

Pathways for All

Strategic Board for Post-16 Provision

Terms of Reference

Background

The establishment of a Strategic Board was a key recommendation from the Kent 16-19 Review. See <https://www.kelsi.org.uk/kent-16-to-19-review> for more details and links to the Executive Summary and full Report.

Purpose

The Board will provide strategic leadership and facilitate collaboration-between partners in Kent, including working with schools, the further education sector, training providers, higher education providers, the business community, and other relevant organisations, in order to progress an ambitious post-16 agenda.

The Board will work to ensure that Kent prepares its young people for the challenges that they will face:

- Keeping the perspective of the young person at the heart of the 16-19 system and ensuring young people’s meaningful involvement in its development
- Providing leadership to ensure that the needs of young people are met by the 16-19 sector in Kent
- Ensuring that the recommendations of the Review, as they may evolve, are implemented
- Driving collaboration across the sector to secure the best outcomes for young people
- Ensuring maximum impact and sector engagement
- Lobbying appropriate national and regional bodies for change when issues are identified.

Scope

The Board remit extends to all aspects of education and training provision for young people in Kent aged 16-19 (up to 25 for those with Special Educational Needs (SEND)).

In addition to the recommendation to establish the Board to give strategic direction and leadership to the sector, there are a further seven recommendations arising from the Review. These relate to:

- Improving pathways into post-16 provision for young people
- Improving outcomes for young people from 16+ provision
- Raising young people’s aspirations through more effective CEIAG, and ensuring that these aspirations, once raised, are actively supported by those who influence young people
- Developing an “area-based offer” to increase local access to a wide range of provision
- Improving the provision available below Level 2

- Supporting the mental health of young people
- Improving and enabling access to provision through non-traditional means
- Learning lessons from the impact that Covid 19 has had on the delivery of education and training provision and related support services for young people.

Deliverables

The Board will:

- Lead on the development and implementation of the recommendations of the 16-19 Review
- Identify, prioritise and monitor workstreams leading to the development and subsequent maintenance of a live action plan for the county
- Improve collaboration across the sector
- Ensure that there is a clear understanding of the issues that face the post-16 sector in Kent
- Support the delivery team to ensure the Review meets its aims
- Represent and promote the Board across the county to give it maximum visibility.

Authority

Since the closure of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in 2010, there has been no one central controlling or coordinating function with responsibility for post-16 provision¹. Whilst local authorities retain certain responsibilities – principally in relation to promoting participation in education and training post-16, and identifying and supporting those who are participating – an area’s post-16 offer is largely based on individual provider decisions on what they will offer.

The Board will therefore need to build on the spirit of collaboration and the consensus on the issues to be addressed that have been achieved through the Review process in order to encourage change, and to hold partners to account for the progress made.

The Board’s authority will therefore derive from its ability to create a shared moral purpose and persuade the sector to act, rather than from any formal powers conferred to it.

Membership

Key sector partners will be invited to nominate a senior representative from their group (their “sector representative”) to join the Board as follows:

- Chair - Kent based education leader
- Kent Further Education
- Higher Education

¹ The LSC did not have responsibility for schools-based post-16 provision, which remained with local authorities at that time. Since the *Academies Act 2010*, the number of secondary schools for which local authorities have responsibility has reduced considerably – across all phases, only 203 schools nationally were academies in 2010; by 2021-22 almost four-in-five secondary schools had become academies.

- Kent Association of Leaders in Education (formerly Kent Association of Headteachers) – headteacher from a non-selective secondary school
- Kent and Medway Grammar Schools Association
- Kent Special Educational Needs Trust
- Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce/Employers
- Kent Association of Training Organisations
- Federation of Small Businesses Kent
- Kent County Council
- Department for Education / The Education and Skills Funding Agency
- Medway Council.

This list is not exhaustive and allows space to add some additional representation at the direction of the Board.

It may be that the ongoing needs of the review change over time and thus it would be appropriate to change chair as the work progresses into different phases. A chair will be appointed for two years with a one-year break clause that can be triggered after the first year. This can be extended for one year at a time dependent on the agreement of the chair and the Board. A vice chair can be appointed at the discretion of the chair and Board.

Meeting arrangements

The Board will meet on between 4 to 6 occasions in a 12-month period. All representatives are asked to commit to attending all scheduled Board meetings. (Proxies are only to be used in exceptional circumstances and will need to be identified to KCC's Education Lead Adviser at least a week in advance of the meeting that it is proposed they will attend.)

An agenda, relevant papers, minutes of the previous meeting, etc. will be circulated at least a week in advance of each meeting.

A Board meeting will be quorate if at least three sector representative members are present.

Decisions will be made by consensus whenever possible. If a consensus cannot be arrived at, a formal vote will be taken to determine the matter. The Strategic Board chair (or the vice chair if the chair is not present) has the deciding vote.

Reporting

Board members will report back to their representative body on a regular basis, in a way determined by the representative body concerned.

Resources and budget

The Board will be supported by:

- A small operational team
- KCC's Education Lead Adviser

- The Education People's Principal Post-16 Lead²

KCC will provide the office space, administrative support, additional resources etc. required to enable the Board and its operational team to function.

Over time, Board members may be asked to lead particular strands of work (task and finish groups) on the Board's behalf as these are identified and agreed.

Some funding and resource has been contributed by KCC to the Pathways for All work and to support the Board. Over time, other sector representatives will also make contributions towards the costs incurred.

Review

These Terms of Reference will be subject to review on an annual basis as part of an independent evaluation of the Board's performance and that of any task and finish groups.

² The Education People (commonly referred to as "TEP") provides a one-stop shop for education services, supporting the full age range of provision from early years to young adults across Kent.