

The Post-16 Education and Skills Strategy 2021-2024 Update

CES Committee 12.09.22 – Appendix A

Strategic objectives of the Post-16 Education and Skills Strategy

Our approach is underpinned by the following strategic objectives of the post-sixteen education and skills strategy:

Strategic Objective 1: ***Extend the opportunities for young people to access vocational and technical programmes*** by developing vocational pathways and the curriculum through partnerships and collaborative approaches with post-sixteen providers.

Strategic Objective 2: ***Minimise the number of young people who are NEET***, by developing the employability skills and resilience of young people and by ensuring excellent transition support and interventions for all young people, especially those at risk of becoming NEET or who are already NEET.

Strategic Objective 3: ***Increase the opportunities for disadvantaged young people to progress to suitable education, training, and employment***, including care leavers and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

This strategy is intended to contribute to the wider Education Strategy in the following ways:

Inclusion:

- Developing progression routes and opportunities for young people with special educational needs and disabilities aged 16 to 25 to enable them to develop the skills and independence they need to access employment.
- Collaborating with partners to support disadvantaged groups, such as care-leavers, to access suitable progression routes into education, training, or employment.

Review of Activities in 2021-2

Strategic Objective 1

‘Extend the opportunities for young people to access vocational and technical programmes by developing vocational pathways and the curriculum through partnerships and collaborative approaches with post-sixteen providers.’

1.1 A key priority for the Post 16 Team is to increase access to, and the take-up of, vocational provision (including T levels) for young people. Schools and colleges were contacted and offered an opportunity to meet to discuss vocational curriculum development. Most schools accepted the offer, to date four schools have applied to the DfE to deliver T levels as well as Barnet and Southgate College. This work will continue into 22/23; as schools roll-out T Levels further and collaboration is encouraged.

1.2 School meetings have taken place to discuss vocational and technical curriculum development, this was followed by the T Level CPD Conference for schools in May 2022 to support school leaders in their consideration of the introduction of T Levels, and the implications of this for school sixth forms. After the T Level CPD Conference, follow up meetings took place with interested school leaders and subsequently four schools applied to

deliver T Levels from 2023. We will set up a T Level network for these schools and colleges to collaborate from September 2022.

1.3 Exploring options for extending technical and vocational opportunities through the creation of dedicated technical and vocational sixth-form provision attached to one or more existing sixth forms or Barnet and Southgate College; this would involve support for the school/college in identifying suitable premises and could involve a joint approach to central government to secure the necessary capital and revenue funding. There is one school who are interested in developing their technical and vocational Sixth Form provision to facilitate T Level delivery which would include a new building. This discussion will continue in the academic year 2022/23.

1.4 We have shared with school governors the rationale for the KS5 strategic plan and strengthened their understanding of the current KS5 landscape, both nationally and within Barnet. Governors have received several updates regarding T levels and a further presentation is scheduled for Autumn term 2022.

1.5 A key focus for the Post 16 Team and for post sixteen providers in Barnet is to improve the overall attainment of vocational qualifications. To do this we have implemented and supported good practice networks to improve the quality of vocational provision across the borough; this includes running networks in agreed vocational subjects to share best practice and improve outcomes for young people. From 2022/23, these networks will become 'vocational teaching and learning communities', open to all schools in Barnet. These communities will be supported by the major examination boards as well as being led by experience practitioners. Following vocational examination results in 2022, key priorities will be identified to ensure the teaching and learning communities facilitate an improvement in student outcomes.

1.6 We have encouraged good practice networks to share the learning derived by providers from the Covid19 pandemic in respect of remote and online learning and the development of a blended learning offer of face-to-face and remote learning. We hope this will help providers to improve the offer and the opportunities for young people with a diverse range of needs and different learning styles. In 2021/22, the vocational networks facilitated colleagues to share best practice and lessons learnt from the Covid period to enable colleagues to consider how lessons learnt could become a feature of teaching and learning going forwards.

