

## NEET and Participation Strategy

### SUMMARY

- 1.1 The city has had a NEET and participation strategy in place for 12 months to ensure that historical under performance in this area is addressed and that the numbers of young people who are engaged in recognised forms of education, training or employment (EET) when they leave school is increased.
- 1.2 Derby has historically had a higher not in education, employment or training (NEET) figure than for neighbouring authorities and also received national scrutiny regarding its figures pertaining to young people who have left school in year 11 but whose EET destinations are unknown (October 2013). Given the concerns regarding the NEET performance, a performance surgery was held in March 2014. The recommendations from the surgery are set out in section 4.4.
- 1.3 Since implementation of the strategy in December 2013, performance has improved against both NEET and unknowns. NEET is performing 1% better in December 2014 than it was for the same month in 2013 and unknown performance is improved by 19.8% from December 2013 to December 2014. More detailed information on these improvements is set out in paragraphs 4.1 and 4.2 and the work that has led to these improvements is set out in paragraphs 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5.
- 1.4 The NEET and participation strategy provides clear governance, vision, direction and a systematic approach to performance management.

### RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 For the progress made against the NEET and Participation strategy to be considered and commented upon by Children and Young People's Scrutiny Board a year after implementation.

### REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 To inform the Scrutiny Board of the progress of the NEET and Participation strategy.
- 3.2 To ensure Scrutiny Board members are provided with an opportunity to comment upon the progress made.

- 3.3 To keep the Scrutiny Board aware of developing strategies within the CYPD.
- 3.4 To ensure the strategy continues to build on the impact and progress made to date.

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 Derby has seen a 2.7% drop as a quarterly average for its NEET figure over the 12 month period from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 to 1<sup>st</sup> September 2014, which is a greater rate of improvement than that displayed for national, regional and comparator figures. Derby's quarterly NEET average now performs better than its comparator authorities and is now just 0.6% behind the national average, which is a 1% improvement from 12 months ago and 1.7% behind the other east midlands authorities, which is a 2% improvement from 12 months ago).

The current validated NEET figure for Derby city as of 31.12.14, is 6.4%, which is an improvement from December 2013, when the NEET figure was 7.4%. The DORIS target for NEET for Derby City for 2014-15 is 8%, which the city is on target to meet.

- 4.2 The unknown figure for the same period dropped as a quarterly average by 11.8% from the 23.3% average unknown figure in quarter 2 of 2013-14, to the 11.5% figure for 2014-15. The current unknown figure for Derby city as of 31.12.14, is 3.7 %, which is an improvement of 19.8% from December 2013. Ther DORIS target for unknown for Derby City for 2014-15 is 10%, which the city is on target to meet.

The term 'unknown' more often relates to a lapse in the record on the tracking system (Profile) of a young person already in provision. This is a particular issue when young people leave school and there is a requirement to 'reconfirm' their destination from 1st September each year. This accounts for the spike in numbers of unknowns in September and October each year (this is also an issue for young people exiting years 12 and 13).

Unknown performance has significantly improved over the past 12 months, the city managed to reduce the figure below the 10% threshold in August 2014, with a statutory return figure of 8.4%. Performance has incrementally improved since that point in time.

Raising the Participation Age (RPA) data has also seen improvements between September and December 2014 as outlined below:

September 2014 – 80.7% young people were participating in EET  
 October 2014 – 86.7% young people were participating in EET  
 November 2014 – 89.7% young people were participating in EET  
 December 2014 – 90.1% young people were participating in EET

This improving set of figures links with the improvements in NEET and unknown performance across the same time period.

Data provided by the DfE in October 2014 outlined that the proportion of 16 and 17 year olds in Derby city recorded to be participating in education and training at the end of June 2014 was 85.4%, which was an increase by 7.9% over the 12 months between June 2013 and June 2014.

Derby city's in year change in performance between June 2013 and June 2014 was the highest in the east midlands, given its 7.9% improvement over that 12 month period. It was also the highest rate of improvement across what were then Derby's comparator authorities of:

Bolton  
Coventry  
Dudley  
Leeds  
Peterborough  
Portsmouth  
Sheffield  
Tameside  
Telford and Wrekin

It was also higher than the national average rate of improvement in the last 12 months of 1.3%.

