

The Hidden Advantage: Delivering Excellence in Tutorial Support

The Tertiary College Group



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Foreword

In comfortable times high-achieving institutions are more likely to be preoccupied with effectiveness than efficiency. The current recession and public funding cuts will accelerate, perhaps to the point of obsession, our concern for better efficiency. Already I detect enhanced interest in personal tutorial systems which deliver more for less.

For many years we have scrutinised teaching delivery to increase class size, reduce course hours and maximise teacher contact to ensure the money goes further without compromising quality. But it is rare to find colleges viewing their heavy investment in personal tutorial work in the same light, despite the fact that 'enrichment', for want of a better name, is part of the former LSC's funding tariff.

In part this is because the purpose of tutorial work are multiple, overlapping and not easily measurable. We believe that this study will be a valuable starting point for those who want to improve both the effectiveness and efficiency of their arrangements.

We did not embark on this research with any clear distinction between support for students and the 'tutorial curriculum'. But it is clear from the study that some colleges place a heavy emphasis on the tutorial system to deliver a non-subject-based curriculum covering study skills, contemporary issues, personal and health education or a combination of all three or more. Other colleges may give minimal attention to these things or find ways of delivering them through the accredited mainstream curriculum. Whatever approach is adopted will colour the ethos of the college.

For some this tutorial arrangements appear expensive it could be that they are expected to deliver more. As a college manager you will need to decide how much you need to 'purchase' before efficiency savings propel you towards restructuring your personal tutorial arrangements.

I conclude by thanking our numerous friends and colleagues in the participating colleges for providing a wealth of valuable material and to Liz McMichael and her team for their technical expertise, strong impetus and intuitive understanding of the issues.

Nigel Robbins
Principal, Cirencester College
& Tertiary Colleges Group

Section 1: Introduction

- 1.1 The Tertiary Colleges Group was awarded LSIS Flexibility and Innovation Funding in order to commission research across the further education sector into personal tutorial arrangements for full-time sixth form learners. Since the introduction of the Curriculum 2000 initiative at the start of this century colleges have developed and experimented with different tutorial support approaches driven by the need to improve success and retention rates, make financial savings or improve reputation the eyes of external stakeholders. To date there has been little research into the impact of these changes and the resultant cost and benefits. This research report has been funded by LSIS, but the views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of LSIS.
- 1.2 The project 's objectives were:
 - getting colleges to reflect critically about what they want to achieve from their personal tutorial arrangements, especially for 16-18 year olds;
 - identifying good practice in personal tutorial arrangements and testing the impact on retention or progression levels;
 - identifying strategies to improve learner retention, conferring individual, financial and reputational benefits; and
 - providing guidance for colleges planning to review and modify their personal tutorial arrangements.
- 1.3 The review process has generated micro case studies of innovative practice which will be of interest to other colleges and demonstrate:
 - better value for money derived from a sharper focus on what colleges can expect to achieve from their personal tutorial systems;
 - the benefits from recognising that personal/pastoral guidance tutors constitute a profession in their own right;
 - examples of good practice to support learners to stay on in learning; and
 - resultant improvements in rates of retention.
- 1.4 The findings from the research were disseminated at a workshop called **The Hidden Advantage: Delivering Excellence in Tutorial Support** on 24th June, 2010 at the 16-19 Summer Conference organised by the Sixth Form Colleges Forum.
- 1.5 The project commenced on 15th February 2010 and concluded at the end of June 2010.

Section 2: Methodology

- 2.1 The methodology combined desk and web research, an online survey targeting senior managers in colleges with responsibility for the personal tutorial system, an analysis of the trends in success rates for Tertiary Colleges and Sixth Form Colleges and culminated in a series of site visits to six Tertiary Colleges and four Sixth Form Colleges to generate micro case studies of innovative practice.
- 2.2 The research stages were:
 - desk and web searches to identify the range and variety of personal tutorial systems or models operating in the further education sector to provide context for the findings;
 - identification and generation of a database of over 300 individuals with overall responsibility for the personal tutorial system for the online survey;
 - analysis of the responses to the online survey;

- identification of providers with demonstrated improvements in success rates;
- site visits to ten providers; and
- analysis of the evidence base to produce the final report.

- 2.3 RCU consultants also made contact with Dr Sally Wootton from FETN (FE Tutorial Network) to discuss the findings from the desk and web search stage and to seek support from Network members for the online survey of key staff managing tutorial systems in colleges across the English FE sector. In Dr Wootton's view the tutorial process within the further education system in England is an under researched area with a lack of published evidence in the public domain.
- 2.4 The site visits to the ten providers featured face-to-face depth interviews with:
- senior management (to provide a rationale for the institution's tutorial system);
 - managers with overall responsibility for the tutorial system;
 - staff delivering the tutorial system (focus group discussions); and
 - students experiencing the tutorial system (focus group discussions).
- 2.5 Providers selected to take part in the site visit phase of the research project were identified using a combination of publicly-available data on success rates², geographical spread and the recommendations of Tertiary Colleges Group members.
- 2.6 The providers who kindly agreed to participate in the project were:

Tertiary Colleges	Sixth Form Colleges
Barnsley College	Brighton Hove & Sussex Sixth Form College (BHASVIC)
Burnley College	Hereford Sixth Form College
Cirencester College	Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College Darlington
Richmond College	
Petroc	

- 2.7 RCU, on behalf of the Tertiary Colleges Group, would like to thank all of the colleges and the individuals who kindly gave their time during the course of the site visits.
- 2.8 The site visit phase of the project was carried out during May and June 2010 and visits lasted between half a day and a full day on site.
- 2.9 The following report has synthesised the outcomes from the desk and web search process, the results from the online survey, the key themes which emerged from the discussions with staff and students during the site visits and the micro case studies of innovative practice identified during the course of the research.
- 2.10 The report contains direct quotes from responses to the online survey and discussions with college staff and students. These quotes are set out in blue italics.

Section 3: Outcomes from the desk and web research

- 3.1 The desk and web search revealed a number of approaches to personal tutorial support which have been adapted from the traditional model of using subject tutors as personal tutors for groups of students who they also teach. The process highlighted that there is no *one model fits all* system. Tutorial curricula are not fixed and need to be flexible to meet the needs of the learners.

- 3.2 Good practice in personal tutorial systems relies on commitment from senior management, continual evaluation to improve personal tutorial systems, professional development and support for personal tutors, a well-structured and resourced system, systematic communication and effective partnerships and networks.
- 3.3 A key source of information was a project carried out by the Learning and Skills Network (LSN) in 2008 called Supporting Learners to Succeed³. This project examined a number of personal tutorial systems operating across the wider learning and skills sector and included specialist land-based providers, specialist education colleges, work-based learning providers and young offender learning providers in addition to general further education and sixth form colleges. The outcome from this project was a definition of pastoral provision and a resource base to help providers to review, develop and continually improve their pastoral provision. A key resource available on the website is the Check, Audit and Action Review Tool.
- 3.4 LSIS Excellence Gateway provided the starting point for exploring variations in personal tutorial systems. The case studies for the colleges sector identified the following models:

Model/Type	Features
Traditional Model	Subject Tutors with a contractual requirements to be Personal Tutors and who teach tutees and in some cases non-tutees
Super Tutor Model	Limited number of Personal Tutors (Personal Tutor Team) with responsibility for a number of tutorial groups
Professional Tutor Model	Non-teaching staff with large caseloads employed specifically to deliver group and personal tutorial systems
Mixed Model	A combination of the traditional model and the professional tutor model
Tutorial Support Team	Comprising specialist staff such as mentors, counsellors, advisers, health specialists able to offer support to any of the above models

- 3.5 The starting point for the research project was the hypothesis that personal tutorial systems have a direct impact on the retention and success rates of an organisation and that some of the newer/different models have been developed in direct response to poor performance indicators. The following sections of this report explore this hypothesis.
- 3.6 The traditional model with subject tutors delivering the tutorial systems has a number of strengths:
- tutorials and teaching are inextricably linked and key messages can be integrated;
 - the curriculum link enhances communication, support and relationships;
 - subject teachers offer a range and depth of experience (for example relevant employment or HE experience);
 - parental familiarity and confidence; and
 - a clear sense of identity for learners.
- 3.7 Then again, it also has a number of weaknesses, namely:
- inconsistencies in the level of support given to tutees;
 - not every subject teacher wants to be, or is suited to, the role of a personal tutor;
 - reduced likelihood of training in the role of being a tutor;
 - variations in the level of commitment and follow-up;

- pressure on space and timetabling for high numbers of tutor groups;
- shortage of private space for confidential discussions;
- inconsistencies in the use of concern systems;
- lack of impartiality on course-related issues;
- low priority given to the role by some tutors;
- lack of clarity on the purpose of the tutorial system;
- issues of quality assurance where the system operates with large numbers of staff; and
- use of relatively high cost staff to deliver support.

3.8 However a number of high-achieving colleges in this study retain the traditional model and have attended to specific weaknesses. Others have decided that ‘tinkering’ with the traditional model will not produce the desired improvements in student experience and have begun to adopt more radical approaches to the organisation and delivery of personal tutorial work.

Section 4: Expanding the evidence base

Introduction

4.1 This section of the report explores the evidence gathered from the online survey of senior managers in colleges responsible for tutorial systems and combines this with insights gained through discussions with staff during the site visits on the rationale, ethos and operational aspects of different tutorial models. It expands the evidence base on the impact of changes taking place across the sector in the management and delivery of the tutorial system.

4.2 Within the English further education system every 16-19 student on a full-time programme has an entitlement to regular tutorials and enrichment activities. The Young People’s Learning Agency (YPLA) Funding Guidance for 2010/11, in the section entitled Curriculum Entitlement, states:

“The YPLA expects that the entitlement will include regular tutorials and enrichment activities, which will be delivered in an appropriate number of guided learning hours (glh) that are additional to the other learning aims within the learner’s programme. Consideration of the entitlement provision delivered by providers is reviewed during inspection.”

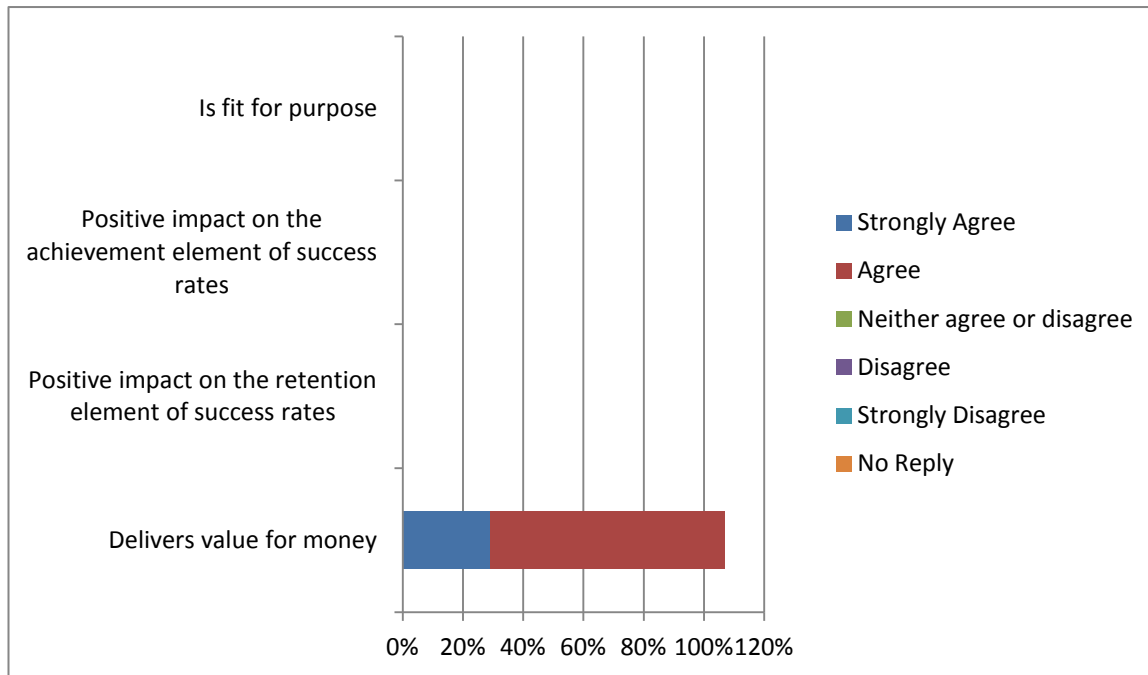
4.3 The guidance for Ofsted inspectors, the Handbook for Inspectors, requires inspectors to take account of enrichment activities, while tutorials get a specific mention in relation to the level of young people’s knowledge around equality and diversity.

