

# Yorkshire and the Humber Regional Learners' Panel Terms of Reference

## 1. Background and purpose of the Yorkshire and the Humber Regional Learners' Panel

- 1.1. The Yorkshire and the Humber Regional Learners' Panel (RLP) has been set up by Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in the Yorkshire and the Humber Region.
- 1.2. The RLP is a reference group; the panel members are not expected to be experts on education or specific policy areas, but will have valuable knowledge and experience as users of the Further Education (FE) system.
- 1.3. Members provide an independent voice to give direct feedback and advice on current and emergent policies and regional plans, to enable better decision making and implementation by the Regional Learning and Skills Council.
- 1.4. The RLP is one of the mechanisms to ensure that the learner voice can be heard directly at a regional level. The group will be able to influence policy implementation, and will therefore have direct impact on the learning experiences of individuals across the FE system. In the course of its normal operation the RLP will:
  - 1.4.1. express views to regional officers of the LSC through the established mechanism of panel meetings and their outputs;
  - 1.4.2. give varied and diverse feedback from a range of independent viewpoints with the range of views expressed captured in the meeting outputs;
  - 1.4.3. give ideas and individual recommendations for what they would like to see happen in the Yorkshire and the Humber region;
  - 1.4.4. expect its views to be taken into account and for the LSC, in conjunction with other regional and sector agencies, to make a formal response to the panel.
- 1.5. The RLP will contribute to the National Improvement Strategy (*Pursuing Excellence*), in particular:
  - 1.5.1. Aim 3: the further education system continuously improves so that colleges and providers aspire to and achieve excellence, and no provision is unsatisfactory;
  - 1.5.2. Priority action: embed personalisation and increase the learner voice.
- 1.6. The operational support from 1 September 2008 until 30 September 2009 will be the responsibility of the NIACE, The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education).

## 2. Remit

- 2.1. As a reference group, the remit of the RLP is to provide a user's perspective on issues:
  - 2.1.1. to identify and discuss policy priorities from a range of policy options defined by the LSC or identified by Panel members, where relevant to the work of the Panel;
  - 2.1.2. to provide the LSC, both regionally and nationally and partners with direct access to the voices of learners and learner experiences of policy implementation – helping to influence the development of Government policy and reviewing the impact;

- 2.1.3. to provide the LSC and partners feedback on expectations and “on the ground” standards of service that panel members would like to see policy deliver for them;
- 2.1.4. to consider and evaluate, from a learner perspective, the potential effects on learners of emergent policy areas from the LSC, DIUS/DCSF and partners;
- 2.1.5. to consider and advise LSC and partners on emerging policy development and implementation, as negotiated with Partner Agencies as appropriate;
- 2.1.6. The RLP will seek to build relationships and consider joint activities with the National Learner Panel (NLP) and with the Humber Apprentice Panel (HAP).

### **3. Membership**

**3.1.** The RLP usually has approximately 16 panel members.

#### **3.2. Members**

- 3.2.1. Chair (elected by the panel members) (1)
- 3.2.2. Vice-Chair (elected by the panel members) (1)
- 3.2.3. Panel Members (from the 4 LSC sub-regions in Yorkshire and the Humber and from a variety of providers and courses)

#### **3.3. In Attendance**

- 3.3.1. Senior representatives of the Yorkshire and the Humber regional Learning and Skills Council;
- 3.3.2. Policy leads from other key stakeholder organisations relevant to the discussion topics, e.g. DIUS, DCSF, LSC;
- 3.3.3. Representatives from NIACE to provide operational support to the Panel.

### **4. Recruitment, appointment and terms of office**

- 4.1.** Panel members are volunteers aged 16 or over and taking part in some form of further education in England.
- 4.2.** An annual recruitment exercise has been established:
  - 4.2.1. applications to join the RLP are invited from all eligible learners;
  - 4.2.2. applications are shortlisted on the basis of suitability and to reflect the diversity of the learner population;
  - 4.2.3. telephone or face to face interviews are conducted with shortlisted applicants to inform the final selection.
- 4.3.** Where possible, panel membership should reflect the diversity of:
  - 4.3.1. the types, levels and environments of learning within the FE system;
  - 4.3.2. the Yorkshire and the Humber sub-regions;
  - 4.3.3. learner profile including age, gender, disability and ethnicity.
- 4.4.** Panel members volunteer for a one year term of office, from the date of the induction event.
- 4.5.** Panel members may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms of office.

- 4.6. Panel members wishing to serve a second term of office are required to re-apply for panel membership.

## **5. Quorum**

- 5.1. The RLP is a reference group, rather than a decision-making body. Consequently there is no quorum for the RLP.

## **6. Meeting arrangements and frequency**

- 6.1. The RLP will hold four main panel meetings a year and sub group meetings, as required. The main meeting dates for 2008-09 will be:
  - 6.1.1. event 1: 12-13/02/09 in Leeds;
  - 6.1.2. event 2: 20/03/09 in Coventry at the National Office of the Learning and Skills Council;
  - 6.1.3. event 3: late April or May 2009 at the LSC offices in Bradford;
  - 6.1.4. event 4: June or July 2009 at an FE establishment.
- 6.2. Sub group meetings will consist of a minimum two members of the RLP and wherever possible be made up of panel members from groups affected by the policy topic to be discussed;
- 6.3. The RLP will consider issues at its meetings which have been identified by the regional LSC or brought forward by Panel members in discussion with the Panel Chairperson, Jawad Ahmed;
- 6.4. An email online evaluation system has been established as part of the research framework to enable participants to comment on the effectiveness of each main meeting;
- 6.5. NIACE will provide secretariat support to the panel, and facilitate all panel meetings and events.

## **7. Reporting and accountability**

- 7.1. At its first meeting the RLP will draft an Action Plan to guide its work for the year;
- 7.2. After each full meeting or sub-group NIACE will create an output (minutes) capturing the panel's views and discussions, to be signed off by the Chair and the LSC. Attending panel members can provide amendments or clarifying comments;
- 7.3. No panel member will be identified as a contributor to specific comments in any report made public;
- 7.4. All outputs will be circulated via established distribution lists, as well as in hard copy and made available via the internet;
- 7.5. The panel will be connected to other appropriate learner groups via an agreed list of groups and mechanisms of interchange.

## **8. Review arrangements**

- 8.1. NIACE's research team will evaluate the work of the panel for the LSC, conducting interviews with key LSC staff and panel members, to assess:

- 8.1.1. the impact of the outputs from the RLP
- 8.1.2. the services and support provided by NIACE Regional Development Officers.

**8.2.** This will be undertaken before the end of each term of office.

**9. Current membership**

RLP Membership 01/01/09 - 31/12/09

Jawad Ahmed, Chairperson	West Yorkshire
Rebecca Cooper	South Yorkshire
Tamsine Lee	South Yorkshire
Helen Peake	West Yorkshire
Laura Knowles	West Yorkshire
Victoria Green	West Yorkshire
Lucy Atkinson	The Humber
Huma Zafar	West Yorkshire
Sidrah Sadeef Siraj	South Yorkshire
Laura-Jane Fryer	The Humber
Martyn Hoyle	The Humber
Amanda Jane Slack	South Yorkshire
Dave Thompson, Vice-Chairperson	The Humber
Bill Hazon	The Humber
Julie Martin	South Yorkshire
Marjorie Hodgkinson	West Yorkshire