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Personalising Further Education: Developing a Vision

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This consultation is relevant to all providers of post-16 and Further Education, excluding school sixth forms and Higher Education institutions.

The consultation will be of particular interest to principals and chief executives, teachers and trainers and others who manage education and training in colleges, adult learning training providers and other post-16 providers. We also welcome comments from employers and learners.

Foreword

by Bill Rammell



“Today, people want the service to be organised around them, not them around it. They want high quality service, tailored to their specific needs and at a time and place convenient for them...”

Tony Blair

I am delighted to introduce this consultation on personalisation in the Further Education (FE) system. We set out in our White Paper *Further Education: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances* (March 2006), a range of changes to strengthen personalisation in FE and make a reality of the 14-19 and Skills Strategies. This document offers an update on personalisation and outlines what we propose to do next.

Our economy and society depend on our education and training system. Colleges and training providers help six million learners every year and I firmly believe that each learner deserves an enriching and successful learning experience that gives them the skills and abilities they need to succeed and thrive as individuals, as citizens and at work.

In our recently published *The Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners: Maintaining the Excellent Progress*, Alan Johnson set out five clear priorities for the way ahead. These are:

- > Closing the gap in educational attainment between those from low income and disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers;
- > While at the same time continuing to raise standards for all across the education system;
- > Increasing the proportion of young people staying on in education or training beyond the age of 16;
- > Reducing the number of young people on a path to failure in adult life; and
- > Closing the skills gap at all levels – from basic literacy and numeracy to postgraduate research – to keep pace with the challenge of globalisation.

This is a huge challenge for Government and the system itself. And we can only succeed – that is, help all our citizens achieve their goals, whoever they are and wherever they choose to learn - if we reform the services we deliver. We need to put the needs of the learner and the employer at the centre of service design and delivery.

I am extremely grateful to those organisations working with us to make personalised services a reality for more learners, including Learning and Skills Council (LSC); Quality Improvement Agency (QIA); Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA); National Union of Students (NUS); National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE); Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL); Association of Colleges (AoC); Association of Learning Providers (ALP); and of course individual learners and providers who have contributed to developing this document through workshops and interviews.

The Department and its partners will be organising consultation events over the next few months to allow you to join the debate. Or you can respond in writing to this consultation – the details appear at the end of the document. However you choose to get involved, I encourage you to take part. It matters to us to hear your views and experiences and it gives you the chance to help us to make a real difference. There is already considerable expertise within the sector in meeting the needs of learners, we need to build on that expertise and strive for excellence for all learners. Personalisation has the potential to improve outcomes for all learners, providing the skills they need to improve their economic position, benefiting themselves, their families, their employers and their communities. I hope you will play your part.

Bill Rammell

Bill Rammell
Minister of State for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education

Introduction

The FE white paper *Further Education: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances (March 2006)* recognises that when learners participate in decisions affecting their learning experience, they are likely to play a more active role in the provider's quality improvement process – a key lever of service improvement. Systematic collection of the views of learners is a rich source of valuable feedback, and when acted on effectively it can influence the shape and availability of services to ensure maximum benefit to the learner. Alongside a range of other important developments such as Framework for Excellence and the Quality Improvement Strategy, we believe personalising learning has an integral role in improving quality.

This consultation paper draws on research; interviews with learners, colleges and other providers and employers; and stakeholder workshops. It draws on views and ideas emerging from providers and users, across the sector, to initiate a sector-wide consultation on what our shared vision for personalisation might be in the FE system. It focuses on key elements of personalisation; successful approaches that can be more widely applied; and what more needs to be done if we are to reap the full benefits of personalising learning.

The LSC's National Learner Satisfaction Survey shows that learners value their experience in FE. And standards are improving with almost three out of every four learners succeeding. There have also been improvements in responsiveness to the needs of employers and learners, for example, the success in engaging employers in Train to Gain with provision tailored to the needs of their business and responsive to the existing skills level of the employees.

But more needs to be done to build on this excellent practice and make a step change in quality so that every learner gets the best possible learning experience. The headline success rate and satisfaction rates mask some key areas where we are not yet getting services right for our learners, and success rates differ between groups of learners and course levels, subjects and qualification. For example:

- > Learners on longer courses in construction and ICT have around a 50% chance of success;
- > Black learners have a 67% chance of success compared to 74% for the average;
- > 59% of care leavers are in education, employment or training compared to 87% of all young people at 18 to 19;
- > Only 67% of learners are very or extremely satisfied with their learning experience;
- > Only 40% of learners gave a high rating when asked whether their teachers know how they like to learn;
- > 1 in 8 learners said that more than a quarter of their lesson time was wasted;
- > Across the system, it is unusual for learners' views to be sought routinely to help individual teachers/trainers improve their methods;
- > Quality assurance systems rarely follow a learner's journey from point of enrolment to progression, or a week in the life of a learner to really understand the learner's experience so that improvements can be made.

