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# 14-19

the future of work-based learning



## Section 1

# Policy context: the Green Paper

The Green Paper is a consultation document which builds on policies outlined in the White Paper, *Schools Achieving Success*, published in summer 2001. The main outcomes from the consultation on the Green Paper will be implemented from September 2004. Pathfinder pilots from 2002 to 2004 are suggested for some of the proposals.

## The vision

'We set out an evolving vision for greater coherence in the 14–19 phase of education and training in England and the challenges and opportunities it presents to all those with a stake in the changes we propose.'

*14–19: Extending Opportunities, Raising Standards, Green Paper, February 2002*

Brave words. And there is genuine vision in some of the ideas put forward in the Green Paper – not least in suggesting that there's no point drawing a hard line at 16 when most young people will continue in some form of education and training for at least another three years.

But what's the substance? Is the Green Paper a patchwork quilt of different initiatives, attractive enough in their own right but lacking real coherence or integrity? Or is this latest project much more than that – a magic carpet, perhaps, to take us out of the divisive, status-ridden past and in to a better future where opportunities are open to all and are genuinely built on high standards and high expectations?

## Where is it leading to?

There are four broad, underpinning objectives in the Green Paper:

- To build an education system in which every young person and every parent has confidence and to ensure that no young person is denied the chance of a decent education.
- To deliver the technical and vocational skills needed in an advanced economy, so that everyone has a pathway to success and can reap the benefits of gaining skills which meet the country's needs.
- To promote education through a curriculum that is more flexible and responsive to learners' individual needs, motivates them to stay in learning and challenges the most able.
- To encourage closer collaboration and innovative working between schools, colleges and training providers.

Set against the backdrop of education and training reform in other parts of the world, the picture emerging from the Green Paper is broadly familiar – but with some interesting developments. We're not going to see the UK go down the line of greater flexibility as in the US or Japan, or down the German route of greater regulation. In essence, this is still the 'third way', in which individual choice is underpinned by a publicly funded system under fairly tight central controls.

## Starting out – age 14

Any vision for 14–19 learning has to be built on young people's achievements in school. The Green Paper states that by the age of 14, most young people should have reached a good standard in the basics. They should have learned how to reason and think logically and creatively. They should be taking more responsibility for their own learning.

Support for young people towards the end of Key Stage 3 in schools will be crucial in two respects:

- To raise aspirations for the next phase of learning.
- To provide guidance on which pathway to choose from the wider range of options available.

So the 14–19 phase starts with a review of progress between pupils, parents and teachers. All young people will develop an individual learning plan to mark their entry into the new phase. Parents should be involved in negotiating plans. The plan will help them choose the most suitable options and identify the learning they need to gain the proposed new matriculation diploma at age 19. It will help them set targets, manage and review their learning.

## Flexibility at 14–16

What happens after that? Some of the most important changes in the Green Paper concern the proposed new curriculum for 14–16 year olds, which will turn into something significantly more flexible than the one they follow at the moment. This is the 'extending opportunities' agenda, offering individual learners a wider range of choices and recognising that young people have diverse aims. Statutory requirements will fill roughly half the timetable – which leaves a lot more time for options. All young people will also have a statutory entitlement to other subjects if they want them.

Proposed statutory requirements	Proposed statutory entitlements
English	Modern foreign languages
Mathematics	Design and technology
Science	Arts
ICT	Humanities
Citizenship	
Work-related learning	



Vocational options, in particular, will be developed further and given higher status. New GCSEs in vocational subjects are being introduced in September 2002 and will become more widely available in 2003. More vocational qualifications will count towards performance tables. Learners who take qualifications up to a year later than 16 will also be counted. There will be more support for teachers and their workloads will be reduced. Inspection will comment on the breadth of opportunities available in schools.

‘. . . all inspection reports [will] include a judgement about the quality and range of provision currently available and the impact of any collaboration that exists. This will be a main focus for area inspections.’

