

The transfer of responsibilities for commissioning 16-18 education from LSC to LA

Current LSC responsibilities that will transfer in April 2010.

As well as a remit for developing adult skills the LSC is currently the commissioner of 16-18 provision. They maintain relationships with the Further Education Colleges and sixth form colleges so that there is good intelligence about the organisations. The LSC is organised on a regional and sub-regional basis (Brighton & Hove is in the Sussex sub region of the South East Region). Commissioning plans for post 16 provision from each LA are collated to produce a Regional Plan. The Regional Plans are pulled together and the totality of the funding required across the country is compared to the funding available. If there is a mismatch the decision to increase or decrease the funding reaches back down through regional and sub-regional groups to the LA and then to the providers (including school sixth forms). This funding mechanism is very different to that for schools with pupils below the age of 16. The LA will not receive a budget but will pass on funds allocated by the system described above. The complex national formula to fund post-16 providers takes into account the number of learners, the type of courses they follow, the amount of teaching time for courses, the quality of past performance, the socio-economic circumstances and additional support needs.

The LSC also has had funding for particular projects, for example the Key Stage 4 re-engagement project (working with 200 young people 14-16), and Entry to Employment provision for those without the necessary confidence or skills to get into work. LSC also manages contracts with private providers and also training providers. They check on quality and can de-commission where appropriate. The LSC has also provided for the education of learners with Learning Difficulties or Disabilities up to the age 25.

The commissioning of 16-18 provision (and 16-25 for some pupils with additional needs) in Brighton & Hove becomes the responsibility of the Local Authority in April 2010. The LSC staff will be responsible for the commissioning of provision for the academic year 2010-11 but working closely with officers. In April 2010 staff will transfer from the LSC to Brighton & Hove City Council payroll and the extra capacity that these people bring will enable us to take over the functions described above.

New staffing arrangements

We have been fortunate to have been allocated 7 people to transfer from LSC to Brighton & Hove in April 2010. These people have been matched to the LA by the LSC Human Resources team. These people will be placed in the Learning, Schools and Skills branch of the CYPT.

Working with neighbouring LAs

In the original planning for the change it was suggested that the sub-regional groups should re-form. This proved problematic and so senior 14-19 officers from Brighton and Hove, East Sussex and West Sussex have met to discuss protocols and processes for working together in the best interests of learners who travel across LA borders to learn.

Young people have a wide choice of places to study in and around Brighton & Hove and so the decisions in one LA will have possible consequences for residents in the neighbouring LAs. Resources for 16-18 education will come from the National Government based on local commissioning decisions. Decisions made in each LA will have an impact on neighbours within what is known as the Travel to Learn Area.

In 2006/07, about a quarter of 16-18 year old learners resident in Brighton chose to learn outside the city. About 11% of Brighton & Hove learners went to East Sussex colleges and another 11% to West Sussex Colleges. A very small percentage went further afield. This equates to 871 Brighton and Hove young people that were educated in neighbouring areas.

Similarly 922 West Sussex young people were educated in Brighton & Hove and 535 East Sussex young people were educated in Brighton & Hove. These figures show that we have a vested interest in working together for the best interest of the learners and the FE institutions. When all young people have to stay in education until age 18 these numbers could rise by 15%. This is a significant number of families affected by the commissioning decisions of neighbouring LAs.

Senior officers from the 3 Sussex LAs have met frequently to develop future formal arrangements for working together to co-ordinate commissioning plans within the Travel to Learn Area. The three authorities have already set a successful precedent for working together on shared issues, including the Area Wide Prospectus, Sussex wide Health and Safety vetting process and collaborative protocols around Diplomas.

The new parliamentary Bill will call into being the Young People's Learning Agency (staffed by people currently in the LSC) which will support LAs in their new role and ensure that there are robust arrangements for Travel to Learn Areas. There will also be a Skills Funding Agency which takes on those duties of the LSC pertaining to the commissioning adult skills training.