The sector already accommodates a very diverse range of learners and this diversity is growing with, for example, more 14-16 year-olds studying vocational options with FE institutions and offender learners now an integral part of the system. However, a number of groups remain under-represented in learning and the sector needs to reach out to ensure the services offered encourage increased participation.

Learners entering the FE system have already had experience of compulsory education through their schooling. Schools are increasingly personalising learning; and the Teaching and Learning in 2020 Review, chaired by Christine Gilbert, has been asked to describe a vision for personalising learning in schools and to make recommendations for the delivery of that vision. It will report by the end of the year.

This document looks specifically to the commitments made in the FE White Paper around responding more effectively to the needs of learners, in a way that reflects the particular needs and circumstances of students in FE. Once the Teaching and Learning in 2020 Review has reported, we will be looking at the recommendations and working with colleagues in schools to ensure work in both sectors is taken forward in a co-ordinated and complementary way.

This paper sets out a possible "vision" for what effective personalisation looks like in the FE system and sets out a description of personalisation and its key constituent parts. It aims to establish a shared understanding and language, so that we can drive forward together and maximise the potential benefits for learners and employers through excellent and responsive services.

This paper also asks what does success look like and how we will know when we have achieved those goals for all learners in the FE system. Over the coming months we will hold consultation workshops and events, but we also want your direct responses to this consultation document, and to the questions that appear throughout. Details on how to respond to this consultation are set out at Section 4.

Section 1

What is Personalisation?



In an educational setting, personalisation means working in partnership with the learner and employer – to tailor their learning experience and pathways, according to their needs and personal objectives – in a way which delivers success.

What success could look like for the learner ...

My college makes sure I can choose and influence the service I get at every step so that it really meets my needs and gives me the best chance to succeed. We have learner course representatives who we can talk to, as well as talking to our tutors. This allows us to share our views on a whole range of issues that can be made better: facilities; timetabling; course access; teaching methods and materials ... everything really. These issues also get taken to the student committee where they get discussed with the managers who can really make a difference to how things work around here. Every year they run a consultation survey and then take action. I think it's good that they report three times a year on improvements they have made in response to the survey and the student committee. Although I didn't get on well at school, I'm thinking of becoming a course 'rep' next year and applying for the student committee.

I'm doing a level 2 course with my employer through Train to Gain. My employer supported me doing this learning because the broker was able to make sure that it fitted in with our work schedule and they were able to influence where and what training was being delivered. To be honest, because I work shifts, I would have found it really difficult to do this training outside of work. I know the key thing is that training meets the needs of my employer, in terms of where and when the training happens but it's been good for me too. They did an assessment of my skills at the beginning of the course, which means I don't have to repeat things I feel I already know – and of course I get a qualification at the end which is great if I want to take my learning further, or if I ever need to find another job.

1. This section sets out a view of what personalisation in the FE system looks like and proposes a common language and understanding to enable us to debate and ultimately agree a shared vision of personalisation in further education. Differing forms and degrees of personalisation have been employed to drive change and improvements to services in both the broader public sector reform agenda and the private sector.
2. Personalisation, as a single term, brings together a range of hitherto disparate practices into a single, unified and powerful approach. We and many practitioners believe that, in combination, the range of practices that constitute personalisation has the potential to become more than the sum of the parts. In talking to colleges and providers there is a desire to reap the benefits of personalisation.

Learner Journey

3. Tailoring the service for the learner must apply to the whole learner “journey” and not just parts of it. Indeed, personalisation has a role in encouraging and engaging those not currently in learning by capturing the views of potential learners and creating learning opportunities in which they want to participate. So an institution must strive to capture the learner voice and respond to those views in all aspects of its business: from outreach and inquiry; assessment of need and enrolment; to successful completion, raising ambition and encouraging progression.
4. Even more challenging than personalising approaches at every stage of the learner journey, is giving the learner the skills to be an active protagonist in that journey. This is a second journey, to become an expert learner with the skills to negotiate and challenge all elements of the learning experience, to be an active, motivated partner and not a passive, disengaged recipient. Learners need to understand and be able to fulfil their responsibilities as active participants, and colleges and providers need to enable learners in this more active, involved role.

