

Kent County Council

14 - 24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy

2012 - 2015

DRAFT

	Page
Executive summary	
Introduction	2
Our Ambition	4
Strategic Priorities	9
The National Context	11
Kent Initiatives for Training and Employment	15
Conclusion	19
Appendix1: Kent Performance Profile	20
Appendix 2: Targets and Performance Measures	24
Appendix 3: The Role of the Local Authority	26
Appendix 4: Case Studies	27
Appendix 5: Kent Employment Sectors	
Appendix6: Resources to Deliver the Strategy	29

Executive Summary

Our Ambition:

Our ambition is for all young people in Kent to become better qualified and more employable; to be able to participate and achieve success in education and work based training at least until the age of 18; and to ensure more 18 to 24 year olds can access higher learning or sustained employment that is appropriate to their needs and relevant to the local and national economy.

Our Aims:

We aim to achieve lower youth unemployment, put in place better systems for local employers and learning providers to work in partnership so that we secure the higher levels of skilled young people we need in the key growth sectors relevant to the Kent economy, and have every young person participating in high quality learning or training that is relevant to their needs, until the age of 18, with a good outcome.

About the Strategy:

This strategy is designed to link the world of learning to the world of work more successfully, and to bring about more rapid transformation in young people's skills, qualifications and employability. The strategy aims to set out the overarching ambitions and outcomes that we and our partners intend to achieve.

We have four key areas of focus for our strategy. These are:

- To raise attainment and skill levels
- To improve vocational education, training and apprenticeships
- To increase participation and employment
- To target support to vulnerable young people

In order to succeed, we know we have to develop more effective partnership working between the local authority, schools, colleges, higher education providers, work-based learning providers, employers and other agencies. It is clear that greater collaboration is needed between groups of schools and with local FE colleges and employers, and that local 14-19 partnerships need to do more to develop the curriculum offer, progression pathways and work based training opportunities for local young people.

Why do we need a strategy?

Recent reports from Government, the CBI and KCC's Select Committee Report, *the Student Journey*, confirm the poor track record in managing school to work transition, the need for radical overhaul and improvement in vocational education and training and the urgency of addressing employers' concerns about the work readiness and employability skills of many school and college leavers and graduates.

The majority of young people in Kent succeed in education and make a positive transition to higher learning and the world of work. However we are not succeeding well enough in

engaging and educating all young people to a standard that ensures their future economic well being or meets the needs of the economy. This is a great waste of human potential which no developed country can afford if we are to compete in a global market. We need to do better in Kent, in how we educate adolescents and young adults to be more highly skilled and work ready.

Who will the strategy impact upon?

All young people aged 14-24, but in particular:

- Young people who would not currently chose to stay on in education and training to age 18
- Young people who would benefit from vocational pathways
- Vulnerable learners, such as care leavers, teenage parents, young offenders and young people with learning difficulties who are consistently over represented in NEET figures.
- Those pursuing higher education courses and graduates

To influence:

- Young people making choices
- Parents and carers
- Employers
- Education and training providers
- Commissioners

To engage:

- Schools, FE Colleges and Higher Education and their representative bodies
- Specialist providers
- Employers and employer networks
- Statutory partners
- Funding bodies
- Sector Skills Councils
- Young people and their parents/carers

How will the strategy be delivered and monitored?

We will develop a new Employment, Learning and Skills Partnership Board that will take on joint responsibility for the delivery and oversight of this strategy.

Conclusion:

The initiatives and the strategic priorities set out in this document represent one of Kent County Council's major goals; to change the life chances and employment prospects of young people and in turn the future prosperity and growth of Kent as one of the best places to live in the UK.

Introduction

Our strategy is designed to achieve a more comprehensive vocational offer for young people aged 14 to 24 to sit alongside academic pathways and to make the changes needed to build a learning and skills system fit for the 21st century.

This means more rapid development in Kent whereby the work of schools, colleges and employers become better integrated and responsive to the needs of young people and the economy, and young people have access to the highest quality and levels of vocational education in the UK¹.

It aims to deliver the commitment made in Bold Steps for Kent to “*work with all providers to deliver a 14-24 strategy that equips young people with the academic, vocational and life skills required to succeed in the 21st century economy*”

Young people are the future for Kent and raising their educational achievement and aspirations are directly linked to their future prosperity, the prosperity of the community and the success of the local economy. Against the backdrop of low UK economic growth and high youth unemployment, there is urgent need in Kent to do more to support all young people to achieve better educational outcomes and be better prepared for skilled employment or further learning at age 18 and beyond.

This is a massive agenda that requires fundamental changes to the way we deliver education and skills training, so that the system becomes much more adaptive to our rapidly changing world. Improving the employability of young people and the transition from school to work is a crucial task if we want to contribute to the country’s economic recovery as well as ensure the young people of Kent have the best possible prospects.

The education system is being challenged like never before to equip all young people with the qualifications, skills and experiences that will enable them to succeed in work and life. The gaps between what we are achieving and what our society needs are widening, as is the mismatch between the skills required by a rapidly changing world of work and many of the vocational courses and qualifications provided by schools and colleges. The economic downturn has sharpened our perception of the underlying trends and structural changes that need to be made to improve our prosperity, and the growth and international competitiveness of the UK economy. Education plays a vital part in this.

Recent reports from Government, the CBI and KCC’s Select Committee Report, *the Student Journey*, confirm the poor track record in managing school to work transition, the need for radical overhaul and improvement in vocational education and training and the urgency of addressing employers’ concerns about the work readiness and employability skills of many school and college leavers and graduates.

We are enormously challenged, still, to ensure all young people achieve the levels of literacy, numeracy and IT competence required for a skilled job in the modern economy. We are also challenged to develop the range and diversity of vocational courses required to ensure all young people’s aptitudes and interests are developed for their future sustained employment in a world of work that is innovating fast. The highest status university courses are vocationally focused and yet school and college level vocational courses are often considered to have

¹ Action for Jobs: How to get the UK Working, CBI, October 2011

lower status and limited value in our system. At the same time, well established apprenticeship programmes run by some companies are highly prized with very competitive entry requirements, but we do not have enough of them. The demand for apprenticeships is rising rapidly but the capacity of businesses to provide them is lagging behind. Many employers and schools recognise the need to work more closely but we still have a situation where many young people do not have sufficient opportunity to learn about and experience the world of work as part of their on-going education². And like many developed countries we have a high rate of school failure among some groups of young people, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, which leads to unacceptably high levels of unemployment and social cost. These are some of the challenges this strategy is designed to tackle in Kent.

We are building on some good developments in recent years, which highlight some of the key ingredients for future success. The Kent Vocational programme was established in 2005 to provide high quality practical pathways for young people at age 14 in a range of occupations.. These provided a blend of school and work based practical skills training, delivered by skilled experts in different occupations, in environments with high quality industrial standard equipment. There was good employer engagement in the design of the curriculum and in providing mentoring and guidance for young people. In total 29 vocational centres and specialist workshops were established and by 2010 there were over 8000 young people engaged in these programmes offering a wide range of work related qualifications. The vocational programme continues to deliver a range of worthwhile vocational options for 14 to 16 year olds one day a week, complemented by a core curriculum designed to provide young people with the qualifications they need at age 16.

The practical, experiential and work based elements of these programmes are some of the reasons for their success in engaging young people and improving their skills. In particular the Young Apprenticeship programme was a significant success, with a 98% success rate which included level 2 English and mathematics. A number of the vocational programmes made a significant contribution to the reduction of the NEET figure, which was well below the national average for a number of years but is now increasing. The one day a week model in high quality provision put Kent at the forefront of innovative delivery of vocational programmes for 14-16 year olds nationally and was praised by the Wolf Report.

However there were shortcomings, which we need to address as we move forward. The lack of clear progression and extension to post 16 learning and higher level vocational qualifications; the mismatch between some of the courses and the needs of local businesses; the limited attention to level 2 literacy and numeracy qualifications in some programmes; and the lack of flexibility in working arrangements between schools and other providers are all priorities for improvement as part of this strategy. These, and the need to scale up to a much more comprehensive system of vocational education that supports all young people to at least age 18 and beyond, and offers higher level qualifications with better routes to skilled employment for all young adults in Kent, are the main focus of this strategy.

Patrick Leeson
Corporate Director, Education, Learning and Skills

Ambition for the Education and Training of 14-24 Year Olds in Kent

² Learning to Grow: What employers need from education and skills survey 2012, CBI/Pearson, June 2012

Our ambition is for all young people in Kent to become better qualified and more employable; to be able to participate and achieve success in education and work based training at least until the age of 18; and to ensure more 18 to 24 year olds can access higher learning or sustained employment that is appropriate to their needs and relevant to the local and national economy.

Our commitment is to seek to inspire young people in Kent to fulfil their potential in the community and in the world of work and to equip them with the academic, vocational and life skills required to succeed. We will work with partners to ensure that young people are able to access the information and gain the qualifications, skills, work experience and learning opportunities they need.

The majority of young people in Kent succeed in education and make a positive transition to higher learning and the world of work. However we are not succeeding well enough in engaging and educating all young people to a standard that ensures their future economic well being or meets the needs of the economy. While we educate 60% of 16 year olds to a good standard and over 40% of young people engage in higher education, the system lets down nearly 30% of young people whose skills and qualifications limit their prospects to low paid and low skilled employment and high risk of unemployment.

