



Report of the Director of Children's Services

Report to the Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)

Date: 9 February 2012

Subject: Range of Services Available to Support Young People who are NEET to move to EET

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

1 **Background**

Reducing the number of young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) is a priority for Leeds, identified in the Children and Young People's Plan. NEET is identified as one of the key "obsessions" for Children's Services to improve outcomes for children and young people, and has been the focus of Outcomes Based Accountability sessions with key staff in Children's Services to identify actions for improvement. The Raising of the Participation Age means that young people will remain in education or training for an additional academic year after Year 11 from September 2013 and until age 18 from September 2015. Planning to reduce the number of young people NEET will, therefore, concentrate on increasing the number of young people in education or training.

2 NEET was selected as one of the obsessions as it 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 likely to have a 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.

3 **Young people not in employment, education or training**

Some young people are statistically more likely to be NEET, eg. some BME groups, those with learning difficulties and disabilities, care leavers, young offenders, poor school attenders, young parents, young carers, pregnant young women, homeless YP and those living away from their family. NEET rates vary significantly in different areas of the city. Young people who are NEET report feeling bored and isolated. They have more chance of long-term unemployment, ill health and criminality than their peers. When they do get work, they are more likely to be in low-paid jobs.

- 4 The Audit Commission published a report, called “Against the Odds” in July 2010 which looked at the cost of young people who are NEET and made recommendations on actions for local authorities and other partners. A copy of the summary report is attached as Appendix 1.
- 5 The local authority is responsible for monitoring the number of young people (16-18) who are NEET and reporting monthly to DfE, this is done from information collected by the Connexions service on every young person resident in Leeds. The position for November 2011 is:

	Leeds – Nov 11	Statistical neighbours – Nov 11	England – Nov 11	Leeds – Nov 10
NEET (adjusted)	8.1%	8.1%	6.3%	9.2%
In Learning	78.4%	80.0%	78.2%	75.9%
Not Known	11.4%	6.9%	11.2%	7.8%

Information on the number of young people NEET, and comparison with other local authorities is distributed on a monthly basis. The latest set of available data is attached as Appendix 2. It also includes the geographical distribution of young people who are NEET by wards and the numbers of young people in the various “hard to reach” categories. We are also working on a more detailed analysis of young people who are NEET by each ward that will be available for the March Scrutiny Board meeting.

The latest Children’s Trust Board report card relating to NEET is attached as Appendix 3.

The detailed actions we are currently taking to reduce NEET are captured in the Raising the Participation Age (RPA) action plan (Appendix 4) , alongside other actions that are required to implement RPA. Our approach recognises how NEET and the Raising of the Participation Age will become one and the same thing for young people under the age of 18. The action plan is currently still a draft and we would welcome any comments or suggestions from Scrutiny Board on its content or format before it is released for wider consultation.

6 **Responsibilities in relation to NEET**

Current arrangements and upcoming changes to statutory duties mean that a wide range of organisations have responsibilities that impact on the number of young people NEET.

7 **Local Authority**

The local authority has a duty to make available to young people below the age of 19 and relevant young adults (i.e. those aged 20 and over but under 25 with learning difficulties) support that will encourage, enable or assist them to participate in education and training (Section 68 of the Education and Skills Act 2008). The local authority will no longer be expected to deliver a universal Connexions service, but instead deliver targeted services to support young people’s progression and participation.

8 The Education and Skills Act 2008 places the following duties on the Local Authority for the Raising of the Participation Age (RPA):

1. To promote the effective participation in education or training of persons belonging to its area to whom the act applies.
2. To make arrangements (so far as it is possible to do so) to identify young people who are failing to participate in education or training.
3. To work with other local authorities to identify and share information about young people who live in one area and are accessing education in another.

9 **Schools**

From September 2012, schools will be under a duty to secure access to independent and impartial careers guidance for their pupils, a key part of the support to ensure all young people make appropriate decisions so they remain in EET.

10 **Young People's Learning Agency / Education Funding Agency and the Skills Funding Agency**

The funding for learning opportunities for young people over compulsory school-age comes for the YPLA (soon to change to the EFA) and the SFA. These organisations agree allocation of place and contracts with learning providers, following national criteria and funding allocations. They, therefore, have a significant role in determining the number of places for learning available to young people. Individual learning providers will determine their curriculum offer.

11 **Jobcentre Plus**

Jobcentre plus is responsible for support services and some training opportunities for young people who are claiming out of work benefits. Decisions on individual young people's access to opportunities are based on national criteria. Young people age 16 and 17 are only able to claim benefits if they are in "hardship", which only applies to around 40 young people at one time in Leeds, and in which case the Jobcentre works in partnership with LA commissioned Connexions services. The role of Jobcentre Plus is more significant in work with 18 and 19 year olds.

12 **Support Services including specific targeted support available to young people classified as "sustained NEET"**

There are a range of services which provide support to young people, and aim to meet the needs of some young people classified as "sustained NEET". These services are delivered across the statutory and voluntary sector, some are funded by Leeds City Council and other public bodies, others rely on charitable funding. These services are often designed with another remit, for example the Youth Offending Service is in place to deal with young people who have offended but the nature of the client group they work with means the work has an impact on engagement in EET. Services that work with young people who are NEET include adult services, such as Jobcentre Plus and Housing services.

