular importance where an employer may have had a negative experience in the past, or where a learner has reported that they have had a negative experience during a placement.

It is also important that the needs and priorities of employers are both respected and considered when identifying a potential match between learner and employer. Honesty

about the possible difficulties associated with a particular learner, as well as the potential benefits to the employer, is essential – in the interests of the long-term relationship as well as the success of the immediate placement.

**Employer recruitment is clearly important – and dynamic, committed individuals are a key factor in finding new employers to match the placement needs of a particular individual learner.**



## Evidence of impact

It is essential that engagement programmes – and each particular aspect of those engagement programmes – are regularly, systematically and rigorously evaluated, within each setting and locality, to ensure that the programme (and each different element) is:

- measurably improving engagement, attendance, accreditation outcomes and post-school progression for those learners who have been recruited onto the programme
- actively recruiting all those who should be recruited – bearing in mind the over-representation of particular ethnic and disability groups within NEET statistics nationally and in some areas – and taking remedial action where this is not apparent
- having some measurable impact on reducing the numbers and percentages of students across the local authority who are NEET after they leave school
- providing evidence of a longer-term and sustainable effect on the post-school engagement, employability, confidence and employment profile of learners who have been through the programme.

Schools and local areas within the key stage 4 engagement programme pilot areas have each developed their own strategies for collecting evidence of changes to pupil attitudes and of engagement with learning – but have also looked closely at ‘harder’ evidence of changes (and, typically, improvements) to:

- attendance and exclusion patterns
- attainment within qualifications
- post-16 progression routes.

Increasing numbers of these local areas and schools are also setting up systems to collect and analyse data related to the sustainability of these measurable changes in:

- attitude
- engagement with lifelong learning
- longer-term employability

– largely through looking at participation rates post-16 and beyond.

They are also looking at patterns of recruitment and achievement for different groups – ie some ethnic minority and disability groups – as is the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) at national level. The intention is to identify where selection and recruitment processes are not operating in an equitable manner, so that remedial action can be taken by programme managers.

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Within the programme (and by focusing on what the key stage 4 engagement programme guidance calls 'process indicators') increasing numbers of partnerships are developing quality frameworks, which are applicable to all parts of the programme, including the monitoring of providers.

Monitoring activity within these quality frameworks needs to be systematic and regular, with a clear understanding of expectations on all sides. Regular reviews of the provision are required to test its effectiveness as well as checking such things as health and safety procedures. A single point of contact in all involved organisations ensures effective communication in relation to these evaluation activities.

Providers within the programme should also be vetted against quality criteria. This can be done using Ofsted reports, Learning and Skills Council guidelines, or through a local-authority-led quality assurance programme, as in Torbay (see case study 6 below).

## Understanding the themes within different contexts

No single approach or model can simply be applied without modification in all settings and contexts and then expected to work. The right solution for every local context always has to be developed, over time, through collaboration with key partners and the young people (and their parents/carers) themselves – and thus tailored to the local or even school context.

To provide some examples of how different partnerships have addressed these eight themes, ten case studies are given below. They are cross-referenced to the themes that they address as shown in the grid below.

Theme	Case studies' coverage									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Wirral	Manchester	Southend	Shropshire	Thurrock	Torbay	Telford	Warrington	Bournemouth	Essex
1. Identifying and recruiting students	✓	✓			✓			✓		
2. Flexible curriculum models		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3. Collaboration and partnership working	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
4. Assessment and accreditation of learning		✓	✓			✓			✓	
5. Ensuring effective careers education and information, advice and guidance	✓		✓		✓			✓	✓	
6. Motivational power of work-focused learning		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
7. Engagement of local employers								✓		
8. Evidence of impact	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		

Note: There are further case studies providing helpful examples of different aspects from key stage 4 engagement programmes available from the QCA website. To find out more and download copies, visit [www.qca.org.uk/qca\\_18360.aspx](http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_18360.aspx).

### Case study 1:

#### The Wirral (North West region)

The Wirral was one of the first 20 local authorities to pilot the key stage 4 engagement programme from 2006 to 2008. The majority of other pilots were Pathfinder authorities, but The Wirral was chosen as a pilot due to the success of its Excellence Through Inclusion programme, which ran from 2003 to 2006.

The programme has been offered to all schools for learners who are at risk of disaffection and therefore unlikely to achieve at level 1 or who might have higher ability but have disengaged from key stage 4. Schools identify those who would most benefit from the programme and consult with learners, parents, advisers and local coordinators.

Barbara Mervyn is the overall coordinator for the programme, which is supported by variety of systems: a central unit for registering providers; a half-time project manager; a seconded Connexions personal adviser (PA); *the Good practice guide to KS4 off-site learning* (policies, procedures and documentation); an operations group (all schools and providers); the 14–16 Task Group; the 14–19 Strategic Partnership; a quality award for off-site learning piloted through the 14–19 team.

