

Open Report on behalf of Debbie Barnes, Executive Director of Children's Services

Report to:	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Date:	19 October 2012
Subject:	Improving Access to Post-16 Learning Provision in Lincolnshire Action Plan – First Monitoring Update

Summary:

This report invites the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to consider the actions/progress of the action plan resulting from the Access to Post 16 Learning Provision review undertaken in 2011.

Actions Required:

- (1) To consider the attached action plan and to determine whether the Committee supports the actions/progress to the Executive Councillor for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning set out in the report.
- (2) To agree any additional recommendations/actions to be passed to the Executive Member for Children and Young People.

1. Background

Lincolnshire County Council undertook a review of access to Post 16 provision during 2011 which resulted in a number of recommendations being made. The attached action plan outlines the progress made towards meeting the recommendations as at September 2012.

Since then there have been (and are continuing to be) a number of statutory and policy changes that will impact on post 16 education and training provision from September 2013. These include:

- The transfer of the statutory duty to provide careers guidance to pupils in years 10 and 11 (we await the outcome of a consultation regarding whether this should be extended down to year 8 and up to year 13) from local authorities to schools from September 2012.
- The implementation of the duty on all young people to participate in education or training until the end of the academic year in which they turn 17 from 2013, and until their 18th birthday from 2015. The coalition government has however made the decision not to impose sanctions on either young

people for failure to participate, or on employers for employing young people without training. It does reserve the right to do so in the future.

- Schools funding reform, in particular the changes to funding high needs i.e. learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD) post 16 provision (to be implemented from April to August 2013 depending on type of institution). This means that funding for meeting the high cost element of provision for learners with high level needs will be transferred to local authorities to enable them to commission directly with providers.
- The 16 – 19 funding formula review (to be implemented from academic year 2013-14). However, our assessment is that it is unlikely to make any significant difference to the funding per student received by each institution (post 16).
- Introduction of ‘Study Programmes’ (from academic year 2013 – 14) which will mean some providers will need to review their curriculum.
- A consultation into A level reform that is currently being undertaken, from which any resulting changes will be introduced on a gradual basis from academic year 2013-14 onwards.
- Future planned legislation (Children and Families Bill) resulting from the response to the SEN Green Paper ‘support and aspiration: a new approach to special needs and disability’ which will inform the development of provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD).

It should be noted that whilst the Local Authority’s role in securing suitable education is clearly set out under sections 15ZA and 18A of the Education Act 1996 (as inserted by the ASCL Act 2009) i.e. ‘that all schools, Academies, colleges and other providers (including charitable and third sector providers) are autonomous and independent bodies. As autonomous organisations, they have responsibility for designing and delivering learning programmes which meet the needs of the young people in their area. It is their responsibility to decide on their curriculum offer and mix of provision, responding to the needs of individuals and employers and to the local authority strategic overview. It is only through strong partnership working that the Local Authority can seek to influence provision in their area.

2. Conclusion

Significant progress has been made in relation to some actions in the plan including:

- Reduction in the number of learners with complex needs accessing residential provision as a result of the development of provision in local mainstream colleges and partnerships between colleges and special schools.
- The change and focus of the County Council funded career service has enabled them to focus on meeting the September guarantee and as a result 95.1% (latest provisional figures) of year 11 young people have received a firm offer of an education or training place starting this term.
- The NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) figures remain good - currently 3.8% (at 16), 4.5% (at 17) but the unknowns are high at 4.8% (at 16), 13.6% (at 17). The high numbers of unknowns in the 17 year old group

is due to the fact that there was no provision for supporting or tracking NEET during the academic year 2011/12. The change in focus to concentrate on supporting NEET 16 – 18 from September 2012 is already having an impact.

- There has been some success in promoting apprenticeships to schools, young people, parents/carers and businesses through the work of the Apprentice Champions. However the economic climate has hampered growth in available apprenticeship places.

We have been less successful in some areas including our ability to increase collaboration between schools or to significantly influence the mix of provision. This is in part due to the fact that schools, providers and academies are autonomous organisations facing a number of other challenges not least the need to maintain funding levels.

In light of the statutory and policy changes outlined above, the Committee is requested to review the attached action plan and make any additional recommendations/changes to the plan. The Committee's views will be reported to the Executive Member for Children and Young People.

3. Consultation

a) Policy Proofing Actions Required

Not applicable.

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Executive Response to Improving Access to Post 16 Learning Provision in Lincolnshire – Action Plan arising from Recommendations
Appendix B	Skills and Learning Action Plan Progress Report

5. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

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