

Summary of Comments by the mock Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held on 11 November 2011 on the Improving access to post-16 learning provision in Lincolnshire report

A number of barriers and issues in relation to post-16 provision in Lincolnshire were raised from the review and listed in the report. Those in attendance were invited to discuss these barriers and issues, further to which the following points were noted: -

- young people often found it difficult to get employment as work places preferred to employ people that were older and had more experience;
- there was a minority of people that found academic learning difficult and would experience better success taking part in vocational learning at an earlier age. Staying on at a sixth form or college would not be the best way forward for some 17 or 18 year olds. In view of this, it was extremely important for all young people to be given proper advice and guidance on all possibilities that were available to them;
- advice and guidance should be realistic, focussing on how to achieve a certain career path, what qualifications or courses a young people would need to fulfil their aspirations and what jobs would be available at the end of undertaking the qualifications;
- independent advice was extremely important as lots of options for young people were currently overlooked due to biased advice and guidance offered by schools;
- advice and guidance should also be introduced earlier so that it could help shape decisions around which GCSEs a young person chose to work towards;
- suggestions were put forward of holding events for young people, similar to those of graduate fairs but with a perspective on careers and post-16 options. The young people in attendance agreed that such events would be extremely useful, however, the main problem would be transport in terms of how the young people would get there and who would pay for their transport;
- the cost of transport was one of the biggest barriers for young people, particularly for those living in rural areas. Reference was made to London, where all students between the ages of 16 – 18 received free public transport. It was agreed that this should be the case for all young people but the County Council did not receive enough government funding for such a scheme to be replicated in Lincolnshire;
- there would be real problems in Lincolnshire if the government's increase in the participation age was not supported by providing a means of transport for young people to and from their sixth-forms, colleges or work-based learning placements;
- in view of the increase in participation age, it could be argued that child fares on buses should be extended from the age of 16 to the age of 18;
- there were occasions where young people perfectly suited specific jobs, but did not have the confidence or capability to write a suitable letter of application or Curriculum Vitae, or conduct themselves very well in an interview. Careers advice and guidance should be extended to incorporate lessons on developing these skills;
- it was important for young people to understand the basic requirements of working life, such as consistently arriving to work on time and punctuality;
- academic post-16 courses should be more inline with university courses so that there was more of a link.