

A commitment from
The Children's Plan

Delivering 14–19 Reform: Next Steps Summary



department for
children, schools and families

Summary

Children and young people at the centre of everything we do

1. Our aim is to make this the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up. In 2007, we published the first ever *Children's Plan* to put the needs of children, young people and parents at the centre of everything we do.
2. If we are to achieve this, we must ensure that all young people are able to thrive as citizens in a globalised economy. That is why we have embarked on a transformation of services and expansion of opportunities for young people, ranging from support for the most vulnerable and their families, to reforms to qualifications and curriculum to stretch the most able. This document focuses on our reform programme for young people's education and training.
3. Our programme has three goals which are captured in the Government's Public Service Agreement (PSAs):
 - To ensure that all young people participate until at least their 18th birthday – in education and training that stretches and challenges them to achieve their potential and go on to further or higher education or skilled employment
 - To give young people the knowledge and skills that employers and the economy need to prosper in the 21st century

- To close the achievement gap so that all have an equal opportunity to succeed, irrespective of gender, race, disability or background

Progress since 2005

4. In 2005, we published the *14-19 Education and Skills White Paper* and, after extensive work with partners, the *14-19 Implementation Plan*. This set out our delivery priorities.
5. Thanks to the efforts of all our local and national partners, we have made substantial progress. For example, following work by employers, Higher Education (HE) and others too, young people are now studying the first five Diplomas in over 140 local consortia of schools and colleges across the country. New functional skills qualifications are being piloted, which will help ensure all young people achieve the basic employability skills which employers and HE both say they want to see. We have extended the September Guarantee of a suitable place in learning to all 17 year olds. And young people have increased access to positive activities in their leisure time.
6. As a result, we have seen more young people participating in education and training than ever before, achieving good levels of skills, and then progressing further:
 - The proportion of young people aged 16-18 taking part in education or training rose from 77.1% in 2006 to 78.7% in 2007, the highest rate ever
 - The proportion of 16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET) fell by 1 percentage point, from 10.4% in 2006 to 9.4% in 2007

- In 2007, level 2 attainment at 19 years was 73.9% and level 3 attainment at 19 years was 48%
7. We have also seen more young people complete Apprenticeships; a narrowing of the attainment gap at 19 between those on free school meals (FSM) and other pupils; and an increase in the proportion of those going into HE from more disadvantaged backgrounds.
 8. Despite this progress, significant challenges remain. There are still too many young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), and too many leaving education with few or no qualifications. Employers and HE are telling us that the skill levels of young people must improve further if we are going to close the skills gap identified by the *Leitch Review*. And socio-economic background and factors such as gender, race, disability remain too strong a predictor of attainment.

Raising the participation age

9. That is why we made the historic commitment last year to raise the participation age. Subject to Parliamentary approval of the current Education and Skills Bill, we will raise the participation age to 17 by 2013 and to 18 by 2015 to give every young person the opportunity to remain in education or training.
10. We need to provide all young people with opportunities that suit their needs and interests. For too long we have let some of our most vulnerable young people drop out if they struggled with what was on offer, rather than tailoring the offer to help get them back on the path to success. Raising the participation age challenges all of us responsible for young people's futures to raise our game. The ambition that all young people

participate and achieve moves from an aspiration to something that we must deliver within a few years.

11. We must use this to galvanise the entire education system, and wider services, behind the goal of ensuring that all young people now have opportunities to stay in education and training that meets their needs and interests. The children who started year 7 this September will be the first to stay in education and training. So we must act quickly to make sure the right opportunities and support are in place.
12. That is why we are publishing this document now. We have three main aims in doing so:
 - To present a clear picture of the 14-19 reform programme in the context of progress to date; further developments since 2005; and our wider objectives for all aged 0-19 and beyond, as set out in the *Children's Plan*
 - To show how the programme fits together – starting from the perspective of the young person and the learning and support available to them, and describing the local partnerships that will deliver better opportunities for them.
 - To set out the next steps and timetable of reform to 2015 to ensure that we achieve our ambitious goals for all young people aged 14-19

A 14-19 Entitlement for all young people

13. Our starting point is the concept of a 14-19 entitlement for all young people to the right learning opportunities, and the right support as set out in Figure 1 below. To deliver that entitlement, we have four clear priorities:

