

From: Sue Chandler, Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services

Sarah Hammond, Interim Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education

To: Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee – 19th July 2022

Decision No: N/A

Subject: The Responsibilities and Support Services for Kent's Children Not in Employment, Education and Training (NEET)

Classification:

Past Pathway of Paper: N/A

Future Pathway of Paper: N/A

Electoral Division: All

Summary:

This report summarises the scope and activity of the work being undertaken to support those young people who are not in employment, education or training. This includes the NEET Support Service, which was moved from a commissioned contract (delivered by Connexions Kent - CxK) to The Education People, from 1st October 2020.

Recommendation(s):

The Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to NOTE the contents of the report.

Introduction

- 1.1. Local authorities have a statutory duty under Section 68 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 to encourage, enable or assist children's participation in education or training.
- 1.2. It is a statutory requirement to record children's Education, Employment and Training (EET) status and to identify and support those who are not participating or are at risk of not participating. The information is returned by local authorities to the Department for Education (DfE).
- 1.3. EET is measured as 'participation' in post-16 learning options including school, further education colleges, apprenticeships, traineeships, internships, higher education, and volunteering while in part time education or training.

- 1.4. 'NEET' refers to 16–18-year-olds not in Education, Employment, and Training. Local authorities must report NEET figures to the DfE. Children at statutory school age are not classified as NEET but, if not on roll at a school, are either children missing education (CME) or electively home educated (EHE).
- 1.5. Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) refers to learning difficulties or disabilities (communicating & interacting; cognition & learning; social /emotional /mental health and /or physical needs) that make it harder for children to learn.
- 1.6. Children with SEND can access SEN Support and those with more complex needs might benefit from an assessment by the Local Authority for an Educational, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). An EHCP outlines how the child's needs will be met until they leave education or until they are 25 years of age.
- 1.7. School terms impact on when placements and education, employment and training entry points are available and consequently the NEET cohort demonstrates seasonal variations. The peak number of young people recorded as NEET usually falls in quarter 4 between Dec-Mar when the drop out of young people from school-leaving destinations is highest.

2. Why Employment, Education and Training Matters

- 2.1. Not participating in EET, whether from statutory school age exclusion or not being on roll, or being post-statutory school age NEET, can have a detrimental effect on a young person.
- 2.2. Not participating can increase the likelihood of being targeted, exploited, and becoming involved in crime¹ and EET is a well-established protective factor for desistance from offending² and social, emotional, and mental wellbeing in adult life.
- 2.3. The likelihood of being NEET increases with deprivation, negative parental factors (such as unemployment, poor education experiences), being care-experienced, poor academic achievement, and negative school experiences.

3. County Challenges in the ETE landscape

- 3.1. In June 2020, the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services made the Key decision (part of EHPS Commissioning Decision 20/00017) to move the NEET service provision from a commissioned contract (delivered by CxK) to The Education People. This decision was called into scrutiny committee on 23rd June 2020. Following a vote by Members, the decision was upheld and on 1st October 2020 the provision, utilising Teckal regulations, was moved to TEP.
- 3.2. The reasons to move the provision to TEP were as follows;

¹ 'Excluded, exploited, forgotten: childhood criminal exploitation and school exclusions.' Just for Kids Law (2020)

² 'Desistance and young people' HM Inspectorate of Probation (May 2016)

- To directly align with work already taking place in TEP, strengthening the relationship with education and skills providers already working with TEP.
- Following the SEND inspection, it was highlighted that all service provision needs to work across the across the spectrum of need, working to be inclusive of those young people with both a diagnosed and undiagnosed SEND, whilst also targeting other vulnerable groups, such as those entering the youth justice system or those young people that form the home educated cohort.
- A need for a better integration with the tracking service, to help identify young people
- To add capacity to the NEET County Action Plan, create a more preventative approach to NEET reduction and optimise the resource throughout the whole year
- In order to achieve changes through the existing contract there would have needed to be a 'material change', this could not happen under the guise of a contract extension, meaning the contract was no longer fit for purpose

3.3. As a result of both Brexit and the Covid pandemic, the post-statutory school aged EET landscape has become increasingly challenging.

