

Item 4: 16-19 Policy and Development

1 Summary and Purpose of report

Since April 2010 local authorities have been responsible for securing sufficient, suitable education and training for all young people between 16 and 19; or aged 19-24, who have a learning difficulty and/or disability and are the subject of a learning difficulty assessment.

This report explains to the Board current guidance to local authorities and the changing policy environment, and updates them on the range of activity in Barnet in order to effectively respond to the new requirements on local authorities and meet the needs of learners.

2 Details

2.1 Background and Context

Since April 2010 local authorities have been responsible for securing sufficient, suitable education and training for all young people who have reached the age of 16 (statutory school leaving age) but have not reached the age of 19; or are aged 19-24, have a learning difficulty and/or disability and are the subject of a learning difficulty assessment.

To assist local authorities to undertake their new duties the Young People's Learning Agency (since 1st April 2012 known as the Education Funding Agency, EFA) produced and published the National Commissioning Framework (NCF), which provided detailed guidance to councils in their role in the commissioning of 16-19 learning.

2.2 Responsibilities

Following the formation of the new Coalition Government in May 2010 the NCF was removed and new simplified statutory guidance was published in December 2010. The latest guidance for local authorities was published by the EFA in July 2012:

Guidance for local authorities: Funding 16–19 education and training

In fulfilling their statutory duties, local authorities should champion the education and training needs of young people in their area by:

- influencing and shaping the provision on offer and helping to develop and improve the education and training market
- promoting any necessary structural change in the local education and training system
- supporting the improvement of the quality of the education and training of young people aged 16-19
- supporting employer needs, economic growth and community development working with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) as appropriate

- supporting the development of provider and stakeholder networks that help to deliver the RPA targets
- making information on needs of young people and gaps in provision transparent and relevant to institutions, local authorities, either individually or jointly, may develop with their partners a statement outlining their strategic overview. Maintained schools, academies, colleges and other providers (including Apprenticeship providers) are expected to be involved in the development of those statements

Also, local authorities and institutions may agree to re-shape provision in an area by re-allocating numbers from one institution to another where that best meets the needs and demand of students and addresses local or regional priorities for improvement and participation. The allocation of student numbers may be changed by agreement of the local authority and all institutions concerned, as long as there is no overall increase in places or funding and the EFA is notified.

2.3 Changing environment

Importantly, these key responsibilities sit within a context of significant structural change that cuts across the entire education system:

- legislation giving all schools the option to step out of local authority control and become academies
- central government drive to encourage a non-maintained education 'market' through the establishment of e.g. Free Schools, University Technical Colleges, Studio Schools
- raising of the participation age to 17 in 2013 and 18 by the year 2015
- new arrangements for careers guidance from September 2011 with statutory responsibility for impartial and independent advice moving to schools
- review of the national curriculum
- changes to the national formula for schools funding
 - (i) with providers paid per learner rather than by qualification, freeing up programmes for example to offer progression to work, or to include work experience
 - (ii) giving local authorities a high needs cash budget in 2013 with the opportunity to influence provision to meet commissioning needs
- wide-ranging proposals for the reform of 14-19 vocational education (the Wolf Review)
- consultation on re-shaping the education, health and care landscape for young people with Learning Difficulties/Disabilities

2.4 Priorities for Barnet

The work of the 14-19 team over the last year has focussed on Participation and extending the offer for post-16 learners including those young people with Learning Difficulties/Disabilities (LDD).

There are over 20 post-16 education providers in the borough of which 19 are schools with Ofsted judging 90% of these providers as good or outstanding.

By September 2012 there will be 15 secondary academies.

The overall achievements for learners are high. 66.7% gained 5+A*-C inc. English and Maths in 2011. However the accepted threshold to Level 3 studies of 5 grades A*- C, including English and Maths, at GCSE was not reached by 33% of learners in 2011.

We need a broader post-16 curriculum offer to accommodate this group of learners and to ensure that they succeed. This is becoming more urgent as we prepare for the raising of the participation age to 17 years in 2013, and 18 years in 2015. To achieve this we will need more opportunities for learners to take up Apprenticeships, Foundation Learning and Vocational Programmes. The recent Wolf Review emphasised the importance of English and Maths at GCSE grade C or above, for young people's success in the job market .We therefore need to ensure that there are sufficient opportunities for learners to gain these qualifications.

