

Report of: Executive Member for Economic Development

Meeting of:	Date	Ward(s)
Executive	22 March 2018	All

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SUBJECT: Post 16 Education, Employment and Training – Response to the report of the Children’s Services Scrutiny Committee

1. Synopsis

- 1.1 The Executive received a report from the Children’s Service Scrutiny Committee on 28 September 2017 which reviewed Post 16 Education, Employment and Training. The Committee proposed 16 recommendations.
- 1.2 The scrutiny review:
 - Explored how to sustain improvements and continue to increase the number of young people progressing to Post 16 Education, Employment and Training.
 - Suggested ways to prevent young people becoming not in education, employment or training (NEET) in the first place.
 - Assessed the strategic role of Islington Council to: enable an increase in the number of young people in education employment & training; and to identify specific measures which will increase progression into education, employment and training.
 - Assessed the availability and effectiveness of information, advice, guidance and employability support for young people.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To welcome the findings of the **Post-16 Education, Employment and Training Scrutiny Review**.
- 2.2 To agree the responses to the recommendations of the Children’s Services Scrutiny Committee as set out in section 4.
- 2.3 To note that officers will report back on progress to the Children’s Services Scrutiny Committee in July 2018.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Committee commended the Progress and iWork services for their work in reducing the number of young people NEET in Islington. However, the Committee considered that improvements could be made to these services. In particular, it was highlighted that services could be strengthened by presenting themselves as a united team. It is considered that greater coordination and joint working would lead to a more coherent employability and progression support service.
- 3.2 The Committee made several recommendations to further increase progression into education, employment and training. These include: increasing the number of 'stepping stone' approaches; reviewing careers education in alternative provision with a view to incorporating employer-led learning; reviewing the quality, range and accessibility of vocational pathways; and raising awareness of the council's progression and employment services
- 3.3 To significantly increase the number of young people progressing into education, employment and training, work is needed to tackle the root causes of barriers to progression. The Employment Commission and the Fair Futures Commission have both found that young people in Islington do not lack ambition but that many experience a lack of social capital, lack of exposure to the world of work, and inadequate careers guidance, as real barriers to social mobility and progression into good careers.
- 3.4 The iWork Youth Employment Team opens up pathways into sustainable careers for young people. This begins with supporting schools to engage with businesses who can inspire young people and in doing so bridge the gap with the world of work. The team also works with employers to develop apprenticeship and entry level roles for school leavers and NEET young people aged up to 24. iWork provides essential pre-employment support to equip young people to make a successful transition into the work place. The team also supports the council's internal apprenticeship programme, providing pastoral support and employment progression opportunities.

The Progress Team is made up of a Post 16 Participation Manager and 7 advisers who deliver NEET prevention and interventions to the most vulnerable young people not in Employment, Education and Training. They have statutory duty to follow up on all 16 to 18 year-old Islington residents and maintain an up to date record of their destination. The team also provides on-going support to young people leaving Islington schools and colleges who have not a secured place of learning.

- 3.5 The teams are already collaborating in the following ways:
- Planning and delivery of apprenticeship promotion in schools, through one to one advice, group sessions, CPD for teachers and advice for parents.
 - Planning events for young people on education, employment and training opportunities including quarterly 'Aspire' events, which offer young people aged 16-24 an opportunity to network with recruiting employers and learn from the career pathways experienced by role models in a range of growth sectors.
 - Delivery of the ESF funded Careers Cluster project, working with nine schools, one college, and 18 employers to develop an innovative careers offer and enable successful transitions of young people from school into further education, training or employment. This project has enabled the development of a stronger careers network in local schools, which will continue to meet with local business leaders and develop work related interventions within schools.
 - Shared data and referrals in support of 1-1 guidance for young people who have dropped out of learning provision.
 - Community based work with young people identified as being at-risk, working collaboratively with Targeted Youth Support.

- A joint initiative with the Youth Offending Service started in January 2018, with an iWork employment coach working alongside a Progress Adviser. A further targeted piece of work is underway to develop employment and education pathways for young people leaving custody.

4. Response to Scrutiny Recommendations

4.1 Recommendation 1: That the Progress and iWork teams be integrated further to develop a more coherent and efficient employment and progression support service.

The Progress team moved to the Employment, Skills and Culture division on 8th January 2018.