4.4 Providers are therefore accountable for the funding allocation supporting tutorial systems. A key concern voiced by some senior college staff was the risk to the tutorial system if there was any reduction in the paid glh allocated to the entitlement as it was felt that this would have a major impact on students.

Value for money

4.5 The online survey of senior staff responsible for tutorial systems in colleges proved very successful with 107 responses from a database generated by RCU of 328 individuals, the overall response rate to the survey being almost a third. The online survey posed

specific questions on the value for money aspect of current tutorial systems and the impact on key performance indicators.



- 4.6 The figure shows that overall agreement with the four statements was high but levels of stronger agreement leave some room for improvement. Given the lack of published research into tutorial system models managers appeared to use internal evidence as a basis for their judgements. Inevitably there will be an element of subjectivity or comparison with previous institutions. The following comments relating to value for money and effectiveness give a flavour of respondents' thought processes:

There is a cost factor in the introduction of the new system, but the high level of support, reflected in student feedback, does represent value for money. It is difficult to measure the impact on retention and success rates in a precise way, but the more we do to enhance support and to identify and respond to problems earlier, the more we can push at the margins of our already high success rates. The old system was fit for purpose, but the time pressures on, and need for consistent approaches from; tutors indicated that we could improve levels of support further. (Tertiary College)

There is strong evidence (both qualitative and quantitative) that tutorial support is having a significant impact upon student achievement. Having merged with another college we are working on developing our system further over the coming year with a strong recognition of the significance of a good tutorial system in students' educational journey. (GFE)

There is clear evidence of the positive impact of Personal Tutors on retention in their curriculum areas (from retention figures). (GFE)

- 4.7 Staff expressed concern about the future of tutorial systems if the current funding for entitlement activities were cut or even withdrawn. Discussions with staff about the cost of delivering tutorials and other enrichment activities revealed that there had been very few situations where colleges had undertaken any formal evaluation of the cost effectiveness of their tutorial system. In many instances the discussions confirmed that cost was not a primary consideration, even in the current climate and that the value outweighs the cost. However this was typically based on perceptions rather than formal cost benefit analysis.

The overriding consideration was the quality of the tutorial system and its impact on enabling young people to remain on course and to achieve their learning goals.

- 4.8 One Sixth Form College confirmed that its tutorial system could be considered expensive but the excellent reputation, achievement and success rates of the college would indicate its worth. Another Sixth Form College stated that the tutorial system is one of the last things that would change because it has directly contributed to the Outstanding rating at the last Ofsted inspection. Sustainability was however a concern where tutorial systems were delivered by senior members of the teaching staff.
- 4.9 One Tertiary College which has quantified the cost of delivering tutorials has done this by collating information on the staff cost of delivering tutorials and compared this figure to income derived from tutorials⁴. A senior member of staff commented: It has proved useful to have this information when discussing staffing needs and strategies for improvement during the year. In terms of value for money, much of the value in the strategy is reflected in improved success rates and more satisfied learners.

Purpose of tutorial support

- 4.10 The introduction of a funded entitlement and the links to national performance indicators (retention and achievement elements of success rates) have, in part, been responsible for some of the changes which have taken place in the delivery of tutorial systems in colleges. Discussions with senior members of staff during the site visits confirmed an increased importance placed by colleges on the effectiveness of their tutorial system now that it comes under the Ofsted inspection process.
- 4.11 Clarity of purpose for tutorial systems was viewed as important by respondents. In general tutorial systems comprise two purposes; group tutorials linked to a wide variety of enrichment activities (e.g. Every Child Matters and health and wellbeing) and one-to-one discussions relating to performance and progression issues. The figure⁵ illustrates the differences in the purposes perceived by the respondents to the online survey.

Ranking Based on Respondent Ratings

Key Purposes of Tutorial System – Group	Overall	Key Purposes of Tutorial System – Individual	Overall
Receiving and giving information	1	Personal support	1
Group bonding and discussion	2	Academic support	2
Career planning	3	Welfare support	3
Personal development	4	Improved retention elements of success rates	4
Improved retention elements of success rates	5	Improved retention elements of success rates	5
Academic development	6	Personal development	6
Academic support	7	Academic development	7
Improved achievement elements of success rates	8	Career planning	8
Solving problems	9	Solving problems	9
Welfare support	10	Providing reassurance for parents	10
Personal support	11	Receiving and giving information	11
Providing reassurance for parents	12	Group bonding and discussion	12

Source: RCU Online Survey Q19

Base: 107 responses

- 4.12 There are differences between the perceived purpose of tutorials for students taking AS/A2 subjects and those students following a vocational programme of study. Discussions with senior staff during the site visits identified that in some colleges teaching staff viewed tutorials as being 'different' for AS/A2 students and that the purpose was more one of 'personal support' while tutorial support for vocational students was perceived as being more 'integrated' due to the amount of time spent with subject tutors and consequently a student's ability to have regular access to staff.

Drivers for change

- 4.13 One of the objectives for this project was to get colleges to think critically about what they want to achieve from their tutorial systems for 16 to 18 year olds. Discussion with senior staff during the site visits and responses to the online survey revealed that the subject of tutorials was an important topic and that there were teams of dedicated staff inside colleges whose primary aim is to develop support mechanism to enable young people to achieve. One senior manager in a large Tertiary College said: In the eyes of the College, tutorials are the glue which binds the learner journey as a whole.
- 4.14 Two colleges were at the start of the process to introduce new tutorial systems. Some Tertiary and Sixth Form Colleges operated more traditional models (for the purposes of this report this is defined as Subject Tutors required to be Personal Tutors as part of their employment contract) while others had introduced dedicated Personal Tutors to deliver the tutorial curriculum in whole or in part. Two themes common to all of the participating colleges were the need to ensure consistency of delivery across the tutorial system and supporting young people to achieve their learning goals.
- 4.15 The providers approached to take part in the site visits represented a range of performance in respect of retention and achievement and external judgements on tutorial systems (e.g. Ofsted comments). Some colleges had taken recent action to improve their tutorials systems while others were at the start of a tutorial transformation.
- 4.16 The providers ranged in size and in terms of recruitment area characteristics. Six of the colleges have achieved outstanding Ofsted inspection grades. One Tertiary college which was visited straight after a mock Ofsted inspection was graded 'good with many outstanding features', one of these being tutorial and enrichment provision.
- 4.17 Ofsted inspection reports identified five of the colleges as supporting young people whose GCSE attainment was below the national average, one college which supported young people from an urban area of 'considerable disadvantage' and two tertiary colleges and one sixth form college located in areas of relative affluence. The socio-demographic mix of providers yielded a wide range of examples of ways in which tutorial curricula has been innovated to provide a relevant and flexible programme to suit recipients.
- 4.18 The key drivers shaping existing and emerging tutorial systems identified through the visits to the ten providers were:
- changes to Ofsted inspection criteria;
 - a belief that individuals cannot achieve without an effective tutorial system;
 - moves to raise the profile of tutorials by giving them a clear identity which the institution values;
 - a switch of focus from delivery to support;
 - a perceived need to raise the quality and consistency threshold across the organisation;

- a desire for a structure which supports students and helps them to succeed; and
- the need to reduce costs of delivery from expensive subject tutors to dedicated staff contracted to deliver the tutorial curriculum.

Examples of tutorial models

4.19 While most colleges display tutorial systems that have evolved over time and do not exactly fit a neat typology, the following mini-case studies illustrate the broad features of the different approaches listed in section 3.4.

Traditional Model

Burnley College, BHASVIC, Hereford Sixth Form College (SFC), Richmond upon Thames College and Queen Elizabeth's Sixth Form College Darlington Subject Tutors as Personal Tutors

All of these colleges operate a 'traditional' tutorial model with Subject Tutors acting as Personal Tutors to deliver group tutorials and one-to-one support to students they also teach.

Two of these colleges have outstanding Ofsted inspection grades. Both organisations had reviewed and improved their tutorial processes and doubled the time devoted to tutorials from 1 hour a week to 2 hours a week. Burnley College is about to introduce a Super Tutor per division, with responsibility for liaising with other divisions' Super Tutors.

Queen Elizabeth SFC concluded in 2009 that there were insufficient tutors to meet the growing number of students. More staff were invited to become a 'Double-Tutor' i.e. teaching in a subject area and having a first year and a second year tutor group. Eight staff are now Double-Tutors.

BHASVIC and Richmond upon Thames College are in the process of transforming tutorial systems. Both colleges have undergone a period of tutorial review. BHASVIC has chosen to adopt the SFC Farnborough super tutor model, using Lead Tutors to deliver the new tutorial system. Richmond upon Thames College has changed the reporting status of Tutor Managers/Senior Tutors and is in the process of raising the profile of a more integrated tutorial system whilst restructuring ten Schools of Study into four Divisions for the coming academic year.

Perceived advantages of the Traditional Model:

- closer relationships with the students because they have subject knowledge relating to progression; and
- greater accessibility for students.

Professional Tutor Model

Cirencester College's Professional Personal Tutors

The College operates a strong pastoral system but felt that the system was 'good but could be better' particularly where consistency in the quality of the support was concerned. In September 2009 a new grade of staff was established to deliver group and individual tutorials. These professional Personal Tutors are on support staff contracts and have up to six tutor groups i.e. around 150 students. Some of the new tutors are ex-Guidance staff, some are full-time and some part-time. There are also Lead Tutors who have a case-load of around 80 tutees and extra administrative roles. All tutors are managed by Senior Tutors (experienced academic staff

in the respective subject areas/Faculties). Under the new system, Senior Tutors are managing more and having to deal less with individual problem students.

City of Sunderland College's Associate Lecturers

The College's previous system was delivered by Subject Tutors outside of the curriculum and was focussed on delivery rather than support. The quality of tutorials was mixed and was not felt to be delivering value for money. The new senior management team wanted a structure which supported students and helped them to succeed. The College also wanted better retention rates and an increase in higher grades. The senior management team (SMT) set about a major change and undertook a restructuring based around the quality agenda. The starting point for the present tutorial system was to appoint a new grade of staff specifically to deliver the tutorial curriculum. The Associate Lecturer role was created based on individuals qualified to degree level. Some had teaching qualifications already and others have acquired teaching qualifications since their appointment. This grade of staff is not paid at the same level as Subject Tutors because they do not have the same developmental responsibility in respect of the curriculum. Their role is to deliver the tutorial curriculum and to act as advocates for their students at Progression Boards*. The change represented a shift from a tutorial system with a primary focus on key skills towards a more individual centred (personal action planning) system that also offered individual support.

Perceived advantages of the Professional Tutor Model are:

- specifically employed for their people skills;
- their ability to network;
- their communication skills;
- useful to have backgrounds in working with young people; and
- more cost effective than Subject Tutors.

Note: *Progression Boards are held termly and look holistically at the students to ensure the young person is meeting their targets and knows what to do to help them reach the next step.

Mixed Model

Barnsley College's Tutorial Learning Mentors (TLMs)

The introduction of Tutorial Learning Mentors (TLMs) came about as a specific point of focus on retention, students at risk of leaving, Additional Learning Support (ALS) and small group work. TLMs engage with group tutorials as and when appropriate. The College has twelve departments and each department has a Tutorial Team Leader (TTL) and at least one TLM. Departments are increasing their number of TLMs as they recognise their worth and their impact on the learner experience. The College operates a devolved business model and as part of the Performance Review Model Heads of Department (reporting to SMT) make the decisions to run their business (their department) to the maximum benefit of their students. In the Sixth Form College there is a TTL and six TLMs who deliver the entire tutorial programme. In the rest of the College each department has a TTL and at least one TLM plus, in some departments, subject tutors who act as Personal Tutors. Many TLMs have teaching qualifications. In departments such as Engineering the TLMs deliver the one-to-one tutorials but they operate a different model for group tutorials. They have one full day every five or six weeks dedicated to tutorial activities. These are themed to reflect the ECM agenda. Guest speakers are invited and there is a clear focus to the event.

Petroc's Personal Tutors and Pastoral Tutors

Petroc was created from the merger of North Devon College and East Devon College. The tutorial system which operated at North Devon College formed the basis of the tutorial system for the merged organisation. The College has six Schools led by Heads of School and Senior Tutors to oversee the tutorial system. The management of the College's tutorial system sits very high in the organisation within the Directorate for Learning headed by the Vice Principal. The current system operates with Personal Tutors who are Subject Tutors employed on academic contracts, overseeing two tutor groups each. There are also 6 Pastoral Tutors based at the Barnstaple campus supporting Humanities and Science AS/A2 students and 1 Pastoral Tutor in Hairdressing. These tutors are not on academic contracts (although the A Level Pastoral Tutors are new graduates with a teaching qualification). They support up to 160 students in 8 tutorial groups each.

Perceived advantages the Mixed Model are:

- flexibility in delivery;
- ability to match Personal Tutors with the type of student, level of ability and curriculum area.; and
- freedom to innovate and devise engaging tutorial programmes.

