

Skills for Londoners Board

# AGENDA

**Meeting Higher Level Skills Advisory Group**

**Date 9 July 2020**

**Time 1.00pm**

**Place Remote Meeting**

*Agendas and minutes of the meetings of this Group are published at [www.London.gov.uk/Skills-for-Londoners](http://www.London.gov.uk/Skills-for-Londoners) (except in those cases where information may be exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act).*

*Meetings are not held in public and are only open to those invited to attend by the Chair.*

**Members:**

George Johnston (Chair)  
Nichola Hay (Deputy Chair)  
Simon Ashworth  
Dr Graeme Atherton  
Katie Bell  
Yolande Burgess  
Pat Carvalho  
Prof. Martin Doel  
Dr Bob Gilworth

Ruben Hale  
David Hillier  
Yvonne Kelly  
Dr Philippa Lloyd  
Rebecca Plant  
Mary Vine-Morris

**Contact Officer:** Laura Marshall, Senior Board Officer, Skills & Employment

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**1 Introductions and apologies**

**2 Declarations of Interest**

Members to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests which they have in any of the items set out on the agenda and, where applicable, consider if they should withdraw from the discussion or the meeting.

**3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting (Pages 3 – 8)**

**4 Actions Arising (Pages 9 – 10)**

To be presented by Laura Marshall, Senior Board Officer, Skills & Employment.

**5 Governance Update (Oral Update)**

To be presented by Laura Marshall, Senior Board Officer, Skills & Employment.

**6 GLA Recovery Planning Update (Oral Update)**

To be presented by Atif Shafique, Senior Policy Officer, Skills & Employment.

**7 Level 4/5 Research (Pages 11 – 26)**

To be presented by Beth Wheaton, Senior Policy Officer, Skills & Employment and representatives from RCU.

**8 Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Higher Level Skills Advisory Group is to be confirmed.

**9 Any Other Business the Chair Considers Urgent**

## Skills for Londoners Board

# MINUTES

## Meeting: Higher Level Skills Advisory Group

**Date:** 4 December 2019

**Time:** 10.00am

**Place:** Room E, 169 Union Street,  
London SE1 0LL

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**Members present:**

Nichola Hay, Skills for Londoners Board member (Acting Chair)  
Dr Graeme Atherton, London Higher  
Pat Carvalho, Harrow College Uxbridge College  
Professor Martin Doel, University College London  
Ruben Hale, University of Arts Awarding Body  
Yvonne Kelly, Barking & Dagenham College  
Mary Vine-Morris, Association of Colleges

**GLA Officers:**

Julia Harrowsmith, Senior Manager – Strategy and Relationships, Skills & Employment

James Lee, Principal Policy Officer, Skills & Employment  
Laura Marshall, Senior Board Officer, Skills & Employment (Clerk)  
Cameron Tait, Principal Policy Officer - Strategy, Policy and Relationships, Skills & Employment (Item 1-5)  
Beth Wheaton, Senior Policy Officer, Skills & Employment

**Others in attendance:**

Magdalen Attwater, University of London  
Richard Boniface, RCU  
Peter O'Brien, London Councils  
Gareth Parry, RCU  
Jessica Strenk, Middlesex University London  
Anne Thompson, RCU

## **1 Introduction and apologies**

- 1.1 The Deputy Chair welcomed members to the meeting of the Advisory Group and led a round of introductions.
- 1.2 Apologies for absence were received from the Chair, George Johnston. The Deputy Chair, Nichola Hay chaired the meeting on his behalf.
- 1.3 Apologies for absence were also received from David Hillier, Simon Ashworth, Rebecca Plant, Katie Bell (Jessica Strenk attended in her stead), Dr Bob Gilworth (Magdalen Attwater attended in his stead) and Dr Philippa Lloyd.

## **2 Declarations of Interest**

- 2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

## **3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

### **3.1 RESOLVED:**

**The minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2019 were agreed as a correct record.**

## **4 Actions Arising**

### **4.1 RESOLVED:**

**The actions arising from the previous meeting were noted.**

## **5 Higher Level Apprenticeship Policy**

- 5.1 The Group received a report covering recent changes in higher level apprenticeship provision in London.
- 5.2 Members heard that since the introduction of the apprenticeship levy in April 2017, there had been a rise in the number of higher level (Level 4/5) and degree level (Level 6/7) starts in London. However, at the same time there had been a decline in intermediate and advanced level apprenticeships (Level 2/3). Members noted that London had a larger share of higher and degree level apprenticeship starts than the rest of England.

