

The School Governors' Guide to the Learning and Skills Council

A guide for School Governors explaining
what the Learning and Skills Council is
and what it does

September 2005

Of interest to all School Governors
involved in 14–19 year old further
education

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What is the Learning and Skills Council and what does it do?

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is a Government-funded public body that exists to improve the skills of England's young people and adults in the interests of having a workforce of world-class standards. We are responsible for planning and funding high-quality education and training for everyone over 16 (except higher education) in England, including provision in school sixth forms. The range of qualifications and programmes that the LSC funds is diverse, and includes AS and A-levels, Advanced Vocational Certificates in Education (AVCEs), National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and Apprenticeships.

We have a central role to play in driving forward the reform of 14–19 education. The Government introduced 14–19 reform in order to encourage young people to continue learning after compulsory school age by offering a broader choice of courses and qualifications across a wider range of subjects and skills.

How does the LSC operate?

Our structure operates at national, regional and local levels. As a school governor, you would be most likely to work with one of our local offices, which are responsible for maintaining grassroots contact with providers of post–16 education, including

Local Authorities, schools, colleges and other organisations that provide education and training. Each of our local offices is responsible for maintaining an oversight of all post–16 education and training on offer in its area and ensuring that the needs of learners and employers are met.

Nine Regional Directors support our local offices by working with organisations such as Regional Development Agencies, Job Centre Plus and Local Authorities. The Regional Directors are in turn supported by our national office in Coventry, which works with government and national organisations representing schools, colleges, post–16 training organisations, employers, trade unions and the voluntary sector.

Does the LSC work with schools?

Your school will have links with the LSC in a variety of ways, some of which you may already know about. We hope that this guide will give you a clearer idea of how we are working with you to achieve the best for all the pupils in your school.

How does my role as a school governor affect the work of the LSC?

School governors have an important role to play in making sure that all students from Key Stage 4 onwards have appropriate provision available to them. Programmes of study for students of all abilities may be offered through collaboration with other schools, further education or work-based learning providers. This is to give young people access to the opportunities that will make the most of their abilities and help them to succeed.

The following pages offer a guide to the key initiatives we are working on and their relevance to you as a school governor. We have divided the information into the following areas:

- funding and planning for school sixth forms
- broadening access to vocational options for 14–19 year-olds.

Funding and Planning for School Sixth Forms

What is the LSC's role in funding sixth forms?

Our local offices fund school sixth forms through Local Authorities. The system is designed to make sure students benefit directly from funding, allowing sixth forms to support individual students and using a funding formula that takes into account the actual qualifications they are studying.

How does the LSC fit in with my school's planning cycle?

For your school sixth form to undertake long-term resource and curriculum planning, funding allocations need to be as certain and clear as possible. To aid this, schools receive notification of their funding from the LSC in advance so that schools are able to plan and resource their Key Stage 5 programmes for the following year.

A simplified process was adopted after consultation with more than 1,500 school and Local Authority representatives.

Access to Vocational Options for 14–19 year-olds

How will my school achieve the broadening of access to vocational pathways for 14–19 year-olds?

Collaboration is the key to this. No one school can offer the spectrum of options that will satisfy the needs of every student. The education sector as a whole can only be successful in translating the vision for 14–19 education into reality if we work together.

The LSC is committed to supporting and encouraging partnership and collaboration between providers, which can increase and improve the vocational opportunities for young people in your area. We need positive relationships between schools, colleges and work-based learning providers to foster effective ways of working together, with the aim of:

- raising the profile of, and access to, vocational provision in schools
- sharing facilities
- developing the new curriculum.

The key initiatives helping us to drive this forward are:

- 14–19 Learner Entitlements
- Increased Flexibility Programme

- Young Apprenticeships
- Education Business Links.

We describe each of these in more detail below.

14–19 Learner Entitlements

What are they?

A learner entitlement guarantees that a minimum and specified range of learning opportunities, support, information, advice and guidance will be available to all young people within an area.