This is a great waste of human potential which no developed country can afford if we are to compete in a global market. It is only through an improvement in our skills base that Kent's young people will be able to compete globally with the fastest growing nations. Introducing the OECD Skills Strategy in May 2012, the OECD Secretary General said that skills have become the global currency of 21st century economies. Other countries are developing faster and achieving growth through improved education and learning, by adapting their education systems more quickly to the needs of a dynamic work environment and digital age and by integrating more successfully their business, school and university systems with advances in key skills sectors. Our young people are not just competing against each other for jobs anymore. They are competing against Indian engineers, Chinese designers and African investment analysts. We need to foster in young people flexibility, practicality and self-reliance and ensure that their education enables them to be able to do things as well as know things.

We need to do better in Kent, in how we educate adolescents and young adults to be more highly skilled and work ready. This strategy is designed to link the world of learning to the world of work; bring about more rapid transformation in young people's skills, qualifications and employability. It also sets out the overarching ambitions and outcomes that we intend to achieve with our partners. The strategy will be underpinned by a series of policies and plans that will set out in more detail how we intend jointly, with our key stakeholders and partners, to deliver these ambitions.

The successful engagement of employers and more effective partnership arrangements are paramount. Kent has a large number of employer networks and groups. We are also developing new forms of school collaborative arrangements and have established the Kent Association of Headteachers as the main partnership forum for shaping the future of education in Kent. In addition, we are a key partner in the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) that includes councils, businesses, universities and colleges from Essex and East Sussex, all focused on driving forward prosperity by creating the right environment for growth. It is recognised that access to a world class, appropriately skilled workforce is the top factor in influencing business location and company performance, and therefore a key

aspect of the LEP agenda is to ensure that businesses have the skilled workforces needed to compete, particularly in the key growth sectors that will drive economic growth for the future. We need to build on this potential to improve engagement and collaborative working and to share information, seek feedback on new initiatives and gain commitment for business to increase contacts with schools and colleges, develop work based learning and work experience opportunities for young people and be more involved in the design of vocational programmes.

In order to succeed, we know we have to develop more effective partnership working between the local authority, schools, colleges, higher education providers, work-based learning providers, employers and other agencies. It is clear that greater collaboration is needed between groups of schools and with local FE colleges and employers, and that local 14-19 partnerships need to do more to develop the curriculum offer, progression pathways and work based training opportunities for local young people.

The ambitions of this 14-24 Strategy must therefore be delivered in partnership with a wide variety of organisations, including:

Schools	Specialist providers
FE Colleges	Employers
HE institutions	Employer Networks
Education Funding Agency	District Councils
Skills Funding Agency	Sector Skills Councils
Job Centre Plus	Diocesan Boards

We will develop a new Employment, Learning and Skills Partnership Board that will take on joint responsibility for the delivery and oversight of this strategy.

We aim to achieve lower youth unemployment, put in place better systems for local employers and learning providers to work in partnership so that we secure the higher levels of skilled young people we need in the key growth sectors relevant to the Kent economy, and have every young person participating in high quality learning or training that is relevant to their needs, until the age of 18, with a good outcome.

Achieving our ambition will be challenging when nearly 10,000 18-24 year olds in Kent are currently unemployed, there are wide gaps in secondary school performance at age 16, about 12% of 16-19 year olds do not participate in education or work based training and by the age of 19 over 20% of young people still do not have the basic qualifications to get a skilled job.

In order to meet this challenge we have four key areas of focus for our strategy:

1. Raise Attainment

This strategy will focus as a priority on developing the vocational curriculum and raising the achievement of 14 to 16 year olds, so that all young people can progress to meaningful

qualification pathways to age 18. Attainment at 16 is the single most important factor in securing participation, learning and achievement between the ages of 16 and 19, especially attainment in English and mathematics. We need therefore to continue to raise the attainment of five good GCSEs including English and mathematics at age 16, and when this is not achieved at age 16 to ensure young people can attain this standard by age 17 or 18.

Most young people want to stay in education after the age of 16 to improve their levels of qualifications and most of those who follow an A level pathway do well and are well provided for in schools and colleges. However other post 16 learners are not so well provided for and do less well, so another priority is to improve the curriculum offer and the progress and educational outcomes for all 16-19 year olds, especially those from low income backgrounds who achieve well below average in Kent.

For the young people who follow a Level 3 qualification or Advanced level pathway we need to see an improvement in outcomes. Kent achieves below the national average on all measures and we need to be more ambitious for all young people, especially those who can and should progress to graduate level. We need more graduates in Kent and to retain more graduate employees in Kent businesses. Attainment at grades A and B at Advanced level is very variable, even in schools where prior attainment at age 16 would predict very good level 3 outcomes. This should continue to be a focus for improvement in school sixth forms and colleges as part of this strategy.

2. Improve Vocational Education, Training and Apprenticeships

The second key strand of the strategy is to ensure there is a quality vocational education and training offer in place so that all 14-19 year olds can access and succeed in following an appropriate pathway for education or employment with training. This means a much more comprehensive and systematic programme of vocational education, 14-19, across the county that is well matched to students' needs, has clear progression to higher levels of qualification and has employer engagement in the design of the programmes and employer contribution to their suitability for the local labour market. It will include a significant increase in young people taking up and successfully completing an apprenticeship, as well as more young people following other vocational pathways that lead to higher level qualifications and a skilled job.

Kent's business community, employers, FE colleges and work based learning providers are the key to this ambition. Learners on full and part-time vocational courses need to develop new employment skills, and progress to the next level of learning, whilst receiving relevant and high quality work experience throughout their period of study.

3. Increase Participation and Employment:

The third key strand is to achieve full participation to age 18 for all young people. The Education and Skills Act 2008, places a duty on all young people to participate in education or training until age 18 by 2015. This doesn't necessarily mean staying in school. Young people will be able to choose how they participate, through full-time education, such as school or college; an apprenticeship; part-time education or training if they are employed, or volunteering for 20 hours or more a week.

Tracking progress

Under the Raising the Participation Age (RPA) regulations the local authority has a responsibility to ensure all young people's education or training can be tracked until age 18. We recognise that effective tracking and monitoring begins much earlier as young people approach the age of 14 and make decisions about their future pathways. An agreed approach to doing this in Kent, in partnership with schools, colleges, employers and work based training providers is a priority.

Preparing for employment

We recognise that all young people need to be educated to develop their employability skills and that employers' surveys identify the lack of these essential skills by many young people as a major concern. Communication, problem solving, initiative, team work, time keeping, resilience and literacy and numeracy skills are as essential for employability as qualification levels and vocational specific skills.

A priority for the strategy is to ensure employability and enterprise skills are taught effectively as part of the curriculum from Primary school onwards. Building on this, a priority is also to ensure young people access quality work experience as they progress through their 14 -19 education and that there is greater employer engagement in the design and delivery of curriculum courses and work based learning. Quality work experience placements are one of the most effective routes into apprenticeships and other employment with training.

Needs of the local economy

It is clear that our strategy, to be effective, must focus on the local economy and the needs of the key skills sectors in Kent, as well as ensure the education and training offer for young people is well integrated with employers' plans and needs in different areas of the county. We aim to achieve improved employer engagement in how young people are educated and prepared for employment, so that the education and skills system in Kent is more responsive to the changing needs of local business and workforce requirements, and more young people are helped into jobs.

The priority will be to realign the post 16 offer to better reflect the needs of the local economy. We need to develop curriculum pathways and qualification routes, as well as sustained work experience and training for young people, which are better matched with the requirements of key skills sectors in Kent. A key part of this will be to make effective use of all the available local and national schemes that are designed to increase youth employment with training, including apprenticeships.

Progressing to higher education

Where students are achieving high grades at Advanced level and want to progress to higher education, we need to ensure that they are optimising their choice of course and institution, to maximise their employment opportunities within their chosen vocational pathway. We know from research carried out by the Sutton Trust that applications to the UK's top universities vary widely by similar types of school and colleges. Kent learners are not always being given consistent messages about university choices and future earning and employment prospects.

We will work with local Higher Education providers to develop vocational pathways and ensure relevant work experience opportunities are available locally. In future we aim to follow the progress of Kent learners across HE institutions to measure their course choices against employment outcomes and feedback this analysis into local advice and guidance for young people.

We aim to ensure that more young people can progress from Advanced and Higher level apprenticeships to higher education and that more young people from disadvantaged backgrounds go to university or progress to graduate level apprenticeships.

Transition from learning to work

The strategy will also focus on supporting young people to age 24 into employment. The successful transition from learning into work continues to be a key issue for young people well into early adulthood, and depends very much on the skills and qualifications they have achieved since age 16. Better qualified young people have lower unemployment, but it is also the case that many better qualified young people are unemployed because their skills do not match the needs of the local economy and the local economy is contracting rather than growing. Nationally over 1 million 18-24 year olds are unemployed (10,000 in Kent) but many local employers and small businesses say one of the reasons for not expanding is the lack of appropriately skilled workers, especially among young people. To address this and encourage employers to invest in skills and more sustainable workforce development for growth, this strategy will give priority to developing further our partnerships between business, schools, higher and further education.