The project manager has expanded the range of provision available for the second year by including courses in horticulture and engineering, and by developing a range of shorter courses focusing on personal development with the Wirral Youth Theatre. Learners therefore will be able to select a package based on individual need and to progress to other courses throughout the year.

The year 11 cohort has received transitional support from the project's dedicated Connexions PA. The examination results and post-16 destinations of this group are tracked and evaluated. Vulnerable youngsters from targeted groups such as learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) have been identified, and details on their attainment and progression can be evaluated separately and as a benchmark for comparison.

Targeted groups are as follows.

Target area	Percentage
Gender/boys on programme	66
SATS level 4 and below	59
Looked after children	4
Statements/school action	32
EBD/non-academic issues	45
Attendance below 90%	70

In 2008, over 220 learners were on the programme from 18 schools. The gender ratio was approximately 3:1 in favour of boys. Learners spent two to three days a week with one of six registered training providers who had been approved by a central local authority unit.

The programme consists of learners choosing from a menu of off-site activities provided by ten private training providers and two organisations from the voluntary sector, and enables learners to spend two days a week learning new skills in a work-related environment. The course offer has expanded from construction and hairdressing to cover a broader range, including sport and leisure, computer game design and pre-uniformed services.

Three providers achieved their Off-Site Learning Accreditation Kite Mark in 2006/7. The Wirral's programme recently won a bid for additional funding to enable the publication of a good practice guide showing successful post-16 transition strategies.

The programme has also enhanced personal development through providing enrichment opportunities at training providers, for example motivational workshops through drama and one-to-one careers guidance with the seconded Connexions PA.

Analysis of year 11 leavers from the programme has shown results comparable with the rest of the cohort in both achievement and retention rates for this most vulnerable group, while learners on the programme show increased self-esteem and confidence as they gain skills. Schools have reported a noticeable improvement in behaviour and attendance.

### Case study 2:

#### Greater Manchester (North West region)

Manchester Solutions is a non-profit-making organisation offering large-scale engagement programmes in the Greater Manchester area. It deals with 14–16 provision and a large volume of apprenticeship provision. A sister company, Manchester Enterprises, is the economic development agency for Greater Manchester. Historically, a programme called GM Power was run through an education business partnership for eight years. From this came a key stage 4 engagement programme for all 10 local authorities in Greater Manchester. It has successfully built up extensive partnerships across the whole region, relating to proven engagement programmes.

The engagement programme has grown from about 550 year 10 starts a year, to 679 in 2007. In 2008, 850 learners were accepted, with a carry over of 500 going into year 11. In total 1,300 learners were engaged. The contract from the Learning Skills Council (LSC) is for £1,400 per student.

Students apply for courses after reviewing information from helpful leaflets, DVDs and external talks. Training providers then review these. A young person attends an interview with a training provider or college and at that stage they will go through an initial assessment. Not all providers do an initial assessment when learners start on the programme, because they do not want to set up the young person to fail. At induction a work placement is allocated, with an assessor or a mentor. The young person attends the training provider work placement for the two-year programme.

The actual programme mirrors the QCA template for engagement programmes, offering a level 1 vocational qualification to everyone. The need for personalised learning is important, so the actual programme is individually tailored. Many young people are not ready to be out in the workplace straight away. For these, knowledge around employability is developed at the centre in the first few months, and this will differ for each individual.

Twenty-four providers are sub-contracted, mainly private training providers and some colleges. A training provider handbook deals with quality assurance process, describing what should be incorporated into the key stage 4 cycle, such as induction, risk assessment, reviews and observation of teaching and learning.

Learners do well on the programme. Carol Lucas, who manages the LSC contract, said: 'The number of young learners who come because they are sent is a minority and this is demonstrated by the fact we have 80 per cent retention. We undertook an evaluation of the programme; responses were positive, attributing success on the programme to being treated as an adult, and the work experience. The programme has changed their options at post-16.'

For local authorities it is fully embedded into the curriculum offer. It is not seen as a single programme because the criteria are different to those for the academic route, as the learning style of a young person can be more suited to vocational development.

Bernadette Murray is a contract manager for the GM Power programmes. 'We've got a young person who wanted to do motor vehicle studies; he's quite a shy lad and he did a work placement, completed the course and now he has got his own apprenticeship with a garage. He was really quiet and found it difficult to mix with other students.

At one point he was going to drop out, but the training provider kept him motivated and he's now doing really well.' As he had already completed some units of the NVQ, this learner had an advantage when he progressed to a full apprenticeship.

