

VOCATIONAL PATHWAYS 14-19 YEARS

A Review by a Select Committee
appointed by the
Education and Libraries
Policy Overview Committee

Parts I and II

Chairman: Mr J Beynon

December 2003



Foreword

The major problem, we faced during the life of the Committee, was to try to keep abreast of what was happening in “the world outside” as, there is a significant amount of work being done on this subject, both nationally and in the County. It was imperative that we kept focussed on what were perceived to be the needs of Kent.

In introducing the Report I would like to make three comments.

First, though our brief was to consider the 14-19 age group, we soon learnt that disaffection occurs at a much earlier age, and we have given consideration to this in Chapter Two. It is very apparent that any ‘**standard** scheme of education’ cannot hope to embrace all the learners who pass through it. Those who can’t, don’t or won’t engage with the current system prove very expensive to the LEA, who have to find alternative means of providing for them.

Second, there is a very real need for the LEA to join up with Strategic Planning and Regeneration to ensure that we plan our education to meet the needs both, of those businesses we have here at present, and those we would want to attract into the County.

Finally, we make no apology for not attempting to establish a financial plan for the recommendations we have made. The possibilities are so various and alternatives so endless that any such offering would have been meaningless.

Writing this foreword gives me the opportunity to thank my fellow Committee Members, all those who freely gave their time to attend as witnesses, those others who spoke so clearly and confidently to us, when we visited them. Lastly, but by no means least, Sara Turnbull and Denise Fitch, who have smoothed our paths so well.

We wish you an enjoyable and productive read!

John Beynon
Chairman

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Vocational Pathways 14-19 Years -Executive Summary

14 to 19 marks a critical phase in young people's lives. It is the period when they build on their earlier learning and prepare for whatever pathway they chose. Many young people make this transition well -but too many do not. Too many people in Kent drop-out at 16, disengage from learning and head for low-skilled, low-paid employment. The key to tackling these issues is to put the needs of learners at the heart of the 14 -19 education system.

Meeting learners needs effectively requires all partners to work together. The LSC, LEA, schools, FE Colleges and employers must collaborate and be 100% supportive of one another's efforts. Whilst the Select Committee has focused on the contribution the LEA must make it fully recognises the role of other "players" in providing improved educational experiences for learners and in developing improved pathways through from ages 14 to 19.

The scope of this report is wide-ranging. This reflects the scale of the issues that need to be addressed. The remit of the Committee was to look at 14-19 Years, however it is not possible to look at these years in isolation. One of the key consensus issues that arose from the evidence gathered was the need to prevent learners becoming 'disaffected' prior to aged 14 years. The report reflects this and highlights the need to provide high level pastoral support and curriculum diversification at an earlier age.

The focus of the report and the recommendations are in regard to Key Stage 4. Nationally and across Kent many schools are developing innovative ways of providing learners with an increased range of courses, particularly vocational. Another consensus area from the evidence gathered was the need to increase the scale of vocational provision and work placements for 14-19 learners.

The report also looks at post-16 provision, including work-based learning. Increasingly FE colleges and schools are going to have to work closer together in order to meet the needs of learners and offer a broad range of choice. This requires a real shift in approach from the traditional competitive relationship that has existed.

There are many challenges involved in transforming 14 to 19 years to effectively meet the needs of learners in the 21st century. There needs to be a step change in the relationship between schools and the business community. Educational Institutions will have to change the way they work. In order to achieve these changes Kent County Council has a key leadership role to play

Recommendations

Chapter One: Policy Context

Recommendation 1.1 The LEA should actively involve a broad range of young people in all stages in the development of a 14-19 Strategy.

Chapter Two: Transition from Primary to Secondary Schooling

Recommendation 2.1 The LEA should investigate as soon as possible the use and potential benefit of research into emotional intelligence within Kent schools, noting the current work being done through pilots.

Recommendation 2.2 The LEA in partnership with Connexions must ensure that an improved level of pastoral support and careers guidance based on best practice is provided in the early years of secondary schooling, and throughout the 14-19 period.

Chapter Three: Increased Flexibility at Key Stages 3 and 4

Recommendation 3.1 The LEA must actively encourage schools to introduce some learner choice in Years 8 and 9.

Recommendation 3.2 The LEA should encourage the taking of GCSE's when it is appropriate for the learner (earlier or later).

Recommendation 3.3 The LEA in partnership with the LSC (Learning and Skills Council) should encourage the spread of the Increased Flexibility Programme (IFP) throughout all secondary schools in Kent at Key Stage 4, involving FE colleges and employers.

Recommendation 3.4 The 'Strategy for 14-19 years' must ensure that vocational options should be available as a right to learners of all ability ranges and throughout this age range.

Recommendation 3.5 The LEA should play an active role in raising the status of vocational education amongst parents, teachers, employers and learners to achieve parity with academic subjects.

Recommendation 3.6 The LEA in partnership with LSC must monitor the profile of learner uptake on vocational courses, and encourage learners to cross gender based boundaries, in following vocational pathways.

Recommendation 3.7 The LEA should extend the existing '16-19 learner entitlement' to 14-19 years.

Chapter Four: Implications of Flexibility

Recommendation 4.1 The LEA must encourage the broadest possible choice for all ages in the 14-19 group, and positively engage with the LSC's StAR review (Strategic Area Review).

Recommendation 4.2 KCC should encourage the strategic development of new 'skills centres', starting in Ashford and Kent Thameside.

Recommendation 4.3 The LEA should in the planning of new Secondary Schools give consideration to the provision of vocational facilities on site.

Recommendation 4.4 The LEA should conduct further research into the funding arrangements of vocational provision at Key Stage 4 in order that the increased cost of vocational training is reflected in future funding allocations.

Recommendation 4.5 The LEA should encourage schools to establish a Kent pilot project wherein providers pool all 14-19 budgets.

Chapter Five: Transition to the Workplace

Recommendation 5.1 The LEA in partnership with Connexions should take a lead in promoting labour market awareness amongst teachers and learners.

Recommendation 5.2 The LEA should encourage secondary schools to take up new ways of providing work experience, other than the common provision of a one-two week block at the end of year 10.

Recommendation 5.3 KCC as an employer must set corporate and directorate level targets for the quantity and diversity of work placements (including modern apprenticeships) it provides to young people. It should also monitor other public sector employers on this. In addition, KCC should consider including a request that its contractors and suppliers also offer such opportunities to young people.

Recommendation 5.4 The LEA and the LSC should conduct an audit of the whole of vocational and work-related Key Stage 4 provision (FE Colleges and schools). The LEA should develop a set of targets and indicators for these areas.

Chapter Six: Learner Support and Personal Development

Recommendation 6.1 The LEA should give a high priority to promoting the quality and availability of physical, spiritual and value-based education given in schools for 14-19 year olds.

Recommendation 6.2 The LEA should encourage Connexions to produce area-based information on education and employment options and offer independent advice to learners to assist them with their post-16 choices.

Recommendation 6.3 The LEA should promote the wider benefits of teachers undertaking secondments or placements in the workplace and vice-versa for employers.

Recommendation 6.4 The LEA should in partnership with schools explore the success of alternative forms of aptitude testing as a tool in raising attainment and helping students decide their progression route.

Chapter Seven: Collaboration or Competition?

Recommendation 7.1 The LEA, alongside the LSC, must promote the joint planning of 14-19 provision with clusters/areas, including FE colleges.

Recommendation 7.2 The LEA should have a named officer co-ordinating collaborative activities between the maintained and independent sectors at cluster/area level.

Recommendation 7.3 The LEA must encourage the need to take ownership and responsibility for promoting improved collaboration between schools and the business community. As such, a named officer in the LEA should take on this role, including playing an active part in the development of 'business clubs' at cluster/area level.

Chapter Eight: Progression Routes

Recommendation 8.1 The LEA should monitor attainment and progress of 14-19 year olds as a whole, in addition to the attainment at the end of Key Stage 4.

Recommendation 8.2 KCC must recognise and should lobby nationally for simplification of the qualifications system, probably along the lines of the unified qualification framework as outlined in the Tomlinson Interim Report, building upon the experience of the International Baccalaureate in Kent.

Chapter One: Introduction and Policy Context

- 1.1 In September 2001 Kent County Council adopted a new Constitution. The new political structure means that a Leader and a single-party Cabinet now take most of the decisions previously taken by the all-party service committees. Elected Members outside the single-party Cabinet can contribute to the development of policy through the three all-party Policy Overview Committees (POCs): Strategic Planning, Social Health and Community Care, and Education and Libraries. These committees may advise the Council, Leader and Cabinet on policy development, review the Council's performance relative to its objectives and targets, and make reports and recommendations to the Council. In addition, in the case of education, Church representatives can also play a part in the development of policy. Article 7.2 of the Constitution gives Policy Overview Committees the power to appoint Select Committees, with the legal status of Sub-Committees, to conduct reviews with the same powers as the main Committee.
- 1.2 On 11 April 2003 the Education and Libraries Policy Overview Committee appointed a Select Committee to conduct a topic review on Vocational Pathways 14-19 years. The Terms of Reference were:
- (a) To consider and shape the education of Kent Students between the ages of 14 to 19 with a particular focus upon vocational learning. "Vocational" or, to use the recommended terminology of the 2003 White Paper, "Specialist" education in Kent, will be considered in the context of current good practice; identified needs of students: national developments; and the needs of the economy, both in Kent and nationally.
 - (b) Particular emphasis will be given to work related education and associated Business Partnerships.
 - (c) There will be a sharp focus on the expansion and development of modern apprenticeships in Kent.
 - (d) There will also be a focus on vocational education in Kent as a pathway to higher education for increasing number of students. The importance of spiritual, physical and value-based education will also be considered.
 - (e) An emphasis on the ways on which schools are working more closely with FE will be a feature.
 - (f) Central to the review will be consideration of and contribution to, the outcomes of the White Paper "Opportunity and Excellence 14-19", including the Tomlinson review of future options, which is considering a British Baccalaureate.

The Membership of the Select Committee was:

Mr Beynon (Chairman, Conservative)	Mr M Dance (Conservative)
Mr Bristow (Church Representative)	Mr Norman (Conservative)
Mr Cope (Conservative)	Mrs Stevens (Labour)
Ms J Cribbon (Labour)	Mr M Vye (Liberal Democrat)

- 1.3 The Select Committee gathered evidence from a wide range of sources, which are detailed in full in Appendix One. In September 2003 the Select Committee held nineteen hearings with key stakeholders and gathered written evidence. The background research for this report took place between July-September 2003.
- 1.4 The Select Committee were particularly eager to hear the views of young people and the business community. This approach is based in the principle that the learners should be at the heart the education system, rather than the needs of individual institutions and that the success of vocational provision is reliant upon meeting the needs of employers.
- 1.5 There are a number of reasons for carrying out a review on vocational pathways 14-19.

Firstly, following the publication of the Green Paper '*Opportunity and Excellence*' the Government formed the 'Working Group on 14-19 Reform' (chaired by Mike Tomlinson). This group is currently considering a range of radical options for redesigning the 14-19 curriculum. KCC is committed to being at the cutting edge of this national debate, in order to contribute to national developments and best meet the needs of learners in Kent.

Secondly, local developments have provided the ideal opportunity for KCC to provide strategic leadership on 14-19 provision. The Kent & Medway Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is in the process of conducting a strategic area review (StAR) of post-16 education provision. The LEA has just introduced a new cluster based system across Kent, which has the potential to improve collaboration between education providers.

Thirdly, England has a significantly low staying on rate in education post-16 in comparison to other countries. Likewise, Kent also has a low staying on rate, that is currently around 76%¹. One of the ways in raising these participation rates is by ensuring that there is sufficient breadth of curriculum to stimulate young people and ensure that they reach their full potential.

¹ Kent & Medway Connexions. Destinations Analysis. Figures for 2002, which is above the national average.

Finally, to ensure that learners are prepared for the world of work and that the Kent economy gains an appropriately skilled workforce. Given the scale of housing growth in Kent over the next twenty years there is a real need to increase the rate of employment growth and the educational facilities to support this.

Policy Context

- 1.6 The term 'vocational' can convey a variety of meanings. It can be used to refer to occupational specific training or it can be used to refer to a wide range of subjects, including economics and media studies, which can also be perceived as 'academic' subjects. This confusion over the definition of the term 'vocational' is exacerbated by the introduction of 'vocational' A levels and GCSEs. Vocational A levels appear to offer more practical content and assessment styles than traditional A levels, but both lead to entry to HE, rather than direct progression into employment. Likewise many 'academic' routes such as medicine are very specialised but not widely perceived as 'vocational'. Added to this, increasingly the term 'specialist' is being used as an alternative to the term vocational. Throughout this report the term vocational will be used to refer to the wide range of courses/skills that have an occupational focus. The SC recognises that this refers to a broad range of provision.
- 1.7 Outside the UK other countries, such as Germany and Holland have well-established vocational pathways. France, Denmark, Sweden and Finland, all have distinct general streams, these account for *"rather under half of all students"*². In Germany and Holland only a third of all learners in secondary schooling study purely academic curriculum. This is in stark contrast to England, where vocational education and training (VET) does not exist as an institutionalised system, as it does in Europe.³
- 1.8 Education between the ages of 14-19 spans the point at 16 where compulsory education ends and young people make choices about continuing their studies at school or entering further education, work-based training or employment. Due to this statutory leaving age, historically we tend to conceptualise a divide in the education between under 16 and post-16. This division is also reflected in the statutory division of responsibility between the LEA and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC)⁴. Reconceptualizing this as one continuous period would

² Department for Education and Skills. Green paper 14-19: opportunity and excellence. (Including Annexes-John West 14-19 education and training in other countries) February 2002.

