

Select Committee on Children’s Services – 13 November 2008

Report of the Director of Children’s Services

Young People not in Education, Employment or Training(NEETS)

Purpose of Report

1. To explain the current position and activity regarding 16 – 18 year old NEETS to the Select Committee.

Background

2. The Targets are as follows:

	Nov 07 – Jan 08	Nov 08 – Jan 09	Nov 09 – Jan 2010	Nov 2010 - Jan 2011
NEET – Without Stretch	5.2%	4.9%	4.6%	None
NEET – Stretch	4.9%	4.6%	4.3%	None
Current Performance	5.6% (715 young people)			

3. The current 16 – 18 year old NEET targets are part of the Local Area Agreement, the Children and Young People’s Plan and are one of the five identified priorities within the Targeted Youth Support Plan.
4. The targets are very challenging. Our work in this area is being effectively led by Black Country Connexions and is based on sound collaboration between LA personnel and colleagues within partner agencies. Since November 2004 the proportion of 16-18 yr olds who are NEET has fallen from 9.6% to 5.5%.
5. Work to achieve the NEET target is currently supported by various groups e.g. the NEET Steering Group, 13 – 19 Children’s Trust Partnership, the 14 – 19 Strategic Partnership and Dudley Community Partnership. Top Church Training, a voluntary sector organisation, are working closely with the Connexions service on this agenda.

6. An important priority group are 17 year old NEETS because 50.8% (271 young people) of the current NEET register are made up by this group. Connexions, Colleges and Training Providers are working hard to support young people to retain their chosen destination rather than dropping out of educational courses.
7. Another priority group are 18 year olds, as they constitute 34.9% (186 young people) of the current NEET register. Stronger links with Job Centre Plus are currently being formed and agreements are being put in place to support young people with early entry onto New Deal. This is a programme that helps young people develop their employability skills and find work and training.
8. Connexions and Partners are currently working hard to support Year 11 2008 school leavers to enter a positive destination. The cohort comprises of 4,456 young people. The Connexions Service is currently seeking to ensure that every young person is known and has entered a positive destination.
9. Additional Personal Adviser support has been focused on vulnerable groups. Personal Advisers are deployed to specific areas e.g. looked after young people and this includes support for young people who are at risk of becoming NEET as well as those who are NEET.
10. Connexions, the Learning and Skills Council and the LA 14 -19 Team are currently engaged in ensuring that there is a guarantee of a place (the September Guarantee) in education and / or training for every 16 and 17 year old in the borough.

Finance

11. Local Area Agreement reward and pump prime funding are being used as well as Connexions resources and European Social Funding. There are a number of ESF projects funded through the Learning and Skills Council in Dudley supporting both young people who are at risk of becoming NEET and young people who are NEET.

Law

12. To improve the well being of children and young people (Section 10, Children Act 2004)
13. To safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people (Section 11, Children Act 2004)
14. To ensure that Careers Services are provided for schools and college students (Section 8, Employment and Training Act 1973 – amended by the TU Reform Employment Rights Act 1993)

15. To secure the services which encourage, enable or assist effective participation of young people in education and training (Section 114, Learning and Skills Act 2000)
16. To assess young people with learning difficulties and disabilities (Section 140, Learning and Skills Act 2000)
17. To secure young people's access to positive leisure time activities, taking account of young people's views and publicising up to date information about the activities and facilities available (Education and Inspections Act 2006)

Equality Impact

18. Children and Young People are consulted and involved in all service delivery regarding NEET support and provision.
19. The NEET Action Plan includes equality issues.

Recommendation

20. It is recommended that:
 - The Committee notes this report
 - Partners remain fully engaged with both NEET prevention and NEET reduction in order for the borough to achieve its stretch targets



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