The organisation believes that a key factor in its success is that, because it is centrally managed and controlled, quality is assured. Another aspect is finance, and for any new partnership the true costs of running this programme need to be determined. A key factor is to get a contribution from the schools, so that it is not seen as a free programme; schools contribute £250 a year per learner to the programme.

### Case study 3: Southend (Eastern region)

Southend Unitary Authority set up the 'Chances' engagement programme in November 2007 and already had alternative education provision. The learners referred for Chances tended to be intermittent school attendees and unsuccessful on the alternative education provision.

Twenty-four learners were recruited on the programme, with about 15 being regular attendees. A collaborative approach was organised with South East Essex College, the local further education college, Connexions, four secondary schools, the pupil referral unit (PRU) and two training providers: YMCA Training and Eden Training. Three groups of learners were organised around vocational areas for a two day programme at one of the three providers.

This local partnership set up a steering group which produced quality assurance frameworks common to all partners, with consistency around inductions and setting of standards and expectations for all sites. Accreditation was also common to all providers, with real-life qualifications to aim for, such as NCFE level 1 Certificate in Money Management, OCN Digital Audio, City & Guilds Entry Level Certificate, CACHE Communication Award and Application of Number level 1 or 2, level 1 Bronze Arts Award and Duke of Edinburgh Award. Additional workshops were organised around the needs of learners, with subjects such as drug and alcohol abuse, sex education and issues around housing and nutrition.

Engagement improved, and the behaviour of the learners showed more maturity and embedded decision-making strategies, with regular review of progress and the formal celebration of achievement. 'The Chances programme has made me think about growing up and taking responsibility for my future', said one satisfied learner. Achievement in formal qualifications was high, ranging from 80 to 100 per cent in all awards. Attendance improved for most and 85 per cent had a positive progression route at the end of the programme.

As part of an evening to celebrate alternative education, young people from the Chances programme were included. Eleven pupils were nominated for awards – for some pupils it was the first time that they had ever experienced a positive result of any kind during their education. 'I recognised what had wound me up and by laying down past frustrations I felt I was able to start with a clean sheet', said one successful learner. Parents and carers were very supportive of the celebration evening and attendance was good. On another occasion a video produced by the learners on the programme was screened to a large public audience, including the mayor.



What made this partnership effective was a range of factors: the engagement ensured that these challenging pupils were aware of the need to prepare for the future and develop new skills; and they were able to take part in activities and tasks set in work contexts. Where incentive systems were used, healthy competition was generated, with learners responding positively; a more adult learning environment created more mature attitudes to learning; strong personal relationships were established over time, ensuring that learners developed strategies to accept authority; delivery was flexible and adaptable to changing needs and interests of learners; and learners' progress was regularly reviewed and monitored, with realistic progression routes identified. One learner said: 'I now know what I'm good at, I'm more confident and I feel positive about my future. Six months ago I had no idea where my life was going.'

Issues identified were: low levels of punctuality and attendance for some pupils, particularly after the weekend and holidays; roll on/roll off alters the dynamics of groups, therefore fixed start dates were more appropriate; where referral information was not available at the start of the process, tutors were not able to address the identified needs of learners; early identification of learners ensures effective planning of provision; full days are more effective than part days, due to transport costs and issues; although accreditation is high, the cost of intense support has to be taken into account; and one provider should have overall management of the programme, to ensure that quality frameworks are consistent.

The choices of a range of types of vocational courses organised by the partnership have addressed engagement. David Coleman, the 14–19 Consultant for Southend, said: 'The Chances programme has re-engaged learners, giving them clear progression routes, so they can move on successfully.'

#### Case study 4: Shropshire (West Midlands Region)

There are five 14–19 consortia in Shropshire, with a membership of 22 secondary schools, colleges and other local partners. All planning and organisation for 14–19 is driven through the consortia, so the key stage 4 engagement programme planning is housed within the consortia too. For the first year the allocation of funding was determined on the basis of the location of NEET hotspots, cohort size, expression of need and configuration of schools. In effect each secondary school had sufficient funding to support a minimum of three pupils. Individual programmes were agreed for each of the pupils identified, which included vocational and/or personal skills development. The success of this approach is due to schools determining a programme that best suits the needs of individual learners, who in turn can then relate their own abilities to career intentions, and go on to make informed choices about progression.

Schools identified the pupils and the appropriate programmes required, and all the programmes included an element of learning in an alternative environment, either work placements or college. The list of criteria applied to selection and programme design was based around the guidance supplied by the QCA. Additionally, all learners on the programmes were encouraged to have a mentor and/or a Connexions personal adviser to support them.

