

LEARNING CITY YORK Board Meeting

Wednesday 3 March 2015
14.30 – 16.00, York College



Attending: Jane Elsworth-Barker (NCS), Alistair Gourlay (CYC), Sue Gradwell (chair, NYBEP), Annabel Jelley (YNYER LEP) Julia Massey (Learning City, CYC), Liz McNeil (UOY), Claire Newhouse (Higher York), John Thompson (CYC)

Apologies: Alison Birkinshaw (York College), Jill Gibson (JCP), Cllr Janet Looker (CYC), Maxine Squire (CYC)

Minutes

1. Minutes and actions

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

JT clarified that the York Education Partnership is to be split into the York Learning Partnership (YLP) and Schools Forum. This is distinct from the York Learning Alliance (YLA), which is a proposed schools company jointly owned by the local authority, that could deliver CPD and school-to-school support through the teaching school alliances.

LCR will be making funding available for schools and clusters of schools to bid for related to enterprise and employability, it is unclear whether the YLA will be in place in time to submit bids, so it is likely that the local authority will submit bids, on behalf of the schools (**JM** leading).

The 14–19 and Skills team has been removed from the restructure of school improvement services and will be considered separately.

The next meeting of the Community Learning Partnership will discuss whether the partnership should formally report to Learning City York.

2. Mental health (AG)

A bid has been submitted to BIS by York Learning, on behalf of the York Community Learning Partnership, with the outcome to be announced in the next few weeks. The proposal is to look at whether learning can have an impact on people with mild depression, creating more capacity and developing a common assessment tool; support available will need to be mapped so that people with more serious mental health needs can be referred to appropriate services.

There is a shortage of talking therapy/counselling, and a 12–18 month waiting list, and so we would like to put additional provision in at this level to fill gaps where other organisations have reduced or withdrawn their services. More than half of people claiming ESA have mental health needs. From September 2015, training for counsellors will not be funded. This leaves a significant gap in services at a time of growing need, and will be vital in terms of economic development to get and keep people in productive work. We are also seeing more mental health issues and self-harming in schools.

A more in-depth discussion to be held at a future meeting, to include York St John University, who have funding to do peer outreach work.

3. York Economic Strategy (JM)

The York Economic Partnership is hosting a workshop on March 9th to prioritise the top 5 key issues for the city to focus on over the next five years, 2015-2020.

The learning, skills and people issues will be well represented by Alison, as Chair of Learning City, Maxine Squire, Julia Massey and Paul Murphy (Higher York).

Recognising the importance of Growing the Economy and Creating Jobs, the Board agreed that the following 'obsessions' could not be overlooked and should be fed into the workshop:

General summary

The most successful and equitable economies don't separate economic growth from social inclusion, financial inclusion and personal development.

CEIAG

Across all ages; to respond to the changing labour market and skills needs both now and in the future.

Vulnerable groups

With 'full employment' (by economic definition), aligned to the challenges of high levels of part-time employment, support from employers and agencies is required for vulnerable groups to ensure that there are sustainable job opportunities for all, eg adults with LDD; ex-offenders.

Mental health

'Hidden' evil ... impacting of attainment and productivity of young people and adults.

Sectors

It is not just about the needs of high growth / high value sectors, eg Bio-Vale; it is also about the needs of high employment sectors, eg health and care, tourism (including retail).

Need to fix labour shortages in some of these low paid, high employment sectors, eg care and hotel industry ... how do we get the sectors to be valued, and how we encourage better pay?

Digital inclusion / digital skills

Cross-cutting theme ... all ages ... all sectors ... all levels ... in or out-of work.

Family Learning

Importance of FL to raise attainment of young people and parents.

Apprenticeships / Graduates

Need to continue the drive on high quality and better paid Apprenticeship opportunities, particularly as an alternative to HE. At same time, we need to nail a graduate offer for employers to better utilise the talent and skills of HE students.

4. ESIF (AJ & JM)

AJ: It is a slow process and we are unlikely to have an outcome before the autumn. There is £39m available through the YNYER LEP, and plans to spend it include:

- Youth programme, with a focus on CEIAG, employability skills and progression to HE
- Workforce development, making sure we offer flexible training for people in work
- Social inclusion and unemployment.

We need to procure support for people being made redundant in a way that is nimble and can be deployed quickly. We need agencies to share information quickly at a local level.

Concerns raised by Board members: local authorities and other agencies are losing staff and skills, and do not have the capacity to maintain services when there are gaps between contracts; while national providers may be able to pick up that work, there is the question of whether they will understand the local context.

Big Lottery Funding is used to build capacity in the voluntary sector, and involves a lot of development work before and during the contracts, which gives them greater prospects for success. AJ explained that they are trying to collaborate with neighbouring LEPs where possible, although funding requirements mean that this cannot always be achieved. One such example is with regards to the DWP Opt-in programme for supporting the unemployed, where by the LCR allocations for York, Selby, Harrogate and Craven will be combined with the YNYER allocations and tendered through YNYER.

JM shared a document giving themes and priorities for LCR. One call for activity will be released in March which is to be co-financed by CITB for CEIAG around construction and attracting more working age people to the sector, as well as younger people still in education. Another that is likely to be released is around local flexibility for reducing unemployment – this would look to local authorities to provide match funding, and so CYC is assessing whether they will have sufficient funds and in-kind match to bid for activity.

