

From: **Roger Gough Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform**

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To: **Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee – 23 July 2014**

Subject: **NEETs and Apprenticeships 16 to 18 Year olds in Kent**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Electoral Division: **All**

Summary:

The report sets out details of the profile of the current NEET cohort and explains the work being undertaken to reduce NEETs and increase the take up of apprenticeships for 16-18 year olds.

Recommendation:

The Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse the work being undertaken by the KCC Skills and Employability Service to reduce NEETs and increase apprenticeships for 16 to 18 year olds.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report explains the profile of the NEET cohort for Kent and gives details of the activities being developed and implemented by the KCC Skills and Employability Service to continue to reduce the number of young people who are NEET (not in education, employment or training). The report explains the challenges young people face when leaving school and entering the work place, and sets out the need for appropriate pathways into apprenticeships and employment with training at ages 16, 17 and 18.

1.2 Preparation for employment through appropriate high quality vocational and technical learning pathways both pre and post 16 is critical to ensure young people can access apprenticeship opportunities at ages 16, 17 and 18. The decline in the previous offer of vocational courses for 14 to 16 year olds following the Wolf Report reforms has led to significant changes and new qualifications. These provide new pathways for young people who are looking for apprenticeships as a positive progression route at age 16. Unless there is a high quality vocational and technical offer at Key Stage 4 with good progression to post 16 vocational learning or apprenticeships post 16, learners face many barriers to accessing apprenticeship opportunities. This is compounded by some post 16 providers being too reliant on academic qualifications and offering too few quality extended work experience placements for those young

people wishing to access apprenticeships. Therefore our challenge is to develop the new provision that is needed to secure these better opportunities for young people. At present we face significant gaps in the provision across Kent.

- 1.3 Technical awards for 14-16 year olds were announced by the government in mid-June 2014. These new qualifications, which are occupationally-specific, will provide good progression routes into apprenticeships. The Skills and Employability Service will start discussing these opportunities with schools once the specifications for these qualifications have been released. These new awards will count towards the new headline performance measure called Progress 8, which in future will be the published results for schools across eight subjects, including English and maths, for pupils at age 16. Young people will be able to take up to 3 vocational or technical qualifications as part of their KS4 programme.
- 1.4 The number of Apprenticeships starts for 2012/13 declined for all age groups nationally. This is due to changes in funding arrangements and a number of apprenticeship providers withdrawing from the age 16 to 18 market. However, the decline in apprenticeship take up has been significantly less in Kent than elsewhere. This is due to the significant work undertaken by Kent Employment Programme officers in supporting employers to take on NEET young people and those who have been unemployed for more than 3 months.
- 1.5 Ensuring that young people have access to careers information and guidance about apprenticeship opportunities is essential to recruitment at ages 16 and 17. This is delivered through a number of key activities within the Kent Choices4U brand. This report explains how this work is being expanded to focus on Apprenticeship recruitment over the coming months.
- 1.6 The Skills and Employability Service now has statutory responsibility for tracking all 16 to 19 year olds. This data is being used to target young people who may wish to take up apprenticeship opportunities. The number of young people being tracked in 2013/14 is 51,668. This report sets out how the Skills and Employability Service and KIASS (Kent Integrated Adolescent Support Service) is managing this new system and will increasingly use this data to target apprenticeship opportunities in localities and by occupational sectors.

2. Facing the Challenge

- 2.1 The Skills and Employability Service has recently undergone a major transformation programme. The new work strands and team structures are for Young People, Adults and Employment. Within these strands officers have been realigned to provide a more efficient service to increase activity with employers to maintain apprenticeship take-up and improve the offer. Our next task is to improve our integrated working internally particularly with KIASS, and the School Improvement and Standards Team. Externally we are creating new ways of working with Schools, KAFEC, KATO and Universities to ensure that the right pathways are available for young people within each district.

- 2.2 Providing targeted support for vulnerable young people and adults is also a priority for us. Kent Supported Employment is now integrated within the Skills and Employability Service. This will enable us to add capacity to the already successful Assisted Apprenticeship programme and provide support to Troubled Families to generate apprenticeship and assisted employment opportunities.