*14-19: Extending Opportunities, Raising Standards, Green Paper, February 2002*

There's more flexibility for individual learners as well. Young people will be encouraged to develop at a pace consistent with their abilities. Some may progress through Key Stage 3 in two years and start the 14-19 phase at age 13 or even earlier. Others may gain qualifications later than 16. Arrangements should allow for accelerated learning in a range of subjects, building on the work of initiatives such as 'Excellence in Cities' and the 'Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth'. GCSEs will become roughly the mid-point of the 14-19 phase, not a demarcation line between compulsory and post-compulsory education as they are at the moment.

Guidance throughout the first two years of the phase will come from careers education programmes and external specialists working with schools. Connexions personal advisers will help to support young people as they choose their pathways.

This whole raft of changes at 14-16 signals a sustained attempt to open up the curriculum and make it more responsive to individuals' needs. It also tackles the age-old academic and vocational divide at its roots, during the years in which young people start to make important decisions about their further learning and careers.

### **16-19: an unwritten story**

The Green Paper is clear about what should happen in the transition from Key Stage 3 and what happens between 14 and 16. It's less clear what will happen during the rest of the phase from 16 to 19. Curriculum 2000, brought in as part of the *Qualifying for Success* reforms, will be continued and adapted to produce a simpler 'A' level structure. 'A' levels in vocational subjects will be extended. Modern Apprenticeships are to grow and change – more on that in Section 2.

Whatever pathway young people choose, they will need to show worthwhile participation in three strands:

- A qualification strand.
- A common strand of literacy, numeracy and ICT to at least level 2.
- A wider activities strand, including active citizenships, work-related learning and wider interests.

The proposal is that achievement in all three strands will be recognised by a new matriculation diploma. The diploma could be awarded at intermediate level (GCSE), advanced level (A level) or higher level (high A level grades).

### Collaboration

Some of the proposals set out in the Green Paper could be tackled by schools, colleges and training providers working on their own – as they mostly do at the moment. But not all. One of the most intriguing aspects of the Paper is its emphasis on providers working together in new collaborative networks.

It won't be easy. There are entrenched attitudes, commercial forces and decades of history to deal with. Hence the suggestion in the Paper that providers should be rewarded for identifying and removing barriers to collaboration. Pathfinder projects will be set up to explore different models of collaborative working; innovations will be supported; good practice will be recognised.

And not least, the Green Paper recognises that a significant level of investment is needed to widen the choice of pathways and build quality provision in all of them. Behind the promised reforms is a promise that government investment will increase in future years as resources permit. More details on future funding are expected to emerge from the spending review in autumn 2002.

Level	Current rate (2001)	Target (2004)
Level 2	75%	85%
Level 3	51%	54%
Entry into Modern Apprenticeship by 2004		28%
Initial entry rate into HE (current)		34%
HE target for 2010		50%
Target for 18–21 year olds		40%

### Taking a closer look

The danger of visions is that they can carry you away. What can a closer look at the proposals in the Green Paper tell us about the shape of reform in the next few years? What might happen to upset or frustrate the realisation of its vision? This isn't to throw cold water on the Green Paper – just to look at it in a cooler light. And almost inevitably, analysis of this kind throws up more questions than answers.

### Targets

The first thing to say is that the intentions seem to be serious enough. The new 14–19 policy is target driven.



The Level 2 target is one of the key public service agreement targets set by the Treasury for the DfES. It is seriously meant – even though it may be missed. Attainment of this target underpins all the others. Failure to achieve it may undermine them.

### **Work-based learning**

There is also a risk that some of these targets may work against rather than support each other. How feasible is it to simultaneously boost staying on in full-time education and entry into work-based learning? What will the impact of Education Maintenance Allowances (EMA) be if they are extended across the whole country?

A recent study by the Institute for Fiscal Studies sheds some light on the second question. It estimates that the impact of EMA for a whole cohort would be a net flow of 3.7% into full-time education and a flow of –2.2% out of work and training. In other words, EMA is likely to benefit full-time education at the expense of work-based learning.

