



**REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF EDUCATION LEEDS
REPORT TO SCRUTINY BOARD
DATE: 17 January 2008**

SUBJECT: Education Standards – Support for young people at risk of not engaging in education, employment or training

Electoral Wards Affected:

Specific Implications For:

Ethnic Minorities
Women
Disabled People

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Please indicate that the following have been addressed within the report:

Resource Implications:

Finance
Personnel
Accommodation/Buildings

<input type="checkbox"/>
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Policy Implications:

<input type="checkbox"/>

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 To inform Scrutiny Board members of the support provided for young people at risk of not engaging in education, employment or training.

1.2 The report aims to provide an overview of the developments and challenges associated with this area of work and supply sufficient information to help inform the planning of subsequent sessions and associated visits.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 The local authority has responsibility for providing overall strategic leadership for 14-19 provision and in Leeds this is discharged by Education Leeds on behalf of Children's Services. As the statutory responsibilities for 14-19 learning are currently shared by the Local Authority and the Learning and Skills Council, both parties have been working closely together to develop a shared strategy for post 14 learning in Leeds. The aim is to transform levels of achievement: increasing participation in post-16 learning; reducing the number of young people not in employment, education or training; and developing the highly skilled workforce the city needs to compete in a global economy.

2.2 The local authority currently has legal responsibility for the funding and delivery of 14-16 provision. Responsibility for 16-19 funding currently lies with the LSC, but will pass to the local authorities from 2010/11, with the exception of post 16 Apprenticeships which will continue to be funded through the LSC.

2.3 The new Education and Skills Bill gives local authorities the responsibility for delivering Connexions services from April 2008 and developing a new integrated youth support service and targeted youth support provision. Local authorities will be required to promote young people's participation and to support them to find appropriate education and training opportunities. Since February 2007 Leeds has been working on a Transition Plan to reconfigure three major areas of support so they better meet the needs of young people; these are:

- The provision of high quality impartial IAG and transition support.
- The provision of youth work support and positive activities.
- The provision of targeted support for young people in need or at risk.

2.4 The recent DCSF announcement on raising the participation age will have a profound impact on the way we view NEET in future. Implementing the raising of the education or training leaving age to 17 by 2013 and to 18 by 2015 will be a major priority for the local authority over the coming years. No young person will be forced to stay at school, there will be a range of opportunities including new Diplomas, part-time training alongside employment, work based learning and apprenticeships. The DCSF proposals for raising the participation age are detailed in the "Raising Expectations" document attached as Appendix 1.

3.0 KEY AREAS OF WORK

3.1 *A partnership approach to NEET*

The work to reduce the number of young people who are NEET in Leeds takes place across a wide range of organisations. Young people's education, employment or training (EET) situations are intrinsically linked to other factors in their lives, reducing NEET is part of a much wider agenda around 'closing the gap' and reducing social exclusion. The input from services, to reduce the number of young people NEET, takes place across the public, private, voluntary, community and faith sectors. Organisations work together through formal strategic and operational groups, and informal practitioner networks.

Work is focused on both the prevention of young people becoming NEET and work to get those who are NEET back into education, employment or training.

3.2 *Leeds NEET Strategy*

In April 2007 Leeds appointed a NEET Coordinator to ensure a joint strategic and operational approach to reducing the number of young people NEET across Leeds. The NEET Coordinator is based within the 14-19 Team in Education Leeds and works across Children's Services to reduce NEET.

The NEET Coordinator oversees the work set out in the NEET Strategy and Action plan for Leeds. These documents are included as Appendix 2 and Appendix 3.

3.3 *General 14-19 developments that help support the reduction of NEET*

Education Leeds are working with and supporting partners in the city on a range of general 14-19 developments that support the engagement of young people in employment, education and training. These include the introduction of the new 14-19 curriculum, in particular the Diplomas programme; development of a city-

wide 14-19 timetabling framework to improve access; 14-19 Area Prospectus and Common Application Process and the implementation of electronic Individual Learning Plans (e-ILPs).

