

## Research Briefing N° 11

# Education for All: The Nuffield Review of 14-19 Education and Training in England and Wales (2003-2009)

This research was a review of 14-19 provision in education and training in England and Wales to establish purpose, identify successes, and the need for improvement/change.

**Key words:** 14-19; education and training; school/college collaboration; education policy; curriculum and qualifications reform; apprenticeship; young people



## Key findings and recommendations

- There were no clear educational aims and values for the 14-19 phase in England, and policy was dominated by managerial and performative language.

**Recommendation:** during the 14-19 phase all young people should have the opportunity to develop:

- knowledge and understanding for the 'intelligent management of life';
  - competence to make decisions about the future;
  - practical capability;
  - moral seriousness; and
  - a sense of responsibility to the community.
- Despite considerable investment and improvements over the period of the Review, this phase was still marked by relatively poor rates of participation, high rates of attrition and low levels of attainment compared internationally.
- Recommendation:** changes should be made to curriculum and assessment:
- greater recognition for practical and active learning;
  - assessment for learning should be separated from assessment for accountability;
  - England should develop a unified and inclusive curriculum and qualifications system;
  - Wales should continue to develop the Welsh Baccalaureate; and
  - the apprenticeship brand should be reserved for high quality employment-based learning.
- Organisational arrangements for 14-19 education and training were complex and, as a result of competition for learners, progression routes were unclear and collaboration was fragile.

**Recommendation:** 14-19 education and training should be organised through ‘strongly collaborative local learning systems’ and policy levers (e.g. performance measures) should focus on collective rather than individual action.

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## What we did

A great deal of change was taking place in the 14-19 phase during the period of the Review (2003 to 2009) and part of the review’s function was to make sense of this and to assess its impact at all levels of the system.

The Review was a collaboration between and shaped by a Directorate drawn from the Institute of Education, University of London, the Universities of Oxford, Warwick and Cardiff, and the Universities Central Admissions Service (UCAS).

The Review was framed around two related questions:

- What counts as an educated 19 year old in this day and age?
- What kind of system would support the development of an educated 19 year old?

## How we did it

These questions were examined through several related strands of work:

- a review of academic and policy literature, which brought together existing evidence and relevant theoretical frameworks;
- visits to different types of providers and areas of England and Wales;
- statistical analysis on the participation, attainment and progression of young people; and
- empirical studies on admissions to higher education, vulnerable young people, 14-19 Pathways in Wales, and how policy was developed in both England and Wales.

The research design was underpinned by the desire to create an inclusive and robust review process that actively involved young people and those who were working with and for them.

## Impact

The early work of the Review was highly influential in informing the design of a unified diploma system for the Working Group on 14-19 Reform (Tomlinson Review 2003-4) and the development of the Welsh 14-19 system.

## Further information

The Review brought together a diverse range of primary and secondary sources and distilled these into accessible working papers and annual reports that were made widely available on a dedicated website (see Review website: <http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/14-19review>).

This website became the key source of information on 14-19 matters throughout the period of the Review and beyond. Of equal importance were the events that took place on a regular basis with a core group of over 100 members, representing researchers, practitioners and policy-makers from all parts of the UK. Publications include:

Pring, R., Hayward, G., Hodgson, A., Johnson, J., Keep, E., Oancea, A., Rees G., Spours, K. and Wilde, S. (2009). *Education for All: the future of education and training for 14-19 year olds*. London: Routledge (this book was awarded a prize in 2010).

Hodgson, A. and Spours, K. (2008). *Education and Training 14-19: Curriculum, qualifications and organisation*. London: Sage.

Raffe, D. and Spours, K. (eds.) (2007). *Policy-making and Policy Learning in 14-19 Education*. Bedford Way Series, Institute of Education.

Hodgson, A. and Spours, K. (2006). ‘The organisation of 14-19 education and training in England: beyond weakly collaborative arrangements’ *Journal of Education and Work* Vol. 19, No 4, 325-342.

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