3.4. This is partly because Kent had historically been able to lever in over £6million per annum from the European Social Fund (ESF) to provide a diverse offer for vulnerable learners including, NEETs, those with low attainment and SEND students, for whom school 6th form or college had not been suitable. In April 2019, the ESF was reduced from £6m to £860,000.

3.5. Changes to the ESF funding brought new challenges in that when a young person leaves a course with an accredited work experience component, traineeship providers can no longer accept them as they are unable to claim the accredited work experience funding. This has caused a gap in funding and has inevitable meant a reduction in the number of places available to young people.

3.6. There is still uncertainty around what the future financial envelope may be to support alternative EET opportunities, and this makes it is difficult for the industry to plan future provision.

3.7. There has been an increase in the number of young people who are in employment without training and therefore not considered to be participating in education or training. This will affect the county participation rate that is published in the NEET scorecard.

3.8. There is a lack of suitable and diverse Special Post-16 Institutions (special schools) for children with EHCPs needing post-16 education. Complex children also do not have access to the variety of courses available to children in mainstream further education.

4. The impact of the Covid Pandemic

- 4.1. The Covid pandemic has exacerbated children's experiences of social isolation, emotional well-being concerns, and lack of routine. As a result, time away from the formal school routine has made it more difficult for those children already struggling with their education to return to full time education, particularly those who have passed statutory school age.
- 4.2. A change in working patterns following the pandemic led to a sharp increase in NEET children in the final months of 2020 as many children go on to work in hospitality, leisure, and tourism which were the sectors hardest hit by the pandemic.
- 4.3. Following the pandemic there was also an increase in the number of children who are Electively Home Educated learners. This cohort continue to be statistically more likely to become NEET.

5. Kent's NEET prevention and support services

5.1. The Education People

- 5.1.1. KCC Integrated Children's Service provide £500k per annum to support NEET commissioning. On 1st October 2020 that commissioned activity transferred, under TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment) from CxK's NEET Support Service to The Education People (TEP). One of the key aims of the transfer of the KCC contract to TEP was to ensure a sharper focus on both the SEND and youth justice cohort, identifying and supporting higher risk children who are NEET and at risk of NEET.
- 5.1.2. The transfer brought together three teams:
 - TEP's Skills & Employability Service Engagement Officers (EOs)
 - TEP's Post 16 Tracking Team
 - CXK's Post 16 NEET Support Service.
- 5.1.3. Joining the NEET Support Service and Not Known Tracking Team has had a positive impact on identifying NEET more quickly, so children are supported sooner with a more streamlined experience within one service.
- 5.1.4. Children in Year 11 who are at risk of becoming NEET transfer from the Engagement Officers working within the schools into the NEET Support Service. Support can include contact in term six, to support children to identify a destination for September.
- 5.1.5. TEP's NEET Support Service works directly with children who:
 - Have been NEET for more than six weeks or
 - have experienced multiple periods of NEET
 - Are in academic Years 12 and 13 with an Education Health Care Plan.
 - Are in identified vulnerable groups: those supported by Youth Justice,
 - Children Missing Education in Year 11 after term three, and

- Children who received SEN support in School (K-code in the school census).
- Children in Care/Young Care Leavers who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET are supported by Virtual School Kent (VSK).
- VSK and the NEET Support Service maintain a close working relationship which allows early identification of those who are at risk of becoming NEET.
- District NEET prevention meetings, including engagement form Youth Teams