Although good progress has been made in improving education outcomes for young people in vulnerable groups, there is still a significant gap when compared with young people in Barnet overall. For example only 10% of young people in care achieve 5 grades A*- C, including English and Maths, compared with 66% overall.

2.5 Participation: Raising Participation Age (RPA)

RPA starts in September 2013 when ALL young people currently in Year 11 will now need to stay on in some form of education or training for a further year. The current Year 10 cohort and all subsequent cohorts will have a duty to participate in education and training up to age 18 under the legislation.

The responsibility for encouraging, ensuring and supporting their participation falls to the local authority. Barnet has therefore developed a plan for working with education providers and other partners to raise participation to as close to 100% of young people in the age group of Barnet residents as is possible.

Implementation Planning

Duties in respect of RPA fall on:

- young people, to participate
- LAs to support and encourage their residents to participate
- school, colleges and training providers to co-operate with LAs in tracking and supporting young people

Participation by young people may be full or part-time:

- full-time is at least 540 hours learning per annum; part-time is 280 hours
- participation may be through college, school, apprenticeship, part-time work or volunteering
- part-time participation (i.e. on a formal programme of learning) is expected alongside any of the above

There is now some guidance in draft from the DfE to set expectations for local partners in supporting RPA. Sanctions, whilst in the legislation, are not to be operated on any parties in the first few years of RPA. Whilst the majority of young people in Barnet do stay on and achieve at age 16-18 now, the RPA plan in Barnet has a partnership approach so that the LA, parents/carers and education and training providers, employers and the voluntary sector can

work together to expand opportunities and develop improved support systems which help 100% of young people to take up and succeed at their choice of education and training.

Broadening the curriculum offer

LAs are expected to provide the key incentives to make RPA happen. They are required to work with providers to ensure that the local offer for 16-18s is attractive enough to attract and sustain participation. While Barnet has a very strong and well-regarded A Level offer we can do more to create an offer which meets the needs of all young people, especially in year 2 of Sixth Form (year 13). Areas of development currently in Barnet include:

- a collaborative sixth form between schools and Barnet Southgate College to support transition and retention
- a new Studio School
- more Apprenticeship Places, through the establishment of the new ATA (Barnet Apprenticeship Training Agency)
- enhanced and modern provision and pathways for students with LDD in schools and the college
- stronger provision at Key Stage 4 for schools to buy alternative options to GCSE for some students; this will give young people better progression opportunities at post-16
- The roll-out of the Barnet Apprenticeship Club in four schools in 2012-13 to enhance 'ready for work' employability so school leavers have more chance to get taken on by employers

2.6 Securing Careers Information Advice and Guidance

The duty to provide impartial and independent guidance (IAG) is removed from LAs from September 2012 and falls to schools, for years 9-11. The LA will provide advice and guidance to young people aged 16-18 who are not on the roll of an institution and who are deemed vulnerable. Effective, timely and high quality guidance from age 13 is a major element in supporting participation of young people if they leave school and move on, with 25% of Barnet students currently doing this at the end of Year 11.

Through the work of the Youth Support Service Barnet is:

- supporting schools to take on the IAG responsibilities
- providing a network (Barnet Careers Forum) for Careers staff in all schools, colleges and training providers to keep them up to date with apprenticeship and other local employment opportunities for 16-18s, and develop a network to support good IAG practice
- providing web pages for Careers staff about opportunities in Barnet which their young people can be advised about
- offering a high quality Careers Guidance service which schools can buy in, with flexible arrangements and marketable price, to provide IAG to young people in schools

2.7 Supporting transition for young people leaving school after year 11

We are planning a safety net approach to catch young people early who might leave school to go to another provider. The safety net will provide:

- support for schools to identify young people who will leave school and may be at risk of non-participation
- support for applying for a college place to ensure appropriate choices are made
- more taster events to help the student get used to the planned new environment
- awareness for local colleges to give additional support for retention to at-risk young people from Barnet schools (flagging system)

2.8 Strengthening the tracking and monitoring of participation, especially of young people age 16-17 in year 12

Requirements for tracking are set out in the Education and Skills Act 2008. Effective tracking is required to ensure every Barnet resident is participating up to age 18. All partners and providers, especially those working with vulnerable young people will need to work together to track, report and check that every young person is in provision. Systems and protocols are being developed, and with cross-borough partners, to set up structures to manage this level of monitoring. There is also a requirement for reporting to DfE through Client Caseload Information System (CCIS) on levels on non-participation, and these figures are to be published. Full details should be in the autumn 2012 guidance.

