learning
and skills
development
agency

LSDA responds

Youth matters

LSDA's mission is to improve the quality of post-16 education and training in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. We do this through research to inform policy and practice, through helping to shape and communicate education policy and through improvement and support programmes for organisations that deliver post-16 education and training.

Further information

Introduction

1 The Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the youth Green Paper *Youth matters*. In making this response, the Agency has drawn on its experience of managing large-scale research and development projects for the post-16 education and training sector. These include the Post-16 Citizenship Development Programme and the Vocational Learning Support Programme for 14–19 year olds, which provide much of the evidence for our response.

2 LSDA fully supports the principles underpinning the Green Paper, particularly the provision of a more responsive and integrated service for young people. Our experience supports the Green Paper view that the success of this service will require genuine opportunities for young people to have a say in and to shape services that are provided for them.

3 We have only responded to questions where we have relevant experience.

General observations

4 We agree that many young people would welcome increased opportunities to become involved in the issues of the day as concerned citizens and volunteers. However, to promote implementation, practitioners will benefit from practical support and proposals to help them to translate the proposals into reality.

5 Young people stand to gain a great deal from involvement in community activities and so does the wider society. The paper could be clearer about these gains. Benefits include:

■ better-informed young people, who are aware of their rights and responsibilities

■ positive young people who feel they belong

■ greater likelihood that young people will eventually vote

■ stronger democracy.

6 There appears to be an emphasis on 'problem youth' in the paper. Most young people are 'ordinary' and constructive, concerned about their futures, their families and their friends. They are easily persuaded to become more involved in decision-making within their own organisations and their communities, if the activities offered seem useful, interesting, relevant and fun.

7 We suggest that implementation stage will need to focus on creating positive incentives for young people to take up the opportunities provided. We support the introduction of the Opportunities Card, which we agree should take account of the lessons learned from the experience of implementing and using the Connexions Card. The card would provide extrinsic motivation. However, we believe it is equally important to focus on the intrinsic motivation that comes from being listened to, being valued and making an obvious difference to an issue of concern to them. Here, the rewards are influence and status, which are of crucial importance to many young people, and help develop confidence, self-esteem and lead to longer-term participation in the wider society.

8 We agree that volunteering is an extremely important aspect of community involvement. There should be stronger recognition of the learning to be gained by young people from volunteering, in terms of knowledge, skills and understanding about the way our society works and could be improved.

9 However, volunteering is only one way for young people to become more involved and such activity consists of more than 'doing good'. We expand on this point in more detail below, but would like to draw attention here to the valuable and empowering outcomes for young people of:

■ organising consultations, debates and conferences

■ taking part in campaigns, youth forums and elections

- setting up discussion groups, networks and training sessions for other young people.

10 To ensure successful implementation of the proposals, schools, colleges, training providers, employers, youth services and community groups should be encouraged and funded to work more closely together and with local authorities. This should enable a wider range of opportunities to be offered to young people in a local area and should ensure that these are taken up. There will need to be discussion of the impact of the extra responsibility for local partnership working (such as Children's Trusts) on current curriculum provision and staff training within local providers and local authorities.

11 We also believe greater clarity is needed about what extra resources local authorities will be allocated and whether they will be required to share them with other organisations. Moreover, we suspect that the sum identified will be insufficient, especially if, as we strongly recommend, a broader range of options is developed than is currently provided in many areas.

12 Although local authorities are well placed to manage the provision of activities and facilities, it is also important to remember that the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has responsibility for education and training for over-16 year olds. There will need to be watertight arrangements for local authorities and the LSC to work together in ensuring access, high-quality provision and a unified standard across the whole country.

13 Finally, we welcome the proposal to introduce national standards, but suggest their consistency could be improved. For example, one of the proposed standards specifies one tight entitlement – access to 2 hours per week of sporting activity – while another is a loose description – 'opportunities to contribute to their communities through volunteering'.

Responses to specific questions

General

Question 1a. What do you think are the most important issues facing young people now?

14 LSDA's experience of running the Post-16 Citizenship Programme suggests that there is a wide range of issues that concern young people but that their circumstances will determine their priorities.

15 For example, most young people are concerned about making the right career choices, gaining relevant qualifications and balancing their education with the demands of family, friends and part-time jobs. They want to become successful adults, take on appropriate responsibilities and make a contribution to society. Many are also concerned about personal relationships. Some are anxious to avoid difficulties arising from bullying. A few are faced with greater difficulty and are forced to confront issues relating to independent living, such as finance and housing.