- 3.3.1** The breadth of the vocational curriculum offer in Leeds is one of the best in the country and continues to expand. At Key Stage 4 secondary schools are working in partnership with other providers ranging from FE colleges, Family Learning Centres, City Learning Centres, training providers and voluntary, community and faith sector organisations to ensure young people have access to the widest possible range of vocational and work-related learning programmes. Over 2,500 Key Stage 4 learners now have a programme of study delivered in partnership between their base school and another provider.
- 3.3.2** The widening of curriculum pathways and greater use of vocational qualifications is having a positive impact on learners disengaged with a traditional academic curriculum. The speed of the introduction of a more vocational curriculum in Leeds has been rapid. In 2004 only 6% of the total Section 96 points accrued by students in Leeds came from “non-GCSE” qualifications; in 2007 this figure has increased to 19%.
- 3.3.3** The introduction of the new Diplomas is the most significant curriculum development in decades. This commences in Leeds with the piloting of Diplomas in Construction and Creative and Media and will grow in subsequent years until all 17 of the Diploma lines are available to all young people in Leeds by 2013. Diplomas should have a significant positive impact on young people engaging in learning pre 16 and progressing to further learning post 16.
- 3.3.4** The 14-19 Area Prospectus supports Information Advice and guidance (IAG) delivery and progression planning for learners. This can be found at www.leedspathways.org.uk. There is comprehensive advice and guidance information for young people on the prospectus, including local labour market and progression information.
- 3.3.5** The web based e-ILP allows young people to access the e-ILP at any time via any internet-enabled computer and to be at the centre of development for their personalised learning, with IAG services and support processes following the young person, not the institution.
- 3.3.6** In addition to information available through the 14-19 Area Prospectus a wide range of materials are produced by igen/Leeds Careers, for young people, parents/carers and staff to support the IAG process
- Moving On, Where Next, Decisions, Get that Job and Checkout handouts for pre 16 learners
 - Jobfaqs 18+ and Unifaqs for post-16 students
 - West Yorkshire Careers News for school and college staff
 - The Directory of Agencies for PAs, school/college staff and other agencies
 - The Labour Market Bulletin, Summary for PAs and annual LMI conference
 - The website for young people which includes details of current apprenticeship and employment opportunities – www.wyzup.net
- 3.3.7** Our annual ‘Careers on Show’ event attracts over 3000 Year 11 learners over 2 days, with an additional 500 young people and 500 parents and carers attending

the evening session. The 'Buzz' careers event aimed at young people with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities and their parents attracted over 400 young people from 26 schools, including SILCs and FE specialist provision.

3.4 *Specific curriculum programmes aimed at preventing young people becoming NEET*

3.4.1 Leeds has been successful in a number of funding bids over recent years to support provision for lower achieving young people and those at risk of disengaging. Over the last 3 years the 14-19 Team has been awarded grants in excess of £2 million for this provision. This includes European Social Funding to support learners on vocational programmes at risk of disengagement, KS4 Engagement Funding, and European Social Funding to support activities for lower achieving young people through the West Yorkshire Investment Plan (WYIP project). Those learners who benefited from the WYIP project achieved 12% more than was estimated in Year 9.

3.4.2 The KS4 Engagement Funding is currently in its second year. One aspect of the project targeting year 11 learners has seen strong links develop between Central Leeds Federation, Leeds College of Building and HEAT (HEAT are a Belfast based company who have been awarded a contract to upgrade plumbing and heating systems in properties within Leeds North West ALMO Arms Length Management Organisation). From this element of the programme 94% of learners were retained on programme, 87% of learners achieved a full level 1 BTEC Introductory Certificate in Construction and 7% a partial qualification all with positive progression routes. Current year 11 learners are expected to achieve at comparable levels.

3.4.3 The FE sector was awarded funding via Education Leeds WYIP project during 2006/07 to broaden the skills of learners on their pre-16 L1 college programmes, with the primary aim of improving performance for lower level learners and supporting progression onto level 2 programmes post-16. Skills enhancement activity days, ranging from bakery enterprise to windsurfing leadership days, were planned to suit the progression needs of each group. Focusing primarily on employability skills, communication skills and personal/social development, the days aimed to equip learners with the skills needed to make a smooth transition into level 2 education, or training post-16. The days were supported by local employers and the connexions service. Learners reported an increase in self-esteem and confidence, which are likely to be important factors in progression. The activities had a positive impact upon achievement, with an additional 4.5% of them gaining 5+A*-G.

