

**Report of Director of Children's Services**

**Report to Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)**

**Date: 25<sup>th</sup> July 2013**

**Subject: Directors Response – Scrutiny Inquiry into 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. NEET was selected as one of the obsessions and consequently the subject of the inquiry as the failure of young people to make a successful transition from school to further learning or employment is likely to have major consequences for economic wellbeing in their adult life.
3. 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 Igen and Leeds City College.
4. Members of the Board hope that the findings will contribute to providing better outcomes for young people and to achieve the aspiration of becoming a NEET free city.

**Recommendations**

5. The Board are requested to note the responses to the recommendations, based on their findings.

## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 This report sets out the formal response of the Director of Children's Services to the recommendations of the Children and Families Scrutiny Board inquiry into increasing 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 igen. This was supported by two visits to speak to young people undertaking courses provided by igen and Leeds City College.

## **3 Main issues**

- 3.1 The response to each of the recommendations of the Board is set out below.
- 3.2 **Recommendation 1 – That the Director of Children's Services incorporates destination measure information for Leeds as part of the performance monitoring information. This information to be provided to the Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) on an annual basis.**
- 3.3 This recommendation is accepted by the Director of Children's Services. Destination measures will be incorporated into the annual standards reports and progress against the destinations measures will be closely monitored by the 11-19 (25) Learning and Support partnership sub-group of the Children's Trust Board. The Department for Education (DfE) has recently released destination data for 2010-11 that shows Leeds slightly below the national average for destinations of 16 year olds, but above the national average for destinations of 19 Year olds. We are expecting more recent data in due course.
- 3.4 **Recommendation 2 – That the Director of Children's Services defines and implements a clear cross sector city wide strategy for tracking the destinations of young people and engaging with those who fall into the 'Not Known' category to ensure that appropriate support can be provided. A progress report to the Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) is required in October 2013.**
- 3.5 This recommendation is accepted by the Director of Children's Services. There has been considerable progress in recent months in bringing down the level of 'Not Known' and it now stands at an all time low of 5.9% (May 2013). The

reduction of 'Not Known' has been incorporated as a key element of the Targeted Information Advice and Guidance contract that igen were successful in securing. The contract includes an element of payment by results based on reducing the level of 'Not Known'. igen are taking a lead role in coordinating activity across a wide range of partners and have introduced a number of initiatives that should continue to bring down 'Not Known' levels. Progress on reducing the 'Not Known' level will be presented to Scrutiny Board in October 2013.

3.6 **Recommendation 3 – That the Director of Children’s Services provides a report to the Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) in October 2013 which explains how Youth Contract funding has been utilised and the direct impact this funding has had on creating EET opportunities for young people.**

3.7 This recommendation is accepted by the Director of Children’s Services. The Youth Contract in Leeds has got off to an excellent start with 342 young people starting on the programme (between September 2012 and March 2013) and 228 progressing to employment, education or training, giving a progression rate of 67%. This compares very favourably to the national average progression rate of only 27%. A detailed report on the success of the first year of the Youth Contract will be presented to Scrutiny Board in October 2013.

3.8 **That the Director of Children’s Services works in partnership with the Clusters to ensure that area based NEET data is analysed to identify those that are at risk of being NEET and sustained NEET to facilitate efficient targeting of resources. Progress should be reported to the Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) in October 2013.**

3.9 This recommendation is accepted by the Director of Children’s Services. Reports showing NEET data at a local level are now regularly distributed to Cluster and Areas. This data is central to informing the use of Youth Contract Cluster Innovation Funding and Area NEET plans. A detailed report will be presented to Scrutiny Board in October 2013.

3.10 **Recommendation 5 – That the Director of Children’s Services undertakes a review of the IAG support provided by Schools since September 2012 and reports the outcomes to the Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) in October 2013.**

3.11 This recommendation is accepted by the Director of Children’s Services. A preliminary survey was undertaken earlier in the year with schools (including Academies, Specialist Inclusive Learning Centres and Pupil Referral Units) to establish what arrangements they are putting into place to meet their new statutory duties. A number of different approaches are emerging including, purchasing services from careers guidance suppliers through the list developed by the Council and internal arrangements where schools are either employing a trained careers/personal advisers or retaining an existing member of staff to deliver careers guidance.

3.12 We did not receive a response from a number of schools and we also know that the majority of schools are currently reviewing their arrangements now the new

centrally commissioned Targeted Information, Advice and Guidance service are up and running. We have therefore decided to support schools to complete a detailed self assessment in the Autumn that we will use to produce a clear position statement with regard to IAG arrangements in all schools. We will report on progress around this area of work to Scrutiny Board in October 2013.