3. 14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy

- 3.1 Increasing the number of Apprenticeship opportunities is a clear priority within the 14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy. There are four key performance priorities linked to expanding apprenticeships opportunities. These include the establishment of 5 Youth Employment Learning Zones, continuing to increase in the number of KCC apprenticeships, the development of pre apprenticeship programmes and at least 50% of all schools employing apprentices by 2016.
- 3.2 To ensure these targets are met the Skills and Employability Service is involved in a wide range of activities to increase the number of apprenticeships and reduce NEETs. These key activities include:
- Establishing Progression Partnerships in the 12 Districts. These meetings consider all young people in the locality and offer them appropriate pathways for further learning opportunities or employment with training. These NEET to EET groups act as a clearing house for young people and broker a suitable offer with all providers in the locality including schools, colleges and work based providers.
 - Developing new learning pathways to employment through a programme called the 2-1-2 curriculum model in schools. This post 16 study programme offers a substantial vocational qualification, English and maths qualifications and extended work experience placements. Four schools have engaged in the pilot programme this year with a further 15 schools are developing this offer for September 2014. This curriculum model provides good progression pathways into apprenticeships.
- 3.3 Since April 2013 the Kent Employment Programme has recruited 631 young people aged 16-24 into an apprenticeship, of which 147 were re-engaged from the NEET cohort. The evidence shows that the impact of this programme goes beyond the one year of the apprenticeship, as 98 of the first 103 KEP apprentices still remain in employment with the original employer. This is a much higher success rate than any other apprenticeship programme. The programme ends in March 2015, so further investment in the project by Kent County Council would contribute to supporting more NEET vulnerable groups into apprenticeships.
- 3.4 The Assisted Apprenticeship programme offers significant additional support through job coaches and job mentoring for vulnerable young people who have multiple barriers to entering the labour market including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, Children in Care, young offenders and teenage

parents. All of these learner groups are on an apprenticeship programme this year, with 22 young people having been supported through this scheme this year. The programme is now being reshaped and expanded as the Kent Supported Employment programme is integrated within the Skills and Employability Service. We expect to expand the programme to offer 200 new Assisted Apprenticeships.

- 3.5 Within KCC the number of apprenticeships is increasing with an expectation that the target of 120 will be exceeded this year. There will be more Level 3 opportunities available over the next four months to attract young people at age 17 who leave school after completing Year 12. This higher level offer includes expanding the Microsoft apprenticeship scheme.
- 3.6 Currently, 180 schools are employing apprentices, and there have been 252 apprenticeship starts this year. This work continues to engage more schools and there will be a focus on increasing the number of level 3 and 4 apprenticeships in conjunction with major companies such as Barclays, Macdonald's, IBM, Price Waterhouse Coopers and the Association of Graduate Recruiters who have contacts with the vast majority of blue chip companies.

4. Decline in NEETs

- 4.1 The percentage of NEETs has fallen over the last year. The average for 2014 compared to 2013 fell from 6.1% to 5.9% in March 2014 as shown below. These figures are higher than the national and south east England averages.

NEETs -Three Month Average

	Academic Age 16-18 (year 12-14)							
	2013-14				2012-13			
	Jan-14	Feb-14	Mar-14	Ave	Jan-13	Feb-13	Mar-13	Ave
ENGLAND	5.3%	5.3%	5.3%	5.3%	5.7%	5.6%	5.6%	5.6%
SOUTH EAST	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%	5.3%	5.2%	5.1%	5.2%
KENT	5.9%	5.8%	6.0%	5.9%	6.2%	6.1%	6.0%	6.1%

- 4.2 The NEET figures should always be used in conjunction with the Not Known figures. From 2013 to 2014 the Not Known figures increased from 2.4% to 5.0%, which is well below the south east average.
- 4.3 The Skills and Employability Service now has access to more detailed information and reports on vulnerable learners who are NEET. This new data will enable both KIASS and the Skills and Employability Service to target early help activities to young people most at risk from disengaging post-16. The work will include the offer of apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships training. A new area of work will be to develop supported employment opportunities for young people attending Special schools.