Local LSCs are committed to developing 14–19 Learner Entitlements for all young people. We are doing this work with Local Authorities, Connexions partnerships and schools, colleges and work-based learning providers.

What do they mean for schools?

Once the entitlement is in place, schools will make an agreed range of subjects (including vocational and work-based qualifications) available to young people from the age of 14. This may mean schools working with other schools, colleges or work-based learning providers. It might also mean that young people will study in more than one place. Schools will need to provide high-quality advice and guidance to help young people choose appropriate learning pathways at the ages of 14–19.

Increased Flexibility Programme

What is it?

The Increased Flexibility Programme (IFP) for 14–16 year-olds is a programme that aims to increase vocational opportunities in schools by allowing pupils to take a range of GCSEs in vocational subjects and other related qualifications. The programme is currently in place in 60 per cent of maintained secondary schools. IFP is used by more than 280 LSC-established partnerships in England. These partnerships consist of colleges, schools and other education-related organisations.

What does it mean for schools?

It means that over 100,000 Year 10 and Year 11 pupils nationally are now undertaking vocational learning, spending one day a week in a college, with a training provider or with an employer. Furthermore, early figures suggest that the IFP is bringing benefits in a range of ways, including improved attendance and behaviour, and increased retention rates in learning post–16.

Young Apprenticeships

What are they?

Launched with 1,000 participants in September 2004, the Young Apprenticeship programme enables pupils at Key Stage 4 to take vocational qualifications in industry sectors from engineering to health and social care. A further 2,000 14 year-olds will begin training under the scheme in September 2005.

Young Apprenticeships are provided through partnerships between schools, colleges, training providers and employers. The LSC funds the provision by up to £6,000 for each student for the duration of their Apprenticeship.

What do they mean for my school?

Pupils undertaking Young Apprenticeships benefit from spending up to two days a week in the workplace with an employer, training provider or college. This is on top of subjects in the core national curriculum, which are protected so that pupils still have access to a balanced curriculum and a broad set of options.

The Young Apprenticeship programme will see pupils gaining industry-specific qualifications (such as NVQs) at Level 2. This gives them a platform from which they can progress to post–16 Apprenticeships, if they wish. And there is no question that post–16 Apprenticeships are increasingly popular with school-leavers, with the number of participants standing at a record 255,000. In fact, we're injecting £38 million into the programme to boost this number further in response to the growing demand for apprentices from employers.

Education Business Links

What is it?

As the name suggests, Education Business Links (EBL) is a programme that focuses on improving links and building relationships between education and business.

Each local LSC is responsible for ensuring EBL activity in their area. They do this by supporting the Key Stage 4 requirement for work-related learning as well as broadening the contribution that businesses and employers make to the 14–19 curriculum. This is achieved through local consortia in each of the local LSC areas, which act as a single point of contact to provide a full range of high-quality activities.

Additionally, in 2005/06, schools are receiving £55 million directly from the Department for Education and Skills to support enterprise education. This will contribute to supporting work-related learning in schools. The LSC is also responsible for the Enterprise Advisory Service, which aims to support schools, colleges and other providers in specifically promoting and encouraging enterprise in the curriculum.

What does this mean for my school?

The EBL programme can support the broader 14–19 curriculum by:

- giving your pupils access to support for work experience
- providing greater opportunities for you to work with employers
- offering professional development placements for teachers in specific business sectors.

The opportunities offered by education and business partnerships are a key factor in increasing participation in learning post-16, raising attainment of young people, and preparing them for the world of work.

Questions and Further Information

Your school may already be involved with these programmes, and if this is the case we hope to develop our links further. If your school is not yet involved, you may become involved in the near future. We are working with our partners to increase the number of schools who have the opportunity to benefit from our programmes, and our work on pilot schemes is allowing us to adapt them as necessary.

Contacting your local LSC

If you have questions about involvement in any of the initiatives outlined in this leaflet, please see the LSC website (www.lsc.gov.uk) or contact your lead Director of Young People's Learning 14–19/Schools at your local LSC.



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