Defining Personalisation

5. The principles of personalisation can and are being applied across a range of educational settings and in other public services. But the particular circumstances and challenges facing the FE system will make the application of personalisation in that context distinctive compared with other environments.
6. So what is personalisation? One respondent commented that it is not done **to** the learner but **with** the learner and that active engagement is critical to success. Those consulted broadly agreed on the following description of personalisation in the FE sector.

Personalisation in FE – moving from good to excellent

Working in partnership with the learner – to tailor their learning experience and pathways, according to their needs and personal objectives – in a way which delivers success.

- > **Responding to the needs of the whole person.** Anticipating, identifying and addressing each and every learner’s needs and responding with personalised support that removes barriers and delivers increased success rates and progression;
- > Creating an ethos of **seeking and responding to the views of the learner** in ways that deliver an excellent, social learning experience in the subject(s), supporting employability and personal development;
- > **Responding to the needs of the local community and employers** through flexibility in course choices, location and timetabling, innovative and appropriate uses of ICT and tailored approaches, such as Train to Gain. In particular, seeking to capture and respond to the needs of hard-to-reach groups and those who currently fail to thrive and achieve in FE;
- > **Raising the ambitions of all learners.** Enabling them to make informed, challenging and achievable choices and to understand the consequences of those choices, based on a genuine understanding of their long-term goals;
- > **Supporting every learner to become expert.** Teaching and fostering the development of the learner’s ability to negotiate with the teacher/trainer and achieve at the highest possible level;
- > **Encouraging individuals to take responsibility** and giving them the approaches and tools they need to become independent and effective lifelong learners and citizens;

- > **Fostering openness and trust**, supported by robust systems where learners help shape services and comments and complaints lead to improved services in the area where they learn and the organisation as a whole.

7. This description of what personalisation will look like and what it aims to achieve within the FE sector has emerged from initial consultation with stakeholders and practitioners. We believe it offers a good basis to frame the next stage of the debate and (as set out in Section 2) to help us determine what success looks like and how it can be measured.
8. Through our initial discussions with practitioners we believe these elements and interventions, when delivered consistently and coherently, can form a successful personalisation strategy. The elements described may well overlap but must be applied throughout the learner’s journey. Further details on the key elements of personalisation are set out at annex A.

Q: Do you agree with the description of personalisation above?

Q: Are there other key areas our discussions should cover?

Q: Would a system that delivered on this aspiration **begin to eliminate** the disparities in success rates discussed earlier in this paper? Particularly for the most disadvantaged groups of learners?

Q: Are all the elements of a successful personalisation strategy captured at annex A?

Q: To what extent will the successful application of the approaches outlined in annex A lead to better results and increased progression for learners?

Section 2

Why Personalise Learning?



The greatest potential benefit of personalisation is improving the outcomes for all learners in the FE system, providing an enriching and successful learning experience and helping them to acquire the skills and

abilities that will enable them to succeed and thrive, personally and economically.

What success could look like for learners ...

I'm at a big, work based-learning provider in my local community. My trainers really care what I think. I have regular 1:1s and we have group discussions with my supervisor (who is my key trainer) and we talk about everything. I'm encouraged to share with him what parts of the training work for me and those things that really irritate me and make me switch off. And I can't cop out of that discussion, my trainer has this way of getting me to tell him what I'm really thinking – we work together to make sure I can enjoy my Apprenticeship and do well. I've really changed since taking this programme. I'm more confident and wouldn't put up with just watching someone at work to learn, or having a trainer talk at me for an hour at a time anymore. I'm pretty expert at negotiating with the trainers now.

After phoning the educational advice helpline, I thought through my options and chose carefully. Even though I had only just bought a computer I decided to try the e-learning way, as I have toddlers to look after and my parents are both frail. I think it is great that it is more than just 'a course' you do by yourself, they have really thought through how to involve us in a 'virtual community' with other learners and with our personal tutor using on-line 1 to 1s and moodles. I have my own personal learning space for the three GCSEs I'm doing, and I have also joined the 'tell it like it is' group where we discuss on-line what is good about the programme, the support we get and what could be better. Because I have a lot of caring responsibilities, I also phone my tutor each week, and she has given me information about services that could advise me on respite care when I have assessments, and how I could get some help with paying the fees for the course.

9. Personalisation puts the user at the heart of education and training services. We believe that this will deliver the skills, for more learners and at all levels, that are needed to sustain an advanced, competitive economy and promote a fairer society. Practitioners are telling us that there are significant potential benefits from getting personalisation right, and their experiences and areas of good practice show us that these benefits are within our reach.

