

Report of: Corporate Director - People's Directorate

Meeting of:	Date:	Ward(s):
Children's Services Scrutiny Committee	10 th February 2020	All
Delete as appropriate	Exempt	Non-exempt



SUBJECT: Update on Scrutiny Review of Post 16 Education, Employment and Training

1. Synopsis

- 1.1 This report provides a further update on the Children's Services scrutiny which reviewed Post 16 Education, Employment and Training (June 2017). The committee proposed 16 recommendations.
- 1.2 The aim of the original scrutiny was to:
 - To explore how to sustain improvements and continue to increase the number of young people progressing to, and in, post 16 education, employment and training; and
 - To suggest ways to prevent young people becoming not in education, employment or training (NEET) in the first place.

2. Recommendations

That the Committee notes the update to the Post 16 Scrutiny review.

3. Background

The following recommendations were made in the original Post 16 Scrutiny Review:

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

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.
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.
4. That the council 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.
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.
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.
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.
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.
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.
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.
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.

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

Following the review, the Progress Team moved into the iWork employment service, within the Employment, Skills and Culture division, in January 2018. This has enabled a more integrated support offer for NEET young people aged 16 and 17, with access to pre-employment and employment opportunities such as traineeship and apprenticeship programmes brokered through council employer relationships.

4. Implications

Update on progress towards the recommendations made from scrutiny

For the purpose of this report, updates against the recommendations have been grouped into the following categories:

1. Working with schools to improve the careers education offer.
2. Supporting 16-25 year olds into Education, Employment and Training.

4.1 Working with schools to improve the careers education offer

It is the responsibility of all secondary schools to provide their students with Careers Information, Advice and Guidance. It was reported in the initial Post 16 Scrutiny Review that this provision was inconsistent across Islington schools. In 2017 the council created a schools' Careers Network to develop opportunities to share good practice, and this network continues to engage all secondary schools with CPD sessions in support of employment and careers activities.

4.2 **100 hours World of Work initiative**

The council has committed to ensuring that all young people in Islington benefit from 100 hours' experience of the World of Work by age 16. This builds upon the work that has been in action since the recommendations of the Employment Commission in 2014 to develop a high quality careers offer in schools that is industry led, in order to create change for the next generation. The programme is designed to engage children and young people from the early stages of primary school through to secondary school, to prepare for their future careers and gain an understanding of the breadth of career options that are available locally.

Key progress includes an increased offer of support from local employers across a range of industry sectors, with a particular focus on offers for primary schools where current support is less well developed. Several successful pilot activities with primary schools have helped to establish formats that can be replicated across a larger number of schools, including 'careers carousel' events that engage children with hands-on career activities, led by a variety of employers.

To ensure meaningful primary school engagement, the World of Work team are meeting with primary head teachers, and identifying both enrichment lead teachers and governors within schools. Nine enrichment governors have committed to date, with work underway to encourage others through the school governors network.

Secondary school engagement is positive, with all mainstream secondary schools having taken up activities, in addition to Samuel Rhodes Special School, The Courtyard and New River College PRU. These activities include STEM Career Champions Workshops, Professional Conversations CV building, Meet the Professionals speed networking, Careers Fairs and work experience.

A special event to mark the 100 hours World of Work programme will be held on 21st January 2020 at the Institute of Physics. The aim of the event is to recruit schools not already involved, recruit more employers from priority sectors, celebrate the good work already happening and to highlight the benefits of the programme to all parties involved.

A key aspect of the programme is to ensure that activities engage those young people who would benefit the most. Bespoke offers are being developed with council services working with vulnerable young people, including Youth Offending Service and Virtual College, as well as Alternative Provision providers.

The table below shows the delivery of activities in schools between April 2018 – November 2019:

School	Activities	Pupil Experiences
Arts and Media Islington	6	962
Central Foundation Boys School	9	840
COLA Highgate Hill	9	489
COLA Highbury Grove	1	120
COLA-I	2	165
Elizabeth Garrett Anderson	7	860
Highbury Fields School	20	1890
Beacon High	11	1191
New River College	6	118
Samuel Rhodes School	16	154
St Aloysius	18	1075
St Mary Magdalene Academy	6	1170
The Courtyard	1	20
Total	112	9054

Sector	No. businesses
Apprenticeship support	1
Construction & Engineering	4
Creative	9
Financial and Professional	2
Health & Social Care	4
Higher Education	1
Hospitality	1
Media and journalism	1
Public Services	2
Retail	1
Sports, leisure, travel	1
STEM	9
Tech/Digital	2
Employability	3

4.3 **Careers provision within New River College (Pupil Referral Unit) and Alternative Provision**

The original Post 16 Scrutiny report examined the provision of careers support within the PRU and Alternative Provision.