- 4.4 A key shift in this activity has been to work directly with schools and colleges to help them understand their role in ensuring that young people have positive and appropriate destinations. The main focus of the work has been to continue to develop Career Education Guidance and Advice systems in schools and to gather the electronic transfer of existing data sets from schools and colleges. We aim to ensure that schools support young people to make informed choices at ages 16 and 17 including apprenticeships. This data can be regularly reviewed by individual schools and learners as part of the destination and activity data collection process, enabling services to be targeted to vulnerable groups and individual learners. The data will be used to target interventions through KIASSE to engage vulnerable young people who are at risk of becoming NEET or who are NEET.

Three Month Averages - Not Known

	Academic Age 16-18 (year 12-14)							
	2013-14				2012-13			
	Jan-14	Feb-14	Mar-14	Ave	Jan-13	Feb-13	Mar-13	Ave
ENGLAND	7.5%	7.1%	6.9%	7.2%	8.7%	8.2%	7.9%	8.3%
SOUTH EAST	7.9%	7.6%	7.5%	7.7%	10.7%	9.2%	8.3%	9.4%
KENT	4.6%	4.7%	5.8%	5.0%	2.8%	2.3%	2.2%	2.5%

- 4.5 The Not Known figures for Kent shows that the Local Authority has sustained a good performance in comparison with other Local Authorities and nationally. KCC will continue to reduce the number of NEETs through more targeted interventions delivered by KIASSE.

5. 16 to 18 year olds available for apprenticeships

January 2014 data for NEETs and Apprenticeships	
Number of NEETs	2307
Number of apprenticeships 16 to 18	1440

- 5.1 Of the 2307 young people who are NEET, approximately 1,000 learners could progress into an apprenticeship with appropriate support, guidance and pre-apprenticeship preparation including job coaches particularly at aged 17. To increase the number of more vulnerable NEET young people into apprenticeships additional resources will be required. These learners often have significant barriers to learning and are not work ready.
- 5.2 The profile of the NEET cohort in January 2014 shows that, 1641 were identified within a vulnerable group. The majority of these young people find progression into any form of participation in employment or education difficult for a number of reasons. Often it is the lack of time appropriate engagement programmes to prepare them for employment. 530 of this vulnerable group are

teenage mothers and 330 are in the LDDD group. The profile of the LDDD NEET Cohort aged 16-24 shows that disengagement for these learners has an upward trajectory after age 17. Poor progression pathways at ages 16 and 17 will result in young people leaving full time education, without appropriate preparation for an apprenticeship or employment with training.

- 5.3 These vulnerable groups require significant additional support from a range of agencies to access opportunities such as apprenticeships. The Skills and Employability Service offers the Assisted Apprenticeship Scheme, and the Kent Employment Programme and now the Kent Supported Employment Programme provides job coaches for young people and mentors for employers. Many apprenticeship providers are not able to provide this important additional support because of costs and lack of experienced staff. This is an area that Kent Training and Apprenticeship should develop as part of the Kent County Council EFA (Education Funding Agency) contract with a value of over 500k for 16 to 18 year old apprenticeships.

6. Apprenticeship Profile in Kent

National Apprenticeship Service Data

- 6.1 The National Apprenticeship data set shows an overall fall in the number of apprenticeship starts in the second quarter from August to January, in line with national trends. However, there was a year on year increase in the number of Advanced and Higher Level Apprenticeships. Overall the decline in the Kent figures was not as great as those recorded nationally and by our statistical neighbours.

