

Report of Director of Children's Services

Report to Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)

Date: 10th September 2015

Subject: An update on progress in relation to increasing the Number of Young People in Employment, Education or Training

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. The Children and Families Scrutiny Board conducted an investigation into the support available in Leeds in order to reduce the risk of young people not accessing appropriate employment, education or training, also referred to as NEET.
2. The Board conducted its inquiry over three sessions involving a range of key stakeholders and two visits to speak to young people undertaking courses provided by Aspire-igen and Leeds City College.
3. This led to the production of a Scrutiny Inquiry Report in March 2013 containing 13 recommendations and a subsequent response from Children's Services in July 2013.
4. The recommendations included a request for an update on progress in October 2013, September 2014, and a further update in September 2015. In addition, the Scrutiny Board requested on 18th June 2015 that additional focus regarding destinations for SEND young people who are NEET, or at risk of being NEET, be brought for consideration and debate.

Recommendations

5. The Board are requested to note and comment on the progress to reduce the risk of young people not accessing appropriate employment, education or training.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report provides a detailed progress update on a number of key areas of activity to increase the number of young people in employment, education or training.

2 Background information

- 2.1 The Scrutiny Board was tasked with carrying out a piece of work on each of the three Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) obsessions. The third of these related to reducing the number of young people not in employment, education or Training (NEET).
- 2.2 The focus of the inquiry was on the support available in Leeds in order to reduce the risk of young people aged 16 to 19 years old becoming NEET and help them access appropriate employment, education or training.
- 2.3 During the course of the three sessions the inquiry received written and verbal evidence from a range of key stakeholders involved in supporting young people including council services, schools, FE colleges and Aspire-igen. This was supported by two visits to speak to young people undertaking courses provided by Aspire-igen and Leeds City College.
- 2.4 This led to the production of a Scrutiny Inquiry Report in March 2013 containing 13 recommendations and a response from Children's Services in July 2013.
- 2.5 The Scrutiny Inquiry Report also requested a progress update on a number of key areas of activity to reduce NEET to be presented to Scrutiny Board in October 2013 and a further report on progress in September 2014 and now in September 2015.
- 2.6 At the Scrutiny Board meeting in September 2014, it was agreed that recommendations 3, 4 and 13 would be removed.

3 Main issues

3.1 The Leeds strategy and model to reduce NEET (Recommendation 12)

- 3.2 Our performance in reducing the number of young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) is a powerful indicator of our overall success in educating and supporting young people. If young people fail to make a successful transition to further learning, employment and adult life, it is likely to have major consequences for their future economic wellbeing. To successfully address NEET and achieve our ambition to become a child friendly NEET free city we must tackle a range of complex inter-related issues affecting the most vulnerable. Our work with young people around the development of the Child Friendly City, our review of post-16 provision, the development of the Leeds Youth Offer and the major programmes that are now underway around the Devolved Youth Contract Programme and Families First initiatives are coming together to provide a cohesive package of opportunity to achieve our ambition for all young people aged 16-19 to be productively engaged in education, employment or training.

- 3.3 The duties for Raising of the Participation Age (RPA) have now been fully implemented which means young people are to remain in education or training until their 18th birthday. In addition to efforts to increase participation in education or training we are also focusing on providing employment opportunities and ensuring young people have the skills to succeed in the workplace.
- 3.4 **NEET & Not Known Performance Update**
- 3.5 There is evidence we have started to turn the curve with regard to reducing NEET/increasing progression to education, employment and training and reducing Not Knowns, see Annex 1. There is currently a particular focus on reducing the number of young people aged 16-19 who are NEET for over 6 months as the first stage in delivering on our ambition to become a NEET free city.
- 3.6 There are around 70 less young people NEET in June 2015 compared to June 2014, there have been dramatic decreases in the number of young people with a not known status by around 1,600 over the last three years since the opening of the Scrutiny Inquiry. This means that at this current time we can be more confident in the accuracy of our NEET data than in earlier reporting periods.
- 3.7 The number of young people whose status is not known is down to a record low of 2.5% in June 2015 compared to a national equivalent rate of 7.3%; see Annex 1, Table 2. Leeds has the lowest Not Known rate of the Core Cities, which range from 2.5% (Leeds) to 20.5% (Liverpool), sitting significantly below the average of 7.9%. Our success in reducing Not Known to this level has been a dedicated collective effort from Aspire-igen, schools, colleges, the council and other partners. Our processes and procedures around tracking and data collection are more robust than they have ever been, and we can go forward with confidence around the quality of our data.
- 3.8 This substantial reduction in not known rates has impacted on the NEET rate in Leeds, as inevitably some young people with an expired status have been identified as NEET.
- 3.9 Table 9 of Annex 1 shows the change in NEET levels by cluster over the last 12 months. Specific activities and initiatives, and how and when it is targeted locally to support young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET, is detailed and monitored through Area Level NEET action plans, led by Aspire-igen.
- 3.10 The DfE use data from the reporting period between November and January each year as their key measure of local authority performance and this data is shown in Table 4. They also indicate where local authorities have particularly high rates of young people with a not known status. For 2015 data (November 2014 – January 2015) just under half of the local authorities nationally were flagged as having more than 50% above the England average of young people with a status of Not Known. A high not known rate serves to artificially suppress the reported NEET rate, and this means that comparison of NEET rates with just under a quarter of local authorities in the country is not a valid exercise. In Leeds we have

confidence from our data tracking, that we are aware of the current status of over 95% of our 16-19 year olds.