4.2 Recommendation 2: That Children's Services review how the council's employment and progression support services could be further integrated with both targeted and universal youth services, to improve the accessibility of the Progress Team and to provide more holistic support to those in need. This review should be completed by July 2018 and the conclusions reported back to the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee.

In 2018, the following substantive action is planned:

- Integration of the Progress team within Employment, Skills and Culture that ensures continuity of service and the development of an improved service offer.
- Establishment of a strategic partnership with external youth employment providers.
- Islington wide mapping of employability teams and partnerships.
- Stronger alignment with Youth and Community services to provide holistic support to young people.

A launch of the new integrated service will take place in Spring 2018. Initial promotion will target education partners and residents. In the run up to the launch, joint planning, staff training and development workshops are taking place.

4.3 Recommendation 3: That the council provide an induction session and supporting resources for teachers and others working with young people. This should be primarily targeted at those working with 14 – 18 year olds and professionals with careers/pastoral responsibilities. The induction and resources should focus on the specific issues faced by young people in Islington and seek to bridge knowledge gaps, such as the range of vocational opportunities available and how best to support young people into them.

By May 2018 a task and finish group will be established to co-devise with schools an induction package that would best meet their needs. There is a local careers forum where professionals with a careers/pastoral responsibility share information about key policy developments e.g. the new Statutory Guidance for careers education. Recent forum activity has included CPD sessions for school staff on the local labour market, with a package of bespoke resources produced for schools through the Carers Cluster projects. Further training has been delivered including updates on apprenticeship reforms and opportunities.

4.4 Recommendation 4: That the council's work to increase the sustainability of employability and progression support activities; for example, by supporting schools in developing their own high-quality support to those seeking vocational pathways, and by reviewing how voluntary and community sector groups which contribute to young people's employability are supported.

In addition to the council's own delivery of employability support for schools, officers have established a network of careers leads with secondary schools. iWork also convenes a youth employment network for partners working across the borough to support young people into work. For example, stronger links with the Prince's Trust are being developed to improve ease of access for residents. The Prince's Trust has well established relationships with employers in a wide range of vocational opportunities, and high rates of progression into employment.

4.5

Recommendation 5: That the council provide tailored advice and support to families whose benefits eligibility may be affected by their child's employment. This must be handled sensitively and should not discourage young people from seeking employment.

This is a complex and nuanced area, and iWork will work with the council's Income Maximisation team to develop a fact sheet that offers a base level of information, with signposting for further specialised advice. In addition, officers will present this information to parents at relevant opportunities such as parents' evenings. Training has been organised for officers in February 2018 to ensure a clear understanding of how a young person's employment may affect family benefits.

4.6

Recommendation 6: That the council explore how a greater number and range of traineeship opportunities can be provided and brokered to develop the skills of young people who are not yet ready to apply for an apprenticeship

The council will organise two traineeship programmes per year, with work placements sourced from both council teams and contractors. The first of these will start in March 2018 with the second intake in summer 2018. In addition, the council has recently worked in partnership with the NHS and two other boroughs to organise a successful healthcare traineeship, and recruitment for a second programme is underway. Opportunities to develop traineeships with employers in other key industry sectors are being explored.

4.7

Recommendation 7: Secondary schools and colleges should make use of alumni groups to support their careers education offer. This should help young people to access professional networks and sector specific knowledge, and may identify role models for young people.

This will be discussed with our Islington Community of Schools partnership. Some schools have existing alumni networks in place and are working with appropriate organisations such as Future First. Officers will help to share best practice across schools and identify a suitable structure that can be used universally.

4.8

Recommendation 8: That the 'gold standard' for careers education in Alternative Provision and New River College be reviewed and developed further. This should include high-impact employer-led sessions focusing on ambitions and work readiness. It would be appropriate for these to be provided by local businesses which offer apprenticeships.

A recent review of careers education in Alternative Provision and New River College (NRC) found that progress has been made towards meeting the Quality in Careers Standard, in line with newly released DFE guidance on schools' careers provision, and it has identified further areas for curriculum development. Both NRC and the council are submitting bids for external funding that would enable additional support and expertise on careers education that is not currently available; the outcome of these bids will be known in March 2018.

The council has begun a pilot partnership with NRC and BIG Alliance to provide a programme of employability support drawing on council and other business volunteers, including mentoring, work shadowing and work experience placements, and insight sessions with various industry sectors.