Question 1b. How are these issues different for younger (13–16) compared to older (17–19) teenagers?

16 In our view, the main difference is the extent to which older teenagers have greater autonomy, which leads to wider choices, and increased legal responsibilities. Younger teenagers are mainly living at home, are still in compulsory full-time education and have only limited access to paid employment. The issues they face tend to focus on making the right choices for educational progression and being successful at school. At this age they are also very concerned about relationships with family and friends.

17 From the age of 17, having left compulsory education, young people move into different education, training and work settings. Some take on full- or part- time work and have to balance conflicting pressures. They face anxieties over education and career choices, financial pressures and new situations. They also continue to be concerned about personal relationships.

Question 2. Are there issues faced by particular groups of teenagers that are not addressed in this document? If so, what are they?

18 We welcome the desire shown in the Green Paper to include all young people in its recommendations. However, it appears to be mainly aimed at those in full-time education. Greater efforts are required to involve, consult and provide opportunities for those young people who are not in full-time education. For example, young people in full-time employment have far fewer opportunities to meet in groups, which helps initiate and sustain positive activity.

Question 3. Do you know of any projects or initiatives which have been outstandingly successful in tackling the challenges covered in this document?

19 The LSDA Post-16 Citizenship Development Programme has many examples of projects that have successfully involved young people in productive activities. In all these projects the young people have been encouraged to identify issues of concern to them, and have been supported in developing the appropriate skills and knowledge to take constructive action, which includes effective decision-making.

20 Specific examples of organisations and initiatives include:

■ Youthcomm (Worcestershire)

■ Fitzrovia Youth in Action (Camden)

■ Fareport Training (Fareham and Gosport)

■ Camden Jobtrain (North London)

■ Aylesbury College Access Programme (Buckinghamshire).

Other examples of organisations with similar projects include:

■ Newcastle College

■ Aylesbury High School (Buckinghamshire)

21 These and many other projects are featured on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) website (www.qca.org.uk/citizenship/post16) as case studies of good practice and also in the newsletter of the Post-16 Programme, *Citizenship news* (www.post16citizenship.org).

Question 4a. How can we encourage young people to take their responsibilities seriously?

22 LSDA's experience of running the Post-16 Citizenship Development Programme suggests that young people will take their responsibilities seriously if they are given responsibility from an early age, expected to be responsible and involved in all the stages of decision-making. They need to be treated as young adults and understand the consequences of their decisions. They also need appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes, which should be developed from an early age. These can be built on progressively in a range of contexts, for example, youth and community service activities and at school through National Curriculum citizenship.

Question 5. What more could be done to divert young people from risk-taking behaviour, like smoking, binge-drinking and volatile substance and illicit drugs misuse?

23 Most young people mainly keep out of trouble, and we suggest that more research is required to find out why. Some of our projects that include 'hard-to-reach' young people, suggest that young people become involved in anti-social behaviour when they have no opportunity to become involved in positive activity that is interesting, empowering and relevant to them. The best projects take young people and their concerns seriously and provide ways in which they can take genuine action to improve things (for example, Fitzrovia Youth in Action, Camden Jobtrain, Training for Life).

Question 7. How can the Connexions brand be used to best effect within the reformed system?

24 Citizenship staff at LSDA have worked with Connexions on the Connexions Card initiative and would agree that the lessons learned from this card need to be built on.[1] We would also strongly recommend that young people and frontline Connexions staff are involved in decision-making about the best use of the brand in the new system.

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[1] The weaknesses of the current Connexions Card schemes are well documented and include: focus on rewarding attendance and academic work rather than positive activity; rarely used by independent training providers; assumptions about which rewards young people will value; over-bureaucratic administration before training someone to reward points.

Question 8. What more can we do to ensure that reformed services are focused on achieving the improved outcomes we all want to see?

25 We strongly agree with the statement in the paper that 'we must give teenagers and their parents a real voice in decision-making and, increasingly, put spending power in their hands' (p22). All our experience with young people suggests that they should be consulted at the planning stage, involved in real decision-making and kept informed of subsequent developments. Schools, colleges, youth groups and training organisations should develop democratic structures that involve their young people in decision-making on a day-to-day basis.

26 There will need to be adequate provision of resources if the reformed services are to be effective, and also local cooperation and coordination between providers.

27 We would agree that there is enormous expertise in the youth and community sector.

Chapter 3. Empowering young people: things to do and places to go

Question 9a. What do you think of the emphasis in the proposals on empowering young people themselves to shape local services?

