

Minutes



Meeting	Quality and Standards Committee		
Date	Monday 24 June 2024	Time	17:00-19:00
Venue	Google meet		

Membership:	Jenny Worsdale (Chair); Katie Asgari; Jason Austin; Heather Barnett; Donna Clifford; Sally Gillborn; Daniel Gregory; Ian Sanderson; Carol Stanfield; Aimee Wilson
In attendance:	Tracey Mace-Akroyd (Deputy Principal/CEO); Lucy Barnwell (Director of Learner Recruitment and Marketing); James Godsell (Director of Business Development and Apprenticeships); Cheryl Martin (Director of Quality and Academic Standards); Laura Reid (Director of Safeguarding and Student Support); Mark Ryan (Vice Principal Curriculum); Dan Stanbra (Director of Adult Education and Contracts); Sarah Connerty (Director of Governance and minute taker)
Apologies:	Donna Clifford; Cheryl Martin

		Action
1.	<p>Welcome, Introductions and Apologies</p> <p>The Chair welcomed colleagues to the meeting and welcomed back Carol Stanfield from sabbatical.</p> <p>Apologies received from Donna Clifford and Cheryl Martin.</p>	
2.	<p>Declarations of interest</p> <p>There were no declarations received.</p>	
3.	<p>Minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2024</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on the 20 March 2024 were agreed as a true and accurate record.</p>	
4.	<p>Matters arising</p> <p>The majority of items are complete. Outstanding items are:</p> <p>Action 1 - To consider the attendance target of 95% for adults and report back to the Committee – on the agenda at item 15.2</p> <p>Action 2 – To convene one final Apprenticeship Task and Finish Group – the meeting is pending</p> <p>Actions from 31 January 2024:</p> <p>Action 2 – NSS survey results will be reported to the September 2024 Committee.</p>	
5.	<p>Safeguarding, Prevent and EDI</p> <p>The Committee took the report as read and the Head of Safeguarding and Student Support provided an update on the Safeguarding, Prevent and EDI report, Wellbeing Strategy proposals and costings and Prevent Duty risk assessment/action plan.</p> <p>Governors' questions and comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One governor noted the retention and attendance data and was pleased to see the trend of higher attendance for learners with high needs and EHCPs, which shows needs are being met in a mainstream environment. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Committee agreed that in the current environment a Wellbeing strategy is important to have in place • The report notes the lower-than-average retention for care experience learners and one of the impact measures was around capacity and an improving retention KPI. It was noted that this is a national issue and out of the cohort it is a small percentage of learners. One governor explained that the impact is the caseload and suggested that the impact should be about what the team will do with the learner. The Chair reported that at the recent EDI and Safeguarding meeting there was a discussion about when a learner leaves and the importance of where they go to, which may be a positive outcome for them. ACTION: The DCEO reported that an impact KPI on transition to positive outcomes could be included. The Committee agreed with this suggestion as care experience learners are transient and acknowledging this and looking at positive outcomes would be a valuable exercise. 	Head of Safeguarding and Student Support/DPCEO
6.	<p>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and action plan sub-group working party update</p> <p>The Committee took the report as read. Key points included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The arrangements for Safeguarding are effective • RNN is fully compliant with the PREVENT Duty and works closely with the PREVENT regional coordinators for both East Midlands and South Yorkshire to maintain local knowledge of risk to share information and update the RNN PREVENT action plan and inform training and practices. • Filtering and monitor software for the Group has been updated and Smoothwall products have been implemented and being monitored. • Personal Development events are aligned to local and national trends. • The Group has signed up to the AoC Mental Health Charter <p>It was agreed that there is a lot of good work going on. Following the success of the reaccreditation for Investors in Diversity a working party has been set up to analyse the feedback and recommendations and develop an action plan to further embed diversity and inclusion. Through external assessment it was confirmed that the Group has strong EDI practices and is able to demonstrate this but does not use the FREDI language (Fairness, Respect, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Engagement). Further promotion of this language is planned for all stakeholders over the next academic year. Both quick wins and longer-term outcomes are being focused on. Part of this work is reviewing the EDI policy which will come to the Committee in September. The working party has held two meetings so far and another one is due to go in the diaries.</p>	
7.	<p>Applications and Enrolments 2024/25 including plans for summer student events</p> <p>The Director of Learner Recruitment and Marketing provided an update including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the RNN Group LinkedIn pages now has over 2000 followers, an increase from around 400 18 months ago • Taster events are taking place at all colleges with over 1200 learners booked, an increase of 120% since last year. 348 were in today in and 328 tomorrow at Rotherham and it looks like they had a fantastic time. The days are for both prospective and current learners who are thinking of switching course. Last year one day was offered at each site. This year rolled it has been rolled out over two full days at each site, with free breakfast and lunch • Applications are positive with increased numbers across campuses from last year with the exception of HE. Numbers at DVC have now increased • A T Level event is scheduled for the evening of 9 July 2024 • A webinar specifically for parents is scheduled for the 27 June on <i>Supporting your young person in their journey to starting college</i> <p>One governor raised a question around HE courses not being marketed and it was agreed to discuss under the HE item.</p>	

