# Minutes

**Date**  
20 September 2007  

**Subject**  
External Advisory Group  

**Location**  
Techno Centre, Coventry  

**Time**  
10:30  

**LSC office**  
National Office  

**Publication intent**  
Public  

## Present
- Andrew Jones  
- Andrew Thomson  
- Bob Powell  
- Carol Bannerman  
- David Collins  
- David Hughes  
- David Lawrence  
- Di Dale  
- Donald Rae  
- Elaine McMahon  
- Geoff Hall  
- Graham Hoyle  
- Helen Sexton  
- Ian Pryce  
- John Dallinson  
- John Guy  
- Stewart Segal  
- Sue Meyer  
- Sue Rimmer  
- Susan Pember  
- Tim Ward  
- Verity Bullough  
- Rebecca Loveday  

## In attendance
- Andrew Thomson of QIA  

## LSC staff
- Kevin Street on behalf of Geoff Daniels  

## Apologies
- Apologies have been received from:  
  - Julian Gravatt  
  - Lindsey Wharmby  
  - Malcolm Trobe  
  - Steve Gray
Item 1. Welcome and introductions
1.1 Members were welcomed to the meeting. The apologies were noted.

Item 2. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising
2.1 It was noted that the term ‘for free’ should be added within point 2.5 of the minutes. The remaining minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the previous meeting.
2.2 There were no matters arising to report.

Item 3. Capacity Building for the Sector
3.1 Verity Bullough and John Thomson, Chief Executive of the QIA, presented to members the findings of the Supply side review.
3.2 The review was welcomed by members.
3.3 The model for delivering demand led provision needed to be assessed to ensure it was the most appropriate for the whole country.
3.4 The comparison to incorporation was considered. Incorporation had affected all college business, whereas these proposals affected only Adult and Employer Responsive Provision. This led to a greater complexity for colleges to manage.
3.5 It was essential to ensure the knowledge and expertise of Sector Skills Councils was appropriate to meet the challenges ahead.
3.6 The risks associated with the demand led model were still being considered, including unintended consequences arising from the procurement process.
3.7 Government needed to be aware and to consider the impact on colleges that were moving towards a business model of specialist units within an overarching general college branch.
3.8 The impact of fees on employer engagement needed to be considered.
3.9 Members were invited to visit the QCA consultation: ‘Employer training and the national qualifications system’ and to ask Government to consider the incorporation and its constraints on meeting the needs of the Demand led System.
3.10 Demand from individuals as well as employers should be included within the process.
3.11 An appropriate monitoring and evaluation system was required of the process; Framework for Excellence could not provide this.

Item 4. Machinery of Government Changes

4.1 Susan Pember updated members on the proposed changes in the machinery of Government.

4.2 The new Ministers were extremely hard working, enthusiastic and knowledgeable.

4.3 The FE Sector needed to engage in discussions that ensured it was appropriately placed to assist in meeting the challenges ahead. The recent AoC letter to Ed Balls and John Denham had been very well received and the AoC, 157 Group and others should continue to provide innovative ideas to Ministers, in order to influence the direction of travel.

4.4 Reports had been commissioned which would inform the decisions on the Funding for 14 – 19 and there would be a consultation on any proposals on 14-19, possibly in two stages. The principles around 14-19 would be circulated shortly.

4.5 David Russell (DIUS) was leading on a review of adult provision: Apprenticeships, Train to Gain and Learner Accounts.

4.6 There was a question and answer page on the DIUS website for members’ information and DIUS would do a monthly email to stakeholders to keep them informed of progress.

4.7 Members recognised the great opportunities ahead and their need to engage to provide innovative ways forward. However, they noted there were a number of issues which should be taken into account:

a. The future of the Learner Responsive Model beyond 2010 was uncertain.

b. There had been great improvements since the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 which should not be lost. Lessons learnt from pre 1992 should also be remembered although colleges would welcome closer working with local authorities.

c. The benefits arising from the creation of a national system, particularly with the inclusion of schools, should not be lost.

d. There should be a ring fenced budget for FE to ensure its quality provision was protected.

e. The expertise of local authorities was currently focused on the engagement with schools. It was therefore essential to extend this expertise to enable appropriate engagement with colleges and providers through the commissioning process.

f. The benefits of any proposals for change needed to be clear to enable stakeholders to contribute towards clearly defined goals.

g. Local authorities were providers of post 16 education and could therefore become both provider and commissioner under any new proposals.

h. Learners with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities were a focus for both DCSF and DIUS. The Learning for Living Strategy should not be lost.

i. Simplification of the Qualifications System was welcomed.
j. Schools are not within the scope of Framework for Excellence, which could prevent a single, fair system of monitoring and control.

4.8 Members were invited to submit further comments directly to Susan Pember.

Item 5. Priorities for Success 3 & Demand led Funding

5.1 David Hughes updated members on progress on the publication of Priorities for Success 3 and the Demand led Funding Guidance.

5.2 The change of Secretary of State and Prime Minister had delayed their publications until the CSR levels were announced.

5.3 Guidance on the new Funding methodology needed to be published as soon as possible, especially with the inclusion of schools in 08/09.

5.4 The importance of the continuing role of the EAG was recognised.

  **Action:** Mark Haysom be invited to attend a future meeting of the Group (DH/RL)

  **Action:** A representative of DCSF be invited to join the membership of the Group (SP/RL)

5.5 Disability Living Allowance was not triggering fee remission because it was means tested.

  **Action:** The inclusion of DLA within the fee remission category be investigated and raised with Bill Rammell (KS)

Item 6. Any other business

6.1 There was no other business.

Item 7. Date of next meeting

7.1 The next meeting of the Group is 12 November at 10.30 in Coventry.