Super Tutor Model

The Sixth Form College Farnborough's Personal Tutor Team

On incorporation senior staff took the decision to change the tutorial model and decided that in order to improve the quality of the tutorial experience the College would introduce a new level of staff employed as Personal Tutors and ensure these staff not only had the aptitude but the professional skills to enable them to do the job. In the late 1990s the new system commenced with twelve to fifteen Personal Tutors to 100 tutees. This team of Personal Tutors has now grown to twenty-six and as a team has shaped the tutorial quality assurance process. Lead Tutors are responsible for groups of Personal Tutors (five in total). The College has Personal Tutors who deliver the group and individual tutorial system and Subject Tutors who deliver the teaching and learning in subject areas. Both are expected to care for the students. The Personal Tutor Team operates a pairing system which provides cover for tutees in the event of absence. A key feature of this tutorial system is the location of the Personal Tutor Team. They occupy a corridor in the main part of the College with twenty-six individual offices on one side, group tutorial rooms on the other side and Students Services, Enrichment Officers and Volunteer Bureau staff all sited in this space. The College culture is "count in ones" and show an interest in the individual. The College has a "cradle to the grave" approach to supporting their students. Personal Tutors interview prospective students in Year 11 in the feeder schools and "kiss them goodbye" when they leave. The structure and values which originated in the late 90s are still there today.

Perceived advantages the Super Tutor Model are:

- small team of highly experienced Personal Tutors able to control and improve the quality of tutorial support;
- accessibility for students; and
- the pairing system ensures tutees have continuity of support.

4.20 The purpose of tutorial systems is often clearest in colleges that are consciously changing their approach. For example, the rationale for change which is taking place in BHASVIC and Richmond upon Thames College is driven by the desire to improve the quality of the tutorial systems and to provide consistently high quality tutorial support for students. BHASVIC – Tutorial transformation Five years ago a whole college discussion was launched around what learners should be offered beyond examinations. This led to an initiative called Education for Life (E4L) which focussed on consideration for oneself and others and encouraged reflection on what was learnt outside college (part-time jobs, clubs social life etc). At the same time senior staff in the college were looking at what constituted best practice in tutorial systems across the sector. A decision was taken to launch a model similar to that operating at the Sixth Form College Farnborough. Specialist Tutors are being introduced in September 2010 to Year 1 learners, followed by a planned roll-out to encompass all learners the following year. Specialist Tutors will retain a reduced teaching commitment. The E4L initiative has taken off and senior tutors are felt by the College to have really taken it on board. The new tutorial sessions will be integrated into the block timetable, giving two sessions of sixty-five minutes as this is considered to be a much more effective length of time. Specialist Tutors have been recruited internally. By the end of rollout, there will be twenty to twenty-five Specialist Tutors, with a minimum of three and maximum of five tutor groups each, and an average of 22 students per group. The majority of Specialist Tutors for next year are part-time. A tutorial block is being created over the summer, giving a dedicated area with four rooms for group tutorials as well as break-out space. Having a dedicated tutorial space raises the profile of the tutorial programme for staff and students. It will also ease the problems of providing cover when a tutor is absent. The new tutorial system has been two years in development.

Richmond upon Thames College – Tutorial transformation

One of the key drivers for the change that is taking place in the College's tutorial system is the size of the organisation. Richmond upon Thames College enrolls between 4,000 and 4,500 16-19 year olds and providing all students with a Personal tutor is quite a challenge. Almost all Subject Tutors are required to be Personal Tutors and the College is not able to pick and choose staff to become Personal Tutors because of the number of students requiring support.

The changes which have been introduced have included altering the line of reporting for Tutor Managers and embedding them into the ten Schools of Study (the College is moving to four Divisions in 2010/11). Senior Tutors, or Tutor Managers as they will be known, are responsible to the Head of School and form part of the management team within each School of Study. This has started the process of raising the profile and status of the tutorial system within the College. A new electronic monitoring system was introduced this year helping tutors to focus on attendance, enforced by a 10 minute rule (if the student is not there in 10 minutes they are not allowed into the lesson) and achievement. This has had an immediate impact on retention.

The College firmly believes that having Personal Tutors who are also subject tutors gives them credibility because of their curriculum knowledge and in the case of vocational provision close working relationships. This is harder to achieve in the AS/A2 area because subjects are not confined to one School of Study. In 2009 the College appointed a new Entitlement Manager with a remit to undertake a review of the tutorial system and to provide a firm evidence base for moving forward into a more focussed, planned and integrated tutorial system.

4.21 Some of the senior staff who responded to the online survey indicated that they were in the process of moving towards introducing the non-subject tutor model. One example illustrates this:

We are in a process of introducing dedicated Pastoral Tutors (PT) into curriculum areas with six currently in place. We are moving towards having a PT in each area from September 2010. The first cohort of PTs have been attached to areas that need more pastoral support or where this was seen as an area needing development. We are also looking at more specialist Tutor/Mentor support for Foundation Learning which will be introduced across the coming year. (GFEC)

- 4.22 Student perceptions of their tutorial systems were generally positive about both the Traditional Model and the Professional Tutor Model. This is an example of their comments about the Traditional Model:

Having a teacher as your tutor means that they know more about you – they will understand the deadlines that you have and you are more likely to develop a personal relationship with them. This is important when they come to write your reference for University because they have more knowledge about the department and more information about you and how you work.

- 4.23 Students who experienced the Professional Tutor Model felt that having separate personal tutors had benefits mainly in availability and accessibility. They said:

The tutor's key responsibility is the tutorial system which means that they can always make time for you.

Perceptions of effectiveness among staff

- 4.24 An important aspect which emerged from the site visits was the collective pride displayed by staff when they were explaining their tutorial model, demonstrating a genuine passion for the system which lay at the heart of their organisation and reflected their values and culture.

- 4.25 Based on these explanations, the key strands which are felt to contribute to outstanding tutorial systems are:

- systems which are driven by the commitment from senior staff at the top of the organisation;
- the link between quality assurance and the tutorial system;
- flexibility of the tutorial model;
- parity of esteem between the tutorial curriculum and the academic and vocational curriculum;
- clarity of purpose of the tutorial system;
- recognition of the value of the tutorial system;
- the skills of the staff delivering tutorials (group and individual);
- the holistic nature of the tutorial model (focus is on the whole person rather than specific aspects such as the curriculum) ;
- the sophistication of e-systems underpinning tutorial systems; and
- tutorial curricula informed by the learner voice and supported by relevant specialist staff (inside and outside of the organisation) as and when appropriate.

- 4.26 The online survey captured perceptions of the level of commitment from senior management towards tutorial systems. However it should be remembered that the respondents were themselves mainly senior managers.

- 4.27 The figure shows that overall agreement from respondents was very high for the level of understanding of, and commitment to, the organisation's tutorial system and the proportion of respondents who strongly agreed with the second statement regarding SMT commitment was just over 60%. The level of agreement starts to fall away in respect of whole organisation commitment to continually improving quality of tutorial systems and fell below 60% on overall agreement with the statement regarding the dynamism of tutorial systems. The comment below from a respondent in a Tertiary College elaborates these points.

There has always been a high level of commitment to a cross-college approach to tutorial support from every level of the College structure. Senior managers, academic departments and tutorial staff are all very supportive of the change to a new, dedicated tutorial system, although there was a healthy debate about the quality of support and cost in the consultation process. The transition to the new system means we are experimenting, but has clearly increased the dynamism in the system. (Tertiary College)

- 4.28 Comments from online survey respondents showed that where staff did not have a clear understanding of the purpose of the tutorial system there was generally a lack of commitment. It was also interesting to note a recognition from several respondents that their tutorial systems were long-overdue for a review to increase their effectiveness. The benefits of a comprehensive review of tutorial arrangements were reinforced by evidence from the visits.

Barnsley College

There is a firmly held belief that individuals cannot achieve without an effective tutorial system. FE has undervalued tutorials and Barnsley College has revolutionised its tutorial system and staff in the last couple of years. Previously tutorials had a low profile and been undervalued by tutees and staff because the system lacked an identity. Staff were not always clear on what the tutorial system was there to do. There was sometimes confusion and a tokenistic approach to delivering tutorials. The College appointed a senior member of staff five years ago to develop a meaningful tutorial system. This meant introducing significant changes and raising the rationale and benefits of delivering quality tutorials across the whole college.

Burnley College

A key focus for the College's tutorial system is their Teaching & Learning Strategy. Subject teachers are responsible for learners knowing how to learn. The College has moved over a number of years to focussing on how learners learn and adapting their practice to that. Staff have grown to believe that local young people CAN achieve and that key message has transmitted itself to learners. This is felt to have resulted in breaking a low aspiration culture which is prevalent in the area. The College has invested heavily in tutorials and in getting the discipline/ behaviour/personal values issues right.

The Sixth Form College Farnborough

There is a single corporate objective and that is "we are here to improve students' achievements". "Students come to the College to achieve" and the staff are believed to genuinely like and care for the young people for whom they are responsible. The College believes it adds value to the achievements of the students who study at the College. The pastoral system is one of the "invisible safety nets" in the College to help students achieve.

- 4.29 The value systems which drive a tutorial system plays a key role in its success. Clarity of purpose for a tutorial system is an essential requirement as is parity of esteem for the tutorial curriculum and the academic/vocational curriculum. Getting the balance right is one of the starting points for an outstanding tutorial system.

The Sixth Form College Farnborough

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Barnsley College

The tutorial system at Barnsley College is seen as a ‘robust safety net’ for learners and the tutorial curriculum is just as important as the teaching curriculum. Tutorials used to be delivered by teaching staff who already had a heavy teaching commitment and who sometimes were not positively engaged with the tutorial process. The staff who engage with the tutorials programme now ‘want to be there’ because they enjoy the interaction with students and are firmly committed to the role.

Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College Darlington

There is an expectation that full-time subject tutors will be pastoral tutors (there are few exceptions). The job description for a subject tutor contains information on the pastoral structure and the interview process includes mini-case-studies concerning tutorial issues and poses the question to candidates ‘What would you do in this situation?’ Students are involved in the interview process, including the appointment of the Principal. The College aims for parity between pastoral and curriculum support. “We don’t see the pastoral/subject divide – we’re all in it together”

Clarity of person specifications

4.30 These mini-case studies underline the importance of ‘getting the right type of staff’ to deliver tutorial systems. The research found examples of colleges implementing wholesale reviews of the type of staff delivering tutorials as well as those with well-established ideas of the person specification for individuals to perform the role of Personal Tutor. This is a key driver for raising the quality threshold of tutorial delivery to drive up retention and achievement.

Hereford Sixth Form College

Extract from Tutorial Policies and Procedures

Most full time Subject Tutors are also Personal Tutors and their role at Personal Tutors is an important one in supporting and guiding the student through his/her course of study. Personal Tutors are responsible for both administrative and support and guidance matters relating to their students. The effectiveness of the system depends on the quality of relations between Personal Tutors and students.

Barnsley College Tutorial Learning Mentor – Job description

Summary of the Post -To act as Tutorial Learning Mentor to a caseload of learners. To ensure that learners are encouraged and supported and can access College services as and when needed with ease and know how to access external resources. Person specification – TLMs need to offer flexible and creative approaches; be able to relate to young people and are solutions-focussed.

Key duties include:

- identifying at risk learners;
- listening and embedding solutions-focussed approaches to barriers to learning;
- developing strategies to support underperformance;

- working with learners to raise self-esteem and confidence;
- developing small group activities to foster peer support,
- anger management sessions etc;
- supporting transition from school to college for at risk learners;
- supporting learners in target setting and monitoring outcomes to encourage success;
- communicating effectively with parents;
- offering pastoral support and guidance for academic and pastoral issues;
- offering guidance on progression;
- acting as learning mentors;
- monitoring attendance and punctuality;
- preparing course materials (Schemes of Work, Learning Plans); and
- preparing effective and useful group tutorials.

4.31 Colleges with outstanding tutorial systems take time to get the people aspect of the role right because they understand the importance of having the right kind of staff delivering tutorials and the impact this has on enabling young people to stay on course and achieve.

4.32 Student perceptions of the skills sets which made a good tutor were:

- the ability to understand students;
- being approachable;
- being friendly;
- being a good listener;
- able to communicate well; and
- being someone who was engaging

Link to quality improvement

4.33 Ensuring compliance with quality improvement processes is an important driver of improvement or change in tutorial systems. Tutorial models that rely on delivery by Subject Tutors who already have a heavy teaching commitment and who are not necessarily positively engaged with the tutorial process has been, and continues to be, a problem for some colleges. A culture of quality improvement requires colleges to have staff who engage with the tutorial programme and who 'want to be there' because they enjoy the interaction with students and are firmly committed to the role. Staff buy-in to the tutorial system is an essential element for a successful tutorial model.