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5.3 Members were asked to consider several questions and discuss key issues which included: to what extent the current mix of apprenticeship provision reflected the needs of London's employers and economy, methods to support progression routes into and from higher level apprenticeships, and ways to ensure that the welcome growth in higher level apprenticeships in London was sustained and how this would be funded.

5.4 Members raised several points, including:

- the importance of protecting higher level apprenticeships but not at the expense of intermediate apprenticeships;
- the nature of other higher level skills provision being rebadged as apprenticeships;
- incentivising employers to invest in 16-18 year old apprenticeships;
- the way that providers look at apprenticeships and skills progression by sector;
- the variations in economic development strategies in boroughs;
- the need to focus on small to medium enterprises (SMEs) not just the bigger levy payers;
- incentivising early talent by looking at standards and entry routes for all sectors and all levels;
- the view of apprenticeships as a vehicle driven by the market and employers versus as a vehicle for social mobility;
- incentivising employer behaviour and the Mayor of London's role linked to this; and
- the importance of workforce planning, and the importance of essential skills (project management, leadership, management, etc.)

Officers noted the issues with SME applications, specifically the setting up of a digital account.

5.5 Members were also asked to consider ways to improve diversity in London's higher level apprenticeship take-up and what the Mayor of London could do.

5.6 Key points raised included:

- opening up opportunities for early talent coming in at Level 2/3 and higher;
- promote new opportunities over upskilling existing workers;
- incentives and targeting for employers rather than restrictions around the use of the levy;
- employers signing up to pledges (possibly through the Good Work Standard);
- reviewing recruitment practices and workplace development;
- reviewing careers advice provided in schools and colleges;
- promoting degree apprenticeships in colleges in disadvantaged areas of London;
- the rebranding of degree level apprenticeships;

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- audiences and marketing messages;
- the importance of role models, information, advice and guidance in improving diversity;
- working with universities and degree apprenticeship providers to coordinate 'taster courses'; and
- examining different cultures rather than applying a blanket approach.

5.7 Officers provided Members with a basic update on the apprenticeship programmes.

**5.8 RESOLVED:**

**The content of the report was noted.**

*[Cameron Tait left the meeting]*

## **6 Higher Level Skills (Level 4/5) Research Update**

6.1 Members received an update on the Higher Level Skills (Level 4/5) research being carried out by RCU. This research is looking at the provision of, participation in and demand for education and skills at Levels 4/5 in London. Members were provided with interim findings, with the final report due in April 2020.

6.2 Gareth Parry presented the history of higher level skills to the Group, specifically referring to the prevalence and preference of higher level skills and the lesser take up of degrees in the 1950/60s and the reversal of this trend in the modern day. Members also noted the differences between higher level skills take up in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the government funding attached to prescribed education in the 1980s, the modern development of the increased range in Level 4/5 education and the credit awarding system, and the development of the foundation degree in the 1990s which was planned to become the model for Level 4/5 education. Members noted that historical language continues to live on which had led to confusion in the sector.

6.3 Richard Boniface presented the interim findings of the research being carried out by RCU.

6.4 Members suggested that the research included learner attainment data at levels 4 and 5, a comparison of delivery of level 4 and 5 provision in certain parts of London and sectors against the location of employers. The research should also include 2018/19 data if this was available in time, to examine whether trends were continuing.

6.5 Anne Thompson presented the fieldwork, strategy and schedule for the research, specifically highlighting the interview studies in forty sites that would

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be taking place in two waves from September 2019 to February 2020 and explaining the methodology of the field research.

