

Young People's Participation in Education, Employment and Training

Committee: Children's Health, Social Care and Education Overview and Scrutiny

Date: 18th January 2017

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Wards:	All
Locality Affected:	All
Parishes Affected:	All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 This report details the actions taken to address the issues raised at the Children's Health, Social Care and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 9th November 2016, regarding post-16 participation.
- 1.2 Following the Children's Health, Social Care and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 9th November 2016, the Commissioner, Routes to Employment was requested to present a report on the actions being taken to address the issue of fewer young people in Swindon participating in learning activities, and more young people with 'unknown' post-16 activities.
- 1.3 This work falls within the scope of Swindon Borough Council, Priority Two, to "offer education opportunities that lead to the right skills and right jobs in the right places". It supports the statutory duties for which Swindon Borough Council is responsible and which are summarised in the Department for Education document "Participation of young people in education, employment or training: Statutory guidance for local authorities, September 2016".

2. Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the contents of the attached report, Appendix 1.
- 2.2 Propose any additional approaches that officers should consider in order to improve further the education, training and employment outcomes for young people in Swindon.

3. Detail

- 3.1 The November 2016 Overview and Scrutiny Meeting requested a response from the Routes to Employment team to several issues, arising from data produced for the academic year 2015 to 2016:
 - 3.1.1 more young people, aged 16 to 18, in "unknown" post-16 activities

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- 3.1.2 an increase in the number of young people declaring work without training as their destination.
 - 3.1.3 relatively high numbers of care leavers who are NEET, a large proportion of whom may have a disability.
 - 3.1.4 The Meeting also requested that this Report contain detail regarding information given to young people with Special Educational Needs.
- 3.2 The number of young people in "unknown" destinations has been significantly reduced through earlier tracking work carried out by Early Help colleagues. October is the first month of the academic year for which local and national transitions data is reported. For October 2016, both unknown (223 young people) and Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET, 113 young people) proportions were lower than the national and regional averages. A national "NEET + Unknown" indicator has been introduced. In October 2015 Swindon ranked 83rd of 150 Local Authorities. In October 2016 this had improved to 32nd.
- The recent deployment of a dedicated Youth Engagement Worker (YEW) will help minimise numbers of 16 and 17 year olds in unknown destinations in the future.
- 3.3 Last year, a main contribution towards the rising numbers in jobs without training was identified as young people leaving Swindon and New Colleges after one year. Through the Raising Participation Group, both Colleges presented detailed plans intended to reverse this pattern. In both cases this has involved staff restructuring and better tracking and support for young people. The launch of two European Social Fund (ESF) programmes to support NEETs, "Your Time" and "Building Bridges" projects, has added another set of resources geared towards moving NEET young people into appropriate, and therefore "in learning", destinations. In October 2016, there were 64 young people in jobs without training, falling from 77 in the previous year. A consequence of falling numbers NEET and in jobs without training is that the overall "in learning" picture is more positive, with Swindon jumping from the 85th best performing Local Authority in October 2015 to 31st in 2016.
- 3.4 A new Virtual Headteacher is in post, and has introduced a more rigorous approach to post-16 Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for Children in Care with a clear focus on progression. A more streamlined hand-over process from Virtual School to Care Leaver teams is now in place and the Routes to Employment team is working with the Care Leaver team to ensure an increasing focus on developing employability skills with a goal of finding employment. The October 2016 data shows that 95% of Children Looked After and Care Leavers are in learning, at academic age 16, and 78% at age 17, compared to figures of 74%
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and 57% for the previous year. For all Care Leavers to the age of 21, 54.9% were in education employment or training in October 2016 compared to the national average of 48.0%.

- 3.5 For young people with learning difficulties or disabilities learners, (LDD, increasingly, holders of Educational Health and Care Plans) the data presents a similarly improving picture, with higher proportions in learning and fewer NEET or unknown. The most recent national comparison was produced for September 2016, when 80% of Swindon 16 to 18 year olds were in learning compared to a national average of 75%.

A successful pilot with Wiltshire College introduced supported internships to a small number of learners in 2015/16. Investment in training and support for supported internships has resulted in more providers including this offer for learners with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and more learners enrolled on supported internships for 2016/17.

