

SUPPORTING SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT IN BARNET, WITH A FOCUS ON YOUNG PEOPLE NOT IN EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING (NEET)

Report of: Interim Director of Environment, Planning and Regeneration, London Borough of Barnet

1 Summary and Purpose of Report:

At the Barnet Partnership Board on 24th May 2012, concerns were raised about young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) in Barnet. Although Barnet's NEET figures are below regional and national averages, the Board agreed that the economic climate creates cause for concern. As such, supporting young people into employment remains a top priority for the council and its local partners.

A £1m Council funded package of support for NEET young people was approved at the Council's Cabinet in June. The 'Platforms' programme is designed to support NEET young people aged 16 to 24 into employment and further training. The programme aims to provide a total of 325 workplace and training opportunities for young people. The Council is working in partnership with Middlesex University, Barnet and Southgate College and CommUNITY Barnet on the delivery of this programme. Other projects are being delivered by third party providers.

This report provides an update on the Platforms programme, and sets out the input required from the Barnet Partnership Board.

2 Input Requested from Barnet Partnership Board:

Members of the Board are asked to consider:

- **How their organisations are supporting young people into and employment – and tackling unemployment generally across the borough - whether through: promoting the council programme or other schemes; referrals of young people; raising awareness amongst employers; or volunteering support such as mentoring.**
- **What their organisation is doing individually to support NEETs and where this should be connected into the Platforms programme to ensure coordination.**
- **How we can respond to the challenges identified in the projects to date.**
- **How we can create added value to the programme.**
- **Opportunities for the future for combining resources and where possible mainstreaming the most successful elements of the Platforms programme.**

3 Detail

3.1 The Barnet Partnership Board on 24th May 2012 agreed that local supply chains must be used to help generate local opportunities, with better communications to businesses, and that action must be taken to ensure young people are work ready. A Skills and Enterprise Adviser and Business Engagement Officer were recruited in September 2012 specifically to engage young people onto the programme and engage with local employers. To date they have engaged with 75 young people and 160 employers.

3.2 The Platforms Programme - a partnership approach

The Table below sets out the projects being delivered through the Platforms programme, and progress against this.

Programme	Description and Progress
Barnet Apprenticeship Training Agency (ATA)	<p>An independent company which directly employs an apprentice and places them into a work placement. This takes on employment liability which has been identified as a key barrier to businesses recruiting an apprentice.</p> <p>The ATA aims to create 40 placements. So far 13 Barnet residents (some directly with SMEs) and 18 Businesses have signed up.</p>
SME Apprenticeship Training Grant	<p>A fund for SMEs to cover the costs of training an Apprentice aged 19-24 (16-18's already funded through Govt).</p> <p>Marketing is ongoing and connections established with the National Apprenticeship Service. Take up of the funding has been limited. There is still a challenge in employers understanding of apprenticeships; employers have advised that they cannot afford to pay wages or that the Apprenticeship framework does not meet their specific requirements. These challenges are also being reflected on a national level.</p>
SME internship fund	<p>20 funded three-month internship placements in local businesses. Project to begin in November 2012. Early business engagement has already demonstrated a high level of demand for this.</p>
Council Internships	<p>20 funded three-month internship placements within the Council. Project to begin in November 2012, 18 placements already identified.</p>
Employability Support for Graduates	<p>Graduate employability support for all Graduate Barnet Residents using Middlesex University's expertise and resources</p> <p>Effective referral route in place with Job Centre Plus. There has been a lot of interest from young people. The target is to support 30 young people in total, and the first of the cohorts has 13 participants.</p>
Employability Support for NEETs	<p>Supporting young people to become work ready using Barnet & Southgate College's expertise and resources. The</p>

	<p>programme includes individual support and mentoring.</p> <p>Jobcentre Plus has mandated young people on JSA who fit the criteria to attend. The target is to support 30 young people in total, and the first of the cohorts has 11 participants.</p>
Enterprise support	<p>Enterprise training and support for young entrepreneurs including a mentoring scheme with existing entrepreneurs and business people, using Barnet & Southgate College's expertise and resources.</p> <p>Interest has been low leading to more intensive marketing and promotional activities. This might suggest a lack of appetite for business start ups among young people.</p>
Employment opportunities in the voluntary sector	<p>Funded 9 month work placements in the voluntary sector providing vital work experience to this age group, particularly 16-18 year olds who have little work experience</p> <p>CommUNITY Barnet has identified 12 voluntary sector placements, with the aim of achieving 20 in total. Surprisingly there has been limited interest from young people in the administrative roles. The Skills and Enterprise Officer is working on these to make them more appealing.</p>
Support for young people with learning difficulties	<p>Targeted at young people with learning disabilities, the aim is to secure 15 paid work placements, 15 work experience opportunities and 20 employability training placements.</p> <p>15 young people have been identified by Barnet and Southgate College and Oak Lodge School to receive employment support through the Dimensions project. An Adviser is working with businesses to create work opportunities. A 'Work Pairing programme' is being explored.</p>
<p>Prince's Trust schemes:</p> <p>'Get Into': Dec 2012</p> <p>'Get Started' Feb 2013</p>	<p>Targeted at hard to reach young people to build skills, gain confidence through personal development, find and sustain employment and fulfil aspirations.</p> <p>The team are recruiting 15 young people for each scheme. Greenwich Leisure, as part of the 'Get Into' project is offering 50% of attendees to be taken on as casual staff and one ring fenced full time vacancy for them to apply for.</p>
Proposals for Studio School	<p>Children's Services are currently exploring the feasibility of a new type of school which provides 14-19 year olds with a technical education focused on developing employability skills, alongside academic and vocational courses.</p>

3.3 An evaluation framework has been set up to ensure that we can measure success against the overall programme targets at the end of the delivery phase in March 2013.

4 CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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