On-going support from iWork and Progress officers will further extend the New River College network of employers and training providers to ease the transition for students at the end of Year 11. An arrangement has been agreed with City & Islington College who will provide transition support to students. This includes a day at college, mentoring support and guidance on progression and pathways into college.

4.9

Recommendation 9: That Children's Services undertake a strategic review of the quality, range and accessibility of vocational pathways to determine if there are appropriate pathways available to young people. The findings of this review should be completed by July 2018 and the conclusions reported to the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee.

This will form part of the overall Islington Community of Schools partnership strategy. This will also be informed by up to date labour market information which the Children, Employment and Skills department has recently commissioned and which is due to present its findings on 1st March 2018.

4.10

Recommendation 10: That the profile of the council's progression and employment services be raised with school leaders to ensure that the council has access to data on the pupils who may not attain the required grades, and those who have not attained their expected grades on results day. This should include the pupil's name, contact details, expected and actual grades, information on their ambitions, and any other relevant information. This will ensure that young people NEET receive appropriate support as soon as possible

There is a statutory requirement for schools to provide data to the council on intended destinations, September guarantees and at-risk registers. This will be further highlighted through the termly Head teacher briefings and engagement with Islington Community of Schools.

Data is shared by schools about young people who are at risk of becoming NEET. This enables the Progress team to work with young people during the summer period. This work is currently being reviewed to ensure link advisers are established for each school to support student transitions. Early identification will enable the Progress advisers to develop relationships with the young people prior to them sitting their exams and support them to ensure they have a guaranteed offer of learning for September.

4.11

Recommendation 11: That further work be undertaken to raise awareness of the council's progression and employment services to young people and the wider public. This should include assemblies or workshops, as well as follow up advertising in public spaces, publications such as 'Islington Life', social media, and relevant publications produced by partner organisations.

A communications plan has been drafted to raise the profile of the council's progression and employment services. Key to this is clear messaging and branding of the service with a single access point to ease the journey for young people and residents. A programme of engagement activity is underway with schools, including assemblies, parents' evenings, and careers events. An extended employment section in the next issue of Islington Life will promote a single employment and progression service to young people.

4.12

Recommendation 12: That further work be carried out to publicise the successes of those who have completed apprenticeships. This should raise the profile of apprenticeships and provide role models to young people

Work is underway with the council's Communications team to showcase successful local apprentices across a range of sectors and apprenticeship levels.

Case studies will be shared across online and offline media, and there will be tie ins with national campaigns such as National Apprenticeship Week in March 2018. A programme of activities in schools and community settings will celebrate success and raise awareness of the range of available opportunities, while the launch of an apprentice forum will give current council apprentices a stronger voice and engagement.

A greater number of apprentice role models will be engaged in school activities, particularly targeting apprentice alumni.

We are exploring ways to recognise local employers who have gone the extra mile in supporting young peoples' progression into work, periodically throughout the year.

4.13

Recommendation 13: That a single access route to the employability support services offered by the council and its partner organisations be established and publicised.

Work is underway to achieve a single access route for all young people aged 16-24 to access employment and progression support, and will be launched in Spring 2018.

The youth employment network met in January 2018, and will continue to do so quarterly, to achieve better coordination of services offering employment support between the council and external partners.

4.14

Recommendation 14: That the council continue to develop cross-London working relationships to share best practice with other boroughs. This should support Islington pupils in accessing a wide range of opportunities and developing sector-specific knowledge of the opportunities available

The council has cross-borough partnerships through involvement in relevant forums such as Central London Forward and the GLA Careers Cluster. The Central London Connexions partnership meets quarterly for updates on policy from DfE, to review management information, share good practice, and provides a valuable link with other local authorities. We will also look at the merit of a more local forum with our immediate neighbouring boroughs.

There is a positive relationship with Camden Council that includes joint support for Kings Cross Construction Skills Centre which delivers training and apprenticeship opportunities for residents of both boroughs.

A health and social care steering group involving officers from the boroughs of Islington, Camden and Haringey along with a range of NHS and other employers provides ongoing support for schools to engage with the sector. Work is underway to improve access to new apprenticeship opportunities in the sector.

Collaboration between the Islington and Camden Youth Councils and the Kings Cross and St Pancras Business Partnership enabled a careers event to be hosted at Google in October 2017, attended by 200 young people. The initiative will be built on in 2018.