	<p>One governor asked about the learner journey in respect to different groups and whether that has been picked up and documented how learners progress through college. It was noted that changes have been made in the customer journey. A quiet half hour has been booked into the start of enrolment days for SEND and anxious learners and that has worked well for people to feel more comfortable. One learner at the taster day today was very anxious and was taken straight to the FLEX area and collected by a staff member for their sessions. Personal tours are offered during term time and the service is as individual as possible. One governor noted that it about all learners and characteristics including gender and disabilities and is there a way to look at all of them. ACTION: This work is not tracked or recorded and the Director of Learner Recruitment and Marketing noted that she was happy to look at for future reporting. The biggest issue is the online application form which tracks the user journey which is a barrier to receiving data as it does not work well through a mobile device and work is underway to create a simpler and better experience. Young people may also want look and enquire but are not at the stage of application and a new enquiry button is being added. Prospective learners want reassurance and support and the team are trying to create this and a zero barrier to people coming into the colleges. Open events involve colleagues from all areas of college life, including finance staff to give advice and assurance. It is about making people feel totally included in the process.</p>	Dir of Learner Recr and Mktg
8.	<p>Intended Progression and destinations</p> <p>The DCEO reported that the Attend to Achieve meetings have now moved on to the Achieve to Achieve led by the VP Curriculum and the Director of Quality and Academic Standards from the beginning of June for study programme learners.</p> <p>One governor asked if this includes students who are finishing this year and this was confirmed. Curriculum team leaders, curriculum managers and directors of campus are all involved. The focus is on intended destinations (see full report for details of numbers) and in September actual destinations will be tracked.</p> <p>A full tracker is in place and if progression is not achieved curriculum areas can check to see where those learners have moved onto.</p> <p>The Committee noted that it is an interesting piece of work as it is not easy to track all learners.</p>	
9.	<p>Momentous Sport Partnership</p> <p>The DCEO noted that further developments have taken place today and more conversations are taking place with Rotherham United. To give time for discussions to take place this item is deferred to the next meeting and an update will come to the Chair after the meeting.</p>	VP Curr
10.	<p>HE Strategy Research report</p> <p>The Director of Learner Recruitment and Marketing reported that the research had been commissioned in January 2024 and the company went through various research rounds with different stakeholders. There are four key takeaways – communicate the offer, inspire the journey, deliver the experience, wellbeing at the heart, and five key areas to look at – course appeal, quality, location, student support and environment.</p> <p>It is about bringing in an elevated brand field for HE. There are two different audiences and both need to be catered for. Younger learners don't feel there are the experiences at the UCR for them. Wellbeing and personal development needs to tie into the learner's educational journey.</p> <p>One governor asked if the researchers looked at the provision and it was noted that that they were qualitative focus groups but what did come out was looking at more degree level apprenticeships and professional skills. It is important to get across those themes and organise focus groups with employers to extend this offer. The Committee agreed as the quality of experience can be excellent but if the offer isn't what people are looking for, they won't come. The research pointed to the offering being too academic and not skilled focused</p>	