16-18 Apprenticeships at Quarter 2 for comparison

	Final 12/13	Change	Q1 12/13	Q1 13/14	Change Q1	Q2 12/13	Q2 13/14	Change Q2
16-18	2,597	- 172	1,011	850	-161	1,521	1,440	- 81
19-24	3,791	+349	1,029	840	-189	1,764	1,650	-114
25+	5,159	+217	1,051	490	-561	2,091	1,010	-1,081
Total	11,547	+394	3,091	2,180	-911	5,376	4,100	-1,276

- 6.2 Although this shows a small decline, it represents a significant increase on quarter 1 which is the result of targeted interventions by KCC and other partnerships. Approximately 600 apprentices started during this period. The significant decline in the 25+ age range was due to the introduction of apprenticeship loans. This system of loans has now been withdrawn, which will see the number of 25+ apprenticeships increase.

Access to Apprenticeships

- 6.3 A key issue for many NEETs is they are not work ready. The threshold for accessing an apprenticeship is the ability to go on to achieve level 2 by the end of the apprenticeship. Entry requirements for apprenticeship are increasing,

and the introduction of traineeships as a pre apprenticeship opportunity has not been popular with either young people or employers.

- 6.4 The number of apprenticeship frameworks where the threshold is now a level 2 qualification to commence an apprenticeship is increasing, for example technical apprenticeships like engineering or apprenticeships involving working with children. These now require the attainment of at least grade C GCSE in both English and maths before the commencement of the apprenticeship.
- 6.5 A further barrier for some young people will be the introduction of summative assessments for the new apprenticeship framework being introduced in September 2014.
- 6.6 Many of the NEET cohort do not fulfil these criteria, as they are working at Level 1 or Entry Level. They require substantial support to prepare for an apprenticeship to meet both the academic and technical standards and work ready competencies. There has been a decline this year in pre apprenticeship programmes with a number of work based training providers withdrawing from the market. Changes to the post 16 programme of study funding also appear to be a disincentive to offer these types of courses for many providers.
- 6.7 The number of apprenticeship starts for 16-18 year olds has reduced in the past year, but this reflects a national decline which sees Kent performing better than its statistical neighbours. The small decline reflects the following;
 - Improved economy has meant employers can now afford to recruit experience over apprentices.
 - The situation with K College with a significant reduction in overall learner numbers including apprenticeships
 - Loss of some training providers due to poor Ofsted inspection outcomes
 - National providers are no longer offering 16 to 18 apprenticeship opportunities, for example NACRO
 - Replacement of pre apprenticeships with Traineeships where take up has been extremely low
 - Some increase in the numbers of young people going into jobs without training
 - Raising of the Participation Age has seen a 1% increase this year in the number of 16-17 year olds selecting a school sixth form as their destination choice.
 - The uncertainty of apprenticeship funding for providers means there is a reluctance to develop new provision.

7. Resources

Financial Implications

- 7.1 A number of activities to support the reduction in NEETs and the expansion of apprenticeships for 16 to 18 year olds are delivered by the Skills and Employability Service and KIASS, and this includes the current contract with

CXK. Targeted work to increase the number of 16 to 18 year old apprenticeships has been through the Kent Employment Programme (KEP). This includes a grant to employers of £2000 to employ NEETs, and currently there are 147 NEET young people who are on apprenticeships through this programme. The budget for KEP was £2 million, and is currently funded through the Big Society funding to 2105. There is only sufficient funding for a further 300 apprenticeship starts, and the removal of this funding could see a further decline in the number of apprenticeship in the future, particularly in the 16 to 18 age range.

Human Resources

7.2 There are 5 officers in the Skills and Employability working directly with employers and young people to increase the number of apprenticeship opportunities.

8. Conclusions and Future Developments

Promoting Apprenticeships for 16 to 18 year olds

8.1 To increase the number of apprenticeship starts the Skills and Employability Service has agreed a 16-18 apprenticeship campaign in collaboration with FE Colleges, Training Providers and other partners. This will run from May 2014 to January 2015. This will include:

- An intensive campaign with schools to raise the awareness of apprenticeship options at ages 16,17 and 18. The Skills and Employability Service will provide support for the recruitment process into apprenticeship in localities. This will require additional resources to create a job matching service. This activity has been requested by 300 head teachers.
- Coordinating apprenticeship vacancies in Kent through the Kent Messenger. In June over 300 apprenticeships were advertised and an intensive recruitment exercise has now started which, if successful, will be repeated in January and April 2015.
- Increasing the number of Year 13 leavers into apprenticeships during the summer term. This will focus on level 3 apprenticeships. Retention and the dropout rate at age 17 is a significant issue because of inappropriate post 16 programmes in some schools.
- Continuing to expand the post 16 vocational offer 2-1-2 model, with 20 schools starting in September 2014. This is an effective pathway into apprenticeships by brokering contact between young people and employers and providing high quality work experience placements.