3.4.4 In addition to the wide range of 14-16 vocational programmes offered by FE Colleges, Leeds Further Forward co-ordinates a programme of FE taster events for learners to promote vocational pathways, support transition and decision-making. Tasters are offered as part of recruitment and selection processes at some colleges, and schools can book groups of learners onto enterprise activity taster days at a number of FE colleges.

3.4.5 The voluntary, community and faith sector in Leeds is extremely effective and provides a wide range of alternative provision for disengaged learners to build confidence, self esteem and improve their employability skills. Education Leeds is

working with these providers to ensure that, where appropriate, the courses lead to nationally recognised qualifications, which will support progression to further learning and employment.

- 3.4.6** The EOTAS Alternative Programmes Service was set up by Education Leeds a number of years ago to broker placements for pupils who are on the roll of PRUs and of the BESD SILC. Virtually all pupils referred to the EOTAS Alternative Programme Service have failed to engage with formal education in their previous educational career but have subsequently achieved well in the “alternative” element.
- 3.4.7** An E-Inclusion Programme was initiated in South Leeds in 2005, with the aim of raising the engagement in education of several key groups of students. The programme has developed across a number of years and has been used with a variety of other situations where students had been unable to follow mainstream education, including those who have medical reasons for non-attendance, and those who are not on any school roll. It has since been adopted by the Computers for Pupils (CfP) initiative in Leeds, with a specific focus on the NEET (“Not currently engaged in Employment, Education or Training”) category foremost, with LAC (Looked-After Children) and Primary Carers following on later in the two-year period allocated to CfP.
- 3.4.8** Our Aimhigher Stepping Stones programmes for looked after children supports choice and progression and includes a mentoring.
- 3.4.9** The Junior Windsor Fellowship programme delivered by REEMAP supports progression and raising attainment and aspiration for BME learners. Leeds REACH targets young African/Caribbean people who are less likely to make effective use of Local Authority Pupil Referral Schemes. Each young person has access to the Duke of Edinburgh and several other alternative curriculum activities.

3.5 *Other preventative work*

- 3.5.1** Integrated Youth Support Service/Connexions Personal Advisers (PAs) are deployed to provide IAG and transition support to young people aged 13-19 (and up to 25 for those with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities) in schools, colleges and other educational establishments, the Connexions Centre, community locations and with those in training and employment. There is a network of 100+ Connexions Access Points locations across the city.
- 3.5.2** Provision in schools and colleges includes universal access to impartial careers information, advice and guidance from Personal Advisers qualified in careers guidance. Targeted support is delivered according to assessed need, focusing on ‘at-risk’ pupils and students in Years 9, 10, 11 and in post-16 education. This includes IAG to support young people in making effective life and career decisions, and to aid transition to employment, training, and further and higher education.
- 3.5.2** Personal Advisers undertook guidance interventions with 5,589 young people in Years 9-11 who are at risk of not remaining in learning April 06 - March 2007. A further 1,740 guidance interventions were undertaken with ‘at risk’ students in post-16 education.

