

Newham Adult Learning Service

NALS Advisory Board: Roles & Responsibilities

Agreed 17/09/18



The key purpose of the Advisory Board should be to:

- **Maintain an overview of priorities for adult learning and post-19 provision;** delivery and service transformation within the national and regional context
- **Make recommendations regarding the service's strategic aims and objectives** based on ESFA, Ofsted and Local Authority corporate strategic priorities
- Ensure compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty, under the terms of the Equality Act 2010, and that there is **effective practice in ensuring equal access to participation, educational and social inclusion** and improvement of standards and outcomes for learners
- **Provide support and robust challenge** to ensure performance meets targets set in the Business Plan and implement the improvement action plan as a result of the Self-Assessment Review (SAR) and Business Plan
- Provide **independence of judgment and scrutiny of service provision**
- Provide **support and guidance to the service to secure additional income generation** to ensure sustainability and growth
- Raise the **profile of the Service with internal departments and external organisations** with a view to generating new business opportunities

The Advisory Board should meet between 3-4 times a year, with single focus/theme for each meeting to allow for in-depth scrutiny and challenge.

Themes to be agreed and tie in with academic year quality cycle, but should include:

- Review of the curriculum offer
- Quality of teaching learning and assessment
- Outcomes for learners
- Self-assessment and quality improvement planning
- Review reports on current plans and research activity
- Review key issues in policy and practice.

Role:

To act as a non-statutory body that is:

A critical friend: Critical friend is a term that developed in education where it is often used to describe a critical friend of a school, college or adult education provider who supports and challenges the service by bringing an informed external perspective on their work. It is often used as part of quality improvement processes where again an informed external perspective is brought to the service.

The idea of being a critical friend can be a helpful way of describing the relationship between the NALS Advisory Board & our Senior management team. It captures a combination of support and challenge, but challenge that is constructive and not hostile.

An effective an Advisory Board Member (ABM) is a friend of the Service who supports us, who wants us to succeed, who has ambitions for NALS, who has a clear idea of its purpose, its strengths and areas of development, and presents the Service to others in a positive way.

An effective ABM, like a true friend, should have a relationship with the Service that means he or she can also be frank when we do not meet the requirements and expectations of the Advisory Body. It is much easier for the Service to accept criticism from a true friend of the Service, who has the Service's best interests at heart..

The notion of a critical friend indicates a relationship that is open, trusting, transparent and built on mutual respect. Critical questions are not seen as a threat but as helpful interventions to achieve mutually shared aims. Questions are not asked to try to catch people out but to enable

a clearer understanding of issues and how they can be resolved. Based on trust, probing questions are asked to verify that what is being reported and proposed is built on sound analysis and appropriate and deliverable actions.

An advisory forum:

The advisory board needs to a support network. To ensure NALS improves and reaches its strategic goals effectively it needs to be able to be stretched as a service and where necessary challenge it to ensure progression and success. this is a key role of the Advisory Board

Support skills required by ABMs:

- active listening
- coaching approach
- process focused
- emphasis on development
- encourage innovation
- empathy
- objectivity
- loyalty
- honesty
- fairness

Challenge skills required by ABM:

- directness
- honest frankness
- set stretching targets
- focus on achievement

A strategic sounding board:

As a strategy sounding board the aim would be to utilise the Advisory Board as a group forum designed to elicit opinions about a particular matter. It may entail troubleshooting, reviewing strategies, marketing ideas, or simply as a problem-resolution platforms. this process would be very advantageous, in developing relevant programmes, reviewing achievement, meeting the needs of the community, ensuring we meet the local, sub-regional, regional and national agendas. In addition the Advisory Board can help the Service discover breakthrough ideas or solutions to ongoing problems, as well as move forward on new programmes, funding opportunities and projects more effectively. The aim is to support the service in planning, promotion and clear up misunderstandings that are plaguing the service through the Advisory Board

A platform to support & build the reputation of NALS, in council, amongst partners, politically (with a small “p”), sub regionally, regionally and nationally where required

As a body the aim would be that ADMs would act as Service ambassadors in all walks of professional lives. They would promote the Service, support and celebrate the Service, act as service representatives and advise the Service throughout their tenure.

A Service representative at student forums /learner voice activities

- to undertake surgeries in centres
- attend enrichment activities
- attend learner voice activities
- attend events celebrating our learners and staff
- act as representatives for NALS at external events focusing on community & learners