

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

REPORT

DATE OF MEETING:	7 th April 2014
SUBJECT:	Update on RPA and Vulnerable Learners
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Purpose

To provide CYPSP with the background in relation to Raising the Participation Age (RPA) and Vulnerable Learners and an update on progress.

Background

Under sections 15ZA and 18A of the Education Act 1996 (as inserted by the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009) local authorities have a duty to secure sufficient suitable education and training opportunities to meet the reasonable needs of young people in their area, and to make available to young people age 19 and below, support that will encourage, enable or assist them to participate in education or training (section 68, Education and Skills Act 2008).

The Education and Skills Act 2008, requires young people to participate in accredited learning until the end of the academic year in which they are 17 from September 2013 onwards and until they are at least 18 from September 2015 onwards. The age of compulsory school education remains unchanged. Young people will still be required to remain at school (including academies) until the end of the academic year in which they are 16. Lincolnshire County Council has specific responsibilities with regard to the implementation of RPA.

The 14-19 team is central to supporting young people 14-19 (25) to access high quality learning and employment opportunities through a range of different partnerships. The 14-19 teams role is to ensure young people's needs are met by working with providers to develop a range of provision which will support and empower them to achieve positive outcomes. However it should be noted that all schools, academies, FE colleges and other providers (including charitable and third sector providers), as autonomous organisations, have responsibility for designing and delivering their own programmes but will be expected to respond to the needs of individuals, employers and the Local Authority strategic overview.

The 14-19(25) Strategic Partnership, supported by local authority officers is the principal way by which the Local Authority consults with its partners about 14-19

(25) issues and works with them to support participation. The members contribute to the realisation of the agreed strategic priorities and contribute to the achievement of collective goals.

Currently 30% of the unemployed in Lincolnshire are from the 16 – 24 age bracket, compared to 25% nationally.

Current Performance

Participation

Participation remains good in Lincolnshire compared to regional and national averages and those of our statistical neighbours, and the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) remains relatively low.

Draft data shows that 94.6% of Lincolnshire young people are meeting the duty to participate compared to 93.9 % nationally and 94.4% regionally (Data source DFE).

The percentage of Looked after children age 16 (RPA cohort) in structured learning is **on target** at **86%** . The percentage of 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) is **4.3%** compared to target **3.5%**

(Data source: Aspire Feb 2014).

There has been an improvement in the proportion of young people progressing from year 12 to 13 in school sixth forms with the percentage of young people leaving at the end of year 12 falling from 21% in 2010/11 to 18% in 11/12.

Whilst the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) aged 16 and 17 remains fairly static, it is higher for 17 year olds and therefore this may become an issue in relation to RPA in 2015. Prioritising support to NEET 16 and 17 year olds by the careers service has had an impact. The unknowns at age 18 are high and may include some young people who are NEET.

There continues to be a need to increase the number and availability of level 3 programmes for those young people who have already achieved level 2 (over 40% of the NEET group) including progression opportunities in apprenticeships.

Young people from a range of vulnerable groups (learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, care leavers, teenage parents, those known to the youth offending team, those who have been eligible for free school meals) continue to be over-represented in NEET.

The Percentage of 16 – 19 year olds with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in education, employment and training is **94.7%** against a target of **92%**.

Performance is above target. Significant work has been undertaken to implement the Lincolnshire strategy for post 16 learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD) with the result that there are more opportunities available for these young people to access learning close to where they live.

Attainment

Overall educational attainment of school pupils and post 16 students in Lincolnshire is generally above the national average and similar local authorities at all stages through from early years to that at age 19. However the good overall statistics do hide poor performance in relation to young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Overall attainment at level 3 at the age of 19 (55%) for Lincolnshire has fallen behind the national average (56%) for the first time in recent years, and the gap in attainment is growing and is much higher than nationally (32% compared to 24%). It is a similar picture at level 2 by the age of 19 (25% gap in Lincolnshire compared to 17% for England). The picture for level 2 including English and maths at age 19 is even worse with the gap being 35% compared to 27% nationally and 31% in similar authorities.

The measure that the Department of Education (DfE) use to identify children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are those who are or have been eligible for free school meals in the last 6 years (referred to as FSM for the purposes of this paper). Currently the only data available is for 2012 and the preceding years, 2013 data will not be available until mid 2014 at the earliest.