The types of pupils varied, as schools were given the autonomy to determine which learners would benefit from a personalised approach. For some it was aimed at pupils who had experienced temporary exclusion, and for others it was aimed at pupils yet to achieve their potential at key stage 4. In all cases the schools recognised that an alternative programme needed to be developed, as their pupils were not responding to the traditional curriculum offer. It was very much a mixed scenario, based on individual need, with programmes provided for both year 10 and year 11 learners.

A combination of provision was offered, ranging from a very large training company that devised bespoke training programmes, to small employers offering placements. This has ensured that learners could undertake tasks and activities around a work context.

The authority believed that the offer had to be bespoke, as providing a generic programme would not suit the individual needs of the pupils. The impact was that the learners themselves appreciated both the individual support they were given and the mentoring by a key person within the school environment. They began to respond by recognising and developing their own personal skills and exploring how they could develop their own employability skills.

Attendance levels were mostly maintained, as Janine Vernon, the 14–19 adviser describes: ‘Yes we have certainly got evidence that they continued to attend and achieved. We had a reporting session at the end of the summer term, for which we are still collecting the figures; for participation purposes the majority did engage and also progressed positively onto something else after leaving year 11. A high proportion went into further education and training.’

When asked what the reasons were for the change in their perception of education, Janine said: ‘I think there was a change in their self-worth, because programmes were in the main planned on a bespoke basis. As some pupils don’t necessarily see what they can possibly do, it gave them an opportunity to taste things, try things out and develop a “can do” attitude.’

Elements of this successful provision:

- Outlining a set of criteria that the school can refer to.
- Details of the programme, with a menu schools can use, can assist schools in locating access to a range of opportunities.
- The menu can include a list of courses and agencies with relevant contacts.
- A representative of the school is given the responsibility to deal with the programme.
- Encouraging the involvement of a Connexions personal adviser.
- Appointing mentors to assist learners and provide the links back into school.
- A contact identified within the school and the local authority to facilitate coordination and networking.

### Case study 5: Thurrock (Eastern Region)

Originally a pilot funded from the LSC, Thurrock local authority applied the QCA criteria strictly, so four days of engagement were offered, using a work-based and work experience model. Terry Hammond is the 14–19 curriculum development manager for Thurrock. When he took over the original pilot there was a single member of staff organising the programme for about 40 young people. It had not been clear how the aims of the programme would be realised. Many schools perceived that the original programme could be used to offload difficult and challenging young people.

Then Dawn Ritchie, a qualified Connexions careers guidance officer, was appointed to manage the specific engagement programme. The first thing that she did was to construct a strategic and operational plan. Each young person was interviewed by a qualified careers guidance practitioner, either in school or by Dawn herself, to assess their needs, with a realistic programme built around these individual needs. She was reminded that the purpose of the programme is to reduce NEET. Final destinations were discussed, so the engagement programme had to come up with a staged plan for individual learners. Overcoming issues related to literacy and numeracy had also to be dealt with.

There was roughly a 50 per cent split between year 10 and year 11 pupils; all 100 learners in the second year were found placements through a private company, SEETEC, who provided quality frameworks for this element. All learners were offered functional skills' development and employability through qualified staff for half a day per week. The programme put a strong emphasis on personal development.

Schools identified numbers of young people using the deprivation index and potential NEETs. It then grew to 100 learners in 2007 and to 150 learners in 2008. Seventy-five per cent of all learners on the engagement programme progressed onto training or college last year; this year it was 81 per cent.

Changing perceptions of the learners themselves was important, as many believed that this was the last place you went to before being expelled. Dawn Ritchie believes that effective initial assessment, linked to addressing identified needs in real work settings, is the key to changing negative perceptions. 'Additionally, those learners who had mentors were able to achieve the most; this was because regular weekly visits monitored learners' performance, then quickly identified any issues and worked as a link between the learners, the school, parents, employers and the programme manager.'

Terry Hammond maintains that the two days in school can supplement the motivation being developed on the engagement programme, with many young people developing a more positive attitude to school and undertaking up to eight GCSEs as well. Obviously, flexible approaches by the schools themselves is an important factor in this success.

'Julie' was a very disruptive girl up to year 9, with poor attendance and a very negative attitude to school. Her needs were assessed and two different work placements were considered and explored, from animal care and then child care. Finally, a course in business administration was tried at a business premises. She found this particularly enjoyable, putting in additional hours at weekend and in the holidays, before securing a modern apprenticeship with the company that would pay for all her training. Throughout, Julie still had to attend school for two days a week for English, mathematics and ITC, with her placement motivating her to improve attendance in school. Her achievements were celebrated at an authority-organised event.

Terry Hammond believes that a mixture of funding streams, including central and a school contribution, even in kind shows a commitment to promoting the success of the programme: 'We are now developing five diplomas, with vocational contexts, as part of an overall curriculum offer.' Numeracy and literacy will be embedded into these diplomas, offered as functional skills.