³ Learning and Skills Development Agency. Briefing. May 2002. www.LSDA.org.uk

⁴ In 1992 colleges of further education were removed from LEA control and in April 2002 the main responsibility for funding post-16 education and training passed to the new local Learning and Skills Councils.

assist in encouraging learners to stay in some form of education or training until 19.

- 1.9 The remit of the national Working Group on 14-19 Reform is to develop proposals for major reform of the curriculum and qualifications in England. The group published an Interim report in July 2003. The main recommendation within this report was that there should be a new unified curriculum framework replacing GCSEs and A levels. The group will release a further report in January and their final report is due to be published in the Summer 2004. A White Paper is anticipated to follow.
- 1.10 The Government has also published in July 2003 the White Paper *21st Century Skills, Realising Our Potential* with the aim of introducing a National Skills Strategy. The key driver of this is the need to raise the skills levels of the workforce to increase economic productivity. **The UK stands 25th out of 29 OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries in a league table of participation rates at age 17, and only 75% of our 16-18 year olds currently remain in education or training.**⁵ In addition, the proportion of the UK workforce qualified to Levels 2 and 3 compares unfavourably with our European neighbours.
- 1.11 It is estimated that UK Industry loses around £4.8 billion a year through poorly skilled employees.⁶ A survey by consultancy Grant Thornton in 28 countries found that **skill shortages in the UK were the worst in Europe and third worst in the world.** 38% of firms in the UK identified a shortage of skilled staff as the major constraint on business expansion – behind Canada 41% and South Africa 39%.

Locally

- 1.12 The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is currently in the process of reviewing post-16 education across Kent, with areas being reviewed on a district by district basis, and will be completed by March 2005. KCC is directly involved with the Strategic Area Review working in close partnership with the LSC.
- 1.13 KCC is in the process of developing a 14-19 Strategy in partnership with the LSC. This is due to be launched in early 2004. In addition, the education directorate has commissioned the services of a consultant to carry out further analysis to support the 14-19 Strategy. This Select Committee Report will feed into the development of this strategy and the approach of the KCC, we believe that it is vital for KCC and the LSC to take a strategic lead, which will have a significant impact on the nature and direction of educational provision in Kent. In addition, if learners are to

⁵ P4. Ibid.

⁶ Bell, David. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools. 8 Nov 2002. Speech to North East Chamber of Commerce '*Improving Education, Improving Business*'.

be placed at the heart of this process it is vital that young people are involved in the development of this strategy.

Recommendation 1.1 The LEA should actively involve a broad range of young people in all stages in the development of a 14-19 Strategy.

- 1.14 The Select Committee has heard from a number of witnesses on the importance of ensuring that developments at Key Stage 4 link into work at Key Stage 3 and post-16 (see Chapters Two and Five). As such this needs to be reflected in strategies and policies developed, such as the 14-19 Strategy and the LEA's Education Development Plan (EDP).

Chapter Two: Transition from Primary to Secondary Schooling

- 2.1 The Select Committee heard from a number of witnesses, including from Headteachers, the Head of the Alternative Curriculum Programme and the Head of Key Training who spoke passionately about the need to target learners prior to Key Stage 4, as disaffection amongst learners often begins much earlier.
- 2.2 The young people that Select Committee Members had the opportunity to meet also reflected this viewpoint. Members visited the Threshold Centre, which provides vocational education at Key Stage 4⁷. On this visit Members heard from one boy who had had to leave secondary school. He spoke about how difficult he found the switch between a small village primary school to a large secondary school and that it was at this stage that he became 'disengaged' with learning. He said that he felt isolated within the new large school, particularly as the people he knew from his old school that also moved to the secondary school were dispersed across the whole year group, rather than being grouped together to provide mutual support.⁸
- 2.3 Changing school environments can be a difficult time for learners and a crucial time in their development. As such it is vital that there are effective tracking mechanisms in place in order that the new secondary school can support those most at risk of disaffection. The Select Committee heard from an educational psychologist from the company Juniper Consultancies⁹. She explained that their company was piloting an initiative in four schools in Sheerness to address these issues. A "*passport*" was being introduced for every young person starting at the age of four. It would provide information on emotional intelligence, behaviour and include self-assessment results. The objective was for this information to travel with the learner to the new school so that the staff are best able to meet the needs of the individual.

⁷ Member visit 18 September 2003

⁸ Ashley. Visit to the Threshold Centre, Maidstone. 18 September 2003

⁹ Sarah Simms and Andrew Maudi

In addition, the Head of Christ Church High School spoke about the need for Heads and teachers within the local secondary and primary schools to work together on joint strategies to tackle this issue. He argued that particularly if the Heads had a strong relationship this could have significant benefits for learners in improving the transition process.

- 2.4 The Select Committee heard evidence to support the measurement and development of 'emotional intelligence' amongst learners and teachers. There are different definitions of emotional intelligence that are used below is one of the main ones that is widely used...

"The wider range of qualities which enable people to excel – self-awareness, impulse control, persistence, empathy, etc". (Daniel Goleman)¹⁰

Ms Simms explained that emotional intelligence (EQ) is about developing self-awareness of ones emotions, how they effect others and managing these emotions. As such, assessment of emotional intelligence levels can be used as a tool in deciding the teaching styles to adopt in teaching learners, and what learners will respond to best. Juniper Consultancies is currently running a research pilot in 25 Kent schools called the 'Juniper Initiative'. This aims to increase learners self-esteem and thereby attainment through addressing emotional intelligence issues. As part of this work they conduct assessments of individuals through using cognitive and emotional intelligence tests and then develop intervention strategies to raise emotional intelligence levels. She argued that it is easier to influence the behaviour and attitudes of the young. As such, it made sense to tackle disaffection and promote "*a pro-social, pro-learning culture*" at as early an age as possible. Indeed, the company Juniper Consultancies starts working with children from aged 4 years.

Recommendation 2.1 The LEA should investigate as soon as possible the use and potential benefit of research into emotional intelligence within Kent schools, noting the current work being done through pilots.

For further details on the components of emotional intelligence please see Appendix Seven.

¹⁰ Extract from <http://www.bgfl.org/services/gifted/glossary.htm>

Guidance at an early age

- 2.5 One of the recurring themes that emerged through the Select Committee's research and from the contributions of various witnesses was the challenge of ensuring learners are well informed and able to make their choices at a younger age. This is a necessary consequence of widening choice at Key Stage 4. This necessitates an increase in the provision of advice and guidance in years 7 and 8, with clear resource implications.
- 2.6 Ms Rigby, Connexions explained that currently there is "*very little contact in Year 8*" between Personal Advisors and learners. The Select Committee also heard from the General Manager of the Careers Service. She spoke of the need for a shift in focus from Year 9 to the earlier years in order to build up the learners' awareness of their options.
- 2.7 The need to promote awareness of progression routes and options at an earlier age is reflected the research by Connexions. Respondents felt that they would have "*preferred information earlier*" than Year 11 in order to make decisions then on post-16 options¹¹. In light of these findings the Select Committee welcomes the Government's intention to extend the statutory requirement on schools to provide a programme of careers education in Years 9-11, down to Years 7 and 8¹².

Recommendation 2.2 The LEA in partnership with Connexions must ensure that an improved level of pastoral support and careers guidance based on best practice is provided in the early years of secondary schooling, and throughout the 14-19 period.

¹¹ Synovate (commissioned by Kent & Medway, LSC Kent & Medway). 'Research study into the attitudes and experiences of young people'. March 2003.

¹² Intention stated by David Miliband and Ivan Lewis. DfES. Guidance on Curriculum Examination and Assessment. Ref: DfES/0163/2003. *Careers Education and Guidance in England. A National Framework 11-19*. March 2003.

Chapter Three: Increased Flexibility at Key Stages 3 and 4

- 3.1 This chapter focuses on the issues around the current provision of a vocational curriculum at Key Stage Three and Four in Kent, and makes recommendations to enhance this provision.
- 3.2 Recently the Government has made a series of moves to increase the flexibility of the curriculum at Key Stage 4. In September 2002 the Government introduced eight new GCSEs in vocational subjects¹³, many of which are offered in Kent schools. In addition, the Government has launched a range of new types of school such as 'Academies', which will offer an increased range of curriculum, including vocational options.

Addressing learner disaffection

- 3.3 We need to ensure that we provide for the needs of all learners, including the disaffected. The Select Committee looked at how disaffection could be prevented and how learners who were disaffected could be re-engaged and re-motivated to learn. Currently, around 10% of Kent students leave school at 16 without obtaining 5 GCSEs or equivalent at grades A*-G¹⁴. This situation needs to be tackled and increasing vocational opportunities is one of the ways of achieving this. As well as attainment levels increasing another key outcome is that there would be increased levels of young people choosing to continue in either education or training post-16.
- 3.4 By 'disaffected' the Select Committee is referring to young people who seem discontented or possibly have a resentful attitude towards the mainstream education system. This tends to be associated with the term 'low achievers', however it must be remembered that many young people labelled as 'disaffected' can also have high cognitive ability.¹⁵
- 3.5 All witnesses supported the view that vocational courses offered at Key Stage 4 can increase the attainment of disaffected learners. Many witnesses spoke persuasively of the positive impact that vocational courses can have on learners, particularly on motivation levels, raising self-esteem, and also increasing all round attainment in traditional GCSEs. A variety of explanations were offered for this occurrence.¹⁶
- Disaffected learners respond to the different teaching style.

¹³ Introduced Sept 2002. Applied Art and Design, Applied Business, Engineering, Health and Social Care, Applied Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Leisure and Tourism, Manufacturing, Applied Science.

¹⁴ 2001/02 Including maths and English, KCC annual plan

¹⁵ Sarah Simms, Educational Psychologist

¹⁶ Graham Smith, Pauline Smith, Simon Fox

- Disaffected learners can relate to the vocational subjects better as they are seen to be more relevant to their lives as they want to leave school and enter the workplace.
 - Disaffected learners respond to more individual attention, smaller groups and one to one coaching from the tutor.
- 3.6 The Select Committee heard from the Head of Alternative Curriculum programme in Kent (Mr Fox). The Alternative Curriculum programme provides full-time education at Key Stage 4 to excluded and non-excluded young people. It is an 'alternative' curriculum to the national curriculum and GCSEs. Mr Fox argues that from his experience many of the disaffected respond well to "*curriculum diversification*". He also believes that the exclusion rate would fall as direct consequence of an increase in the provision of vocational options.
- 3.7 Members of the Select Committee also visited a centre for vocational learning at Key Stage 4, which is part of the alternative curriculum programme¹⁷. At this centre the curriculum incorporated the needs of individual learners. For example, through a BTEC route learners could conduct a project on any topic that interested them, for example on Jaguar Cars. This was very successful in re-engaging them in learning.
- 3.8 The Select Committee believes that there is a case for freeing up the curriculum at Key Stage 3 as well as at Key Stage 4 in circumstances where it is likely to increase the motivation levels of learners, particularly learners who may become disaffected. For example, the Select Committee welcomes the work of the Kent LEA in encouraging pilots. Currently, pilots have been developed at Minster College, Hugh Cristie Technology College and Dartford Grammar. These pilots aim to free up the curriculum for learners by enabling learners to sit their SATS a year earlier and thereby enable learners to undertake a broader range of courses outside the national curriculum after their SATS. This approach is now backed nationally by the Leadership Network, which consists of Headteachers of state schools looking at solutions to the problem of high dropout rates after the age of 16.¹⁸
- 3.9 As mentioned previously, Kent has a particularly high drop out rate at 16 years. Moving to an education system that is focused on the needs of individual learners rather than confined to the traditional age barriers would help to increase motivation of learners. Enabling students to take their GCSEs in Year 10 would enable Year 11, the final year of compulsory schooling, to be spent on a sixth-form programme. The National Leadership Network believe that this move would significantly reduce the drop-out rate at 16

¹⁷ Visit to the Threshold Centre, Maidstone 18th September 2003.

¹⁸ Guardian. '*Heads call for three years in sixth form*'. 29 September 2003.

“Because the first year of the three-year sixth form programme would be compulsory, and, having invested time and energy into the first year, the likelihood of students wishing to continue on to the end of sixth form would obviously be greater”¹⁹

Recommendation 3.1 The LEA must actively encourage schools to introduce some learner choice in Years 8 and 9.

Recommendation 3.2 The LEA should encourage the taking of GCSE’s when it is appropriate for the learner (earlier or later).