Achievement Level by age 19	(%)	Those eligible for FSM (%)
Level 2	85	61
Level 3	55	25

(Data source DfE)

Lincolnshire has a lower than average proportion of children and young people who are known to be eligible for FSM, (19% or 19277 including 337 looked after children) although this is in line with similar authorities. Analysis at local authority level suggests that the gap is narrower in authorities with high proportions of FSM. FSM are more likely to have additional needs, attend a Special School or Pupil Referral Unit.

The gap in attainment is compounded after young people reach the statutory school leaving age. They are less likely to be in education or training post 16 (71% compared to 80%) and therefore, if they have not achieved level 2 including English and maths by the end of Key Stage 4, (those not participating) will not do so by age 19, nor will they achieve the level 3 qualifications required to enter higher education.

Closing the gap has been identified as a key priority for the Local Authority; CfBT are leading a project to address this across all age groups.

Areas of Success

Apprenticeships. There has been considerable success in promoting apprenticeships to schools, young people, parents/carers and businesses through LCC funding the work of the apprentice champions. The impact of the apprentice champions can be seen in the latest data on apprenticeship starts.

Lincolnshire continues to buck the national trend for 16 -18 year olds starting an apprenticeship as the numbers continue to rise (**up** by 5.1%) as opposed to a regional and national picture of falling numbers in this age bracket (a regional **decrease** of 4.9% and a national **decrease** of 11.6%). This is a result of: our investment in apprenticeship champions who work directly with employers and young people to increase the number of apprenticeship opportunities; our support for initiatives such as the 'Have a Go' events and World Skills; and the work with employers via colleagues in the economy directorate and with the Employment and Skills Board (ESB). In partnership with the economy directorate we held a 'Go for Growth' conference for senior leaders in schools to highlight the range of employment opportunities within the growth sectors across Lincolnshire.

Some progress has been made in increasing the proportion of advanced

apprenticeships (level 3) compared to intermediate (level 2). In the year April 2012 to April 2013 advanced apprenticeships were 30% of starts compared to 25% the previous year.

Lincolnshire County Council has developed a corporate youth employment Strategy; the Council currently employs 33 apprentices, 10 of whom are care Leavers.

As a result of work done with procurement Lincolnshire and Children's Service commissioning are piloting procurement arrangements for contracts for children's services that include the potential for suppliers to demonstrate added social value by supporting the post 16 education agenda.

Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (LLDD). The Lincolnshire County Strategy for Post 16 Learners with Learning Difficulties and or Disabilities (LLDD) was officially launched in September 2012 with the key priority being to develop local provision for Post 16 LLDD to meet both their diverse needs and their aspirations for adult life within their own communities. This is an area of work where collaboration has been successful. There are 6 groups working across the county comprising of representatives from special schools, colleges of further education, independent specialist providers, independent training providers, learning disability advisers, welfare to work team, support organisations and parents / carers. These groups have brought about increased collaboration and cooperation between special schools, colleges and other post 16 providers facilitating improved transition between organisations, skills sharing, joint training opportunities and cost effective development and sharing of resources. As a result only six young people currently have to access residential provision to secure suitable provision.

In partnership with the welfare to work team and 3 of the 4 colleges in Lincolnshire (Lincoln, Grantham, and Boston) we are successfully piloting Supported Internships for LLDD. Two young people have already been offered an apprenticeship with Lincoln City Council and these started at the beginning of January. A further 2 have been offered paid jobs. 5 are still progressing well. The 14 – 19 team have successfully secured additional Education and Funding Agency (EFA) demographic growth capital funds to the value of £ 1.8 million to support the four colleges to develop further their facilities for LLDD.

Vulnerable Learners. The vulnerable learner group is a sub group of the 14 -19 strategic partnership, it brings together a range of partners with the aim is to ensure all young people in Lincolnshire who are deemed to be vulnerable are able and supported to access post 16 learning.

