

Meeting/Committee	Quality & Standards Committee
Date of meeting	10 th May 2023 at 5pm (via Google Meet)

1 Declarations of Interest and Eligibility

The Chair reminded everyone present to declare any interests that they may have on matters to be discussed. No specific declarations were made and standing declarations were noted.

2 Welcome, introductions and apologies for absence

Attendees:

Jenny Worsdale	Chair
Donna Clifford (from 5.50pm)	
Carol Stanfield	
Heather Barnett	
Sally Gillborn	
Jason Austin	

In attendance:

Tracey Mace-Akroyd	Deputy Principal/CEO
Maxine Bagshaw	Director of Governance
Dave Cosgrove	Head of Business Intelligence and Performance
Debra Adams	Director of Campus- DVC
Laura Reid	Director of Safeguarding and Student Support
Daniel Stanbra	Director of Adult Education and Contracts, English and Maths
Keith Sanderson	Director of Campus- Rotherham
Cheryl Martin	Director of Quality and Academic Standards
James Godsell	Director of Business Development and Apprenticeships
Lucy Barnwell	Director of Marketing and Learner Recruitment
Cath Mollart	Interim Executive Director of Strategic Planning and Corporate Services
Mel Smith	Director of Campus- NNC

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Katie Asgari.
Absent without apologies were Veronica McCoy and Katie Curtis.

3 Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd March 2023

The minutes were reviewed and it was agreed that they were an accurate record of discussions.

AGREED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd March 2023.

There were no matters arising.

4 Action Progress Report

The committee were happy to note the content of the update provided.

5 Safeguarding, Prevent and EDI

The Director of Safeguarding and Student Support drew committees' attention to her detailed report and key matters highlighted included:

- Report includes the 3-year trends regarding key areas, one example of which is mental health referrals.
- In relation to mental health, terms 1 and 2 for this academic year are already exceeding the prior 2-year position. This means a higher than ever number of referrals even with a term still to go.
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment trends are now included.
- Group is working with LADO regarding one staff concern which is a current open allegation. There have been two more queries but these are not open reviews.
- Group has finished the violence against women and girls project and has been invited to bid for funding again. This is work with the violence reduction unit.

In relation to this project, one governor noted that 367 learners have been engaged and she asked whether they have self-identified or were identified by staff. It was confirmed that there are a mix, with some identified by progress coaches and some identified by staff because of their views expressed regarding women. Director expressed some frustration that the project was so short and explained that this was because the group had struggled to recruit.

One governor asked for further information regarding the retention figures for LAC students, given that they are described as lower than target, and they asked what the percentages are. Governors were advised that the 'all' position at 80.8% for 16-19 learners and 90.5% for non 16-18 learners. It was noted that there are only 50 learners and therefore percentages can change dramatically if a small number withdraw. Challenge from the committee was in relation to what the group is trying to do to improve the position and whether or not there have been any successes. Staff explained that some students hit the age of 18 whilst they are still in care and are then moved out and maybe out of the area. There are far fewer wrap around services provided by the local authority than which does mean it is often hard for students to continue in learning. Staff provided assurance that this is something that the EDI committee will look at further.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

6 Student feedback report following meetings with the Deputy CEO

The Deputy CEO drew governors' attention to her detailed report and key matters highlighted were:

- Actions arising from these meetings have not yet been fully integrated in to the QIP as internal meetings have taken place first and have only just concluded. All actions are now collated and will go in to the next iteration of the QIP.
- Deputy Principal and campus leads were able to meet with four groups of learners on each campus. These groups represented:
 - Students making good progress

- English and Maths students
- Students at stage 2 of the group's behaviour policy/procedures
- Students making okay progress but with low attendance
- Aim of the meetings was to better understand motivations, challenges and barriers
- This was a really useful exercise.

Challenge from one member of the committee was to use the information provided as a baseline for future years and to continue to repeat the meetings as the information provided is very helpful. Deputy CEO confirmed that the aim is to conduct similar meetings on a termly basis and she confirmed that staff have been able to implement actions as part of the early feedback received.

One governor commented that there were some themes arising e.g.