- 6.6 Ruben Hale explained he was unsure if University of the Arts London (UAL) learners were included in the data presented by RCU. UAL were set to be interviewed by RCU at a later date and would discuss this issue then.
- 6.7 The Chair asked that Members shared any relevant employer contacts via the Clerk. RCU would approach these employers as part of the research project and the interview studies.
- 6.8 The Chair also asked that data on apprenticeship provision in London presented to the Apprenticeships Advisory Group was shared with Members.
- 6.9 RESOLVED:**
- (a) The content of RCU and the research team's presentation and interim findings were noted;**
  - (b) Members to share relevant employer contacts with the research team via the Clerk. RCU would approach these employers as part of the research project and the interview studies; and**
  - (c) Officers agreed to share with the Group data on apprenticeship provision in London previously presented to the Apprenticeships Advisory Group.**

## **7 GLA Update**

- 7.1 Beth Wheaton thanked Richard Boniface, Gareth Parry, Anne Thompson from RCU for presenting at the meeting.
- 7.2 Members were asked to provide any comments on the interim RCU findings to Beth Wheaton by January 2020 so that they could be considered before the report was finalised.
- 7.3 Members noted that the final RCU report would be published in April 2020 and the next meeting of the Group would be in June 2020, due to the Mayor of London and London Assembly Elections (May 2020). Officers would meet with Members individually before the next meeting to provide them with updates.
- 7.4 Richard Boniface explained that RCU were wanting to include learner student case studies in their findings to highlight the benefits of studying at Level 4/5 to learners. Members noted that cooperation of providers would be helpful and Members felt that it was important to capture those students who had not attained Level 4/5 and had dropped off.

**7.5 RESOLVED:**

The GLA update was noted.

**8 Date of next meeting**

- 8.1 The date of the next meeting was to be confirmed and was expected to take place after the Mayor of London and London Assembly Elections (7 May 2020).

**9 Any Other Business the Chair Considers Urgent**

- 9.1 Peter O'Brien explained that London Councils were re-running their Higher Education Journey report which tracked people's progression into and out of Higher Education. Members noted that this report was due to be released in May 2020. Peter O'Brien offered to share the link to the "Higher Education Journey of Young London Residents 2018" report with Members.

- 9.2 The Chair asked for this report to be shared with the Group and the Apprenticeship Advisory Group when it was released in May 2020.

**9.3 RESOLVED:**

- (a) That London Councils' "Higher Education Journey of Young London Residents 2018" report would be shared with the Group; and
- (b) That London Councils' Higher Education Journey report would be shared with members once released in May 2020.

**10 Close of Meeting**

- 10.1 The meeting closed at 11.51am.

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Higher Level Skills Advisory Group**

Date of meeting:           **9 July 2020**

Title of report:           **Actions Arising from previous meetings**

To be presented by:      **Laura Marshall, Senior Board Officer, Skills & Employment and Beth Wheaton, Senior Policy Officer, Skills & Employment**

Cleared by:               **Michelle Cuomo Boorer, Assistant Director – Skills & Employment**

Classification             **Public**

**1      Executive Summary**

1.1    This report updates the Higher Level Skills Advisory Group on actions arising from the previous meeting.

**2      Recommendation**

2.1    The Higher Level Skills Advisory Group is asked to **note** the update on actions arising from the previous meeting.

**3      Actions arising from the meeting of 4 December 2019**

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Status</b>
6. Higher Level Skills (Level 4/5) Research Update	That Members would share relevant employer contacts with the research team via the Clerk.	Completed.
	That officers would share data on apprenticeship provision in London previously presented to the Apprenticeships Advisory Group.	Completed.
9. Any Other Business the Chair Considers Urgent	That London Councils’ “Higher Education Journey of Young London Residents 2018” report would be shared with the Group.	Completed.
	That London Councils’	Oral update to be

	Higher Education Journey report would be shared with members once released in May 2020.	provided in the meeting.
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#### **4 Next Steps**

4.1 Outlined elsewhere within this report.

#### **Appendices:**

- **None.**

## Skills for Londoners Board Higher Level Skills Advisory Group

Date of meeting: **9 July 2020**

Title of report: **Higher level skills (Level 4/5) Research Update**

To be presented by: **Beth Wheaton, Senior Policy Officer, Skills & Employment**

10

Cleared by: **Michelle Cuomo-Boorer, Assistant Director – Skills and Employment**

Classification: **Public** with Appendix A reserved from publication as it contains information intended for publication at a later date

### 1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The GLA has commissioned RCU, in consortia with a field research team, to conduct an independent analysis of the provision of, participation in and demand for education and skills at Levels 4 and 5 in London.
- 1.2 Interim findings from this project were presented to the Higher Level Skills Advisory Group in December 2019 for discussion and comment. At this meeting, the final report and findings will be presented to the Advisory Group.
- 1.3 A draft executive summary of findings is attached at Appendix A to this report. This executive summary is a draft and the GLA has not signed up to or commented on any of the recommendations outlined in this report. We are seeking views and comments from the Group on this draft. The final version of the report may not include all the recommendations set out in the draft executive summary outlined in Appendix A.