Increased Flexibility Programme

- 3.10 To complement the introduction of these new GCSE’s the Government introduced an Increased Flexibility Programme (IFP) administered through the LSC. The IFP is only a small part of the vocational agenda in Kent or nation wide, however as a new programme in Kent it provides a useful example of the issues and challenges in providing vocational education at Key Stage 4. The IFP started in Kent in September 2002. It aims to raise the attainment of learners on the programme and increase the retention in education and training after 16.

The Targets are as follows:

- One-third of the young people involved should gain at least one GCSE in a vocational subject at level2, over and above their predicted GCSE outcomes
- One-third should gain at least one NVQ at level 1, over and above their predicted GCSE outcomes.
- Three-quarters of the young people involved should move into further education and training
- Attendance rates should match the average for Key Stage 4.

- 3.11 The Select Committee heard from the Project Manager of the IFP programme in Kent (Ms Martin). She explained that the programme enabled learners to study one or two days a week at a college (partner with the school) and to develop their understanding of the work place. She explained that an assessment of the programme would be available in 2004 after GCSE results become known.

- 3.12 Ms Martin and other witnesses outlined some of the challenges that had arisen through this programme. One of these was the issue of balancing

¹⁹ Ray Tarleton, National Coordinator of the Leadership Network. Guardian. ‘Heads call for three years in sixth form’. 29 September 2003.

'supply and demand'. The Select Committee heard that there is a high demand from schools for participation in the programme. One example given was that in Thanet two schools wanted the whole of their Year 10 to participate, however the College provider only had the capacity and funding was only available for 15 learners. In addition, Mr Fox spoke of the "*frustration*" that many Headteachers felt about the constraints of student numbers able to participate in the IFP.

- 3.13 The IFP programme in Kent currently has around 700 learners in each cohort on the programme. This means that it is available to only around 3% of learners in Year 10. The Select Committee welcomes the IFP programme but recognises that it is currently unable to expand provision due to the funding available. Due to the IFP limitations for rapid expansion of vocational options at Key Stage 4, the Select Committee believes that we need to look beyond this programme.
- 3.14 Another issue that came to light was the type of schools currently engaged in the IFP programme and provided vocational qualifications. In the first cohort on the IFP (2002/3) no Grammar Schools participated. In the second cohort (2003/4) 2 out of the 48 schools participating are Grammar²⁰. The Select Committee welcomes the participation of Grammar schools in the programme. All learners should have the opportunity to access vocational courses and that engaging Grammar schools in this programme could help encourage other schools to introduce vocational provision.

Recommendation 3.3 The LEA in partnership with the LSC (Learning and Skills Council) should encourage the spread of the Increased Flexibility Programme (IFP) throughout all secondary schools in Kent at Key Stage 4, involving FE colleges and employers.

- 3.15 Ms Martin and others also highlighted the timetabling difficulties schools faced in offering vocational options. This seems to be particularly difficult in schools on the IFP programme as they are currently designing the timetable to fit around 10-15 learners in a year group being out of mainstream lessons for up to two days a week. If vocational options were offered to increasing numbers of learners in each school then this issue would lessen, as it would be easier to timetable for larger numbers of learners.

Other issues around the IFP programme are the availability of work placements and the relationship between FE colleges and schools, these will be discussed in Chapters Four and Chapter Six respectively.

²⁰ Maidstone Boys Grammar and the Weald of Kent

Access to Vocational Education for all learners

- 3.16 The Select Committee heard from a large number of witnesses who spoke about the perception of vocational courses being for the 'least able' or disaffected and not a route suitable for high achievers. The Head of Whitstable Community College had commented that traditionally schools in the area had chosen to place their most disaffected pupils into FE colleges.
- 3.17 The Select Committee learnt that the current learners on the IFP are widely perceived to be the disaffected or low achieving learners. The IFP Project Manager, LSC, explained that this was not just a perception but was the reality for the first cohort (2002/3) on the programme. Schools were asked to select learners, whom they thought would be appropriate for the programme, the option was not open to all learners. The impact of this selection process was in Ms Martin's view that

"schools placed their lower ability students on the programme"

Ms Martin, did go on to explain that with the second cohort (2003/4) the options were offered to all learners and that this has resulted in the intake being of a *"slightly higher ability range"*.

- 3.18 Despite the current situation being that the intake onto many vocational courses is from the disaffected, the Select Committee heard evidence from a number of witnesses that suggested that vocational pathways were appropriate and indeed desirable for a wide range of learners²¹. Within each vocational area has a wide range of ability levels that can be achieved and indeed pay differentials. The Assistant Head of Youth 16+ (KCC)²² mentioned the example of one learner who had started on a basic level NVQ in hairdressing and who advanced to owning their own hair salon and is now employing other NVQ trainees.
- 3.19 The Select Committee also heard from a number of witnesses who voiced their views that vocational pathways needed to be flexible routes in order that learners can move between vocational and academic routes where appropriate, as their attitudes and needs develop. This needs to be embedded into the curriculum design in order that learners do not have to repeat levels unnecessarily and hold back their progression. The Select Committee believes that this flexibility is vital in order that learners can explore their full potential.

²¹ Pauline Smith, Geoff Terry, Principle Canterbury College

²² Pauline Smith

- 3.20 One of the barriers to widespread uptake of vocational provision across all ability ranges is its low status in comparison to academic education. The Select Committee believes that all types of learners should have the option of undertaking vocational options. Without offering the vocational pathways to all there

*“Is a danger of automatically designating (vocational options) as a pathway for some and not others”.*²³

The Rt Rev Stephen Venner, spoke on the value of learners from all ability ranges and backgrounds learning together. He argued that physically dividing learners between ‘vocational’ and ‘academic routes’ could create a “*them and us*” culture at an early impressionable age.

- 3.21 One of the key findings of a recent Ofsted report on the new GCSEs was that parity of esteem between vocationally related GCSEs and traditional GCSEs

*“Is more often established where courses are provided for a substantial proportion of pupils, rather than just the low-attaining or disenchanteds”.*²⁴

- 3.22 Below is a table outlining the main barriers and ways forward to achieving parity of esteem between vocational and academic pathways. Key to the success of vocational qualifications is tackling parental attitudes. Parents have a significant degree of influence over young people’s pathways and as such their awareness of vocational progression routes needs to be increased.

²³ Geoff Terry

²⁴ Ofsted. *Developing new vocational pathways*. Interim report on the introduction of new GCSEs. HMI 1630. August 2003.

Barriers to 'equal status' for vocational education	Possible options available to address these issues
Predominantly lower achievers/disaffected that take vocational pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging the integration of vocational options (such as GCSEs) into the mainstream curriculum of schools. • Encouraging the provision of vocational GCSEs in selective schools. Ensuring that one out of the LEA promoted pilots to be launched in September 2004 is in a Grammar School. • Encourage flexibility in learner movement between academic and vocational pathways.
Teacher/career officer/FE lecturer attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training • Access to accurate labour market information • Businesses playing an increased role in schools
Employers attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that the curriculum is relevant to local business needs • Fostering partnership relationships • Increased information on range of vocational qualifications available • Simplification of the qualifications available
Parental attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlighting the progression routes available from vocational qualifications, case studies of learners who have gone onto degree level (or it's equivalent) ²⁵.
Higher Education attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research on the progression of students entering HE with vocational qualifications undertaking academic subjects • Promotion of Foundation Degrees

Recommendation 3.4 The 'Strategy for 14-19 years' must ensure that vocational options should be available as a right to learners of all ability ranges and throughout this age range.

Recommendation 3.5 The LEA should play an active role in raising the status of vocational education amongst parents, teachers, employers and learners to achieve parity with academic subjects.

²⁵ Pauline Smith, Tony Smith, Graham Smith, Helen Rigby

Access for all learners -breaking down traditional barriers

- 3.23 The General Manager Careers Service (Ms Duckett) highlighted the marked gender division in the uptake of vocational qualifications, including modern apprenticeships. There are significantly low number of boys undertaking courses in 'Health, Social Care and Public Services' –only 10.83% of the total intake. Equally Chapter Four illustrated the local employment growth areas. It is noticeable that the very areas with significant skills shortages (such as construction) are marked by low numbers of women in these occupations.²⁶ In Kent last year only 0.57% of the total intake were female on Construction courses and 1.96% on 'Engineering, Technology and Manufacturing' courses.²⁷ Hairdressing is the most popular course for females (95% female) and Plumbing for males.²⁸ The Select Committee notes that over the next year the Equal Opportunities Commission are conducting a formal investigation into the barriers and solutions for addressing this issue²⁹
- 3.24 Ms Duckett highlighted that there are ways of taking a proactive approach in promoting the uptake of non-traditional pathways. For example, in Sept 2003 a Skills Day was held in Canterbury. This was sponsored by Connexions Kent and Medway to encourage 300 girls (invited from the Girl Guide Association and their friends) to try out non-traditional skills - e.g. plumbing / welding as well as other vocational skill areas they may not have tried e.g. silver service catering. The Select Committee is aware that the LSC is planning (with partners, notably Ashford Borough Council) to run a Skills event in 2004, which will be open to the whole of south/east Kent. This could be an opportunity for addressing this issue and promoting the uptake of non-traditional areas to girls and boys.

Recommendation 3.6 The LEA in partnership with LSC must monitor the profile of learner uptake on vocational courses, and encourage learners to cross gender based boundaries, in following vocational pathways.

Increasing Learner Choice

- 3.25 The Select Committee would like to see an increased range of vocational options offered to all learners at Key Stage 4 regardless of the type of school that they are at. This would enhance individual learner choice and thereby ownership and motivation levels of the learners. The Select

²⁶ Nationally over 90% of those on Construction and Engineering courses are men

²⁷ Statistics from the LSC, Micheal Martin, Planning Analyst. Ages 16-19 for 2002/3.

²⁸ Statistics from the Learning and Skills Council for 2003/3. Michael Martin, Planning Analyst. 22 Sept03

²⁹ Formal investigation under section 57 (1) of the Sex Discrimination Act into occupational segregation in training and work

Committee notes that across Kent there is little scope for learners to choose from a diverse curriculum when they make their option choices in Year 9. The Select Committee heard from two learners who advocated increased choice at this stage. One of the representatives of the Kent Youth County Council stated that he felt “pushed into” certain subjects based on teachers issues such as timetabling pressures and league tables and would have welcomed an increased range of choice at Key Stage 4 as well as post-16.

- 3.26 The LSC in partnership with KCC has just produced a learner entitlement at 16 (see Appendix Three). This document will go to every learner in Kent. It outlines what every learner is ‘entitled’ to by way of advice, the curriculum quality and diversity. It is part of the cultural shift placing learner choice and rights at the heart of education provision. The Select Committee heard from the Principle of Canterbury College (Geoff Terry) who advocated Learner Entitlement at the age of 14 years. He believed that this would assist in the needed conceptual shift towards considering 14-19 as one period, rather than a split between pre and post-16.

In addition, to learners having ‘entitlements’ the Select Committee recognises that learners also have responsibilities. Within the existing 16-19 entitlement this is reflected, it calls for learners commitment towards attendance, respect, and taking responsibility for self-managing workload (for full text please see Appendix Three).

Recommendation 3.7 The LEA should extend the existing ‘16-19 learner entitlement’ to 14-19 years.

- 3.27 The Select Committee heard from the Cabinet Member for Education that in September 2004 3 or 4 new pilots would be introduced in Kent, these would develop innovative ways of providing vocational education at Key Stage 4. Nationally, there are now 39 established 14-19 pathfinder schools. These have been established since Jan 2003 to test more radical ways of providing 14-19 education and training (none in Kent currently exist). Although, the Select Committee does note that four schools in Kent have gained national pathfinder status in Enterprise Learning³⁰. Having institutions in Kent that had 14-19 pathfinder status would be important for Kent. It would enhance levels of innovation locally, increase the provision of vocational education and would increase Kent’s national influence on policy development.

³⁰ The Abbey, Invicta Grammar School, Northfleet School for Girls, Wilmington Hall School

Chapter Four: Implications of Increased Flexibility

Where is vocational provision best provided? –Implications for Institutions

- 4.1 From international practice we know that there are many different ways in which vocational provision can be provided at Key Stage 4. Very broadly these can be divided into education systems where learners are taught in separate institutions and where vocational subjects are taught alongside an academic curriculum. The Netherlands and Germany are primarily characterised by an ability split at secondary level where vocational courses are taught very separately. In contrast the USA, Canada and Sweden are characterised by the teaching of vocational courses within the High School system.
- 4.2 The Select Committee heard from the Cabinet Member for Education on the Dutch education system. At age 12 learners are divided between a vocational stream and a university preparation stream. Similarly, in Germany pupils are divided in more or less equal numbers between three types of school, the *Hauptschule* for the least able, the *Realschule* for the middle group, and the *Gymnasium* for the most able in academic terms. However, in addition to this arrangement Germany also has schools called *Fachgymnasien*. These specialise in business and engineering, and lead to the same *Hochschulreife* qualification as in the general *Gymnasium* via the *Abitur*.
- 4.3 In contrast the USA vocational course are delivered within a school environment. It is of note that in the US only around 10% of High School students see themselves on vocational pathways. However, nearly all students in the US do undertake at least one vocational subject, therefore it is integrated into the mainstream curriculum.³¹
- 4.4 There are a wide-range of methods available in providing vocational courses at Key Stage 4. They can be provided in schools, FE colleges, through work-based providers and indeed through a mixture of all of these. For example, one method is to provide this in an 'Alternative Education College', the Head of the Alternative Curriculum Programme (Mr Fox) in Kent reported that one had been established in Canterbury in September 2003. This is part of the 'voices' project targeted primarily at learners who are at risk of exclusion or excluded. Mr Fox explained that this project arose out of a clear need in the area for this type of provision, and that the FE sector was not providing enough of a capacity for this. It

³¹ Department for Education and Skills. Green paper *14-19: opportunity and excellence*. (Including Annexes-John West *14-19 education and training in other countries*) February 2002.

is hoped that in the future the FE sector will offer similar provision and that there will be no further need for such separate centres.