1.7 This year, we have continued to work with schools and colleges on developing and implementing an improvement strategy for vocational attainment. We have been using best practice networks to improve grades across vocational provision within Barnet, e.g., by sharing strategies on how teachers can support students to gain distinctions. In addition to the networks, we set up in-school training from an examination board for two schools. This work will continue in 2022/23 and be based upon results analysis and will be facilitated through the teaching learning communities.

1.8 We continue to research what further curriculum provision is needed, especially within the vocational landscape, and then supporting groups of schools, and linking with local colleges, in working together to meet these priorities, especially around careers advice and guidance and work-related learning within the curriculum. In the summer term 2022, BELS-Inspire was launched to support schools in delivering quality Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEAIG) as well as facilitating work experience and all work-related learning opportunities. This has been marketed and some schools have engaged and purchased packages.

1.9 In the summer term 2022, we established a data dashboard for post-sixteen education in Barnet to enable providers to benchmark their performance and the achievement of their pupils against other providers. Existing data systems within BELS have allowed for the

creation of a template to collate academic and vocational results. This will be issued to schools and will help improve our understanding of progress and attainment.

1.10 In 2021/22 the 'Barnet Vocational Prospectus' was revised and published. The prospectus was sent to all secondary schools, colleges, and training providers in Barnet. This document is also available online; it will be updated annually. We will continue to develop and produce the Barnet Vocational Prospectus so that young people are aware of the opportunities within Barnet. Hopefully, this will lead to more young people embarking on vocational qualifications nearer to home without feeling the need to travel to other boroughs to access vocational pathways.

1.11 Schools for the very first time have been approached to share vocational success stories in August 2022 including destinations and we hope to raise the profile of technical and vocational courses. In October 2022 we are holding a Barnet Options and Careers event in conjunction with Middlesex University to promote opportunities. We will continue to work with secondary schools and local colleges to ensure that positive messages are delivered to secondary pupils about technical and vocational education opportunities within Barnet and to give pupils easy access to the colleges' open events or to presentations in school from the colleges to promote this local offer. We recognise that Barnet and Southgate College are by far the largest provider of technical and vocational education in the borough and we will therefore promote it as the local college of first choice for technical and vocational education.

1.12 In line with the Barnet's 'Work, Skills and Productivity Strategy' we will encourage young residents into jobs and learning opportunities that have good prospects for progression within the fastest growing sectors of the economy. We work closely with colleagues across the council to analyse trends in employability and skills to identify 'growth' employment areas such as health, care, construction & trades, and the creative industries sectors that forecast the fastest growing numbers of new entry level jobs (and realistic progression pathways) to ensure that we provide training and support for young people to meet the demands in employment from local and regional employers.

1.13 We have collaborated with the Employment and Skills division of the council to identify skills shortages and have communicated this to our post sixteen providers so that new or existing provision can be tailored to meet this need. We have five providers planning to deliver T levels in these shortage areas. This should encourage young people into these pathways. We also deliver the 'Routes into Construction Programme' this supports the hardest to reach young people into construction employment.

1.14 We have used the allocated COVID funding to launch BELS- Inspire with our secondary schools and post sixteen providers. This innovative provision will provide high quality work experience opportunities to young people in schools, sixth form and colleges. We have now established links with a wide range of employers; we are working collaboratively with the council business development unit to further develop our reach of employers to enhance and enrich the vocational curriculum offer, to identify opportunities, promote work experience, and work opportunities to schools to enhance and complement their curriculum offer. We will disseminate good practice regarding employability initiatives at regular networking events with schools and colleges.

Strategic Objective 2

'Minimise the number of young people who are NEET, by developing the employability skills and resilience of young people and by ensuring excellent transition support and interventions for all young people, especially those at risk of becoming NEET or who are already NEET.'

Employability skills and resilience

'The world of work is constantly evolving, with employers looking for a wide range of occupational skills, qualifications, and personal competencies. When it comes to recruitment, however, attitudes and aptitudes are often seen as more important than formal qualifications. Although technical and basic skills are required to get past the initial application stage, other aspects such as personal qualities, attitudes, and general aptitudes are then seen as far more critical. Resilience is frequently cited by employers as an essential quality for young people to possess, the ability to cope with setbacks and criticism, be motivated to overcome obstacles, and stay calm under pressure. A positive attitude to work, punctuality, flexibility, verbal communication skills, and the ability to make a professional introduction are all crucial when deciding whether to recruit a young person.' (UCAS 2020).