- 5.1.6. NEET Support Workers pass on intelligence about gaps in provision to the Principal Post-16 lead, who can influence funders and learning providers to fill those gaps. They also help inform strategic decisions about developing provision in the county.
- 5.1.7. Examples of this success include TEP's influence on the opening of new provision. Catch 22 is due to open two new centres and CXK have been awarded a contract to deliver European Social Fund NEET provision across Kent, funded by the Education Skills Funding Agency (EFA).
- 5.1.8. Through the Reconnect programme there have been a number of programmes put in place to focus on those young people that have been NEET for a longer period of time due to COVID. These programmes will run through the summer and link into existing workstreams to build sustainability.
- 5.1.9. KCC Skills & Employability Service coordinate the activities of the NEET Interdependencies Group, and oversee the statutory duty to track children, develop the post 16 provision offer in Kent, provide NEET support to children (except those with an EHCP wanting to return to education and those supported by VSK) and develop NEET prevention strategies/deliver activities for Kent education providers and other KCC services.
- 5.1.10. Skills & Employability Service Engagement Officers (EOs) identify those Kent schools with the highest number of NEETs, they then work with those schools to develop and implement an Action Plan for the Year 11s who are at risk of becoming NEET. As part of the NEET SLA, TEP operate a "Four-Hour Offer" for schools which can include working with post-16 providers, providing access to online resources, webinars, apprenticeship events, online parent events, district participation meetings, support on using the Kent Choices website and attendance at Kent Choices local events, which introduces children to local education and training providers.
- 5.1.11. TEP are also actively engaging with colleges to encourage them to run transition programmes to help schools transition the most vulnerable students into college.
- 5.1.12. EOs track mainstream learners who are at-risk of becoming NEET over the summer holidays and where appropriate children are referred to TEP's specialist post 16 advice and guidance service.

5.1.13. Once the new school year starts in September, the EO's will contact all children that were assessed of being at risk of being NEET, to understand whether they have been able to transition across to their chosen destination as planned or whether they need a referral to the NEET Support Service for intensive support.

5.2. Data Oversight and quality assurance

5.2.1. KCC's Management Information Service is in place to quality assure NEET data, train new users, collect data from education establishments, update systems, ensure the baseline data and vulnerable learner data is correct and up to date, create user reports for KCC contract management, make the statutory returns to the DfE and work in partnership with the Skills and Employability Skills service to help keep the NEET and Not Known data figures and ensure that these remain in line with statistical neighbours and the national average.

5.3. Special Education Need and Disability (SEND) responsibilities and activities

5.3.1. As part of the contract exchange in 2020, an additional responsibility was added, to ensure that children with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) who are NEET, receive the support they need to find and sustain a place in education, employment, or training. TEP work in partnership with the NEET Support Service, Virtual School Kent (VSK) and Youth Justice (YJ) to assist their work with children who have an EHCP. To directly support NEET children who have an EHCP who want to return to education and to ensure that data on children with an EHCP or a K code on the school census is up to date and accurately recorded.

5.3.2. The NEET Support Service Manager and the Interim SEN Monitoring and the Inclusion Manager meet fortnightly to discuss individual young people's cases and identify next steps in that young person's learning journey.

5.3.3. Since establishing this process 183 children with EHC Plans who are NEET or 'at risk' have been discussed, reviewed and appropriate support put in place. Common support needed for this cohort includes helping parents to decide on their child's progression route, transferring EHCPs from other counties and giving advice and guidance on transport issues.

5.3.4. Links between TEP and Supported Employment have been developed to improve careers education for SEND children and create supported employment opportunities, which assists children with a disability who need extra help to progress towards and into work.