- 3.11 It should be noted that of the young people who are included in the NEET figures at any particular time, around 300-400 will not be available to the labour market due to medical reasons, or because they are caring for young children or have other caring responsibilities. In addition 50-60 young people who already have a date agreed to start work or further training will remain recorded as NEET for a short while longer. At the current time around 1080 of the NEET group are those young people who are actively seeking education, employment or training. These groups are shown in Table 5 of Annex 1.
- 3.12 Around a quarter of the NEET group have been NEET for fewer than three months. Our focus is on working with the 'sustained NEET' group, who have been NEET for more than six months and at the end of June 2014 there were 958 young people (57.5%) of the NEET cohort in this group. Sustained NEET rates by cluster are shown in Table 8.
- 3.13 In Leeds we are reducing the length of time young people are NEET. The Year 14 cohort have the greatest prevalence of sustained periods of NEET, with around four out of every five NEET young people in that age group being NEET for more than three months, and around two-thirds having been NEET for more than six months. Long-term NEET rates are much lower for young people in Year 12, with around two-thirds of this group being NEET for less than six months.
- 3.14 When looking at the age of those in the NEET group, we have 2 percentage points more 17 and 18 year olds NEET than the national average. The majority of the NEET group in Leeds are 18 year olds, with two thirds of them being NEET for more than six months.
- 3.15 Of those young people (16-25) in the city who are tracked as SEND (this is both self-declared and those with a 139a Statement or Education Health and Care Plan) 61% are engaged in Further Education, 9% in Employment (including Apprenticeships), 4% in other training (e.g. re-engagement activity, Traineeships or training through the Work Programme) and 18% are NEET. Of those NEET, 16% are available to the labour Market and are actively seeking employment, education or training. Whilst this gives us some indication of the engagement of this group, there is work underway at this moment to enhance the accuracy of the reporting of young people in this group.
- 3.16 There are several differences in the definitions used by different government departments when it comes to reporting the NEET status of our children who are looked after or who have left care. When looking at 16-21 year old CLA and CL's there are around 40% who are NEET at any one time. The Care 2 Work Group have worked closely with the Social Care Teams to complete a cohort analysis to understand the main barriers experienced by our CLA and CL's who are NEET. This is detailed further on in this report.
- 3.17 We are on par nationally with the number of 16 and 17 year olds participating on Apprenticeships and in Further Education. The rate of participation in learning in Leeds was 85.8% in June 2015 compared to a national average of 82.7% and a

rate among statistical neighbour authorities of 84.1%, see Table 3. This positive picture is important as we measure how well young people in Leeds are meeting their duties of Raising of the Participation Age (young people under the age of 18 are not be able to be in a job that does not included the equivalent of at least one day per week of learning). On this measure, comparison against the performance of other local authorities is more reliable, as this measure is not distorted by large numbers of not known records.

- 3.18 We will increasingly report the rate of young people in learning alongside the NEET rate as the DfE have previously stated they would start to move away from measuring NEET to measuring Participation as the Raising of the Participation Age is now implemented.
- 3.19 The last NEET Scrutiny progress report lay out and explained the key areas of work taking place across the city to help reduce NEET and showed how these link together to form a comprehensive and coherent model and strategy to reduce NEET across Leeds. These are summarised again in Annex 2. This update report provides progress on these areas along with providing information on new initiatives. This report also provides information on work underway to introduce Health Education and Care plans for young people in the city who have Special Education Needs or a Disability (SEND). Detail on progress with supporting children who are looked after or care leavers into positive learning or employment destinations post 14 and 16 is also included. This work is reflected in detail in the Care 2 Work Progress Plan in Annex 3.
- 3.20 **Learning Offer**
- 3.21 **Post-16 Learning infrastructure (Recommendation 12)**
- 3.22 The local authority shared with Schools, Governors and Councillor members the "School Sixth Forms in Leeds: A Discussion Document for Post-16 Learning in Leeds 2014-2020" document and held an event for Heads/Principals, Governors and Councillors on 23rd July 2014. Potential collaborative solutions identified by the Council were outlined to Scrutiny Board within the progress report of September 2014; these are detailed in Annex 4 for ease of reference. A verbal update on progress against these will be given at the Scrutiny Board Meeting on 10th September 2015.
- 3.23 **University Technical College (UTC)**
- 3.24 The first UTC in Leeds will open its doors in the city in September 2016. The new school for 14 to 18-year-olds will specialise in manufacturing and Engineering. The project has been led by major employers including Kodak UK, Agfa, Unilever, Siemens and Grant Thornton. It has the backing of Leeds City Council, Leeds University, Leeds City College and the city's chamber of commerce. The UTC will help bridge the skills shortage facing the sector by educating the inventors, engineers and scientists of the future. Specialising in engineering and manufacturing, the new college will provide a vocational education for young people aged 14-19 from across the city region, with the curriculum focused on the 'STEM' subjects of science, technology, engineering and maths.

3.25 Approval has been received by the Department of Education for the funding agreement of £9.5million to cover the cost of building works and initial staffing costs. UTC Leeds will be located at the Braime Pressings factory on Hunslet Road, Leeds, and will be housed in the building's newly converted west wing, construction work starting in September 2015 for completion September 2016.

3.26 Working with industry, the job of the new principal will be to present this fantastic opportunity to parents and ambitious young people and recruit the first intake of 105 14 year olds and 120 16 year olds ready for when the UTC Leeds opens its doors.

3.27 Special Educational Need & Disabilities (SEND)

3.28 Following the local implementation of the Children and Families act young people with Special Education Needs now receive a coherent and joined up plan from the age of 0-25 through the introduction of Education Health and Care (EHC) Plans. The EHC Plans focus on the aspirations of young people and on intended destinations into adulthood. Young person centred reviews in year 9 begin to explore intended destinations and the EHC plan ensures that a young person's education and learning better prepares them for the transition into adulthood and an appropriate positive destination; whether that be into further learning, employment, independent or supported living, or a meaningful adult life.

3.29 The first of the three years of conversions to the new EHC Plans has been successful and Leeds has been recognised as demonstrating good practice by the DfE. The local authority in partnership with post-16 education providers has designed and implemented a fair and equitable process for funding Post-16 learning.

3.30 A post-16 (HNS) providers forum has been established and ran an OBA turning the curve workshop exploring ways to increase the numbers of young adults with SEND accessing the world of work when they leave post-16 provision. As a result a supported internship pilot for post-16 students with SEND has been established. Leeds City Council is working closely with employers, post-16 providers and supported employment advisers and a strategic group chaired by Cllr Dowson is overseeing the supported internship pilot.