Dawn believes that effective engagement programmes depend on detailed planning, developing relationships with learners and their parents and schools, and then selling the benefits to employers. Monitoring all aspects of the provision keeps learners on track: not one learner has yet left the programme in Thurrock.

For Terry, success comes from establishing trust with schools, who have to believe that it is value for money. Young people themselves need to feel special, and that the engagement programme is different from their existing school provision. Costings need to include administration, with some contingency for summer, where young people are at the greatest risk. Initial 'learning visits' offer opportunities for young people to experience what the programme is about before deciding to become part of it.

### Case study 6: Torbay (South West region)

When the demand for 14–16 vocational training became greater than the local further education college could cater for, the Torbay Universal Curriculum was created. This involved the recruitment of a range of private training providers and organisations from the voluntary sector, and developing a partnership approach.

It is important that provision includes a broad range of appropriate vocational interests and social needs delivered to suit the learning styles and abilities of the young people.

In September 2008 the key stage 4 engagement programme was developed out of this initiative and has been structured to enhance provision for those who provide schools with the greatest challenges in overcoming a range of ‘hard to break down’ barriers to learning.

The creation of an innovative, motivational, engaging and flexible holistic package that is personalised to as great a degree as is possible is the key to raising aspiration and achievement.

Almost immediately attendance, progress and attitude were seen to improve, and there have been no permanent exclusions in the participating schools. In fact, one is able to produce some remarkable early upturns in behaviour – with one youngster whose overall attendance throughout 2007/8 was 28.9 per cent, and who was causing major concern, registering 93.3 per cent attendance during the first eight weeks of being placed on a more appropriate and engaging curriculum.

Liz Porter, the Senior 14–19 Development Officer in Torbay, is positive that the benefits of working in a productive partnership have been reflected in the initial success: ‘We work with a small number of secondary schools (eight), three special schools and one FE college here in Torbay. The headteachers agreed to allow us to use money for practical and applied learning, identified in the dedicated schools grant (DSG) and from that we are able to coordinate the work-related and engagement programmes and even subsidise the unit cost for each vocational place.’

The partnership forges links between the schools, the training providers and the local college, ensuring the transfer of all relevant information that would maximise a learner’s potential to succeed. Advice and guidance is provided to trainers who may not be fully understanding of educational terminology, achievement levels and categories of in-school support.

The local authority also assists schools with their additional transport costs, funds a rolling programme of quality assurance using trained Ofsted inspectors, and is developing a programme of professional development for vocational trainers who are new to the world of 14–16 learning.

John Davies, another 14–19 Development Officer, describes the selection criteria for the pupils targeted towards the engagement programme: 'The schools use records of attendance, behaviour, social deprivation and attainment to establish those who are in danger of either seriously falling behind or totally falling out of the system post-16. Early identification is important so that the young person and their parents have plenty of time to understand the benefits and expectations of a more appropriate provision. High quality information, advice and guidance is vital'.

While many of the activities used on the engagement programme are very different to the 'regular' school provision, they are all subject to accreditation. Short units such as those on the National Open College Network (NOCN) 'Step Up' course are ideal as they cater for that 'roll-on-roll-off' flexibility so essential to a re-engagement project.

As learner needs and strengths over two years change with maturity and achievement, the programme must have the capacity to cope with a potentially greater demand for workplace training in year 11. This is one of the greatest challenges to the scheme during the current economic situation.

Liz Porter reviews the reason for the success of the provision: 'It's a more personalised curriculum with a significant emphasis on getting to know the learner as a person. For some of those who find the school setting to be a highly challenging environment the delivery of meaningful, enriching activities at a pace that suits them has been the difference between remaining on roll or exclusion. When a young person develops the confidence or desire to re-integrate into some or all of their school lessons they may do so having made a conscious choice and with the knowledge that there is a range of support readily available.'

### Case study 7:

#### Telford and Wrekin (West Midlands region)

By August 2007 the authority had already gone through the bidding process from the LSC. Schools had been told about the project and been asked to refer young people to it. At that point there were about 150 learners' names, so a list of criteria to apply was drawn up. The criteria included poor attendance rate, poor behaviour and whether the young person would benefit from the project. From participating on this programme, large numbers of young people have gained insight into potential career paths and the skills and qualifications required to progress to further training programmes.

Ninety-four places were offered to 11 different schools and a brochure created about the aims of the programme. A number of well-established training providers, of proven ability in specific vocational areas, were offered the opportunity to provide places. Telford had already decided to continue with its 'Travel to learn' programme, where schools pay the full cost for young people to go out on one or two days a week to follow a vocational programme, so it had already worked with providers who had experience of delivering to these young people.