The key drivers for the tutorial system operated at the Sixth Form College Farnborough are the skills and abilities of the Personal Tutors and the ethos of the organisation with its focus on helping all students to achieve.

4.34 Discussions with staff during the site visits identified a large number of checks and balances in their tutorial models to ensure high quality. The most frequently mentioned was the importance of student feedback on the quality, content and delivery of tutorials. Below are some examples of the ways in which colleges capture this feedback:

- online student surveys with responses converted into statistics;
- Student Forums;
- students evaluation of the tutorial session with Lead Tutor feedback to their team;
- student and parent views with feedback strongly encouraged and collected formally via surveys as well as through learner focus groups;
- student survey questions on both group and one to one tutorial activity;

- focus groups held with students including on the subject of tutorials supported by regular staff dialogue
- with students; and
- feedback via student reps and a student council.

Ensuring relevance and student buy-in

4.35 Staff responsible for the delivery of group tutorials stated that the content and focus of group tutorials has to be of relevance to the student and felt flexibility in the content and way in which it was delivered is an important aspect of delivery.

4.36 During the focus group discussions with students it was apparent that those students valued well-planned and well-developed content within group tutorials found:

Some topics are really interesting and they help you to discover things that you didn't know about yourself...they make you...I don't know... a more rounded individual.

4.37 Students also said that they really enjoyed having visitors in to talk to them because of the opportunity to ask questions and get information from people other than their Personal Tutors. Where students did not appear to have a planned programme of study in group tutorials there was evidence of dissatisfaction:

It can get tedious turning up each week just to hear the bulletin which you can read for yourself.

4.38 These students tended to place more value in one to one sessions with their Personal Tutors as they felt their time was spent more productively.

Importance of developing tutor skills

4.39 Colleges have found that the inclusion of tutorials in Self Assessment Reports (SARs) has formed part of the process to encourage Personal Tutors to take ownership of the tutorial system. This approach also underlines the value and parity of esteem of the tutorial system. One college undertakes a tutorial audit three times a year while other colleges routinely include tutorials in their internal inspection processes. Most colleges include tutorials (group and individual) in their observation schedule.

4.40 Staff development, Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and Performance Management were other aspects of quality improvement processes discussed during the site visits. One college encourages pastoral targets within annual appraisals; another college devised a Tutorial Staff Development Planner (TSDP) identifying a number of events staff have to attend. Staff at this particular college commented that the TSDP had a positive impact in raising the confidence levels of staff delivering the tutorial programme and in one to one interactions with students.

4.41 In addition to formal staff development/CPD, tutorial teams provide mutual support for new Personal Tutors as well as meeting regularly to discuss and exchange best practice and identify future training needs. This approach was seen by colleges as being characteristic of a dynamic tutorial system.

4.42 The online survey tested senior staff perceptions of the level of resource and planning that went into professional development of Personal Tutors and the delivery aspect of tutorials.

4.43 There were some interesting comments from respondents to these four statements.

CPD and support is well-planned

In addition to the graded observation staff receive a developmental observation (ungraded) with a mentor/subject specialist to help support actions arising from graded lesson observations or to share good practice. In addition the staff development programme relates to organisational needs as well as the needs of the individual and each application is considered, prioritised and agreed by line and senior managers. Teaching staff are also required to be licensed through the IFL process. (GFEC)

Over the past year and a half there has been weekly tutor training provided on a roll on/roll off basis. There have also been dedicated tutor training sessions on staff training days, as well as sessions on related areas of work like Learner Voice, Target Setting and Youth Work. (GFEC)

CPD and support is adequately-resourced.

There is a problem in releasing staff to attend CPD when they are teaching or tutoring up to their contractual maximum. (GFEC)

This is starting to happen... but much more investment in training specifically for personal tutoring is needed. (GFEC)

Tutorials are well-structured

We have introduced an over-arching framework of tutorial content and most tutors are using this (but not all). (GFEC)

The procedure is at this moment being reviewed and evaluated. While the majority of areas are extremely well structured and resourced there are one or two areas in need of slight improvement. (GFEC)

Despite comprehensive schemes of work, where faculties have not allocated time these are not well-structured. (GFEC)

Tutorials are well resourced

Some of our resources become dated quite quickly (e.g. stuff on drugs awareness) or are sourced from abroad (e.g. American/Australian video materials). (GFEC)

Our current tutorial team and pastoral system has been in place for the past year and a half. The team focuses primarily on pastoral support with some responsibility for target setting and progression. The management of academic tutorials sits with course teams and curriculum areas. This needs to be merged more effectively with clearer lines of responsibility and management. As part of the new system, Schemes of Work and resources have been developed that relate to the different levels of study and meet the needs of students as part of the Every Learner Matters agenda. We have also introduced an electronic Individual Learning Plan (ILP) system that is supporting students with target setting and their progression. (GFEC)

4.44 A comment from one of the students who took part in the focus group discussions gets to the heart of what a tutorial system means to students:

It is not the system you have that is important, it's the person you have. At the end of the day if you have someone who you can get on with, they will do things for you no matter who or what they are and they will always help you.

Role of performance data

4.45 A number of colleges visited during the project operate sophisticated electronic systems for capturing performance data. In some cases these e-systems have been developed internally to meet specific information needs while other organisations have bought in ready-made e-systems. These e-systems were identified by staff as having two key purposes:

- to identify patterns of behaviour, absences etc to flag up students potentially at risk; and
- to act as a primary means of communication between Subject Tutors, Personal Tutors and Lead/Senior Tutors.

Barnsley College's Electronic Personalised Learning Plan (EPLP)

The EPLP informs the rota for all Personal Tutors (PTs) in respect of who they will see in their allocated hours. Subject Tutors upload the current review which allows Tutorial Learning Mentors/Personal Tutors to sit down with students to discuss progress, set targets etc. TLMs/PTs record details on the EPLP, personal goals etc, details of contact, Celebration for Success online certificates etc. Any Subject Tutor dealing with that student can then access the EPLP and check on what is happening. Students can also show their EPLP to their parents as they progress.

The College hosts parents' induction evenings and Tutorial Team Leaders (TTLs) give presentations and explain to parents how they can access their child's EPLP. There are hard copy versions of records to print off and take home to parents if there is no computer at home.

City of Sunderland College's Progress Review Plan (PRP)

The Personal Review Plan (PRP) is a key driver of the College's tutorial system. The PRP records all the essential attendance, performance information, target grades etc. Students can personalise their PRP to some extent as well. The PRP is able to be viewed by the student, their Subject Tutors, their Associate Lecturer and their parents/guardians through the College's Blackboard. Progression Boards are held every term and Associate Lecturers take a holistic view of their students to make sure the young person is meeting their targets and knows what to do to enable them reach the next step.

Petroc's On Campus

On Campus – is a system which the College has developed over several years. This e-system now drives the whole information process for tracking students, monitoring their progress, setting targets, highlighting at risk students and facilitating communication between staff across multiple sites. Personal Tutors, Pastoral Tutors and Subject Tutors have access to the records and students have a different level of access but can be authorised to see other parts, some of which must be accessed by a member of staff. There is an online Personal Record for each student. This has tab links to a number of key areas such as: PDP (personal development); UCAS reference; draft personal statements; online reviews; support information etc.

The College has developed an At Risk Register which has 6 levels (1 being the least level of concern up to 6 which is the highest concern) which monitors those students causing concern and logs the interventions taken to help keep the student on their course.

Sixth Form College Farnborough CRISTAL Web

SFC Farnborough's in-house CRISTAL Web contains all of the data relating to every student and is the key tool to identify patterns of behaviour which may lead to a student being at risk of dropping out of college. It is also the primary method of communication between Subject Tutors,

Personal Tutors and Lead Tutors. Personal Tutors use CRISTAL Web to monitor for signs of things going wrong before they reach a critical point and have access at the highest security levels of information contained in the system.

- 4.46 The mini-case studies outlined on the previous illustrate the importance of integrating with other elements of learner support to help keep young people engaged in their learning programmes and ultimately succeeding.

Section 5: Conclusions

- 5.1 The YPLA currently has a funded entitlement for the delivery of regular tutorials and enrichment activities for all 16-19 students on full-time courses. One major concern to colleges would be how to maintain tutorials and enrichment activities if this funding was no longer ring-fenced. Tutorial systems, whatever the type of model operating in colleges, are expensive to run but the evidence consistently points to their value in helping young people to stay on courses and to achieve their learning goals.
- 5.2 However very few colleges have formally evaluated the costs and benefits of their systems and this leaves tutorial support vulnerable to pressures to reduce costs. The Ofsted inspection process includes an assessment of the college's tutorial and enrichment provision and it was evident from the discussions with senior staff during the site visits that this was having a positive impact on their tutorial systems and had triggered wholesale tutorial reviews in some cases.
- 5.3 Clarity of purpose is one of the underpinning requirements for an effective tutorial system. Colleges have to be absolutely clear on what their tutorial system is meant to do and what it is not meant to do and this message has to be understood throughout the organisation. Staff buy-in to tutorial systems is key and the commitment must be supported by specific and effective skill development programmes.
- 5.4 College management is mindful of having to work within reducing budgets whilst at the same time wanting to provide excellent levels of support to students. A key finding from the research is that there is no single optimum tutorial model for colleges. The further education sector includes a range of excellent tutorial models contributing to outstanding inspection grades. However, underpinning these tutorial systems is a whole organisation ethos and culture driven by senior management teams which have identified and communicated a clear purpose to the tutorial system. This means that models imported from effective systems elsewhere may not deliver the desired effects unless the supporting culture and ethos are aligned. Irrespective of the model used, tutorial systems appeared to be most effective where they had been formally reviewed and regularly evaluated.
- 5.5 The research found a number of key drivers for curriculum system reviews:
- internal shifts from delivery to support;
 - external pressures to raise quality and consistency thresholds; and
 - promotion of cultures where the success of individuals is paramount.
- 5.6 Financial pressures to achieve more with less will become a significant factor and colleges need to examine more formally the value for money delivered by their tutorial systems. A key question for the future will be can colleges produce the same level of quality of outcomes for students with lower cost models?

- 5.7 The tutorial curriculum needs to have parity of esteem with the academic/vocational curriculum and this can often be a challenge for colleges to get this balance right. This means getting staff to engage with the tutorial programme and having clear strategies to monitor and build student perceptions of value.
- 5.8 One way to build parity of esteem and demonstrate the importance of tutorial systems is to invest in effective supporting data systems. E-systems which have either developed organically as tutorial systems matured or those which have been bought in to improve tracking and monitoring appear to contribute to outstanding tutorial systems. The research found some highly sophisticated information systems which underpinned not only the recording of routine information, identification of at risk students, setting targets and monitoring of achievements but also facilitated essential communication between Personal Tutors and Subject Tutors across large and small organisations. Inevitably, the real added value came not from the design of the systems themselves but the way they were used by tutors and managers to support continuous quality improvement.
- 5.9 Having the right people with the right skills to support 16-19 students is a key feature of an outstanding tutorial system. This is most effective where colleges have clarity on the skill set needed to be a successful Personal Tutor. In the professional Personal Tutor model staff are specifically recruited with experience of dealing with young people to deliver the tutorial system. Where this approach works well, this new grade of staff quickly acquires curriculum knowledge from close working relationships with Subject Tutors and in many instances they are qualified teachers. However effective skill identification and development can be a feature of any system.
- 5.10 Outstanding tutorial systems have robust quality improvement processes fully embedded. This means tutorial systems form part of the Self Assessment Review process, group and individual tutorials are routinely observed, and the impact of tutorials is regularly audited.

Appendix

Online Survey Results

Analysis of online survey

- 1) RCU devised an online questionnaire which was targeted at senior staff in colleges with responsibility for the group and individual tutorial system operating in their college. In order to increase the effectiveness and response rate to the online survey RCU Project Support staff compiled a database of senior staff in colleges across England with this specific responsibility. The final database comprised 328 contacts.
- 2) The survey went live on Wednesday 21st April and closed on Friday 7th May and during that period RCU received 107 completed questionnaires.

Type of College	Number of completed questionnaires
General Further Education Colleges	68
Sixth Form Colleges	31
Tertiary Colleges	5
Specialist Colleges	3

- 3) 85 respondents indicated that they had direct responsibility for their college's group and individual tutorial system. This equated to three quarters of respondents from General Further Education Colleges (GFECs) and 87% of respondents from Sixth Form Colleges

(SFCs). 7 of the 8 respondents from Tertiary and Specialist Colleges also had direct responsibility for their tutorial systems.

- 4) Respondents were asked to describe their recruitment areas.