3.31 A supported internship is a course offered by colleges and post-16 providers. They aim to help young people with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve paid employment by giving them the skills and experience they need through learning in the workplace.

3.32 Children Looked After and Care Leavers – Care 2 Work

3.33 As of March 2015, Leeds City Council's Children's Services has restructured the staffing to support Children Looked After (CLA) and Care Leavers into further education and employment. The expanded Virtual School Team and the Raising Participation Team now support this area of work in developing strategies to reduce NEET Care Leavers. This area of work is the responsibility of the Care 2 Work Group, which reports strategically into the MALAP Education to Employment sub group; the MALAP Care Leavers Group (New Belongings) and this year will

report to Corporate Parents. The Care 2 Work Group brings together staff from Leeds City Council's Children's Services, DWP, Employment and Skills, Children's Services Social Care, Leeds City Council HR, and Aspire-igen with the specific aim of improving the numbers of CLA / Care Leavers entering Education, Employment and/or Training (EET). This work is monitored and evidenced in the Care 2 Work Plan (see Annex 3) and the work of the group has attracted some recognition from other Local Authorities. Learning visits have been hosted by Leeds City Council to share what is deemed to be good practice.

3.34 The work of the Care 2 Work group to date has been enhanced and supported by an allocation of £250,000 from Leeds City Council Leaders, known as the Leeds Guarantee Fund, as of April 2015. The Care 2 Work group has decided to make best use of this funding by the development of support for the key groups of NEET Care Leavers. Such groups have been identified by a detailed cohort analysis has been conducted, details below. The Ready 4 Work programme which was piloted in July 2014, to prepare our NEET 18-21 year old care leavers to take the next step to EET, has proved to be successful , with over 50% of the cohort now in EET. Collaborative work continues with Leeds City Council HR to identify employment opportunities and Apprenticeship placements for care leavers prior to those jobs being externally advertised.

3.35 It was recommended at the last NEET Scrutiny to priorities and implement standardised processes that adequately identify, track and support Care Leavers in order for them to be supported into positive post-16 training or employment opportunities. The reporting of NEET Care Leavers is given recognition as a priority group by Leeds City Council 14 – 19 Strategic Partnership. This includes being able to track which Children Looked After /Care Leavers have just left Year 11 or Year 12, and do not have an offer of learning or employment with training for September (September Guarantee). For those young people who do not have an offer, a collective targeted approach was taken by Aspire-igen and their social worker to swiftly work with them to help them secure an appropriate learning or employment with training destination. The Leeds Guarantee Fund had enabled the Care 2 Work group to conduct a more rigorous cohort analysis with the aim of targeting funding to priority areas. Strategic development with other partners is now in process to provide targeted support in the areas of teenage pregnancy / young parents; leaving custody; mental health support.

3.36 The Care 2 Work group members also take a lead with the School Improvement IAG network; enabling the team to raise the profile of Looked After Children / Care Leavers as priority groups in schools and post-16 settings. The network is extremely well attended and the schools welcome the solution focussed best practice to support this cohort of young people.

3.37 Employability Support Activity (Recommendations 3,6,7 and 8)

3.38 Devolved Youth Contract Programme

The Devolved Youth Contract Programme for 16 and 17 year olds was devolved from the nationally procured programme under City Deal in May 2012. The Youth Contract has recently been approved by Cabinet Office to continue until March 2016 in order to allow as many young people as possible to be supported to

achieve a 6-month sustained progression in EET. Year 2 has been characterised by steady progress, with programme elements being established as 'business as usual', alongside strong partnership-working arrangements.

As we enter Year 3, we have nearly completed recruitment with 1,032 young people currently on programme. Currently, 661 of these young people have progressed to employment, education or training, with the majority of young people entering Further Education (see Annex 5 for further details). To date, we have successfully supported over 30% of the Youth Contract cohort through to their 6-month sustained progression point. This represents a successful transition for a significant proportion of the hardest to help young people in Leeds, including those with experience of housing issues, child protection, in care/care leavers, pregnancy/teen parents, learning difficulties and/or disabilities and mental health issues.

- 3.39 In Leeds we deliver the Youth Contract programme primarily through our targeted IAG provider (Aspire-igen) working in partnership with the Education Business Partnership. Young people are recruited to the programme and allocated a key worker who will help them make a successful transition. They are encouraged to choose from a range of activities designed to respond to their needs and help them achieve progression. Options include mentoring (business or peer mentor), group assessment centres, mock interviews, business visits, and work placements within an overall 'Set for Success' programme. Businesses supporting the programme include organisation such O2, Kodak and Leeds Federated Housing.
- 3.40 The key features of the programme in Leeds which have helped us achieve good results already are:
- Being able to ensure that Youth Contract Support Programme activity is a coherent part of a wider city-wide strategy around creating employment opportunities and reducing the number of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET)
 - Strong, pre-existing partnerships between the main service provider and voluntary/third sector offering specialist expertise
 - Well-developed employer links through the Education Business Partnership enabling us to engage businesses extensively in the programme and put an emphasis on helping young people to become 'work-ready' and link to live opportunities in the labour market
 - The sustained relationship with an experienced key worker to provide both support and challenge
 - An emphasis on achieving measurable outcomes, for example by carrying out pre- and post-programme skills audits. This is supported by a 'payment by results' approach, with the final payment made when a young person has been in a sustained placement for six months or more (a strong indicator that a lasting transition has been achieved)
 - A core programme complemented by locality-based innovation projects led by area teams, for example, provision of targeted mental health counselling and outward bound residential programmes

The national evaluation of the Youth Contract highlighted higher achievement rates of young people into and sustaining EET through the City Deal locally designed and delivered programme than the nationally procured provision.