- 3.5.3** The Effective Transitions (ET) project, where PAs are based in specific schools and Colleges, has improved work in those institutions to reduce the number of young people who become NEET. It has also had an impact on the number of young people continuing in learning Post-16. The ET PAs located in 14 high schools, as part of multi-disciplinary teams, support young people at risk of becoming NEET on leaving school.
- 3.5.4** The targeted work of the Education Leeds Teenage Pregnancy and Parenthood Team and Connexions PAs has significantly increased the number of teenage mothers in learning. The success of this input is reflected in the take up of Care to Learn funding, which pays for childcare provision for teenage parents accessing learning opportunities.
- 3.5.5** A Reintegration Officer and Specialist learning mentors provide support to: school-age parents and parents-to-be; parents and parents-to-be in school sixth form. At the Leeds Teaching and Learning Centre a crèche is available to teenage parents to allow them to access provision. Connexions PAs provide support to 16-19 year old parents to access EET.
- 3.5.6** Each Youth Offending Service (YOS) area team has an Education Officer who works with school aged young people to ensure they are accessing appropriate education. Each YOS area team has a Connexions PA working with young people aged 16-19 to ensure they access employment, education and training (EET).
- 3.5.7** Work to increase the number of young offenders in EET has had an impact. Connexions have increased the numbers of PAs employed by the YOS to 4 from April 2007; this is expected to improve outcomes for young people on orders. Links between the YOS and Connexions network are well established, with a YOS manager attending Connexions LMC and Operations Group. Targeted provision for young people over 16 is being developed, with several new schemes funded by the LSC.
- 3.5.8** Barnardos Willow young carers service is a partnership with Leeds Social Services, who support 250 young carers aged between 5 and 17. A variety of supporting resources e.g. CD-ROM Toolkit and DVDs have also been produced and distributed to all schools in Leeds. Barnardos Willow also has a Connexions PA to help young carers aged 16-19 enter EET.
- 3.5.9** The Education Leeds Travellers Education Service work directly with the communities: visiting, advising and supporting young people and their families. There is also a Connexions PA for Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Exchange. The roadside mobile unit provides resources for distance learning and a point for initial contact on circus / fairground and other traveller camps. Additional educational opportunities are provided through the delivery of an outreach community learning programme.

3.6 *Programmes targeted at 16-19 year olds*

- 3.6.1** A number of different programmes for lower achieving young people have been supported by the LSC including Entry to Employment (e2e), Entry to Vocational Programme (E2V, precedes e2e), and Young Parents programme. The LSC and

Leeds providers are also engaged in developing a phased implementation of the Foundation Learning Tier which will develop a more focussed and strategic approach to entry level and level 1 for learners aged 14 and over in order to raise participation, achievement and progression amongst learners at these levels.

3.6.2 The Budget pilots have been running in Leeds since April 2006. The Activity Agreement works to reduce the number of young people NEET by working intensively with young people to engage them in activities. Since the start of the project the Activity Agreement has signed up 235 young people. 202 have completed their programme, 113 (56%) left to a "positive outcome" (defined as EET or a PDO), and 89 (44%) left back to NEET. 89 young people did leave the project back to NEET, however 30 of them were found to have moved into EET/PDO within 13 weeks.

The Learning Agreement works with young people who are in employment without training and Employers to enable young people to engage in learning. Since the start of the project the Learning Agreement has worked with 65 young people, 40 of whom have signed up to learning.

3.6.3 The vacancy service, run by igen on behalf of Connexions West Yorkshire, works with employers to gather vacancies for young people. The emphasis on employment with training has had an impact on the number of young people accessing learning post 16. The vacancy service discuss training with employers, to ensure young people are able to access appropriate learning. Igen also refer young people who are entering employment without training to the Learning Agreement.

3.7 *Attendance, behaviour and exclusion*

3.7.1 Over recent years we have introduced strategies that have led to significant improvements in attendance, behaviour and exclusions. The 'No Child Left Behind' project is starting to embed and make a real difference for those young people most at risk of achieving low outcomes at Key Stage 4. No Child Left Behind has become a DCSF example of best practice and a pathfinder for school partnerships to improve behaviour and tackle persistent truancy. The work of NCLB has resulted in a narrowing of the gap between levels of unauthorised absence in secondary schools in deprived areas and the national average; a fall in the number of fixed term exclusions, and a fall in permanent exclusions. The number of BME pupils permanently excluded has also significantly reduced.

3.7.2 Further detail on this area of work is provided in the Attendance and Exclusion Report 2006/7 attached as Appendix 4.

4.0 **OUTCOMES**

4.1 The two main indicators used to measure the engagement of young people in education, employment and training are the annual survey of Year 11 destinations undertaken in November each year and the on-going monthly monitoring of 16-18 year old NEET figures.

4.2 The percentage of young people progressing to learning at age 16 has increased in recent years and is currently around 85%. Lately there has been a significant shift towards young people progressing to full-time learning in schools and FE

colleges at age 16 rather than following apprenticeships. If this trend continues it could present a significant problem for Leeds, as the only growth in post 16 learner numbers that the government will fund will be for young people entering apprenticeships. The percentage of young people progressing to EET at age 16 is improving slowly and currently stands at around 92%. A summary of Year 11 destinations is included as Appendix 5.