5.3.5. Figure 1. below illustrates that the EET and destination known outcomes for those with an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) has improved in the last year. (There are 3 different codes that are used in Pupil Assessment Tracker reporting by schools - N- no special educational need, E- Education, health and care plan, K- SEN support)

Figure 1. NEET Known outcomes with EHCP and SEN Support

		Cohort	NEET No.	NEET %	Not Known No.	Not Known %	Combined NEET/NK %
EHCP	Feb-21	1376	97	7.0%	28	2.0%	9.0%
	Feb-22	1810	106	5.9%	12	0.7%	6.6%
K code	Feb-21	912	14	1.5%	5	2.1%	3.6%
	Feb-22	2025	90	4.4%	23	1.1%	5.5%

5.3.6. The percentage increase in NEETs for those with a 'K code' is due to improvements made to record SEN support. We now have a clearer view of the cohort which enables a better response to the individual needs of young people using the service

5.4. **Fair Access – Electively Home Educated (EHE) and Children Missing Education (CME) Teams' responsibilities and activities**

5.4.1. to ensure that all Kent EHE and CME children have a September Guarantee, know where they can find pre and post 16 support and information, have updated contact details on systems and that the NEET Support Service is notified of those in Year 11 where there is a concern.

5.5. **Virtual School Kent (VSK) responsibilities and activities**

5.5.1. to ensure that all Kent, post 16 Looked After Children receive the support they need to find and sustain a place in EET, that the systems data is up to date and that the transition of learners from key stage 4 to post 16 support is effective. All Children in Care and young Care Leavers are identified and supported, including attending the NEET interdependency meeting and taking an active role in the development of the multi-agency NEET Action Plan and maintaining data throughout the academic year.

5.5.2. VSK ensure that September Guarantee data is recorded for year 11 and year 12 Children in Care and that all of cohort has a September Guarantee. VSK also promote the use of the Kent Choices platform for VSK teams, Designated Teachers, Social Workers, Foster Carers, and the children being supported.

5.5.3. VSK Key Stage 4 Progression Advisors (KS4PAs) support Children in care in year 11 with their September Post 16 destinations, ensuring that applications are made via Kent Choices website and monitoring offers via this platform.

5.5.4. KS4 PAs support with this key transition by linking in with Career Leads in schools, TEP EO's and NEET Support Service to ensure the young person is aware of all the options available to them in Post16 education. VSK KS4 PA's and Post 16 Education Support Officers (ESOs) network with TEP, NEET

Support Service and education provisions via area specific meetings throughout the academic year to identify new provision and gaps in the education offer.

5.5.5. VSK Transition team (KS4 PAs and Post 16 ESOs) support each other during the academic year to ensure that the Post 16 destination for year 11s is the right choice for the young person and that the young person has been actively involved in this decision via Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings. VSK Post 16 team secured funding from Reconnect to provide an intensive NEET support programme for Children in Care in North Kent who had been long term NEET during this academic year. The aim of this is to support them during terms 5 & 6 and encourage re-engagement with EET for the next academic year.

5.6. Youth Justice responsibilities and activities

5.6.1. As part of the youth justice service offer to children involved in the criminal justice system, the service ensures young people receive the support they need to find and sustain a place in EET. This includes those in Year 11 who are preparing to leave compulsory education.

5.6.2. In October 2020, the transfer of the KCC contract to TEP brought about a sharper focus on the youth justice cohort, identifying and supporting children who are NEET and at risk of NEET.

5.6.3. EET is a key protective factor for desistance from offending, and in October 2022 EET performance, and the availability of appropriate services for this cohort, is being introduced by the Ministry of Justice as a national Key Performance Indicator for Youth Justice. It is an inspection interest, and the Kent's Youth Justice Board partnership is responsible for ensuring services are available which meet the needs of the Youth Justice cohort.

5.6.4. At May 2022, 72 of the children open to Youth Justice were above statutory school age. Nearly half of these (34) have full time provision, 13 have part-time provision and 25 are NEET.

5.6.5. Of the 25 NEET, 72% (19) have no specific reason or plan recorded. 3 had a previous post-16 'destination' but subsequently became NEET, with one withdrawn from college due to risk of serious harm to others and 2 withdrawn from provision due to non-attendance.