Activities completed for 2021-22:

2.1 The Post 16 team has representation at the Barnet's employability group with post-sixteen providers to look at the core skills needed by young people to be effective in the workplace and to develop the resilience to cope with the changes in employment that may be an inevitable part of career progression. As part of this group, we are working with a wide range of providers to look at how we can improve employability skills including resilience training for young people.

2.2 We have launched BELS – Inspire, a new programme working with schools and other providers to offer and support schools to develop work placements and/or employer links. This will embed employability and relevant work experiences for young people into their curriculum. The focus is to prepare young people for working life with the skills and aptitudes needed to succeed in the workplace.

2.3 Providing information and support to our providers to ensure that young people can be supported onto programmes that are reactive to training and skills shortages; we will do this based on research and will share with post-sixteen providers an awareness of skill shortage areas, so that they may respond to this by developing the appropriate curriculum and programmes.

2.4 As part of the employability group, we are sharing data with providers on job opportunities and skills shortages in Barnet. We have commissioned programmes with North London Garages and Cherry Tree Foundation to meet the skills gaps. In addition to this, we work closely with Cidori and other training providers to provide occupational related courses to support young people into employment. This year we are collaborating with Hawk Training who have an extensive network of local employers who are experiencing difficulties in recruiting young people into employment.

NEETs

2.5 Overall, the number of Barnet young people aged 16 and 17 who are not engaged in education, employment, or training (NEET) is low. Current NEET figures for August 2022 is 8.4%. However, the next priority must now be on reducing the number of young people dropping out from their programme during the transition from Year 12 to Year 13.

2.6 In line with Barnet's 'Work, Skills, and Productivity Strategy,' we want to enable residents from all backgrounds and communities of the borough to have access to high quality employment, learning and skills opportunities, and for this to happen at a scale that is consistent with the challenge facing us because of the pandemic.

2.7 The key priority is to ensure that young people are supported onto the correct programmes, so they do not become NEET. At the beginning of the pandemic, we recognised that young people needed timely support and advice on available education courses, as well as employment advice or information on training programmes. In response, we developed a vacancy resource list to give young people up-to-date information on

opportunities. We will continue to update this resource and make it more widely available to schools, other providers, and partner organisations. We also developed a dedicated careers and information telephone line to provide support to young people. We will continue to provide this.

2.8 During 2020 we established specialised 'pathways' leading to employment for long-term NEET young people, taking into account the impact of COVID on the employment prospects for young people aged 18-24 years. We will continue to provide and develop these targeted pathways.

2.9 The Department of Education requires the local authorities to track and monitor young people up until the age of 18 years old. In Barnet, we have decided to go much further and we now track young people up until the age of 20 years. We have the lowest NEET figures in London (except for the City of London) however we believe that we need to provide support for young people beyond this age as we know from data that unemployment figures increase for young people after the age of 18. We have used the COVID funding allocated to BELS for post-sixteen projects to track 18-year-olds and to organise interventions to prevent those at risk of being NEET becoming NEET and to get those who are NEET into education, training, or employment.

2.10. Our aim is to ensure that good quality information and guidance, along with transition support, is provided to young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET, through a mixture of school-based sessions, virtual sessions and through the post-16 Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) and Careers Information Telephone line. In Summer 2022 on A' Level and GCSE results days BELS had Careers Advisers in five schools/ colleges to support young people. The Careers Information Telephone Line was also available for students, this was well publicised.

2.11 We will continue to offer a borough-wide careers education service on a traded basis for young people in Years 8 to 13. The aim of the provision is to ensure young people have a clear understanding of the provision on offer in both schools and colleges and the pathways to employment. BELS will be offering Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) to schools, however the take-up for this service is shrinking. Schools have increasingly opted to appoint their own staff. BELS also works with some Barnet schools in a more ad hoc way to support them with different projects. From September schools who buy-in CEIAG as a traded service have been offered a complimentary careers quality audit.