28 As already indicated, we applaud the emphasis in the paper on empowering young people. Our work has shown beyond doubt that giving young people a voice and responding to what they say has a very powerful impact on their motivation and self-esteem. However, it is very important that the implications of such a policy are carefully thought through. Offering the opportunity to have a voice, but then appearing to disregard it can breed cynicism. Young people need to understand when/if their preferred outcome is not possible.

29 We also welcome the ideas of an opportunities fund, an opportunities card and local authority standards. However, we would wish to re-emphasise our earlier point that these services should be available to all young people, including those in education, training organisations, independent schools, employment, or none of these. Also, young people will need appropriate training to be able to use the opportunity fund effectively.

Question 10a. What should be done centrally to support the development and delivery of local opportunity cards?

and

Question 10b. How should opportunity cards be developed so that the maximum number of young people can benefit?

30 Important ground work has already been done by the Connexions Card pilot and the lessons of that initiative should be built on. For example, young people should be involved in its design, marketing and delivery, perhaps with the support of a national advisory group comprising young people. Also, resources should be put aside for providers in the different settings (for example, schools, colleges, youth groups and workplaces) to support and promote opportunities cards.

Question 11a. Which activities do you think have the most benefits for young people?

31 Young people will gain most from activities that have meaning for them in relation to their personal goals in education, careers, work and relationships, and also enable them to operate effectively as young adults within their wider communities. These activities are the most likely to lead to a sense of involvement and the satisfaction of making a positive impact on others.

Question 11b. Do the proposed national standards on activities cover the right areas?

32 We welcome the proposed introduction of national standards and in particular the emphasis on including activities that are 'exciting' and 'enriching' for young people (see page 32 of the Green Paper). However, we would wish to see an additional entitlement in the standard: access to forums in which young people's views on services and other local issues are sought.

33 There is a need to broaden the definition of 'positive contributions' that young people can make to their communities to include activities other than volunteering. We mentioned earlier the value of other activities including campaigning and networks. All these types of activities have taken place within the LSDA-run Citizenship Programme, and the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), independent evaluators of the Programme, reported the resulting learning and positive attitudes.[2] Whichever activities are undertaken, young people and responsible adults need to have opportunities to recognise and value the learning they have gained.

Question 11c. Are they achievable and affordable within existing resources?

34 Several areas of additional costs are likely to be incurred when providing positive activities for young people:

■ development as well as ongoing operational costs. At present, it is not clear from the proposals to what extent the funding will cover development of the opportunities card

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[2] *Taking post-16 citizenship forward: learning from the Post-16 Citizenship Development projects*, Rachel Craig, David Kerr, Pauline Wade, and Graham Taylor, Research Report No. 604 NFER, 2004

- local partnership costs, which are vital to the success of the proposals. For example, independent training organisations are often not-for-profit companies or charities with little access to extra budgets often available to schools and colleges

- staff time and expertise

- appropriate training for young people and the staff working with them

- setting up effective infrastructures nationally, regionally and locally, as well as systems for monitoring and evaluating the opportunities card scheme and the national standards.

Chapter 4. Young people as citizens: making a contribution

Question 12. Will our proposals, taken together with those of the Russell Commission, lead to increased mutual respect between young people and others in the community?

35 Our experience suggests that mutual respect comes when young people work alongside adults from the community on issues that directly concern both. For example, an inter-generational project from the LSDA-run Citizenship Programme in Enfield involved sixth formers and older members of the community meeting regularly to discuss issues of relevance to all in the community (such as crime, voting, road safety and drugs use).[3] All the participants expressed their delight in discovering the shared interests of the different age groups.

36 Encouraging volunteering can help build mutual respect, but the volunteering needs to have a clear purpose for all involved, and learning should be made explicit for young people. Young people need to take an active and effective part in society, as informed and critical citizens who are socially and morally responsible.

Question 13. What more can we do to recognise and celebrate young people's positive contributions to their communities?

37 We cannot stress too strongly the importance for young people of being taken seriously, genuinely consulted, having suggestions acted upon and being thanked by members of their communities. These forms of recognition can be very powerful. However, official recognition can also help, for example public ceremonies, exhibitions, performances, and press coverage. Some participants in relevant networks of provider staff working with LSDA also support accreditation of, or qualifications in, community involvement but these would require currency and credibility.

Question 14. Would the opportunities to earn rewards motivate young people to get involved in their communities?

38 Experience of the Connexions Card initiative suggests that young people are motivated by rewards. However, material rewards are not sufficient without the additional motivation of the kinds described above – having their views listened to and acted on.