There's also a question mark over the Modern Apprenticeship (MA) targets. How realistic are they? And even if they are achieved, what difference will they make to the status and impact of the apprenticeship route?

The target for 2004 is that 28% of the cohort should enter MA. It's likely that the target will only be achieved through some judicious re-badging – Level 2 training badged as Foundation MA, college NVQ training to become apprenticeship training in the new 'programme-led' option – and a few genuinely new entrants at the margins, though even this looks vulnerable when actual entrants into work-based learning are currently running well below profile in many local Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs). The 35% target proposed in the Cassels report on Modern Apprenticeships and not accepted by the Government would require much more than re-badging. Achieving this would still only bring the UK into line with the Netherlands and leave it way behind the number of apprentices in Germany.

### **Labour market and employers**

There isn't much of an appetite in the Green Paper for a mass youth apprenticeship system in the UK. What understanding is there of the way young people enter the labour market and how this might affect their choices on leaving school? Can employers be persuaded to support even the modest rate of expansion in MA envisaged during the next two years?



The new earnings survey reveals that youth wages average £200 per week for 18–20 year olds in full-time jobs. It's a compelling reason why some young people don't go into further full-time education at 16 or on to university two or three years later. It's also one of the plus points for MA, where apprenticeship wages are a distinct incentive to attract young people – but at a cost to employers.

Recent research shows that employer awareness of MA is high, at around 90%, but employer involvement is low, somewhere between 7 and 9%. Among small and medium-sized enterprises, MA is seen as a recruitment tool first and an opportunity to train second. Some never take the training commitment seriously. A four-week marketing campaign for MA in March 2002 was aimed at young people and LSCs received over 100,000 enquiries in the first few weeks (half by e-mail!). How will this particular 'extended opportunity' be catered for, given the shortage of employers willing to take on MAs? Is there a role here for Business Link? And just as important, how will standards be raised if LSCs and providers come under growing pressure to recruit new employers quickly?

### **Beyond policy**

Answers to questions like these will emerge over time, some more quickly than others. Whether the answers are good or bad depends to a very considerable extent on the actions – and aspirations – of the organisations involved with delivery.

The role of government is to provide the framework within which services operate. The current Government is keen to modernise services – education and training just as much as health and transport. Policy documents such as this Green Paper are just the starting point. They have to be taken up and turned into practical propositions by those who provide the service. The world is constructed by what we do. Whether a genuinely 14–19 phase does emerge, whether we get a 'world-class' education and training system 'with standards that match the best in the world', rests on what happens over the next few years as providers and other stakeholders try to turn the vision into reality.

The remaining four sections in this report explore key aspects of the Green Paper proposals in more detail and suggest how providers and others can make the most of the possibilities now opening out in front of them.



## Section 2

# Work-based learning

### What place does it have?

Chapter 1 of the Green Paper sets out the Government's proposed strategy for 14–19 education and training. Most of the remaining chapters focus on education. What's happening to training? And, more particularly, what place could work-based learning have in the changing landscape of 14–19 provision?

Some answers – but not the whole story – can be found in other policy papers which complement the Green Paper.

**'In 2010, the UK will be a society in which Government, employers and individuals will actively engage in skills development to deliver sustainable economic success for all.'**

*In Demand: Adult Skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* Performance and Innovation Unit,  
November 2001

More brave words. This time from the heart of government, the unit set up inside No.10 to modernise government and drive through the changes seen as essential to New Labour's second term in office. The provenance is significant: what the PIU says will happen tends to happen. An action plan to take the skills revolution forward is due to be published alongside the 2002 spending review this autumn.