2.12 We continue to develop our communication strategy with young people, schools, parents, and carers so that they are fully aware of the range of post-sixteen options available to them. The Post-16 prospectuses are available to our young people and parents, these can also be found online. We have updated the content of post-sixteen section of the BELS website and included relevant documents for school leaders, young people, and parents. We have publicised our programmes and events through BELS social media platforms and with external organisations. Furthermore, we have engaged with the Council's Senior Communications and Campaigns Manager, this has resulted in 'Barnet First' publicity as well as online promotions.

2.13 We have created a calendar of regular careers and networking events for schools and post-sixteen providers to be publicised to young people, parents, and carers. BELS engages with the Barnet Careers Forum and regularly attends meetings. In October 2022, we are holding Barnet Options and Careers evening, all schools will be encouraged to attend. This is in addition to the vocational teaching learning communities and T Level network we will establish from September 2022. A list of all Sixth Form Open Evenings for September 2022 has also been collated will be shared with all providers.

Projects

Risk of NEET project

2.14 The Risk of NEET (RON) programme has been devised to minimise the number of young people who become NEET aged 16-19 years. Schools and colleges already have in place interventions to support learners who are vulnerable or likely to disengage. However, there is a hard-to-reach cohort of young people who, after these interventions, are still at high risk of being NEET by the age of nineteen and therefore are likely to become dependent on state benefits. The RONI programme has two elements:

- use of data to identify those at risk of becoming NEET and
- a mentoring and IAG support package as part of re-engagement support.

2.15 The post-16 team will continue to work with local secondary schools to develop and refine data systems for early identification of young people at risk of becoming NEET at the end of Year 11 and to create programmes for students from Year 10 upwards aimed at ensuring those at risk progress to a sustainable destination of employment, education or training (particularly learners with SEND and young men from black heritage backgrounds and White British backgrounds). The team will also work closely with the Youth Justice Service to identify those at risk and suitable programmes.

2.16 We are currently delivering mentoring support to young people in eleven schools (including sixth form college), from year 10 upwards, enabling the students to sustain their education placements. The mentoring support is dynamic, personalised, asset driven, and strengths based. We work with young people to identify the barriers to transformation, gain a clearer vision, unleash the power of a growth mindset, and identify and develop the skills that are required for them to thrive in a post-pandemic world. In 2021 to 2022 we engaged 320 young people. Since April 2022, 125 young people have engaged. We have used the COVID funding allocated to Post 16, to employ a mentor who is assigned to the Youth Offending Service.

Future Pathways – Targeted NEETS project

2.17 BELS has also been successful in bidding for funding from the Mayor of London's European Social Fund. The charity, Catch 22, was appointed as lead bidder for the West London area and BELS put its name to the bid along with the London Boroughs of Hounslow and Ealing. Funding has been approved from April 21 – August 23.

The project provides extra funding for work on NEETS with a focus on young people aged 16 to 24 who are:

- Looked After or care leavers; or
- Homeless or at risk of being homeless; or
- Who fall into two or more of the categories below:
 - lone parent
 - in problem debt (minimum of £1,000)
 - young carer
 - involved in substance misuse
 - involved in criminal activity

2.18 To date, this extra funding has enabled us to work intensely with ninety-three hard to reach vulnerable young people. So far twenty-nine have successfully moved into employment, ten into education/ training and another eleven have enrolled to start training courses in September 2022. These achievements have resulted in the contractor increasing the funding allowing us to support more young people.

Access for All – Routes to Construction project

2.19 The Routes into Construction Project was established in 2019, collaborating with the Council's Regeneration team (S106), The project is designed to align with construction partners/ employers' needs and is designed to support young people who are NEET at Post-16. During Phase 2 of the programme from January 2021 to August 2022, we have placed over seventy unemployed young people aged 16 to 24 in jobs or training within construction and allied trades in Barnet. We have used the COVID funding allocated to Post 16 to increase the number of staff working on this programme this includes an Outreach Employment Adviser who will be based a Graham Park and other regeneration projects within Barnet.