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[3] LSDA (2005). *Make it happen: effective practice in post-16 citizenship*, video and DVD package. The project features as a QCA case study (www.qca.org.uk/citizenship/post16) and on an LSDA training video.

Question 15. How can we ensure that young people from the diverse range of communities that make up today's society are effectively engaged by service providers?

39 Experience from the Citizenship Programme suggests that all young people, regardless of background or ability, can be engaged in activities if there is a conscious effort by adults to be inclusive and to provide relevant and appropriate opportunities that young people help to shape.

Chapter 5. Supporting choices: information, advice and guidance

Question 16. What kind of help and support is most important for young people?

40 The most important role of information, advice and guidance (IAG) services is to help young people make appropriate choices about their current and future lives. To do this, IAG needs to be visible, accessible and responsive and the following need to occur:

■ a heightened awareness of the services available among target groups

■ IAG services accessible when, where and how young people want and need them

■ high quality information on the *full* range of options available to young people, together with sustained support to ensure they are able to act on their preferred option.

41 Further, many young people feel that the advice and support offered should be more relevant to their own situation, lives and ambitions, for example with more awareness of how it might fit in with benefit entitlement. Therefore, IAG must be available on a wide range of topics and help young people to make links between their various areas of need.

42 Support needs to be targeted at the recipient's strengths and weaknesses (as indicated in *Youth matters*) but it also needs to take into account the aspirations and values of young people. IAG can function as a real confidence builder, for example, providing a voice. For it to do this it is also important that young people do not feel judged for seeking advice about various matters.

43 IAG services need to reach and offer support to a very diverse range of individuals. Many individuals are unaware of IAG services or any entitlement to support and advice, and many others do not seek out IAG early enough. Too often it is only when there are serious problems or at key points of transition that advice is sought. However, Connexions has become an established brand name that many young people have heard of.[4]

44 Unfortunately some young people, despite making positive choices and taking actions to support these, encounter structural obstacles that they may not be able to navigate or overcome on their own. Practical guidance and sustained follow-up support are required to ensure, for example, that a young person can complete all relevant application forms required to secure an Apprenticeship, understands the time spans involved and has a 'plan B'.[5]

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[4] Harrison D, Walker L, Zwart R (2005). Evaluating the effectiveness of the new approach to marketing Information and Advice Services: next step marketing strategy. LSDA Evaluation Unit.

[5] Hughes M and Monteiro H (2005). *Making workbased learning work: effective entry to work based learning.* LSDA. Available from: https://www.lsda.org.uk/cims/order.aspx?code=041763&src=XOWEB

Question 17. How can we ensure that IAG is comprehensive, impartial and challenges stereotypes?

45 Any IAG service needs to be seen as approachable by every group in society. An established history of good service is important in developing the level of trust and reputation that this requires.[6] We agree that where Connexions has a good reputation and offers a high quality service, it should continue.

46 One of the main features of poor performing IAG services is partial information about possible progression routes in education and training, especially detailed information about work-based learning. We believe that:

■ intensive effort is required to disseminate materials to all IAG providers on the broad range of routes young people can take

■ measures are needed to ensure that young people's views on service design and delivery are gathered. For example, consultation user groups of young people could be established (perhaps facilitated by an adult) to evaluate these materials so they are relevant to a wide range of individuals

■ staff development and training are required for formal providers of IAG so that they feel confident in explaining all feasible routes.

47 Older people still associate IAG with the school careers advice service while young people tend to see it as more independent and to value its separation from education and careers. Care needs to be taken to ensure that school- and college-commissioned or -provided IAG services in the newly proposed system are impartial.

Question 18. What do you think of proposals to devolve responsibility to Children's Trusts, schools and colleges?

48 As indicated above, measures will need to be taken to avoid any reduction in the objectivity and independence of the adviser and the advice given once responsibility is devolved to individual schools and colleges. Schools and colleges are frequently seen as either having limited knowledge of the range of options available or biased towards what they are personally most familiar with.

49 Successful implementation of a devolved system will require key stakeholders to work in close partnership. The Children's Trust (or representative of a school or college that provides significant volumes of IAG) will need to take on the demanding role of coordinating provision across the local area.

50 Children's Trusts must have a specific duty to address the needs of all those young people who do not attend school or college. It is important to provide IAG to 'at risk' groups, such as young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs), in settings that they are at ease with, where they can be supported by staff that they respect and will listen to. However, it is also important to recognise and support young people in work-based settings who may have greater difficulties accessing IAG than people at school or college. Some young people can find going to a school or college for advice daunting or impractical if they are working full time.

