

Raising the Participation Age - Information for sixth forms, colleges, training providers and other post-16 education providers

What is RPA?

The Government has changed the law so that from start of the 2013/14 academic year, all young people are required to continue in education or training:

- Until the end of the academic year in which they turn 17.
- From summer 2015 this will be until their 18th birthday.

The information here will help you to understand what this means for post-16 education providers; school sixth forms, colleges, training providers and others.

Young people have a choice about how they continue in education or training post-16, which could be through:

- Full-time study in a school, college or with a training provider.
- Full-time work or volunteering combined with part-time education or training.
- An Apprenticeship (www.apprenticeships.org.uk).

Where a young person is attending full-time education at a school sixth form, they will be meeting their duty to participate. For young people attending other full-time education – at a college or training provider – the definition of full-time participation is at least 540 hours of directed learning¹ a year. In general, if a young person is attending a full-time programme with your institution they are meeting the duty to participate.

Why have you made this change?

The vast majority of 16 and 17 year olds already continue in some form of education or training. However, the small group of young people not participating includes some of the most vulnerable. We want to give all young people the opportunity to develop the skills they need for adult life and to achieve their full potential.

What does it mean for you?

We know that the high proportion of young people currently engaged and supported through post-16 education and training is a reflection of the hard work of all those involved. RPA is the next step aimed at ensuring all young people have the opportunity to participate and reach their potential.

If you provide education or training for 16 and 17 year-olds, you will be required to inform the local authority if a young person (aged 16 or 17) has dropped out of learning. This is so the young person can be contacted swiftly and offered support to help them re-engage.

Local authorities will need to work with you to ensure that all 16 and 17 year-olds have suitable education or training offers and that there is sufficient suitable provision for all young people.

More information is available at: www.education.gov.uk/rpa.

¹ Directed learning means the amount of time young people are being taught or given instruction by a lecturer, tutor, or being supervised.