The curriculum on offer reflected the needs and interests of the young people on the programme. Some engaged on motor vehicle courses with a local provider; others followed programmes at the Telford College of Art and Technology along with other providers. Some schools ran the Prince's Trust 'Excel Club', based within school but not in a classroom and not with a teacher. There was also a bespoke programme offered for six boys from travellers' families, which was successful in retaining learners.

Improving attendance of the learners on the programme was a major objective. Regular meetings with the coordinators at the school and a reporting system for attendance ensured that attendance increased quite considerably. Some of the young people did not improve their attendance in school as much as had been anticipated, but on the programme it was 100 per cent and that was judged to be worthwhile.

Presently the authority is auditing all of the schools for the young people who finished the programmes, in terms of overall attendance for that year as well as improvement of behaviour and attitude. There is an expectation of an overall attendance of about 80 per cent, which is hugely above the figures of the learners when attending school.



Not all of the young people completed the whole year, for various reasons, and their schools gave them an option to swap. Altogether there were 115 young people who accessed the programme for some length of time. At the start of the programme there was about a fifty-fifty split in terms of years 10 and 11. Schools have been very pleased with the engagement programme and how their young people have progressed.

A number of learners have progressed to Telford College of Art and Technology to follow programmes of study, so the engagement interventions have been a great success. The authority also worked with a company called the Educational Development Service (EDS), which offers a one-day programme of work placements. These have been very successful in terms of getting people employment at the end of the programme. One girl who went to work at Francesco (Hair & Beauty) Group got an apprentice position there. She would not have been eligible through the normal routes of the apprenticeship scheme.

A small group of six boys went to another provider called 'Total People', following a construction course. They actually built a small home like a tiny little shed. The boys were really impressed and a number of them are hoping to progress in that vocational area. Some of them have gone on to the Entry to Employment programme as a way of continuing.

Kerry Wootton, a 14–19 Development Officer, explains why the programme was successful: 'I think that for a number of these young people one of the most important things was that someone was taking a personal interest in them and that seemed to make a big difference. A number of the young people found that the existing school curriculum did not meet their particular needs, with them having had mixed experiences of school. We sometimes find that there is a generational problem, where parents did not have a good experience at school, which impacts upon their children's experience. This programme provides for young people to be out of the classroom environment, doing something that appeals to them and engages them. This personalised curriculum was one of the factors that really made them take interest.'

### Case study 8:

#### Warrington (North West region)

This key stage 4 engagement programme started in 2006 as a response to the identification of vulnerable pupils, as part of the Every Child Matters agenda. The local authority made a successful bid to the European Social Fund (ESF), and a project called 'Way Forward Warrington' was developed so that learners could recognise, develop and apply their skills of employability. 'Routefinder' identified learners in year 9 who were in danger of disengaging, vulnerable, had behavioural issues and were not performing effectively. The schools, in collaboration with Connexions PAs, identified the learners and completed a referral questionnaire devised centrally by the Way Forward Warrington team. The criteria used were that learners had to be vulnerable, were unlikely to achieve at school, had learning difficulties and/or needed additional support. The ESF funding allowed for 60 learners to be funded through this project.

Many of the parents and carers that came to the induction evenings had negative ideas, with questions such as; 'why has my child been identified to be on this programme?' Through the sessions that were held, all questions were answered in ways to put people at ease, and opportunities were provided for them to talk to the learning providers to find out who the learners would be working with. By describing the accredited qualification that the learner would be aiming for, this helped in changing perceptions.

A series of preparatory days in year 9 looked at developing an individual learning plan, the kind of learning environment to suit each learner's individual needs, and the vocational area they would like to work in. By the end of year 9, the individual needs of the learners were addressed and the most appropriate learning provider found, so that they were able to move forward in year 10.

Sixty learners were identified initially, and eventually 110 learners were involved in the first year of the programme. Referred learners were mainly those from year 9, though a number of learners who were disengaging in year 10 were also referred.

When the programme was initially set up, about 14 providers, mostly based in Warrington, were involved, offering courses that ranged from level 1 courses in construction to NVQ qualifications in customer service. Several learners completed key skills at level 1 and have gone on to full apprenticeships. It is important that learners work towards a recognised qualification and receive guidance/help in planning a progression route on completion of the Routefinder programme. As part of Routefinder, learners would normally go to the work-based learning provider for one day a week, though for some learners the time was extended due to their level of disengagement from their home/school environment.

The other elements of the curriculum offer were key skills communication, application of number and problem-solving. The programme was also about developing learners' employment skills, through experiencing working practices and environments. Enrichment activities were also offered, where different providers were invited in areas such as drug awareness, first aid, health, safety and wellbeing. This linked to Every Child Matters outcomes and involved working closely with the primary care trust in Warrington.