	<p>enough. Having strong employer links and focusing on what learners want for their next steps is a key area of focus.</p> <p>One governor noted that she had looked at the HE area of the website and there is a limited choice and internally how do we understand our HE offer because it is not broad and is the offer based on expertise and what we are good at. It was agreed that this is a perception and depends on what the benchmark is. If you are a creative student there are the options and that aligns with experts in our institutions. We should be looking at skills and aligning with the LSIP. Higher Technical Qualifications going forward will be a key focus. The aim is to set up focus groups with businesses and look at LMI data and see what the economy needs.</p> <p>One governor noted that Degree apprenticeships need three people on board and that is difficult in terms of staffing.</p> <p>There needs to be a focus on communicating directly to the people that want our offering. HE is still seeing the impact of the cost of living and Covid and has had to adapt to suit our learners and businesses have had to change.</p> <p>There was a discussion about the availability of the offer in comparison to other FE organisations and it is a fairly representative offer with USPs defined. It is more about an ongoing responsiveness to stakeholder priorities. The Group does not have the capacity to compete with a large HE organisation and it is about having the right offer rather than seeking to broaden it too much.</p> <p>The DCEO reported that the SLT have reviewed the report and identified that we need to further develop the way we report and re-educate our language. An example is Kirklees College who are facing similar issues with a drop in traditional HE numbers. They have introduced more higher-level skills, brought in more adults and renamed their centres. Further work is being done over the summer, particularly around the need to capture higher level skills.</p> <p>The VP Curriculum reported that a lot of work is being done around HTQs and areas are being looked at with the South Yorkshire Institute of Technology IoT around aligning resources and staffing, a modular based approach, understanding employers and what they want and how do we reach a large number of employers to understand, educate, advise and guide them. The Group are working in the background to ensure that what we are offering is right for our stakeholders and communities.</p> <p>One governor asked about the LSIP and what those responsible for supporting implementation of LSIPs are doing about convening employers on an ongoing basis and what has happened to their responsibility to implement the LSIP.</p>	
11.	<p>Maths and English model and delivery plan for 2024/25</p> <p>The Director of Adult Education and Contracts reported that the Group is building on the success of the model from January 2024 and developing this for 2024/25 maths and English delivery rather than bringing in a new model. The current achievement looks positive, pending outcomes.</p> <p>Due to the changes to conditions of funding a vocational maths hour is being implemented to present a more seamless experience for learners. Rigorous developments to the exemption process are being put in place to reflect the 2.5% in reductions for next year and 0% for 2025/26.</p> <p>One governor noted that delivery in vocational settings is seen in the sector as done really well and really badly and asked how the Group will get buy in from staff and learners and how this will be monitored. It was agreed it is a brave decision and is fraught with risk. The allocations of responsibilities have been agreed for each area and the same approach is being taken with nominated experts working actively as consultants. There will be ongoing support through 121s. Timetabling is for an hour a week for ongoing support from maths experts until the end of the year. This will achieve qualitative impact and culturally knit together the maths and vocational relationship and embed the provision.</p>	