- 4.5 Increasing the range of vocational choice in Kent will have significant implications for the providers of post-16 education. If the needs of the learner are placed centre stage it is necessary to rethink the current arrangement of post-16 providers in Kent. Currently, many of our smaller sixth forms struggle to offer learners a broad range of choice. The Select Committee heard from the Head of Christ Church High School, Ashford about his decision to close their sixth form. He felt that it was too small to be viable and offer a sufficient breath of learner choice. The Select Committee notes that there are currently 89 sixth forms and 7 FE colleges in Kent for a population of 1.3 million in comparison to other counties such as Hampshire, which has only 10 sixth forms for a population of 1 million.³² With an increased range of vocational options, in addition to traditional A-levels this pressure on small sixth forms will increase further³³.
- 4.6 It is recognised that this is a pressure that smaller schools face as a whole, as well as sixth forms. However, it is hoped that through increased collaboration, such as what is occurring in NorthWest Kent, this pressure will be alleviated. NorthWest Kent College has formed a consortium with eight schools, including two single-sex grammar schools. From September 2004 this consortium will offer all post-16 learners in and around Gravesham the ability to select academic and vocational courses from a common prospectus and, theoretically, study at any of the institutions in the consortium. This is a very welcome development, it aims to ensure that learners have a range of choice, whilst demonstrating the viability of smaller sixth forms, if they adapt and form 'consortium' arrangements³⁴.

Recommendation 4.1 The LEA must encourage the broadest possible choice for all ages in the 14-19 group, and positively engage with the LSC's StAR review (Strategic Area Review).

- 4.7 The Select Committee heard from a number of witnesses the need for post-16 providers to expand the vocational provision and the physical facilities available, in order to meet increasing demand levels. Mr Fox suggested method in assisting with this is by FE colleges specifying, through vocational projects (like VOICES), the exact nature of what they require for entry to vocational courses in their colleges (vocational competencies, behaviour, work related attitudes etc). The vocational projects can then deliver, following the guidance, and students (who would otherwise have

³² Professor Melville highlighted that there were only 12 sixth forms in Hampshire. Information on Hampshire County Council's website states that there are 10.

³³ This point was also made by David Melville, Vice Chancellor of the University of Kent

³⁴ Murrey, Janet. *'Protect and survive'*. Guardian Education. October 21 2003.

left school and missed out on further education or training) gain access to the FE sector. Others spoke on the need to build new FE centres that had the capacity to offer a wide-range of choices to learners. The Headteacher of Christ Church High School spoke about the need for such a centre to be built in Ashford. The Select Committee recognises that different types of institution are able to provide vocational provision, and believes that what is key from the evidence received, is that the scale of this vocational provision is significantly increased.

Recommendation 4.2 KCC should encourage the strategic development of new 'skills centres', starting in Ashford and Kent Thameside.

4.8 Increasing learner choice, including access to vocational courses has implications on the physical mobility of learners. If the increased choice is to be provided through increased collaborations between educational providers, this necessitates increased mobility of learners travelling to different institutions. The Select Committee recognises that in a County like Kent this has significant transport as well as financial implications that need to be well researched.

4.9 In order to increase the scale of vocational provision it is necessary for the LSC and the LEA to consider the implications in the design of new education centres. The Cabinet Member for Education spoke about the need to have increased levels of capital investment in order to equip schools to teach in an appropriate learning environment. This is reflected within the Governments 'Building schools for the Future' strategy, where the government aim to rebuild or renew every secondary school in England over the next 15 years.³⁵ This need to plan for the future is particularly important given the scale of housing growth that will occur across Kent (focused around Thames Gateway and Ashford) over the next twenty years.

Recommendation 4.3 The LEA should in the planning of new Secondary Schools give consideration to the provision of vocational facilities on site.

Funding of vocational provision

4.10 The funding for vocational provision at Key Stage 4 is a complicated matter, accentuated by the statutory division of responsibility between the LEA and LSC for pre and post 16 education³⁶. Mr Carter and Mr Fox highlighted that currently **vocational provision is generally significantly more expensive than traditional academic education**. However, this

³⁵ http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/_doc/3611/Building%20schools%20for%20the%20future.pdf

³⁶ This view is supported nationally in the findings of the recent Ofsted Report. *Supporting 14 to 19 education -evidence from the work of 12 LEAs*. HMI 586. July 2003.

upfront cost needs to be balanced against the social cost of disaffected learners, and the loss to the Kent economy in not meeting skills shortages. It is also a low cost in comparison to the traditional educational provision to excluded children through Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), which cost between 9.5-13K per head.

- 4.11 Each secondary school currently receives around 3.5K per pupil head. Currently to provide vocational provision within schools this is an additional cost to the school. . It was highlighted that it was particularly difficult from a school budget perspective to provide specialist learning to a small group of learners³⁷. There are differing cost estimates of providing vocational provision. It has been estimated that it is around double the amount per head to provide vocational provision. Currently the LEA provides an 'alternative curriculum' to excluded young people at a cost of around 4/5K per head
- 4.12 Mr Carter highlighted that these funding issues are being addressed. The Education Directorate, KCC are in the process of scoping the cost of offering vocational provision within a couple of schools in Kent. They are looking at the type courses, and different methods of delivery.³⁸ The Select Committee welcomes this development. It hopes that the long-term aim of this research is to factor in vocational provision into schools funding allocations. In addition, it is hoped that this scoping work with schools takes place with a wide range of school types.

Recommendation 4.4 The LEA should conduct further research into the funding arrangements of vocational provision at Key Stage 4 in order that the increased cost of vocational training is reflected in future funding allocations.

- 4.13 Further to this necessary research and support work, the LEA needs to provide leadership in promoting innovative ways of funding vocational provision. The most radical model would be for institutions to pool all of their budget for 14-19 education. This would enable a wholistic approach to be taken in determining the supply needs to enable learner choice and meet the needs of the local economy. This clearly needs to be piloted prior to a roll out being appropriate.

Recommendation 4.5 The LEA should encourage schools to establish a Kent pilot project wherein providers pool all 14-19 budgets.

³⁷ Head of Whitstable Community College

³⁸ *ibid*

Chapter Five: Transition to the workplace

- 5.1 This Chapter looks at a range of issues. These include the provision of work-based learning (Work placements, modern apprenticeships, work experience), and how vocational provision can help meet the needs of the economy.

Skills Shortages

- 5.2 “Growth sectors” for jobs in the area over recent years include hotels/restaurants/catering, personal/social/community service, financial and retail at Bluewater.³⁹ Over the next ten years the greatest growth in employment is expected to be in the construction sector reflecting the planned housing growth.⁴⁰ KCC in addition to the LSC has a role in ensuring that the supply for this demand is in place in order to promote local employment. As such, it is important that there is an adequate range of vocational qualifications available in this sector and other high growth areas.
- 5.3 The skill shortages in Kent are not confined to the business sector alone. In the public sector there are also shortages, for example in the social care profession. The Select Committee notes that the Select Committee on Domiciliary Care (March 2003) focused on this issue in their report with recommendation 9.5 and this Select Committee fully endorses this.

“SSD work in conjunction with the Care Provider organisations (UKDCA and KCCA), and the Skills Sector Council to make links with colleges and schools offering work experience practice placements”.

- 5.4 The Select Committee heard from the General Manager for Careers Service about the need to increase learners’ awareness of the local and national economy in order to help inform their option choices. She argued that in France it is much more accepted for learners to use information on skills shortages, growth areas and earnings to inform their choices.

The Select Committee notes the valuable information that the Careers Service already produces such as the LMI Review (labour market information). The Select Committee recognise that it is important to increase teachers understanding of the labour market as well as learners per say. This will enable teachers to pass on their knowledge and understanding to learners.

Recommendation 5.1 The LEA in partnership with Connexions should take a lead in promoting labour market awareness amongst teachers and learners.

³⁹ ibid

⁴⁰ P33. 7.3. Skills Insight. 2002. *Skills Review Update 2002*. www.skills-insight.org.uk

Key Skills

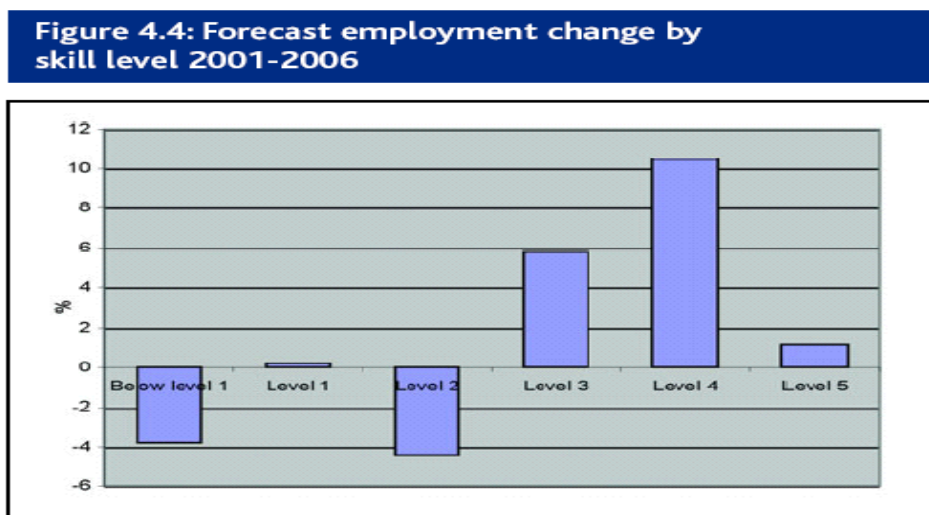
- 5.5 Key skills are a range of essential skills that underpin success in education, employment, and lifelong learning and personal development. The main key skills are communication, application of number and IT though there are others (see Glossary).

The Select Committee heard from The Personnel Manager, Saga (Mr White) that over recent years the company had seen a decline in the social skills of 16-year old school leavers, which are part of their target recruitment market. One of the key skills areas that they are looking for is communications ability due to the nature of their business. This includes the ability to relate to different types of people verbally and in writing.

These views are supported by national research conducted by the CBI- Pertemps employment trends survey, published in August 2003; this states that 34 per cent of firms are dissatisfied with the literacy and numeracy of young people. It will also show dissatisfaction with school leavers' business awareness (70%), self-management (56%), career knowledge (44%), and work attitude (37%).⁴¹

Intermediate and High Skills (A-levels, degree or equivalent)

- 5.6 Many of the witnesses highlighted that there is a real demand of intermediate level skills. Indeed, it is forecast that as many as 80% of new jobs over the next decade will require level 3 qualifications (A-level or their equivalent). The graph below illustrates this.⁴²



Source: Skills Insight Forecasting Model 2002

⁴¹<http://www.cbi.org.uk/ndbs/press.nsf/0363c1f07c6ca12a8025671c00381cc7/761e11a1032d09a880256d87003b0322?OpenDocument>. Press Release 21 August 2003

⁴² Extract from Learning and Skills Council. *Sector Studies Series for Kent & Medway*. Issue 1-April 2003.

In order for Kent to remain economically competitive it is vital that the education system equips learners to achieve in this environment. The working age population in Kent is less well qualified than in the region as a whole and the English averages. 41.7% of the Kent workforce is qualified to NVQ level 3 or equivalent⁴³ in comparison to the English average of 42.7%. So there is a real need for Kent to increase these levels of attainment.

- 5.7 Mr White also highlighted the difficulties Saga experience in recruiting high skilled individuals with managerial aptitude, in the areas of HR, marketing, IT. This is supported by local statistics which show that Kent overall has a below average level of high skills. 22.5% of the Kent Workforce has a vocational, professional, management or academic qualification at NVQ level 4 (degree level) in comparison to the English average of 23.8%.⁴⁴

Work Experience

- 5.8 The DfES state that all pre 16 Yr 11 should have entitlement to a minimum of 5 days work experience. In Kent, as in most other parts of the country this is often extended to 10 days. Currently over 80% of pupils undertake work experience at the end of school year.⁴⁵ The Select Committee heard from a number of witnesses of the issues that arise due to this. Mr White from Saga pointed out that this created a huge issue for the business community, as they were limited in the number of students that they can take on at any one time, and therefore limited in their ability to extend work experience opportunities. The Director of Business, Learning and Skills Council (Tony Allen) highlighted that this year's cohort was an estimated 19,000 across Kent and that this placed a "*colossal burden*" on employers.