3.41 Education Business Partnership offer to schools

3.42 The council's Education Business Partnership (EBP) has reviewed and enhanced their offer to schools. The Team currently offers an extensive range of opportunities to schools and academies for young people to engage with people from businesses to enhance their employability and enterprise skills. These include interactive sessions by business leaders and employees to raise aspirations and understanding of particular career opportunities; structured visits to local businesses; mock interviews and mentoring programmes. In addition the EBP has designed a range of sector related programmes which are delivered in partnership with employers at their place of business and include: Retail in Action, Hospitality in Action, Utilities in Action, O2 Girls into Digital Communications and O2 Learn to Code programmes.

The team is currently marketing services to schools for the 2015/2016 academic year. As part of this process schools are being encouraged to work with the service to audit existing activity, and to map this against the new Ofsted Common Inspection Framework. Utilising the Local Authority designed CEIAG Self-Assessment Tool, future provision will also be mapped against the CIF in order to ensure that schools are reflecting Ofsted's requirements in their delivery of CIEAG.

3.43 A number of schools access programmes for primary and secondary education via other providers such as The Ahead Partnership and the Prince's Trust. The EBP works in partnership with these providers where pertinent, including a recent joint offer to the Leeds Manufacturing Forum with the Ahead Partnership, which we hope will result in widening the participation of businesses engaging with schools and young people.

3.44 ATA and Apprenticeship Hub

3.45 The Leeds ATA and Apprenticeship Hub are now into the final year of a three year programme funded through the City Deal (ending September 2015).

3.46 The ATA continues to trade as a company limited by guarantee and is jointly owned by the Council and Leeds City College. The ATA supports the creation of new apprenticeship opportunities involving small and medium sized (SME) employers that would otherwise be unable to take the business risk of employing an apprentice directly. Effectively operating as an employment agency, the ATA directly employs apprentices who are hired to host employers where they will complete their apprenticeship.

3.47 The Apprenticeship Hub is part of the Employment & Skills service and works across the city to drive up the number of apprenticeships. It works in partnerships with training providers and offers support, guidance and information to businesses and young people about apprenticeships.

- 3.48 The Hub and ATA jointly coordinate and deliver wide ranging SME and young person engagement programmes and are supported by a network of Apprenticeship and Business ambassadors, who help carry the message about apprenticeships to young people, parents, and teachers.
- 3.49 Staff from both teams attend regular business events and network meetings to promote opportunities. The teams have good relationships with business organisations including Leeds Chamber of Commerce. The Hub works with sector bodies and sector skills councils and has enabled support and brokerage services to businesses in the city across the manufacturing, cultural, creative and digital, legal and professional business services sectors. In 2014/15 the Hub supported the legal sector to launch the Leeds Legal Apprenticeship Scheme, with the ambition that every legal practice in the city will employ at least one apprentice. Now in its second year, over thirty businesses are involved, including high profile firms such as Bond Dickinson, Eversheds, and Squire Patton Boggs. This is a good example of how a sectoral approach can reap dividends, especially in a profession which, according to popular perception, might not be apprenticeship friendly.
- 3.50 The Hub and ATA deliver a school engagement programme which ensures school and college leavers receive information about accessing an apprenticeship as a career progression route. Activity within schools includes delivering year group presentations, workshops, stands at careers events and bespoke events e.g. exam result day information sessions. Almost all secondary schools have engaged with the team.
- 3.51 To complement the wider school engagement activity, in the summer of 2015 the Hub and ATA delivered weekly Apprenticeship Application Workshops. Hosted by training providers in the city centre, these sessions encouraged young people to identify specific opportunities of interest, and apply for them on the day – with support from the Hub/ATA team to ensure their application was of a good quality. The workshops will be reinstated in early 2016 as young people start to make their choices about future destinations.
- 3.52 Every summer the Hub stages a high profile apprenticeship recruitment event at the Town Hall. This year over 1700 young people and their parents/carers attended the event on the 13th July, with a change in the emphasis of the event enabling them to review over 200 live vacancies and express their interest in applying. On the night we received over 850 expressions of interest in the vacancies displayed, all of which were passed to training providers for follow up with the young people.
- 3.53 The National Apprenticeship Service's **Apprenticeship Grant for Employers (AGE)** that was referred to in the last Scrutiny Report, is no longer available in the City Region. As part of the Leeds City Region's Devolution Deal, this has been replaced by a local Grant, known as the Local Enterprise Partnership's (LEP) AGE.
- 3.54 This Grant went live on 1 August for apprentice starts up to 31 December and will offer grants of up to £2,000 available to businesses with less than 250 employees employing an apprentice (16-25 years) and, based within specified local authority

postcode areas in the region, including Leeds. Grants are offered on a 'first come first serve basis' but each business can receive up to 3 grants i.e. a possible total of £6,000 maximum. However, any business that is already being supported through the LEP Skills Service Programme is not eligible for the LEP AGE.

3.55 The Grant is payable directly to businesses, although this must be claimed via the training provider who, from 1st August 2015, need to complete an online Registration of Interest form on behalf of an eligible business. Further information and full details on the process can be found at <http://www.the-lep.com/age/>.

3.56 To the end of July 2015, 406 young people have been supported into Apprenticeships with the Hub and ATA's support and 571 businesses have committed to take on an apprentice.

3.57 Support to employment

There are a wide range of other programmes and initiatives in place across the city to assist young people in securing employment. These include national Youth Contract programmes to encourage and incentivise employers to recruit young people including academies and work trails as well as local interventions:-

