



Raising Participation Age

Raising the Participation Age (RPA) – Questions and Answers

INTRODUCING RPA	
1. What is Raising the Participation Age (RPA)?	<p>RPA is a duty placed on all young people to participate in education or training until their 18th birthday. This duty is in the Education and Skills Act (2008) and is being introduced in two phases (see Question A2 below).</p> <p>RPA provides the opportunity for all young people to access provision and support that they will need to learn and participate after the age of 16.</p> <p>Young people in Year 12 or below will all be required to continue in education and training until their 18th birthday.</p>
2. Why has it been introduced?	<p>It is being introduced to increase the opportunity for every student to improve their life and career prospects.</p> <p>Evidence shows that achieving qualifications at 16 and 17 can help to boost a student's prospects for life – for instance, young people with 2 or more A-levels earn around 14% more than those without.</p>
3. Is RPA the same as raising the school leaving age?	<p>No, RPA is not the same as raising the school leaving age. The school leaving age remains at 16. Young people can participate after leaving Year 11 in any of the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remain in full time education (such as school, college or home education) for 540 hours per year minimum • go onto an apprenticeship, or a traineeship (pre-apprenticeship) • be in full-time work alongside part-time learning, leading to an accredited qualification • take up volunteering for 20 hours or more and do this alongside part-time learning which leads to an accredited qualification • be self-employed, combining this with part-time learning leading to an accredited qualification.



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WHAT DOES THE LAW SAY?	
1. <i>Where does the duty lie for young people?</i>	<p>The legislation places a duty on the young person to find and take up an opportunity of free study up to the age of 18.</p> <p>Supported by their parents/carers and schools they will be expected to take their own decisions about how they wish to participate.</p>
2. <i>What is the duty on the Local Authority?</i>	<p>The Council must :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure sufficient suitable education and training provision for all young people aged 16-18 (inclusive) in their area. • Make available to young people below the age of 19 support that will encourage, enable or assist them to participate in education or training.
C. RPA AND COURSE INFORMATION SOURCES	
1. <i>Where can I find out more about RPA ?</i>	<p><u>Useful links:</u></p> <p>DFE website: www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeople/participation/rpa</p> <p>London Borough of Barnet website www.barnet.gov.uk/info/930339/raising_participation_age/929/raising_participation_age</p> <p>Enquiries can also be directed to RPAdata@barnet.gov.uk</p>
2. <i>Where can I find out about the education and training opportunities available ?</i>	<p>Schools and colleges have to provide information, advice and guidance to their students on about all the post-16 education and training opportunities in their area.</p> <p>More information is also available: On the London Borough of Barnet website: www.barnet.gov.uk/BEETS</p>



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	<p>From the National Careers Service. They can be contacted on 0800 100 900 or you can view their website here https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk</p> <p>The National Apprenticeship Service provides information about apprenticeship opportunities: http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/</p>
<p>D. DEFINITIONS</p>	
<p>1. What is defined as 'working' from an RPA point of view?</p>	<p>To meet RPA requirements the young person will need to be working full-time, alongside part-time study. This is defined as holding a job for 8 or more weeks consecutively and for 20 or more hours per week. Where a student's employment hours vary, employment of 40 or more hours over a two week period can be considered as meeting the requirement.</p> <p>Full-time self-employment should be regarded in the same way as full-time employment.</p> <p>You can only study part-time alongside full-time work; so you should not study part-time with a part-time job.</p>
<p>2. What is defined as 'volunteering' from an RPA point of view?</p>	<p>Volunteering is defined as working other than for financial reward. A full-time volunteer needs to have volunteered for 8 or more weeks consecutively and for 20 or more hours per week (same as full-time work) to meet RPA rule. Where a student's volunteering hours vary, volunteering of 40 or more hours over a two week period can be considered as meeting the requirement.</p> <p>In the case of volunteering, some form of written agreement should exist between the student and the placement provider to show working arrangements.</p>
<p>3. What is re-engagement provision?</p>	<p>Some young people may need to be attracted back into a college or school place, especially if they have been out of studying for a while. For these young people a gradual return may be best. This is described as 're-engagement'.</p> <p>Further information on the re-engagement is available in Annex 3 of the RPA Statutory Guidance which can be found on the DFE website: DFE RPA webpages.</p>