The advantage of spreading over the year would mean that pupils would be able to sample a range of workplaces and options and thereby increase their knowledge on which to make future decisions. The Select Committee notes that this approach is being developed by Business Links and welcomes this.

Recommendation 5.2 The LEA should encourage secondary schools to take up new ways of providing work experience, other than the common provision of a one-two week block at the end of year 10.

⁴³ Vocational A-levels or 2A level standard

⁴⁴ Connexions, Careers Management. Labour Market Summary –2002/3.

⁴⁵ P5. The Kent Partnership. Education and Employer Links Working Group. *Recommendations for Improved Education/Employer Links in Kent.* June 2003.

5.9 A number of schools across Kent already have well-developed work-based learning programmes that integrate this into the curriculum.⁴⁶ However, there does seem to be widespread variation in the quality of the work experience provided⁴⁷. The Select Committee heard from Hannah Patton that her experience of work experience was that it had no relationship with future career intentions, despite each learner having completed a form stating their preferences. Mr Allen, LSC also spoke on the need to have a closer link between work experience, the curriculum and the aspirations of the learner. This holds true for all work-based learning. In November 2002 a 'Kent Quality Standard for work Experience' was launched. This was led by the Kent & Medway Education Business Alliance (KMEBA)⁴⁸ and supported by KCC. The Select Committee welcomes this development and hopes that all Kent schools adopt the standard.

Modern Apprenticeships

5.10 Modern Apprentices learn on the job, building up knowledge and skills, gaining qualifications and earning money all at the same time. There are two levels of Modern Apprenticeship: Foundation (FMA) and Advanced (AMA). Both of them lead to National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs), key skills qualifications and Technical Certificates (for all subjects from September 2003). These are still in their infancy and are still developing therefore their success can not as yet be adequately judged.

5.11 In total across Kent and Medway there were 3,577 learners who started on either an advanced or foundation level modern apprenticeship in 2002. Out of these 60% of learners achieved the full level and only 55% achieved the foundation level.⁴⁹ This success rate seems to vary across the county and between differing courses. At Canterbury College the principal explained that they had a 20-30% 'success' rate of those on the modern apprenticeship scheme. Despite variation it is widely acknowledged that there is a significantly low success rate on the modern apprenticeships and this is an issue nationally not just in Kent. There are however differing views on whether this low success rate should be perceived as a problem or not. The Association of Learning Providers (ALP) argues that the rate is so low because of its measurement. Success is dependent upon the learner completing the whole of the programme. They argue that the learner should gain recognition for completing elements of the modern apprenticeship, even if they do not

⁴⁶ Whitstable Community College, Channel School

⁴⁷ Also from Rt Rev Stephen Venner

⁴⁸ This organisation has been disbanded and the LSC contract to provide work experience has been given to Business Links

⁴⁹ Statistics from the LSC, Michael Martin, Planning Analyst. 22 Sept 03

gain all the necessary requirements (such as key skills or technical certificate).⁵⁰

Witnesses have suggested a number of reasons as to why the completion rate is so low⁵¹.

- Employers Attitudes
- Key Skills
- Learner Allowance

- 5.12 KCC Assistant Head of Youth 16+ (Ms Smith) and the Principle of Canterbury College highlighted that many employers are happy providing paid time-off to employees for the study of an NVQ level qualification at college. However, they are much less eager, and indeed very hard to persuade employers to provide time-off for completion of the whole modern apprenticeship programme. This suggests that employers place more value on the NVQ qualification over the whole modern apprenticeship. A Business Manager from Connexions (Ms Rigby) suggested that from her experience employers were supportive of modern apprenticeship. Employers'

“Do not lack commitment but it is difficult for them to offer necessary time off”

- 5.13 Ms Smith and the Director of Threshold (a small provider of vocational education)⁵² spoke about the need to have key skills in order to complete a modern apprenticeship. For some learners this can be a barrier to attainment as they lack these skills. Local and national research highlighted earlier in this Chapter demonstrates the importance of key skills in meeting the needs of the economy.
- 5.14 Ms Rigby offered a further reason for the low completion rate on modern apprenticeships, which is that the training allowance of £40 per week paid to the learner was not high enough to be attractive over other options available to them. This allowance is paid to the learner and no financial incentive is given to the employer. However, the Select Committee also heard about the high learner demand levels for modern apprenticeships so this does not seem to be a disincentive to learner uptake. The General Manager of Careers Service informed the Select Committee that the demand levels for Modern Apprenticeships were high and that these had been raised by the national LSC marketing campaign promoting them to learners, and that this has helped create a demand level that is outstripping supply⁵³.

⁵⁰ Guardian Education. 'Futher –A measure of success'. October 21 2003.

⁵¹ Evidence from Pauline Smith

⁵² Sue Eiffort, Visit to the Centre took place on 19 September 2003

⁵³ Helen Rigby, Pauline Smith also provided evidence to support this view.

Work Placements

- 5.15 Chapter Three discusses the Increased Flexibility Programme (IFP). One of the key aspects of the programme is that it offers learners the opportunity to undertake a work placement for one day a week to complement their study of a vocational GCSE. From the evidence provided by the project manager of this programme it came to light that **out of the first cohort of 700 learners on the programme only 47 work placements could be found.**
- 5.16 The lack of work placements available is a significant issue given the desire of many to increase the scale of vocational provision. Ms Martin believes that the perceptions of business can be a barrier to obtaining work placements. Many believe that they will not gain from having a 14-year-old on site and that at this age they can be disruptive⁵⁴. Ms Martin recognised that this perception was based to an extent upon previous experiences of the business community. For example, she gave an example from West Kent of where one boy on the IFP programme had undertaken a work placement and had been accused of stealing. Despite this not being proven this type of incident has a lasting influence on local businesses. Of course there are also many positive examples of successful work placements occurring in Kent and these need to be celebrated.
- 5.17 Research shows that learners gain real benefits from learning in the workplace that is relevant to their studies and enhances learning. This has occurred in the IFP programme through the 47 work placements provided. Naturally, it is vital that the issue of quality of placements has equal importance to the need to increase the quantity.
- Case study: Work placement in Thanet**
10 girls undertook a work placement with a large retailer one day a week. This complemented their study of retail and increased their motivation levels. The learners and employer gained mutual benefits, as the employer gained valuable work assistance. (evidence from Ms Martin)
- 5.18 Ms Smith emphasised the need for appropriate work placements that would lead to further employment. She highlighted that Key Training Services receives a large degree of support from SMEs and the charity sector, specifically charity shops. This was valued, however what is

⁵⁴ This view was supported in written evidence provided by Ann McNulty, Manager of EKEBP

important for the young people is that they secure employment and as such it would be more beneficial for them to be employed in businesses.

- 5.19 Ms Smith spoke to the Select Committee about the need for KCC to take a lead as an employer in providing work placements and Mr Allen (LSC) advocated KCC's role in providing work experience. KCC is one of the largest employers in Kent and as such has a role as an employer in offering work placements and modern apprenticeships to young people. Ms Smith argued that currently there is a very low supply of work placements offered and that only a few areas, such as Youth & Community and Supporting Independence Programme (SIP) have responded to requests. This suggests that a different approach be required to increase the number of placements offered. One of the current barriers seems to be that the financial cost (although small) would be born by the individual unit and not the directorate or corporately. If KCC were to address this issue corporately it would have significant benefits for KCC and the young people. It should lead to an increase in the numbers of young people joining the organisation, and KCC would be leading by example in encouraging other employers to adopt a similar approach.
- 5.20 It is the responsibility of the business community as well as the education sector to increase the availability of work placements and learning. The business community has self-interest in promoting greater links between business and education due to its need for a skilled workforce. National Research commissioned by the CBI shows that which shows dissatisfaction with school leavers' business awareness (70%), self-management (56%), career knowledge (44%), and work attitude (37%).⁵⁵ One of the key ways in which KCC can address the shortage of work placements is through promoting the benefits of taking on learners to the business community. The Select Committee welcomes the marketing strategy adopted by the Kent Partnership to increase employer engagement.⁵⁶
- 5.21 However, the Select Committee recognises that further measures are necessary beyond a marketing approach to increase the level of employer engagement. Kent predominantly consists of small businesses, which often have little capacity to think beyond their immediate business needs. One method of addressing this could be for large scale businesses to take on a leadership role in supporting SMEs with the paperwork and preparation involved in taking on young people in work placements.

⁵⁵ <http://www.cbi.org.uk/ndbs/press.nsf/0363c1f07c6ca12a8025671c00381cc7/761e11a1032d09a880256d87003b0322?OpenDocument>. Press Release 21 August 2003 CBI-Per Temps Annual Employment trends Survey.

⁵⁶ Education & Employer Working Group

One witness advocated taking into account employers work experience/placements provision as a factor in the allocation of contracts from KCC to the business sector⁵⁷. Other ways of providing incentives to employers seem to be necessary. One alternative could be to offer a form of financial incentive to employers who take on modern apprentices and who offer work placements at Key Stage 4⁵⁸. Such measures have been introduced in mainland Europe and in the USA at a national level.⁵⁹ KCC may wish to lobby national government for a form of financial incentives to be introduced to ease the burden on SMEs.

Recommendation 5.3 KCC as an employer must set corporate and directorate level targets for the quantity and diversity of work placements (including modern apprenticeships) it provides to young people. It should also monitor other public sector employers on this. In addition, KCC should consider including a request that contractors and suppliers also offer such opportunities to young people.

5.22 The evidence that the Select Committee received reflected in the above sections demonstrates the diversity of practice across the county in terms of work placements, modern apprenticeships and work experience. The LEA would benefit from conducting an audit of this provision and vocational learning. There is a need for the LEA to collect up to date information on learners who are undertaking vocational learning. Currently, the LEA does not have the ability to find out details of learners who are enrolled on such courses, but relies upon exam results. Data Management Systems thereby need to be developed in partnership with the LSC. Improved data on the scale and quantity of existing practice, particularly at Key Stage 4, would enable the LEA to take a lead in sharing best practice, and as a planning tool in developing the 14-19 Strategy.

Recommendation 5.4 The LEA and the LSC should conduct an audit of the whole of vocational and work-related Key Stage 4 provision (FE Colleges and schools). The LEA should develop a set of targets and indicators for these areas.

⁵⁷ Mr Minter, Director of The Kent Partnership

⁵⁸ Helen Rigby

⁵⁹ In Austria earlier this year the government's financial incentives were deemed 'unsuccessful' in increasing the shortage of placements available.

<http://www.eiro.eurofound.ie/print/2003/03/inbrief/AT0303201N.html>

Chapter Six: Learner Support and Personal Development

- 6.1 This Chapter looks at the range of support that is offered to learners within secondary schooling. This includes pastoral support, careers guidance, and examines some of the managerial issues around providing this support.

Pastoral Support

- 6.2 With the increase in collaboration between schools, FE colleges and other training providers schools and employers it is particularly important to establish effective protocols, guidance and tracking mechanisms for individual learners. The Head of Tunbridge Wells High School spoke on the particular need to track the disaffected and ensure that they did not become lost from the education system. Mr Fox argued that within the IFP programme more needed to be done to aid the transition to FE colleges, which is a very different learning environment.

“Young people who have received an effective careers education programme delivered through the curriculum, alongside impartial advice and guidance from external guidance specialists, make the best transitions”
14-19: Extending Opportunities and Raising standards DfES 2002

Spiritual Development and value based Education

- 6.3 A number of witnesses indicated the importance of the spiritual development of students and the values that inform their individual actions⁶⁰. The Select Committee heard that in the case of Christ Church High School the unashamedly Christian ethos of the school, combined with community orientation, had set high expectations. Students and parents had responded well to this environment, though progress had been hard won and had taken time and commitment.
- 6.4 Through increased collaboration between institutions and the development of vocational provision, there seems to be a trend towards students learning in more than one institution at the same time (see Chapter Three). This means that learners are increasingly exposed to different institutional environments and values. This therefore makes it even more important that individual learners’ personal development is given the prominence it deserves in any programme undertaken.
- 6.5 The Bishop Stephen spoke to the Select Committee about the need for learners to be taught the values of respect and the true meaning of

⁶⁰ Mr Mulrenan, Bishop Stephen, Professor David Melville

tolerance. He explained that this is part of the work of the Church community in Kent. He also spoke about the need for learners to deal effectively with the pressures and expectations that are placed on them by others.

- 6.6 Ms Simms (Educational Physiologist) also spoke on the need for learners to be guided in their lives and choices by personal values rather than the influence of external pressures, she argued that this aspect is part of developing emotional intelligence.
- 6.7 It is important that any new curriculum (Tomlinson) reflects the need to incorporate the teaching of values into the design. Professor Melville a member of the 'National Working Group on 14-19 Reform' informed the Select Committee that this had been discussed at length within the working group. He mentioned that values were embedded into the International Baccalaureate with its focus on community service and voluntary work.

Recommendation 6.1 The LEA should give a high priority to promoting the quality and availability of physical, spiritual and value-based education given in schools for 14-19 year olds.