10. A range of national strategies has been successful in tackling levels of poorest performance and average success rates, but maintaining the rate of increase in success rates, across the board, is likely to become harder as easier gains have been secured. There is an emerging view that we need more tailored approaches for learners to take us to the next level and achieve excellence, addressing better disparities that see so many groups of learners, often the most vulnerable, fail to thrive and succeed in FE.

Benefits of Personalisation

- 11. Improved retention.** With greater flexibility and support, improved assessment, IAG and a greater opportunity to mould their own learning experience, fewer learners should drop out from their courses. Personalisation should see learner motivation and satisfaction levels increase, better learning choices matched to learner goals and aspirations, and the strengthening of processes which allow for external factors (such as childcare or financial problems) to be more easily and rapidly addressed.
- 12. Improved achievement.** Personalised teaching and training that stretches and motivates learners, helping them to identify their learning goals, fitting learning to their needs and fostering expert learner skills, should support improved achievement. However, personalisation is much more than flexibility and tailoring teaching and support – at its heart is the learner taking responsibility for their learning. For offenders this includes the motivation to continue learning that started in prison, when they are released or when their sentence ends. More active learners, who are involved in making choices about how they learn their subjects best, will also learn more effectively. They will be able to influence the purpose and real life application of their learning which should improve motivation.
- 13. A more responsive, better-skilled and informed workforce.** Teachers, trainers and managers can develop greater insights into the real needs and experiences of their customers. Teachers see that technology may be used to deliver the benefits of personalised learning and appreciate the role of technology in enabling differentiation and choice. They will be skilled at negotiating with learners to ensure that each person gets the very best service and can reach the highest levels of achievement during their time with the college

or provider. This, in turn can improve the sense of achievement and satisfaction for teachers/trainers as they see more highly motivated learners achieving good results and progressing to further learning. An organisation with an ethos of openness and responsiveness, will be responsive to the views of its workforce as well as its learners and use their insights to improve services.

- 14. More expert and independent learners.** Personalisation requires a shift in the responsibility between learner and provider. Learning in FE already takes place in a range of settings: in the workplace, online, as well as in the classroom. Where traditionally some teachers or trainers delivered knowledge to passive learners, personalisation fosters negotiation and greater dialogue with learners. We also believe that learners who are more actively engaged in their learning process will also acquire broader, transferable skills – for example self-motivation, independent analytical skills, adaptability and assertive negotiation – that provide a firm base for life-long learning and are highly sought after by employers.
- 15. Greater social inclusion.** Strengthening personalisation in FE should lead us to explore and address issues that stop some individuals and groups from participating in learning post-16 or failing to succeed when they do take up a course. By gathering and responding to the views of learners, and potential learners, you can begin to understand and address those barriers – the sense that 'learning is not for people like me'. Approaches, such as using other learners as advocates can help build the skills of even the most passive and tentative learners so they are more motivated and more likely to succeed.

- 16. Better economic productivity.** Increased skills will improve employability, help fill skills shortages and raise the overall productivity of the country. This will contribute significantly to reduced re-offending. For the individual and the employer there are significant financial and economic benefits to investing in learning and skills acquisition. Improved completion and achievement, the fostering of lifelong learning and increasing engagement in the learning and skills sector will support individual and community prosperity.
- 17.** It is right that individuals and employers should contribute to the cost of learning in line with the benefits they receive and will, as a result, have increasing expectations. In response to this providers will need to tailor their provision to meet the needs of their customer groups: individuals, employers and Government. Trials of learner accounts, which will begin in 2007/08, will look to evaluate a range of issues including whether accounts can help empower learners and increase choice. Additionally, where Government contributes to the cost of provision, particularly where provision is free, it is only right that the individual or employer also makes a personal commitment. For example, we encourage learners to complete a whole level 2 course in order that they get the return of their own (and the taxpayer's) investment of time and effort to increase their skills level and employability.

Realising the Benefits

- 18.** We recognise that there is existing good practice across the sector but the position is patchy. The disparity in success rates across the system shows that some are benefiting more than others. Particular groups of learners, such as ethnic minority males, or those on particular courses, such as construction, have a lower chance of success.

- 19.** Our challenge, if we are to realise the full potential benefits that personalisation offers in FE, is to increase successful outcomes for all learners, and especially for the most disadvantaged. Personalisation is not a deficit approach. There will be universal benefits that will accrue from shaping systems and institutions around the needs of learners but, if we do this effectively, we will target the specific needs of those learners who currently underachieve in FE. For these learners in particular, personalisation offers us an opportunity to deliver a real shift in the learning experience, success rates and overall achievement.