Type of college recruitment area	%
Largely urban	50%
Largely rural	13%
Mixed	37%

- 5) The first question on the survey aimed to establish the many different approaches used in colleges to support a range of different student groups. Desk research and interviews with key stakeholders indicated that there was no “one size fits all” approach and that organisations had developed tutorial systems to suit the needs of the young people they support. For example one Tertiary College operates a tutorial system where they employ professional personal tutors with large case loads to support AS/A2 students while students on vocational courses have subject tutors as their personal tutors. The responses to the first part of the survey confirmed that there were many different approaches used across the further education sector.
- 6) Respondents were invited to add further comments which would help to describe their 16-19 tutorial system more clearly. Some of these comments are set out below.

We do have some teaching staff who are not tutors. Some teaching staff have more than one tutor group but we do not have a special role of super tutor/coach. We do have non teaching staff who provide support e.g. with welfare advice and guidance and careers advice but on an ad hoc basis - they do not have 'dedicated caseloads' of students. (GFEC)

Each group has a tutorial once a week. The tutorial sessions are planned by the Student Services Department and delivered by the curriculum. Additional activities and tutorial support is provided by guest speakers, themed events and activities. (GFEC)

We have limited vocational provision - Applied A levels and the Creative & Media Diploma. We do not offer full Level 2 programmes. Most teaching staff are tutors and some support staff such as mentors also are tutors. As far as possible we try to have subject based tutor groups and try to have a member of staff who teaches the student to be their personal tutor. However, this is not always possible. (SFC)

Almost all teachers tutor including managers and senior managers. Vocational and Academic are together. Level 3 is both AS and A2, Level 2 and Foundation are distinct. We have specialist mentors and learning support staff who may have a tutor group but most mentors do not. Tutoring is two sessions with one-to-one options when group time is released or converted. (SFC)

- 7) 32% of respondents overall indicated that they varied the way in which the tutorial system for 16- 19 year olds was applied differently in some curriculum areas.

Differentiated by level. (GFEC)

Tutorial programme is differentiated and is appropriate to the needs of Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 learners and also those at or Pre Entry. It is also targeted to the needs of A Level and vocational students. (GFEC)

Tutors map Every Child Matters (ECM) themes into their schemes of work based on what is present in their vocational subjects and the expertise within their course team; therefore whilst there is a common tutorial scheme of work this is not necessarily followed systematically: e.g. in Health and Social Care there is less emphasis on being healthy within the tutorial scheme of work as this theme is developed within the vocational subject curriculum. (GFEC)

GCSE/AS/A2 students may be tutored by a member of the teaching staff who does not teach them

- because of the size of the curriculum offer and the variety of subject choice combinations. We are moving towards a Personal Tutor system delivered by Specialist Pastoral staff. This model is more developed in GCSE/AS/A2 than elsewhere. (GFEC)

We are in a process of introducing dedicated Pastoral Tutors (PT) into curriculum areas with six currently in place. We are moving towards having a PT in each area from September 2010. The first cohort of PTs have been attached to areas that need more pastoral support or where this was seen as an area needing development. We are also looking at more specialist Tutor/Mentor support for Foundation Learning which will be introduced across the coming year. (GFEC)

The College is divided into Schools and although there is a generic and standardised tutorial process because of the uniqueness of each School there is flexibility in the system to allow the providers in each area to tailor the schemes of work and the delivery content to meet their own students' needs. (GFEC)

Autonomy in Faculties re: timetabling of Tutorial, therefore not all receive full entitlement. Being directed for 2010/11 so that all full time 16-19 have Group and Individual Tutorials timetabled. (GFEC)

Content of tutorials and approaches are differentiated according to needs of cohorts and this may vary within different curriculum areas. (GFEC)

The tutorial system works slightly differently in the sixth form, with there being a greater likelihood that the personal tutor may not actually teach the student. Curriculum areas may choose to have a greater or lesser input from the pastoral side and include a more subject specific focus. (GFEC)

Some areas adhere strictly to the college's tutorial calendar and scheme of work, some use it loosely and some ignore it. Tutorial allowance varies between an hour per week and an hour and a half. Some areas focus almost entirely on one-to-one tutorials. Tutorial paperwork is audited so there is more conformity on completion of ILPs. (GFEC)

Vocational pathway e.g. BTEC courses have Tutorial which is linked to the course. Academic pathway e.g. GCSE/AS/A2 have Tutorial which is blocked at same time for each level and a programme which is designed by a senior member of staff and delivered by Personal Tutors. The core elements of Tutorial exist in all pathways. (GFEC)

Tutorial provision is different for A Level provision to Vocational. Vocational courses are ready formed groups tutored by teaching staff whereas A Level students are formed into groups for group tutorial, often with member of a teaching team who may not teach all of the individuals. This latter group have a Senior Tutor who oversees and quality controls the quality of provision within the area. (GFEC)

Some vocational areas have more sophisticated ILP arrangements (linked to individual modular achievements) than academic areas. Some Departments frontload their one-to-one tutorials in the academic year. (GFEC)

Currently A Level students are tutored by a team of tutors who also teach A Levels. A Level students may or may not be tutored by a teacher who also teaches them an A Level subject. Vocational students at Levels 3, 2 and 1 are tutored by a team of tutors who do not teach a subject, although all tutors teach a tutorial curriculum. The difference results from a reorganisation of the college, where courses from the vocational part of the college moved to the A Level centre, but the tutorial systems have not yet merged. (GFEC)

Common core curriculum, but areas vary in approach to delivery. (GFEC)

A Level groups do not always have a tutor who teaches them - although we try and ensure they do. This is because they take a range of subjects. Level 3 vocational will always have a teacher as their tutor as they are studying one subject area. (GFEC)

Have separate High Achiever, Academic and Vocational groups. Tutorials are directed to different pathways i.e. Russell Group, Recruiting HE and Employment. Level 1 and 2 tutorials look at developing skills required to progress into employment. (TC)

Differences between Year One and Two Courses, and we are developing differences between BTEC and A Level. (TC)

The programme for LLDD and PMLD learners is more flexible and delivered in a way that meets the needs of these learners. (TC)

A Level tutors usually teach their tutees but not always. Vocational and levels 0 - 2 always teach tutees, often for significant periods of time. A Level tutorials are on the timetable grid whereas vocational and levels 0 - 2 are slots on a timetable at a suitable time in the week. (TC)

Whilst all students are tutored by someone who teaches them, they are mixed groups in terms of the teaching groups they come from (so a tutor will have AS and A2 students from perhaps 4 different teaching groups in their Tutor group); BTEC and other vocational groups are tutored as a teaching group and are not mixed. (SFC)

Diploma groups tutorial together. Other Advanced level groups mixed curriculum groups. Separate Intermediate, Intermediate Access, Foundation and ESOL groups. (SFC)

- 8) The next section on the survey asked about the commitment from senior managers in respect of the tutorial system and how dynamic they were. The first statement invited respondents to indicate their level of agreement with Senior managers in the college understand the tutorial system.
- 9) There was a very high proportion of respondents from Sixth Form Colleges who said that they Strongly agreed with this statement. The level of agreement was lower from GFEC respondents.

Senior managers are fully committed to improving the tutorial system. (GFEC)

Not all Senior managers understand. (GFEC)

There has always been a high level of commitment to a cross-college approach to tutorial support from every level of the College structure. Senior managers, academic departments and tutorial staff are all very supportive of the change to a new, dedicated tutorial system, although there was a healthy debate about the quality of support and cost in the consultation process. The transition to the new system means we are experimenting, but has clearly increased the dynamism in the system. (TC)

Senior management have recognised tutorial needed developing and have created a new post to re-vamp system and processes. (TC)

10) The second statement asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement with Senior managers in the college are fully committed to the tutorial system.

11) Once again the key difference between respondents in GFECs and SFCs was the proportion of individuals who replied that they *Strongly agreed* with the statement.

Attitudes towards the tutorial system have shifted over the last 2 years and are becoming more consistent - however, there are still pockets of inconsistent practice across the college as a whole, both in terms of tutorial structure and delivery. (GFEC)

Those who do not understand lack commitment to it. (GFEC)

Some Senior managers are tutors; they are committed at several levels. The tutorial system needs revitalising despite including some excellent materials. (SFC)

The Principal and other senior managers are all tutors. (SFC)

12) Statement number three said There is a whole organisation commitment to continually evaluating and improving the tutorial system.

13) The figure shows that the proportion of respondents from SFCs who Strongly agreed with this statement has fallen back to the 60% mark. However this is around 20% higher than GFEC respondents although the aggregate level of agreement is broadly the same.

All tutorial activity is subject to graded lesson observation (SMT are part of the Lesson Observation team) - this year over 70 tutorials were observed and graded with good practice, actions and staff development identified as a result. It also provided us with a benchmark for improvement as we move forward. (GFEC)

We are reviewing the inconsistent approaches to tutorials and considering different models for some areas to improve the effectiveness of tutorial provision. (GFEC)

We are beginning to understand need for improvement. (GFEC)

We are in process of a whole college review of group tutorial delivery and provision with a move towards larger group delivery from partnership agencies where possible. (GFEC)

There are elements of the system that work very well such as themed and planned meetings for tutors and the range of types of tutorial inputs. We still need to improve on a consistent quality of delivery and compliance and absolute measuring of impact. (GFEC)

We are giving more time to tutors next year - increasing from 90 minutes to 120 minutes. There is a focus on one-to-one work. (SFC)

14) The final statement in this section asked for levels of agreement with the statement Our group and individual tutorial system is dynamic.

15) The responses to this statement gave the lowest level of overall agreement which would indicate that there are tutorial models in operation which may benefit from a review, particularly as providers have to examine the cost effectiveness of delivering tutorials

We are currently evaluating a major structural change to appoint 'mentors' with the characteristics of Youth Workers to work caseloaded with and within teams and deliver the Every Child Matters (ECM) based tutorial scheme. Current tutors who are also course leaders would have 10 minute sessions each morning and relinquish some pastoral responsibilities. This change is contemplated to enable teaching staff to focus on improving learning performance and ensure that staff who have greater expertise in Safeguarding and lifestyle issues are available to students. (GFEC)

A complete review is taking place and it will be dynamic from September. (GFEC)

Some very dynamic, others non-existent. (GFEC)

Working towards. Building strong team and curriculum links so that all aspects of students' programme are fully supported. (TC)

16) Continual Professional Development (CPD) is an important aspect for any organisation wishing to improve and the survey asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement to two questions regarding the planning and resourcing of CPD.

17) The first statement focussed on the planning of CPD and support. The level of agreement from respondents to this statement was greater from SFC respondents than their colleagues in GFECs.

We have introduced (September 2009) a comprehensive training programme for tutorial staff which covers a wide and diverse range of themes and runs from September to July. Additional training sessions are added in response to needs which arise through the year. Tutorial staff are given minimum targets of the number of sessions they should attend outside a compulsory set of core modules. (GFEC)

We probably need to do more planning around training for tutorial support. A new appointment starting in August has been tasked with doing just that. Resources are available however – just not properly taken up. (GFEC)

In addition to the graded observation staff receive a developmental observation (ungraded) with a mentor/subject specialist to help support actions arising from graded lesson observations or to share good practice. In addition the staff development programme relates to organisational needs as well as the needs of the individual and each application is considered, prioritised and agreed by line and senior managers. Teaching staff also are required to be licensed through the IFL process. (GFEC)

Over the past year and a half there has been weekly tutor training provided on a roll on/roll off basis. There have also been dedicated tutor training sessions on staff training days, as well as sessions on related areas of work like Learner Voice, target setting and youth work. We recently merged with another college and we are now in the process of reviewing the two systems and harmonising good practice. (GFEC)

We have a two hour session every fourth week allocated to CPD issues or events. (TC)

18)The second statement said CPD and support is adequately resourced.

19)The figure shows that there was a higher level of agreement with the statement from SFC respondents but it is also noticeable that the Strongly agree level from GFEC respondents was low at just over 20%.

There is a problem in releasing staff to attend CPD when they are teaching or tutoring up to their contractual maximum. (GFEC)

This is starting to happen... but much more investment into training specifically for personal tutoring is needed. (GFEC)

The staff development team manage this and annually review and update - and is part of the staff appraisal procedure. (GFEC)

The everyday demands of supporting 2,000 students and the funding constraints under which we all operate means that we do not always devote the time and resource to planning new system that would be desirable, but I am confident that we have planned effectively and that resources are just about sufficient, although finding suitable accommodation is a constraint. (TC)

20)Two more statements followed the previous section focussing on how well structured and resourced tutorial systems are in colleges.

21)The figure above shows respondents' level of agreement with the statement They are well-structured. Once again respondents from SFCs have indicated a higher level of agreement with this statement than their GFEC counterparts.

