



QUALITY OVERSIGHT GROUP: 2nd JULY 2020

MINUTES

PRESENT	Shane Chowen (Chair), Amelia Sussman, Mel Brookstone, Sanna Jordansson, Mark Isherwood, Anthony Impey, Roy O'Shaughnessy
IN ATTENDANCE	Kurt Hintz, Gary Hunter, David Dangana, Jackie Chapman, Graham Drummond (Clerk)
APOLOGIES	Sarah Ebanja, Keyan O'Donnell

The Chair welcomed members to the inaugural meeting and explained that the role of these meetings would be to scrutinise quality issues at a group level and hold senior leaders to account; the way in which this will be carried out may evolve over the next six months. Whilst it was recognised that all members brought their own educational perspective and experience, it was difficult to compare this against the challenges faced by CCCG, particularly in the current situation of managing the impact of a national pandemic.

The CEO further commented that CCCG will be reporting an operating deficit of £4.6m for the 2019/20 financial year (£2m of which can be attributed to the impact of the pandemic). This is a significant improvement compared to the previous year, as the organisation returns to financial sustainability and a break-even position in 2020/21. The Group also needs to improve the quality of education and training in some areas of its work, and he was looking forward to the challenge that this group would bring in order to achieve that.

1.1 QUALITY

Action

A group quality update was considered and received. It was noted that:

- CCCG had received 'requires improvement' for overall effectiveness at its most recent Ofsted inspection in February. The main areas of weakness identified during the inspection were apprenticeships and 16-19 provision. Adult and high needs provision were identified as being good. The achievement of a grade 2 or above at the next inspection is a key priority for the Group;
- Included within the report was a breakdown of student attendance and retention across the group, which showed that average attendance was 84.9% during 19/20 which is below target. Retention has been 93.5% which is 0.5% above target. However, it was further noted that this monitoring data is only relevant up until when the lockdown started in March, and will not be published;
- Further analysis indicates that in some curriculum areas participation rates have improved since teaching was delivered via online means, with rates of 90% or over being experienced. However, for some students e.g. for adults, participation has been more problematic; with around one third of students unable to access the internet or use a laptop. This is a barrier to learning for a significant proportion of the Group's students and will be a strategic focus as a blended approach to teaching and learning is adopted in the new academic year. Further analysis of a student survey was provided within the report;
- With the cancellation of public examinations, estimated grades have been submitted to awarding bodies. This process, which included internal moderation, has now been completed and grades will be announced by awarding bodies during August. Checks for unconscious bias with respect to protected characteristics have been carried out and differentials in performance are not anticipated. It was further noted that:
 - overall performance in achievement is expected to be in line with previous years, with a marginal improvement in A levels and GCSEs;
 - there is an appeals process which can be followed by students if they are unhappy with their final grade, however this will only check whether a clerical error was made and will be in form of a data subject access request in line with GDPR regulations. The opportunity to re-sit examinations in November will be made available as well.

Members discussed the issue of some students only being able to access lessons and learning via their phones. It was noted that in some cases the access to learning provided by phones works well e.g. in the case of lessons delivered via Microsoft Teams. Also, in some curriculum areas such as in

more practical and vocational areas the use of phones can work well. However, if students are being asked to complete independent study and / or write an extended piece of work then a computer or laptop is needed. It was further noted that the definition of attendance, particularly for funding bodies, may need to be reviewed as the delivery of online lessons continues. Members asked that further analysis of attendance versus online participation would assist in the overall analysis of participation rates.