5.6.6. Of the 25 NEET, significant additional vulnerabilities are typical, with 6 being Children in Care and 1 subject to a Child Protection Plan. 10 have an EHCP. 5 have an Autistic Spectrum Condition diagnosis, and 1 has a diagnosed speech and language difficulty. An additional 3 have other identified special educational needs.

5.6.7. Analysis of the history and needs of the Youth Justice NEET cohort reveals:

- High levels of school exclusion and children accessing alternative provision when at school age
- historical poor school attendance with long periods without structure or routine, a consequent lack of readiness or ability to cope with full time

employment or education, and a willingness to start part-time with the need for gradual planned increase.

- high prevalence of having left school early, without qualifications, with a need for entry level Maths, English, and Functional skills to progress into further education.
- A tendency for disinterest in further education in favour of vocational courses, such as CSCS cards, and employment, such as construction.
- elevated emotional well-being issues including trauma, with significant support needs for anxiety and poor mental health.
- a high number of children with EHCPs, with some who have not been able to access effective SEND input and a larger number with suspected undiagnosed needs. Kent Youth Justice use a speech, language and communication screening tool which is overseen by Symbol, to identify potential undiagnosed needs and to inform engagement and delivery
- history of significant transience (including inter-county) and instability, including some rural dwelling with limited transport.
- Children, and particularly those with a criminal conviction and those leaving custody, have few opportunities for suitable employment

5.6.8. Kent Youth Justice use a speech, language and communication screening tool which is overseen by Symbol, to identify potential undiagnosed needs and to inform engagement and delivery. However, children with a criminal conviction and those leaving custody, are frequently faced by fewer opportunities for suitable employment

5.6.9. Analysis of the history and needs of the Youth Justice NEET cohort reveals: Youth Justice delivers restorative reparation activity and 'unpaid work' requirements, and from 2022 has been accrediting this through the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) framework. This enables Youth Justice interventions to meet multiple aims which promote desistance and seek the best long-term outcomes for children known to the service.

5.7. **Education, Employment, Training intervention for young adult care leavers supported by 18+ Care Leavers Service**

5.7.1. The 18+ Care Leavers Service supports young people who are care experienced, from the age of 18-25 years where we have a corporate parenting responsibility.

5.7.2. As of April 2022, the 18+ Care Leavers Service are supporting 1932 young adults, just over half are unaccompanied asylum-seeking adults

5.7.3. Figure 2 shows that as of April 2022, KCC are above the national average for Care Leavers accessing EET by 2.13%. Government data records the National Average for care leavers aged 19-21 years in EET as 59%, for Kent Care Leavers aged 19-25 years it is 62.13%. (Due to our duty to provide support up

until the age of 25 years, Kent's NEET data is for all young adults open to the service)

5.7.4.

Figure. 2 - Data for EET for Care Leavers

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Total in EET (April 2022)	1201	62.13%
UASC EET	733	37.93% (60.03% of total EET)
Total NEET	715	36.98%
Not recorded due to long-term missing *	16	0.82%
Citizen NEET	415	21.46%
UASC NEET	300	15.51%

Note: Long term missing are UASC young adults, who went missing when they were under the age of 18 years, within a very short period of entering the UK. The case details of these young adults are regularly reviewed with Police, Home Office and KCC but their whereabouts are unknown.

- 5.75 The Care Leavers Service has two designated Education, Training and Employment (EET) Support Officers who work with the allocated Personal Advisers (PA) to offer advice and guidance to young adults regarding EET options. They will work jointly with the PA where necessary for more intense support. They attend multi-agency meetings with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) District Leads, looking at young adults with more complex needs in the districts, reviewing EET support.
- 5.7.6. The EET Support Officers attend the Drop-in service, which are sessions offered across the county for Care Leavers to access additional support.
- 5.7.7. The 18+ Care Leavers Service currently has two Care Leaver Apprentices who lead on our social media presence and will post EET opportunities for young adults to access. They also produce a bulletin for Care Leavers which includes information regarding EET.
- 5.7.8. Data is shared monthly with the DWP as to how many Care Leavers are living in the Kent districts and how many of those are currently NEET, this helps to aid targeted provision in key areas.
- 5.7.9. Rachel Calver, the 18+ Care Leavers Service Manager for Transition chairs the Kent and Medway Designated Member of Staff group which brings together key Child in Care and Care Leavers leads in the Colleges and Universities in Kent and Medway. This helps to discuss key issues that may impact on EET progression.
- 5.7.10. There are monthly meetings between the Care leavers Service and the Key Stage 5 team in Virtual School Kent to discuss the transition support for those Children in care ending academic year 13. The information from their Personal education Plan (PEP).