Careers Guidance

- 6.8 Careers advice to young people is currently provided in Kent through Careers Management Kent and Medway. This is a partner within the Connexions Kent & Medway Partnership, launched in November 2002. Connexions is a new organisation which provides wholistic support to young people aged 13-19 years nation-wide. It provides advice on guidance on a wide range of issues including; lifestyle, drink and drugs, money and housing, relationships, health, learning and training and careers. The service has 27 outreach centres across Kent and has around 200 personal advisors whom are predominantly based in schools.
- 6.9 Of course young people do not only get their advice from formal sources but from a range of informal ones as well. Kent & Medway Connexions commissioned an independent research around the attitudes and experiences of young people. This research study found that most young people turned to their parents/carers for advice, however this lessened with age. For advice on education/training it was interesting that young people turned to their teachers (57%) and careers or personal advisor (21%) over parents/carers (14%). This evidence demonstrates how vital it is that teachers are equipped to provide information to learners on their full range of options. (See Appendix Four).

- 6.10 A number of witnesses suggested that within some schools there is still a tendency to want to retain their students (particularly the high achievers) within their own sixth-forms, and therefore promote the option of A-levels over all other options to learners. If this occurs this works against the interests of the learner, as it is not based upon their individual needs⁶¹. In addition, it can also act as a barrier to the take up of vocational pathways post-16 through a lack of teacher understanding of the other pathways available.

Research by Connexions supports these assertions. Their research study concluded that one of the major information gaps to young people aged 13-19 was on

“information on alternative to established routes of A-levels and University”⁶²

In particular respondents highlighted that Grammar schools are

“less likely to provide alternative information from A-levels and Universities”⁶³

- 6.11 The Select Committee believes that learners have the right to information on all the options open to them and that this information should be accessible and promoted to the learner as part of the careers service. The Principal of Canterbury College argued that learners at a school with a sixth form currently have to search for information on other providers themselves. Learners should not have to struggle to gather together information from each separate post-16 provider. It would be beneficial and enhance learner choice if this information on educational options was provided in one unbiased information pack on the range of options within their local area. The potential benefits of having this information on the Connexions website could also be explored.

Recommendation 6.2 The LEA should encourage Connexions to produce area-based information on education and employment options and offer independent advice to learners to assist them with their post-16 choices.

⁶¹ Hannah Patton provided evidence to the Select Committee on her educational experience. This assertion was supported by Amanda Duckett, Pauline Smith

⁶² Synovate (commissioned by Kent & Medway, LSC Kent & Medway). ‘Research study into the attitudes and experiences of young people’. March 2003.

⁶³ *ibid*

- 6.12 Learners individual needs should to be placed centre stage. The Select Committee welcomes the role that Connexions is playing in providing independent advice on a range of topics to learners. The Select Committee also believes that it is important that at an operational level Personal Advisors who focus on the disaffected link in with other agents such as Family Liaison Officers (FLOs). The role of Personal Advisors in providing pastoral and careers advice is vital, it is equally important that the teaching staff also take responsibility for this role, and that this responsibility is taken on by senior teaching staff within schools.
- 6.13 From the evidence that the Select Committee has gathered it seems that the level of guidance and advice offered to learners in secondary schools varies greatly across the county and between schools. Some schools such as Whitstable Community College benefit from having a Personal Advisor (PA) on site, and even has conducted home visits with the learner's families over the summer. Others such as Christ Church High School, Ashford only have 0.5 of a PA as they share one with another school. The Headteacher of Christ Church High School expressed concern over the allocation policy of Connexions. He felt that his school was being unfairly disadvantaged by its successful GCSE results despite having a school intake from an area of high deprivation.
- 6.14 Select Committee learnt that one of the reasons for this perceived variation was due to the allocation methodology that the Connexions service uses. Within the funding allocations the Service does allocate 10% towards those excluded and 20% at those at risk of exclusion. Locally the Connexions service also top up the funding focused towards schools who are 'at risk' due to the particularly high number in Kent.⁶⁴ The Select Committee welcomes the principle of targeting support at the disaffected. However, the Select Committee believes that it is equally important for all learners, including the high academic achievers to be adequately supported in their progression choices.⁶⁵

Teaching Vocational Education

- 6.18 Some witnesses voiced concerns that many FE lecturers are not fully equipped to deal effectively with younger learners, particularly those with behavioural issues⁶⁶. The Dean of Education, ChristChurch College also raised this issue and argued that often they can lack the skills to raise the motivation levels of learners in this age group, tackle behavioural issues, and understand the differing rates of development.

⁶⁴ Views from Gordon Bernard, Chief Executive of Kent & Medway Connexions Service. Email 03/09/03

⁶⁵ A poll commissioned by the Association of Colleges found one in three 16-25 year olds felt their school had not given them sufficient careers guidance.

⁶⁶ Helen Rigby, Graham Smith

- 6.19 She argued that one of the solutions to this issue is to raise the level of training available and expand the graduate training available. She also spoke about the need to incorporate the 14-19 agenda into the teacher training programmes. Christ Church College are piloting a scheme to provide a qualification that encompasses QTS and FENTO standards (enabling them to teach in FE or schools)⁶⁷. This is currently the only Higher Education Institution in England running the scheme. The Select Committee welcomes this pilot and Government recognition of this issue.
- 6.20 Teaching shortages in vocational provision in Kent reflect the general pattern of teaching shortages that exist in the county. It was suggested that courses such as Leisure and Tourism and Health and Social Care have particular shortages. However, this is something that Christ Church College is addressing. Prof Blandford highlighted that this was why the College was leading on the joint initiative whereby participants secure the FENTO and QTS status (mentioned above). The Select Committee learnt from Professor Blandford that only 66% of teachers that studied with Christ Church College remained teaching in Kent. There is therefore a need to increase the retention of trainee teachers in Kent.
- 6.21 One of the challenges for the teaching staff is to increase their level of understanding of the business sector. This will enable them to provide up to date information to learners. Mr Allen, LSC spoke to the Select Committee about the need to encourage teacher placements in the workplace. The government aspiration is that 10% of teachers spend at least one day per year in the workplace. Tony Allen argued that this was inadequate and that a much greater level of exchange is needed between teachers and employers.
- 6.22 Similarly, the General Manager of the Careers Service spoke to the Select Committee on the challenges for Careers Advisors in providing high level advice on vocational options. With the increase in vocational options it is increasingly important for careers advisors to keep in touch with employers. One of the ways that the Kent & Medway Careers Service is tackling this issue is through enabling every careers advisor to undertake a work placement through the LEBPs (Education Business Partnerships). The Select Committee welcomes this initiative and hopes that this opportunity is extended to teachers.

Recommendation 6.3 The LEA should promote the wider benefits of teachers undertaking secondments or placements in the workplace and vice-versa for employers.

⁶⁷ Professor Sonia Blandford. Written Evidence provided 23 September 2003. QTS stands for Qualifications Training Standards and FENTO refers to the Further Education National Training Organisation (further abbreviations can be found in the Glossary)

Tools for Practitioners

- 6.24 A number of witnesses commented on the option of using forms of assessment and ability testing to assist in offering support to learners, particularly to assist learners with making choices at Key Stage 4. There are a wide-range of different types of tests that are available for use, and Kent Schools do use a variety.
- 6.25 The Kent & Medway Connexions Service have a '*Framework*' that they use to assist learners.⁶⁸ This is a process of assessment, planning, implementation and review (APIR). It provides a structure to assist Personal Advisers in their one-to-one work with young people. This process of identifying needs, planning effectively and taking action to address those needs is a key element of a Personal Adviser's role working one-to-one with a young person. The Framework has identified 18 factors, which have the potential to impact on a young person's participation and progression in learning in both positive and negative ways (see Appendix Five). Individual assessment profiles are used as part of this process, including self-assessments.
- 6.26 Other forms of testing are often used in the assessment and guidance provided to learners. The *Morrisby profile* is a psychometric test that indicates aptitudes and abilities both generically –spacial awareness etc but also in personality terms.

'*Fast tomato*' test' is a set of self-assessment tools developed by the Morrisby organisation to enable young people and their personal advisor to determine levels of personal awareness and aspirations; it also includes learning styles.

Ms Simms (Educational Psychologist) spoke on the need to use different teaching styles in vocational education, particularly with the disaffected⁶⁹. Graham Smith highlighted that the nature of vocational education means that it has to be much more reliant upon the learner self-managing their work.

Recommendation 6.4 The LEA should in partnership with schools explore the success of alternative forms of aptitude testing as a tool in raising attainment and helping students decide their progression route.

⁶⁸ This will become mandatory from April 2004

⁶⁹ Supported by Graham Smith, Helen Rigby

Chapter Seven: Collaboration or Competition?

- 7.1 This Chapter examines the existing relationship between schools, FE colleges, and the business community. A number of witnesses spoke of their hope that the new LEA cluster system introduced in September 2003 would enhance collaboration at all levels between educational providers and with the business community.

The Relationship between schools and FE colleges

- 7.2 Many of the witnesses commented on the historical competitive relationship that existed between the FE and school sectors.⁷⁰ This is based upon the competition for post-16 learners and the differing funding arrangements. One witness spoke about the shift in recent years towards increased collaboration and a partnership approach⁷¹.
- 7.3 One of the impacts of increased vocational provision at Key Stage 4 has been to enable increased numbers of learners to study one or two days a week at an FE college. This has occurred through the IFP programme (discussed in Chapter Three), and through individual partnership relationships between schools and colleges.
- 7.4 There are many examples in Kent of exemplary collaborative working between schools and FE colleges. The Select Committee heard from the Headteacher of Ashford Christ Church High School about the partnership between his school and South Kent College. This is a particularly interesting case study as it demonstrates the potential for successful collaboration and provision of vocational courses outside of the IFP programme and without extra LSC funding.

The Select Committee also heard from about the flourishing partnership between Whitstable College and Canterbury College, which includes 38 Year 10 learners undertaking NVQ level 1 at Canterbury College for one day a week.

Case study: Ashford Christ Church High School This school is in an area of high deprivation and as such its GCSE scores and the staying on rate post-16 are remarkable achievements (1.5% of intake achieved 5 A-Cs in 1991 in comparison to 35% in 2003). This is a partnership that has flourished since 1996 when a link course was introduced in the school to encourage learners to stay in education post-16. The school provides a GNVQ course at Key Stage 4 that is delivered by the FE College on the school site and is also participating in the IFP programme. Currently around 50% of the schools learners at Key Stage 4 have some experience of vocational education through South Kent College.

⁷⁰ Graham Smith, Simon Fox, Mrs Tighe

⁷¹ Mrs Sullivan-Tighe, Head of Whitstable Community College

- 7.5 However, the Select Committee also heard examples of the existing tensions between schools and the FE sector. Mr Fox suggested that there was tension over the way that the Increased Flexibility Programme had been implemented. He believes that many in the FE sector were concerned over the referral process by schools of learners (this issue is explored in more depth in Chapter Three).
- 7.6 The evidence that the Select Committee heard on the relationship between FE colleges and Schools suggests that levels of collaboration vary greatly across the county and are dependant upon the enthusiasm of individual Headteachers and directors of FE colleges⁷². Through having a structured approach to joint planning this relationship could be enhanced to the benefit of learners.
- 7.7 Having a 14-19-learner entitlement (recommendation 3.5, Chapter Three) could act as the catalyst for providers jointly planning their courses so that, as far as possible, every young person had all options available locally. There are many different models that could be used to deliver joint planning, what is important is that the needs of the learner are placed first. This would enable a strategic approach to be taken in clusters as to the numbers and type of courses to provide.

Recommendation 7.1 The LEA, alongside the LSC, must promote the joint planning of 14-19 provision with clusters/areas, including FE colleges.

League Tables

- 7.8 League tables can be seen as one of the barriers to collaborative working between schools and FE. A number of witnesses suggested that one of the disincentives to schools in offering vocational provision is the perceived negative effect that this would have on league table results. This would seem a particular disincentive in offering vocational provision to all learners (particularly high achievers). Current league tables only include GCSE results and have a significant impact in terms of attracting students. The Select Committee welcomes the government intention to include vocational qualifications from 2004/5 in league tables. However, with increased collaboration between educational providers it is expected that there will be a move towards more area-based assessments.

⁷² The Select Committee heard from Ms Martin that in West Kent there are currently no partnerships on the IFP programme between FE colleges and schools.

According to Mike Tomlinson (Chair of the Working Group on 14-19 Reform)

"Such co-operation will, or at least should, lead to a rethink about the performance data published and the accountability mechanisms...If the performance of students is a product of co-operation, can headline performance data be other than at area level?"⁷³

Independent/maintained

- 7.9 A recent national research study found that only one third reported joint partnership activities between schools between maintained and independent sectors.⁷⁴ Locally in Kent the relationship between these sectors is varied and is very much dependent upon the enthusiasm of individuals. The Government this year published its response to the national review of charitable status. Within this it pledged a new definition of charity in law which would ensure that private schools would be subject to a 'public character check' to ensure they are benefiting the wider community.⁷⁵ This welcome move might act as an incentive on the independent sector to increase collaboration with other schools. National research suggests that through encouragement the LEA could increase collaboration levels. Indeed, the Select Committee notes that KCC is involved strategically with the national 'building bridges' project.

Recommendation 7.2 The LEA should have a named officer co-ordinating collaborative activities between the maintained and independent sectors at cluster/area level.