Q: Have we effectively captured the benefits of personalisation?

Q: How can providers ensure their personalisation strategies deliver these benefits, particularly for the most disadvantaged?

Measuring the Benefits of Personalisation

- 20.** Having identified the potential benefits of personalisation, we need to look at how we might measure them and create a framework which can gauge how successfully personalisation strategies are being implemented in FE. We see key areas for measuring the success of personalisation strategies including:
- > Overall completion rates both generally and for those groups with the lowest rates;
 - > Overall learner achievement rates, generally and for those groups that currently underachieve;
 - > Increased participation amongst under-represented groups;

- > Increased progression into further skills development or sustainable employment, including value added and distance travelled measures;
- > Learner satisfaction both generally and segmented to capture the views of those groups who have tended to be least satisfied;
- > Equality and diversity impact measures measuring retention, achievement and participation of particular target groups such as Pakistani and Bangladeshi learners;
- > Employer and employee satisfaction levels;
- > Employer recognition of the increased skills, including life skills, gained by their employees;
- > Inspection findings about the value and impact of more personalised services, including initial assessment processes, workforce capacity and teaching, and the active part learners play in shaping services.

21. Strong measurement tools already exist within the sector and are widely used and understood by providers, in particular success rates, the Ofsted Common Inspection Framework (CIF) and the LSC's National Learner Satisfaction Survey (NLSS). As an overarching approach, the LSC is developing, and consulting on, the Framework for Excellence. The Framework, through a balanced scorecard, aims to measure success and excellence in responsiveness to learners and employers. The LSC is consulting on the Framework from January to March 2007. The responses to this consultation, on personalising learning, will help inform the definitions within the Framework to ensure consistency.

22. Our preferred approach is to work with existing mechanisms to ensure they capture measures of the effectiveness of personalisation strategies.

Q: Have we captured the correct measures of success for personalisation?

Q: Do you agree that measuring the effectiveness of personalisation should be embedded within existing and proposed quality tools?

Section 3

Supporting Delivery



Personalised learning is not an end in itself, it has the potential to be a powerful driver for achieving our main targets and strategies: 14-19 reform; Skills; and a reformed FE sector with a strong economic mission.

What success could look like for the learner ...

I was a bit scared about spending a couple of days a week at college, not that I particularly wanted to stay in school all the time but at least there I knew everyone in my class. But it's been fun and I really like the proper vocational training I'm getting, learning things I can use to get a good job one day. My tutors and teachers have started to treat me differently too, not that they let me off anything, they still keep a check on everything I'm doing and I'm always surprised by how much my teachers know about what I'm doing in my other classes. I shouldn't be surprised really given that I have a personal tutor who talks to me about all my lessons and workshop sessions, even about other things that might be worrying me outside class. It can be odd being in two different environments but my tutor is helping me to handle things and showing me that I can talk to my teachers and get things changed – he even helped me prepare to negotiate an extension on some course work when the deadlines for my school and work placement came at the same time.

I agreed with my tutor in the French class that's helping me with my business clients, the areas where I was already an "expert learner" when I started the programme. I feel I have built up my confidence, skills and knowledge to learn well independently, and to negotiate with my teacher so that the learning methods used really work for me. I am a very visual person so I like to learn with film clips, pictures and diagrams, and I have been supported to become better at listening to learn. I am so impressed with my teacher in the community centre. She is a true professional who responds fast to what each of us say we need, and always challenges us to extend our expertise in learning. The programme gives us so much on top of the qualification.

23. We have already set out in Section 2 the key benefits that can accrue from applying the main elements of personalised learning in a coherent way through the entire learner's journey. Improved responsiveness to learners' and employers' needs, increased motivation, engagement and success rates will contribute directly to the successful delivery of our strategies. This section draws out how the development of a sector-wide application of personalised learning will be a powerful tool in the successful delivery of these strategies.

14-19 Reform

24. The 14-19 reform strategy seeks to develop a system where all young people have opportunities to learn in ways which motivate and stretch them and through hard work qualify themselves for success in life; one where educational opportunity and chances in life do not depend on accident of birth, but are uniformly available to all young people. The White Paper, *14-19 Education and Skills*, set out policy proposals for the introduction of the qualifications and curriculum changes necessary to create that system.