- 3.13 **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. The Director is required to provide a progress report to the Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) in October 2013.**
- 3.14 This recommendation is accepted by the Director of Children’s Services. The Council’s Education Business Partnership are currently reviewing and enhancing their offer to both primary and secondary schools. Details of the new offer to schools will be presented to Scrutiny Board in October 2013.
- 3.15 **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. A progress update is required by the Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) in October 2013.**
- 3.16 This recommendation is accepted by the Director of Children’s Services. We are addressing this matter in a number of ways. One of these is to ensure schools and colleges have easy access to the latest labour market information around future employment opportunities to inform their development of the curriculum. We have approached this through a significant investment in the information that is available through Leeds Pathways. It is also central to the review of the Education Business Partnership offer to schools.
- 3.17 Other ways we are addressing the issue include; as part of the detailed discussions we are currently having with schools and colleges around the future of post 16 provision in the city and through the menu of activities available through the Apprenticeship School Engagement Programme. A progress report on all these areas of activity will be presented to Scrutiny Board in October 2013
- 3.18 **Recommendation 8 – That the Director of Children’s Services investigates how opportunities can be brokered between all schools and businesses to provide opportunities for young people to meet inspirational role models, raise awareness about career prospects and raise aspirations. A progress update is required by the Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) in October 2013.**
- 3.19 This recommendation is accepted by the Director of Children’s Services. The Education Business Partnership (EBP) current offers an extensive range of opportunities for young people to engage with people from businesses. These includes presentations by business leaders to raise aspirations and understanding

of particular career opportunities, structured visits to local businesses, and staff from business undertaking mock interview of pupils and acting as mentors to young people. One of the limiting factors is around the engagement of some schools with the offer. This is partly due to the fact that through necessity these opportunities are offered as a traded service. To assist with this issue of cost we are using Leeds Pathways as a vehicle to support the free transfer of knowledge and information from business people to young people. Local business people have also been very generous with their time to be involved with video interviews that are now included on Leeds Pathways. Details around the take up of the EBP offer by schools will be presented to Scrutiny Board in October 2013

3.20 **Recommendation 9 – That the Director of Children’s Services reports back to the Scrutiny Board in October 2013 on the success of the Learning for Parents pilot and the future provision of this support across the city.**

3.21 This recommendation is accepted by the Director of Children’s Services. The Learning for Parents pilot has proved a success and is likely to be repeated subject to the outcome of the current commissioning round. A report on the pilot will be presented to Scrutiny Board in October 2013 as requested.

3.22 **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. A progress report is required in October 2013.**

3.23 This recommendation is accepted by the Director of Children’s Services. There is a need to obtain a clear picture of what work is already taking place through Children’s Centres and Schools and look at how this good practice can be disseminated across the city and investigate what further support can be given to parents. A report on progress around this area of work will be presented to Scrutiny Board in October 2013.

3.24 **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. A progress update is required by the Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) in October 2013.**

3.25 This recommendation is accepted by the Director of Children’s Services. The approach taken to this issue has been to develop a parents and careers section on Leeds Pathways - [www.leedspathways.org.uk](http://www.leedspathways.org.uk) . This provides information to support parents/carers in helping their son/daughter to make informed career choices. It has been visited by around 700 parents/carers since 1 September 2012. We are currently working on plans to promote this resource and increase its use by parents/carers. A progress report will be presented to Scrutiny Board in October 2013.

3.26 **Recommendation 12 –That the Director of Children’s Services works in partnership with other Council departments, schools, voluntary organisations, businesses and partners to determine a model and strategy which will mobilise the city to reduce the number of young people who are**

**NEET or at risk of becoming NEET. A progress update is required by the Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) in October 2013.**

- 3.27 This recommendation is accepted by the Director of Children's Services. Work is underway to capture on one side of A3 a clear picture of all the work that is taking place across the city to reduce NEET and show how it all links together. We will use this to inform discussions with partners to ensure we have a comprehensive, clear and coherent model and strategy to reduce NEET across Leeds. A progress report on this area of work will be presented to Scrutiny Board in October 2013.
- 3.28 **Recommendation 13 – That the Director of Children's Services facilitates the provision of data and information for organisations to rapidly identify those whose NEET status is 'not known' or those who are at risk of becoming NEET in order to secure appropriate education employment or training destinations for young people. A progress update is required by the Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) in October 2013.**
- 3.29 This recommendation is accepted by the Director of Children's Services. A NEET Data Board has been established between the council and key strategic partners to progress this area of work. There has been some progress with regard to the collection of participation data from partners, but ensuring the efficient and timely collection, uploading and dissemination of NEET data remains a priority and work will continue to further improve these processes during the coming year.
- 3.30 We have also included the reduction of the 'Not Known' as a key element of the Targeted Information, Advice and Guidance contract secured by igen and linked it to payment by results. A progress report around the collection and sharing of NEET/'Not Known' data will be presented to Scrutiny Board in October 2013.

## **4 Corporate Considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and Engagement**

- 4.1.1 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.

### **4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

- 4.2.1 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.

### **4.3 Council policies and City Priorities**

- 4.3.1 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.

### **4.4 Resources and value for money**

- 4.4.1 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.

### **4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

- 4.5.1 There are no relevant legal implications to this response to the inquiry.

### **4.6 Risk Management**

- 4.6.1 Increasing participation employment, education and training is vital to the economic and social success of the city. Failure to delivery on this priority would have serious consequences for the economic prosperity and social fabric of the city.

## **5 Conclusions**

- 5.1 Increasing the number of young people in Education, Employment or Training is the most 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 Youth Contract and Families First initiatives are coming together to provide a once in a lifetime opportunity to achieve our ambition for all young people aged 16-19 to be productively engaged in education, employment or training.
- 5.2 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 scrutiny process has been useful in bringing a fresh perspective to the issues we face and has highlighted the need for further work around a number of key areas of activity.
- 5.3 We look forward to reporting on the success of the wide range of initiatives and activity to increase participation in employment, education and training to Scrutiny Board in October 2013.

**6 Recommendations**

6.1 Board are requested to note the responses to the recommendations, based on their findings

**7 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

7.1 None

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<sup>1</sup> 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.