	<p>One governor asked about the level of maths being taught. It was noted that it is about looking at impact and the importance of maths beyond a condition of funding to support learners' current provision and next steps.</p> <p>One governor asked about which cohorts of learners receive the vocational hour. It will apply to all groups at level 2 or below who require core maths provision. It is a whole college effort, dealing with a large number of students.</p> <p>The DCEO suggested looking at non accredited recognition for learners which would help to support a successful completion. It was agreed it could tie in well with the initiative being launched around learners achieving the power of skills which has 10 skills for learners to achieve. A lot of businesses are already on board with the initiative which will give RNN learners the opportunity to achieve through example. Employers want to see transferable skills from their employees and it would give an achievement for learners, whatever grade they receive.</p> <p>The Committee noted that it will be interesting to see how the new model has worked when the results come in. The focus has shifted from high grades to progress from previous attainment and putting in place realistic expectations and demonstrating a meaningful distance travelled. The DCEO reminded the Committee of the strategic indicator which details an incremental increase for learners below Level 3.</p>	
12.	<p>World Skills/Competitions End of year</p> <p>The VP Curriculum reported that the curriculum teams have worked tirelessly to give students the encouragement and opportunity to be involved in competitions. Katie Asgari has been fantastic in Hair and Beauty with many students progressing and achieving in competitions. Afternote: in addition to the achievements in the report Hair and Beauty learners there are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shortlisted for the World Skills Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Heroes Awards 2024 and invited to present at the houses of parliament • Hair and Media Makeup student won Gold at the World Skills finals and asked to attend the Houses of Parliament. <p>There is pressure testing to support the process, internal competitions and a notable number of individuals went forward in WorldSkills competitions - 94 learners with 25 progressing to regionals and 38 pending progression. There were two students of the year for accountancy and one student won the Sheffield Hallam inspirational student award. Overall, there are lots of successes and external exposure for students and it has been a really positive year with more results to come.</p> <p>The Chair thanked all the teams involved in supporting students and the Committee agreed it was really exciting to see all the achievements from our students.</p>	
13.	<p>Quality Arrangements End of year including Deep Dives, EQA, Staff TLA CPD</p> <p>The report was taken as read in the absence of the Director of Quality and Academic Standards.</p> <p>The DCEO reported that the Group is currently looking at slight changes to the deep dives focusing on the risks that a curriculum area poses and looking at the Ofsted criteria. There are comprehensive arrangements in place but there is always room to reflect. A full report will come to the September Committee and detail any changes being implemented. Deep dives were stopped for the summer term to drip feed teaching and learning pedagogy to staff and there will be a big bang approach when staff come back after the summer.</p>	
14.	<p>Risk Report (including key Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) aspects and underpinning reports) Including the 23/24 QIP update, the Progress against KPIs/Risk register and emerging concerns</p> <p>The DCEO noted that the amazing work happening at the different campuses is included at the start of the report.</p> <p>Key points from the report included:</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance at exams has improved on the previous year • All areas are predicted to improve • The Group remains focused on all areas and curriculum managers are being held to account for their areas • There is an equal focus on apprenticeships • The risks associated with getting the buildings ready after the capital works are mitigated with a comms plan being worked on and good communications between curriculum managers and the capital projects leads and Estates team • Staff are staying committed to get every achievement. <p>The Committee noted that it all looks very positive.</p>	
15.	<p>Quality of Education Reports</p> <p>1. 16-18 (including High Needs)</p> <p>The VP Curriculum reported as follows: Attendance slightly better than last year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall attendance for 23/24 (excl English & maths) is at 84.44%, which demonstrates 4.94% (79.5% 22/23) improvement on 22/23 at R09. • T Level attendance is positive with an average of 90.46%. A lot of work has been done with the ETF, AoC and other colleges to support progression • Retention has slightly fallen compared to previous years. The several rounds of Attendance to Achieve meetings have identified earlier within the academic year increased withdrawals, complete no achievements or Transfers so there are less withdrawals expected • Progression and achievements are positive. Overall predicted achievement 83.21% v 76.92% 22/23 (+6.29%) <p>The Committee asked how many T Level students there are and it is c.70. Students are doing really well and two learners have secured higher level apprenticeships.</p> <p>Key areas of focus</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve achievement and retention rates across all provision 2. Continue to improve the number of students progressing within the Group. Heightened focus on L1 CEIAG, Qualifications on Entry and a change to the L1 curriculum for 24-25 3. Recruit and retain high quality staffing within curriculum areas in delivering consistently strong, progressive TLA to support points 1-2 4. Capture progression much earlier with a scrutinised overview from DoC to support achievements and curriculum plan <p>2. Adults (including subcontracting)</p> <p>The Director of Adult Education and Contracts reported on the following action: <i>Action 1- to consider the 95% attendance target for adults</i> - Attendance remains an area of concern. It has been re-classified to amber, recognising that it is not on trend but attendance is in a positive position and is realistic and appropriate for our learners.</p> <p>In summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current retention, attendance, personal development and deep dive activity indicates a current projected positive trend in 19+ achievement data remains achievable • Provision is highly aligned to local needs, meeting local stakeholder requirements and ensuring Group financial sustainability • Adults benefit from positive inclusion in a broader and inclusive personal development offer • Subcontractor activity continues to be indicated to be of a high standard • There are very positive current predictions across all areas 	

