

# Key Players

A number of agencies operate in the learning and skills environment. Here are those you're most likely to see and what they're responsible for:

## The Department for Education (DfE)

The Department for Education is responsible for children's services and education, including early years, schools, further and higher education policy, apprenticeships and wider skills in England.

The DfE is responsible for:

- teaching and learning for children in the early years and in primary schools
- teaching and learning for young people in secondary schools
- teaching, learning and training for young people and adults in apprenticeships and further education
- teaching and learning for young people and adults in higher education
- supporting professionals who work with children, young people and adult learners
- making sure that local services protect and support children (safeguarding).

There are 18 agencies and bodies that the DfE works with directly (sponsors). Those that are most likely to come up in learning and skills discussions with Theatre are:

### Ofqual

The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) regulates qualifications, examinations and assessments in England, concentrating on: GCSEs, A levels, AS levels, and vocational and technical qualifications.

They are independent of government and report directly to Parliament.

### Ofsted

Ofsted is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. They inspect and regulate services that care for children and young people, and services providing education and skills for learners of all ages. In Higher Education this function is fulfilled by QAA. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education is an independent body entrusted with monitoring and advising on standards and quality in UK higher education.

### Office for Students

The Office for Students (OfS) acts as the regulator and competition authority for the higher education sector in England. They are responsible for distributing Government funding to higher education providers.

## Education and Skills Funding Agency

The ESFA is a single agency accountable for funding education and skills for children, young people and adults, including apprenticeships. They fund academies, further education, sixth-form colleges and training providers and manage the National Careers Service, the National Apprenticeship Service and the Learning Records Service.

## Institute for Apprenticeships

The IFA is responsible for developing, maintaining and approving apprenticeship standards for England, this includes advising on the amount of Government funding that can be spent on training for each apprenticeship (managed by the ESFA).

The IFA is responsible for the development of the Technical Qualifications that will feature within the new T-Levels going forwards and host the industry panels (groups of employers) that support their design.

## Office of the Children's Commissioner

The Office of the Children's Commissioner promotes the rights, views and interests of children in policies or decisions affecting their lives. They particularly represent children who are vulnerable or who find it hard to make their views known.

## Student Loans Company

The Student Loans Company is a non-profit making government-owned organisation that administers loans and grants to students in universities and colleges in the UK.

## Social Mobility Commission

The SMC is an independent statutory body. In line with the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016, it is a continuation of the body previously called the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission. They monitor progress towards improving social mobility in the UK and promote social mobility in England.

Social mobility is the link between a person's occupation or income and the occupation or income of their parents. Where there is a strong link, there is a lower level of social mobility. Where there is a weak link, there is a higher level of social mobility.