We will also work with all partners and agencies to ensure as many unemployed 18-24 year olds as possible benefit from schemes like the Youth Contract, which is support worth nearly £1 billion over the next three years. It includes extra support through Jobcentre Plus offering young people additional adviser intervention, access to a careers interview with the National Careers Service, an offer of a work experience or sector-based work academy place, and entry into the Work Programme which provides a subsidised job with wage incentives for employers to take on young people.

4. Target Support to Vulnerable Young People

The fourth key strand is to target support more effectively to young people who are at greatest risk of poor outcomes and future unemployment. The strategy recognises that many young people face challenges in their lives and need additional support. The number of young people not in education, employment or training is rising and there is over representation in this group of vulnerable and disadvantaged young people who are looked after by the local authority, care leavers, young offenders, young parents and refugees and asylum seekers. Too many young people in Kent are excluded permanently from school and remain outside the mainstream education system, with poorer prospects for achievement as a result. Additionally, there is insufficient provision for 16-19 year olds with learning difficulties and disabilities to help them access further learning and achieve independent living and employment. We will, therefore, give particular attention to

- reducing exclusions and the NEET figures for vulnerable groups
- improving participation, provision and outcomes for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities, including better integrated support for them as they move towards adult life

- developing integrated adolescent support services that will provide targeted help for vulnerable young people and those at risk of poorer outcomes and future unemployment.

It is also clear that more intensive work is needed in some parts of Kent where youth unemployment is well above average, there are high numbers of NEETS and attainment outcomes at ages 16 and 19 are below average. The strategy will pilot more integrated working to support young people in at least four of these areas of high need in 2012-2013.

Our Strategic Priorities

The key priorities for the 14-24 Learning and Skills Strategy are to:

Raise Attainment by:

- *Ensuring more young people achieve five good GCSEs including English and mathematics at age 16 and 19, and we close the gap so that more 16 to 19 year olds achieve level 2 and Level 3 qualifications especially those from low income backgrounds*
- *Ensuring more young people from disadvantaged backgrounds go to university and more young people can progress from advanced level and higher apprenticeships to higher education*
- *Ensuring more young people who follow an A level pathway complete their courses and achieve better grades, so that they can access higher level apprenticeships and professional pathways, move to higher education of their choice so that we widen participation in higher education, and for those young people with the best grades that more should secure a place at the top universities*

Improve Vocational Education, Training and Apprenticeships by:

- *Ensuring the 14-16 curriculum provides vocational options for young people that lead to higher qualifications and better progression to post 16 vocational learning and training*
- *Increasing the take up and completion of apprenticeships, and ensure there is better progression to higher level apprenticeships for all 16-24 year olds*
- *Expanding other vocational options that lead more directly to employment in the Kent economy*

Increase Participation and Employment by:

- *Ensuring all young people participate in learning and training to age 17 by 2013 and to age 18 by 2015, commencing with pilots in Tonbridge, Swale, Thanet and Dover during 2012-13.*
- *Developing curriculum pathways and progression for 16-19 year olds so that those who do not follow an A level pathway have high quality options that deliver a good outcome and access to skilled employment*
- *Developing young people's employability skills as an essential part of the curriculum*
- *Improving access to high quality information and advice, and work experience, so that young people have a better understanding of the labour market and FE options*

- *Ensuring new courses and pathways 14-19 are more responsive to the needs of local skills sectors and are better integrated with the needs of the local economy, as well as being supported by local employers' investment and engagement.*
- *Promoting the new Kent 16+ Travel Card to learners and providers in Kent to minimise travel being a barrier to learning.*
- *Developing an effective system of local 14-19 learning and employment partnerships that engage schools, colleges, work based learning providers, employers and Jobcentre plus in delivering planned coordinated improvements in young people's skills, qualifications and employability.*
- *Delivering increased youth employment through support for apprenticeships, internships, work placements, re-training opportunities, targeted work with those out of work for more than six months and engagement with employers and other agencies to promote wage and training incentives.*
- *Developing employer engagement in education, more opportunities for young people to have contact with, and careers advice from employers*

Target Support to Vulnerable Young People by:

- *Ensuring disadvantaged young people get good quality work experience and more support for progression towards further education and work, so that achievement gaps narrow and unemployment for this group is not disproportionately higher*
- *Improving early intervention, support and pathway planning for young people most at risk of becoming NEET so that we rapidly reduce the NEET figures*
- *Developing an integrated adolescent support programme so that all young people at risk of poorer outcomes have tailored support to improve their well being, to participate in learning, training and other positive activities and are helped to access employment*
- *Improving 16-24 learning and employment opportunities, and outcomes, for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities*
- *Developing effective tracking and monitoring of all young people from the earliest years of secondary school and more particularly from age 16, so that all young people's needs can be addressed and they are supported to participate and succeed to age 18*
- *Developing more intensive and integrated programmes of support and provision, providing highly targeted interventions and investment in new learning and training opportunities, in the areas of Kent with the poorest outcomes and prospects for 14-24 year olds.*
- *Completing the review of Pupil Referral Units so that each local area has a more flexible and integrated approach to supporting the learning and achievement of young people at risk of exclusion from school and those following alternative curriculum provision.*

The National Context

The national developments and reforms of vocational education and skills training pathways require a coordinated local response and one important purpose of this Strategy is to provide this coordination, to maximise the benefits, opportunities and resources available as a result of national initiatives, so that young people in Kent gain as much as possible.

Our strategy addresses national policy developments which set out the requirement to raise attainment, close achievement gaps, develop vocational education, increase apprenticeships, improve youth employment and employer engagement, secure participation for all young people in education and training to age 18 by 2015 and target support to disadvantaged and vulnerable young people.³ We will make optimum use of the reforms to support and drive forward our strategy in Kent.

The recent changes to the school performance framework at age 16, reformed vocational qualifications and Study Programmes for 16 to 19 year olds, which will be accompanied by far reaching changes in the way post-16 education is funded, monitored and reported, we believe provide an opportunity for more creative curriculum design and better learning pathways. It is helpful that from 2012 the government is publishing destination measures showing how many young people at age 16 progress into education, training or employment from individual schools and colleges.

From September 2012 schools have responsibility for providing impartial careers advice and guidance for all pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 and the government will consult on extending this duty for all 16-18 year olds. This an opportunity for schools to ensure young people receive better advice and guidance about their future learning and employment options.

The proposals in the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Green Paper also require young people with learning difficulties and disabilities to participate to age 18 and to have integrated education, health and care plans to support them to age 25. This will help to ensure better provision is in place for these young people, coordinated more effectively across health, social care and education services.

The Youth Contract is designed to support disengaged 16-18 year olds to participate in education, work experience or a job with training. Those unemployed who are supported through the Youth Contract will face the possible penalty of losing benefits if they do not participate or if they drop out of a work placement or subsidised job⁴. We will ensure we make maximum use of this to support as many unemployed young people as possible to get into work.

Recent evidence suggests that young people who participate are likely to have had good contact with employers while at school and a new Education and Employers Task Force aims to provide people from all sectors and professions to visit schools to talk about their jobs and

³ The Plan for Growth, HM Treasury/BIS, March 2011

⁴ Building Engagement, Building Futures: 16 to 24 year olds in Education, Training and Work, DFE/BIS/DWP, December 2011

career routes. We will with schools to encourage a significant increase in employer engagement and contact with school pupils.

The CBI is making it a priority to support businesses and schools to team up to raise ambition at all levels and to take the essential steps needed to build a schools system fit for the 21st century. The Ambition for All Campaign will identify what works well in terms of preparing young people for life and work. The campaign wants to determine what should be done to ensure that all young people are leaving school with the skills needed for employment and life. The proposals include:

- support for a national roll-out of successful existing school-business engagement initiatives with a new 'Employability School' standard
- a network of 450 local business people (Business Ambassadors) to act as champions to enthuse and inspire young people about the world of work from an early age, through the development of school business links in each local area
- increasing business commitment to providing high quality meaningful work experience

The government is targeting more investment on apprenticeships and has developed a new 16-19 bursaries fund to provide additional support to low income learners for the cost of transport, food and learning materials. In 2012-13 the government is providing more funding for apprenticeships and expects to see over 140,000 more 16-18 year olds start an apprenticeship, with £1500 incentive payments to small businesses to take on an apprentice. Taking advantage of these initiatives is one of our key priorities.

Apprenticeships are not appropriate for everyone and the Level 2 entry qualification means that a number of young people do not have the English and mathematics qualifications required by many employers. Other pathways are also being promoted, based on new 16-19 vocational programmes of study offered by schools, FE colleges and other work based learning providers, with significant elements of work experience and incentives for schools and colleges to develop more coherent packages that suit the needs of students who might otherwise disengage. We will ensure as much local flexibility and innovation as needed to support young people in different parts of Kent will be developed as we deliver new pre-apprenticeship programmes and the new vocational programmes of study.