- **Sector work based academies** targeted to Jobseekers Allowance claimants are delivered through Jobcentre Plus in conjunction with local partners. These provide pre-employment training, work experience and a guaranteed interview with an employer and participants retain their benefits while on this short programme. Sector initiatives reflect the current recruitment needs of employers and therefore vary, but the Leeds Teaching Hospital Trust regularly recruits to its Apprenticeship vacancies and Clinical Support posts throughout the year through this mechanism.
- **The Work Programme** contracted by DWP is delivered through prime contractors Ingeus and Interserve across West Yorkshire. 18-24 year olds in receipt of Jobseekers Allowance for more than 6 months are referred to the Work Programme. It offers an individually tailored programme of support for up to 2 years.
- **Work Clubs** supported by DWP though nominal start-up funding, are delivered by a range of organisations. Over 20 are available across the city and using a variety of delivery models, seek to support individuals look for and gain employment.
- **A Work Trial** supported by Jobcentre Plus enables an employer to try out a potential employee before offering them a job. For the employer it reduces the risk and cost of recruitment. Work trials must be for jobs of 16 hours or more a week and last at least 13 weeks. This enables Jobseekers Allowance claimants to take part on a voluntary basis and retain their benefits while participating.
- The Council's **Jobshop** services are available across the inner city through the network of Community Hubs. Matrix accredited Information, Advice and Guidance is provided, including support to create an e-mail account, undertake job search,

developing CVs and applications, interview and assessment centre preparation and access to adult skills provision. Customers can access a wide variety of job and Apprenticeship vacancies including those secured by the Council through employment and skills obligations placed on developers through S106 planning agreements and on contractors seeking to deliver services on behalf of the Council above specified thresholds.

- The Council's **Work@Leeds** programme completed its final cohort on 30 May 2014. In total, the programme supported 103 NEET young people into work experience and 42 NEET young people into employment. Work@Leeds has been subsumed by Head Start, a LCR funded training and work experience programme for 18 -24 year olds.
- **Head Start** launched on 31st March 2014 and will provide circa 600 young people who have been unemployed for six months with quality work experience with a local employer for up to six weeks and, including employability training. Key worker support is also provided to all programme participants by Aspire-igen, the Council's delivery partner. Key workers support young people to overcome any barriers that affect their ability to gain and sustain employment. Training is delivered by Leeds City College and covers a range of skills development including customer service, team building, communication, CV writing and interview technique. The Council is providing a large number of work placements and is also working with employers across Leeds to open up new opportunities. A range of employers are currently working with the programme from large multi-nationals such as Premier Inn to local independents. Through key worker support and the Council's Jobshop provision, young people are being supported to gain permanent and sustainable employment. A minimum of 217 young people are expected to gain employment over the two year programme with 163 of those sustaining employment for at least six months.
- **Talent Match** is a Big Lottery funded programme that is being coordinated locally by Voluntary Action Leeds (VAL) and delivered by Third Sector providers. Talent Match works with 18 -24 year olds who are furthest from the labour market, including: those that have been NEET for over 12 months; unknown NEETs and priority groups including, BME; ex-offenders; travellers; lone parents and those with mental health issues. Key worker support is central to Talent Match and outcomes include a range of supported interventions including progressions into employment and supported work placements. The Council is supporting this programme through partner meetings and locally coordinating employer engagement, led by the Ahead Partnership. To the end of March 2015, over 100 young people had been supported. In the two years, to the end of December 2015, providers in Leeds namely, Learning Partnerships, BARCA-Leeds, PATH, Hamara Healthy Living Centre and the Cardigan Centre anticipate being able to support over 250 young people in total.
- The **Fair Chance** fund will support vulnerable, homeless NEET young people aged 18 - 24 into housing, education and work. The funding will test Social Impact Bonds (SIBs) as an innovative way of solving complex social problems. SIBs are a payment by results system that will see investors fund interventions to prevent

young people from becoming NEET. Payments will only be made if initiatives are successful and positive outcomes are achieved.

- **Youth obligation** – From April 2017, 18-21 year olds on Universal Credit must either ‘earn or learn’. They will participate in an intensive period of support at the start of their benefit claim. After 6 months they will be expected to apply for an apprenticeship, traineeship, gain work place skills or go on a work placement, otherwise they will lose their benefits.
- **Student maintenance** – Maintenance loan support will rise for students from low and middle income backgrounds up to £8,200 a year studying away from home, outside London. From the 2016-17 academic year, maintenance grants will be replaced with maintenance loans for new students from England, paid back only when their earnings exceed £21,000 a year.
- **Student loans** – The government will consult on freezing the loan repayment threshold for the next 5 years and review the discount rate applied to student loans and other transactions to bring it more into line with the government’s long-term cost of borrowing.
- **Employment advisor support for 14-17 year olds** – The government is creating a new Jobcentre Plus employment advisor role, working with schools and sixth-form colleges to help build young people’s understanding of the local labour market, the skills local employers are looking for, and routes into work. This new service will start in Birmingham, before expanding to the wider Greater Birmingham and Solihull area and then beyond. It is anticipated that this will be evaluated prior to consideration of wider application and any opportunity for other LA’s to bid for local roll out.

3.58 Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (Recommendations 5, 9, 10, 11)

3.59 Leeds Pathways

3.60 In September 2014, the Leeds Pathways website was re-launched as a sub-site on the Council website at: www.leeds.gov.uk/leedspathways. As always, this site covers the most up-to-date learning, training and employment information for young people from ages 14-24, as well as hosting information for parents/carers and professionals, with expanded Area pages to support work carried out in localities. Working with Employment & Skills, we have provided an up-to-date Key Job Sectors page which details local labour market information for Leeds to support career progression, supported by employer films. Information about Job Centre Plus and Connexions is also hosted on the site. Training and other CPD resources are available for all stakeholders to help them make the best use of this resource.

3.61 Online Prospectus and Application System: UCAS Progress

In addition, Leeds Pathways is the portal for UCAS Progress, a service provided by the LA, which supports young people in Year 11 to make Post-16 applications. This makes up a significant portion of the September Guarantee data and pre-populates returns for schools to aid the accuracy and ease of this process.

3.62 Results and #Leeds Next Steps clearing event: 3rd September 2015

3.63 Annually, Leeds Pathways participates in the Good Luck Results campaign, providing both Revision and Results/Clearing information at appropriate times. This year, we are organising a new venture to promote participation for young people, along with the Apprenticeship Hub - **#Leeds Next Steps, a Post-16 Clearing event, on Thursday, 3rd September, 11:00-18:00 in Civic Hall**. There will be over 40 training providers, colleges and schools hosting stands offering advice, information and live courses for young people to enrol onto. The Apprenticeship Hub will be advertising live vacancies with employers, and Connexions advisers will be available to offer support. Young people who have just left Year 11 or 12 and do not yet have an offer of learning, along with those who school feel their offer is at risk (maybe due to exam results) have been invited to the event via a direct mailing. Those young people in the NEET group who are actively seeking training or employment have also been invited.

