

Report of Director of Children’s Services

Report to Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)

Date: 15 September 2016

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 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. The resulting Scrutiny Inquiry Report was produced in March 2013 including 13 recommendations to be actioned and a subsequent response from Children’s Services in July 2013. The recommendations included a request for an update on progress in October 2013, September 2014, September 2015 and a further update in September 2016.

Recommendations

The Board is asked to note and comment on the progress made to reduce the risk of young people not accessing appropriate employment, education or training.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report provides an update on a number of key areas of activity to meet the monitoring requirements of the Scrutiny Board following its inquiry on the support to young people identified as Not in Employment Education or Training (NEET) or at risk of becoming NEET.

2 Background information

- 2.1 The Scrutiny Board examined 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). The focus of the inquiry was on the support available in Leeds to reduce the risk of young people aged 16 to 19 years old becoming NEET and help them access appropriate employment, education or training.
- 2.2 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 the contractor for the targeted Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) service, Aspire-igen. This was supported by two visits to speak to young people undertaking courses provided by Aspire-igen and Leeds City College.
- 2.3 The resulting Scrutiny Inquiry Report in March 2013 included 13 recommendations for action and a response was provided from Children's Services in July 2013. The Board has monitored implementation of the recommendations through progress reports on a number of key areas of activity at its meetings in October 2013, September 2014, September 2015 and now in September 2016.
- 2.4 At the Scrutiny Board meeting in September 2015, it was agreed that the actions arising from recommendations 2, 5, 8 and 12 had been completed, and recommendations 1 and 9 would no longer be monitored through the board. This report provides an update on the remaining recommendations 6, 7, 10 and 11.

3 Key Issues

3.1 NEET & Not Known Performance Update

- 3.1.1 The data tables in Appendix 1 demonstrate that we have started to turn the curve on performance to NEET reduction / increasing progression to education, employment and training and reducing Not Knowns.
- 3.1.2 There are around 250 less young people NEET in June 2016 compared to June 2015 (6.1% of the 16-19 cohort). Whilst this is not a dramatic decrease, this is still a significant achievement considering that the number of young people with a not known status has reduced by 1,725 over the last four years (see Table 3 of Appendix 1). Currently, there is 1.9% of the 16-19 cohort whose status is not known, the lowest level recorded in Leeds. We can now be more confident in the accuracy of our NEET data than in earlier reporting periods and more appropriately direct resources across the city to effectively support young people into education or employment.

- 3.1.3 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 1, along with comparisons against Core Cities and Statistical Neighbours in Table 2. 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 935 of the NEET group are those young people who are actively seeking education, employment or training. These groups are shown in Table 10 of Appendix 1.
- 3.1.4 Table 8 of Appendix 1 details the number of young people in the cohort across the clusters who have been NEET for over 3 months and over 6 months at June 2016. Table 9 shows the change in NEET and Not Known levels by cluster over the last 12 months. There have been significant reductions for some clusters across both measures. A reduction in Not Knowns usually results in an increase, therefore a reduction in both is very positive.
- 3.1.5 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 person 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. The majority of the NEET group in Leeds are 18 year olds, with two thirds of them being NEET for more than six months.
- 3.1.6 Children Looked After (CLA) and Care Leavers (CLs) are over-represented in the NEET cohort. They are defined and measured differently across age groups by different government departments. Social care report that around 40% of 16-21 year old CLA or CLs are NEET at any one time. Data for the 16-19 age range, indicates that 36.2% are NEET (see Table 5 of Appendix 1). The Care 2 Work Group, working with the Social Care Teams, has completed a cohort analysis to understand the main barriers experienced by these young people. This has informed the Care 2 Work initiative and new arrangements being developed with the Employment and Skills service to strengthen and better connect the target group with prioritised access to employment support programmes and Council apprenticeships and the graduate employment scheme.
- 3.1.7 The DfE have now produced the second year of statistics for the Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 Destination Measure, which now enables us to start to analyse trends. Leeds is below par nationally in relation to the number of 16 and 17 year olds participating (90% in Leeds, compared to 92% nationally). However, this has increased over the two year period by 2 percentage points (from 88%) compared to 1 percentage point nationally (see Key Stage 4 Destination Measure, Table 6 of Appendix 1). This positive picture is important as we measure how well young people in Leeds are meeting their Raising the Participation Age duty. On this measure, comparison against national figures is more reliable, as this measure is not distorted by large numbers of not known records (as is the case when looking at NEET performance).

3.1.8 Key Stage 5 destination data (see Table 7 of Appendix 1) is more positive, with 77% of the Leeds cohort sustaining their destination compared to a national average of 73%. This is a 4 percentage point increase, when nationally only a 2 percentage point increase was seen over the same period.