Links between Employers and educational providers

- 7.10 The Select Committee heard some examples of very positive collaborations. At the Channel School the relationship with the local business community seems to be very strong and has been established over a number of years. They have established work-related learning programmes and offer 'industry days' in Year 9. The Pathways Development Manager from the school states that this relationship has been assisted through schools finding their own work placements for students.

"By doing this we are able to build up a personal unique pool of loyal employers, ones who we are able to confidently place pupils

⁷³ Speech to the Royal Society of Arts. BBC News 27 March 2003.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/2891601.stm>

⁷⁴ www.nfer.ac.uk/whatsnew. Press release 24th July 2003.

⁷⁵ Society Guardian. "Q&A: Charity Reform" July 16 2003.

with low ability, or with a medical problem, or an asylum or refugee student”

- 7.11 The physical location of education institutions and businesses can be a limiting factor on the extent of collaboration that is possible. The Head of - Tunbridge Wells High School argued that this was a limiting factor for his school. On the other hand the physical location can also enhance links, Mrs Sullivan-Tighe, Headteacher at Whitstable College has utilised links with the business community due to site location.
- 7.12 The Select Committee believes that the LEA has a key role to play in taking a strategic approach to developing strong links between the business community and schools. The Select Committee recognises the work of the LSC, the Kent Partnership, Business Links and the EBPs (Education Business Partnerships) in promoting these links. There are seven EBPs in Kent & Medway, who are involved in the delivery of work experience, teacher placements, and mentoring. Developing these relationships is vital in order to address the significant shortage of work placements needed for learners.
- 7.13 The Kent Partnership is working to encourage the establishment of ‘business clubs’, through Business Links and the EBPs (Education Business Partnerships), to match the clusters of schools. These would then enhance the links and co-ordination of school/business links. This initiative needs the active engagement of the LEA at an operational as well as strategic level.

Recommendation 7.3 The LEA must recognise the need to take ownership and responsibility for promoting improved collaboration between schools and the business community. As such, a named officer in the LEA should take on this role, including playing an active part in the development of ‘business clubs’ at cluster/area level.

Chapter Eight: Progression Routes

- 8.1 This Chapter focuses on the level of clarity and awareness learners, parents, educationalists, and employers have of the progression routes available from vocational learning.
- 8.2 One of the aims of the national working group on 14-19 reform is to develop a curriculum framework that will improve recognition of the variety of progression routes available to young people.

The main benefits of having clear progression routes are as follows;

- It will enable learners to make more informed choices on vocational options
- Raise the aspirations of learners
- Enable a wider range of learners to go onto higher education (disaffected) and vocational pathways (including high academic achievers)
- Enhance parental, employer and HE understanding and perception of vocational status.

- 8.3 Many witnesses commented on the need for greater clarity in the progression routes from vocational courses⁷⁶. This local perspective is backed by national findings. One of the key findings identified by Ofsted in their recent report into the new vocational GCSEs was that

“Too many pupils are unclear about progression routes from the new GCSEs, as are some teachers.”⁷⁷

Learners would greatly benefit from an increased understanding of the progression routes that are available to them and understanding their long-term as well as their short-term options. The Select Committee heard from Bishop Stephen who commented on the short-term nature of the education system. In England there is a general conceptualisation of education being in short distinct stages, GCSEs (2 years), A levels (2 years), degree (3 years), with 16 being a key milestone. This is a cultural barrier to learners developing a strong awareness of progression routes available to them.

Learners do benefit from having long-term direction; as such Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) can be used as a tool in planning their long-term future. Within the Green Paper on 14-19 Years the government made a

⁷⁶ Pauline Smith, Liz Martin

⁷⁷ Ofsted. *Developing new vocational pathways*. Interim report on the introduction of new GCSEs. HMI 1630. August 2003.

commitment to their introduction. These are similar to the current progress files in use in many schools already. These is a set of guidance and working materials to help young people from age 13 and adults to record, review and present their achievements, set goals, and make progression in learning and in work. The use of Individual Education Plans with children special education needs (SEN) is well established. Although, these are beneficial it is noted that there is a need to retain a level of flexibility.

- 8.4 The LEA has a key role to play in helping to create a shift in attitude and approach towards conceiving 14-19 years holistically; this needs to be reflected in service performance management. Currently, the LEA does not have its own targets relating to attainment at 19 years, in contrast to the LSC⁷⁸. If the LEA did integrate these targets into its planning processes this may help influence the organisational culture and assist in the implementation of the 14-19 strategy.

Recommendation 8.1 The LEA should monitor attainment and progress of 14-19 year olds as a whole, in addition to the attainment at the end of Key Stage 4.

Curriculum Reform

- 8.5 The National Working Group on 14-19 Reform are in the process of developing a model diploma framework. The full details of this framework outlined within the groups' Interim Report⁷⁹ and an outline can be found in Appendix Six.
- 8.6 The Select Committee heard from the vice-chancellor of the University of Kent (Professor Melville), who is a member of the National Working Group on 14-19 Reform. He explained that this new qualification framework would enable the incorporation of vocational qualifications within the overarching diploma framework. The groups' favoured model is outlined in the table below. This may require some flexibility to recognise the achievements of young people with special educational needs, as well as high achievers.

⁷⁸ 1,339 additional young people (to 87%) at Level 2 by age 19 by March 2004, 1,424 additional young people (to 55%) at Level 3 by age 19 by March 2004 (LSC website)

⁷⁹ See Working Group on 14-19 Reform. *Principles for Reform of 14-19 Learning Programmes and Qualifications*. Published 16th July 2003. www.14-19reform.gov.uk

A new framework of Diplomas	existing qualifications
Level 3 (advanced) Diplomas	AS and A level, Level 3 NVQ, Advanced Extension Award and equivalent qualifications
Level 2 (intermediate) Diplomas	GCSE at grades A*-C, Intermediate GVNQ, Level 2 NVQ and equivalent qualifications
Level 1 (foundation Diplomas	GCSE at grades D-G, foundation GNVQ, Level 1 NVQ and equivalent qualifications
Entry level diplomas	Entry Level Certificate

(Extract from the Working Group on 14-19 Reform. *Interim, Progress Report*)

- 8.7 The French Baccalaureate system illustrates one of the methods for incorporating vocational qualifications within the overarching framework. France has a parallel system where learners can take the *Baccalaureate General* pathway of the *Baccalaureate Professional* (vocational) pathway.
- 8.8 Professor Melville also explained that currently there is no detailed design of exactly what an 'English Baccalaureate' or 'diploma' (name has not been decided as yet) would consist of. He explained that this was deliberate in order that all views can be taken in account through the national consultation on the Interim Report.
- 8.9 A number of other witnesses spoke in favour of the principle of a baccalaureate/diploma system⁸⁰. The General Manager of the Careers Service argued that this would help ensure that there was parity of esteem between academic/vocational qualifications. The diploma system would shift the focus away from the attainment of particular subjects to a focus on the level of qualification (diploma level) that the learner had obtained. Indeed, Mr Melville explained that the diploma would be "*the sum of its parts*" in contrast to the current GCSE set up.
- 8.10 The Select Committee heard from the Headteacher of Dartford Boys Grammar School, The Dean of Education, Christ Church College and the Vice Chancellor of the University of Kent on the specific value of the International Baccalaureate. Currently, the HE sector in Kent has large numbers of overseas students who enter with the international

80 Amanda Duckett, Geoff Terry, Professor Sonia Blandford, Tony Smith also spoke in favour of a diploma system.

Baccalaureate qualification. In addition, Kent schools are increasingly attracted to the offering the qualification. The Dean of Education argued that that the International Baccalaureate was beneficial for four main reasons.

- 1) Transferability in the Global Market
- 2) Content-transferable skills
- 3) Equity-all students follow an internationally recognisable scheme
- 4) Links to other Key stages-Middle Years Bac and Junior Bac⁸¹

8.11 The Select Committee welcomes the expansion of the international Baccalaureate in Kent and its uptake at a diverse range of schools. Kent is the gateway to mainland Europe and as such it is important that we value other systems of qualifications other than the English GCSE-A-level options.

8.12 In Chapter Three (increased flexibility) the need to retain a level of flexibility within the curriculum in order that learners can move between 'pathways' was expressed. This principle is also extended to the introduction of any new diploma system. Mr Melville argued that this flexibility would be built into the curriculum as far as possible, although this was impossible to be 'seamless'. For example, a learner who had taken the vocational pathway (up to the equivalent to A-levels) would be able to progress to an academic degree, however they may have to take a foundation year at a HE institution.

8.13 Many witnesses spoke on the need to rationalise the "*vocational pea soup*"⁸². There are currently and estimated 3,700 qualifications available to learners post-16⁸³. With this scale of qualifications available it is very difficult for employers, parents, HE sector and most importantly learners to make sense of them and gain an understanding of potential progression routes. Introducing a diploma framework would in the long-term enhance understanding of levels of attainment and the progression routes.

8.14 The Select Committee believes that there are clear benefits to be gained from introducing a diploma framework in place of the existing range of qualifications. These benefits include raising the status of vocational qualifications, enhancing understanding through reducing the complexity of existing qualifications.

⁸¹ Written Evidence provided by Professor Blandford. (23 October 2003)

⁸² Paul Carter. 10 September 2003.

⁸³ Geoff Terry, Principle Canterbury College and included in Working Group on 14-19 Reform. Progress Report *Principles for Reform of 14-19 Learning Programmes and Qualifications*. Published 16th July 2003

Recommendation 8.2 KCC must recognise and should lobby nationally for simplification of the qualifications system, probably along the lines of the unified qualification framework as outlined in the Tomlinson Interim Report, building upon the experience of the International Baccalaureate in Kent.

Vocational Education as a pathway to Higher Education

- 8.15 According to DfES in contrast to the high proportion of learners progressing to HE from A-levels, only around half of those who achieve vocational level 3 qualifications by age 18 go on to higher education by age 21⁸⁴. It could be argued that HE Institutions are tending to overlook this pool of talented students. The national Working Group on 14-19 Reform have also identified this as an area of concern as

“There is no vocational equivalent to the near universal link between success at A-level and entry to HE”⁸⁵

- 8.16 However, the HE sector is now rapidly increasing the vocational courses that it offers, particularly with the introduction of Foundation Degrees. These are new, employment-related higher education qualifications. Foundation degrees are designed in conjunction with employers to meet skills shortages at the higher technician and associate professional levels. Universities offer these, in partnership with higher education (he)colleges and further education (fe) colleges. Flexible study methods make them available to people already in work, unemployed people, or those wanting to embark on a career change. On successful completion foundation degree graduates can revisit their career options, and may choose to progress to further professional qualifications or to an honours degree.⁸⁶ They are the equivalent level to HNDs⁸⁷ and are designed with time to replace them. Many of these will be delivered through FE Colleges. FE Colleges currently deliver an estimated 12% of HE courses.
- 8.17 The key to the success of foundation degrees is that they are recognised by employers, as valuable qualifications in their own right as alternatives to traditional degrees. The Vice-Chancellor of the University of Kent argued that they are increasingly becoming valued by employers; such as the armed forces, the police, and for teaching assistants.
- 8.18 It is worth noting that much of the Higher Education Sector is already vocational. Depending upon ones definition, and estimated 50% of HE is

⁸⁴ Widening Participation, P12

⁸⁵ Working Group on 14-19 Reform. Progress Report. *Principles for Reform of 14-19 Learning Programmes and Qualifications*. Published 16th July 2003

⁸⁶ Extract from FAQs <http://www.foundationdegree.org.uk/faq/>

⁸⁷ Higher National Diploma

directly vocational already.⁸⁸The Select Committee notes that it is through the expansion of vocational pathways such as foundation degrees that the government intends to meet its widening participation target of '50% of under 30 year olds having experienced higher education'. This is similar to the situation in Finland where the Finish Government aims to attract 60-65% of young people through vocational HE expansion.⁸⁹ The Select Committee welcomes foundation degrees both as useful qualifications in their own right as a pathway to direct employment and as a pathway to further HE study.

⁸⁸ Working Group on 14-19 Reform. Progress Report Summary. *Principles for Reform of 14-19 Learning Programmes and Qualifications*. Published 16th July 2003

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Progress Report, Progress Report Summary, Progress Report Consultation Response form

LIST OF APENDICES

- Appendix I: List of Witnesses**
- Appendix II: Glossary of Terms**
- Appendix III: 16-19 Student Entitlement**
- Appendix IV: Learner Attitudes**
- Appendix V: APIR Wheel**
- Appendix VI: A new diploma framework**

Appendix One

Meeting Date	Witness/es Attending (or visited)	Main Areas Covered
9 September 2003	Graham Smith	Curriculum, partnerships, disaffected
	Helena Sullivan-Tighe	Curriculum, partnerships, disaffected, work experience
	Tony Smith	International Bacaleareate, Curriculum
10 September 2003	Paul Carter	Needs of disaffected learners, strategy
	Tony Allen Trevor Minter	Work Experience, partnerships
	Pauline Smith	Work-based learning
	Amanda Duckett	Careers advice/guidance
	Steven Ferguson Hannah Patton	Experience of education system
16 September 2003	David Melville Elizabeth Martin	Higher Education Increased Flexibility Programme
17 September 2003	Geoff Terry Helen Rigby Sarah Simms Bishop Stephen	Partnerships, curriculum
18 September 2003	Young people (visit to Threshold centre)	Work-based learning
19 September 2003	Simon Fox Mr Mulrenan Sonia Blandford	Alternative Curriculum

Written evidence received from the following:

Sue Eiffort, Director of Threshold

Gill Cannon, Manager, South Kent Education Business Partnership

Professor Sonia Blandford, Dean of Education, Christ Church College

Malcolm Bell, Principal, North West Kent College

Ann McNulty, Manager East Kent EBP (Education Business Partnership)

Maureen Robinson, Pathways Development Manager, The Channel School

Appendix Two: Glossary of Terms

Basic Skills: Literacy, numeracy and English Language skills. One in five people in England are said to have low basic skills.