25. The 14-19 reforms offer some particular challenges to the FE sector, many of which can be successfully addressed through the application of the principles of personalisation. The FE sector is being asked to play an integrated role alongside schools to deliver learning that meets the needs of all young people from the age of 14. The distinctiveness of FE provision will be key in ensuring that there is real choice with adaptability of learning options and course modules available to all young people. But there also needs to be coherence and seamlessness of delivery for the young person between institutions.

26. The development of Specialised Diplomas as a modular qualification with young people taking different modules or qualifications in different institutions will present challenges. The principles of personalisation in making the entire learning journey coherent and sensible from the point of view of each learner offers an approach, which if effectively applied, meets these challenges in a holistic way. Making the system responsive to the needs of the learner will ensure coherence and integration of systems, from approaches to attendance and information management, to the integration of pastoral and tutorial support mechanisms across institutional boundaries.

Skills

27. The Skills Strategy aims to ensure that employers have the right skills to support the success of their businesses, and individuals have the skills they need to be both employable and personally fulfilled. The importance of the Skills Strategy was brought into sharp relief by Lord Leitch's interim report *Skills in the UK: The long term challenge* (autumn 2005). The report, on the skills needs of the economy in 2020, presents a daunting picture of the rate at which other nations such as China and India are improving their skills base, and the challenge we must set ourselves if we are to keep pace.

28. A central tenet of the Skills Strategy is giving employers greater choice and control over the publicly-funded training they receive and how it is delivered to ensure that it is geared towards the changing demands of the economy and targeted at meeting skills gaps and shortages. Personalisation, as an approach, does require the sector to respond to the needs of learners, employers and the local community, and it is central to the delivery of areas such as PCDL provision and learners with learning difficulties and disabilities. Flexibility in the approach of an organisation and its workforce can facilitate adaptation to the needs of the different customer groups without those needs necessarily having to compete for primacy.

Quality Improvement

29. The FE White Paper recognises that the challenge presented by Lord Leitch's interim report would only be met if our FE system is fit for purpose in meeting the two strategic challenges of transforming 14-19 education and up-skilling the adult workforce.

30. The FE White Paper outlined a robust approach towards raising the bar on standards and driving a culture of continuous improvement across the sector. We are simplifying the quality assurance and improvement systems through the creation of a single Quality Improvement Agency (QIA) and the merger of Ofsted and the Adult Learning Inspectorate.

31. The QIA will shortly issue the first ever national strategy to support improvement and higher standards in FE. Colleges and other providers will be responsible for driving up quality within their own organisations with an increasing emphasis on self-improvement. The personalisation agenda has an important role in driving quality in the FE system and will be a key part of the overall quality strategy.

32. We believe the new arrangements that we are setting in place over the coming months will support providers as they strive to transform the learning experience for each learner through personalising the learning experience. These arrangements are set out below.

Strengthen Teaching and Learning and Responsiveness to Individual Need

33. Assessment of Learners' Needs – At the heart of personalisation is that learners should have a proper assessment of their needs at the start of their programme and ongoing assessment and support. The QIA will review and evaluate existing assessment resources with a view to developing and disseminating materials to support diagnostic assessment models – materials to be available in April 2008. Additionally, LLUK will ensure appropriate training modules are built into initial teacher training and CPD reforms by April 2008.

34. Expert Learner – We have set out our ambition that all learners in FE should have the opportunity to develop skills to help them gain the most from their learning experience and take responsibility for their learning journey. We have asked the QIA, working with other partners, to look at best practice and undertake research to inform the development of a definition of, and standards for, an 'expert learner'. QIA will be looking at approaches for integrating this with their Teaching and Learning Change Programme, so that these skills are embedded within subject areas and appropriate to the learner's age and experience. We expect the standards to be available by April 2008.

35. Excellent and impartial information, advice and guidance services are an essential and significant element of personalising learning. The current cross-government review of information, advice and guidance (IAG)

arrangements for adults is exploring the potential for a universal, comprehensive and customer-focused service on learning, work and careers for adults, building on the local, face-to-face support provided by *nextstep* and the *learndirect* national on-line and telephone advice service. We want people to be able to get the help they need at any point in their journey through life, in the way that best meets their needs – on-line, face-to-face and over the telephone. This includes new, high quality labour market information that we are developing for guidance purposes with Sector Skills Councils, and a customer tracking and follow-up system that will enable us to give users ongoing personalised support.

36. As part of the review, we are extending *learndirect* advice services on a trial basis to test the feasibility of providing in-depth personal guidance by telephone, to complement face-to-face guidance services. This is the first trial of its type anywhere in the world. The trial is targeted at adults looking to progress their careers, typically in occupations requiring Level 3 qualifications or returning to the labour market after a career break. Over 64,000 people have used the service in the first nine months, and feedback so far suggests that they are finding it helpful.