ACTION: The Chair noted that she would like to see correlation when the results come in across attendance and achievement and the Director of Adult Education and Contracts noted he was happy to produce this for the September Committee. It was noted that areas like ESOL are a good example being in the top 10% for outturn nationally but attendance is in the mid 80% because of a raft of personal challenges of our learners. It highlights that in spite of the difficulties learners still progress and achieve and have very high expectations. It was noted that in some way attendance must correlate to achievement, alongside good teaching and it was agreed that the deep dives demonstrate higher attendance with excellent teaching and learning.

The DCEO noted that at Inspections inspectors are being asked to unpick this and there is the question about what are the wider support strategies in place for adults. Wider support and flexibility are good at the Group but it is not captured very well. All the informal chats and time taken after lessons is key for learners and should be captured. **ACTION:** It was agreed that it would be useful to work with the Director of Adult Education and Contracts on where areas of low attendance and high achievement are to see what other support learners are receiving. It was agreed that a piece of work when the results are in looking at lower attendance and higher grades will come back to the Committee next year.

One governor noted that through her experiences in the sector and with voluntary work adults want to be there so they will utilise extra support. In very general terms younger students often miss out because they are not as bothered.

3. Apprentices

The Director of Business Development and Apprenticeships reported that a finalised profile for 2024-5 is out. There has been a spike in interest for construction trades and the brickwork courses are now full. The Group continues to grow its higher offer. A Level 7 senior leader apprenticeship with the HE team doing some delivery and buy in of masterclasses from Hull University is an exciting new development. It is not an MBA but will have similar content. The team are trying to get as many learners in for their End Point Assessments and there are 60 remaining. If all pass achievement rates will be 65%, more realistically it will be 64% or lower. A new policy is being rolled out for learners who are falling below that and there are strict action plans and a requirement for employers to release learners and give them the right scopes of work and support.

Apprenticeships are predicted to grow and were 9% above national average for last year. All the relevant tutors have been met with to give assurance that there are reasonable predictions for next year.

One governor asked if there are learning points collected by the team on employers who are not keeping to their required commitments and how to avoid pitfalls in the future. It was noted that a lot of employers did not complete a scope of work form and there is now a three stage mentor programme for the employer to be involved in, a webinar which lays down all the expectations, and an expectations booklet given at the onboarding session. Previously any issues were left for a long period of time and now there is early intervention at two weeks, six and 10 week checks. If employers fall below the intervention levels a meeting will be called with either the Director of Business Development and Apprenticeships or the Director of Campus.

The Committee noted that an achievement rate of 63-64% would be an excellent result.

The Committee asked if the previous issues with EPAs have been resolved this year. It was noted that the Group has moved to City and Guilds who have a two-week turnaround compared to the two to three months being experienced last year.