13 The services which are in place with a specific remit to reduce the number of young people NEET, and performance measures on NEET, include the following.

Connexions Service – delivered by a range of providers

Connexions currently delivers careers guidance, IAG and support services to young people age 13-19. Universal services are planned and delivered in partnership with schools, Further Education (FE) colleges and Specialist Inclusive learning Centres (SILCs) for young people in learning. These services are delivered by Prospects. Targeted and specialist services for vulnerable young people in communities and in schools / colleges are delivered by igen, Prospects and 'Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector' (VCFS) partners. This includes work with young people who are 'Not In Education, Employment or Training' (NEET) or at risk of NEET and have additional barriers to engaging in 'Education, Employment and Training' (EET). Targeted and specialist services provides support to move young people in to EET and sustain the place in EET until the young person is settled. Specialist services are delivered to identified groups of young people with specific barriers to engagement in EET that require specialist knowledge / interventions. Groups receiving support are: young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; looked after young people and care leavers; young offenders; young people in housing need; asylum seekers and refugees and; young people from BME communities.

The universal career guidance delivery will end on the 31st March 2012, in line with changes to Government policy and legislation. Targeted and specialist services will continue, including services available to all young people who are NEET, with targeted and specialist support for those who require it. Interim arrangements are being put in place with providers

for 2012/13 ahead of a commissioning process that has begun to put new service delivery arrangements in place for April 2013.

14 **Jobcentre Plus**

Work with young people who are claiming benefits. Young people are allocated a Personal Adviser who will review their case on a regular basis. Personal Advisers decide on the level of support for the young person to find and secure employment, using personalised diagnostic skills and tools. Advisers support, motivate and challenge the young person to help them identify their own needs and work with the young person to address these needs, to help maximise their chances of finding work quickly. Young people are able to access a range of different training opportunities, dependent on the benefit they are claiming and the length of the claim. Some of the programmes delivered locally are attached in Appendix 5.

15 **Local level planning**

There are a wide range of agencies who will have an impact on young people's engagement in EET. Local level planning between a range of different organisations is happening at a cluster level. Each cluster is carrying out Outcomes Based Accountability planning sessions in order to identify actions and processes that will reduce the number of young people who are NEET within their area, allowing for actions to be developed which fit with the needs of the local community. The organisations / services involved will differ according to the needs of the cluster but are likely to involve school staff, post-16 learning providers, Connexions, youth work staff, Youth Offending Service, Attendance Service staff, Parenting and Family Support cluster staff, voluntary and community organisations. From these sessions local action plans are being drawn up which are owned and delivered by the cluster partners. Clusters will receive data on NEET to allow them to monitor progress. The use of Outcomes Based Accountability at a local level is a key strategy for Children's Services to ensure that funding is used to maximum effect in order to meet the local needs of young people and families and achieve the best results for the local community. This approach allows for actions to be put in place which are responsive to need and, therefore, deal with the diverse range of needs amongst young people who are NEET, including the range of needs amongst those in the "sustained NEET" group.

16 **Opportunities**

There are a wide range of EET options available to young people, which are listed on the Leeds Pathways website, www.leedspathways.org.uk. Young people who are NEET would be able to take up these opportunities and the diverse needs of young people mean it is important to have this range of opportunities available.

17 Listed below are the key learning opportunities available which have been designed to respond to the needs of young people who are NEET, responding to common factors amongst this group of young people.

18 **ESF REAL**

This programme is delivered by igen, who contract for provision with different providers, including a number of voluntary sector providers. The programme is funded by European Social Fund through the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA).

The **REAL (Realise, Engage, Achieve, Learn)** programme is a first step engagement programme which offers support, training and vocational experience to young people that gives them the confidence and skills needed to fulfil learners potential. All young people who access the REAL programme are given intensive support to help them achieve their aims. Every project has no more than 10 young people in each group and most will have additional support as well as the tutor. Support workers engage with the learners at a very early stage offering assistance with any barriers to learning which involves linking-up with external specialist support agencies.

19 REAL training providers across Leeds deliver courses in specific vocational areas eg car mechanics, hair/beauty childcare, animal care, construction trades, army preparation, admin, gardening/landscape/horticulture, retail. The individual courses vary in length so this can be

tailored to suit each young person eg, specific arrangements have been made for a course delivered in the community for young mums. The REAL programme has flexible hours which can increase as and when each young person is ready.

As learners come to the closing stages of their course Support Workers intensify their support, therefore making the transition into the next stage of the learners career path a seamless one.

REAL have so far worked with 344, 16-19 year olds & 76, 14-16 year olds, where 91.11% have achieved and 66.91% have progressed.

20 **Foundation Learning**

igen also deliver a foundation learning programme for the YPLA, again this involves contracting provision with a range of different providers.