There is a specific structure in place and it is currently being reviewed to ensure that it is effective. It is improved but needs to be further improved. (GFEC)

Some areas operate more effectively than others. (GFEC)

Some are well structured but I wouldn't claim that the picture is totally consistent. (GFEC)

The Tutorial allocation (60-68 hours) provides an entitlement for learners to receive a minimum of 5 individual tutorials lasting for 20 minutes and to participate in 24 hours of group tutorials. The rest of the allowance is available for the likes of supervised group assignment work and careers advice. To enable an effective tutorial process when individual tutorials are taking place tutorial sessions may be double staffed to facilitate assignment workshop activity at the same time as individual tutorials and in IT rooms. During one-to-one tutorials the documentation to be used are:

- weekly planner;
- ILP; and
- a tutorial record.

This double staffing assumes two groups of 15 (or minimum group size) are brought together when tutorials are scheduled. Access to cross college tutorial/enrichment services i.e. youth team - tutor does not claim contact time for these sessions. Effectiveness of tutorials is audited in the College's quality assurance processes using:

- ILPs;
- Tutorial Review Records (2 per year November-January and March-May);

- Weekly Planner Records
- Tutorial Records; and
- Lesson observations

As part of the tutorial process termly reports are produced for all learners and copies sent to key stakeholders i.e. parents, carers, employers. (GFEC)

We have introduced an over-arching framework of tutorial content and most tutors are using this (but not all). (GFEC)

The procedure is at this moment being reviewed and evaluated. While the majority of areas are extremely well structured and resourced there are one or two areas in need of slight improvement. (GFEC)

Despite a comprehensive scheme of work where Faculties have not allocated time these are not well structured. (GFEC)

Currently 1 hour group and 1 hour one-to-one per week. (GFEC)

22) The second aspect concerned the resourcing levels of colleges' tutorial systems

23) Agreement levels were lower for this aspect, more so from SFC respondents. In a time of fiscal constraint the site visits will allow for a dialogue around whether tutorial systems might be subjected to reductions in resources.

Some of our resources become dated quite quickly (e.g. stuff on drugs awareness) or are sourced from abroad (e.g. American/Australian video materials). (GFEC)

Our current tutorial team and pastoral system has been in place for the past year and a half. The team focus primarily on pastoral support with some responsibility for target setting and progression. The management of academic tutorials sits with course teams and curriculum areas. This needs to be merged more effectively with clearer lines of responsibility and management. As part of the new system, Schemes of Work and resources have been developed that relate to the different levels of study and meet the needs of students as part of the Every Learner Matters agenda. We have also introduced an electronic ILP system that is supporting students with target setting and their progression. (GFEC)

We have just completed a tutorial review and development project and so now have resources and structure in place to support tutorials - but this is an area we are developing - so hopefully I would give a different answer in six months time! (GFEC)

We currently lack a member of staff who has time and responsibility for co-ordinating the tutorial system and input across the college. (GFEC)

24) The online survey now looks at how well tutorial systems support student self development.

25) Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with the following statement Our tutorial system enables access to effective information, advice and guidance. The figure above shows that overall agreement was very high with 94% of respondents Strongly agreeing or Agreeing with this statement. Two thirds of respondents from SFCs indicated that they Strongly agreed with the statement compared to only one third of GFEC respondents.

Some variations in quality. (GFEC)

26) The next statement was Our tutorial system fosters self-confidence and independence in students.

27) Overall agreement with this statement was 80% with a higher level of agreement from respondents in SFCs and Tertiary & Specialist Colleges (T&SCs). What is more interesting is the fact that only 1 in 5 GFEC respondents compared to 1 in 2 SFC respondents Strongly agreed with the statement.

We are working on more input on developing self-confidence through the tutorial system and making progress. (GFEC)

Our new system is designed to improve the consistency of guidance experience. The College has offered increasing opportunities for student's personal development but there is always more we can offer. Students value the independence, diversity and tolerance which the College environment helps foster. (TC)

28) Our tutorial system values diversity was the next statement in this section.

29) This figure shows that agreement with this statement was higher than for the previous statement, 88% compared to 80%, and there was very little difference between respondents in respect of agreement levels.

30) The final statement in this section was Our tutorial system enables students to access appropriate opportunities for personal development.

31) Overall 81% of respondents were in agreement with this statement. 45% of SFC respondents Strongly agreed with the statement compared to 23% of their GFEC counterparts.

With reference to all of the above: In some areas students access all these things. In other areas they do not. All hinges on the enthusiasm and commitment of the tutor. (GFEC)

As we are this year in the process of developing and improving our tutorial processes I have ticked 'agree' but there are many examples of outstanding practice - we are striving for consistency across college. (GFEC)

All of the above are embedded within the Statement Of Work and in the professional practice of the Personal Tutors and Tutorial Team. (GFEC)

We have a strong and continually improving enrichment programme. (GFEC)

We have a really good on-line set of tutorial schemes, lesson plans or outlines and resources for all tutors to access. This is dynamic and new materials are added as appropriate. (GFEC)

We have identified that the system MUST improve for September to ensure it DOES! (TC)

32) The online survey also wanted to assess the impact of colleges' tutorial systems in respect of some tangible indicators. Respondents were once again invited to indicate their level of agreement with five statements. The first being Our current tutorial system delivers value for money.

Having dedicated Personal Tutors in each area provides students with support to help them overcome barriers to learning and achieve in their chosen area of study. Feedback from

curriculum staff and students support this and it is beginning to be evident in achievement data. (GFE)

33)The figure on the previous page shows that just over three quarters of all respondents agree that their current tutorial system delivers value for money. Just over one fifth of GFEC respondents Strongly agreed compared to just over one third of SFC respondents.

34)The second statement said Our tutorial system has had a positive impact on the retention element of success rates.

35)Overall 81% of respondents were in agreement with this statement and interestingly respondents from GFEs are marginally more in agreement than their SFC and T&SC counterparts.

We are currently reviewing our group and individual tutorial process, with a view to refining it to enhance it further. (GFE)

There is clear evidence of the positive impact of Personal Tutors on retention in their curriculum areas (from retention figures). (GFE)

We are continually working to improve our retention and as an area flagged as high pregnancy rates and impoverished (both financially and social deprivation) we are focussing on finance and health and well being – Every Child Matters, Equality & Diversity and social inclusion are high on our agenda. (GFE)

Where fully implemented. (GFE)

Tutors are responsible for circa 20 students above their teaching allocation. These students are tutored as required, i.e. on demand with minimum levels of service for ILPs. College retention has been 95% for the last two years and previously 94%. Level 2 retention is 92% in our inaugural year. College 3 Year ALPS T-Score is 2.67 and is in the top 5% nationally of schools and colleges in the ALPs data set. 85% progression to HE. (SFC)

36)The third statement in this series said Our tutorial system has had a positive impact on the achievement element of success rates.

37)82% of respondents were in agreement with this statement and there was a slightly higher level of respondents form SFCs who Strongly agreed with this statement.

Our success rate improvement has improved year on year since 2008 and now stands at 14% improvement over three years. We are still improving our tutorial system and therefore hope to further improve our success rates this year and in the future. (GFE)

After 18 months of the Tutorial Team's work, achievement rates are improving though it is still early days and the role of tutorials needs to be considered along with other developments in the students educational experience (e.g. functional skills). (GFE)

38)The next statement asked respondents their level of agreement with the statement There are good progression rates to higher level of study.

39)The figure shows that overall 91% of respondents agreed with this statement but there was a significantly higher proportion of SFC respondents who Strongly agreed with it.

Aimhigher is a part of the Tutorial Team and delivered at Level 3. Our UCAS applications have increased by over 30% in the last two years along with student success in achieving places in University (awaiting final data for 2009/2010). (GFE)

40) The final statement in this section said Our group and individual tutorial system is fit for purpose.

41) Although the number of respondents from Tertiary and Specialist Colleges was small compared to GFEs and SFCs, the level of agreement with the statement was 88% compared to 81% of SFC respondents and 68% of GFE respondents.

It is in the process of becoming so. (GFE)

We are currently reviewing our group and individual tutorial process, with a view to refining it to enhance it further. (GFE)

There is strong evidence (both qualitative and quantitative) that tutorial support is having a significant impact upon student achievement. Having merged with another college we are working on developing our system further over the coming year with a strong recognition of the significance of a good tutorial system in students' educational journey. (GFE)

Tutorial systems are currently under a major review and re-structure and a revised unified cross-college model will be rolled out in the new academic year. (GFE)

Overall fit for purpose but room for improvement, more focus on employability skills planned. (GFE)

There is a cost factor in the introduction of our new system, but the high level of support, reflected in student feedback, does represent value for money. It is difficult to measure the impact on retention and success rates in a precise way, but the more we do to enhance support and to identify and respond to problems earlier, the more we can push at the margins of our already high success rates. The old system was fit for purpose, but the time pressures on, and need for consistent approaches from, tutors indicated that we could improve levels of support further. (TC)

42) The final section wanted to find out if students found the group and individual tutorial system of value. There were three statements for respondent to show their level of agreement with. The first one being Students value group tutorials.

43) This statement produced quite a low level of overall agreement with only 61% of respondents agreeing with the statement. It was interesting to note that the highest level of disagreement came from SFC respondents. Respondents, comments illustrate some of the issues around group tutorials from their perspective.

We have had real success in some areas this year for group tutorials, although this is variable according to programme area, which is an issue we are working on to develop. (GFE)

More focus is needed on the methods of delivery of group tutorials. (GFE)

I think that where there is good practice and enthusiasm from staff students value group tutorials, however this varies between Academies and where staff are co-opted to fill their

timetables group tutorials are less effective because those staff have not 'bought into' the ideas underpinning the tutorial system. (GFE)

Attendance levels are best in those groups delivered by specialist pastoral tutors. (GFE)

Attendance at tutorials is approx. 85% which is higher than some subject attendance rates. (GFE)

Attendance at group tutorials has improved significantly over the past year, but there is still some inconsistency especially where the group tutorials are not delivered by a dedicated Pastoral Tutor. This inconsistency is also related to timetabling issues, where tutorials have been allocated to an especially early or late slot and to room allocation. These issues are being addressed in the proposal for the developments of tutorials for September 2010. (Tutorial & Learner Voice Coordinator, GFE)

Although attendance at group tutorials is slightly lower than teaching averages and students and tutors can feel that the notice-based element is tedious, there is evidence that students do feel a sense of group identity and we can do more to make the group experience more focused on their needs. Individual tutorials are valued, but again we can do more to raise attendance levels and to enable students to feel greater ownership of, and value more, the individual learning plan approach. (TC)

It is the external agenda, not the wishes of students themselves, which drives the provision of group tutorials; on the other hand we have good evidence of how much students value individual tutorials, and of how well we deliver them. (SFC)

44) The second statement was Students value individual tutorials.

45) This statement received a significantly higher level of agreement from all respondents and in particular those from SFCs.

The value learners have for tutorials can vary between departments but overall the feedback we have suggests a high level of value for one-to-ones and a good level of value for group. We have, in some departments, introduced the 'tutorial day' where groups participate in a range of experiences through a whole day and the learner feedback from these days is excellent. (GFE)

One-to-ones are more valued but students do attend and enjoy group tutorials on the whole - although there are exceptions. There is no doubt that some tutors are more skilled at this work than others. (GFE)

Learner views through surveys and focus groups back this up - students value the one-to-one meetings more than the group tutorials. Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is also a contributing factor to attendance for many of our learners. (GFE)

46) The third and final statement in this section said Attendance levels at group tutorials are good.

47) Overall around two thirds of respondents agreed with this statement but agreement levels were higher from SFC and T&SC respondents.

Attendance levels are very poor in some areas e.g. A Level but good in vocational areas. (GFE)

Variable across curriculum areas. (Director Support for Students, GFE)

Quality surveys show that more than 88% of students agree with these statements. (TC)

48) Respondents were asked how their respective organisations selected staff to deliver group and individual tutorials. The majority of responses to this open question indicated that there was an expectation that all teachers are tutors. There appears to be a strong belief among staff that:

.....teaching and tutoring overlap and a good teacher does more than deliver their subject and is fundamentally interested in the wider welfare of their students. (TC)

Some respondents said that selection was not possible as there were insufficient permanent staff to pick and choose from. In some colleges departmental heads select staff from their teams to deliver group and individual tutorials while in others it was down to self-selection.

Where respondents indicated that they employed dedicated members of staff to deliver the tutorial curriculum these individuals had been specifically recruited for that express purpose.