KH

The report continued to be presented and the following was noted:

- A COVID-19 working group, the membership of which has included senior leaders and trade union representatives has been meeting regularly to consider the safe return of staff and students to college sites. Students on courses for which their 'license to practice' assessment has been delayed are being prioritised and will return within the next week. This includes up to 1900 students across CCCG and includes courses such as AAT, Hair & Beauty and Construction. 1400 of these students are studying at CONEL. Students on Hair and Beauty courses may have to wait until August until social distancing regulations have been agreed and can be complied with;
- In some courses, such as with Health & Social Care and Early Years, students need to complete work placements in order to complete their course. This problem has been compounded by the lack of flexibility provided by awarding bodies and the lack of guidance;

It was noted that when the 20/21 academic year starts in September, a blended approach to teaching and learning will need to be adopted because not all classes will be delivered face to face. A forthcoming continuing professional development day is being delivered to staff which will focus on pedagogical issues surrounding a blended learning approach. It was further noted that:

- Online teaching and learning requires staff to have a high degree of confidence when using technology;
- Ensuring that students have access to high quality learning materials can be a time consuming activity, especially if the use of the materials cannot be replicated in other classes e.g. if there is only one class in a particular subject. This is less of an issue in areas such as level 2 English and Maths where there is a higher volume of students who use the same learning material;
- At the forthcoming CPD event for staff, a blended learning manual will be launched which will serve as a reference for staff in the development of the Group's approach to blended learning. The central theme of this approach is to ensure that teaching and learning is student centred;
- There are three important strands to the Group's approach to online and blended learning as follows:
 - The provision of technology to students in order to provide access to learning;
 - The pedagogical approach to blended learning;
 - The digital skills of staff to ensure that they have the confidence to deliver in an online environment.

It was further noted by members that for a large number of students the additional emotional support and 'wrap around' services were an important part of college life and the refuge that college sites provide to some students cannot be replicated in an online environment. Members recognised that the colleges' role in this regard is a vital part of its service to the community and that the needs of its students is the key determinant of any decisions that need to be made. It was further noted that in order to meet these needs the Group will adopt a variety of different approaches to curriculum delivery.

The final part of the report was presented and the following was noted:

- Rapid improvement plans to address areas of weakness were suspended at the time of lockdown. These will continue at the start of the next academic year and will concentrate on the following areas:
 - The Centre for Business Arts and Technology
 - A Levels – at the Angel and Kings Cross sites
 - Creative and Service Industries at WKC
 - ApprenticeshipsValue added is also a key focus for improvement;
- The implementation of an 'open classroom' approach to the development of professional teaching practice and the coaching of teachers will continue at the start of the next academic year. The importance of ensuring that managers have the correct educational expertise to observe and support teachers was also noted.

At the end of the report a list of quality indicators that would be used to monitor progress was included. It was agreed that staff and employer feedback on the Group's approach to teaching & learning and curriculum development are to be a part of the monitoring of quality at a Group level. KH

1.2 APPRENTICESHIPS

An update on apprenticeships was included within the report. An additional verbal update was provided by the Managing Director of CCCT, Jackie Chapman. The following was noted:

- Improvement in achievement rates and communication with employers have been the two key areas of focus since the Ofsted inspection. With respect to employer communication there has been some improvement, for example Islington Council have indicated a higher degree of satisfaction. With respect to achievement, the pandemic has impacted on a significant proportion of end point assessments (EPA), however in some areas good progress has been made and where EPAs have been completed students have done well.

It was further noted that communication with employers and problems with EPAs has been recognised by the Department for Education as a sector problem. Anthony Impey notified members that he had a contact at 'Investors in People' who has been working on this issue and would be happy to put Jackie in touch. AI/JC

2. EDUCATION BOARDS

It was noted that one of the roles of this group would be to co-ordinate activities of the education boards. This will be considered at a future meeting.

3. MEMBERSHIP

The Director of Governance reported that he was exploring the possibility of co-opting a member from a college to join this group. A proposal would be made to the Search and Governance Committee in due course.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The terms of reference were received. These have been approved by the Board, but would need to be reviewed as the role of the group develops.

5. MEETING DATES

The following meeting dates for 2020/21 were noted:

Thursday 8th October 2020 5pm

Friday 27th November 2020 9am – 4pm – SAR Validation

Monday 18th January 2021 5pm

Thursday 25th February 2021 4:30pm

Tuesday 23rd March 2021 5pm

Thursday 13th May 2021 5:30pm

Monday 28th June 2021 5:30pm

Signed as a correct record: _____

Shane Chowen