The National Performance Profile

Nationally, the performance challenges mirror those in Kent. (See appendix 1). There is a persistent link between disadvantage and low educational attainment and participation, which continues to blight life chances into adulthood. Pupils eligible for free school meals achieve half as well at age 16 compared to their peers, are more than twice as likely to become NEET, and are four times more likely to drop out of education or training before the age of 19. About 75% of young people unemployed for more than six months have qualifications below level 2 and come from lower income backgrounds.

Gaps in attainment open up in the early years and widen as children get older. It also becomes obvious early on which children have most challenges and barriers to learning and achievement. Young people from families with multiple problems are most at risk of not participating and this is often the result of many years of failed interventions. All this points to the need for more effective early intervention and better targeted support to those children and young people who need it most to succeed.

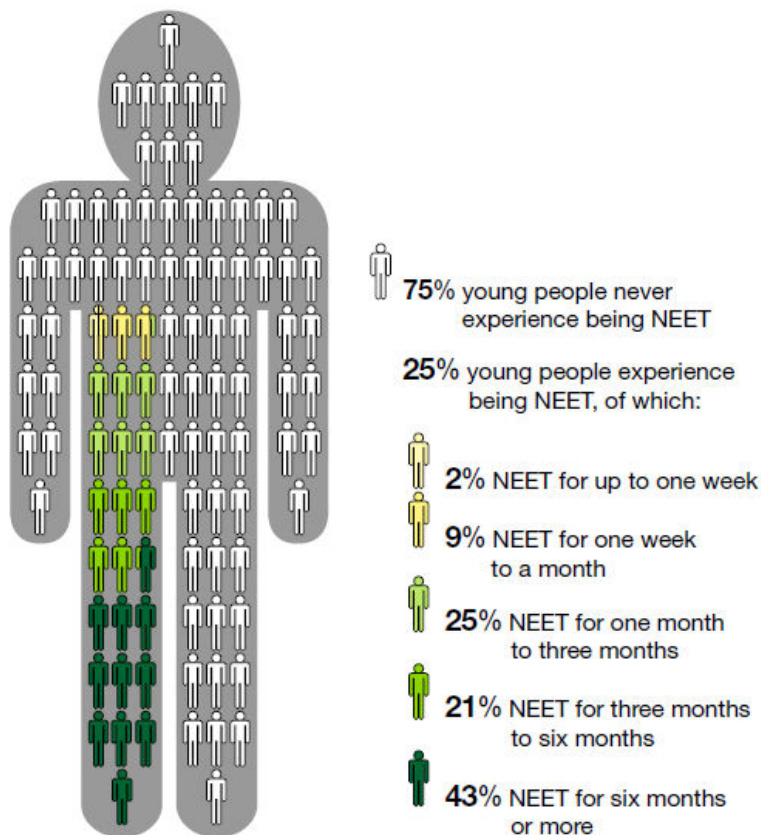
Nationally in 2011 about a quarter of 11 year olds progressed to secondary school with attainment levels below level 4 in English and mathematics. At GCSE, 59% of pupils attained five good GCSEs including English and mathematics. This reflects the Kent profile. Raising attainment in English and mathematics is critical, therefore, for all age groups in Primary and Secondary schools but most critically at age 16 and subsequently for 16 and 17 year olds. Where 18-24 year olds do not have a level 2 English and mathematics qualification, providing this opportunity for them is critical to improving their employment prospects.

The employment rate of adults with level 2 qualifications is twice that of those without qualifications and achieving level 2 and 3 qualifications dramatically increases lifetime earnings.

Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training - NEETs

Nationally more than 96% of 16 year olds and 87% of 17 year olds participate in education or work based learning. (In Kent these percentages are lower). There are over one million 16-18 year olds who are NEET and over one million young people aged 18-24 unemployed. There is also an increasing number of young people in the population. Most young people who are NEET or unemployed remain so for short periods of time and it is a smaller group that requires the most intensive targeted support. Among OECD countries, the UK has the eighth highest percentage of 16-19 year olds who are NEET.

Figure 1: Most young people are never NEET: most NEET episodes last fewer than six months

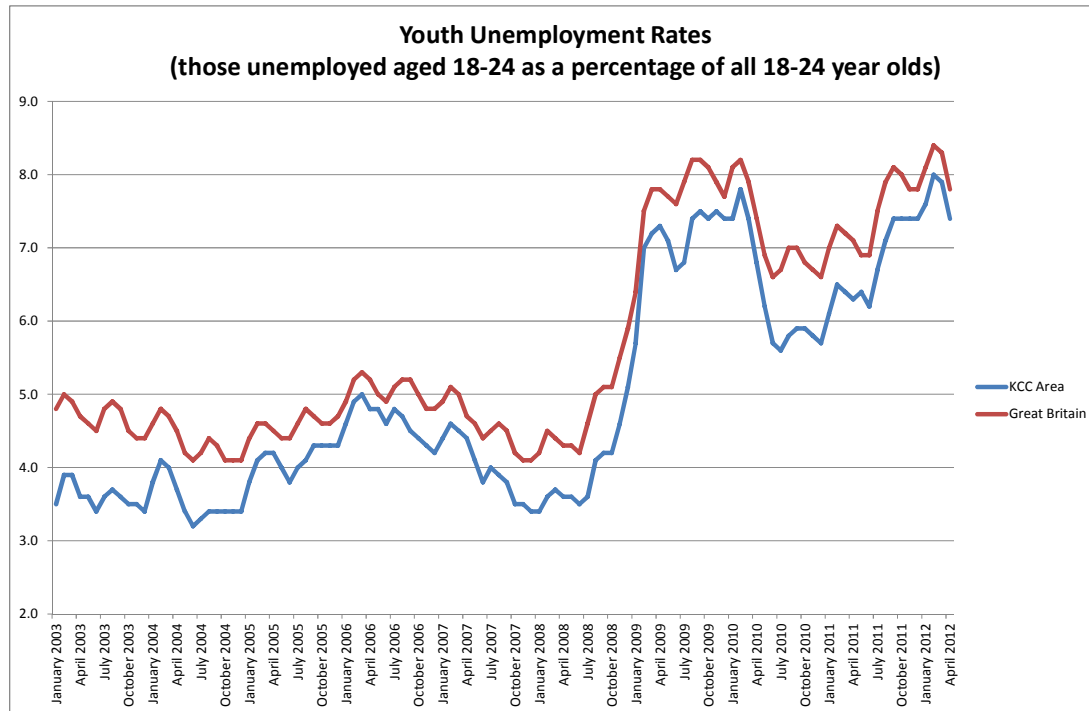


Source: Audit Commission, analysis of Connexions data from fieldwork areas (approximately 24,000 young people), 2010

Youth Unemployment:

Youth unemployment is of particular concern because of its impact in the longer term on lifetime earning and employment. Research based on longitudinal tracking of two UK cohorts from birth suggests that a year of youth unemployment (16 to 24) reduces earnings 10 years later by approximately 6% and by up to 15% by age 42. It also suggests that these young people spend an extra month unemployed every year up to their mid 30s. These effects diminish slowly in adult life but the studies suggest that 1 in 5 of these adults are still impacted by low wages and higher risk of unemployment into middle age.⁵

Chart 2



In a recent report, the TUC warned that young people leaving school, college or university are facing the bleakest employment outlook since 1994. Figures show one in five young people (20.4 %) are neither working nor studying full-time. An analysis by the trade union body, released to coincide with the latest unemployment figures, shows that the proportion of young people not in employment, education or training is at its highest level since 1994. This is despite the fact that the number of young people in education has been on a steady upwards trajectory over the last two decades. 41 per cent of young people are now in full-time education, compared to just 24 per cent in 1992. Young men currently have a higher chance of being in either work or education than young women, with 80.6 per cent studying or in work, compared to 78.5 per cent of young women.

National priorities, therefore, are to reduce youth unemployment and the NEET population, improve attainment at ages 16 and 19 especially in English and mathematics, develop more quality vocational education leading to higher levels of skill and qualification that are valued in the world of work, increase apprenticeships and employer engagement, ensure young people receive impartial careers guidance and advice, improve progression pathways to post 16 education and training and support more vulnerable young people to achieve. These are reflected in this strategy.

⁵ Research undertaken for ACEVO Commission on Youth Unemployment: Youth Unemployment: the crisis we cannot afford.

Kent Initiatives for Skills and Employment

As well as the strategic priorities set out above, KCC has a number of on-going initiatives that will help us to move forward quickly. We want to build on these and extend their impact.

Our strategy builds on the previous 14-19 Learner Strategy, developed and implemented with our key stakeholders, as well as the considerable progress made in developing a strong vocational programme across Kent, the expansion of our apprenticeship programme, the improvements in access, information and choices and the work we have undertaken with businesses to identify our sector skills gaps.