There is a potential risk from an awarding body who has not released 10 learners' certificates leading to delays in them entering gateway. These have now been released and the team are working on scheduling EPAs. If not achieved this may potentially cause them to continue into

Dir of
Adult Ed
and
Contracts

Dir of
Adult Ed
and
Contracts

	<p>24/25 when they had been predicted to achieve in 23/24. This will impact finance as the achievement payments will not come into 23/24 but will also impact overall achievement. The Committee noted that it is positive to hear about the reduction in out of funding learners (OOFs). The Director of Business Development and Apprenticeships reported that the majority were taking a break in learning and there needs to be a rationale for OOFs.</p> <p>4. HE</p> <p>It was agreed that HE had been covered in some detail already on the agenda. One governor raised a question from the paper which gives an urgent request for marketing of provision. The Director of Learner Recruitment and Marketing confirmed that HTQs were marketed and the team are awaiting final courses to be added in and this can go out with the new information when received. The Committee asked about students moving forward and how to capture progression of Level 3 year two students. ACTION: The Director of Learner Recruitment and VP Curriculum and the Director of Quality and Academic Standards to meet to take forward outside the meeting.</p> <p>5. English & Maths</p> <p>The Director of Adult Education and Contracts reported that there were some tough and brave decisions made in changing the model in year to a streamed process. The data indicates the Group is on the right trajectory. A permanent Head of English and maths is now in role and it feels like it has turned a corner to a positive trajectory, noting there is more work to do. One governor asked if all posts are filled for September. Currently leadership and management posts are filled. Staffing is in the process of being updated to align to the new model. The advance teaching practitioner roles will be based at each college and will drive and support the deputy roles with a focus on teaching and learning and the new model allows the Group to grow its own English and maths staffing.</p>	<p>Dir of Learner Rec/VP Curr/Dir of Quality and Academic Standard</p>
<p>16.</p>	<p>Curriculum Strategy & Curriculum Planning & Efficiency Update</p> <p>The Vice Principal Curriculum thanked the Chair, the link governor for curriculum, the CEO and the ED HR, Marketing and OD for meeting last Monday to consider the strategy and to the Exec for signing it off. The position with FE curriculums is changing and programmes are being turned off with government reforms. Counselling has been withdrawn for next year, in the main because of issues with staffing. It is a break to ensure that there is a robust curriculum business plan in place. An increase in Higher Level learners is planned. The strategy meets the needs of the community and has strategic indicators of growth. It includes a positive contribution with optimum staffing and efficiencies. The strategy is being looked through in detail with the senior team. The VP Curriculum thanked Board colleagues for their support which had been really insightful.</p>	
<p>17.</p>	<p>Governance items</p> <p>The Director of Governance reported on the timings for governance matters coming to the Committee. The changes to timings are to allow terms of reference and self-assessment processes to be fully reviewed and streamlined. This year is exceptional and for 2024-5 governance items will come to the summer Committees. Timings are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Terms of reference – to come to the September 2024 meeting 2. Membership – to come to the September 2024 meeting 3. Cycle of business – the Committee considered the revised cycle which will come to the Board for approval alongside all Committee cycles. <p>RESOLVED: The Committee recommended to approve the Quality and Standards Committee’s cycle of business</p> <p>Review of effectiveness – the survey will be circulated after the meeting and results will come to the September 2024 meeting.</p>	
<p>18.</p>	<p>For information from the Audit and Risk Committee:</p> <p>Internal Audit on Student Wellbeing – substantial assurance</p>	

	<p>The Chair noted that the internal audit report came to the last Audit and Risk Committee who requested it came to the Quality and Standards Committee. The report gives Substantial assurance which demonstrates systems and controls are substantial. The Committee noted that <i>the Group works with a student cohort with complex needs and there is reassurance that such important work is being so well managed. It recognised this achievement and the hard work and dedication of staff to make this happen and passed on their thanks to the Student support teams.</i></p> <p>The Committee passed on their thanks and congratulations to the team.</p>	
19.	<p>Any other items of urgent business There were no items raised.</p>	
20.	<p>Date of next meetings: Tuesday 24 September 2024 Tuesday 19 November 2024 Tuesday 11 March 2025 Tuesday 10 June 2025 All 17.00 start</p>	

Meeting closed: 18.26