37. We will look to further education to offer personalised support to learners – from pre-learning skills assessment and help to choose the right provider and course, to expert on-programme input from tutors and advisors, to guidance at the end of the course to achieve outcomes and progress to further job or learning opportunities. We will work with LSC, QIA and FE providers to develop material to promote good practice to raise delivery standards, including expanding the use of the Matrix Standard.

38. Helping those out of work – For people on JSA and Inactive Benefits we are working with Jobcentre Plus and the LSC to trial a personalised approach for individuals where a lack of skills is deemed to be the main barrier to finding a job. Through Skills Coaching they can receive an in-depth service which identifies which skills are missing and how they might be gained. Where appropriate, they can also use the Adult Learning Option which will allow them to undertake full-time training while still receiving their benefits, plus a £10 per week top up payment to help them meet the costs of learning.

39. Improving Information – The LSC, on behalf of partners, is introducing a new service to improve access to information already collected about learners and learning. The service is being brought in under a programme called Managing Information Across Partners, which is supported by over 40 organisations across the sector. This service will enable individuals (and with their consent, learning and IAG providers) to access individualised learner records, using a unique learner number. These records will bring together information currently collected from schools, FE, HE and awarding bodies. By having access to learner records, we believe those providing IAG and support, will be able to offer a much more personalised service because they will know what that learner has undertaken before.

40. Improving Pastoral Support – We are currently developing pilots which will test and evaluate different approaches to pastoral support. The pilots will include a particular focus on Children and Young People in Care as part of our Green Paper commitments. We also want to explore how pastoral arrangements can best work to support those 14-19 year-old learners who learn across more than one institution. The evaluation of these pilots will be built into guidance for providers by April 2008. Our work so far suggests that there are three main components to pastoral support:

firstly, to undo barriers to learning; secondly to boost learning and achievement; and thirdly, to motivate and spur ambition and broaden horizons for future steps after their programme. We welcome your views on these three aspects of pastoral support, and also information on pastoral systems in colleges and providers that you think are good practice.

41. Qualifications and Credit Framework. The Qualification and Curriculum Authority (QCA) will run a two year test and trial period of the Qualifications and Credit Framework from 2006 to 2008. The proposed Framework will allow individuals and employers to access smaller chunks of learning and package them together in a way which best meets their needs. This will improve portability of learning – a particular issue for offender learners – and labour market mobility and will allow learners and employers to better tailor the learning experience to meet their specific circumstances and needs.

Strengthening Learner Representation

42. National Learner Panel – The National Learner Panel has just been established. The Panel will be independent and will ensure that the learner voice is heard at the national level, able to influence policy design and delivery. It represents a unique opportunity for the learner voice to be heard by Ministers and policy makers through a genuine and ongoing dialogue, ensuring the views of learners are at the fore during the development of policy that will affect learners across the FE system. The Panel has a diverse membership drawn from different learning settings with ages from 16 to 75 who will have the opportunity to share their views on key developments which support the delivery of our 14-19 and Skills strategies. The LSC is also establishing a panel specifically to capture the views of learners with learning difficulties and disabilities.

43. Learner Involvement Strategies – The White Paper set out the intention that all providers in the FE system will have in place a learner involvement strategy so that learners can help influence and improve provision. The learner involvement strategy will set out the approaches the provider will put in place to capture and respond to learner views. The LSC is leading this work and is ensuring that it fits with other developments such as Framework for Excellence. To support providers, the LSC will be producing draft guidance in early January 2007 followed by consultation. Final guidance will be issued in April 2007 to inform providers' learner involvement strategies for September 2007.

44. Engaging Learners Collectively – The White Paper stressed the need for all providers to put in place effective mechanisms for engaging with learners collectively, including through student committees. We will support providers in doing this through guidance on Learner Involvement Strategies which will share examples of best practice from across the sector. Providers will need to adapt mechanisms that enable learners, including those on shorter courses, to contribute. We also expect learners to play a key role in institutional governance with college governing bodies including at least two learner governors.

45. Learner Satisfaction Surveys – We are working with the LSC to develop a small number of core questions, for inclusion in providers' own learner satisfaction surveys, that are consistent and comparable with the existing National Learner Satisfaction Survey. The LSC is leading this work to ensure integration within the Framework for Excellence. The LSC will make guidance available to providers in April 2007.