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	<p>The Council will hold a list of re-engagement programmes and providers; young people or parents should contact the Participation and Placement Team at Barnet for more details</p>
<p>4. What are Study Programmes?</p>	<p>These were introduced for September 2013 and required all schools, colleges and work-based learning providers working with 16-19 year olds to offer a customised programme for each learner that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided progression to a level higher than that of their prior attainment • Included qualification(s) that are of sufficient size and rigour to stretch the student and are clearly linked to suitable progression opportunities in training, employment or higher levels of education. • Required students to work towards GCSE A* – C grade in Maths and English (or other qualifications that will act as a stepping stone for achievement of these qualifications in time). • Allowed for meaningful work experience related to the vocational area of the Study Programme, which develops employability skills and/or creates potential employment options. • Included other activities unrelated to qualifications that develop the skills, attitudes and confidence that supported progression. <p>The balance between these activities will vary depending on the needs of the learner.</p>
<p>5. What are Traineeships?</p>	<p>Traineeships are a strand of 16-19 Study Programmes targeting students who are committed to securing an Apprenticeship or other employment. A Traineeship prepares a young person for an Apprenticeship.</p> <p>The Traineeships programme prepares young people for an Apprenticeship or sustainable work by offering a high quality work placement, work preparation training, and English and Maths.</p> <p>Traineeships are available to 16-24 year olds, will last no longer than 6 months and provide a high quality work placement (between six and five months).</p> <p>Only providers judged by Ofsted to be 'Good' or 'Outstanding' are able to offer Traineeships. In Barnet 'First Rung' and 'Barnet and Southgate College' offer Traineeships.</p>
<p>6. What constitutes full-time and part-time provision?</p>	<p>Attending full-time education at a school (including an academy or free school) by itself is defined as meeting the duty to participate. For other types of further education (sixth-form college, further education college, or independent college) full-</p>



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	<p>time provision is 540 planned hours minimum, part-time is 280 planned hours minimum. All post-16 providers offering full-time provision will need to meet the requirements of the 16-19 Study Programmes and offer an academic programme or a substantial vocational qualification recognised by employers. It is important that work experience and Maths and English (if not achieved at level 2, i.e. GCSE at A* - C or equivalent) will need to be included so young people can progress into employment or further education or training.</p> <p>Information about Study Programmes can be found on the DFE website here: http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/curriculum/a00210755/16-19-study-programmes</p>
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G. RPA COMPLIANCE AND OTHER INFORMATION

<p>1. Which students will the Local Authority include in their RPA cohort?</p>	<p>As a minimum those students who are 16 or 17, who have not achieved 2 or more A levels (or other equivalent prescribed level 3 qualifications).</p> <p>It is up to the Local Authority to decide which students they will include within their RPA cohort as far as residency is concerned. In Barnet we will be including young people who live in the borough. With regard to Looked after Children who have been sent out of borough to study at a residential education establishment - Barnet will continue to treat them as resident within the county.</p>
<p>2. What is the situation where the student has not been participating in education or training because of illness or through having a baby?</p>	<p>This is an acceptable reason for not participating as long as the student resumes participation as soon as they can.</p> <p>For young people who are parents there is an expectation that they do participate in full-time education or training (following a reasonable period of maternity leave). They may qualify for 'Care to Learn' funding. For more information on the Care to Learn scheme please phone 0800 121 8989, or access https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn</p>
<p>3. What happens to the student who does not participate in education or training at 16 or 17?</p>	<p>The legislation allows for young people to be fined if they do not participate. However, the Government will not be implementing this part of the legislation for the time being.</p> <p>The Local Authority will be tasked with doing everything in its power to encourage the student to take up education or training opportunities.</p>