The PIU report reinforces the 'third way' approach of strengthening demand and supply, also found in the Green Paper and the Cassels report on Modern Apprenticeships. All these policy papers point in the same direction: the key to an improved publicly-funded education and training service is a demand-led system in which provision is responsive to individuals and employers and more purchasing power is in the hands of customers. For its part, the Government (through agencies such as the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and inspectorates) will provide a framework which focuses on outcomes, accountability and local flexibility.

### Expectations and opportunities

In its strategic plan to 2004 the LSC says it aims to extend participation in education and training, engage employers in workforce development, raise levels of achievement and improve the quality of providers. Local LSCs have all developed their own strategic plans focusing on three things: skills, participation and learning. Their plans also include impact measures and strategies for improving quality.

**Raise demand** – promote benefits, remove barriers, provide guidance

**Improve supply** – improve quality, increase capacity, provide funding

**Provide the framework** – review outcomes, build accountability and flexibility, set targets

Work-based learning is an integral part of LSC strategies. A significant increase is planned in the numbers in work-based learning by 2010. More immediate opportunities for work-based providers include:

- the extension of Centres of Vocational Excellence to work-based learning providers
- bids for 'increased flexibility' for 14–16 year olds
- responding to the leads generated by the MA marketing campaign.

To meet these and other opportunities, LSCs will expect work-based learning providers to form partnerships with schools and colleges and collaborate closely with Connexions. It's an important agenda for LSCs, since one of the main constraints they face is how to grow provision when a significant number of providers have less than satisfactory provision. The messages from inspection – especially area inspections, which in the longer term will form some sort of measure of an LSC's performance – are getting through loud and clear.

#### **Key findings from area inspections**

- Value for money in training providers is low because there are low levels of retention and achievement and high costs of implementation.
- Trainees have performed well only in areas where key skills have been successfully implemented and where they have received good on-the-job training.
- On- and off-the-job training are often poorly coordinated.
- Initial assessment by training providers is often poor and insufficiently rigorous entry criteria are applied.
- The standard of teaching is frequently poor and the management and monitoring of training providers is poor.
- Training providers often provide little effective tutorial support, and in too many cases trainees are not sufficiently trained for employment.

The emphasis on quality will not go away and LSCs are determined to keep their eyes on that particular ball. Shifting the emphasis from competition to collaboration is one way of raising standards across the board. It's also a way of encouraging providers to stop protecting what they do if it's not good enough. And pooling resources among providers can bring gains in value for money and effectiveness. The first lesson for providers is that if they do a good job they'll survive. And if they do it really well they'll be given the opportunity to grow their existing market share and move into some of the new markets opened up by the shift to a 14–19 phase.

As they move into their second year, LSCs are becoming more confident about their planning function and more demanding in what they expect providers to do. To meet these higher expectations and to take advantages of



