

Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Date of meeting:	03 March 2021
Title of Report:	NEETs
Lead Member:	Councillor Jon Taylor (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Transformation)
Lead Strategic Director:	Alison Botham (Director for Childrens Services)
Author:	Tina Brinkworth
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Your Reference:	AB.MZ.03.03.2021/1
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

To provide an update to the Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee on NEETs.

Recommendations and Reasons

For the Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee to receive the report for consideration.

Alternative options considered and rejected

Not applicable - report is for information only

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

Plymouth Plan

Policy HEA2: Delivering the best outcomes for children, young people and families.

Policy GRO2: Delivering skills and talent development

Corporate Plan: A Growing City

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

There are no implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan arising from this advisory report.

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

No direct carbon/environmental issues identified

Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

* When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.

Appendices

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Background papers:

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Sign off:

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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Ming Zhang

Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes

Date agreed: 22 Feb 2021

Cabinet Member approval: Approved verbally by Councillor Jon Taylor, Cabinet Member for Education Skills and Transformation

Date approved: 12/02/2021

NEETs Update

Executive Summary

From March 2020 when social distancing rules were initially announced and subsequent lockdowns, PCC and partners across the city worked closely to address and minimise the impacts of Covid-19 on our young people, particularly around reductions in existing opportunities in the local economy. As social distancing restrictions on the operation of schools, colleges and private providers became embedded, we worked with partners and stakeholders to address understand the situation emerging and identify risks such as:

- Using previous year's trends and destinations to identify volumes of young people making the transition from school/college to further career paths and destinations e.g. c2700 at yr11 and 1300 at year13, and FE leavers anticipated to be near 4,000.

The lack of opportunities for young people due to the impact of Covid-19 on the Plymouth economy. (e.g. Apprenticeship numbers now starting to recover down 60% at quarter one of academic year and down by 26% at quarter three on previous academic year).
- A general disorientation of education and employment pathways for young people created by Covid 19 and their ability to make informed choices with options that remain available but are not as easily accessible or visible
- A lack of confidence that employment opportunities exist in the chosen field of study or work.

The development of the Skills Launchpad Plymouth alongside the wider range of range of advice, guidance and initiatives in place, including the transitions contract at CSW Group, will ensure that the city can continue to deliver a comprehensive and joined-up approach to supporting young people and their families through the difficult economic environment created by Covid-19.

Statutory duty

Local authorities have broad duties to encourage, enable and assist young people to participate in education or training.

Specifically these are:

1. To secure sufficient suitable education and training provision for all young people in their area who are over compulsory school age but under 19 or aged 19 to 25 and for whom an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan is maintained.
2. To make available to all young people aged 13-19 and to those between 20 and 25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), support that will encourage, enable or assist them to participate in education or training under Section 68 of ESA 2008.

Current position

In December 2020 there were 233 young people age 16 to 17 NEET, this represents 4.3% (significantly higher than the SW 3% and national average 2.7%) in comparison with 4.1% in the previous year. There were a further 147 (2.7%) young people with unknown status, against 2.4% at the same point in 2019. Latest available national combined NEET and Not Known figures, from December 2020, show Plymouth at 7.1% NEET/Not known with England at 6.3%, national data identifies Bristol at 7.1%, Portsmouth 6.7% and Southampton 7.8%.

Young people in vulnerable groups often face a range of additional pressures or difficulties maintaining participation in learning. Latest figures, for 16 -18 year old NEETs, identify 64 with special educational needs and disabilities, 30 in care, and 9 care leavers. Resources are specifically targeted to provide additional support for these groups of vulnerable young people.

Transition into Education, Employment and Training Contract

The work of the transitions contract, delivered by CSW Group Ltd, supports young people in vulnerable groups to secure places Post-16. It works alongside the work of school careers advisers in delivering the September Guarantee of offering places to all 16 and 17 year olds. Careers advice is further supplemented by Careers Enterprise Company activities such as school based Enterprise Advisers. The flexible approach of the transition contract in supporting multi-agency work through the contract has enabled CSW to respond to the changing needs of schools and families throughout the Covid-19 crisis including:

- Telephone welfare checks for any students that schools/tutors are concerned about;
- offering specific timed availability to those young people who are home educating so that they can speak to a dedicated advisor
- contacting all Year 11 and Year 12 whose destination was an apprenticeship to check on their plans, see whether their offer has been confirmed, whether advice on alternative provision is required

Plymouth Skills Launchpad

Resurgam is one of 6 Pillars supporting economic recovery of the City. Working with local stakeholders and partners, Skills Launchpad Plymouth (Skills4Plymouth) provides an open door offer with the full range of services, advice, support and apprenticeships available to our citizens, young and older, who will be able to access a resource to support them if other options are unclear.

SkillsLaunchpad Plymouth has been purposely developed to provide a one-stop open door facility for all young people, parents and carers with a range of offers that will support young people and minimise the risk of them becoming NEET. The Launchpad has drawn together city wide service providers and stakeholders engaged in supporting young people and those at risk of NEET and includes; CSW Group Ltd, DWP/Job Centre Plus, National Careers Service, the Plymouth Careers Hub, the Devon and Cornwall Training Provider Network as well as links to employers across the City. This coherent approach is the first time the City has drawn together an offer that enables a joined up approach and support on the best the city has to offer and pathways to pursue.

The Youth Hub element of Skills4Plymouth website went live in August, timed to provide support for students 'A'level and GCSE results, and is supported by outreach to our communities, followed closely by the phased roll out to Adults and Employers and an offer to Schools.