- A high quality learning route for every young person that enables them to participate, achieve and progress (chapter 2)
- The support to integrate all services for young people, so that they can make the most of their opportunities and choices (chapter 3)
- Stronger local partnerships and consortia arrangements (chapter 4)
- Establishing the right delivery arrangements at a local, regional and national level (chapter 5)

Figure 1: An entitlement to the right learning opportunities and support for all young people aged 14-19

All young people will study as part of the new secondary curriculum:

- Key Stage 4 core curriculum: English, maths, science
- Key Stage 4 foundation subjects: ICT, PE, Citizenship
 - Work-related learning and enterprise
 - Religious education
 - Sex, drug, alcohol and tobacco education and careers education
- A course in at least one of the arts; design and technology; the humanities; modern foreign languages and all four if they wish to

Learning for young people will lead to qualifications from one of four routes:

- Apprenticeships – with an entitlement to a place by 2013 for all 16 year olds suitably qualified
- Foundation Learning Tier – with an entitlement by 2010 to study one of the progression pathways
- General Qualifications, e.g. GCSEs and A levels
- Diplomas – with an entitlement by 2013 for all 14-16 year olds to the first 14 Diplomas and for 16-18 years to all 17 Diplomas

Young people will be able to study qualifications that do not fall under these four routes where there is a clear rationale to maintain them in learners' interests and some young people will study informal unaccredited provision to re-engage them.

Throughout the curriculum and qualifications routes there will be

- Functional skills in English, maths and ICT and personal, learning and thinking skills

There will be the right support, including:

- Excellent Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) and support to make the right choices at 14 and 16
- A 14-19 Prospectus in every area setting out the courses and support available
- A Common Application Process linked to the 14-19 Prospectus that makes it easier to apply for education and training
- The September Guarantee to ensure all 16 and 17 year olds have an offer of a suitable place in learning and targeted supported to those who need it most.

A high quality and valued learning route for every young person that enables them to participate, achieve and progress

14. Every young person should have the opportunity to engage in learning that will enable them to participate, achieve and progress to higher education or skilled employment.
15. To achieve this, we need a system where young people and their parents can understand the range of courses and qualifications that are on offer, where employers and HE recognise and value these qualifications, and where all have confidence in the standards of the qualifications.
16. Earlier this year we published *Promoting achievement, valuing success: a strategy for 14-19 qualifications*, in which we set out how we would develop a streamlined set of qualifications. We said then that we expect publicly funded qualifications to fall within one of the four routes below – unless there is clear evidence of a need to maintain specific qualifications outside these routes in the interests of learners; or if young people are studying in informal non-accredited provision to help to re-engage them and set them back on the path to success.
 - Apprenticeships, with all young people suitably qualified entitled to a place from 2013
 - Diplomas, in 17 areas of study that we will introduce in phases between 2008 and 2011
 - Foundation Learning Tier, with progression pathways that will roll out nationally from 2010
 - General Qualifications, such as GCSEs and A levels

17. Young people will be able to choose from any one of these four routes. There will also be opportunities for personalised learning in formal and informal settings that will enable young people to reengage and progress onto one of these routes.
18. In many instances it will be possible to combine qualifications from within more than one route to best meet the learner's needs, for example taking an A level as part of the Additional and Specialist Learning within a Diploma. Choosing one route will not preclude moving to another. There will be flexibility for learners to move between routes as their interests and aspirations develop. To underpin this, schools are, from September 2008, teaching a new secondary curriculum.

Skills that everyone needs and values

19. Whichever route young people choose, they will gain the generic skills that are so critical to both employers and the Higher Education sector. They will start learning personal, learning and thinking skills as part of the new secondary curriculum. And functional skills will be embedded throughout the secondary curriculum and an integral component of all four learning routes.

A clear, streamlined system with choices that all lead to progression

20. To help achieve a streamlined qualifications system that works effectively and delivers value for money, we will introduce a new system to ensure that all publicly funded qualifications meet the needs of learners, employers and Higher Education. From December 2008, we are establishing a joint committee, Joint Advisory Committee of Qualifications and Approvals (JACQA) to advise the Secretary of State on this. It will also carry out biennial reviews of the 14-19 qualifications system. And in 2013 we will complete a full review of how all publicly funded qualifications at that point are combining to meet the needs of young people, employers and universities.
21. It is critically important that everyone has confidence in all qualifications. We will therefore be legislating to establish Ofqual from 2009 as an independent regulator of qualifications and tests. The regulator will report to Parliament, rather than to Ministers, so everyone can have confidence in its judgements about the standards of qualifications. And the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) will evolve into the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA), an agency for developing curriculum and qualifications, including the development and delivery of National Curriculum assessments.