The Vocational Programme

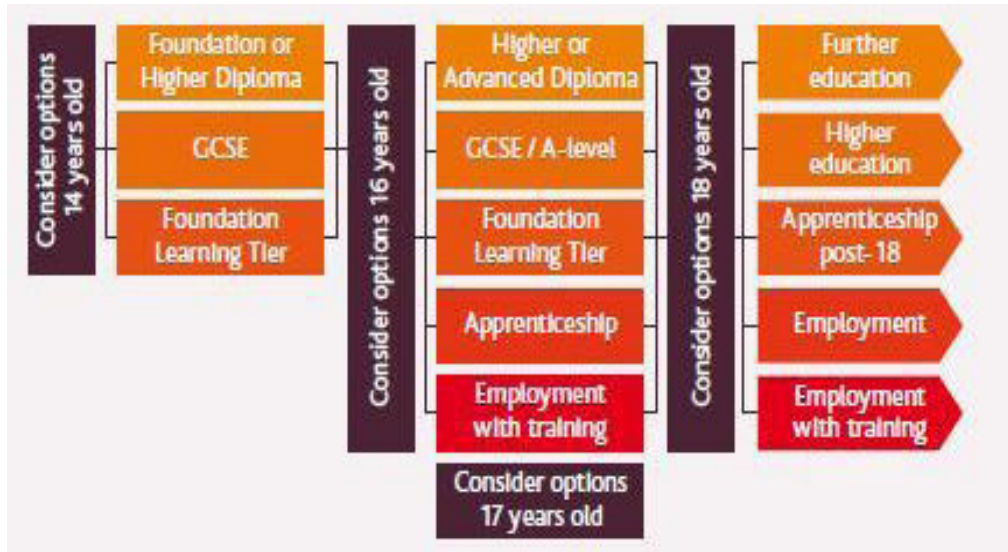
In response to the concerns about the number of young people who were not participating in learning and attaining sufficiently to progress to further education, training or employment, Kent County Council has given priority to developing a system of vocational learning that recognises the different aspirations of young people.

In the recent past we delivered a good 14-16 vocational programme, and the work of schools, colleges and the Vocational Skills Centres across Kent enabled 8,500 14-16 year olds to undertake vocational courses, helping many young people to move into an apprenticeship or other employment. The most successful courses were in construction, engineering and catering where industry standard facilities were available. We aim to build on this work, scale it up and ensure it leads to better qualifications and progression to post 16 courses.

In some cases, the 14-16 vocational courses did not offer good enough progression to post 16 courses offered in the FE Colleges and were a significant barrier to progression to Level 3 qualifications. We are aware that, to improve this, more effective 14-19 collaborative working and planning of local provision, which ensures progression from age 14 to 19 and leads to employment, needs to be developed between schools and colleges in each area of the county.

We also know that we need to re-design the vocational offer quickly in response to the recent government changes to vocational qualifications, and the expectation that young people will have a better vocational offer with good pathways to meaningful learning and qualifications between the ages of 16 and 24.

Figure 3: Choices in education and training from age 14 to 19.



We are also taking steps to improve the provision for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities. Nearly half of the 16 year olds who attend Special Schools do not have access to appropriate post 16 education, work based learning and training and many young people with learning difficulties and disabilities at age 19 have poor opportunities for employment and independent living. We are addressing these issues as part of our SEN review and through the new arrangements for joint planning of the future care and education of disabled 16-25 year olds.

The Post 16 Travel Pass

We recognise that the cost of transport is a key consideration for young people when making decisions about participating in learning and training post-16. To ensure transport costs are not a barrier to learning and participation for all young people, and disadvantaged young people in particular, KCC has recently approved a subsidised Post-16 Travel Pass scheme. This provides county wide travel on buses and is available to learning providers at a cost of £520 per pass. There will be an average KCC subsidy of £230 per pass. Students can apply to buy their pass from their learning provider at a cost of no more than £520, and at a reduced subsidised cost for low income families.

“Kentchoices”

We know that quality information and advice is the key to helping young people find the right courses and pathways for post-16 learning and training. When young people do not follow the most appropriate courses the drop-out rates at age 17 tend to be higher.

The ‘Kentchoices’ prospectus is the largest and most used area- wide online prospectus in the country with over 10,000 courses and 250 learning providers for post 16 learning opportunities. In 2011-12 over 13,000 Year 11 students used the site to research and apply for their courses. This year usage is considerably ahead of the same time last year and is expanding to include other year groups and young people from outside the county.

We will expand and develop the site further as part of this strategy. The site contains a comprehensive offer for 16 year olds including schools, colleges and work based learning providers. Use of the careers information pages has grown and so the site has evolved to include details on apprenticeships and a wider range of vocational opportunities as well as sections for professionals and parents. New developments include working with national and local employers to represent their job opportunities for school leavers. The service is being developed to provide high quality information and support for employment. The service also offers support for schools to deliver their new responsibility to provide impartial careers advice and guidance.

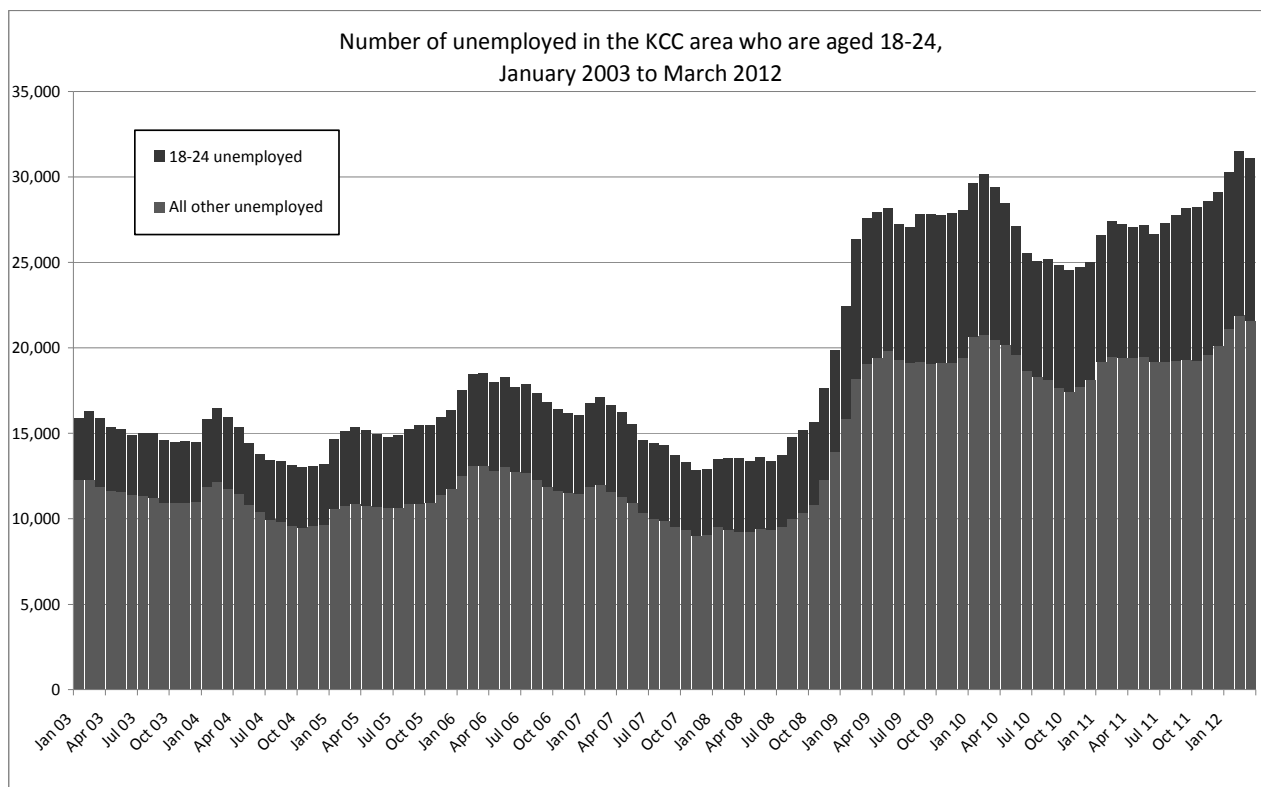
Tackling Youth Unemployment

We are taking very active steps to tackle unemployment among young people, which is a real concern. Nearly 10,000 18-24 year olds in Kent are unemployed, and more than half have been out of work for more than three months. Youth unemployment in Kent has grown from 3,815 in January 2008 to its current high level.

Kent has five of the national youth employment hotspots where youth unemployment among 18-24 year olds exceeds 20%. These are in Thanet, Swale, Shepway, Gravesham and Dover. We believe this requires a more targeted and intensive response as part of this strategy. We will develop Youth Employment and Learning Zones in these areas where we will work with partners to pool resources to improve learning and training options to get young people into work, provide mentoring and more personalised support for young people aged 16 to 24, and provide better information about and contacts with, local employers and employment opportunities.

We are working across all parts of Kent to develop programmes that will create employment opportunities for 18 to 24 year olds who are currently in receipt of Job Seeker Allowance, building on our successful experience in delivering additional jobs for this group of young people through the Future Jobs Fund. We will continue to work with training providers to align our programmes with the National Youth Programme funding and other funding opportunities in order to direct as much resource available within the system to create employment opportunities for Kent young people.

Chart 4



Apprenticeships

There is already significant activity to increase apprenticeships. The recent launch of the **Kent Jobs for Kent's Young People** initiative is showing positive signs of impact, with over 100 apprenticeships pledged. This new apprenticeship campaign is designed to engage and incentivise employers to take on more young people. By pooling various employment subsidies and £2 million from Kent County Council it enables employers to take up a grant and offer apprenticeships for lower salary costs, and receive help with recruitment so that bureaucracy is kept to a minimum.