A review of all year 11 pupils in EOTAS will ensure that those young people who require additional support in Further Education settings are assessed and if required will have an EHCP.

All young people with an LDA who are continuing in learning beyond September 2016 have been identified and assessed for an EHCP.

The SEN assessment team have been reconfigured to ensure continuity for all learners post 16 as the EHCP no longer ceases automatically when a young person leaves school.

- 3.6 The online website "My Care, My Support" is maintained to provide information and advice the provision and support for young people with special educational needs and disabilities. This includes an online marketplace with over 350 providers which enables young people to access services directly.
- 3.7 Appendix 1 places the comments above, in the broader context of the Raising Participation work of the Routes to Employment team.
- 3.8 Through the development of an updated Raising Participation Plan, the Local Authority is well-placed to remain ahead of the national average for key indicators at 16 and 17. The partnership with providers is well-established and providers, including Schools and colleges, share the same participation priorities. The new Plan will quantify the agreed contributions needed from partnership members (Colleges, School Sixth Forms, Other Providers and Youth Engagement Services) in an overall performance framework.

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The Skills and Employment Partnership has reviewed the overall structure of its sub groups so that there is one group focusing on 'Skills for Inclusion', encompassing the NEET agenda for 16-18 year olds and progression to work for a wider age range who are disadvantaged in the labour market. This will support a more coherent approach to meeting needs of young people and adults and maximise the use of funding.

The Post 16 Area Review has provided an opportunity to highlight strengths and areas for improvement across the Wiltshire and Swindon area. Improving educational outcomes by 19 and specifically outcomes in English and Maths and ensuring providers work together to improve progression to sustainable work for vulnerable groups including the SEND group and care leavers is one of the recommendations that the two Local Authorities have put forward.

3.9 Threats to continued progress, which will be incorporated into a new Raising Participation Plan risk register, include:

3.9.1 Risk of Youth Engagement capacity being reduced as a consequence of the current service review

3.9.2 Post-16 partners, often for financial reasons, being unable to maintain a broad curriculum offer, especially for the less academically successful

3.9.3 High numbers of learners with an EHCP aged 16-18 in Swindon schools (20.6% as at 21/01/16 compared to 8.6% in England) impacting on the capacity of services and providers to meet the needs of this group

3.9.4 Pressure on the high needs budget to meet the needs of an increasing number of young people aged 16-19 from 176 in January 2016 to 316 in September 2016.

3.10 The Local Authority remains responsible for Care Leavers and young people with EHCPs to the age of 25. With some evidence that fewer adults in Swindon who have a learning disability are in employment, the Transitions Transformation Programme has been launched, with Routes to Employment leading the work-stream focusing on moving more young people, in particular, into EET destinations. For Care Leavers, Routes to Employment has led the development of a pilot programme designed to help the Care Leaver team to better improve the employability skills of Care Leavers.

4. Alternative Options

4.1 None

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5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications from this report.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 The Council is required to comply with the statutory provisions referred to in the report. All other legal and human rights implications have been considered in the preparation of this report.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.3 The actions set out in this report will potentially increase the cohesiveness and capacity of the community, as its main objective is to reduce the number of young residents who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), therefore increasing their capacity to contribute to Swindon's economy and to better meet their employment needs.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.4 A Diversity Impact Assessment was produced for the period covered by the previous, Raising Participation Strategy. Copies are available from Martin Casey, Strategic Needs Analysis Consultant, mcasey@swindon.gov.uk

A new Diversity Impact Assessment will be produced alongside the updated NEET/Participation Strategy.

Risk Management

- 5.5 A Risk Assessment will be incorporated into the updated NEET/Participation Strategy. Two key risks have been identified:

5.5.1 There is a consultation currently being carried out on youth engagement services, with a new structure to be in place by 1st April 2017, which presents a risk to reduction in those services. A set of options to be considered by Members is under way in order to mitigate this risk.

5.5.2 There is a risk that the priorities of post-16 providers, e.g. driven by budget pressures, could lead to less flexibility in the learning offer. To mitigate this risk, SBC officers will work closely with providers to identify alternative provision options and access European Social Fund projects which are already running.

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6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Board Director, Resources (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 Draft NEET/Participation Strategy available on request.

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1 – "Transitions in Swindon - Increasing the number of young people aged 16-19 participating in learning".