- 4.3 The above improvements in performance have been due to a combination of factors, which are set out in the paragraphs below:
- The development of information sharing agreements with Staffordshire Local Authority (LA) for Burton and South Derbyshire College and Nottinghamshire LA for Bilborough College, as both have young people from Derby on their programmes, whose data Derby LA requires to track potential EET destinations.
  - There has been a clear set of performance expectations given to staff within the space@connexions, including evening tracking at times of high need, i.e. September/October and January.
  - A key impact has been the return of a Performance Coordinator role to the space@connexions in June 2014. This role had previously been subsumed into a generic Business Support role, which alongside the loss of X 2 NEET Tracking Officers, had led to a decline in Derby's NEET and unknown performance. Much of the success of this role is due to the Performance Coordinator being co-located with the operational delivery team at the space@connexions.
  - An apprentice has been recruited and has been in post since August 2014 (recruited using money from the Keeping Families Together budget). This has been a key element of achieving greater improvements in performance, as the apprentice is able to undertake tracking of lapsed EET destinations via social media and through telephone tracking. Derby as a LA still remains under resourced when compared to neighbouring LA's and a future challenge will be retaining an apprentice when the current position comes to an end in August 2015. In order to maintain the improvements that have been made in

performance, it will be essential to recruit another apprentice in August 2015.

- The apprentice is lead for social media within the centre; she adds key information to the Facebook page, i.e. open days at colleges, job advertisements etc. and also tracks destinations for young people. All space@connexions staff have been trained to use social media to track their cohort of young people and add information to the space@connexions Facebook page.
- A consistent system of identifying year 11 pupils vulnerable to NEET and tracking them post year 11 has been implemented with the agreement of city secondary school Head Teachers.
- Transition mentors have been working with vulnerable groups in year 11 within the city's alternative provisions (Kingsmead and Derby Pride Academy) and this group are tracked robustly to ensure they remain engaged in EET. However, the DfE contract for this ends in May 2015 and at the time of writing this report, we are unaware of any plans for either extension or new contracts.
- There is also robust tracking of the electively home educated cohort, which is part of the NEET performance framework.
- City Schools and training providers have been made aware of the needs of the local labour market by being provided with a D2N2 State of the Economy Report and information resource for young people and staff. This outlines D2N2's key employment areas for growth in the next 10 years.
- A Connexions Personal Advisor has been allocated to each of the key vulnerable (to NEET) groups in the city, i.e. those engaged with the Youth Offending Service, children in care and care leavers, teenage parents, disabled children and those electively home educated . This has led to reductions in both NEET and unknown numbers for these groups over the past 6 months.
- There has been a focus in particular on care leavers given that the current OFSTED single inspection framework contains a focus on performance in relation to children in care and care leavers, including performance in relation to NEET. Derby has care leavers NEET as a local performance measure.
- The allocated Connexions Personal Adviser (PA) has worked with the Virtual Head Teacher and Leaving Care Team Manager to help reduce the numbers of care leavers who are NEET. This saw reductions in NEET for care leavers (as set out below) between August and November 2014, although December saw a slight increase:

August 2014 – 23 care leavers were NEET

September 2014 – 11 care leavers were NEET

October 2014 – 9 care leavers were NEET

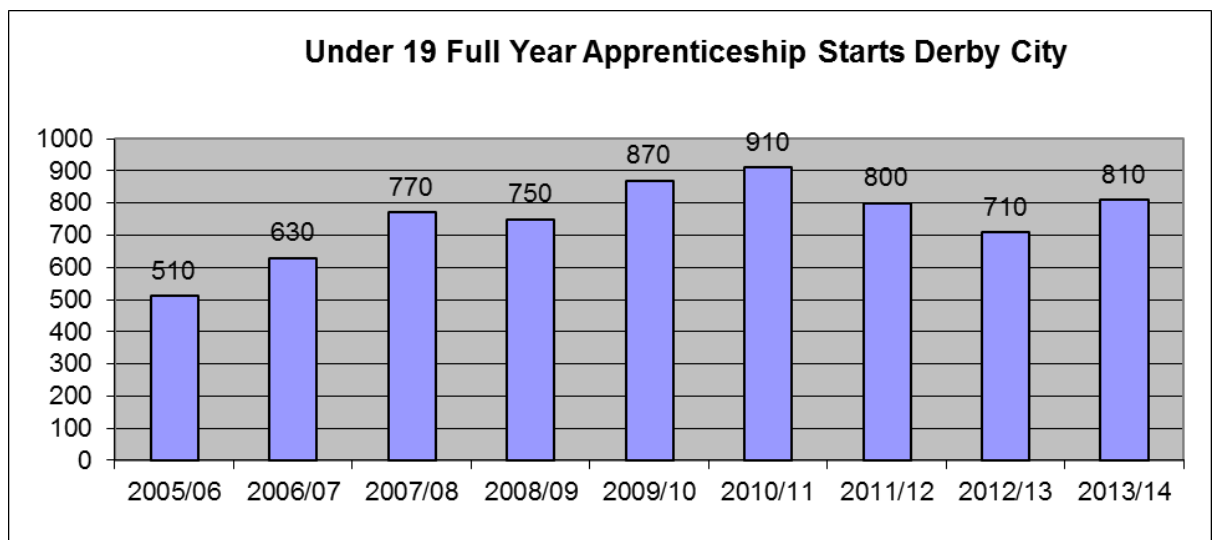
November 2014 – 6 care leavers were NEET

December 2014 – 9 care leavers were NEET

- The remaining 9 NEET young people are all on the case load of the Connexions

PA with responsibility for care leavers and children in care, some of these cases will be very difficult to turn around given the numerous social obstacles they will need to overcome to move into education, employment or training.

- A report was produced by the NEET Performance Coordinator for the January 2015 NEET strategy meeting which detailed the profile of the entire existing NEET cohort across the city (currently 507 children) to look at trends, i.e. last school, demographic information etc. and consider any actions needed to address these. The Connexions PA allocated to NEET care leavers also attended in order to discuss the work she is undertaking to maintain performance for care leavers across the city moving forward.
- A report is planned to be taken to DMT in early 2015 to look at whether there is scope for the city council to develop a care leavers apprenticeship scheme similar to schemes run in other authorities across the east midlands, which would help in maintaining the good performance being seen across the authority presently and addressing any gaps for this group in relation to the OFSTED single inspection framework.
- There have been improvements in relation to apprenticeship activity across the city, the number of school leavers in July 2014 progressing into employment rose to 188, of which 166 were apprenticeships. This was an increase from July 2013 where 174 progressed into employment of which 151 were apprenticeships. In all but one secondary school the numbers progressing into apprenticeships increased. When looking at full year figures we have reversed a two year decline in apprenticeship starts for under 19s. In the year 2013/14, 810 under 19s started apprenticeships – this is the third highest yearly figure in the past 9 years.



Progress has been made in the information, advice and guidance given on apprenticeships with schools encouraged to deliver at least a minimum number of lessons in Key Stage 4.

Future developments are to encourage post 16 institutions to deliver a self

development pack which prepares 16-19 year olds for apprenticeships and an event for guidance professionals looking at higher apprenticeships is planned for this year.

The Local Authority over the past year has led on the establishment of an Apprenticeship Hub in the City. This has put in place a better web presence on the City Council web site and the offer of a Derby City Apprenticeship Grant for Employers (AGE) – worth £1000 in addition to the National Apprenticeship Scheme AGE of £1500; and more support for young people looking to apply for an apprenticeship.

4.4 Two recommendations were made by the Children and Young People's Performance Surgery in March 2014, these were:

- Take the NEET Strategy to Derby Renaissance Board for consideration and support.
- Explore opportunities for identifying the locations of 16-19 year olds through the electoral registration process and individual voter registration.

Awareness of the NEET strategy has been increased via the Derby Renaissance Board and as a result Derby County Football Club and Rolls Royce have all expressed an interest in working with the LA to further address NEET. There have been X 2 meetings with Rolls Royce (via the Mitie Foundation) and as a result, 'World Of Work' days are being arranged with X 4 city secondary schools. There is also scope for the LA to work with the Mitie Foundation on a 'Ready To Work' programme from April 2015.