Question 19. Do you agree that it is important to have minimum expectations?

51 Yes.

52 Minimum expectations for young people of different ages should be there to act as a safety net and help encourage all young people to feel that the service is there for them. The key challenge when developing minimum expectations is to find the right balance of rigour, coherence and flexibility to meet diverse individual needs.

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[6] Dickinson P (2001) *RR308 Lessons learned from the Connexions Pilots*. DfES. At http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR308.PDF

53 However, for people over the age of 16, it is far less practicable to deliver any kind of minimum entitlement because not all individuals attend an institution or want help and support. It will be more important to establish a minimum entitlement for over-16s based on making support and advice available when individuals are ready to receive it. All providers of services for this age group should advertise and raise awareness about what services are available and how to access them,[7] even if young people don't immediately take them up.

54 Overall, people want a service that is sympathetic to their needs and has the time to listen, gives appropriate and accurate advice (or can make referrals to knowledgeable sources) while presenting a range of options to give young people real choices rather than just one possible solution.

Question 20a. Do you agree there is a case for quality standards?

55 Yes.

56 Variability in the quality of IAG provision is a critical issue driving the changes laid out in the Green Paper. Quality standards should help decrease this variability, and will be even more important in the proposed devolved system.

57 We recommend developing further the MATRIX standard[8] or a similar existing tool for implementing quality standards for IAG.

58 It will be important to explain to young people, parents, employers and providers the meaning and value of the standards so that they become a widely recognised and respected quality mark.

59 In tandem with quality standards, to increase the overall quality of IAG provision, we believe that principles for delivery should be developed and agreed nationally. These should be based on tried-and-tested practices and be appropriate for use in a wide range of settings. For example, some recent LSDA research and development about engaging people in learning recommended that providers of services focus on:[9]

■ working in partnership with other organisations, such as community networks, as this makes it easier to reach target groups

■ providing 'hard to reach' groups with ample support with both practical issues (such as childcare) and personal issues (such as confidence-building)

■ ensuring the curriculum (or programme of activities) is tailored to the needs of individuals, with a variety of entry points to break down psychological barriers to access

■ ensuring there are achievable goals that are 'learner-referenced' (set by the individuals)

■ ensuring progression helps to motivate people and retain interest.

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[7] Harrison D, Walker L and Zwart R (2005). Evaluating the effectiveness of the new approach to marketing Information and Advice Services: next step marketing strategy. LSDA Evaluation Unit.

[8] Lessons need to be learned from the lack of uptake so far of MATRIX. This has been due to: appropriate but challenging standards that many IAG providers do not achieve; a low level of awareness of MATRIX in the education and training sector; the fact that it is a voluntary system; the requirement of a payment for assessment (even though the cost is just a few hundred pounds).

[9] Champney J, Davey M, Lawrence S (2005). *Breaking down the barriers*. LSDA, in partnership with the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE). This is a guide that very different organisations have used to motivate and inspire a wide range of groups who are more likely to be marginalised from education and training, including ethnic minorities and ex-offenders. Available to download from https://www.lsda.org.uk/cims/order.aspx?code=052023&src=XOWEB

Question 20b. How can they be made affordable without putting pressure on financial or workforce resources?

60 Some cost savings could be made by avoiding duplication of materials and repetition when delivering help and support to young people. However, far more significant savings are to be gained in helping young people in the transition to work, training and further education, which can reduce drop out and help engagement in economically productive pursuits and society.[10]

61 LSDA's experience suggests that providing high-quality IAG services as proposed in the Green Paper will incur additional costs in the following areas:

- staff development and support

- self-improvement activities

- coordinating the development of service provision, including ensuring that material on a wide range of topics is disseminated to all appropriate IAG providers

- developing quality standards and materials.

Question 21. Would quality awards for IAG help ensure high quality and impartiality?

62 Yes, providing that the awards come from a recognised authority and the evaluation process and criteria for the awards are transparent.

Question 23. Do you think there is a good case for bringing together within Children's Trusts responsibility for commissioning different services which provide support to young people with additional needs?

63 Yes. We welcome a coherent, unified system that will bring all information under one umbrella to:

- help keep track of 'hidden' children/young people

- prevent duplication of services

- facilitate passing on of (sensitive) information

- support the work of special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs), and a range of other professionals in schools and colleges.

Chapter 6. All young people achieving: reforming targeted support

Question 24. How can we ensure that young people facing particular barriers, for example those who are disabled, are effectively engaged by service providers?