3.64 Youth Information Hub – www.leeds.gov.uk/youthinformationhub

3.65 The Youth Information Hub is a new online resource for young people and professionals which brings together a full range of information on different topics, relevant to young people. This initiative has been strongly supported the Youth Council and Child-Friendly Leeds, with a presentation at the recent ambassador event.

3.66 This site contains general information on topics from mental health services and budgeting to travel passes and Breeze events. There are also pages with information for targeted groups of young people, including:

- **Young Carers:** This section links to Barnardo's, the contracted provider for these services.
- **Young People with learning difficulties or disabilities:** This section links directly to the Leeds Local Offer information.
- **Leeds Guarantee for Care Leavers:** www.leeds.gov.uk/careleavers
This page meets the Ofsted duty around publishing the Leeds Guarantee for care leavers. It is a regularly updated page, with information about events and progression opportunities. It also provides transparency on the full range of entitlements for care leavers and sign-posts to relevant agencies to promote self help.
- **Teen Parents:** www.leeds.gov.uk/teenparents
This page has a range of useful information as well as a quick self-referral process for help from the Teen Pregnancy Team, which can be done by teens, parents/carers or other professionals.

3.67 Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) self-assessment tool

- 3.68 The new revised statutory guidance for governing bodies and school leaders and staff '*Careers guidance and inspiration in schools*' was refreshed at the end of April 2015 and replaced previous versions issued in March 2012, March 2013 and March 2014. It provides more detail on why schools (and local authorities that maintain pupil referral units) must (by law) secure independent careers guidance for young people, what they must do to comply with their legal responsibilities in this area, and the role of the governing bodies and head teachers in shaping the offer.
- 3.69 It provides greater clarity on the legal requirements around information sharing with the Local Authority. The work undergone in the city to support this is detailed later in this report.
- 3.70 The new duties now state very clearly that schools should ensure pupils are informed about the options available to them at post 14, not just post-16. Such as: GCSE's; options offered by local university technical colleges and studio schools; opportunities for 14 year old enrolments at local colleges. Details of Leeds City College's 14-19 Apprenticeship Academy is available on their website and on Leeds Pathways <http://leedspathways.org.uk/courses>. The local authority supported a mailing in June 2014 and April 2015 about the academy to all year 9 students. This goes some way in supporting schools in meeting this element of the duty. Children's Services are working closely with schools so they are aware of infrastructure changes across the city for post 14 and post-16 provision. In July 2015, the local authority, supported and funded by post-16 providers directly funded by the Education Funding Agency for 16-19 Study Programmes, completed a mailing to the parents/carers of young people in year 10, 11 and the NEET group to inform them of all post-16 options.
- 3.71 Finally, the duties put a large emphasis on the evaluation and monitoring of advice and guidance. Ofsted, through the thematic review, found that very few schools did this well. In 2013/14 the Local Authority devised and launched the CEIAG Self-Assessment Tool to support schools and colleges in understanding their duties and enable them to identify what they do well and in what areas they need to improve and require further support. This has now been updated to reflect the new duties published in March 2015, and is currently undergoing a further refresh to mirror Ofsted's new Common Inspection Framework. Since its launch in 2013/14, 60% of Leeds Schools and Colleges have shown an interest in implementing the tool, with 30% actually using it to support their CEIAG Strategy. Boston Spa School have used the tool rigorously, and this was commended by Ofsted at their recent inspection. A number of schools are using findings from their Self Assessment to support each other in CPD sessions. Where numerous schools have identified a need, then the Local Authority have put on CPD sessions with schools to help bridge knowledge gaps and share good practice. An example of this is around Data and Tracking of young people, in particular in regard to the September Guarantee. These sessions have proved invaluable for the Local Authority to help redefine processes to ensure maximum return rates, thus improving the data we hold about young people and their destinations.
- 3.72 Overall, a number of different approaches to the careers duties are emerging, including purchasing services from careers guidance suppliers through the list developed by the council, and internal arrangements where schools are either

employing trained careers/personal advisers or retaining an existing member of staff to deliver careers guidance. It is anticipated that this will have changed significantly for the 2015/16 academic year due to the recent withdrawal of pre-16 Connexions services. A survey has been sent to all secondary schools asking them to define what staffing arrangements they have in place to support all young in relation to CEIAG, including those with SEND. This is due to be returned the second week of the Autumn Term.

3.73 The Careers Network, led by Children's Services, has run for another year and has been well attended with 80% of Leeds secondary schools and colleges engaging. Evaluation of the network has been rated by attendees as either Good or Excellent, and therefore it has been agreed to run the Network for another year free of charge to schools and colleges. In June this year, the Network ran their first half day conference focussing on CEIAG within the new Ofsted Common Inspection Framework. Aspire-igen sponsored the event in order for it to be cost neutral to the Local Authority. Attendees heard from two Senior HMIs, along with Leeds City College who had previously undergone a pilot inspection under the new regime. Boston Spa also shared the benefits of using the Self Assessment tool to prepare for inspection, and Connexions provided detail on the recent changes to the service available in Leeds, providing practical advice on how schools can make best use of referrals.

3.74 Aspire-igen Targeted IAG Services & Families First

3.75 As part of the Council's Budget Report 2015/16, reductions in funding of 50% were agreed for the Targeted Information Advice and Guidance (TIAG) service provided by Aspire-igen under the banner 'Connexions Leeds'. This is in addition to reductions in budget of 48% that the Connexions service in Leeds experienced up to 2014.

3.76 Attempts were made last summer to mitigate the budget situation by asking schools to match-fund school-based pre-16 Connexions work. A number of schools committed funding to this. However, the majority did not, and on this basis the local authority decided not to move forward with the proposal, resulting in the cessation of all pre-16 work in schools and on offsite provision from April 2015 under the new contract arrangements.