2.9 Developing participation enforcement policies

A key area for LAs will be to provide interpretation of the regulations regarding the level of participation required, and allowed. Further clarification is anticipated, especially around part-time participation, volunteering and when part-time work constitutes participation. It is expected that local authorities will need to set expectations about participation, which may need careful and precise interpretation where this could have an impact on young people's religious observance or traditional cultural practice. Some 'exemptions' from the duty to participate will need to be given to some young people and Barnet will need to determine 'reasonable excuse' policies.

2.10 Supporting colleagues working with key vulnerable groups to raise participation

A major exercise is underway to inform colleagues about RPA and to encourage them to formulate relevant policies. Each working area in Children's Services has had a briefing to help develop their preparations for RPA. A main priority for us is to ensure that those working with the NEET cohort will be well prepared for the changes, which aim to increase employability of this group. Promotion has included an event for parents of years 8 and 9 attracting 175 people, information leaflets and posters for libraries, schools and colleges, an RPA schools 'kit' for year 10 and 11 cohorts, and work with ESF providers working with the 14-19 at risk of NEET cohort.

In fulfilling our duty under RPA, LAs are expected to track participation of young people in education and training and to ensure that those who are NEET are supported to participate.

To do this we have brought teams together to identify the data we will need. The group are currently working together to create a template for schools to complete which will have indicators/criteria for those at risk for becoming NEET.

2.11 Provision for Learners with Learning Difficulties (LLDD)

The local authority responsibilities for this cohort extend to their 25th birthday, and the lack of local opportunities for these learners has led to large numbers of Barnet students placed in external provision or remaining at our two special schools up to the age of 19. For many young people this means a long daily commute with associated transport costs.

Data forecasting has shown that there will be a growth in the numbers of young learners aged 16-25 years with learning difficulties and disabilities, with a projected increase of 211 young people with Special Educational Need in Barnet and Enfield between 2011/12 and 2015/16. New population growth forecasts arising out of the new census information suggests that the 16-25 population growth in Barnet may be even higher than currently predicted and this will manifest in increased demand for provision for young people aged 16 to 25 with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Therefore, for some time, the council has been working with our special schools and other partners to explore ways to increase opportunities for this cohort of young people through increasing the range of locally based provision offering work-related and independent living skills.

Earlier this year, working in partnership with the College, Oak Lodge, Mapledown and Enfield Council, the council co-ordinated a successful partnership bid for Government capital funding from the 16-19 Demographic Growth Capital Fund 2012-13. The bid was to develop a new local provision, based at Barnet and Southgate College, to meet the transitional learning needs of young people aged 16-25 years with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (including complex needs, autism and profound and multiple learning difficulties). The offer will be available for students based at the college as well to support pupils within Barnet and Enfield special schools.

Funding of £804,000 has been secured through this route and was intended to fund the refurbishment of an existing building on a site in Southgate. However this has not proved viable so the College has sought agreement from the cooperation to finance a new building that will be based on the site of the former Southgate College which backs onto Ashmole Academy.

The College has also secured a further £2million to contribute to the development which was through a bid with the Skills Funding Agency. The college plans to have this provision available to young learners in September 2014.

Many learners making the transition from school to college either find they are duplicating work they have already completed or find it hard to cope with the higher level. To enable a smoother transition for these learners we have been

working on a curriculum mapping exercise to link the curriculum within these institutions.

3 Recommendations and Input Requested

That the Children's Trust Board note and endorse the activity undertaken to date outlined in this report.

That the Children's Trust Board highlight any issues identified where enhanced partnership working is required to deliver better outcomes for this age group

4 Contact Details for Further Information

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