64 Where service providers have all relevant information, they can target and provide appropriately to:

- ensure forward-planning for individuals

- enable advance strategic (and individual) planning at colleges

- provide appropriate forums for listening to young people and use their responses in future planning

- organise difficult areas like transport and untangle the funding criteria of different agencies

- fund transition, for example, from full-time education and employer-based training, flexibly and realistically

- ensure that processes, procedures and practices across all partner organisations actively promote current diversity and equality legislation.

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[10] As highlighted in Every Child Matters at http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/aims/

Question 25. How can we ensure that the new lead professional role is successful in coordinating the delivery of targeted support to young people who need it?

65　Lead professionals with professional authority, a budget, a defined role and access to the 'right' people will:

■　recognise the complexity of the role(s) they undertake

■　enable teachers, lecturers and trainers who work with students with learning difficulties to receive coordinated support through a single lead professional.

Question 26. What more could be done to help older teenagers make a smooth transition to support from adult services, where they need them?

66　Young people in transition to adult services need:

■　continuity of support and recognition that different people mature at different rates and that emotional, social and intellectual development may not all take place at the same pace in the same individual

■　support systems that are highly sensitive to individual needs

■　systems that ensure continuity of adult support, peer friendships, and family relationships.

Appendix: The Post-16 Citizenship Development Programme

Background

67　The Post-16 Citizenship Development Programme was established in 2001 following recommendations in the second Crick Report[11] and the government's decision to make citizenship statutory at Key stages 3 and 4.

68　The programme is funded by the DfES and the European Social Fund and managed by LSDA. It aims to trial different ways of providing citizenship learning in all post-16 education and training settings: school sixth forms, sixth form colleges, FE colleges, tertiary colleges, training organisations, workplaces, youth services and voluntary community groups. The programme is probably unique in that staff from these different areas have met regularly at local networks and national training events to share ideas and strategies for the embedding of active citizenship within their curricula and courses. In all, around 150 organisations have been involved.

69　The programme has gained considerable experience of what works, and what does not in the development of active citizenship for 16–19 year olds. Independent evaluation indicates a high level of success in meeting the programme's original aims: the final evaluation report from the National Foundation for Educational Research, *Taking post-16 citizenship forward* (December 2004) concluded:

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[11] *Citizenship for 16–19 year olds in education and training* (2000). The 'second Crick report'. Department for Education and Skills.

Overall the Programme has been hugely successful in laying the foundations for the development of post-16 citizenship. Above all it has succeeded in showing how the aspirations of the Crick Group on 16–19 citizenship, that citizenship should be an entitlement for all young people aged 16–19 ... can be developed in practice in a range of post-16 settings and contexts.

Active citizenship

70 The post-16 citizenship team at LSDA has worked closely with the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) in developing guidance for post-16 citizenship, which appears on the QCA website (www.qca.org.uk/citizenship/post16). The document states:

Citizenship education (should equip) young people with the knowledge, skills and understanding to play an active, effective part in society as informed, critical citizens who are socially and morally responsible. It aims to give them the confidence and conviction that they can act with others, have influence and make a difference in their communities (locally, nationally and globally) (p6).

71 It sets out a framework for citizenship learning within which a wide range of activities can take place. The framework includes three essential opportunities that post-16 citizenship work should offer young people. To:

- identify, investigate and think critically about citizenship issues, problems or events of concern to them

- decide on and take part in follow-up action where appropriate

- reflect on, recognise and review their learning.

72 The main forms of provision used for post-16 citizenship programmes and activities are:

- representative structures (eg youth councils, unions, forums)

- components of citizenship within other courses and qualifications

- specially written courses or units for citizenship, sometimes leading to qualifications or awards

- group tutorial programmes

- voluntary and community activities and campaigns

- events (e.g. citizenship conferences)

- individual or group research projects.

Benefits of citizenship in the words of project members

Taking responsibility for myself and others – it's given me an opportunity to explore my social and political views – something young people have been deprived of in the past.

Youth project member, Worcestershire

Citizenship has exposed me to the feeling of wanting to get up and make a change in society and the wider world - it's invigorating

Sixth form college student, Merton

I think because we did citizenship ... it's given me a different perspective on college life. Rather than just what the college can do for me, it's made me think what I can do to contribute to the college community.

College student, Richmond-Upon-Thames

The benefits of citizenship to our training agency have been immeasurable ... due to the opportunities for personal development, our retention levels have improved significantly.

Training provider, north London