49) The follow-up question concerned the attributes which respondents looked for in group and individual tutors. The key attributes which emerged from their responses were:

- Commitment to the well-being, welfare and development of students;
- Signing up to the ethos of the organisation;
- Commitment to helping students to progress;
- Placing a high value on equality and diversity;
- Awareness of whole-person needs;
- Approachable;
- Flexible;
- Enthusiastic;
- Good communicators;
- Ability to be a good listener;
- Able to inspire and motivate;
- Able to build effective relationships whilst fostering independence;
- Able to relate to young people;
- Develop the study and personal skills of young people;
- Well organised;
- Sensitivity;
- Good classroom management;
- Sense of humour;
- Strong interpersonal skills;
- Ability to empathise;
- Passionate about pastoral care;
- Good organisational skills;
- Sound knowledge of UCAS, Every Child Matters, Safeguarding; and
- Knowing when to refer to specialist support agencies.

50) Respondents were asked if there was a specific training programme for group and individual tutors and of the 98 responses, 51 said that they did have one.

51) Respondents were asked to indicate the key purposes of their tutorial system from a list of options

and to indicate whether these applied to group or individual tutorials. The table below shows the ranked list of responses (1st to 12th). The results indicated that the Receiving and giving of information is one of the key purposes of group tutorials followed by Group bonding and discussions and Career planning. Retention and achievement elements of success rates were ranked in 5th and 8th place respectively and ranked in equal 9th place by SFC respondents.

Ranked purposes of group tutorials

Key Purposes of Tutorial System – Group	Overall	GFE	SFC	T&SC
Receiving and giving information	1	1	1	1
Group bonding and discussion	2	1	2	1
Career planning	3	3	2	4
Personal development	4	4	4	6
Improved retention elements of success rates	5	5	9	4
Academic development	6	7	6	6
Academic support	7	9	5	6
Improved achievement elements of success rates	8	7	9	6
Solving problems	9	6	12	11
Welfare support	10	10	11	3
Personal support	11	11	7	10
Providing reassurance for parents	12	12	8	12

52) Other purposes for group tutorials not listed but mentioned by respondents were:

- Creating a sense of belonging/community.
- Development of citizenship skills.
- Promoting health and well-being.
- Rights and responsibilities.
- Understanding equality, diversity and respect agendas.
- Every Child Matters.
- Developing study skills.
- Time management skills.
- Providing learner voice opportunities.
- Recognising and celebrating success
- Fulfilling the parental role for students living away from home.
- UCAS applications.
- Team building, confidence building, improving communication skills.
- Financial skills

53) The table below shows the ranked responses (1st to 12th) in respect of the key purposes of individual tutorials. Personal support and Academic support tops this listing with Welfare support close behind. However Personal and Academic development was highly ranked by respondents from Tertiary Colleges and Specialist Colleges but this is based on a small number of respondents.

Ranked purposes of individual tutorials

Key Purposes of Tutorial System – Group	Overall	GFE	SFC	T&SC
Personal support	1	1	1	1
Academic support	2	2	3	1
Welfare support	3	2	1	8
Improved retention elements of success rates	4	4	6	5
Improved achievement elements of success rates	5	5	6	5
Personal development	6	6	8	1
Academic development	7	7	4	1
Career planning	8	9	4	5
Solving problems	9	8	10	8
Providing reassurance for parents	10	10	9	10
Receiving and giving information	11	11	11	11
Group bonding and discussion	12	12	12	12

54) Additional comments on the key purposes of individual tutorials from respondents were as follows:

- Over viewing progress.
- Dealing with individual problems.
- Advocacy.
- Study support.
- Referring for additional support.
- Target setting.
- Progression.
- Action planning.
- Motivation.
- Addressing under performance.

55) Respondents were asked how the purpose of their tutorial system was explained to students and many responses explained that students had information prior to commencing their courses through marketing materials and the student handbook. The period of induction was key to disseminating information on the purpose of tutorials. Respondents also added information on particular actions which have helped students to value the tutorial system.

The tutorial system is explained at interview, at enrolment and on the first day of term by the Principal and by the Personal Tutor. The individual support that is offered in a one-to-one relationship is at the heart of why the system works and is therefore valued. (SFC)

We have an induction presentation on the purpose of tutorials. We have developed an online forum for Personal Tutors to share resources and discuss issues. We have started to provide some form of tutorial related training activity to each INSET day. (GFE)

Tutorials are explained in school liaison and Open Day presentations, at Admissions interviews and at Induction, although we can do more on this in the induction phase. Ensuring that support is effective and sensitive is the best way of getting students to value the system, but we can do more on the website, intranet, at induction etc to explain the importance of accessing support and having dialogue with tutors. (TC)

The tutorial system is explained to students through induction by their tutors. There are differentiated College schemes, session plans and resources to be contextualised by tutors for their learners. Some of these activities are planned to give learners ownership of their own learning and progress appropriate to their level and stage of the course. They also give learners time to think through their individual strategies for success/overcoming barriers to learning and to agree group strategies too. (GFE)

We have held student focus groups on tutorials and from next year will be using a tutorial menu designed for tutors and students to dip into with linked resources - students will be involved in designing their tutorial programme. (GFE)

Bringing in guest speakers whenever possible has added to the students' appreciation of the group tutorial. (GFE)

Induction Programme Surveys; "You said we did" posters around college when we changed the focus of tutorial. (SFC)

Primarily as the hub to the wheel of their learning programme - providing individual and group support to the process skills required for learning, both in terms of practical and personal development. We have begun to set up activities which encourage students to prepare for their one-to-one sessions to optimise the outcome of the sessions. (GFE)

56) The survey asked if respondents had changed their tutorial system in the last 5 years and if so what were the main differences between their current system and the previous one.

More subject based. (SFC)

Fewer tutors. Tutors now have 4 groups. (SFC)

More connection with academic studies with a prioritising of the ILP process. (SFC)

A cross college system of tracking and accountability - it is now possible for senior managers to see what is happening in group tutorials and to ensure that topics required by Every Learner Matters and Employability agenda that are not covered in the syllabus are actually covered in group tutorial. (GFE)

Differentiated activities for different academic levels. (GFE)

There is now more learner involvement in the development of the group tutorial programme; planning themes started at cross college level and resources are beginning to be shared across the institution in key themes. The target setting and review aspect was introduced about 5 years ago. (GFE)

More one-to-one focused. Differentiated in group tutorials and targeted to the needs of the cohort. Mapped to Every Child Matters themes. (GFE)

Shared values and commonality around the scheme of work and wider college support and wellbeing activities and support. (GFE)

No major changes, just constant improvement. (SFC)

The current group tutorial system is more focussed than the previous one on delivering the key themes of Every Child Matters. Individual tutorials are more target driven. (GFE)

Recruitment of specialist pastoral tutors (called Tutorial Advisers because on Support grades). Introduction of Every Child Matters themes. (GFE)

Curriculum Manager for Tutorials role was created two years ago to centralise the management and support of tutorials across college (and to focus on consistency and sharing of good practice). (GFE)

The primary changes are around dedicated Pastoral Tutor support and electronic target setting and tracking. (GFE)

The move from academic lecturers having one tutor group of twenty to dedicated full-time tutors with caseloads of up to 140. We will maintain group tutorials of circa twenty students. New tutors can combine previous guidance staff and personal tutor roles and provide more focused and responsive tutoring. Curriculum links maintained by having Faculty-based tutorial teams led by Senior Tutor who is member of academic staff. (TC)

More student led. (GFE)

We have introduced a six week probation period and regular tutorial reviews where grades are given for attendance, progress and conduct, plus an overall grade. Report copied to parents. (GFE)

Focus on one-to-one mentoring with larger sessions planned to cover key Every Child Matters themes, often delivered by outside 'experts'. (SFC)

Timetabling of group and individual tutorials, introduction of Scheme of Work, liaising with Student Services to provide activities linked to Every Child Matters themes. Training offered on staff training days. (GFE)

More time allocation – 1 hour group and 1 hour one-to-one Standard scheme, lesson plans and resources on VLE ready to be contextualised by tutors. Tutor training and support. Lead tutors. Audit and observations and learner voice meetings. (GFE)

Clearer entitlement for all types of learner cohort, a tutorial toolkit with support resources, links, a tutorial menu which is linked to resources with learning outcomes, topics etc mapped to ECM themes - a one-to-one tutorial support planner with resources, more in-depth analysis of learner motivation and how teachers can help them. (GFE)

ILPs are audited and therefore more effectively completed. There has been more emphasis on training tutors to develop autonomy in their tutees. Putting all tutorial resources on VLE. (GFE).

Purchase of new eILP. (GFE)

The current tutorial system is more structured and has meaningful activities to engage students in the development of their personal and social well being, as well as focusing on their academic development. We have also introduced the Senior Tutor model onto the Vocational Programmes to ensure greater consistency. (GFE)

We now use ProMonitor (electronic system) for monitoring all aspects of a student's development whilst in college. (GFE)

We have overhauled it this year, with the Senior Tutor team being in charge of tutorial provision. We have produced a generic cross college tutorial scheme of work which is then

adapted by each area. We have put whole college events on to support the key themes of Every Child Matters and six additional Equality and Diversity themes. (GFE)

The tutorial management team create tutorial schemes of work 'frameworks' for Personal Tutors that signpost key tasks and activities across the year. (GFE)

The system we have works. One change we made was to introduce an electronic format for ILPs. This allowed all staff involved in the teaching and learning of a particular student to make comments/suggestions on improving performance. It also allows managers to check ILPs are being completed. (GFE)

Addition of Student Welfare Officer and variation of time allowed for individual support within the tutorial period to address issues such as attendance and punctuality. (SFC)

Units rewritten, new personnel, staff review and involvement, key learning outcomes identified, new materials' checking procedures e.g. observations of tutorials added to subject observations. Creation of Student Council and greater student voice. Topical materials to encourage debate and discussion. (SFC)

Specialised groups that students opt into depending on their aspirations. (SFC)

Now single year groups not mixed years. Each Personal Tutor stays with their group for two years where possible. Personal Tutor is first point of contact for staff and students- and has the overview. Tutor groups are more diverse makeup. Central use of IT for delivery of the programme using moodle. e-ILP currently being developed. Student views more central to scope and delivery of the programme. (SFC)

57) The reasons for change were:

- To better support academic achievement.
- Raise success rates.
- New senior manager, new ideas.
- Improved quality assurance.
- To meet a wider range of learner needs.
- To gain more student input and buy-in to ensure similar student experience.
- Make more meaningful and thus more valued by students.
- Introduction of online systems.
- Introduction of specialist tutors.
- Ofsted inspection.
- Responding to students and staff evaluations.
- Inconsistency in delivery of tutorial system.
- Improve student study habits.
- Improve student experience and ensuring each student receives the support which matches their needs.

58) Respondents were invited to describe what they felt made their tutorial system particularly good or innovative. Tracking and e-ILP/PLP processes were felt by some to be a strength in their system. One SFC respondent said:

It is good but not innovative - some would say it is too costly and too traditional. But it works for us. It is a whole college approach and flags up the importance the college places on guidance/pastoral work. The skills used by tutors are transferable to their subjects.

Other interesting comments from GFE respondents were:

In some areas there is outstanding practice with high levels of trust between learners and tutorial staff, very effective setting of targets, good attention paid to classroom protocol, emphasis on aspiration and closing achievement gaps, clear corporate approach to tutorial system, realistic and up to date progression advice.

Additional effectiveness is ensured because we have a dedicated team to develop and support this area of work including Pastoral Tutors, Tutorial Support Workers who track and monitor attendance and causes for concern and who offer one-to-one and small group support to students. We also have two youth workers who offer group tutorials and support students through a programme of informal education. Selected tutors, thorough planning that involves students, effective links with external agencies to ensure topics delivered use up-to-date information, regular sharing of good practice between tutors and programmes, regular evaluation of tutorials via surveys, focus groups and programme reviews.

A Tertiary College respondent said:

We have a strong tutorial planner in place at the start of the year with appropriate topics for different year groups. Learner mentors for all vocational learners - staff who are non teachers and available to learners everyday at all times and not just in tutorial.

Other valued aspects were:

- Good quality staff.
- Links to enrichment and the local community.
- Good bank of resources, readily accessible.
- Personalisation of the tutorial curriculum.
- Observation.
- Students having input into the programme.
- Sharing good practice.

59) Aspects for improvement mentioned by respondents were:

- Eliminate inconsistencies in practice.
- Have more student-input into materials.
- Understanding the needs of one to one tutorials and moving away from group dominance.
- More CPD for tutors and get greater buy-in from students for group tutorials.
- Improve time framed action plans for students causing concern.
- Systematic use of short term target setting and electronic ILP right across the college.
- Bringing together the Pastoral Tutors and Course Tutors into a more integrated system.
- Need to make the content and group management of group tutorials more dynamic and effective.
- Appoint a member of staff with the focus and time to oversee cross college tutorials from the viewpoint of external speakers and overall co-ordination.
- Raise the value of tutorials with staff.
- Involving the students more in the planning stages.
- Further develop the links with external agencies.
- Target setting and comprehensive capturing of progress reviews.
- Access to current MIS and diagnostic data.