3.2 Reporting NEET data from September 2016 onwards

3.2.1 The DfE has applied a NEET adjustment formula to Local Authority (LA) NEET statistics since 2003. The NEET adjustment formula uplifts each LA's NEET rate by factoring in a small percentage of their not knowns. However, comparison between official national data and LA data has shown the current uplift factor to be insufficient to account for the disparity between official NEET rates and those reported in LA data. The DfE has therefore decided to drop the NEET adjustment formula altogether.

3.2.2 The DfE plans to introduce a new headline performance measure which combines each LA's NEET rate with their not known rate. This will provide local stakeholders with a much more accurate measure of who the young people are who are in need of support: both those who are NEET and those whose status is not known. NEET rates alone will no longer suggest high performance when in reality there may be a significant number of young people NEET whose activity is not known. The new measure will provide greater transparency and recognition where LAs have efficient tracking processes and low rates of not knowns, but whose NEET rate appears to be above average. The new measure will indicate how well an LA is performing at both tracking young people and supporting the proportion who are NEET.

3.2.3 In addition the DfE has reduced the amount of information LAs must collect and record in their Client Caseload Information Systems (CCIS) and submit to the DfE in monthly extracts. The CCIS is a local database, known as Insight in Leeds, which holds tracking information in relation to the learning and employment status of young people and enables information returns to the DfE.

3.2.4 Prior to September 2016, NEET was measured across the Year 12 to Year 14 age group. From September 2016, the DfE will require LAs to track young people up to the end of the academic year in which they turn 18 (i.e., Year 13). This recognises the disproportionate level of activity required to track the whole 18-year-old cohort in order to identify a small proportion that required support. Unlike 16 and 17 year-olds, 18 year-olds are not under a legal obligation to participate in education or training. They are under no obligation to make themselves known to their LA or engage with them. 18 year-olds are more mobile and tracking them to ascertain their whereabouts and activity is more difficult as a result – particularly in areas where movement across LA boundaries is commonplace. Young people aged 18 are eligible for support from Jobcentre Plus. The DfE believes that this change represents an opportunity for local authorities to focus resources on ensuring that all 16 and 17 year-olds fulfil their legal duty to participate until their 18th birthday, and to continue or improve support for those 18 year-olds who need it and are not already receiving support from elsewhere.

3.2.5 The change to the age range does not mean that local authorities can stop supporting 18 year-olds who are NEET to re-engage. The change in tracking

policy simply extends a local authority's discretion as to how it identifies those 18 year-olds who need support.

- 3.2.6 The law around local authorities' duties for supporting young people has not changed. Section 68 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 still requires local authorities to 'make available to young persons and relevant young adults for whom it is responsible such services as it considers appropriate to encourage, enable or assist the effective participation of those persons in education or training.' The Act defines young people as those below the age of 20.
- 3.2.7 The DfE has confirmed that LA NEET statistics and the annual LA NEET scorecard will only cover academic age 16 and 17 year-olds. It will not be possible to compare data after September 2016 with earlier reporting periods due to the changes to the monitored age range and the removal of the adjustment factor. It is anticipated that Leeds will compare favourably against national comparators when the new measure is introduced given that 55% of the local NEET cohort fall within year 14 and will be removed alongside an existing low Not Known rate.

3.3 Changes to the way young people in Leeds access targeted IAG.

- 3.3.1 The Education Act 2011 requires that individual schools, academies and colleges provide access to independent and impartial careers education and IAG for pupils in Years 8 to 13. The local authority has a statutory to provide access to IAG services to young people who are currently NEET, known as targeted IAG services.
- 3.3.2 Until recently the Council has discharged this duty through contracted activity delivered by Aspire-igen. This contract expired at the end of July 2016 and the service is now being delivered in house. A small number of staff have transferred under TUPE regulations and will deliver the service initially from the Jobshop in the Great George Street One Stop Centre. This service will be rolled out to key Community Hubs over the next few months as additional staff are identified and trained where required.

3.4 Scrutiny Board Inquiry Recommendations

- 3.4.1 **Recommendation 6:** *That the Director of Children's Services works with Clusters across the City to share good practice and establish programmes in primary schools which reduce the risk of NEET, such as the concept of 'World of work Wednesdays'. Such programmes should also be adapted to suit the needs of young people in secondary education.*
- 3.4.2 In 2012 the DfE removed the statutory duty to deliver work-related learning pre-16. That said, there are numerous organisations locally and nationally which continue to devise bespoke programmes for primary and secondary school aged students to support them for the world of work, and which the Council has helped to introduce/connect into local schools. These include programmes such as the EEF's Primary Engineer, Code Clubs (which is being promoted to employers through the city's Digital Skills Action Plan), and work of brokerage organisations

such as the Ahead Partnership who work with lead secondary and 'feeder' primary schools on business and enterprise activities.