4.15

Recommendation 15: Each secondary school and college should nominate one of their governors to oversee their careers education offer. The council should engage with those governors to support them in this role. This could include providing them with information, such as destinations data for their former pupils, including those who were referred to alternative provision.

This matter will be raised at the next Secondary School Governing Board meeting, and we will encourage governors to take part. Meetings with secondary schools and colleges will be concluded by May 18.

4.16

Recommendation 16: Actions arising as a result of this review should be developed in partnership with young people to ensure that the council's employment and progression support services meet their needs effectively.

A survey was taken to establish what young people had found to be most useful about the support offered by the Progress team and what was most beneficial to them. It found young people benefitted most from one-to-one work with one adviser who listened to their opinions, provided support when they needed it, helped them to think and plan for their future and enabled them to get into education or employment. There was a high satisfaction level of the services young people had received overall, while feedback on areas for improvement included greater promotion and earlier notification of the services at school.

We intend to work with the youth council, young people who use our services and attendees of the council's commissioned youth hubs, Platform, Lift and Soapbox, to ensure that we are developing our services in consultation with young people. We will have a youth engagement plan in place for July 2018.

5. Implications

5.1 Financial implications:

A bid has been submitted by the Council to the Richard Reeves Foundation for their Careers Education grant programme to fund a post across for 3 years to support schools across the borough with developing their careers offer (recommendation 8). There are no other financial implications from this report.

5.2 Legal Implications:

The Council must secure sufficient suitable education and training provision for all young people in Islington who are over compulsory school age but under 19 or aged 19 to 25 and for whom an Education, Health and Care plan is maintained (Sections 15ZA and 18A of the Education Act 1996 and Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014). The Council has a duty to make available to all young people aged 13-19, and to those between 20 and 25 with special educational needs and disabilities, support that will encourage, enable or assist them to participate in education or training (Section 68 Education and Skills Act 2008). Educational institutions have a duty to provide information to the Council in order for the Council to deliver its section 68 duties (Section 72 Education and Skills Act 2008). The legislation provides the Council with additional data sharing powers in order to support it to deliver its section 68 duties (Sections 76 and 77 Education and Skills Act 2008). The Council must promote the effective participation in education and training of 16 and 17 year olds in Islington with a view to ensuring that they participate in education or training (Section 10 Education and Skills Act 2008). The Council has a duty to make arrangements to identify 16 and 17 year olds who are not participating in education or training (Section 12 Education and Skills Act 2008). The Council should have due regard to the statutory guidance, Participation of young people in education, employment or training.

5.3 Environmental Implications:

N/A

5.4 Resident Impact Assessment

The council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

The proposals set out in this report and in the attached Resident Impact Assessment aim to improve the overall service for young people by aligning the Progress Team and the Youth Employment Team. The re-designed service will be fully inclusive and provide opportunities for the most vulnerable. The council will be better placed to ensure that offers brokered with local employers and education providers meet the needs of all young people including those with most barriers, for example those in Alternative Provision, Pupil Referral Unit and the Youth Offending Service. The services offered by both the Youth Employment and Progress teams are designed to address social inequality by ensuring that pathways to progression are designed for all young people. This will be achieved by:

- Opportunities to ensure access for all young people to progression pathways through the development of traineeships, work tasters and adjusted apprenticeships.
- Offering a bespoke service and one to one support for vulnerable young people including those who have SEND needs, have protected characteristics, are in care, are known to social services or the criminal justice system.
- Offering a seamless service offer with a reduction in duplication or conflicting offers.
- Offering a combined service by June 2018.

Appendices

- Resident Impact Assessment

Background papers: Post-16 Education, Employment and Training Report of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

Final report clearance:

Signed by:



8 March 2018

Councillor Asima Shaikh
Executive Member for Economic Development

Date

Report Author: Andrea Stark, Director of Employment, Skills and Culture
Tel: 020 7527 5753
Email: Andrea.Stark@islington.gov.uk

Financial Implications Author: Tim Partington, Head of Finance
Tel: 020 5727 1851
Email: tim.partington@islington.gov.uk

Legal Implications Author: Peter Fehler, Acting Director of Law and Governance
Tel: 020 7527 3126
Email: peter.fehler@islington.gov.uk