Protocols for assuring quality were put in place. All learners were assigned a mentor, and that mentor would carry out regular reviews throughout the year and assess and update the individual learning plan. The central team also visited providers to see the learners in their placements on a regular basis, to monitor the progress of the learners and also to observe and quality assure the provider.

The impact of this delivery can be seen in the measurable outcomes. Of those learners who completed the programme after one year, there was positive progression into further education, work-based learning provision and employment. 103 learners continued into this second year and remained in school, achieving certificates for any programmes completed. The project coordinator describes the impact of the programme on one young person: 'in terms of positive outcomes and impact on the learners themselves, one young learner, David was a shy young man, but in school his behaviour was a serious issue and school were considering exclusion. What changed David's perception of learning was through addressing his learning style and meeting his needs in terms of study subject. When choosing his options in year 9, he felt there wasn't anything to meet his needs; he was interested in motor vehicle and through an individual learning plan (ILP) that allowed him to study motor vehicle engineering for one day at college and then one day working with an employer, he was able to engage with ideas and challenges in a work setting.'

Jacky Forster, the 14–19 Strategy Manager, says: 'This programme is an integral part of the 14–19 offer to young people. We are continuously looking to improve the range and quality of the offer available and are making strong links with provision organised through our pupil support team for those out of school or excluded. We have to keep ownership with schools, which still have responsibility for the learners. We believe this programme is having an impact on minimising exclusions and raising attainment for this group of young people by keeping them engaged.'

### Case study 9:

#### Bournemouth (South West region)

Bournemouth's programme is designed for year 10 and 11 students who are disaffected, find school challenging, are not enjoying school, perhaps frequently absent, sometimes doing well and then suddenly not doing well academically. They are potential NEETs. In 2008 there were 105 learners in year 11 and 125 learners in year 10 from five secondary schools.

Once the students have been identified, they are put on an induction programme. A key success factor was keeping parents well informed at every stage. The induction involved teamwork exercises, including activities such as circus skills and outbound courses, with canoeing and fishing. Straight away, students felt that the programme was about them.

Having qualifications to take through to future employment is seen as important, as well as about getting confidence. Learners work towards certification in electrical work and plumbing. One learner worked on a 10-week environment and land based diploma; other courses, accessed from college, involve BTEC qualifications. One school has promoted adult literacy and numeracy courses. Pupils go straight into it as it is an online course; it gives them immediate feedback on their performance, which they enjoy. Another award is the Certificate of Personal Effectiveness, which is about broadening experiences of the workplace.

Numerous partnerships have developed. Connexions are involved, so all learners have their own Connexions PA. Schools offer mentoring, with mentors both within schools and externally. Each mentor is very carefully chosen to work with a specific sort of student. Young people work with local banks on employability skills in the world of work, the world of finance, and looking after your money. These are important characteristics to develop as part of the ability to make informed choices, based on all available options. A careers fair is currently being planned for next year's potential learners, giving them the opportunity to experience an interview, and at the same time to see the world of business and job opportunities with training providers. It intends to make them engage with the business world.

Lucy Foster, coordinator at Portchester School, describes how one learner improved through the programme: 'Quite a nervous boy is doing an animal welfare course, learning how to handle chinchillas, and he just loves it. Hopefully, he will progress onto the two year course; we'll get him some work experience in a pet shop. He's much more confident and now finds it's easier to communicate with us, as he's got so much more to talk about.'

These pupils are learning about their own personal qualities and how they all have their own different qualities and skills, and as they come to work together as a group, that helps because they all can make valued contributions. Recognising their skills and developing them further increases the young person's employability.

Suzie Levett is the 14–19 coordinator for Bournemouth Local Authority. She attributes the success of the engagement programme to selecting students carefully and using criteria that are well informed and sensible, and also to having caring and trusted staff for all students. 'We've been fortunate that there are two PAs that have established extremely good relationships with students, so that when they go out on extended visits students feel comfortable. It's very much about personalising opportunities for the sorts of students that are on the programme. It's about giving them opportunity and giving them hope.'

Putting the curriculum around the child, rather than the other way round, has been an aim of the programme. Many pupils come from backgrounds where aspirations are not part of the fabric of the family, so staff talk about achieving a balance between realistic expectations and raising aspirations.

Pupils feel that they have been listened to for the first time; they have struggled with a curriculum that is academic while they are not. They actually feel that staff are now caring about them and their needs, meeting them halfway – and therefore they have then met the other half. The programme gives a different framework. It gives them the opportunity for bigger experiences.

Suzie Levett describes the overarching policy of the local authority as 'a balance between support, monitoring and challenge of the programme' in order for young people to achieve success and progress.