This builds on the success of the **Kent Apprenticeship scheme** which already supports about 1500 young people aged 16-19 years. Our aim is to double the number of apprenticeships by 2015. Success will require better information and communication with employers about what is available, better advice for young people about apprenticeship schemes and more joined up working between KCC, schools, colleges, training providers and other agencies including Job Centre Plus.

Our strategy includes support for the development of more apprenticeships delivered in schools. The range of apprentices employed by schools has been expanded to include teaching assistants, sports coaches, catering and ground maintenance, and science and ICT technicians to meet the target of 50% of schools employing an apprentice by 2015. This will include Level 3 apprenticeships.

We continue to actively recruit apprentices to the Kent Apprenticeship scheme, which has an average 65% achievement rate. We need to improve this to be at least in line with the overall Kent rate of 74%, if not better. For example, KCC has supported the employment of 69 vulnerable young people in apprenticeships by paying their salary for 12 months and providing co-ordinated support to them and their employers throughout the apprenticeship period. Over 500 young people have been employed by KCC as apprentices and 80% who achieve their framework go into full time permanent employment. We will be reviewing the programme, targeting key units within KCC, as we have done with Kent Highways Service, the Contact Centre and the Youth Service this year, and focusing on raising the achievement rate of those following apprenticeship programmes.

Targeted Support

We have a number of policy and programme developments that will be particularly relevant for some of the young people who would fall into our targeted support cohort.

As a key element of our Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy, we are developing an **Integrated Adolescent Support Service** which will focus on the following target groups of young people age 11-19 who are, or likely to be, among those who:

- have poor outcomes at ages 16 and 19
- follow an alternative curriculum from age 14 onwards
- are permanently excluded, or at risk of permanent exclusion, from school
- have high rates of absence from school or do not attend
- present challenging and anti-social behaviour in and out of school
- engage in misuse of alcohol and drugs
- are at risk of physical and emotional harm
- are young offenders involved in the criminal justice system
- make up the 12% of 16-19 year olds that do not participate in education or work based training
- make up the 20% of young people that do not have the basic qualifications to get a skilled job
- are NEET
- are 16-19 year olds unemployed

This targeted service will work in an integrated way with our Kent Troubled Families programme, providing a more coordinated approach for disadvantaged young people who are most vulnerable to poor outcomes.

Conclusion

These initiatives and the strategic priorities set out in this document represent one of Kent County Council's major goals; to change the life chances and employment prospects of young people and in turn the future prosperity and growth of Kent as one of the best places to live in the UK. Our strategy is intended to make a significant contribution to improving the local economy, increasing youth employment and raising educational and skill levels and qualifications among young people. Its success will mean life changing benefits for many 16 to 24 year olds in Kent. We look forward to working with existing partners, as well as creating new partnerships to help make a greater difference for Kent young people.

APPENDIX I

Kent Performance Profile

Skills levels are a big determinant to how successful people are and too many young people in Kent leave full-time education without a full complement of basic skills and without ambition.⁶ Kent lags behind the rest of the South East in terms of workforce qualification levels, as illustrated in the table below, which compares the percentage of 16-64 year olds with different qualification levels in Kent and the South East region.

Qualification Level ⁷	Kent Numbers	Kent Percentage	South East Percentage
NVQ 4 and above	263,600	30	33.9
NVQ 3 and above	436,900	49.7	53.8
NVQ 2 and above	605,000	68.9	70.8
NVQ 1 and above	724,200	82.4	84.1
Other quals	52,300	6.0	7.5
No quals	102,400	11.7	8.5

The quality of education for 14-19 year olds in Kent is very variable, and although most young people do well and have very clear progression pathways to successful further and higher education and employment, too many young people experience failure early on and do not have access to the kinds of learning they need to progress to better skills and qualifications. The system is designed well for academic routes that lead to further and higher education but is not so well-designed for work related, technical, vocational and professional pathways that lead to employment and work based learning at age 19.

Attainment by Age 16

Key Stage 4 standards have improved year on year and are just above similar areas and in line with the national average for five good GCSE grades including English and mathematics (59%). However the gaps in Secondary school performance at GCSE are wide, and again are worse amongst those young people who face the greatest disadvantage.

- only 28% of pupils on free school meals attained five good GCSEs in 2011, which is well below the 35% national average
- 10% of looked after children and 24% of pupils with special educational needs achieved five good GCSEs in 2011
- boys do significantly less well than girls, with only 55% achieving five good GCSEs with English and mathematics compared to 63% for girls
- of the 40% of 16 year olds who do not achieve a Level 2 qualification with English and mathematics, fewer than half go on to achieve a Level 3 qualification by age 19.

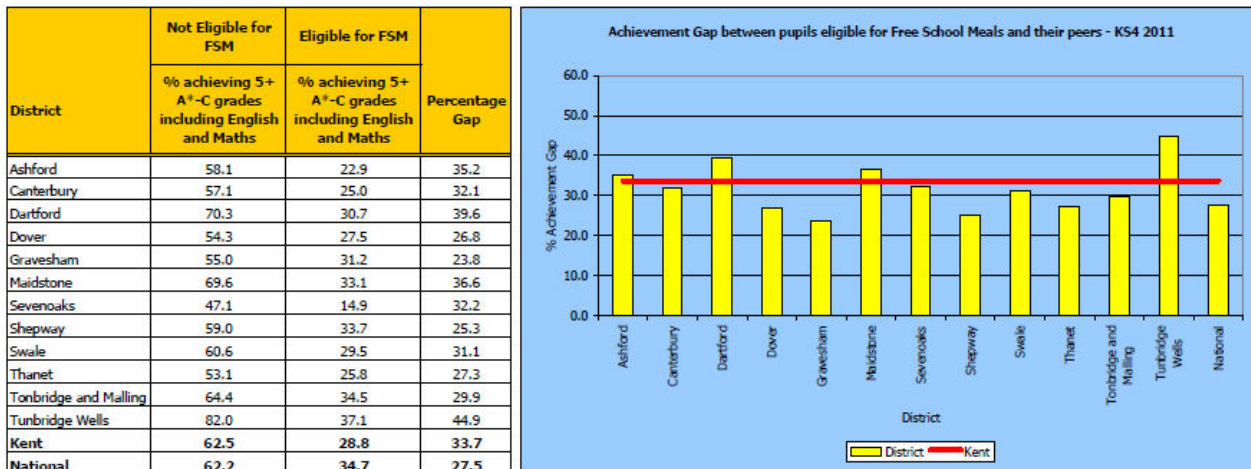
⁶ Vision for Kent

⁷ Source: ONS annual population survey from NOMIS website.

It is a significant challenge for the Kent economy and the education system in the county if nearly half of all 16 year old boys are not educated to a standard that would enable them to access an apprenticeship or progress to many of the vocational and academic pathways that are available post 16.

Chart 5

Table 3j
Key Stage Four Attainment by District 2011
Achievement Gap between pupils eligible for Free School Meals and their peers (NI 102)



Source: EPAS October 2011 Release, January 2011 School Census and DfE Statistical First Release 2011
Contact: Management Information Unit 01622 694683

Attainment by Age 19

Nearly two thirds of 16-18 year olds (62%) are in school sixth forms and the quality of provision is mostly good or better (69%) as judged by Ofsted. A-Level results have steadily improved, although on a number of measures Kent is below the national average. The number of young people achieving Level 2 qualifications by the age of 19 through school sixth forms or FE colleges is in line with similar areas, but too many 16-19 year olds (13.6%) spend two years on courses and achieve no improvement in their Level 2 qualification.

As with every other area of education in the County, the standards and skills achieved by young people aged 19 from low income backgrounds, while improved, are below the national average and the gaps (32% in Kent compared to 25% nationally) between outcomes for the most vulnerable 19 year olds and their peers are not closing quickly enough. This significantly reduces their employability and access to apprenticeships and other vocational qualifications, compared to young people from more advantaged backgrounds.

This is persistent and needs to be addressed more effectively when children are younger and at every stage of education, with more targeted teaching and support. Research has shown that around 90% of young people with highly educated parents will obtain GCSEs grades A-C at age 16, while this figure is only around half for those with parents having only grades D-G at GCSE or equivalent. Similarly, it is well known that qualification levels are closely related to employment stability. Highly educated parents are therefore also more likely to be employed parents. As a consequence, the effects of school attainment and parental education and employment combine and reinforce each other. While virtually no young people with grades

A-C at GCSE at age 16 and living with highly educated and employed parents drop out of a 'successful' learning to work trajectory, this is the outcome for almost one in three young people obtaining few or no GCSEs at 16 and living with unemployed parents holding low qualifications. This highlights the need for more targeted earlier intervention for those at most risk of disengagement and under-achievement.