- Lack of knowledge regarding progress
- CEIAG
- English and Maths anxiety
- Non use of social media

And they asked how the group is dealing with issues on a thematic basis. In relation to the point made around careers, staff explained that it was mainly about progress options for level 1 learners, particularly how to move in to apprenticeships. It was confirmed that some additional progression events have been added to the calendar as well as the taster days.

In terms of the group's response to the feedback, a number of matters were highlighted including:

- Stretch and challenge needs to be a focus,
- Director of campuses will be working alongside the Deputy CEO and the new Vice Principal with targets set in relation to:
 - CEIAG and improving progression,
 - Interventions where the learner has identified that they don't know what they want to do next,
 - Ensuring that contact with learners is purposeful and that this can be built on next year.
- In relation to social media, the group has had a poor historic profile however this is being addressed. Analysis would seem to indicate that it is not usual for learners to use social media for course research, with work with schools and events being more important and influential.
- There is a need to review the approach taken to 'results day' as a lot of young people arrive with no idea of what they want to do and sometimes the group can get advice wrong.
- Every day will be an open day following the GCSE results.
- Lots of activities are planned over the summer. Doors will stay open on all campuses.

Challenge from governors was to keep checking in with the students in terms of the changes made and whether they are having an impact and responding to the feedback provided.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

7 QIP 2022/23

The Director of Quality and Academic Standards referred governors to the content of her report and indicated that all amendments and suggestions have been actioned from the last meeting, including:

- Inclusion of data tables

- RO8 data consistently used throughout all reports
- Staff recruitment challenges added

She confirmed that there have been no changes to the RAG ratings with one red, two green and the others amber.

In considering the document, a challenge from one governor was the reference to 'effective' activity but then the action is RAG rated as amber. She questioned whether this was right and whether or not there was a need for this qualitative comment. Committee discussed the format of the document and it was agreed that the Deputy CEO and Chair of Q&S would discuss this and content outside the meeting, specifically how it meets the needs of governors (Deputy CEO/Chair Q&S, May 2023). It was agreed to investigate the possibility of a condensed version for governors i.e. a summary report. Staff indicated that, for them, it is important not to lose all of the analysis that underpins this document as it is incredibly useful internally but at the same time acknowledged that there needs to be a way to give governors what would be helpful. Deputy CEO commented that the objectives set for the year are challenging and that it will take some time to get to a RAG rating of green.

One governor made an observation regarding the commentary provided regarding attendance and the challenge that it will be to improve. They suggested that it was interesting to see student views and whether or not their feedback, when acted upon, makes a difference.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

8 Risk Report

Deputy CEO introduced this item confirmed that the risks and prioritisation have not changed as staff believe that they are still the right ones to focus on. Narrative in relation to actions has been updated and supporting data has been included as requested.

One governor noted that the achievement prediction for apprenticeship provision is 55.86% and it is therefore very close to the accountability framework trigger points and they therefore asked whether the board should be concerned. Deputy CEO acknowledged that, as it is so close it does remain a risk. She indicated that the RAG rating in relation to the Quality of Education KPI report going to board has moved to amber because of this. Committee were reminded of the accountability framework trigger points and the fact that there could be sanctions if the group does not hold the current position. Deputy CEO confirmed that this has been discussed specifically with the DfE/ESFA and they have said that they want to see an improvement on the prior year. Group has however got to be mindful that the prior year position was very low because legacy data was cleansed and removed. Staff provided assurance that learners are being reviewed on a line by line basis. Committee were advised that the national rate is 53.4%, however it isn't acceptable for the group to be at this level. Head of Business Intelligence and Performance advised that the position in relation to standards is hovering at 51% and that this has not changed much in the last few years.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

9 Marketing and Applications

The Director of Marketing and Learner Recruitment introduced her report and explained that it was comprehensive and lengthy given the period of time since her last report. Key matters highlighted were:

- Marketing strategy updated and launched in August 2022
- Turbulent staffing position in the team in September and October 2022, however new team now established

- Digital marketing has been outsourced
- Brilliant team now in place all of whom are positive, enthusiastic and 'grafters'.
- TV ads were commissioned in January 2023
- Usual spotify billboards have been used
- Schools team have been brilliant and, as a consequence, applications from feeder schools have increased
- Customer experience is still a concern and an area for improvement

One member of the committee observed that there were 2454 applications and they asked whether this data relates to 'new potential learners' rather than progressing existing students. It was confirmed that this is the case and that the team will be working to bring all of this information together so as to be better able to inform the business. She confirmed that these can be multiple applications by individuals, however the figure in relation to this is a declining year on year trend.