46. Support and Training for Learner Representatives – CEL, working in consultation with other partners, is designing training that will support those learners who take up the role of course representative. This will complement existing courses that CEL has developed to support students in leadership roles, including as governors. Our aim is to have training and/or toolkits available for course representatives by the beginning of the 2007/08 teaching year. The support and training will be designed to take account of learners in different settings and with different backgrounds and levels of experience.

47. Strengthening the Role of the Student Liaison Officer (SLO) type roles – The White Paper set out our intention to commission LLUK to develop standards for the SLO type role. To do this LLUK will draw on best practice to develop national standards and make them available to providers through their website in the usual way. CEL will also be looking at how they can support these new standards through the development of training and/or a toolkit approach. The standards will be in place by the 2007/08 teaching year.

48. We believe that collectively, these measures will help support providers in responding to the needs of learners, whatever their age, experience, location and learning/training. In this way the personalisation agenda will support the delivery of our 14-19 Reform and Skills Strategies, and provide valuable feedback from learners across the sector, locally, regionally and nationally. The result will be consistent excellence across the sector in realising the potential of personalisation to strengthen and quicken our responsiveness to the needs of learners and employers which will boost economic sustainability and social equity.

Q: What are the implications of a more personalised approach in tutorial and pastoral support?

Q: Are there models of excellent practice you would share?

Q: Are there any further comments you would like to make?

Section 4

Summary of Questions



Please send your response to this consultation by **12 February 2007** by mail to:

Luke Owen
W3D, Moorfoot
Sheffield
S1 4PQ

Or email:

personalising.fe@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

Q1: Do you agree with the description of personalisation?

Yes Mostly No
Comments

Q2: Are there other key areas our discussions should cover?

Yes No
Comments

Q3: Would a system that delivered on this aspiration **begin to eliminate** the disparities in success rates discussed earlier in this paper? Particularly for the most disadvantaged groups of learners?

Yes Mostly No
Comments

Q4: Are all the elements of a successful personalisation strategy captured at annex A?

Yes Mostly No
Comments

Q5: To what extent do you agree that the successful application of the approaches outlined in annex A lead to better results and increased progression for learners?

Agree Partially Agree Disagree
Comments

Q6: Have we effectively captured the benefits of personalisation?

Yes Mostly No
Comments

Q7: How can providers ensure their personalisation strategies deliver these benefits, particularly for the most disadvantaged?

Comments

Q8: Have we captured the correct measures of success for personalisation?

Yes Mostly No
Comments

Q9: Do you agree that measuring the effectiveness of personalisation should be embedded within existing and proposed quality tools?

Yes Mostly No
Comments

Q10: What are the implications of a more personalised approach in tutorial and pastoral support?

Comments

Q11: Are there models of excellent practice you would share?

Comments

Q12: Are there any further comments you would like to make?

Comments

Annex A

Key Elements of Personalisation in the FE System

a. Responding to the needs of the whole person

- > Improving the life chances of learners and the wider community by developing individuals' skills to negotiate with providers, teachers and trainers to ensure services work for them;
- > Providing high quality teaching and training, adapted to each and every learner and the contexts in which it is delivered;
- > Drawing upon a range of pedagogical practices in each subject to create a varied and engaging learning experience that allows the learner to progress well at their own pace;
- > Identifying and addressing factors that may increase the risk of non-completion, under-achievement and non-participation amongst learners and potential learners and, where appropriate, embedding literacy and numeracy skills acquisition;
- > Providing learning and pastoral support (delivered through tutors, mentors or equivalent) to help learners and potential learners overcome obstacles to learning, be motivated and promote personal development and ambition;
- > Ensuring that learners' employability and personal development are strongly enhanced in ways that suit their long term-goals.

b. Seeking and responding to the views of the learner

- > Learners working in partnership with the provider is a hallmark of personalisation;
- > An ethos of openness and responsiveness, based on robust systems that respond to learners' views collectively and individually;
- > Seeking feedback from and responding to learners on a systematic basis, including to individual teachers so they deliver excellent teaching and learning that meets the needs of each of their learners;
- > Identifying those learners and groups of learners least likely to succeed and understanding, from their point of view, what needs to be improved to increase participation and success.

c. Responding to the needs of the local community and employers

- > A range of programmes developed around the needs of learners, employers and the wider community through consultation, dialogue, outreach and learner involvement in course reviews;
- > Ensuring a breadth of curriculum, carefully shaped to meet learners' needs but not at the expense of quality of provision;
- > Offering flexibilities of location, start dates and timing (remote access, workplace and practical learning), facilitated through links with employers, other providers and the wider community.