Personalising teaching and learning on every route

22. With this improved system of curriculum and qualifications in place, teaching and learning can better respond to the needs and interests of young people. We will support teachers to use assessment for judging both current achievement and potential future achievement. And we will set up an expert group of practitioners to explore the concept of 14-19 pedagogy, taking into account the clear links to the secondary curriculum, assessment routes, teaching and learning approaches and applied learning.

The right support so that every young person can access and make the most of their choice

23. Developing excellent curriculum and qualifications and teaching and learning are key to raising participation and achievement. But together we must also ensure that young people get the right support to choose the course that suits them, the right place to learn in, and the support to help them learn, train and progress onto further learning or work.

Having the right support to choose: High quality Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)

24. Critical to making the right choices is high quality and impartial IAG. We will provide early support to help young people raise their aspirations and challenge stereotypes. In September 2009, we will test early careers interventions in Key Stage 2, and we want to see a personal tutor for every secondary school pupil by 2010.

25. By the time they are 14 every young person should have received good quality information from a trusted source. They should understand the different learning providers to choose from, the range of learning opportunities and have experienced different possibilities before they make choices. In particular, they should know how to get the support to access learning which is delivered primarily in the workplace, such as Apprenticeships.
26. We will therefore continue to support local consortia of providers, individual institutions and the school and youth workforce to deliver better IAG.

Knowing what is on offer

27. Already every 16 and 17 year old is guaranteed an offer of a suitable place in learning through the September Guarantee. We will also strengthen the 14-19 online Prospectuses that are in place in every area. These tell young people and their parents the courses on offer, including the experiences of previous learners, success rates in courses and how to apply for them. In addition there will be a Common Application Process (CAP) that is linked to the Prospectus so that young people can apply through one system regardless of where or what they want to learn. Our aspiration is that the CAP will be in place across every area for young people in year 11 by September 2010.

Support to learn

28. In order to make the most of these learning opportunities in their local area, young people need a range of support. Personal tutors can support young people through key transition stages in learning such as at 14 and 16. The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) will continue to work with stakeholders to develop the Managing Information Across Partners (MIAP) services to improve data sharing and personalisation for the benefit of pupils and learners when they change institutions and courses.
29. Financial and practical support can also make the difference between participation and non-participation. Nearly half of all young people are supported to participate in learning through the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA). Care to Learn is very successful in supporting young parents to stay in learning. And we are working across government to develop proposals on how the wider financial support system could support young learners.

Additional personal support

30. We recognise some young people will need additional personal support. We are taking forward our strategy, working with local authorities to strengthen their support for young people who are NEET through good tracking, flexible provision and learning opportunities.

31. We are increasing support for young people with special educational needs (SEN) and learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD). And the Youth Task Force is driving forward the work that will enable local authorities to enhance their support to young people and families facing the most difficult circumstances, for example with specific initiatives to tackle teenage pregnancy and substance misuse.

Strengthening the local partnerships that will deliver excellent learning and support for all young people

32. It is strong local partnerships of providers that will deliver improved learning and support for all young people. Across the country, consortia, 14-19 Partnerships and local authorities are already showing how increased collaboration is a vital component of this.
33. The consortia that have come together to deliver the new Diplomas exemplify this kind of collaboration. They show how groups of schools, colleges and work-based learning providers coming together have the potential to ensure students can access all four learning routes.
34. At the operational level, many consortia are putting in place the collaborative arrangements that are vital to effective learning, for example a curriculum framework, a compatible timetable and transport between institutions. Throughout 2008/09, we will continue to work with our partners in this area to develop support and spread good practice more widely.

Developing the workforce

35. Leaders, managers, teachers, lecturers, support staff, volunteers and all those working with young people play a vital role in making sure that these collaborative arrangements benefit young people.
36. Already, we are providing training to practitioners and leaders to deliver new and reformed qualifications. And increasingly we will look to mainstream training within Initial Teacher Training and Continuing Professional Development.
37. Our approach for the 14-19 phase will be part of the wider work of the Children's Workforce 2020 Review, which will cover the wider range of professionals who work with young people. And through 2008/09, we will continue to develop our strategy for developing a 14-19 workforce who can work collaboratively across institutions; are recognised for their knowledge and skills across providers; and are confident in using a range of teaching styles to meet all learners' needs.