4.3 The key 16-18 NEET indicator shows around 9% of young people in Leeds are not engaged in education employment or training. The NEET figure varies significantly on a month to month basis as a result of learner transition and tracking difficulties. The percentage of 16-18 year olds who are long-term NEET is small with the majority of young people in the category for only a short period. A graph summarising 16-18 NEET is included as Appendix 6.

4.4 The link between low KS4 achievement and NEET is very clear.

With regard to NEET the most important indicator is not 5+A*-C, but A*-G performance. After a number of years of little progress the percentage of pupils achieving 5+A*-Gs at GCSE has recently started to show an above average improvement compared to both statistical neighbours and the national figures.

The percentage of pupils achieving any GCSE equivalent pass has risen by 0.9 percentage points in Leeds since 2005, compared to a rise of only 0.3 percentage points nationally. There has however, been a more significant increase amongst our statistical neighbours.

4.5 Strategies to improve outcomes for pupils from Black heritage backgrounds are starting to work. The average total points achieved by Black Caribbean heritage students rose by 49 points compared to an increase of 31 points for all pupils. Black African heritage pupils' results points rose by more than twice the average rate and the results for pupils of Other Black heritages rose by more than three times the average. An attainment gap for these specific groups remains, as well as for Black and Minority Ethnic pupils as a whole, but this gap has been significantly reduced over the last three years.

4.6 11 Leeds secondary schools have failed to improve KS4 outcomes over the last three years. While it is true to say that about half of these schools already had high standards and/or progress rates in 2005, the remainder are struggling to keep pace with the improvements which have been observed both nationally and in most of our local schools. A key area of development will be to learn from the successes observed elsewhere in Leeds and to work with those schools where improvement has not yet been observed to implement proven strategies for success.

4.7 Outcomes for pupils with special needs are a concern. In 2007 21% of these pupils were not entered for any Key Stage 4 qualifications. The average total points achieved by statemented pupils has improved from 98 pts in 2005 to 115 in 2007, but the proportion not being entered for qualifications (21%) remains a worry. However, of 230 statemented pupils who were entered for qualifications only 13 failed to achieve any Section 96 points. While outcomes for pupils with SEN, but no statement, have improved at a faster than average rate, they remain significantly below average.

4.8 Outcomes for Looked After Children are also poor. 16 out of the 104 LAC cohort were not entered for any KS4 qualification in 2007 and the trend in total points does not show an increase over the last three years, with LAC pupils achieving about half the number of points than the “average”.

4.9 The improvement in outcomes for pupils eligible for Free School Meals has not kept pace with the average improvement seen across the city. However, the improvement in results for pupils living in the 10% most deprived areas (as measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation) has shown a faster than average improvement. Outcomes for both groups however still remain well below average.

5.0 FURTHER WORK ON NEET

5.1 Further analysis of the cohort of young people NEET is needed in Leeds. Priority groups have been identified from the national Connexions targets: teenage mothers, young offenders, looked after children and young people with LDD. Further work needs to be done to ensure all young people who are vulnerable to being NEET are given the support they need early on. A piece of research funded through the LSC LIF fund will track young people, who are or have been NEET over the last 3 years, to establish the key indicators for young people in Leeds. This will build on the work already done by Education Leeds around indicators and the mapping of the NEET cohort by Super Output Area.

5.2 Further work needs to be done to improve the level of young people whose current situation is Not Known. This percentage has reduced significantly over the last few years, with specific Connexions resource targeted at tracking. The fall in Not Known has not led to an increase in the NEET figure, as we are improving our tracking of young people in EET situations. Further developments to improve the tracking of young people need to be undertaken. Discussion about ways forward is taking place at the Connexions local delivery planning group.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The extensive work on a wide number a fronts to address the complex issue of NEET is at last starting to bear fruit. However, there is still a long way to go if we are to ensure that all young people are to remain profitably engaged in learning until the age of 18 and make the successful transition into employment.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Members of Scrutiny Board are asked to:

- i) Comment on the content of the report
- ii) Consider what further information they require to assist in their inquiry.