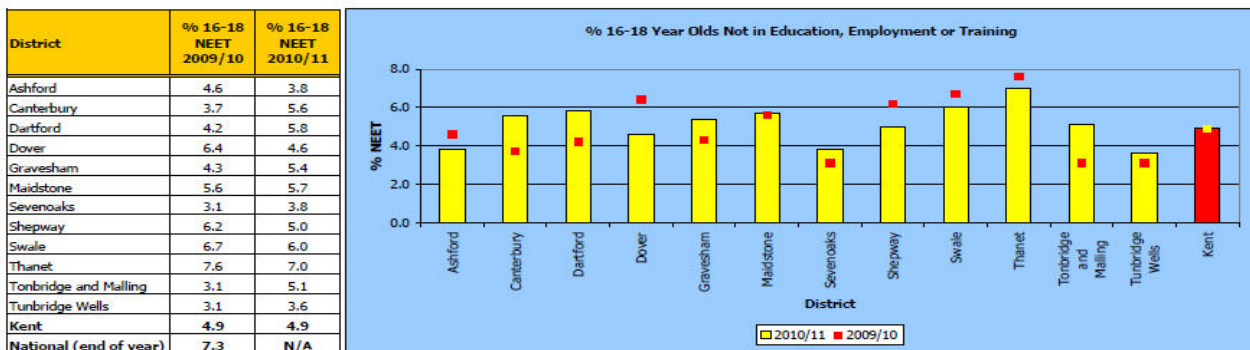
We have been relatively successful in engaging young people (16-19) in education and training, and have kept the figure for those not in employment, education or training (NEET) at a comparatively lower level than levels nationally. However, as the NEET figures increase and earlier success does not carry through to the 18 to 24 year olds, more effective action is needed. Youth unemployment figures reinforce the need for further action with 18 to 24 year olds, accounting for nearly a third of all unemployment in Kent.

Participation and Employment Rates

The participation rate for 16 and 17 year olds in Kent is 88%, compared to 93% nationally. Of these, 83% are in full time education, a small number are in work based learning or training and the remainder are in jobs without training or NEET. In the early months of 2012 there were 2577 16-18 year olds (6.3%) who were NEET. The largest numbers are in Dover, Shepway and Swale, and in Thanet the percentage rises to nearly 10%. The majority of those who are NEET or in jobs without training are in the 17-18 year old age group. If we are to improve this situation and achieve full participation by 2015, nearly 6000 more young people aged 16-18 will need to be engaged more successfully in education or employment with training over the next 3 years.

Chart 6

Table 2i
Percentage of 16-18 Year Olds Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) by District 2010/11



Source: Connexions Kent and DfE Statistical Release

Many young people are still choosing to look for low skill employment at ages 16, 17 and 18 despite rising youth unemployment and the contraction in low skilled jobs. Kent's education and skills providers need to prepare for the Raising of the Participation Age in a way which sensitively supports young people for this change and engages employers in this process to offer employment with suitable skill training.

Consequently, there needs to be closer alignment between young people's ambitions and learning pathways and the opportunities that exist in the local economy.⁸ We need to develop new models of school and employer partnerships, step up the number of apprenticeships and guide young people to participate in learning and training that will lead to better local employment.

At present in Kent there are real gaps in what is needed to support young people to access employment. There is no part time employment with training for 16-19 year olds; there are no pre-apprenticeship programmes, no vocational and technical qualifications with meaningful work experience and no academic courses with meaningful work experience. These are significant gaps in our provision. It is essential therefore to increase work based learning to secure better routes to employment. The challenge overall is therefore to improve outcomes for this age group by improving learning pathways 16-19 and the quality and range of vocational education and training, including enabling more young people to take up apprenticeships.

If these opportunities do not become more available and lead to better outcomes, we will not succeed in ensuring that all young people participate in learning and work based training to age 18 by 2015.

⁸ Hidden Talents: Skills Mismatch analysis, LGA Commission report by the Centre for Economic and Social inclusion, June 2012

APPENDIX 2

Targets and Performance Measures

If this Strategy is successful we will achieve the following outcomes by 2015. We will monitor performance against these measures and report progress and improvements on an annual basis. The key targets for success and performance measures are:

- Key Stage 4 attainment will be amongst the best for our statistical neighbours and improve to at least 70% of pupils attaining 5 good GCSEs including English and mathematics
- The achievement gaps at Key Stages 4 and 5 will be less than the national gap figures. Students from low income backgrounds, looked after young people and students with special educational needs and disabilities in Kent will be achieving better progress and outcomes than similar groups nationally.
- Attainment in English and mathematics will improve so that at least 50% of 16 year olds that do not attain Level 2 will achieve the qualification by age 17.
- There will be fewer young people who achieve no improvement in qualifications between the ages of 16 and 19, so that this number reduces to less than 5%.
- The outcomes for 19 year olds from disadvantaged backgrounds will be above the national average and the achievement gap between this group and other students will have reduced by 10%
- All 16-19 year olds will be able to access and succeed in following an appropriate pathway for education or employment with training to age 18.
- The NEET figures will decrease to below 1%.
- The employability skills of 19 year olds will have improved, especially in English and mathematics, so that Level 2 attainment at age 19 is above the national average
- 20% more young people from low income backgrounds with skills below Level 2 at age 16 will achieve a Level 2 qualification and progress to Level 3 by age 19.
- The percentage of 17 year olds who achieve a Level 2 qualification including English and mathematics and who go on to achieve a Level 3 qualification by age 19 will increase by 20%.
- The number of 16-19 year olds who follow courses and do not raise their level of qualification will decrease to below 5%.
- Advanced Level performance in Kent will be above the national average on all measures.

- At least 70% of the 14-19 year olds supported through the Troubled Families programme will participate in learning or training to age 18, with improved skills levels and employment.
- The number of apprenticeships overall will double and Level 2, 3 and 4 apprenticeships offered in Kent key sectors will increase by 10%.
- The successful completion rate for apprenticeships for 16-24 year olds in Kent will improve to at least 80%.
- The uptake of Level 2 and 3 vocational training in skills shortage areas will increase by 10%.
- The KCC Apprenticeship scheme will continue with at least 88 apprentices taken on each year, totalling 350 successful apprenticeships delivered by KCC by 2015.
- At least 50% of schools will have provided one or more apprenticeships which have been taken up successfully by young people.
- There will be a significant impact on unemployment among 18-24 year olds so that current levels reduce by 4000 to below 2008 levels.
- The number of assisted employment opportunities for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities will increase by 10%.
- Youth Employment and Learning Zones in Thanet, Swale, Shepway, Gravesham and Dover will reduce unemployment for 16 to 24 year olds in those areas to less than the national average.
- Each district in Kent will have effective partnership working for 14-19 year olds, involving KCC, schools, colleges, work based learning providers, employers and other agencies. They will deliver a clear vocational curriculum offer, progression pathways and work based training for all 16-19 year olds.
- There will be fewer than 50 permanent exclusions and all young people permanently excluded will be supported to access appropriate learning, enabling them to participate to age 18.
- There will be an integrated adolescent support service providing effective targeted and personalised support to all young people at risk of becoming NEET.
- There will be successful pilots in at least four areas of highest need in 2012-2013, with demonstrable impact on reducing NEETS and increasing participation and outcomes for 16-19 year olds.
- *Kentchoices4U* will have expanded to provide high quality information about learning options, apprenticeships and other employment with training, and will provide support for schools in delivering their new responsibility to provide impartial careers advice and guidance.

APPENDIX 3

The Role of the Local Authority

National policy recognises that local authorities make a difference, and where local authorities have effective strategies and 14-19 partnership arrangements in place participation rates and outcomes are better. The role of the local authority is, therefore, to provide strategic leadership and coordination, promote effective partnership working and effective commissioning, and to bring together all the available resources needed to ensure success for this 14-24 strategy. Kent is a local authority with clear ambition for better outcomes for young people and a strong sense of its leadership role in developing an improved education and skills system.

The Local Authority also has clear statutory duties in relation to 16-19 year olds: to secure suitable education and training, support young people to participate and target support to those who are NEET. Local authorities also have a duty to undertake learning difficulty and disability assessments setting out the education and training for those young people who had statements of Special Educational Needs at school. Furthermore, Section 68 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 places a duty on local authorities to make available to young people below the age of 19 and relevant adults (i.e. those aged 20 and over but under 25 with learning difficulties) support that will encourage, enable or assist them to participate in education and training.

The Statutory Duty for Raising the Participation Age

The Education and Skills Act 2008, also places a duty on all young people to participate in education or training until their 18th birthday. The local authority has new duties to:

- promote the effective participation in education or training of all 16 and 17 year olds resident in their area; and
- make arrangements to identify young people resident in their area who are not participating.

These complement the existing duties to:

- secure sufficient suitable education and training provision for all 16-19 year olds
- encourage, enable and assist young people to participate,
- have processes in place to deliver the 'September Guarantee' of a suitable education or training place for every young person
- track young people's engagement and participation.

In carrying out these responsibilities the local authority should respond to those young people who are at risk of not participating and low achievement, or who do not participate, by providing targeted support to improve their skills and qualifications and access to employment with training.

When responsibility for health improvement is transferred to local authorities, funding through the health grant can be used to include targeted support to those young people whose lifestyle choices, for example drug and alcohol misuse, prevent them from participating in education and training.