Utilising the Richard Reeves funding for careers education, New River College is making good progress following an initial self-assessment process that identifies strengths and gaps in

provision. They are expecting to go through their first assessment in January 2020 and hope to achieve the full award within a 2 -year period.

New River College has had particularly high levels of engagement with the World of Work. 18 activity bookings between September to December 2019 alone will complement the support provided through employer relationships held directly by the PRU. In 2018-19 academic year the council brokered a number of high quality career activities, including a series of workshops with Ted Baker that have led to a programme of sustained support from the business.

All careers activities are supported by one to one guidance from an allocated iWork Progress Adviser based within NRC, to help students understand the skills they are developing and how the careers week is developing their career plans.

The numbers of young people in Alternative Provision has reduced due to changes brought in by DfE. The Local Authority works closely with schools and New River College to provide guidance and transition support to young people in Year 11 in Alternative Provision. It is recognised that many of the young people in Alternative Provision miss out on careers related activities, work experience and work related learning activities. This group is therefore a priority for the 100 hours World of Work programme, and the council will be utilising Section 106 funding to pilot an employability and work experience programme for this cohort. This programme will be delivered in the Spring and Summer terms in 2020.

4.4 **Supporting 16-25 year olds into education, employment and training**

Supporting Post-16 progression

The Progress Team has a specific remit to work with vulnerable groups in a range of settings:

- Pre-16 support with young people in Year 11 within Alternative provision, New River College (Pupil referral unit) and the Youth Offending Service. Young people who are identified as being 'at risk' of becoming NEET from mainstream schools.
- Post 16 support for young people who are NEET, young offenders, leaving/in care and for young people with a range of complex issues.
- The Progress Team also has a statutory duty to follow up on all Islington residents in Years 12/13 ensuring they are in education, employment and training (EET) and providing tailored interventions to those that are not engaged in EET activities.

Our progress advisers provide one to one impartial careers guidance, advice on education, employment and training pathways, transition and bespoke support to reengage young people into positive activities.

The Progress Team also works closely with mainstream schools providing support to young people at risk, attending GCSE results day and completing a major piece of work to follow up on all Year 11 students. Provision of data throughout the year supports this activity as the local authority is notified of young peoples intended destination at the end of year 11 and whether they have a September Guarantee offer. The current NEET cohort remains low at less than 1.89% (December 2019) and the focus remains in ensuring the destination of all 16 and 17 years olds is maintained as part of the local authority's statutory duty.

4.5 Employment outcomes for 18-25 year olds

The council has a corporate performance indicator for the number of 18-25 year olds supported into employment. In 2018-19 the council working with local partners, achieved 391 outcomes against a target of 360, which is the highest figure since the current monitoring system was introduced.

The following table shows the organisations and services in Islington that contributed the greatest numbers of employment outcomes for young people in 2018-19:

Organisation	Council / External / Commissioned / Grant funded	Employment outcomes
iWork	Council	91
Spear	External	53
Love London Working	External	40
Arsenal in the Community	External / commissioned for some services	40
Independent Futures (Care Leavers)	Council	31
Muslim Welfare House	Grant funded	22
Highbury Roundhouse	Grant funded	12
Highbury Vale Blackstock Trust (Elizabeth House)	Grant funded	11
The Pilion Trust	Grant funded	11
All Change	Grant funded	10
KX Recruit	External	8
ACL	Council	6
Islington Somali Community	Grant funded	5
Jubba	Grant funded	5
Isledon	Commissioned	5

This year council services and partners aim to support at least 396 young people aged 18-25 into employment this year. At the end of Q2 we had 189 outcomes against a profiled target of 178, and this represents an improvement on the same period last year.

A series of employability events under the banner of 'Aspire' engaged 200 young people over the course of 2018 and 2019, of whom 45 subsequently progressed into employment, education or training. These include roles with local employers across a variety of sectors, such as Junior Engineer, Studio Assistants, Project Control apprentices and Pharmacy apprentices. Events have included a focus on particular sectors, such as 'Hidden jobs in the creative production sector' with Brewery Road businesses. Events have also been devised for specific cohorts of young people, with a well-attended event aimed at care leavers hosted at the Sobell

Centre. Apprenticeship awareness sessions have also been delivered to groups of parents and carers, in venues such as Muslim Welfare House.

Increasingly, our work in engaging NEET young people through these activities is delivered in youth and community settings which our target groups are frequently accessing, we are increasingly taking a more localised approach to outreach and engagement. For example, a series of outreach employability sessions at the Andover Centre in Finsbury Park engaged 'hard to reach' young people through collaborative working with the Targeted Youth Service, with nine young residents moving into education, employment and training over 2018-19.