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<p>4. For students studying at school/college who have half term and summer breaks. Do they meet the RPA requirements?</p>	<p>As long as they are in full-time education and training then they meet the requirements. Full-time is defined as attending school or, if at another education establishment, receiving a minimum of 540 planned hours per year which can include work experience and other non-qualification bearing study.</p> <p>Half term and summer breaks are regarded as a normal part of the academic year at most educational establishments so the student will be meeting the participation requirement even if they are not commencing the learning programme until September. However the student may wish to consider learning, training or employment with training until the course starts.</p>
<p>5. For students who already have two A levels/International Baccalaureate Diploma/Advanced Apprenticeship/two Cambridge Pre-University qualifications, is there still a duty on them to participate?</p>	<p>RPA does not apply to students who have achieved the level 3 qualifications listed. As soon as the student has achieved the L3 requirement they will no longer have a duty to participate in education & training. However, it is highly likely that they will be continuing in training or learning following achievement of these qualifications and should be encouraged to do so.</p>
<p>6. For young people being home educated, how does the RPA duty relate to them?</p>	<p>The amount and content of their education is at the discretion of their home educator so there are no other conditions required as long as the Local Authority is satisfied that they are receiving an acceptable level of education which can be confirmed by contacting the student's parent(s) or guardian. They therefore are meeting their duty to participate.</p>
<p>7. Is a young person who is working full-time and studying part-time through online learning/distance learning meeting the RPA duty?</p>	<p>This is acceptable as long as the learning is accredited and adds up to a total of 280 hours per year.</p>
<p>8. For those young people attending re-engagement programmes (e.g. ESF funded, Youth Contract), do they meet the RPA duty?</p>	<p>For young people who have been absent from the education system and are now attending a re-engagement programme, no hourly requirement of education applies. This is because re-engagement programmes are normally not full-time. In light of this they therefore do not meet the RPA duty.</p> <p>However, as long Local Authorities are satisfied that the express intention of the programme is to support the student to move into full-time education or training then the student is regarded as 'progressing towards full participation'.</p>
<p>9. For a student on an Apprenticeship/Traineeship/ Access to Apprenticeship</p>	<p>Yes. By definition, if they are on one of these programmes they have met their duty.</p>



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<i>programme, do they meet the RPA duty?</i>	
<i>10. Is a student in full-time work and receiving on the job training meeting their RPA duty?</i>	<p>No. Young people should do on-the-job AND a planned and accredited training programme. They will only be meeting the duty if the training is accredited and adds up to a total of 280 planned hours per year.</p> <p>If they are doing an apprenticeship then they will automatically be complying with the duty.</p>
<i>11. How does RPA relate to young people with full-time caring responsibilities?</i>	<p>The expectation is that if a student is listed on the Local Authority's register of carers and/or is in receipt of carers allowance then they would be expected to attend part-time education or training of at least 280 planned hours per year. It is up to the Local Authorities to decide if a carer is full-time or part-time.</p>
<i>12. What should be done about students who are in jobs without training?</i>	<p>The RPA duty lies with the student to make sure they are receiving at least 280 planned hours of accredited education or training per year. This should normally be done in negotiation with the employer with ideally the qualifications being worked towards having relevance to the job.</p> <p>If the training impacts on their hours of work then the student will need to agree suitable arrangements with the employer. Alternatively the employer may be willing to convert the job to an apprenticeship. For further information on apprenticeships contact the National Apprenticeship Service here: http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/</p> <p>Local Authorities will also have a role to play in supporting the student to meet their duty to participate if they are in work. This can include working with employers and employer organisations to minimise the number of young people in jobs without training as well as signposting to education and training provision that has the flexibility to meet the student's and employer needs.</p>
<i>13. How about students who take a gap year?</i>	<p>Students should not take a gap year until they have reached the age of 18, or have achieved a level 3 qualification (A Level or equivalent)</p>