5.7.11. On 28th April 2022, the 18+ Care Leavers Service held an EET Event at the Detling Showground, seeking support from KCC directorates, external partners, and local businesses to offer education, training, and employment opportunities for our Care Leavers. They were also asked to pledge their support to provide wider opportunities for care leavers e.g. Mentoring, apprenticeships, help with decorating their first home etc. With over 80 attendees, the service has received a wide range of support pledges offered and continue to see more being added. These are now being progressed and the pledges matched to our young adults.

5.7.12. For our UASC cohort, challenges arise in their access to continue with education due to their Immigration Status and funding implications for the education sector post 19 years. If unaccompanied asylum-seeking young adults do not have status, they are not able to access employment and have limited funds available to them. Due to their limited educational experience, they are often looking to progress onto entry level education as they arrive in the UK, around the age of 16/17yrs, and then when they are reaching progression onto Level 1 and Level 2 courses, they have reached 19yrs of age and funding will be limited to continue in full time education. The delays in the Home Office confirming status for our UASC young adults, is a significant barrier to both their access to education and employment. The vast majority of our UASC young adults without status, have a strong desire to be in employment and support themselves financially.

6. Open Access responsibilities and activities

6.7. To assist the Skills and Employability Service to monitor NEET and Not Known data, open access youth services provide a physical base for the NEET support service in each district, help with the running of the bimonthly NEET district networking meetings, help with community engagement, support pregnant teens/parents who are NEET and work with Social Work teams to help children overcome barriers to education, employment, or training.

7. KCC NEET Action Plan

7.1 Kent County Councils' response to support NEETs is detailed in the annual NEET Action Plan. It outlines how Kent County Council works in partnership with The Education People (TEP) to:

- Increase the Participation rate of 16- and 17-year-olds to 93.7% (full time education or employment that includes study for a suitable qualification)
- Reduce the NEET rate to below 2.9% and
- Reduce the Not Known rate (current education, employment or training status is either unknown or out of date) to below the national average

7.2. The Action plan is delivered by The Education People's (TEP) Skills and Employability Service, and KCC's Open Access, Youth Justice (YJ), SEND, Virtual School Kent (VSK), Management Information and Fair Access.

- 7.3. The governance is provided by the NEET Interdependencies Group that is chaired by the Skills and Employability Service and includes relevant services leaders who have the authority to make strategic and operational decisions. The group meets each term to review progress and problem solve strategic and operational delivery problems
- 7.4. The plan contains a termly calendar of what each service should be doing to prevent young people becoming NEET and how they can support young people who have become NEET. It outlines each service's area of responsibility, who within each service is responsible for the plan and how services must work together to ensure every NEET young person in Kent is reviewed monthly, in district-based processes, coordinated by the Skills and Employability Service.
- 7.5. Performance is measured by data taken from the statutory returns Management Information sent to the DfE. The plan details how the services track and record the activities of children in relation to their education, employment, and training status. By reducing the number of NEETs and recording the activities of all children on the database, the percentage of the cohort participating in education, employment, or training increases.
- 7.6. The plan covers children who are academic age year 11, 12 and 13. and a copy of this year's action plan can be found in appendix 6