APPENDIX 4

Case Studies

Case Study 1: Danish Oil and Natural Gas company (Dong Energy) Apprenticeships at the Swale Skills Centre

KCC has supported the development of the Swale Skill Centre in Sittingbourne. The Skill Centre is at the heart of the Eurolink Business Park, a large industrial estate with several large companies and numerous SMEs, many of which operate in the engineering sector.

The Centre has specialised in engineering and has state of the art equipment for mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, control systems and advanced CAD/CAM. The centre is managed by Sittingbourne Community College but there is access to pupils from other schools in the area. Pupils from 14 years upwards take vocational qualifications at Levels 2 and 3, with plans to offer Level 4 (foundation degree) in 2012.

In the last two years, the Centre has further specialised in sustainable technologies, particularly wind farm operation and maintenance.

The Centre is one of the founding members of a Sustainable Technologies Consortium involving a number of training providers across North Kent. This was initiated in response to requests from DONG Energy, a large wind farm company and major partner in the London Array, which is the world's largest offshore wind farm currently under construction in the Thames Estuary. The Consortium was created to co-ordinate the training offer to the wind farm sector but it also has a wide remit to promote engineering in general.

In September 2011 DONG Energy worked closely with the Swale Skill Centre to recruit nine new Apprentices. These will undergo a three year Level 3 apprenticeship with all of their training provided by the Swale Skill Centre. These are the first such apprenticeships in the UK, and the DONG employees are undertaking a new nationally accredited qualification designed by the staff at Swale Skill Centre. In doing so the staff have drawn on best national and international practice and responded to the needs of employers.

There are plans to double the number of DONG apprentices in 2012, while other wind farm companies, such as Vattenfall and Vestas are showing a keen interest in adding to this number.

The outcomes of this case study are that Kent now has a single point of entry for apprentices into the skills and training system for the renewable industries, which has removed the burdensome process in programme development which can quash initial employer interest.

Case Study 2: Vulnerable Learner Apprenticeships

David⁹ is a young offender who started his apprenticeship in April 2011. He lives with his mother, stepfather and older brother. His father lives locally and he sees him regularly. When he was a young child, David witnessed domestic violence between his father and mother and often saw his brother arrested by the police.

In 2009 (aged 15), David started to get in trouble with the police. He was convicted of theft from a motor vehicle and completed a three month Referral Order. In 2010 he reoffended and was sentenced to a one year Youth Rehabilitation Order for a Public Order offence (fighting) and 'cruelty to animals resulting in injury' (kicking pigeons). However, he has complied with all elements of his community sentence and his Order is currently in the process of being taken back to court for early revocation.

David attended mainstream education and completed education gaining 4 GCSEs, despite several fixed term exclusions for disruptive behaviour and bullying. He started at Canterbury College after leaving school but left after feeling frustrated, considering it too classroom-based for a construction course.

David achieved 4 GCSEs in English, Maths, Science and Wood products and Basic Construction Skills Level 1 certificate.

David wanted to qualify in a Construction trade and did not want to learn via full-time studies at college. The apprenticeship appealed to him because he could continue his studies whilst working and earning a wage.

David and his mother report that his apprenticeship has 'changed his life'. He feels that he has a career plan and will qualify in a trade 'for life'. He states that he is happier, more confident and looks forward to work every day. His mother and step-father both report a marked improvement in David's mood and attitude and in his overall behaviour at home. His risk of re-offending is now assessed as low and his youth offending order is being taken back to court for early revocation.

The outcomes of this case study are that Kent has good base on which to build the further development of a wide range of options and pathways into employment for young people.

⁹ Name changed to protect identity

APPENDIX 5

Kent Employment Sectors

Sector contributions to the Kent Economy

The approximate make up of the business sector profile of Kent, by number of employees and output, is described below:

Industry Sector	2011 Employment ¹⁰	%	Output £mill ¹¹	%
Agriculture, Fishing, Mining, Electricity/Gas/Water	21,400	4.0	1,380	7.1
Manufacturing	38,400	7.1	1,739	9.0
Construction	31,900	5.9	1,663	8.6
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles, motorcycles and personal and household goods	98,500	18.2	2,879	14.9
Transport and storage	28,100	5.2	1,161	6.0
Hotels and restaurants	34,000	6.3	470	2.4
Information and communication	11,900	2.2	626	3.2
Financial intermediation	15,150	2.8	1,067	5.5
Real estate, renting and business activities	7,000	1.3	2,570	13.3
Professional, scientific and technical activities	30,300	5.6	527	2.7
Administrative and support service activities	39,500	7.3	526	2.7
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	29,200	5.4	1,168	6.0
Education	60,600	11.2	1,048	5.4
Health and social work	73,000	13.5	1,541	8.0
Arts, entertainment and recreation	11,300	2.1	Incl below	0.0
Other community, social and personal service activities	9,700	1.8	943	4.9
All Industries	541,000*	100	19,300	100

* Not including self employment

Key Sectors and Skills Shortages

Kent lags behind the rest of the South East in terms of workforce qualification levels, as illustrated in below. This table measures the number of 16 - 64 year olds who have obtained the relevant qualification level, as a percentage of the 16 - 64 population, in 2011.

Qualification Level ¹²	Kent Numbers	Kent Percentage	South East Percentage
NVQ 4 and above	263,600	30	33.9
NVQ 3 and above	436,900	49.7	53.8
NVQ 2 and above	605,000	68.9	70.8
NVQ 1 and above	724,200	82.4	84.1
Other quals	52,300	6.0	7.5
No quals	102,400	11.7	8.5

¹⁰ Source: KCC Research and Evaluation: The State of the Kent economy

¹¹ Source: KCC Research and Evaluation: Interactive economic forecast toolkit

¹² Source: ONS annual population survey from NOMIS website.

Kent Sector Skills Development

In January 2009 KCC published its economic regeneration strategy document “Unlocking Kent’s Potential - a framework for regeneration.” Kent is a diverse economy and “Unlocking Kent’s Potential” identifies the need for sector based strategies, to support those sectors where Kent has existing business strengths and to support new sectors with opportunities for growth. Focussing on key business sectors will raise Kent’s economic performance.

The KCC Regeneration and Economy Division are developing sector based strategies in the following key areas:

- Low Carbon and Environmental Goods and Services sector (LCEGS)
- Creative and Media
- Health and Social Care
- Construction
- Land based industries.

To complement this work, KCC is also developing Sector Based Skills Strategies which aim to:

- Describe the current provision in Kent by key sector area.
- Identify gaps in this provision.
- Propose actions to address the gaps.

Low Carbon and Environmental Goods and Services sector (LCEGS)

Summary of key findings

- Young people interested in construction, engineering and agriculture need to be aware of issues of sustainability.
- Providers of these courses should respond by adding units to existing courses or stand alone courses in sustainability. There are a number of suitable units that providers could consider at level 2.
- The future of sustainable technologies in Kent will be based around small business and consultancy. Large scale projects, such as the London Array, will provide limited long term job opportunities. Retrofit of existing housing stock, followed by new build to current and future specification. are key skill growth areas.

Creative and Media Sector

Summary of key findings

- Kent is very well provided with courses that support the creative skills requirements of the sector. However the sector is reporting significant skills shortages in business, management and leadership skills.
- Providers of creative courses could respond by adding units to existing courses or stand alone courses to develop business skills. There are a number of suitable units that providers could consider at level 2.

Health and Social Care Sector

Summary of key findings

- Staff turnover in the NHS, particularly jobs at NVQ Levels 2 and 3, is very significant. Although overall staff levels in the NHS won't grow over the next ten years, replacement demand will remain large.
- The Care Sector in the South East is behind the minimum qualification standards for NVQ Level 2 and NVQ Level 4.
- Kent has a large number of Level 1 qualification aims being achieved in FE Colleges that are not being turned into Level 2 progressions.

Construction Sector

Summary of key findings

- Total construction output in the region is expected to increase at an annual average rate of 2.4% between 2011 and 2015, with most growth skewed towards 2014 and 2015.
- 14-19 participation in vocational courses in this sector is high at Levels 1 and 2, but drops away significantly at Level 3.
- To meet future demand for skills in sustainable construction, providers can offer units to 14 -19 year olds that provide introductions to sustainability.
- There is a wide range of provision for traditional construction skills in Kent, but gaps have been identified (as follows):
 - Painting and decorating at Level 2 and 3
 - Trowel occupations that are not delivered as an apprenticeship e.g. BTEC at Levels 2 and 3
 - Heating systems; design and installation at level 2 and 3
 - Plant operations; usually NVQ work based.
 - Transport and logistics; Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT) Introductory Certificate in Logistics and Transport level 2/ CILT Certificate in Logistics and Transport.
 - Scaffolding: For example Construction Industry Scaffolders Record Scheme (CISRS) NVQ 2/3 for existing employees.

Land Based Sector

Summary of key findings

- The Land Based sector is predicted to experience declining employment over the next decade.
- The Land Based sector is part of a wider Food Sector that is becoming increasingly mechanised, complex and subject to legislation.
- The following skills will be important for the sector over the next 5 years: Business, management and entrepreneurship skills; Technical/job specific skills and essential skills.
- There are opportunities for greater progression between Level 2 and Level 3 courses, and promotion of the sector to learners.

APPENDIX 6

Resources to Deliver the Strategy