Partnership work with Jubba Youth and Community Association and the council's New Build team has enabled us to successfully progress a young person from a BAME background into a Higher Level 4 Trainee Site Manager Apprenticeship with a local construction contractor. The young person has become a role model and ambassador for his community, and a connector between his employer and local residents. In September 2019 the young person was awarded 'Supply Chain Apprentice of The Year 2019' at the London Councils Apprenticeship Awards and has subsequently featured in apprenticeship campaigns and Islington Life. A number of his peers have also been introduced to the iWork service and placed into work as a result.

4.6 Supporting young people involved with the Youth Offending Service

Further collaboration between iWork and the Youth Offending Service has seen an Education and Employment offer established. iWork has increased its focus on this priority group, with a dedicated Progress Adviser supporting young people in statutory education and an employment coach to support other training and employment pathways.

Section 106 funding has been allocated to support the Education and Employment Offer within the YOS. This funding has enabled the team to pilot an employment pathways programme, which is an incentivised menu of paid work experience and other opportunities. One example of success was a young person who had been NEET for over one year who engaged with the programme and received a bursary to undertake a 12 week traineeship with GLL Leisure. Close working between the employer, YOS and iWork saw the young person successfully complete the traineeship and secure ongoing paid employment with GLL as a sports coach.

The scale of this programme will be extended through the growth funding bid detailed below, to increase the number of young people and employers engaged.

4.7 Post 16 Looked-After Children and Care Leavers Education, Employment and Training

Many Islington care experienced young people achieve successful education and employment outcomes and are well supported by their Personal Adviser or Social Worker, the Virtual School and College and their carers. Islington has 44 care experienced young people studying in Higher Education, which reflects the positive work staff do with children and young people to develop their aspirations and promote good outcomes. In addition, the percentage of year 12 and year 13 young people who are in education, employment or training has improved from 69% to 77.8% over the last 12 months.

However, 46% of care leavers aged between 18 and 21 were not in education, employment or training as of March 2019. This compares with the national average of 39%. National research

and Islington's own findings shows that the low outcomes of care leavers are the result of a range of complex factors. These include the impact of low attainment at the end of KS4, the number of children who enter care in later childhood, the significant social, emotional and mental health difficulties experienced by many young people as result of their trauma and adverse childhood experiences and the difficulties young people have in their transition to adulthood. iWork is working closely the Virtual School and College Head to improve EET outcomes and there is an ambitious target to reduce the number of NEET care leavers to 30% within 12 months.

The key areas of work and development include:

1. Improve the effectiveness of the support provided by the Virtual College's Education, Employment and Training Advisers.

Oversight by the Virtual School Head of the work of the Education, Employment and Training Advisers has resulted in their work becoming more focussed and demonstrating impact. The introduction of EET Action Plans for NEET young people has given a structure and framework to the work they do with young people. EET advisers have developed and improved their understanding of effective models of engagement with young people, for example using a coaching model of practice.

2. Improving the knowledge and skills of Social Workers and Personal Advisers on to how to effectively support young people into learning, training or work.

A key element of the work includes upskilling those who work directly with care leavers, to ensure they have the knowledge and skills to be able support young people effectively. This upskilling recognises that employment and skills should be at the heart of a prevention and an early intervention response. Work is on-going to improve the EET focus of Pathway Plans, so they become effective tools for enabling young people to progress into long term learning, training or work and achieve their goals. Professionals also increasingly recognise the importance of the therapeutic support and the need for young people to be supported in a holistic, trauma informed approach. Further work will be developed over the coming months as part council's growth bid to improve employment outcomes of vulnerable young adults.

3. Early intervention at KS3 and KS4 to improve attainment and progression planning.

Low academic attainment at KS4 and a lack of clear progression planning are significant factors leading to the poorer outcomes of care leavers. Furthermore, we know that early intervention is crucial for school age young people at-risk of becoming NEET. The Virtual School is addressing this issue. At the beginning of the academic year the Virtual School rigorously reviews the support to pupils in year 9 and above. The result of this review is an intensive focus by the Virtual School on pupils at risk of not achieving their expected level of attainment. This includes working with schools to promote the use of effective learning strategies for these pupils, working with carers to improve their support for pupils learning at home and encouraging high aspirations and targeted use of Pupil Premium for additional support. In addition, the Virtual School works to ensure that all KS4 pupils are prioritised for careers advice, either from their schools or Islington's Progress Team.

A high quality vocational approach for some young people also needs to be explored, specifically for children looked-after and care leavers who are unlikely to pursue an academic pathway in the longer term. The Virtual School and schools already have strong assessment data by year 10 which will indicate how well pupils are likely to be served by the academic pathway or vocational pathway.

4. Developing employer engagement and implementing bespoke opportunities for care leavers. Successfully.

Developing engagement with employers is key to improve the opportunities for care leavers. Over the past 18 months a number of successful bespoke opportunities have been successfully developed for care leavers. Much of this has been achieved by the Virtual School Head working in partnership with iWork and a number of employers and organisations such as; Go Forward, Arsenal in the Community and Spear to develop and promote education, employment and training opportunities for care leavers, particularly those who have been the hardest to engage.