8. NEET's Not Known

- 8.1. KCC's Management Information collects data from a range of internal and external sources (including training providers) to share with TEP those children with an ETE offer, those who are NEET, those at risk of becoming NEET and to highlight those with vulnerabilities so they can be prioritised. From this, a cohort of children are identified whose destination upon leaving school is 'not known.'
- 8.2. The Skills and Employability Service working with Management Information and other KCC Services are responsible for reducing the number of children (academic age 16 and 17) with a "Not Known" destination and tracking the September Guarantee: the offer, by the end of September, of a "suitable" place in post-16 learning (education or training) to young people completing compulsory education.
- 8.3. This is an offer in either:
- A school sixth form
 - A college of further education
 - Employment with training to at least level 2
 - An apprenticeship or traineeship

9. NEET Interdependencies Group

- 9.1. Central to the achievement of participation targets is the NEET Interdependencies Group. This brings together TEP and the KCC services who have a responsibility to prevent children becoming NEET or to support them.
- 9.2. Included in this group are:
- TEP Skills and Employability Service – mainstream NEETs and Not Knowns.
 - Integrated Children’s Services/Early Help and Preventative Services – mainstream NEETs and Not Knowns, teenage parents.
 - Youth Justice Service.
 - Inclusion and Attendance Service.
 - Special Education Needs and Disability service.
 - Virtual School Kent – Looked After Children, Care Leavers, and Unaccompanied Asylum- Seeking Children (UASC)
 - Management Information.
 - Fair Access – Elected Home Educated and Children Missing Education.
- 9.3. Attendees of the Interdependencies Group are service leaders who have the authority to make strategic and operational decisions. The group provides governance and ensures operational decisions are implemented by their service. The group meets three times a year to review progress against the NEET action plan and problem solve strategic and operational delivery problems. The group has addressed data quality to enable quick identification and more accurate reporting

10. Contract Management

- 10.1. KCC’s Commissioning team monitors the contract using:
- Data analysis of KPIs at county, area, and district level performance.
 - Qualitative information gathered from both the provider and an Integrated Children’s Services perspective provides challenge and support
 - Narrative and case studies provided by TEP for the scorecard
 - Analysis of the Compliments, Comments and Complaints log, Social Value Log, Safeguarding Themes Log and Risk Log
- 10.2. The Service Manager of the NEET Support Service has day to day responsibility for the service and contract delivery across the county, dealing with all contractual and performance issues.
- 10.3. While the provider is performing at or above the anticipated levels, the contract monitoring meetings occur on a quarterly basis, with a monthly desk-based analysis of data and qualitative information.
- 10.4. Monthly highlight reports are prepared for the commissioning portfolio. This highlights any risks, themes, and contract activity.

11. NEET Service performance

- 11.1. TEP's performance against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that look at both service demand and service delivery & quality. These KPIs are reported and analysed monthly via a scorecard. (See appendix 2 for full breakdown of KPI's, RAG rating and benchmark targets and Appendix 3 for the most recent iteration of scorecard- April 2022)
- 11.2. Overall, the NEET Support Service is performing well. The KPI's that the NEET Support Service has consistently performed well in can be seen in KPI 69, the percentage of new cases where assessment or plan has been completed within 20 working days. The Percentage of young people matched to a EET opportunity, and the percentage still engaged after 3 months, KPI 70 and 72 is performing well and apart from August 2021 and 2020 has always been RAG rated green.
- 11.3. Key Performance Indicator (KPI) 61 showing the number of NEETs being referred per month has reduced over recent months and is RAG rated as red. This would usually flag concerns but this decrease in referrals is due to the changing landscape in the reduction of overall NEETs and NEETs Not Known. Whilst not currently a concern, commissioners will continue to closely monitor against the backdrop of overall NEET figures.
- 11.4. KPI 63 which monitors the average number of young people supported over the year this balances out the RED Rag rating in KPI 61. There is also a season fluctuation based on school terms as evidenced by the year-on-year trend patterns.
- 11.5. A sticking point for the contract is the KPI 65, the percentage of individual cases that are open for longer than 12 weeks has increased to red in recent months. The best RAG rating active for this KPI was back in September 2021, 29.6%, but will need to show 20% or lower to achieve a RAG rating of green. This is due to an increase of complex cases, such as supporting more young people with from the YJ cohort, with an EHCP and / or mental health problems.
- 11.6. A look back over the past 2 years, shows a seasonal variation in the months August to January where the KPIs are ambers compared to February to July where you will see the KPIs are mostly red. This is a direct correlation to when the school, college or educational providers are more likely to be starting training or courses during September through to January.
- 11.7. KPI 75 which monitors the number of referrals within the last 12 months, has been moving in the wrong direction over the past 5 months and is now RAG rated red. In the most recent Contract Monitoring meeting this movement into the red RAG rating, was flagged as a concern and the NEET Support Manager will be completing a deep dive, gaining further analysis to give more detail as to why this is happening and any common themes/characteristics coming from the young people being re referred.