60) The last two questions on the survey asked if respondents formally evaluated the effectiveness of their tutorial system and of the 105 respondents who replied, 92 said that they did do this.

- Student questionnaires.

- Focus groups.
- Termly reviews and annual away day to consider issues in detail.
- Observations.
- Learner Voice.
- Staff Voice.
- Monitoring of ILPs.
- Monitoring UCAS applications and ratio of successful applications.
- Monitoring job applications.
- Working party to plan improvements.
- Tutorials are part of the Self Assessment Process.
- Bi-annual audit of e-ILP/PLs to assess quality of reviews, target setting and dealing with issues.
- Course committees.
- Students Councils.
- Attendance levels.
- Internal quality reviews.
- Retention.
- End of year questionnaire.

Appendix

Online survey instrument



Researching the Effectiveness of Tutorial Systems

Online survey with senior staff responsible for the College's group and individual tutorial system

RCU is a specialist research and consultancy company which has been working with the sector since 1987. We have been commissioned by the Tertiary Colleges Group to undertake research for the learning and skills sector into the effectiveness of group and individual tutorial systems in supporting positive outcomes for 16-19 students. We would like to invite you to contribute to the research by taking a few minutes to complete the following online survey. Your responses will be confidential and unless express permission has been sought prior to the publication of the final report, individual colleges will not be identified.

The results will form part of the evidence base for an assessment of the effectiveness of the different types of group and individual tutorial systems which operate across the college sector for 16-19s. Following the closure of the online survey we will be happy to send you a summary of the results as a thank you for taking part. The survey will close on Friday 7th May 2010 @ 5.00 p.m.

Please click the next button below to start the survey.

Name

Title

Type of organisation:

- ☐ General FE College
- ☐ Tertiary College
- ☐ Sixth Form College
- ☐ Specialist Land Based College
- ☐ Specialist Art & Design College

Do you have direct responsibility for the college's group and individual tutorial system?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Would you describe your college recruitment area as:

- ☐ Largely urban
- ☐ Largely rural
- ☐ Mixed

Q1 We want to get a feel for the type of group and individual system that operates in your college for 16-19 year old full-time students on different types of provision. For each of the different student groups listed below, please tick any of the approaches that apply.

	L3 Academic	L3 Voc	L2 Voc	L1 Voc	Entry	Pre- Entry
Teaching staff who teach the students						
Teaching staff who do not teach the students						
Non-teaching staff with dedicated caseloads (e.g. personal progress tutors, guidance tutors, tutorial support, tutor assistants)						
Specialist personal tutors (mentor/coach/super tutor)						
If none of the above apply, please briefly describe your group and individual tutorial system for 16-19 full-time students						

Q2 Is there any variation in the way your 16-19 group and individual tutorial system applies in different curriculum areas?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Q3 Please can you briefly describe the difference and give a brief explanation of why there are differences.

N4 There now follows a series of statements regarding good practice in 16-19 group and individual tutorial systems. Please can you state your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement using the following scale: Strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree.

Q4 Commitment from senior managers:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a - Senior managers in the college understand the tutorial system					
b - Senior managers in the college are fully committed to the tutorial system					
c - There is a whole organisation commitment to continually evaluating and improving the tutorial system					
d - Our group and individual tutorial system is dynamic					

Q5 If you would like to expand on any of the above statements, please use the box below (please start your explanation with the corresponding letter)

Q6 Group and individual tutorial staffing:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
e - CPD and support is well-planned					
f - CPD and support is adequately resourced					

Q7 If you would like to expand on any of the above statements, please use the box below (please start your explanation with the corresponding letter)

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Q8 Group and individual tutorial structures:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
g – They are well-structured					
h – They are well-resourced					

Q9 If you would like to expand on any of the above statements, please use the box below (please start your explanation with the corresponding letter)

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Q10 Supporting student self development through group and individual tutorials:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
i – Our tutorial system enables access to effective information, advice and guidance					
j – Our tutorial system fosters self-confidence and independence in students					
k – Our tutorial system values diversity					
l – Our tutorial system enables students to access appropriate opportunities for personal development					

Q11 If you would like to expand on any of the above statements, please use the box below (please start your explanation with the corresponding letter)

Q12 Assessing the impact of group and individual tutorial:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
m - Our current tutorial system delivers value for money					
n - Our tutorial system has had a positive impact on the retention element of success rates					
o - Our tutorial system has had a positive impact on the achievement element of success rates					
p - There are good progression rates to higher level study					
q - Our group and individual tutorial system is fit for purpose					

Q13 If you would like to expand on any of the above statements, please use the box below (please start your explanation with the corresponding letter)

Q14 Assessing the impact of group and individual tutorial:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
r - Students value group tutorials					
s - Students value individual tutorials					
t - Attendance levels at group tutorials are good					

Q15 If you would like to expand on any of the above statements, please use the box below (please start your explanation with the corresponding letter)

Q16 How does your organisation select individuals who will become group and individual tutors?

Q17 Please describe briefly the attributes you are looking for in group and individual tutors.

Q18 Is there a specific training programme for them.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Q19 Which of the following are key purposes for your tutorial system?
(please tick any that apply)

- | | |
|---|---------|
| Group bonding and discussion | [] |
| Receiving and giving information | [] |
| Career planning | [] |
| Personal support | [] |
| Welfare support | [] |
| Academic support | [] |
| Personal development | [] |
| Academic development | [] |
| Improved retention
elements of success rates | [] |
| Improved achievement
elements of success rates | [] |
| Providing reassurance for
parents | [] |

Please can you briefly describe other key purposes not already mentioned **Individual tutorials**.

Please can you briefly describe other key purposes not already mentioned under **Group tutorials**.

Q20 How is the purpose of the tutorial system explained to students and have you taken any particular steps that have helped students to value the tutorial system?

Q21 If you have changed your system within the last 5 years, what are the main differences between your current group and individual tutorial system and the previous one?

Q22 What was the reason for the change and how well has it worked?

Q23 If you feel that you operate a particularly good or innovative group and individual tutorial system please could you briefly describe what makes it effective?

Q24 In your opinion what aspects of your group and individual tutorial system do you consider need to be improved?

Q25 Do you formally evaluate the effectiveness of your group and individual tutorial system?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Q26 Could you please briefly explain how you do it.

email This is the end of the questions. Thank you for taking time to complete the survey. If you wish to receive a summary of the results of this survey, please enter your email address below.

Technical summary of research methodology

Governing Research Principles

All RCU's research and consultancy work is governed by a rigorous quality assurance system that is accredited under the market research industry kitemark ISO 20252, the policies and guidelines of the Market Research Society and relevant Data Protection Legislation. For more details of ISO 20252 and the Market Research Society codes of conduct see www.mrs.org.uk.

Overview of Methodology

RCU was commissioned by the Tertiary Colleges Group to undertake research within the further education sector into personal tutorial systems for 16-19 year old students on full-time courses. The objectives of the research were to get colleges to reflect on what they want to achieve from their tutorial systems; identify good practice and test the impact of tutorial systems on retention and progression; highlight strategies to improve learner retention and to provide guidance for colleges planning to review and modify their tutorial arrangements. To achieve these outcomes RCU devised a methodology which involved desk and web searches from secondary published sources; the generation of a bespoke database of over 300 senior members of staff with responsibility for their college tutorial system; an online survey; and site visits to ten Tertiary and Sixth Form Colleges to explore a number of different tutorial models.

Project Team

- Liz McMichael, Deputy Director and Project Manager, responsible for designing the research methodology, project management, client communication, designing the online survey instrument, delivering project briefings to Associate Consultants, undertaking site visits and writing the final report
- Stacy McMullen, Project Administrator, responsible for all of the administrative aspects involved in gathering the contact details for the bespoke database, liaising with the ten colleges to arrange the details of the site visits, liaising with Associate Consultants to undertake the site visits and arranging travel.
- Philip Lucas, Consultant and Deputy Project Manager, responsible for designing the online survey instrument and undertaking site visits.
- Colette Weepman, Research Assistant, responsible for desk and web searches and facilitating student focus groups during the site visits.
- Mohammad Naeem Kazi, e-survey Manager, responsible for the set up and testing of the online survey and the downloading and verification of the responses.
- Ceri Hibbert, Associate Consultant, responsible for leading discussions with staff during the site visits and contributing to the consultants' team.
- Christine Maskill, Associate Consultant, responsible for leading discussions with staff during the site visits and contributing to the consultants' team.
- Gavin Turnbull, Associate Consultant, responsible for leading discussions with staff during the site visits and contributing to the consultants' team.
- Lucille Pendry, Associate Consultant, responsible for leading discussions with staff during the site visits and contributing to the consultants' team.

Key Desk Research Elements

- LSIS Excellence Gateway
- Further Education Tutorial Network (FETN), Dr Sally Wootton
- Supporting Learners to Succeed, Learning & Skills Network, 2008

Key Quantitative Research Elements

- Online survey with senior staff responsible for tutorial systems

- **Description:** RCU designed an online survey which was administered directly to named contacts with responsibility for tutorial systems in colleges. The survey took about 10 minutes to complete and was live from 21st April until 7th May 2010.
- **Target Population:** the research was intended to capture the perceptions and views of senior staff in further education colleges with responsibility for tutorial systems.
- **Sampling:** RCU identified 328 named individuals with responsibility for tutorial systems.
- **Sampling Results:** RCU received 107 completed responses to the online survey.
- **Sampling Effectiveness:** The sampling frame was highly effective.
 - **Broad Topic Areas:** The broad topic areas included:
 - Type of organisation
 - Type of tutorial system operating
 - Commitment from senior managers
 - CPD and support
 - Supporting student self development
 - Impact of tutorial systems
 - Purposes of tutorial systems
 - Evaluation of tutorial systems
- **Data Entry and Verification:** The data was submitted directly to RCU, downloaded into the secure server before being analysed using specialist software. Responses to open questions were reported in full.
- **Weighting of Survey Results:** All figures in the report are based on unweighted results. Where potential distortion could arise from differential response rates by key sub-samples, the results are reported within the sub-samples rather than being aggregated.
- **Estimates:** All quoted figures are actual survey responses and no use of estimated or imputed data has been made.

Bases and Data Sources: The base figures and data sources for each table and chart are separately identified within the report text. In keeping with public sector data protocols, cell values have been suppressed if they occur at a level of 5 or below.

- **Storage of Raw Data:** As part of our quality assurance arrangements we will keep evidence of individual survey responses for at least 18 months after the closure of the project.

Key Qualitative Research Elements

Qualitative research is not intended to produce results that are statistically representative of a wider population. However, selection arrangements were planned to ensure that evidence was gathered from a mix of respondents that was appropriate to the project's information needs.

Site visits

- **Description:** Site visits took place with six Tertiary and four Sixth Form Colleges. Face-to-face interviews and group discussions took place with senior staff responsible for tutorial systems and those delivering tutorial systems. Hand written notes were taken during the site visits which were subsequently transcribed into Word documents. Focus group discussions with students were captured using digital recordings with the express permission of the participants.
- **Target Participants:** Senior members of staff responsible for tutorial systems; managers responsible for operational aspects of the tutorial system; staff responsible for delivering tutorials and students who experienced tutorials.
- **Recruitment and Selection:** Colleges that agreed to take part in the site visits selected the staff and students who took part in the discussions.
- **Recruitment Results:** The recruitment criteria were met.
- **Recruitment Effectiveness:** The programme and the staff identified to take part in the site visit

- discussions led to highly effective visits and high quality information.
- Broad Topic Areas: The discussion guides started at the top of the organisation to identify the ethos and rationale for the tutorial system; this was then followed by depth interviews on the operational aspects of the tutorial system and focussed on changes if they had taken place; staff delivering tutorials were then invited to discuss their perceptions and views of the effectiveness of their own tutorial systems. Students were asked to discuss the pros and cons of their respective tutorial systems.
- Analysis: Respondent views have been analysed by an experienced researcher who has reported the views of respondents in a way that supports the intended project outcomes but does not risk identification of individual respondents.

Verification: Records of individual interviews are provided to interviewees for the purposes of verification. Unless specifically stated otherwise in advance of an interview, respondents will have been given a guarantee of confidentiality, which would prevent access to raw responses directly. However, as part of our quality assurance arrangements we will keep interview/discussion records, and (where appropriate) evidence of verification for at least 18 months after the closure of the project. These will be made available for examination by an agreed third party in the event of a need for further verification.

Reporting

The report contains a combination of absolute figures and relative figures, such as percentages or variations from national averages or benchmarks. Tables and references contained in the report are labelled in such a way as to make their nature clear.

The report includes a combination of direct reporting of survey outcomes and the interpretations of RCU staff. The latter approach is clearly identifiable from the report context and/or section headings.