## Section 5

# Partnerships

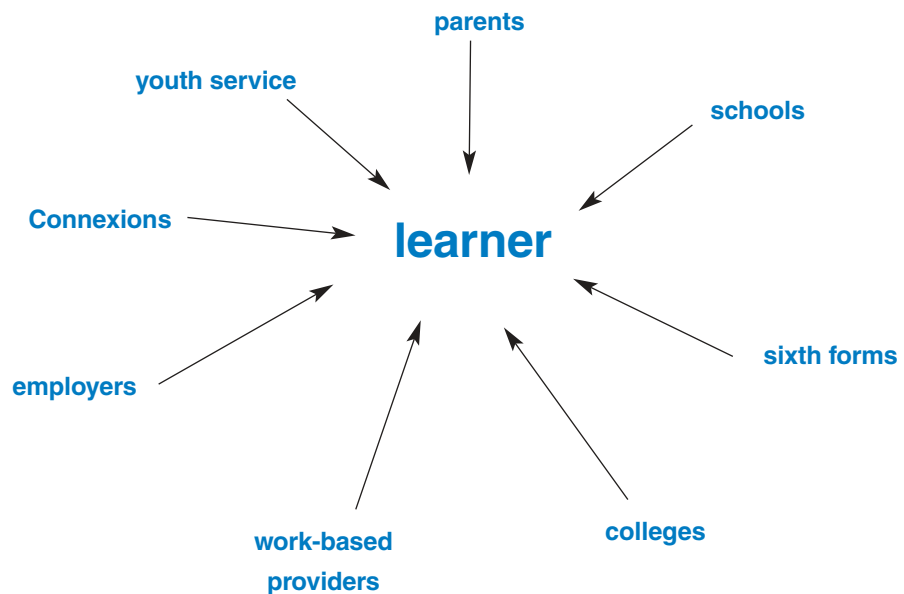
### Models of partnership

‘Our aim is that the 14–19 phase of education and training in England should . . . be delivered through flexible, integrated and innovative networks of collaborative providers.’

*14–19: Extending Opportunities, Raising Standards, Green Paper, February 2002*

A great deal has been said in this report about partnerships. They are a significant part of the delivery infrastructure envisaged in the Green Paper for the 14–19 phase. As yet the infrastructure is barely developed: there are local arrangements between schools and providers in some areas, but they are usually small-scale and patchy.

So who will be the main partners in this brave new world? What should these ‘networks of collaborative providers’ be like?



Partnerships should be reciprocal. Everybody should be able to see that they gain something from it – which may not be easy where potential partners are more used to setting up arrangements that they control. That’s why building trust and respect are so important. Shotgun weddings aren’t usually good at lasting the course.

#### Who does what?

Partners need to be clear about their roles and their responsibilities. This is important because in the new world of networks and collaboration there are so many possible configurations. For example, colleges may provide expertise to



schools in basic skills teaching or access to specialist accommodation, facilities and equipment. Work-based providers may offer expertise in designing and managing individual learning programmes and providing access to assessors or employers. Colleges, work-based providers and employers may be jointly developing centres of vocational excellence which match the specialisms being developed by schools.

Partnerships should also be built on a clear understanding of the learning process and how learners will gain from the collaboration. Even a simple model of learning such as this can help to clarify these things:

Initial assessment → Acquisition → Application → Accreditation

Which partner can help learners best at each stage? What can they offer to make the learning experience more attractive?

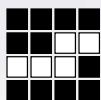
## Sharing information

Providers sometimes say that they are denied important information on the backgrounds, needs and behaviours of young people they are asked to train. They might not be told of pregnancies among young women starting life skills programmes, or young people with known anger management problems starting vocational courses with no plan in place to address their problems. 'If you only have 12 to 14 weeks on a life skills programme to make a difference,' providers might say, 'and you end up spending half that time finding out basic information, it reduces your ability to be productive.'

Initial assessment and action planning are key to this process. Some providers claim to be denied access to assessments, others say they don't get copies of test results. While providers agree that MAs are generally well-catered for in the system, the greatest problems are with pre-employment programmes, where young people have the greatest need. Providers can feel frozen out of the process and may be left to carry out repeat assessments themselves or work with young people 'blind'. More timely and accurate information on background, needs and action planning would improve selection, retention and achievement levels and remove a continual source of confusion for young people and providers.

## The role of Connexions

The Connexions service has a crucial part to play in improving the flow of information between partners. Their role in the 14–19 phase is to remove barriers to participation and achievement by providing access to broader development opportunities.



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# 14-19

## the future of work-based learning

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*14–19: Extending Opportunities, Raising Standards, Green Paper, February 2002*

What does the vision outlined in the government's latest plan for reform mean for work-based learning in the future? How will it impact on providers of education and training?

### Content

- the policy context for the government's 14–19 reforms
- the role of work-based providers at 14–16 and post-16
- the new funding arrangements
- what's happening to Modern Apprenticeships
- developments in vocational learning in schools
- partnerships and the role of Connexions

### Forthcoming

Capacity building through staff development	June 2002
Standards and quality in work-based learning	July 2002
Implications of the LSC era for schools with sixth forms	October 2002
Key developments in Centres of Vocational Excellence	November 2002