

**Children Leeds Learning Partnership****STRATEGY PAPER****Title:**

NEET and Not Knowns in Leeds

**Purpose:**

To advise the CLLP on the issues surrounding the NEET and Not Known data returns to DCSF October – December 2007 in a way that gives a greater understanding of the problems arising so that it is possible to prevent a similar occurrence in the future

**Background and history**

NEET and Not Known figures are produced by Connexions West Yorkshire each month and are monitored nationally by the DCSF. These figures are used in a variety of reporting processes against which performance is measured. Over the period October to December 2007 NEET levels failed to fall and Not Known levels escalated. Some of this is attributable to seasonal trends, but much of it was not.

The NEET and Not Known figures are the responsibility of Connexions West Yorkshire but are largely managed by one contractor

Over the last 5 years we have seen a :

- High political profile for these targets
- substantial increase in investment on NEET and Not Knowns
- Greater co-ordination of work on NEET
- Greater awareness and support from all sectors on NEET
- Diversification of approach to help target groups

**Definition of Not Known**

Each young person for whom there is no recently recorded destination becomes classified as 'Not Known'. All young people who become Not Known have lapsed from a previously known destination eg education, NEET.

**NEET- Current position**

The NEET figure is not substantially different from previous years and the young people cohort has remained stable. However Leeds is not on track to meet its 2010/11 target and will need to reduce the NEET cohort by 25% to achieve this.

**NOT KNOWN – current position**

1. Despite performance issues leading to unacceptable figures, Leeds as a partnership is tracking the Not Knowns competently. Although there remains room for improvement.
2. Remedial action Nov-Dec 2007 has seen the best ever figures for Leeds and attainment of the 2010 target 2 years early.

## **November data return to DCSF**

The November return is important for Leeds as this was the return against which our performance in the JAR was made. Analysis of why the figures were so high provides an insight into what action should have taken place. NEET were 10% and Not Knowns were 16.4%

From the November data return

### Young people leaving Education

- 750 young people had lapsed from FE, aged 18 years. Data on starters in college are notified, but not so leavers; in particular from colleges who do not track their students. Follow up in these cases is on an individual basis.
- 338 young people had lapsed from schools and a further 180 from Sixth Form colleges, aged 18 years. The majority of these were estimated to have entered HE. FE and schools advise on intended destinations of those leaving Y13. The contractor relies on UCAS information to confirm destinations. Despite the lack of notification the contractor did not actively pursue this.
- 241 young people were lapsed from FE, aged 17 years. These were students following one year courses. Early work with students known to be on one year courses, to prevent them becoming Not Known should have been easy to implement.
- 62 young people lapsed from statutory education aged 16 years. This is a different figure from the September Guarantee figure and needs to be looked into. The work with Y11 to achieve the September Guarantee has been sighted as a distraction from work with Y12 and Y13 students. This argument is tenuous.
- The trajectory for Not Knowns from January to August 2008 did not reflect what happened to the figures from October - December
- Figures as of 31. 1. 08 were:
  - Not Known - 6.3%
  - NEET - 10.00%

### Young people leaving other situations (currency expired)

- 238 young people had been lapsed from training offering NVQ2, aged 18 years
- 120 young people had been lapsed from training offering NVQ2, aged 17 years

For both of these categories data should be being exchanged between the contractor and training providers on all leavers

- 328 young people had been lapsed from NEET, aged 18 years
- 139 young people had been lapsed from NEET, aged 17 years

### Young people who cannot be contacted/we have no information

- 344 young people were aged 18 years. Of these 158 had formerly been NEET and 111 had been in work based learning.
- 176 young people were aged 17 years. Of these 60 had formerly been NEET and 77 had been in work based learning

## **Thoughts on the way forward – learning from this event**

- Follow-up of young people on one year courses, prior to them leaving, was an easy target that had been missed.
- Investigation into the exchange of data between the LSC and the contractor should have been explored earlier.
- Work needs to be undertaken by the contractor with the wider partnership, on the ownership by schools of their NEET and Not Known figures to ensure redeployment and maximising of resources.
- Pursuit of the readily available UCAS data would have managed down the Not

Known figures by an estimated 4% (1303 young people)

- Data on young people leaving employment with NVQ2 training is not being provided or is not being inputted. Pursuance of this data is not taking place with the LSC or with individual providers.
- The NEET cohort does not appear to be actively managed.
- Generally, the active management of the NEET and Not Known should enable the contractor to flag up for all partners, problems within these cohorts. This would have given the partnership and Connexions West Yorkshire its best possible chance to manage NEET and Not Knowns.

**Implications for the partnership** (e.g. health & safety, resources, change in working practice, risks, etc):

### **Impact of poor Not Known returns in Leeds November 2007**

#### Assessment of poor performance

- These were the worst figures across the sub-region; the second worst Nationally; and the worst ever November return for Not Knowns in Leeds. The DCS had been advised of the situation.
- Poor service delivery to young people

#### Risk to reputation

- Across West Yorkshire – the Leeds figures had an adverse effect on the sub-regional figures thereby undermining the good work of other contractors and partners both within and outside of Leeds
- JAR inspectors fed back informally that the lead contractor for Connexions did not appear to know what was happening with the NEET and Not Known figures

#### Poor vfm

- Work is being contracted for and paid for but is not being carried out

### **Actions taken by Connexions West Yorkshire**

1. The whole cohort as well as the NEET cohort will be further investigated and analysed in order to ascertain who is their named PA and when the last contact by the PA took place.
2. Consideration is being given to the informal contacts with JC+ with a view to confirming the status of those 18 years who are Not Known.
3. Discussions with the LSC on provision and exchange of data needs to take place with Connexions West Yorkshire
4. Performance issues of the contractor are being pursued.

### **Other comments**

In order for progress to be made in the reduction of the NEET and Not Known figures Leeds will need to manage the process closely from April 2008 to ensure that the lessons learned are not missed and the events are not repeated

### **Recommendations** (e.g. for action, for information, for approval)

1. The CLLP are asked to receive the report
2. The CLLP are asked to note the recommendations below
3. CLLP needs to consider action with immediate effect on the following:

#### Strategic changes

- First and foremost Leeds needs a strategic lead on NEET. A Senior Officer to lead, direct and develop a Leeds strategy and to have to account for it. This will provide vision and leadership for the achievement of this important PSA target.

- Greater forensic use of data to maximise and target use of resource. Use of existing trend data and trajectories to actively manage the NEET PSA target.
- Smarter use of data in the management of the currency rules.

#### Commissioning

- The contract held by the major contractor needs re-focusing to provide greater resource and an integrated approach to NEET.
- The partnership needs to shift the existing resource to ensure a greater focus on NEET.
- Investment/redirection of resource in the follow up of young people to ensure application of the currency rules.

#### Partnership

- Data share and quality are ongoing issues that need to be constantly performance managed.
- Targeted work with LSC, 14-19 team, alongside existing provision in school and colleges and work alongside diploma (some of this is happening).
- Closer working with Job Centre Plus to follow up those 18+ years.
- Greater buy-in by schools on NEET. Closer working relationship with schools to reduce Not Knowns, also meeting of the September Guarantee.

#### **Date and Author**

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4 March 2008