Strategic Objective 3

'Increase the opportunities for disadvantaged young people to progress to suitable education, training and employment, including care leavers and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.'

3.1 In addition to the Care-Leavers and Supported Internships projects, described below, we will continue to prioritise targeted support for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. We have supported young people with additional needs through transition by aiming to prioritise advice and support for children with additional needs from Year 9 onwards and for young adults who will transition to adult social care. In 2021/2022 all schools were offered free CIEAG individual interviews for students with additional needs, nine schools accepted the offer. This year 22/23, this service will be offered as a traded service.

3.2 Our focus is to signpost comprehensive transition pathways for all young people who require SEND support. We have created a range of booklets to support young people with SEN, by providing detailed information on programmes available. In addition to this, the Post 16 Careers Adviser contacts young people and parents by telephone where we feel they may require additional support.

3.3 In line with our Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) Protocol, all Year 9 Annual Reviews include a transition plan and all Year 9 pupils with EHCPs have transitions explicitly discussed and documented as part of their Annual Review. We have begun this work with our schools, but this needs to be developed further. We have used the COVID funding to employ a SEN Support Officer who will collaborate with schools from September 2022 to ensure that all young people with SEN have a detailed transition plans to include pathways planning. We have also in place a SEND Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) Adviser available to work with schools to improve IAG for young people with SEND.

3.4 We will continue to develop new provision and embed a range of pathways for post-sixteen young people with SEND, including supported internships, apprenticeships, voluntary and paid employment.

3.5 Supported Internships Project

The aim of supported internships is to prepare young people with complex needs for paid employment by supporting them to develop the skills valued by employers. This enables young people aged 16-24 with an Education, Health, and Care Plan to achieve sustainable paid employment by equipping them with the skills they need for work, through learning in the workplace. This allows young people to become financially independent and to contribute, socially, and financially within the wider community.

3.6 Outcomes: We have established good partnerships with three main supported internships providers; Royal Mencap, Harrington Scheme and Health Education England,

who have ringfenced twenty-five places on their programmes for Barnet young people. Thirty-three young people completed the programme in July 2022 and to date seventeen have already secured employment, one accepted into university and two into further training. Examples of employment secured include: - Chef – Royal Free Hospital and Nursing Assistant – Royal Free Hospital. We have used the COVID funding allocated to Post 16 employ an Employment Adviser who supports young learners into employment and to sustain employment.

Projects:

Care Leavers Participation Project

3.7 The Care Leavers Participation Project delivered by BELS, has the aim of increasing Education, Employment and Training (EET) levels amongst care leavers aged 16-25 in line with Barnet's Corporate Parenting priorities. This work includes delivering sessions, and running events to promote post-sixteen options, and working with key stakeholders to develop an understanding of best practice in supporting care leavers.:

3.8 We have been working more closely with Onwards & Upwards to track and identify the progress of the NEET care leavers. This has proven to be beneficial because we can identify the barriers (for each young person) to EET and discuss and agree on the best strategy to reduce the NEET numbers. We have increased the number of people working on this programme and staff members are working from Woodhouse Road five days per week to provide targeted support to the young people. Approximately fifty-five care leavers engage with us monthly.

3.9 We have used the COVID funding allocated to Post sixteen education to employ a caseworker who is working specifically with the young people in EET to help them to sustain these placements. We are now closely working with the looked-after young people (Virtual School) to identify those who will transition to care leavers. We are aiming to create an induction programme to ensure their transition from being looked after to a care leaver is as seamless as possible.

3.10 Since April 2022, we have moved twenty-three care leavers in positive outcomes, this includes three young people into traineeships, three young people in apprenticeships, fourteen young people in jobs and three young people into education. The latest data for June 2022 shows that there are 81% of care leavers who are in Employment, Education and Training (EET) and 19% who are NEET (58 Care Leavers).