3.77 Despite these changes, the reduction of Not Known continues to be a key focus of the Targeted Information Advice and Guidance contract. The number of young people with young people with a Not Known status stands at 2.3% in July.

3.78 The service continues to work with priority groups of young people who are NEET in order to help them progress into a positive post-16 destination. The re-commissioned service, which came into effect at the beginning of April 2015, aims to ensure that the local authority meets its statutory duties towards :

- helping vulnerable young people sustain their participation in learning
- tracking and offering support to those who are not participating

- registering young people who are eligible to apply for benefits.

3.79 The service has a clear focus on contributing to the vision of a seamless multi-agency service to vulnerable children, young people and their families, working at a locality level in partnership with schools, clusters and other partners.

3.80 The changes mean that the service now focuses exclusively on 16-19 year old NEET young people (or those aged up to 25 in the case of young people with special educational needs or difficulties).

3.81 The Connexions Centre in Eastgate closed at the beginning of April 2015. There is now a limited drop-in facility available three days a week for young people to receive support with benefit claims before going to the Job Centre. A small central tracking and management information service also remains.

3.82 The remaining Connexions staff have been assigned to three area-based teams, with capacity allocated to each cluster. Delivery is fully integrated with local arrangements for targeted service provision. Priorities are driven by local needs, and allocation of resources is responsive to prevailing levels of NEET in different localities. Alongside this arrangement the service works directly with service leads responsible for care leavers and young offenders in particular, to ensure that the needs of these priority groups are dealt with. This includes regular drop-in sessions in the relevant area offices.

3.83 The restructuring of the service was carried out over a short period of time in order to meet the deadline of 1 April 2015 for the new contract. Every effort was made to minimise disruption to young people. However, the impact of this change in capacity brings risks to be managed, including:

- Reduced capacity for providing young people with sustained access to a support worker to meet their needs, with possible associated safeguarding risks. These include young people vulnerable to sustained NEET and long-term adult worklessness
- Lower capacity for outreach and engagement, which may affect destination tracking and NEET/Not Known figures
- Need for different referral mechanisms to be embedded as a result of the closure of the Connexions Centre
- Potential loss of Connexions staff from the service over the next few months due to uncertainty about jobs after March 2016
- Lack of preparedness of the wider children's workforce, including school staff, to meet the broad needs of young people directly themselves.
- Impact of the Devolved Youth Contract coming to an end, removing an income stream which has helped to cross-subsidise the Connexions TIAG work.

- 3.84 Where possible, these risks are being dealt with as part of the contract management process. They will also need to be considered as part of the ongoing Youth Offer review which is consulting on how to configure youth and TIAG services for young people across the city from April 2016.
- 3.85 In addition, steps have been taken over the summer months to support the transition of young people into post-16 learning and mitigate the possible negative impact on NEET figures from September. These steps include:
- running a 'Moving On Process' for a small number of schools to allow young people at risk of not progressing to be matched with learning opportunities.
 - Leeds City College student support staff are attending results days in 16 schools to offer learning opportunities to students who have underachieved on their GCSE grades
 - A major post-16 'clearing' event on 3 September in the Civic Hall, involving 40 local learning providers with courses to fill and live current apprenticeship vacancies.
- 3.86 The effectiveness of these measures and of the new Connexions structure will be reviewed from September 2015, when NEET figures usually peak. This will allow an assessment of the impact of service changes on young people and their destinations, and identify the need for any service re-planning which may be necessary.
- 3.87 Aspire-igen's Families First contract has been extended to March 2016. The service involves working with families who have a young person who is NEET or at risk of NEET. These joint working arrangements have also helped further embed 'Think Family, Work Family' across Connexions.
- 3.88 Data (Recommendations 2, 4, 13)**
- 3.89 An overview of the data collected and shared to support the monitoring and tracking necessary to support the reduction of NEET rates is included as Annex 6.

It was agreed at the Scrutiny Board in September 2014, that recommendations 4 and 13 would be closed. However, it should be noted there has been, and will continue to be, a high focus on reviewing and strengthening processes for tracking young people over the coming year. Connexions, before the recent changes, supported the tracking of vulnerable young people pre-16 and their transition to post-16 destinations. Aspire-igen used to capture this directly on the national CCIS database to ensure resources could be deployed quickly. This is now the responsibility of the schools and colleges, who do not have access to the national CCIS database, and therefore new data tracking processes have had to be implemented quickly to capture this information; the effectiveness of which will be evaluated over the year.

3.90 Tracking young people with a not known status

The reduction of 'Not known' continues to be a key element of the Targeted Information Advice and Guidance contract held by Aspire-igen. The contract includes an element of payment by results based on reducing the level of 'Not known'. Aspire-igen are taking a lead role in coordinating activity across a wide range of partners and have introduced a number of initiatives that have continued to bring down 'Not known' to record levels.

3.91 NEET Data Board and Data Sharing Agreements with Partners

Partners across the city continue to come together with Children's Services to form the NEET Data Board. Throughout the last academic year the local authority has worked closely with schools and colleges to evaluate and enhance new data processes implemented during the 2014/15 academic year aimed to lessen the data burden experienced by schools in previous years in regard to September Guarantee. These have been positively received and have increased the school return rate and the quality of information received.

3.92 Data sharing within clusters

3.93 Reports showing NEET data at a local level are now regularly distributed to clusters and areas. This data is central to informing the use of Youth Contract Cluster Innovation Funding and area-level NEET plans.

3.94 A 'Moving On' process has been implemented in each of the areas (ENE, WNW, SSE) that has involved periodic "Learning Destination Meetings" between Schools, Connexions Targeted Service, Target Support Services, and learning providers. These parties have been working together on a task and finish basis to identify and encourage the take-up of a suitable learning pathway for young people. The process has been implemented on an area basis and focussed on groups of schools in areas of highest NEET. Young people have been offered a detailed 1:1 discussion, facilitated by the school, with the nominated learning provider to discuss the offer of learning. A review of how well this process has worked for the identified young people will take place at the end of September, with their progress to post-16 currently being monitored and supported as necessary. The aim is to expand the Moving On process to cover all FE colleges and Year 13/14 students (18/19 year olds) during the 2015/16 academic year.