### Case study 10: Harlow (Eastern region)

The Harlow Alternative Education at the Xperience Centre, Essex, programme was able to engage previously disaffected and challenging young people by using a work focus. Perceptions of the value of the programme changed since it was set up to try to engage young people in year 11 who were approaching the end of their statutory education and at risk of leaving with nothing. The centre had a cohort of 12 for the year 2008/9, with all learners starting in September.

This engagement programme has been created with an ethos for its learners that promotes achievement and self-worth through high expectations by all, around an experience that is positive and built around a curriculum that develops skills for working life.

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When a school refers a potential young person for the centre, records of their past difficulties are sent to the centre for consideration. Generally, the young person who turns up for a taster day is never as difficult as the person described on the record: some schools seem to ensure transfer by this method. No one is admitted as a result of being excluded from school, though some have been on the roll of more than one school and a few will have a statement of special educational needs. The main misdemeanour in mainstream schools has been low-level disruption that challenges the authority of the school.

The curriculum is organised to address the issues that the young people have in relation to low attainment, poor self-image, limited English, mathematics and vocational skills, and particularly limited social and communication development.

There are no new additions allowed once the dynamics of the group have stabilised. There is a mixture of activities, including work experience, group visits and more formal elements of teaching and training. The day is structured around habitual routines, with activities of short duration and plenty of short breaks within a fairly short day. There are many support assistants who know the young people really well.

Lorraine Clark is the Centre Coordinator and clearly understands the needs of the young people: 'These young people are not very good at communicating what they want, often getting left behind. Here, we get them to communicate more effectively through a range of activities and so engage in society.' These young people are then able to make informed choices based on an understanding of available options.

## End Notes

1. For more information about the FLT, visit [http://www.qca.org.uk/qca\\_8153.aspx](http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_8153.aspx).
2. The key stage 4 engagement programme was designed to offer a motivating and engaging route for 14- to 16-year-olds at risk of disaffection – and of becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) on leaving school. Within this programme, young people typically spent around two days a week on work placements, receiving tuition in colleges, and with training providers. They continued to follow the compulsory elements of the national curriculum, with a strong emphasis on functional skills. For more information, visit [http://www.qca.org.uk/qca\\_18360.aspx](http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_18360.aspx). An important aim within the programme was the development of personal and social skills and the attitudes and behaviours important to employers – and for progression in learning. Where the programme worked best, young people's learning was tailored to individual needs and they received ongoing, intensive advice, guidance and support.
3. For more information about the FLT, visit [http://www.qca.org.uk/qca\\_8153.aspx](http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_8153.aspx).
4. The AWPU is an element within the funding formula by which schools are resourced.
5. For more information about the QCF, visit [http://www.qca.org.uk/qca\\_8150.aspx](http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_8150.aspx).
6. For more information about assessment for learning, visit [http://www.qca.org.uk/qca\\_4334.aspx](http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_4334.aspx).
7. For more information about APP, visit [http://www.qca.org.uk/qca\\_16884.aspx](http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_16884.aspx).
8. For more information about Every Child Matters, visit <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk>.
9. For more information about assessment for learning, visit [http://www.qca.org.uk/qca\\_4334.aspx](http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_4334.aspx).
10. For more information about APP, visit [http://www.qca.org.uk/qca\\_16884.aspx](http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_16884.aspx).
11. For more information about IAG, visit [http://www.qca.org.uk/qca\\_18073.aspx](http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_18073.aspx).
12. For more information about enterprise education programmes, visit [www.qca.org.uk/ewb](http://www.qca.org.uk/ewb).



13. For more information about DDA guidance on eligibility and general duties, visit [www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/disability/disabilityandthedda/guidancedisabilityequalityinschools](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/disability/disabilityandthedda/guidancedisabilityequalityinschools).
14. For more information about DDA guidance on access, visit [www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/disability/disabilityandthedda/moreondedinschools](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/disability/disabilityandthedda/moreondedinschools).





## About this publication

### Who's it for?

This guidance is for all staff working with young people at key stage 4 in mainstream or special schools, academies, pupil referral units, colleges, training providers or employers offering work experience. It would also be useful for those involved in developing the foundation learning tier.

### What's it about?

This publication updates previous guidance written to support the key stage 4 engagement programme in 2007. It draws heavily on lessons learnt in the key stage 4 engagement programme, a centrally funded pilot programme that has been running since September 2006.

### What's it for?

This guidance will help staff working with young people who are disaffected from the regular school curriculum and involved in engagement programmes.

### Related materials

Further information and guidance is available from the QCA website at [www.qca.org.uk/14-19](http://www.qca.org.uk/14-19).

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