- 3.4.3 Good practice exists and is reflected in reduction across both NEET and Not Knowns across a number of clusters. Work will take place to capture this activity through Area Leadership Teams and Community Committees across the city to enable learning and sharing of best practice. The work taking place with secondary schools under the More Jobs, Better Jobs Breakthrough Project (see 3.4.4) also offers the opportunity for the Council to better understand the interactions between secondary and primary schools in areas such as business and enterprise education, and to gather evidence on the impact of initiatives within primary education to reduce the risk of NEET and better prepare for transition to secondary.
- 3.4.4 **Recommendation 7:** *That the Director of Children's Services investigates with secondary schools and employers how the curriculum/education system in Leeds can be enhanced in order to better prepare and equip young people with the skills they need for the work opportunities that are here today and will exist in the future.*
- 3.4.5 Work to address this recommendation has been prioritised under the More Jobs, Better Jobs Breakthrough Project focused on 2 key actions:
- Strengthening business support in schools through work with business leaders and learning institutions to develop and broker programmes to strengthen business engagement in schools;
 - Working with learning institutions, business leaders (including the LEP and its Enterprise Adviser programme), the third sector, and the national Careers and Enterprise Company to strengthen independent careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) in schools.
- 3.4.6 At its meeting in July 2016, the More Jobs Better Jobs Member Steering Group supported the proposed new brokerage service to deliver the above objectives by drawing on the experience of the Education Business Partnership and the Apprenticeships Hub. The new service aligned with that provided by the National Careers Service, the Careers and Enterprise Company, and the LEP's Enterprise Adviser Programme, will work with schools to support them in reviewing their business engagement and CEIAG provision, identifying strengths and gaps and signposting to the wide range of existing providers and employers that can meet these needs. Schools will be assigned a named account manager which will offer continuity of approach and the development of a trusted relationship. Follow up visits to schools to check on progress and impact will be carried out.
- 3.4.7 The above will also be supported by the development of a virtual platform where teachers / IAG leads can comment on and discuss the range and quality of provision to promote learning, continuous improvement and best practice.
- 3.4.8 For those schools unable to commit to the above, additional provision will be accessible through the 'INPartners' brokerage scheme which will advertise school and partner requests for volunteers to employers to enable employability skills development and CEIAG activities for students run by schools themselves. Designed to break down cultural barriers between education and the business

world and to broker links between schools and businesses, the Leeds Enterprise Exchange programme will be held twice a year providing a free networking event for employers and teachers based around a topical theme linked to young people's transition from education into employment.

- 3.4.9 The review and refresh of the Leeds Pathways site is underway with new up-to-date local labour market information and changes that will make it easier to navigate and appeal to young people. Further work will be undertaken with teaching and IAG staff to ascertain how they can more effectively interact with the website to inform delivery.
- 3.4.10 **Recommendation 10** *That the Director of Children's Services investigates how support can be expanded to raise the aspirations of parents and equip them with the skills to support their children to achieve from foundation years onwards.*
- 3.4.11 Of the 25,304 families registered with our Childrens Centres, 13,581 are in target groups, including lone parents, teenage parents, families with low income and non-working parents. This work includes courses around health lifestyles, child development, first aid courses, parenting courses and a range of adult education courses. 8,096 people attended these groups in the last three months.
- 3.4.12 The Council's Adult Learning Programme delivered 58 targeted family courses in the 2015/16 academic year. Courses delivered in primary schools and children's centres engaged 343 parents or carers of children to improve their skills including English, Maths and ESOL for those where English is not their primary language. Activities also enable parents / carers to be more active in the support of their children's learning and development.
- 3.4.13 **Recommendation 11:** *That the Director of Children's Services investigates how improvements can be made to ensure parents/carers are equipped with sufficient information to help their young people to make the right education, employment or training choices.*
- 3.4.14 The statutory guidance 'Careers guidance and inspiration in schools' and the new Ofsted Common Inspection Framework, states that schools, academies and colleges have a responsibility to consider, as part of their CEIAG strategy, how parents and carers are kept informed of learning and employment options for their young people. Parents and carers have a significant influence on the decisions their young people make, therefore the Council has also implemented several initiatives / products to help parents feel adequately prepared and informed.
- 3.4.15 The review of the Leeds Pathways site with new information relating to the local labour market and an easier to navigate interface will provide parents/carers with an improved resource for accessing information to help their young people make the right education, employment or training choices. Direct mailings to parents of young people in years 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 have been undertaken to provide information on learning and employment options for young people and services where they can access further support both locally and nationally.
- 3.4.16 The Virtual School and colleagues from Children's Services have increased the knowledge of our Foster Carers and the 13+ Social Care Teams through training

sessions on Leeds Pathways and the Youth Information Hub, post-16 learning, benefits, bursaries and support groups available. All of which have increased their knowledge and ability to support our looked after children and care leavers to make decisions about what next steps are best for them.

