

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

Report to:	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Date:	26 July 2013
Subject:	Improving Access to Post-16 Learning Provision in Lincolnshire Action Plan – Second 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 Adult Care, Health and Children's Services set out in the report.
- (2) To agree any additional recommendations/actions to be passed to the Executive Member for Adult Care, Health and Children's Services.

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 June 2013.

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 from local authorities to schools from September 2012 - this duty has now been extended down to year 8 and up to year 13 from September 2013.
- 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.

- Introduction of 'Study Programmes' and Traineeships (from academic year 2013 – 14) which will mean some providers will need to review their curriculum.
- 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 transfer of the High Needs budget to local authorities in 2013/14 means that were we to have continued to have high numbers of specialist residential placements, there would be insufficient budget to meet the needs of all high cost learners from the allocation. By working with mainstream providers we have ensured that the needs of young people with learning difficulties and or disabilities can be met much closer to their home community without severing the links with support agencies and networks on which they will later rely. It also means that our reliance on residential and specialist providers is comparable with that of other local authorities. It was previously much higher.
- The change in focus of the Careers Service to concentrate on supporting 16 – 18 NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) from September 2012 is already having an impact. The NEET figures have improved - currently 2.4% (at 16), 2.6% (at 17).
- In the twelve months to December 2012 Lincolnshire was in the top 12% of all local authorities in terms of the improvement in unknowns - currently 4.5% (at 16) and 10.2% (at 17) however using the latest available data our numbers are comparatively high compared to our statistical neighbours.
- There has been considerable success in promoting apprenticeships to schools, young people, parents/carers and businesses through the work of

the Apprentice Champions. The impact of the Apprentice Champions can be seen in the latest data on apprenticeship starts. The figures for Lincolnshire 16 -18 year olds starting an Apprenticeship this year show that the numbers continue to rise (up by 7.4%) compared to the same time last year. This is against a regional and national picture of falling numbers in this age bracket (a regional decrease of 7% and a national decrease of 12%).

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 Adult Care, Health and Children's Services.

3. Consultation

a) Policy Proofing Actions Required

Not applicable.

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix 1	Executive Response to Improving Access to Post 16 Learning Provision in Lincolnshire – Action Plan arising from Recommendations

5. Background Papers

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

This report was written by Lynn Smith who can be contacted on 07717 700558 or lynn.smith@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

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