5. Supporting care leavers to raise their aspirations through increasing opportunities for mentoring and coaching.

Targeted mentoring and coaching can play an important role in helping young people prepare for, and sustain work or training. For example, the Virtual School Head is now working with BIG Alliance to set up mentoring programmes for care leavers and this will be implemented in 2020.

6. Developing pre-employment opportunities and apprenticeship opportunities for care leavers.

Appropriate pre-employment support is essential to ensure vulnerable young people can successfully enter the workplace. In particular, a lack of functional skills is a barrier experienced by many care leavers and this issue will be addressed in the coming months. The Virtual School has worked with services within the council and local employers to ensure they prioritise work placements, traineeships and apprenticeships for care leavers. The Care Leavers Local Offer has increased the financial support to care leavers to ensure that training and work are more attractive to care leavers. The Virtual School Head has sought to ensure that council apprenticeships are specifically targeted at care leavers. Further work in this area will be focus of the joint work between the Virtual School and College and the iWork Team.

4.8 Improving outcomes for vulnerable young people

Over the last four years we have supported 1,200 young adults into employment, but youth unemployment is a growing challenge in Islington. We now have the highest level of child poverty in London, standing at 47.5%. DWP statistics report 820 people aged 16-24 are claiming out of work benefits (November 2019), an increase from 550 in January 2018 and the highest level since 2014. IN addition, we know that many young unemployed young people do not claim out of work benefits, and our research suggests the true figure of unemployed young adults in Islington could be as many as 2,400.

Unemployment amongst our priority groups, including care leavers and those involved with the justice system, are a serious concern and current resource is insufficient to make a real impact. An employment and skills targeted prevention and intervention initiative, to support a successful transition into adulthood for young people that need our help the most, is now vital.

As part of a deep dive into the nature of youth unemployment in Islington, iWork has trialled estate- based youth employment support. The success of the initiative underlines that a community based approach is key to engaging 'hard to reach' young adults. We have also trialled providing employment coaching for young people supported by the Youth Offending Service, detailed above, which has highlighted the need for dedicated specialist expertise.

To address a serious gap in provision, funding for a new in-house specialist resource of peripatetic youth employment and skills practitioners has been proposed to provide direct support to 16-25 year olds who are NEET. The offer will be a personalised blend of functional, vocational and employability skills delivered in relevant community and workplace settings. The new specialist resource will commence with a focus on cohorts including care leavers, those involved with the justice system, and unemployed and 18-25 year olds not engaged with council services, identified by youth and community partners.

This is an opportunity to take an integrated team LBI approach to address the EET needs of our vulnerable 16-25year olds. From the evidence we have gathered through recent deep dive research and practical pilots, the new programme will include:

- Consistent and on-going wrap around support
- A strong employment, world of work and functional skills offer
- Upskilling of professionals working with young people to enable 'employment conversations' with young people and a more integrated approach across the council.
- Community, estate based approaches that address local needs

The new resource will be co-designed with 16-25 year olds reflecting the cohorts the programme will be focussed on, in collaboration with community-based youth organisations. The resource we establish will also act as a catalyst for wider a cultural change by increasing expectations for vulnerable young peoples' employment and skills outcomes. For example, the team will support existing targeted services by providing employment coaching CPD for frontline practitioners. Critical to the success of the initiative is stepping-up engagement with our anchor institutions and businesses, to create a cadre of local employers who want to play their part to give our vulnerable young adults the experiences the need to succeed at work.

We have already appointed an 18-25 employment coach who will provide intensive and aspirational employment support as part of the new team, and work is underway to plan the implementation of the new project from April 2020.

Two new spaces have recently been identified within the borough for dedicated youth employment and skills support, enabled by GLA funding through the Good Growth Fund. The first is located at 48 Seven Sisters Road, and announcement of a provider is expected imminently. The second will be located within West Library, and youth consultation and coproduction will ensure both spaces have an offer that reflects the needs of local young people.

5. Implications

5.1 Financial Implications:

The council has been awarded a grant of £60,000 across three years by the Richard Reeves Foundation starting in 2018/19. This grant is to provide expert support and guidance to six schools to train Careers Leaders, and support schools in working towards, and achieving the Quality in Careers Standard. Since the last update on the Post 16 review, the Employment, Skills and Culture division have had budget growth awarded for a peripatetic youth employment team for 2020/21 onwards, starting at £250k increasing to £323k in 2021/22. The report is not looking for any further growth and expect all activities to be met from the current budgeted resources.

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 and contribution to achieving a net zero carbon Islington by 2030:**

No negative impacts are expected.

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.

Background papers: None.

Signed by:



6.2.20

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