- 3.4.17 The Employment and Skills service attend a number of parents evenings hosted by schools and academies to provide information on the wide range of apprenticeships available with businesses in Leeds across all sectors of the economy. Marketing materials, direct mailings and campaigns to support increased access to apprenticeships are designed to target and inform parents and carers as well as young people. This was reflected in the high attendance of parents at the Leeds Apprenticeship Fair in March 2016 with a total of over 5,000 visitors. Parents /carers and young people were better informed and therefore able to make best use of their time with employers and training providers.
- 3.4.18 Annually, Leeds Pathways participates in the Good Luck Results campaign, providing both Revision and Results/Clearing information at appropriate times. For a second year we will host a clearing event on 1 September at the Leeds Civic Hall to support 16-18 year olds who do not have a start in learning or employment with training for September. Training providers, colleges and other providers will host stands offering advice, information and live courses for young people to enrol onto. The Apprenticeship Hub will be supporting young people and their parents/carers to search and apply for live vacancies with employers.
- 3.4.19 The Careers Network, led by Children's Services, has run for another year and has been well attended with 90% of Leeds secondary schools and colleges attending. Evaluation of the network has been rated by attendees as predominantly excellent. Sponsorship from Aspire-igen has enabled the Network to run for another year. As part of this network, members have created materials to help parents / carers to support their children. These include an IAG timeline, informed by the Youth Council, showing when young people would like to receive IAG throughout years 8 to 13, and when the crucial times are for parents to support them making decision about their future options. The materials sign post parents/carers to facilities and support available through the city and nationally. Schools and providers are now implementing these as part of their CEIAG strategies.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 The NEET Data Board has consulted with schools and colleges to make improvements to tracking and the September Guarantee processes.
- 4.1.2 Young People have, and will continue to play, a key role in the development of Leeds Pathways and the Youth Information Hub.
- 4.1.3 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 and the projects and initiatives which are being supported by the Leeds Guarantee funding.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.1 NEET rates vary significantly across the city with those areas with the highest rates having a strong correlation with the areas of greatest deprivation. 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, young parents and carers, homeless young people and those living away from their family. Data from January 2016 showed that 21% of the NEET cohort were young people from BAME communities which is proportionate to local general population at this age. However, the NEET rate for young people in care was 19.2% and care leavers was 36.2%, which is significantly higher than the percentage of the local 16-19 population who are in or have left care which is 1.4%
- 4.2.2 Preventative work is targeted to these high risk groups and tracking activity enables targeted support to re-engage young people to achieve a positive outcome and reduce the inequalities of opportunity that prevent young people from making a successful transition from school.

4.3 Council policies and City Priorities

- 4.3.1 The activity undertaken to respond to the recommendations contributes to the Best Council Plan outcomes for everyone to do well at all levels of learning and have the skills they need for life and everyone to earn enough to support themselves and their families. This work will contribute to the specific Best Council Plan 2016/17 priorities around improving educational achievement and closing achievement gaps; supporting economic growth and access to economic opportunities; supporting communities and raising aspirations; and providing skills programmes and employment support.
- 4.3.2 The More Jobs, Better Jobs Breakthrough project, in particular the 'life ready for learning' workstream provides the opportunity to build on existing good work and strengthen the connections between schools and business and young people's awareness and knowledge of labour market opportunities and skills pathways to achieve these.

4.4 Resources and value for money

- 4.4.1 There are no resource implications arising from this report.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 4.5.1 There are legal implications arising from the matters detailed in this report.

4.6 Risk Management

- 4.6.1 Under the revised in-house delivery model, the Council is now directly tracking and supporting young people. Tracking information will be collated and submitted to the DfE in line with the new definitions and local NEET and Not Known rates will be monitored, along with any associated risks.
- 4.6.2 The NEET Risk Register records potential risks and options for risk mitigation. It captures risks associated to current longstanding tracking and reporting systems

and those new processes being implemented to support in house delivery of TIAG services. The NEET Data Board will be the custodian of the Risk Register. Reports will be submitted to the Children's Services Leadership Team, highlighting risks and planned actions to mitigate or remedy these.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 Leeds City Council has ambitious plans to promote sustainable economic growth and improve the wellbeing of local residents which includes helping all young people to successfully transition from learning to work. Failure to deliver on this priority would have serious consequences for the economic prosperity and social fabric of the city. There is clear evidence that we have started to turn the curve on increasing participation/reducing NEET, with the Not Known numbers remaining at a record low level of 1.9%; a significant reduction of 1,800 young people in the last 3 years.
- 5.2 A new operational delivery model is being put in place to support the most vulnerable through the Targeted Information, Advice and Guidance service alongside additional support to schools to meet their duties around CEIAG and build effective links with local businesses to better connect education with the world of work and enable young people to make informed choices.

6 Recommendations

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

7 Background documents

- 7.1 None