5. Universal credit (JCP)

JM to circulate a paper from JCP regarding the impact of Universal Credit on education, skills and learning.

6. Future scanning

- **LM (UofY):** Labour's proposal to reduce tuition fees to a maximum of £6k/year raises a lot of questions, and will have an impact on universities' outreach and fair access work. Post-graduate funding schemes may widen access.
- **Higher York** has won a HEFCE award to act as a single point of contact for widening participation activity with schools which runs until December 2016.

- Schools and colleges are focusing on qualification reform and funding reductions, and are, understandably, not treating CEIAG and a range of other issues as main priorities. It is unlikely that any party will roll back qualification or funding changes, although Labour and the Lib Dems would provide protection for 16–19 funding. Accountability is unlikely to change significantly, although Labour are looking to have local, instead of regional, schools commissioners.
- There is more nuance around the value of apprenticeships for higher skills, we still need clarity around the employer-led model.
- **LEPs (AJ):** It is likely that the existing model for LEPs will remain in place, but they will be consolidated into a smaller number. This leaves YNYER vulnerable, as funding tends to be channelled through larger cities.
- A future agenda item to be added on 'Make it York'.

Education and training in Universal Credit

The guidance on claimants accessing training when in receipt of Universal Credit is more flexible than the rules for claimants receiving Job Seekers Allowance and is all based on whether it improves the prospects of the claimant moving into work (similar constraints will still apply regarding protection of the public purse and claimants moving quickly into work). The decision will be made by the WSC and the claimant together. Claimants may undertake education or training courses provided that this can be accommodated within their work search and other work related requirements (such as courses of hours that can fit alongside work availability).

Claimants may also, at the discretion of their work coaches, (WSC) choose to undertake, or may be required to undertake, relevant training or non-advanced education (up to A levels and equivalent) which will improve their prospects of moving into work as quickly as possible.

In determining whether participation in training should be regarded as a work preparation activity the WSC will make a decision on whether the education or training gives the claimant the best prospects of obtaining work, more work or better paid work. The focus for WSC's will be on whether the education or training addresses immediate skills gaps where a lack of skills is identified as being the main barrier to a claimant getting, remaining or progressing in work.

Periods of education and training are expected to be of fairly short duration except in specific circumstances to meet skills needs where claimants have very low skills, for example maths, English, ESOL and ICT.

Long periods of education and training will not usually be treated as work preparation.

If a claimant is undertaking part-time study that isn't part of an approved training course or apprenticeship, they will still be asked to fulfil the usual conditionality requirements. A claimant's priority goal whilst receiving Universal Credit is to quickly find work, more work or increase their earnings in line with the number of hours they are expected to work. Certain claimants receiving Universal Credit will be encouraged to undertake educational or training opportunities, particularly where they are not expected to work currently, but will be expected to in the future. Relevant training may help them prepare for an eventual move into work.

Education and training overview for claimants

Description

The information you need to provide if you are in education or training and how this is used to decide if you are entitled to Universal Credit.

Overview

For Universal Credit you must give information about any education or training that you and/or your partner are receiving, for example:

- the type of education or training you receive
- the number of hours you attend
- how long the course will last

This information may be found on letters or any other documents from your education or training provider. If you don't have these, contact your education or training provider.

Full-time education

For Universal Credit full-time education courses include:

- advanced education
- non-advanced education of more than 12 hours a week
- any other course at an education establishment for which a loan, grant or bursary is provided, or would be available if you applied for it.

If you are in full-time education, sitting examinations or re-sitting examinations, you won't normally get Universal Credit unless certain conditions are met. For more information, see Full-time education rules.

Part-time education

You may continue to get Universal Credit if you are in part-time education.

If the course was arranged with your adviser, your Claimant Commitment will be changed to reflect all the hours you spend studying. You will be expected to spend the remaining hours of the week in other work-search activities.

If you are in the all work-related requirements group and the course was not arranged with your adviser, you must be prepared to give up your course if you are offered suitable work. Your Claimant Commitment will take account of your other circumstances, for example if you have a health condition or caring responsibilities.

16-19 year olds in education or training

You won't normally get Universal Credit if you are a qualifying young person in full time non-advanced education or on approved training. For more information, see 16-19 year olds in education or training.

Adult training

If you and/or your partner are on an adult training course you may continue to get Universal Credit if you are available for work. For more information, see Training courses.

Training courses

Summary

How your Universal Credit may be affected if you and/or your partner are on an adult training course

Content

You may get Universal Credit if you and/or your partner are on an adult training course run by a recognised provider. A recognised training provider is a government department, or another organisation that pays training allowances from public funds, for example:

- Skills Funding Agency
- Department for Work and Pensions
- Education Funding Agency
- local councils
- Skills Development Scotland
- Welsh Government

If you are in the all work-related requirements group you will be expected to be available for work. Your adviser will look at the number of hours you attend training to decide whether you are available for work and what steps you should take to find work.

If the training is relevant to you moving into work, or finding more work, your Claimant Commitment will reflect the number of hours you spend training. You will be expected to spend the remaining hours of the week in work-related activities.

You must be prepared to give up your training course if you are offered suitable work.

Your adviser can refer you to a recognised training provider if this will help you to find work. The types of training available may be different depending on what part of Great Britain you live in.