

Principles underpinning the organisation of 16-19 provision

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- *Quality ...*
- *Distinct 16-19 provision ...*
- *Diversity to ensure curriculum breadth ...*
- *Learner choice ...*
- *Affordability, value for money and cost effectiveness ...*

■ The five key principles that should underpin the organisation of 16-19 provision

FOREWORD



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The Learning and Skills Act 2000 entitles all 16-19 year olds to further education and training. To help meet the entitlement, schools and colleges must offer high quality provision that meets the diverse needs of **all** young people, their communities and employers.

In many areas 16-19 school, college and work based training provision is excellent but there is significant variation. Inspection reports show that there are serious weaknesses in some areas and a lack of co-ordination of provision in others. That is why the Learning and Skills Council, in consultation with local education authorities, students, schools, colleges, and employers, will over the next two years be undertaking strategic area reviews of post-16 arrangements including 16-19 provision.

There is no blue-print for the pattern of learning for 16-19 year olds, since the focus is the learner, not the institution and local circumstances vary. However, popular and successful sixth form provision – whether in schools, sixth form colleges or new distinct sixth form centres in FE colleges – will be encouraged, particularly where there is little or no such provision.

The strategic area reviews will be based on five key principles that will also provide the benchmark against which we will assess reorganisation proposals that come to the Department. Arrangements that are consistent with these principles will help make reality of a quality learning entitlement for all 16-19 year olds.

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■ 16-19 provision should be organised to ensure that in every area young people have access, within reasonable travelling distance, to high quality learning opportunities across the school, college and work-based training routes that will meet their interests, aptitudes and aspirations and will promote participation and attainment in learning.

■ The Learning and Skills Council are conducting a bottom-up survey of 16-19 provision nationally and will report back on the likely numbers of new sixth forms and sixth form colleges that will be needed. This will inform further discussions between Ministers and the LSC, and the strategic area review guidance will be reviewed accordingly by the end of October 2003.

■ The five key principles that should underpin the organisation of 16-19 provision

The five key principles that should underpin the organisation of 16-19 provision are:

1 Quality

Underpinning all consideration of 16-19 provision should be a requirement that all provision for all learners should be high quality, whatever their chosen pathway. Where inspection evidence or a strategic area review identifies inadequacies in provision, key areas to be examined include the:

- quality of local leadership;
- need for investment, e.g. capital;
- need for reconfiguration of provision, collaboration, merger or the establishment of new institutions, including the case for a new free-standing sixth form college to take over 16-19 provision from an FE college or school, where this has been found by OFSTED to be unsatisfactory and they are unable to demonstrate that alternative solutions will achieve the improvements necessary.

2 Distinct 16-19 provision

Distinct 16-19 provision to meet the particular pastoral, management and learning needs of this age group will be the norm, wherever they learn. All young people should be attached to a 16-19 base (including those in work based training, when attending college). Key features of this distinct provision are:

- each young person will be assigned a tutor, who will ensure that the individual's attendance and progress is monitored; that tutorial group and pastoral care are provided; that each young person is engaged in a holistic, coherent programme of learning; and that they have access to sport and other extra-curricular activities appropriate to their age group;
- it will have separate management arrangements with clear responsibilities for ensuring that the learning experience for all 16-19 year olds is appropriate and coherent.

Popular and successful sixth form provision – whether in schools, sixth form colleges or new distinct sixth form centres in FE colleges - will be an important part of the pattern of provision and should be encouraged, particularly where there is little or no such provision.

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3 Diversity to ensure curriculum breadth

Together, providers need to support a wide curriculum offer for all 16-19 learners in an area. Well-managed collaboration can enable popular and successful small providers, including school sixth forms, to remain viable and to share and build on their particular areas of expertise. Key features include:

- sharing of individual provider specialisms and planning among collaborating providers to enable learner progression to higher levels of those specialisms;
- allowing and encouraging 16-19 year old learners to select courses offered by a range of providers.

Effective collaboration might also include joint arrangements for managing collaborative activity, and sharing of staff resources, facilities, timetables and staff training.

4 Learner choice

The pattern of 16-19 provision should respect learner choice. Learning provision for 16-19 year olds will normally be in one or more of the following settings: school sixth forms, sixth form colleges, distinct sixth form centres in FE colleges, private or voluntary sector training providers and work based learning providers. The balance between these settings in any area will in part reflect historical development of services. But where possible, it should provide students with choice of provider within reasonable travelling distance. In particular:

- learners should normally have local access to high quality 16-19 provision in a range of the above settings;
- young people should have comprehensive, objective advice and guidance on the range of providers and options in their area to inform their choices at age 16;
- learners and parents should be consulted and their views taken into account about any proposals for change in 16-19 provision in their area.

It will be important for those proposing change to ensure that learners and other local stakeholders fully understand the evidence, including provider performance and other data, to inform their responses to consultation.



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5 Affordability, value for money and cost effectiveness

Changes in the organisation of 16-19 provision may result in financial costs and financial savings. Any net costs should be commensurate to the expected improvement in learning opportunities. In particular, proposals should provide:

- the expected improvements in participation, achievement, quality through the range of educational opportunities;
- all capital and recurrent costs and savings associated with the proposal, with details of the source of funding and confirmation that the funding is likely to be available within a reasonable timescale;
- an assessment of the extent to which the expected improvements depend on any additional funding.

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