- Skills Launchpad Plymouth has attracted over 6,000 unique users by January 2021
- Over 100 self-referrals in first three week of going live with new functionality Jan 2021
- Feedback and testimonials from end users and partners has been very positive
- Recognised by DWP Director General for Work and Health Services as leading innovation nationally and watching Skills Launchpad with interest
- Dedicated Youth Hub Coordinator recruited for 2 year fixed period, recruitment underway for Adult Hub Coordinator and chasing additional funding
- Physical space – soft launch w/c 10th March 2021 and official opening 23rd March 2021

SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) and disadvantage

Evidence shows that young people who are disadvantaged are more likely to be adversely affected including those with SEND. There are likely to be significant challenges in the coming months for all of our vulnerable groups and these have been targeted by the Skills4Plymouth partnership for additional support through the commissioned service.

Work with the SEND teams, schools and colleges has concentrated on offering students with SEND , where it has been requested, additional time on courses so that they can take an extra year to complete their Further Education courses due to the loss of the term time. Where a student with an Education, Health and Care Plan has been on a 2 year vocational course due to end this September, and where request and appropriate the student has been encouraged to continue with a third year of the course.

The Virtual School has been working with CSW Group Ltd to ensure that young people leaving care can have the opportunity to make a decision regarding their future with support from the various services. This might mean additional time on a course to complete a qualification or considering their options with regard to employment. All partners are working in a multi-agency way to ensure they are able to access advice and information about the availability of education, access to work courses and employment opportunities.

In addition

- Two designated Education Caseworker for Post 16 Looked after Children within the Virtual School Team specifically to support, track and monitor this vulnerable group. Each CiC NEET student has half termly reviews with all professionals involved and the young person is invited to create a plan to support re-engagement as well as informing the students PEP (Personal Education Plan).
- Virtual School and CSW group have termly meetings to review the multi-agency approach to NEETs and at risk young people. Termly meetings with CCP to review all CiC and also a focus on maintaining students to achieve and review the 'at risk of becoming NEET' students.
- NEET panel established for Care Leavers who have turned 18 during the Year 13 academic year. Being used to shape strategy for all NEETs to develop programmes and provision with all education providers.
- NEET challenges are being fed back to the Leadership Adviser (Post 16 Provisions and Funding), Learning and Communities within a meeting in January with the Virtual School and CSW Group to review young people's needs, and work towards bringing education providers on board to develop provision within a needs led approach. The main gaps are 1-1 support for English and Maths, short programmes/ bespoke packages to support engagement around mental health, incentive based programmes, lack of traineeships/ internships, apprenticeship route being a big jump for majority of NEETs and work experience opportunities.

We are addressing statutory duties by the following:

- The commissioning of Careers South West to deliver individual support for those cohorts and a tracking system to record destinations;
- The Plan for Skills encompasses the delivery of the National Careers Strategy through the Plymouth Careers Hub supporting advice and guidance and the development of meaningful pathways.

Kickstart Programme

Led by DWP as part of the Government's Plan for Jobs, the Kickstart Scheme is a £2 billion fund to create thousands of high quality work placements for young people. The programme is planned to run until December 2021, more information can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/kickstart-scheme>

The £2 billion has been allocated to fund employers to create 6-month job placements for 16 to 24 year olds (who have been on universal claimant credit for 6 months or longer). The programme started November 2020 and young people will be paid 25 hours by the Government at minimum wage, numbers are unlimited numbers within budget. Employers from all industries and across the private, public and voluntary sectors will be encouraged to get involved, however these placements must not replace existing or planned vacancies, or cause existing employees or contractors to lose or reduce their employment. There has been some delay to employer applications being processed by DWP nationally.

There are some conditions; employers can apply direct or they can join a Gateway group representing employers, such as chambers of commerce or trade bodies. Each application should include how you will help the participants to develop their skills and experience, including support:

1. To look for long-term work, including career advice and setting goals
2. With CV and interview preparations
3. The participant with basic skills, such as attendance, timekeeping and teamwork

Employers will receive funding:

- 100% of the relevant National Minimum Wage for 25 hours a week
- Associated employer National Insurance contributions
- Employer minimum auto-enrolment pension contributions

On confirmation of job start, the employer will be paid £1,500 per placement to support overhead costs, this can be used for things like; set up costs, onboarding, training etc.

There will also be extra funding to support young people to build upon their experience and help them move into sustained employment after they have completed their Kickstart scheme (details are not yet available).

In Plymouth (as of Jan 2021);

- The kickstart programme applies to a maximum of 2,000 young people.
- Over 700 placement registered in Devon
- 192 Approved placements in the city
- Plymouth City Council (Education, Participation and Skills department) has established a working group across the city, who meet on a regular basis with various stakeholders to develop an optional 'menu of support' to both the young person and the employer. Where possible utilising existing funded employability programmes as well as specific services for
 - mental health and well-being
 - funded initiatives, courses and qualifications
 - coaching and mentoring support,
 - whilst recognising that each individual and employer will have different needs
- We and partners are working direct with the DWP to deliver 'Sector Based Work Academy' style pilots focused on preparing for and applying for Kickstarts for eligible young people. These started last week along with an induction programme for Kickstart employers.
- DWP are providing a matching services to kickstart placements, which is currently being hampered by lockdown

Apprenticeship

As of Q3 of 2019/2020 the apprenticeship starts stand at 1,870 in the city and due to lockdown and current constraints we are not expecting any significant increase in the remaining quarter (75% of previous year).

Engineering, Construction and Digital have recruited in line with predictions (growth sectors), Hospitality, Tourism and Retail apprentices have been in decline for many years.

The most significant impact has been to Business Admin apprenticeships currently at 420 (57%) apprentices compared to 730 last year.