Student voice

38. There is no group whose view is more important in terms of the 14-19 reform programme than the young people themselves, that is why it is critical that the student voice is heard, at both local and national level.

39. There are already a number of good examples of consortia engaging with students to help them develop and implement reforms; and of students making a substantive contribution to local decisions. But, to make sure the student voice can be heard even more than before, we are strengthening the requirement for consortia to demonstrate their interaction with young people in the next gateway process. We will also establish a national 14-19 learner panel by spring 2009 to ensure that young people are feeding their views directly into national policy.

Importance of employers and Higher Education as local partners

40. The consortia and other partnerships delivering 14-19 reforms are benefitting from the vital inputs of employers and HE. Employers have already played a lead role in developing new qualifications and strengthening existing ones to ensure their quality and standing. This lead role will need to continue to ensure the success of our reforms, for example through applied learning opportunities for young people and developmental opportunities for their teachers and lecturers.
41. The HE sector will continue to play a critical role. It has been similarly involved from the start of the reforms to make sure that post-16 learning prepares young people for further learning and gives them the qualifications that will be recognised by universities. And many Higher Education Institutions are already involved in supporting 14-19 Partnerships and consortia.

The role of 14-19 Partnerships

42. 14-19 Partnerships are the critical body for the delivery of reform in their area. Through legislation in the next session of Parliament we will place local authorities under a duty to cooperate with 14-19 providers and so 14-19 Partnerships will play an increasingly pivotal role. They will be the link between the consortia delivering on the ground and the local authorities as strategic leaders of 14-19 reform through their local role of commissioning provision. We want to work with 14-19 Partnerships to enable areas to develop further.

Supporting and challenging local partnerships

43. At the national level, we will provide support for consortia through funding and through the dissemination of good practice. We will refine the Gateway process to ensure quality and readiness to deliver. And we will look at how we can enhance the collective accountability of consortia.

Establishing the local delivery system with regional and national support to ensure excellent learning and support for all young people

44. Building up from local consortia arrangements to stronger 14-19 partnerships we, with partners, want to establish the local delivery system so that all young people can participate, achieve and progress. We will work with sector representative organisations such as the Bureaucracy Reduction Group and the Implementation Review Unit to ensure that the new delivery system does not burden our partners with bureaucracy.

Local authorities as strategic leaders of 14-19 reform

45. Local authorities play a key role in the 14-19 Partnerships which bring all providers together locally to plan for 14-19 delivery. In addition, local authorities have a wider set of responsibilities for securing outcomes for young people aged 0-19, including ensuring provision of integrated youth support services. This means they are well placed to provide a wider strategic leadership role on 14-19.
46. That is why we have now proposed to give local authorities responsibility for the commissioning of all learning for 16-18 year olds, taking over this role from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) from September 2010 and ensuring there is a suitable learning place for every young person. This will include local authorities becoming responsible for the learning of young people in juvenile custody in their area.
47. To deliver these new duties local authorities will plan more widely and in more detail, working closely in partnership with their local schools, sixth form colleges, FE colleges and training providers. To work most effectively, commissioning of learner provision must sit together with the commissioning of integrated youth support services. We will help local authorities build capacity for their new role:
 - In 2008/09, local authorities will track LSC processes to gain a better understanding of commissioning 16-18 provision
 - 2009/10 will be a transition year where local authorities will play a more meaningful role in LSC's commissioning for 2010/11

- From September 2010 local authorities will assume full responsibility for commissioning of 16-18 provision

Sub-regional groupings and the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA)

48. However even the most capable and best supported local authorities will not be able to work alone to commission the most effective provision for young people in their area, especially given the number of young people who will travel to another local area to learn. To help fulfil their new responsibilities local authorities will need to come together in sub-regional groupings.
- By 2009, there will be sub-regional groupings in every part of the country. Local authorities have submitted their initial proposals and we have asked them to give more detail by March 2009
 - By 2010, we will also establish the YPLA as a small Non Departmental Public Body (NDPB) to support and enable local authorities to commission effective provision for all young people, whilst ensuring budgetary control . The YPLA could play a particularly important role in supporting those local authorities and sub-regional groupings that need more time to develop the full capacity and capability for their new role

End to end commissioning process

49. The new roles for local authorities, sub-regional groupings and the YPLA will all support an effective and efficient end-to-end commissioning process. The key principle of our post-16 funding policy is that funding must follow learner choices. And capital funding should be aligned with learner funding to secure the best provision for young people.