11.8. Figure 3 below illustrates that the NEET figures for 2021/22 are the lowest for Kent in 3 years and not knowns is the lowest for 4 years

Figure 3.- Kent NEET figures 2017-2022

Three-month average: December; January & February	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22
NEETs	2.6%	2.8%	3.3%	3.0%	2.8%
Not Knowns	2.8%	3.6%	4.4%	4.5%	2.3%
Combined NEETs & Not Knowns	5.4%	6.4%	7.7%	7.5%	5.1%

Source: KCC MI NEET Report, February 2022

11.9 Data suggests that those who are NEET, remain so for longer. January 2022 data shows that there was an increase of 27 children who were NEET for a period more than 52 weeks.

11.10 The combined NEET and Not Known percentage for those with an EHCP has reduced from 9% to 6.6% in the last year. There have also been significant decreases for those supported by Youth Justice (8.5% reduction) and VSK (4.4% reduction).

12. The Department for Education (DfE) NEET scorecard

12.1. The DfE publish a local authority NEET scorecard in July each year, with data taken from the monthly returns submitted by Kent County Council.

12.2. The scorecard ranks local authority performance, presents the data in quintiles, and shows progress since the previous year. Authorities in the 5th quintile are sent an improvement letter by the DfE. The December 2020 – February '21 scorecard placed KCC in the 5th quintile. Current data indicates that when the next scorecard is formally published KCC will have moved up into quartile 4.

13. Young Person's voice

13.1. The Commissioning team have worked with the NEET Support Service to gauge the views of children about what good support means to them and the value of the TEP service.

13.2. Children and their families who use this service also have a constant feedback loop via the Compliments, Comments and Complaints (Triple 'C') log. This is reviewed in the formal contract management process in which the provider shares the feedback and explains how it has been used to develop their

services. An example of the May 2022 Triple C log feedback from young people (Please see Appendix 4)

- 13.3. The voice of Professionals is also gathered through the Triple C log and an example of this is demonstrated in Appendix 5.
- 13.4. An example where TEP have adapted their service in response to feedback from young people is to provide training for staff regarding specific topics and themes. In the last year staff have undertaken LGBTQ+, understanding autism and benefits. In response to feedback on mental health issued TEP worked to develop the content of the reconnect programmes in Thanet and Sittingbourne to include support for those with poor mental health.

14. Conclusion

- 14.1. The service to prevent and reduce children from being NEET has benefited from integrated approaches between The Education People and Kent County Councils' services. The partnership has the expertise and flexibility to shape service delivery, has created efficiencies, improved data accuracy, and enabled quicker identification and support.

Recommendation(s):

The Children's, Young people and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to NOTE the report

Report Authors	Relevant Directors Stuart Collins Job title: Director of Integrated Children's Services (West Kent and EHPS Lead) Telephone number: 03000 410519 Email address: stuart.collins@kent.gov.uk
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