Key Skills

Nationally recognised specifications for a range of essential skills, which underpin success in education, employment and can be accredited through recognised qualifications or units. The key skills are communication, application of number, IT, working with others, managing own learning and performance, and problem solving.

Pupil referral units (PRUs) are LEA schools designed to take, on a short-term basis, young people who have generally been excluded from school. Their purpose is to get pupils back into mainstream school as quickly as possible.

Work-related learning: Defined as planned activity that uses work as a context for learning. It involves learning 'thorough' work contexts, 'about' work and working practices, or 'for' work by developing personal attributes and employability skills. It is an umbrella term, which describes a broad range of activities for learners of all ages and includes developing awareness of the economy.

Work experience: This may be defined as 'a placement on employer's premises in which a pupil carries out a particular task or duty, or a range of tasks and duties, more or less as would an employee', but with the emphasis on the learning aspects of the experience.

Work-based learning/routes: This describes learning and training in vocational, occupational or general areas by people employed, or based largely, at a workplace. E.g. Foundation and Advanced Modern Apprenticeships. Work-based learning is often accompanied by vocationally specific courses.

BTEC:	Business and Technology Education Council, a body which awards qualifications
DfES:	Department for Education and Skills
EDL:	Education and Libraries (Community Services)
FE:	Further Education
FENTO:	Further Education National Training Organisation
HE:	Higher Education
KCC:	Kent County Council
LEA:	Local Education Authority
LSC:	Learning and Skills Council
TTA:	Teacher Training Agency
WBL:	Work-based learning
Level 2:	Equivalent to five GCSE's grades A*-C
Level 3:	Equivalent to two A levels.
Level 4:	Degree level

Appendix Three: 16-19 Student Entitlement

SUMMARY OF ENTITLEMENT FOR ALL 16-19 YEAR OLD STUDENTS IN KENT AND MEDWAY

Every effort will be made to achieve the aspirations within this Document but there is no guarantee that this will always be fully in place

Impartial Advice and Guidance: We aim to ensure that:

- You will be able to know before you choose your options all the career pathways that are open to you at schools, colleges and work based learning providers and how you can access these
- A variety of statistical data will enable you to make judgements on whether your chosen school/college/work based learning place best suits your needs and requirements
- Before you start your post 16 course, you will know what your course requirements will be, what funding might be available to you and, by using an individual learning plan, how your progress will be monitored; specific personal guidance including access to the Connexions Service will assist you in making your choices

A Broad Range of Subjects Courses, Levels and Routes which are Right for you:
We will try to ensure:

- A wide range of subjects meeting your needs will be offered to you at local specialist provision, where appropriate
- Courses will be matched to your previous experience, levels of study and qualifications which may include a flexible mix of learning methods, ICT and e-learning, where practical, enabling you to progress to your next level of study at your own pace, including higher education, if appropriate
- Some courses will reflect local community and business needs, course related work experience and enterprise learning
- Your induction programme will give you a sound introduction to your new study programme, with opportunity to discuss your choice of course/s and be flexible enough to enable you, through consultation, to transfer on to a different more appropriate pathway, if required
- Your course will include: all 6 Key Skills, and, if appropriate, at least one Key Skill to Level 3; enrichment, recreational, community activities and private study periods, and, where appropriate, enable you to explore moral/social issues, personal benefits and multi-cultural enrichment
- You will be offered help and support with any literacy, numeracy, language and/or any other special needs identified

Guarantee of Quality: We aim to work with:

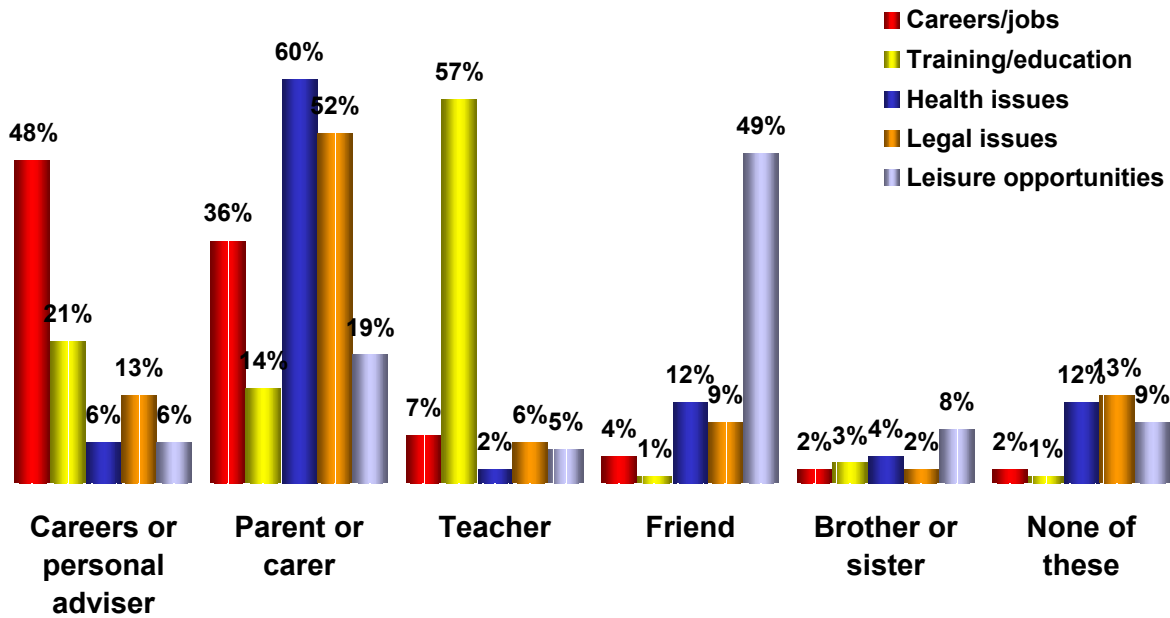
- The governing body or organisation's management team, aiming to continually monitor and raise standards, endeavouring to provide you with a safe, supporting, well resourced and pleasant learning environment including suitable and reliable transport for students with mobility/learning difficulties
- Teaching staff who will be committed to a professional approach and willing to listen to your views. Your success will be our success.
- You so that any complaints you may wish to make will be handled in a constructive, quick, fair and sympathetic way

Your commitment

- Regular attendance, maintaining punctuality, showing respect to your teaching staff, employers, trainers and your physical environment will enable you to gain the most from your course
- Being prepared to listen and to respect the views of others, participating in all aspects of the curriculum programme as well as contributing to the wider community will enable you to enjoy your course more
- Taking responsibility to become a self-managing and independent lifelong learner including completing course/training assignment to agreed timescale; respecting the equality of opportunities policy of the school/college/provider and employer in relation to other learners and staff will give you the environment and opportunity to maximise your learning

Appendix Four: Learner Attitudes

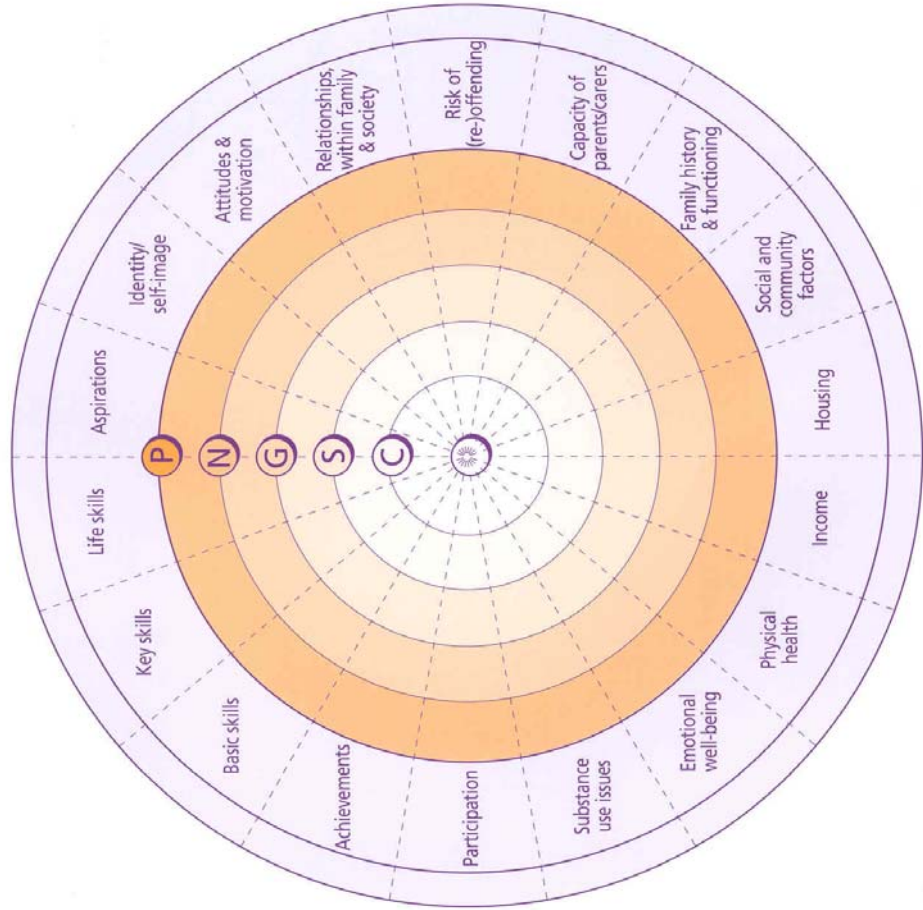
Extracts from **Synovate**. *Research Study* prepared for Connexions Kent & Medway, Learning and Skills Council for Kent & Medway. 31st March 2003.



Appendix Five: APIR Wheel

Appendix 1

Name: Date created:



KEY

- P** Positive strengths identified which could contribute to successful transition(s)
- N** No issues identified which could hinder successful transition(s)
- G** General issues identified
- S** Significant and/or specific issues identified
- C** Critical and/or complex issues identified

Appendix Six: A new diploma framework

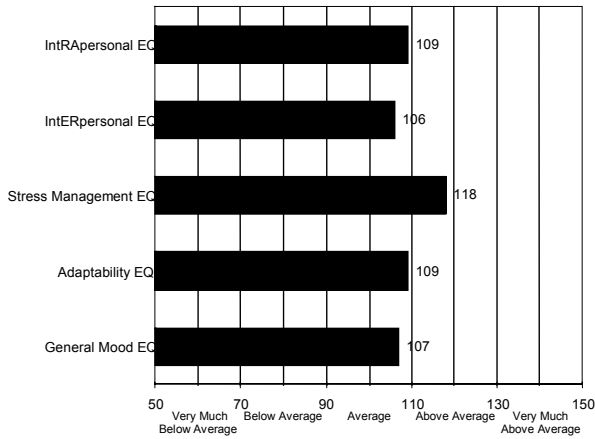
- Young people should work towards a high-status diploma qualification covering the whole of their learning programme, rather than existing individual qualifications such as GCSEs, GNVQs, A levels and NVQs.
- Different types and levels of diploma would prepare young people for the different types of further learning, training or employment.
- Diplomas would be available at the same levels as existing qualifications. For instance, there would be some diplomas, which would be at least as demanding as A levels and other advanced courses, others at the same levels as GCSEs; and some equivalent to Entry Level certificates.
- In order to achieve a diploma, young people would complete a mixture of specialist, general and supplementary learning, divided into a range of components or modules to allow learners to choose a variety of options within their overall diploma. The diplomas might also recognise their wider activities, experiences and interests such as sports, arts and voluntary work.
- Some existing GCSE, A level, NVQ or other courses could become components within the new diplomas. Other components would need to be designed specifically for the new diploma qualifications.
- In some ways the diplomas would be more stretching than the qualifications which young people take now because they would include a wider variety of work, such as new types of project possibly covering more than one subject.
- Over the course of the 14-19 phase, young people would take fewer written examinations than now; and assessment by their teachers, lecturers and trainers would be given more importance.

Extract from the **Summary of Progress**. Working Group on 14-19 Reform. *Principles for Reform of 14-19 Learning Programmes and Qualifications*. Published 16th July 2003.

Appendix Seven: Emotional Intelligence

Extract from an example measurement of emotional intelligence, illustrating the differing components (provided by Ms Simms, Juniper Consultancy).

Composite Scales



Content Subscales