### 2 Recommendation

- 2.1 The Higher Level Skills Advisory Group is asked to:
  - 2.1.1 **Note** the content of RCU and the research team's presentation and findings.

### 3 Introduction and Background

- 3.1 In September 2019, the GLA commissioned RCU working in consortia with a team of field researchers, to deliver a research project on higher level skills in London. The research had a focus on provision of, participation in and demand for education and skills at Levels 4 and 5.
- 3.2 All forms of Level 4 and 5 provision have been investigated through this study, including courses and apprenticeships. These encompass undergraduate, professional and occupational qualifications at levels below the bachelor's degree as well as non-accredited programmes.

- 3.3 Quantitative, qualitative and documentary data has been collected and analysed in order to:
1. comprehend the full and changing landscape of Level 4 and 5 education and skills in London;
  2. ascertain educational and employer activity at these levels;
  3. consider past, present and future patterns of demand as they relate to Mayoral priority sectors; and
  4. assess the contribution of different types of qualifications and programmes to employers, workers, students and providers.
- 3.4 RCU has analysed data from the Individualised Learner Records (ILR), Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), Longitudinal Educational Outcomes (LEO) and other datasets. The fieldwork was expected to comprise of approximately 40 semi-structured interviews with education providers, partner employers and other organisations in five priority sectors: tech and digital; culture and creative industries; advanced urban services; health and social care; and low carbon and environmental goods and services. Members of the Advisory Group were invited to take part in these interviews.
- 3.5 The majority of the fieldwork was completed prior to the closure of institutions due to COVID-19. However, a set of learner case studies due to accompany this research has been delayed until the autumn term.
- 3.6 At this meeting, the research team will present an update on this project for discussion, including top line findings and recommendations.
- 3.7 A draft executive summary can be found in Appendix A. This executive summary is a draft and the GLA has not signed up to or commented on any of the recommendations outlined in this report. The final version of the report may not include all the recommendations set out in the draft executive summary outlined in Appendix A.

## **4 Issues for consideration**

- 4.1 The Group is asked to consider:
- 4.1.1 the content of RCU's presentation and draft executive summary and to advise on any potential amends;
  - 4.1.2 the impact of COVID-19 on the context of this research; and
  - 4.1.3 opportunities for this research to influence recovery work and project or policy design.

## **5 Equality comments**

- 5.1 RCU's final report will include analysis on the demographic characteristics of learners at Levels 4 and 5 in London, including apprenticeships. Further consideration will be given to any inequalities that arise from this analysis, when developing the GLA's policy response.

## **6 Risks arising / mitigation**

- 6.1 An emerging risk for this project is the impact of COVID-19 on collecting learner case studies. As a result, interviews for learner case studies will now take place in the autumn term and will be separate to the main report.

## **7 Legal Comments**

- 7.1 Not applicable.

## **8 Financial Comments of the Executive Director Resources**

- 8.1 This report seeks to update the Higher Level Skills Advisory Group on the content of a research carried out by the RCU and the research team's presentation and findings.
- 8.2 There are no direct financial implications to the GLA arising from the considerations set out in this report.

## **9 Next steps**

- 9.1 Advisory Group members are invited to send further written feedback on the executive summary to GLA officers by 17 July 2020.
- 9.2 Once the final report and recommendations are agreed, GLA officers will explore options for publishing and disseminating findings.
- 9.3 Findings from this research will be incorporated into GLA COVID-19 recovery planning and future devolution proposals.

## **Appendices:**

- **Appendix A** – RCU Interim findings update (*reserved from publication*)

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NOT FOR PUBLICATION

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