The Young People's Learning Provision at Earlsfield (LCCs own EFA funded provision for young people) delivers learning to a range of young people who have significant barriers to their participation.of the learners who have left 83% of them have moved on to a positive outcome, such as, employment, an Apprenticeship or Further Education. Study Programmes have been successfully implemented and they have commenced delivery of Traineeships to 16 – 24 year olds. From February YPLP will work in partnerships with Barnardos to deliver Study programmes across the County to Care Leavers.

Challenges

- A significant increase in the number of apprenticeship opportunities available will be required if the coalition government's ambition, that one in five young people will be studying an apprenticeship by 2020, is to be achieved. In

addition the assumption is that any additional places required to meet the requirements of RPA will be apprenticeships rather than additional places in schools sixth forms or colleges. As an apprenticeship requires an employment opportunity, this provides significant challenges given the current levels of youth unemployment opportunities generally. Currently 30% in Lincolnshire compared to 25% nationally.

- There is a need to increase the opportunities for young people to progress through from intermediate apprenticeships to advanced and higher levels if the apprenticeship is to be a real and plausible alternative to the academic route into higher education. The proportions of apprenticeships in specific sectors still do not reflect sufficiently the skills priorities for Lincolnshire.
- The introduction of Study programmes provides some real opportunities to create programmes that more effectively meet individual learner needs. However, there is an increased requirement for work experience for all of the programmes, which along with the needs for continued growth in apprenticeship places and the requirements for Department for Work and Pensions programmes for the jobless give some cause for concern that the demands on employers may be too great.
- Changes to the post 16 curriculum including the introduction of Study Programmes (which include the introduction of Traineeships and Supported Internships) which whilst providing some real opportunities to tailor programmes to better meet young people's and employer's specific needs, are challenging for some providers to deliver.
- The Children and Families Act requires the introduction of Education, Health and Care Plans, and an entitlement to personal budgets for those who are eligible from 2015 which will impact on the education of LLDD (16-25) learners.
- Retention in schools between year 12 and 13. There are some significant variations between schools (both grammar and comprehensive) with some schools retaining less than 60% of pupils into year 13.
- The impact of the continuing reduction in the number of young people in the 16-18 age bracket on school sixth form providers will make it increasingly difficult to recruit viable numbers.
- It is difficult to evaluate the impact of student finance on participation and attainment in post 16 education. Young people who have been eligible for free school meals are more likely to be affected by lack of finance, and these are the same young people who are failing to attain level 2 and level 3 at the age of 19 in line with their peers.
- Currently there is a mismatch between the skills being delivered within post 16 education and training and the forecasted economic growth sectors across Lincolnshire.

How can CYPSP help

Encourage/support the participation of all young people in post 16 education and training by providing opportunities for supported internships for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, traineeships, and wider work experience opportunities for post 16 learners

CYPSP to use its influence with its members promote opportunities for post 16 learners within their own organisations and partners.

CYPSP to engage the public sector in Lincolnshire which, as the largest employment sector in Lincolnshire, will be key to making opportunities for work

experience and work related learning opportunities available to young people. .

Through the CYPSP further investigate how providers of services in Lincolnshire can demonstrate added social value as required under the Social Value Act, by supporting young people to participate in post 16 learning.

Conclusion

There will be some significant challenges in the future, particularly around RPA, securing sufficient adequate provision and addressing the number of unknowns. These challenges are in the context of the development of an ever more diverse and complex range of providers including schools, academies, university technical college (UTC), independent commercial and charitable providers, colleges and potentially free schools, each of which are independent, autonomous organisations and other than the few remaining schools are outside the local authority's control. The increased competition, application of market forces and reduced funding will create risks to provision.

Analysis shows that there will be sufficient post 16 places available to meet the requirements of the extension of the duty to participate to the age of 18 from September 2014, although there will need to be continued growth in the availability of apprenticeship places.

However, there is still a need to alter the mix and balance of provision in order to better meet the needs of young people; in particular those with low attainment at age 16; those who find it difficult to participate due to a range of vulnerabilities; and those that are failing to participate beyond the age of 17.

If young people are to take advantage of the employment opportunities in Lincolnshire, it is important that the available curriculum takes into account the current and future skills needs of employers in the County and the plans for growth currently being developed by the LEP.

References

Strategic Priorities for 16 – 19 (25) Education and Training for 2014/15
Closing the Attainment Gap