Derby County Football Trust activities are being used to engage hard to reach NEET young people across NEET hot spot wards.

Use of the electoral roll was investigated by X 2 Connexions PA staff members as a source of information regarding the current addresses of unknowns but this was of limited use, as the key issue was having current phone contacts. The use of social media, the return of the NEET Performance Coordinator and recruitment of the apprentice have had a far greater impact than anything the electoral roll could have given us.

4.5 In relation to future actions, I have listed these below:

To reduce NEET performance below 6%, to be achieved by April 2015. Lead officer – A Kaiser.

To maintain unknown performance to below 10% by January 2015. Lead officer – A Kaiser.

Reduce the numbers of NEET in the vulnerable groups of young people by focusing support on these groups. To be achieved by April 2015. Lead officer - J Centro.

Focus on working with the Mitie Foundation to deliver both the 'World Of Work' and Ready to Work programmes. 'World Of Work' programme to be implemented by February 2015 and Ready To Work from April 2015. Lead officer – A Kaiser.

Improve performance against the contract held by Acorn to engage those young people NEET for 6 months or longer. To be achieved by April 2015. Lead officers – A Kaiser/J Centro.

Full review and update of the strategy and supporting action plan in March 2015, as the local and national picture changes. It is planned that the multi-agency strategy group will support the review of the strategy. There will therefore be a new strategy in place for 2015-16. Lead officer – A Kaiser.

## OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 In ensuring that a strategic and integrated approach to NEET and participation is continued, it is vital that partnership agencies involved in taking this agenda forward continue to have a clear reference point and set of actions to work towards. Therefore, given the success of the strategy so far, there appear to be few alternative options that would viably have the impact that a continued strategy supported (and where necessary challenged) by a multi agency strategy group is likely to have.

This report has been approved by the following officers:

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| <b>Legal officer</b><br><b>Financial officer</b><br><b>Human Resources officer</b><br><b>Service Director(s)</b><br><b>Other(s)</b> | Andy Smith   |
| <b>For more information contact:</b><br><b>Background papers:</b><br><b>List of appendices:</b>                                     | Andrew Kaiser 01332 641340 andrew.kaiser@derby.gov.uk<br>None<br>Appendix 1 – Implications |

### Financial and Value for Money

- 1.1 There are no significant financial implications at this point in time; the resources delivering the strategy are in place already. It is a matter of continuing to utilise these resources consistently and continuing to seek opportunities to join up work streams and resources. It is hoped that continued success in the strategy can reduce local costs relating to out of work benefits for young people who are NEET.

### Legal

- 2.1 The Local Authority completes returns to central Government on NEET and Unknown numbers as part of legal requirements and information is shared between agencies involved in this strategy following legislation (the Education and Skills Act 2008 and the Education Act 1996) and local policy/information sharing agreements.

### Personnel

- 3.1 There are no implications as regards requesting additional personnel to continue to deliver this strategy. The personnel are in place already. The strategy may become more difficult to deliver when the current apprentice role at space@connexions comes to an end in July 2014.

### IT

- 4.1 There are no IT implications in relation to continuing to deliver this strategy. The IT is already in place.

### Equalities Impact

- 4.1 The impact of the strategy should be a positive one in relation to its focus on groups who are more vulnerable to NEET, such as care leavers, children with disabilities, teenage parents, those from BME backgrounds and those involved in youth crime. The focus is on improving life chances for these groups with the resources available.

### Health and Safety

- 5.1 There are no significant health and safety implications brought about by this strategy.

### Environmental Sustainability

- 6.1 There are no significant environmental sustainability implications brought about by this strategy.

### Property and Asset Management



- 7.1 There are no significant property and asset management implications brought about by this strategy.

## **Risk Management**

- 8.1 There is a risk of further scrutiny from central Government brought about by any inability to maintain the numbers of unknown destinations for young people. This is likely to impact on confidence in Derby's ability to provide effective EET advice, support and guidance.

## **Corporate objectives and priorities for change**

- 9.1 Corporate objectives from the council plan that are linked to this strategy are:
- A thriving sustainable economy.
  - Achieving their learning potential.
  - A strong community.