One governor asked whether the website is new. Committee were reminded that the website was overhauled in June 2022 but staff acknowledged that there are always tweaks that need to be made to make it more accessible. The RNN website was updated in February 2023 and the next phase is developing websites regarding the commercial aspects of activity.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

10 Quality of Education Reports

1) 16-18

Committee were happy to note the content of the report. Key matters highlighted and discussed were:

- Retention is holding up although there is a slight decline
- Achievement prediction forecasts are looking positive
- Worry will be the final exams and high grades
- In relation to retention, question and challenge from one governor was that there was a significant percentage drop between RO8 and the yearend in the last 2 years and they queried whether the same is likely to happen again. Deputy CEO indicated that in the prior two years staff were still completing data cleansing at this point in time which is simply too late. She expressed greater confidence now on the basis that staff are doing much more frequent data checks. She expressed the view that by May in any year all of those still with the college should be retained.
- MIS and campus directors now have more regular data meetings and therefore any withdrawals should be earlier and avoid a yearend rush. Level of scrutiny is higher and consequently there are more timely actions.

The Head of Business Intelligence and Performance indicated that his data reports to the committee will start to include top level summary reports as well as the detailed analysis. This will be from the RO9 position.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

2) Adults

Key matters highlighted were:

- Group is still on track to see a positive data trend in relation to achievement
- There are some concerns regarding attendance, as the position is 2% below prior year at the same point in time. Ofsted suggested that there is a correlation

between attendance and progression, however group is not seeing this as an issue at this point in time.

- Quality of education is good
- There are some areas that remain a focus, including:
 - Inclusion – one example given was HE
 - Capturing learner feedback
 - Maintaining English and Maths improvements

In relation to nonattendance, one member of the committee asked whether the reasons are the same as for other students. Staff advised that there are some differences but that the group is confident that it has a consistent approach to data recording and evidence. Staff advised that there are some staff capacity issues which do prevent them giving attendance a complete focus. Some adult learners indicate that, on occasion, they have childcare issues or work attendance requirements which do impact upon their ability to study. Committee were given assurance that attendance is monitored rigorously.

(Donna Clifford joined the meeting at 5.50pm)

One governor asked whether the non-attendees are the same students. Staff advised that there are higher profiles relating to consecutive absence in some areas more than others and examples given were ESOL and English and Maths. Staff advised that it tends to be mainly personal reasons for non-attendance and that there are no other significant trends evident.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

3) Apprentices

Staff referred back to the earlier discussions which took place as part of the risk report review. In terms of the information provided, a number of matters were particularly highlighted including:

- Group has put on a functional skills bootcamp as there are a number of learners who have to pass this before they can go in to gateway for end point assessment.
- A lot of these learners are OOF
- Bootcamp prioritisation has been based upon who staff think can pass
- Group may do another bootcamp but it is getting to the point in the year where it won't be possible to get learners through before the end of the year
- Group is seeing some learners get their qualification/certificate and then refusing to take the EPA. There is more work to be done with learners and employers in relation to their commitment to completing the full programme.

Committee asked what the current out of funding number is. Staff advised that it is 219. Governors asked whether this is a legacy position. Staff advised that some are legacy learners but that some are a consequence of staffing issues i.e. learners having to catch up. Nearly all of the 219 have EPAs to get through. Staff advised that the prediction is to reduce this figure to 90 by September as a large proportion of 219 just need to go through EPA. Staff gave assurance that they are working on a learner by learner basis to fully understand what each needs and whether this is achievable before the end of the academic year.