21 **Leeds Learning Links** provides Foundation Learning courses for 16-18 year olds in Leeds. Foundation Learning consists of three key elements:

- Vocational Training/Qualifications
- Maths, English & ICT Functional Skills
- Personal & Social Development/Employability

22 The programme offers a wide range of Vocational Qualifications that can be completed in either Award, Certificate or Diploma level in areas such as; Business Administration, Customer Service, Hairdressing, Horticulture, Retail, Sports and Active Leisure, abc Award Mechanics, Tech Cert Childcare, Youth work and Health & Social Care.

23 All young people attend the Enrolment Week with igen and from there are placed at one of the Leeds Learning Links Partners to continue their course. Leeds Learning Links also have Support workers linked to all partners to help young people in their transition and progression through their learner journey. Additional Learning Support is available by Leeds Learning Links, young people's needs are assessed and a personalised support package is put together to suit them. We can offer support in lots of ways, this can include learning aids/adapted materials, communication and learning support workers, one to one sessions and small group work.

24 Leeds Learning Links courses are designed for young people who would like to gain qualifications and experience in order to progress into Apprenticeships, Employment or Further Education. Some partners also have their own apprenticeship programmes which are natural progression routes for the young people once they have gained their qualifications.

25 The Leeds Learning Links Partnership has worked with 1365 young people (2010-11), with a 70.60% success rate and a 43.21% progression rate.

26 **Young People's Employability Initiative**

The Young People's Employability Initiative (also known as YOUth Inspire) is a Council led partnership programme delivered by a consortium of third sector providers and Leeds City College to improve the employability of up to 580 young people aged 16-24. The 8 week programme targeting 'work ready' individuals who are NEET and/or claiming Jobseekers Allowance provides a tailored package of skills development, work experience and ongoing support for up to six months to help them into employment, an apprenticeship or further training. The programme has been successful in securing work experience opportunities that lead to jobs.

27 So far, 335 young people have started on scheme, of whom 109 have completed the 8 weeks. 96 individuals have successfully moved into employment (12 people aged 16-18).

28 **College Flexible starts**

The colleges in Leeds offer opportunities throughout the year for young people who are NEET to start courses. The widest range of courses is offered by Leeds City College at sites across Leeds, full details are attached in Appendix 6. The college offers a variety of courses, ranging from 2 hour taster sessions to full-time courses. Courses available include courses in the following vocational areas:

- Access to Apprenticeships
- Arts and Media
- Business Administration
- Construction
- Customer Services
- DJ and Music
- Early Years
- ESOL
- Employability and Workskills
- Exercise and Fitness
- Food Preparation
- Hair and Beauty
- Health and Social Care
- Information Technology
- Land-based
- Money Management
- Retail
- Teaching Assistant
- Teenage Parent Programme

Leeds City College have Caseworkers who take referrals to programmes, meet with young people in different venues to consider which programmes may be suitable and support young people to attend and achieve.

29 **Preventative Work**

As well as working to re-engage young people who are already NEET preventative actions are also required to reduce the numbers of young people who become NEET. This is a key part of the strategy to reduce “sustained NEET” as dealing with issues at an early stage can prevent young people from entering a cycle of negative experiences.

30 The new duty on schools to secure access to independent and impartial careers guidance for their pupils, means that schools have a key role in preventative actions to reduce the number of young people who are NEET after Year 11. A new destination measure is being introduced by the DfE for schools and post-16 learning providers, some information will be published in 2012 with more detailed information available from 2013. The measure will give information on the progression of young people completing Year 11 (Key stage 4 destination measure) and young people completing post-16 courses (Key stage 5 destination measure).

31 The local level planning to reduce NEET within clusters is identifying a number of preventative actions working with young people who are currently in statutory education. Preventative work is starting in primary schools as many head teachers are identifying behaviours and family circumstances that indicate a risk of the child disengaging from learning. A range of engagement and support activities are being undertaken with the identified young people and their parent/carers which continue after their transition into high school to help prevent them becoming NEET in the future.

32 **Future Planning**

There has been a significant level of change in national policy following the change in Government in 2010. There is still a level of uncertainty about how policy and budget changes will translate in to changes to services. Work to reduce NEET sits across a number of Government departments, as reflected in the cross Government strategy for 16-24 year olds, Building Engagement Building Futures, attached as Appendix 7.

33 There is also uncertainty on the future of the national economic situation, which could impact on the number of employment opportunities available for young people. However, job opportunities for young people in Leeds are still available in large numbers as demonstrated by our recent significant increase in young people starting apprenticeships.

34 It is important that Leeds City Council understands what works with individual young people in order to ensure that changes to national policy are implemented in a way that has the maximum impact for young people. Understanding what factors in a young person's life may contribute to them being at risk of becoming NEET, and to ensure that early intervention support is put in place to respond to this. Understanding what works will ensure that good practice is built on in the commissioning of services. It also allows Leeds City Council to present a clear message to local partners and national policy makers about the priorities for improving outcomes for young people.

35 If we are to deliver on our vision to be the best city in the UK, everyone in Leeds must get behind our drive to ensure all our young people are productively engaged in education, employment or training.