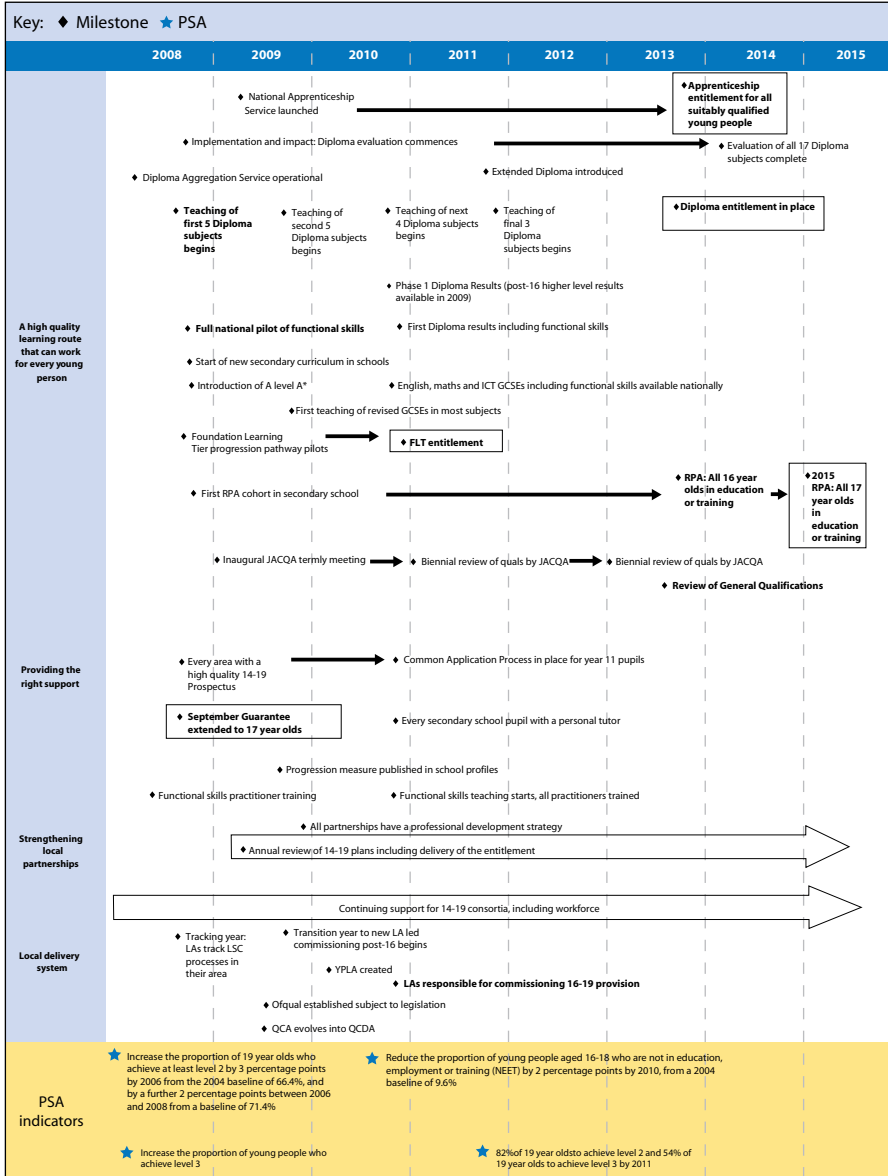
Appropriate accountability

50. To ensure the effective and efficient running of this process, we will put in place appropriate accountability frameworks at all levels:
- From this autumn, the annual review of Local Area Agreements will consider performance against 14-19 and youth indicators
 - New Multi-Area Agreements will reflect collaboration between local authorities
 - We are piloting the Framework for Excellence in FE colleges and sixth form colleges. And from September 2009 we will pilot it in school sixth forms

Conclusion

51. Through our joint efforts we have come a long way since 2005. Working across these four priority areas, we can now create the overall system to achieve full participation of young people. It is an ambitious goal, but one which is vital so we can improve the outcomes and life chances for all young people.

Figure 2: High level timeline





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