Staff highlighted the fact that the off the job training statistics are declining i.e. are learners not completing the 20% required. A review of off the job training records identified that learners are completing the 20% but the training records do not accurately capture the full range of skills apprentices develop and the impact this has on the employer's business. To try and address this, the reviews have been redesigned

so that the deep reflection required can take place. All staff have been fully trained in relation to this.

One governor asked whether there is any sense that the DfE are listening to the structural barriers that are apparent in relation to apprenticeship delivery e.g. once students get their NVQ/certificate they then refuse to do the EPA. Deputy CEO confirmed that this issue and others has been shared with the DfE/ESFA and that it is not just RNN who are facing these challenges. She advised that the newer standards don't have a separate qualification included and that apprentices have to do the whole programme to achieve and therefore this may be a sign that DfE have listened. Challenge from the committee was that, it is important that at the start of any relationship with the employer, the group is very clear in terms of commitment and expectations. Observation by the Deputy CEO is that at some point there will have to a national reflection on the success of the apprenticeship programme, given that the national achievement rates are so low. Challenge from one governor was that employers need to be aware, and it is made clear, that they have drawn down funding for completing the full apprenticeship programme and therefore they have an obligation in relation to this.

In relation to the 90 predicted to be OOF in September, it was explained that some will be current OOF and that some will fall in to OOF between now and then. Staff advised that the JTL numbers are decreasing as they are better progressing learners through to EPA which will again support a reduction in the OOF figure.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

4) HE

The detailed report circulated was noted and a number of matters were specifically highlighted, including:

- There is a need for the group to start to report on the different cohorts more specifically
- HE retention is holding up. Data provided is a cumulative position and is dependent upon the duration of study.
- In year retention is 95.5% which is 10% up on the prior year. This shows that a lot of historical issues have been addressed.
- Attendance is not where we want it to be yet but it is the highest it has ever been. 16-18 learners are attending better, it being the case that adults have to juggle more.
- NSS response rate is 69.4% which is +13% compared to the same point last year
- Exit survey went live yesterday
- University of Hull compliance issues identified, however these will not impact on achievement. Training is planned for staff to address.
- HE strategy group met for the first time this week. Link governor (Donna Clifford) is to be invited to future meetings ([Director of Quality and Academic Standards, May 2023](#)).

In relation to the comments made regarding University of Hull compliance, committee asked whether this relates to routine monitoring or is specific to RNN. Staff provided assurance that the group is not in any kind of measures. It was explained that there is a new quality link at the university and that they are very much 'on the ball' in terms of compliance and monitoring. Issues identified relate to paperwork and wording generally and it should be easy to address. Deputy CEO expressed the view that Cheryl Martin's new role, which includes academic standards, will ensure a higher level of academic rigour going forward.

AGREED: to note the content of the report provided.

5) High Needs

Detailed report was noted and key matters highlighted included:

- Data is really positive for this cohort
- There has been an increase in the number of EHCP consultations
- There was a rise in demand in transition i.e. next years' students. The group contributes to the consultations but the local authority remains responsible for creating them.
- Group will create a working party to look at the role of LSA's and the assessment of need to ensure the right level of support
- LACs are a concern as they have complex lives and needs but assurance was given that the group is working hard to support progression

AGREED: to note the content of the report provided.

11 Compliments and Complaints – Midyear Report

Detailed report was noted and key matters highlighted included:

- 90 complaints in total in 21/22
- Group is now at 89 for 2022/23 so the end of year will be higher. Current position is a 200% increase
- Data is analysed to assess trends
- Information governance team cannot pin the increase down to anything in particular
- There are a lot of low-level complaints linked to student behaviours
- There are a few complaints made about fees and fee remission
- There is nothing which is a major concern which is complained of in high volumes
- Information governance team are trialling a 'not yet logged' system to try and intervene and de-escalate/address issues raised before they become a complaint.

An observation from one governor was that an increasing culture regarding complaints seems to be part of the way of the world now and that they simply have to be managed as best as possible.

AGREED: to note the content of the report provided.

12 AOB

There are no items of additional business.

13 Date and time of next meeting

This was confirmed as 26th June 2023 at 5pm.

The meeting closed at 6.25pm.

Signed _____ Chair

Date _____