3.95 A need has been identified for an audit to take place of all provision funded through Clusters to support young people to engage in EET in order to gain a full picture and to be able to identify good practice that could be replicated across the city.

3.96 Destination measures

3.97 In September 2015, the Destination Measures for Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 will be used for the first time in school performance tables. The latest data shows the percentage of the 2011/12 Key Stage 4 cohort going to, or remaining in, an education or employment destination in 2012/13 and the percentage of students in 2011/12 who entered an A Level or other Level 3 qualification, going to, or

remaining in, an education or employment destination in 2012/13 (see Tables 6 & 7 of Annex 1)

- 3.98 After the end of Key Stage 4 proportionally fewer young people in Leeds went on to a sustained education, employment or training destination compared to national rates. However after the end of Key Stage 5 a higher proportion of Leeds young people went on to a sustained education, employment or training destination than did so nationally. Leeds are 4 percentage points higher than the national average for the number of young people who progress and sustain a HE destination.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.2 The scrutiny process underpinning this report meant that members were able to have face to face consultation with schools, FE colleges, IAG providers, council services and young people. The recommendations are based on their engagement in this process.
- 4.3 Children and young people were involved in the process of awarding the contract for the targeted information, advice and guidance service that began in April 2013.
- 4.4 The NEET Data Board have consulted with schools and colleges to make improvements to tracking and September Guarantee processes.
- 4.5 The Apprenticeship Information Evening held on 13th July, took into account feedback on questionnaires from previous events run by the Leeds Apprenticeship Hub and consultation with schools, colleges and other Apprenticeship Providers.
- 4.6 Young People have, and will continue to play, a key role in the development of Leeds Pathways and the Youth Information Hub.
- 4.7 Children who are looked after and those who are care leavers have been involved extensively in the development and evaluation of the Care 2 Work Plan (see Annex 3) and the projects and initiatives that are being supported by the Leeds Guarantee funding.

5 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 5.1 Some young people are statistically more likely to be NEET such as those with learning difficulties and disabilities, care leavers, young offenders, poor school attenders, those attending the BESD SILC, PRUs or off-site learning, young parents, young carers, pregnant young women, homeless young people and those living away from their family. NEET rates vary significantly in different areas of the city, with the areas of highest NEET levels closely correlating with the areas of greatest deprivation. The purpose of all the strategic and operational activity associated with increasing participation in employment, education or training is to reduce the inequalities that prevent young people from making a successful transition from school.

6 Council policies and City Priorities

- 6.1 NEET is one of the three Children's Services obsessions. It is a multi-faceted issue that in some way links to almost every aspect of partnership activity across the city including the work of all five high level boards of the Leeds Initiative, not least the Sustainable Economy and Culture Board. It also relates directly to the partnership work at a Leeds City Region level, particularly around employment and skills, and business development and innovation.

7 Resources and value for money

- 7.1 The investment on increasing the number of young people in employment, education and training is partly a spend to save model, as it will lead to a reduction in future welfare spending. It will also have a positive impact on the economy leading to a consequent increase in council income.

8 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 8.1 There are no relevant legal implications to this response to this report.

9 Risk Management

- 9.1 Increasing participation in employment, education and training is vital to the economic and social success of the city. Failure to deliver on this priority would have serious consequences for the economic prosperity and social fabric of the city.
- 9.2 It has been confirmed by the DfE that the Devolved Youth Contract will cease in April 2016. Whilst an extension to claim outputs has been granted, there will not be any further funding in addition to that already secured. This, together with the commissioning of ESiF 16-19 NEET programmes being delayed, means there is little flexible short programme provision for those young people seeking re-engagement activity. 16-19 Study Programme Providers are exploring how they devise more flexible programmes within the funding limitations to try and mitigate some of this gap.
- 9.3 As the Council's statutory duties have come to focus increasingly on the targeted group of vulnerable young people, separate services have converged and collaborated on this group. The Youth Offer has been restructured during the past year and the Connexions Service has undergone reductions over a number of years. Efforts to ensure the data used to track young people is accurate and shared timely is ever more crucial to enable resources to be deployed to targeted front line services swiftly.
- 9.4 There are a number of consequences to this changing landscape. The question of how we engage, for instance, with the voluntary sector in delivering services in the future is at risk of being dealt with on a piecemeal basis. There is a risk of gaps in services opening up if changes are not planned holistically. In addition, uncertainties in the funding of a Connexions service beyond March 2016, is resulting in some experienced staff moving to new jobs and careers, meaning a loss of expertise and knowledge in the sector and a risk around insufficient capacity.

10 Conclusions

- 10.1 Only through all partnership groups and individual partners fully appreciating their role around reducing NEET will we be able to achieve our ambition as a city for all young people aged 16-19 to be productively engaged in education, employment or training.

There is clear evidence that we have started to turn the curve with regard to increasing participation/reducing NEET, but there is still a long way to go if we are to deliver on our ambition to become a NEET free city. The work Aspire-igen and partners across the city have undertaken to reduce the number of young people in the city with a not known status is a tremendous success. The figures submitted to the DfE in August 2015 (July performance) show's NEET as 7.2 %, a reduction from 7.4% this time last year. Not Known status remains at record low levels of 2.4%; a massive reduction of 1,600 young people in the last 3 years. As a city we are in a far better situation than in previous years as we have confidence in the data, and have a better understanding of where our young people are and how we can help and support them into learning or employment. Some schools are working effectively to meet their duties around CEIAG, yet there is still a great deal of work to do for them to gain the skills and understanding required to support some of the most vulnerable young people in the city.

11 Recommendations

- 11.1 The Board are requested to note and comment on the progress to reduce the risk of young people not accessing appropriate employment, education or training.

12 Background documents¹

- 12.1 None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.