- Use of the FE job shops through KAFEC to develop a coordinated approach with colleges to increase the number of apprenticeships.
- Working directly with employers to convert more work experience/internships and traineeships into apprenticeships.
- Developing the KCC apprenticeships programme including level 3 and 4 opportunities and increasing the number of work experience placements which convert into apprenticeships.
- Focused work in the Youth Learning and Employment Zones in Gravesham, Swale, Thanet, Dover and Shepway to actively recruit more young people into apprenticeships.
- Advocacy with parents – a campaign to engage and inform parents about apprenticeships

Employer Engagement

- 8.2 Effective employer engagement is crucial to increasing apprenticeships. The Kent Employment Programme (KEP) has successfully engaged over 1000 businesses across Kent to promote the value of apprenticeships. This service has been highly valued by employers especially when recruiting young people aged 16 to 18. Providing high quality support for the recruitment process has resulted in 631 apprenticeship starts being created. The team also provides support and guidance to employers to enable them to access funding through KCC and other Government funds.
- 8.3 The team has established strong working partnerships with Job Centres and Work Programme providers across Kent, as well as various training providers and colleges. A major impact of the programme has been, of the 103 apprentices who completed their apprenticeship since April 2012, 98 remain in employment with the same employer.
- 8.4 There is only sufficient funding to recruit a further 300 new apprentices, and there is no doubt that once the funding is no longer available the number of 18+ apprenticeships starts in Kent will decline.
- 8.5 Identifying new ways of engaging employers in developing appropriate training programmes is a priority. The tourism and hospitality sectors provide 64,000 jobs in Kent. Businesses in Kent's hospitality sector have recognised skills gaps, general recruitment and retention challenges and a strong desire to simplify points of entry to its many and varied businesses. The aim is to promote sustainable, professional career development. KCC is developing, in partnership with employers, a new Guild model for this industry supported by a range of employers including Shepherd Neame, Hilton Hotels and

Rosemary Shrager. A fully developed Kent Guild would encompass key stakeholders and provide a single focus for:

- promoting/marketing a positive image of the sector,
- operating and working within the sector in Kent for employers,
- working with the sector for education and skills providers,
- supporting young people looking to embark on a career
- supporting businesses to develop, grow and to recruit and develop young people into sustainable jobs

8.6 Negotiations are currently taking place with employers and providers to replicate this model for the construction, land-based and digital media sectors.

Access Programmes to Apprenticeships (Next Steps)

8.7 A significant number of NEET young people do not have the necessary skills to access employment. This number needs to be reduced by ensuring there are more opportunities for appropriate work related provision in schools, colleges and work based learning providers. This work has already started in schools by reviewing the destinations of young people at ages 17 and 18, in addition to this work the Skills and Employability Service proposes. Moving forward we will be

- Using the tracking data to monitor those at risk of not participating to target earlier appropriate interventions which will be delivered by KIAS.
- Monitoring leavers and joiners from full time study programmes and offer these learners apprenticeships. Providers will report to KCC the names of leavers and joiners from their institutions and we will work with KIAS officers and CXK personal advisers to develop a protocol for targeting the new leavers with appropriate support to re-engage them.
- Developing a KCC Virtual Academy which would provide a range of pre- employment programmes for 14 to 19 (24) year olds
- Developing the Participation Partnerships in each District to focus on identifying appropriate provision for young people identified at risk of becoming NEET and positively promote apprenticeships or work with training as an option. This would require a dedicated service for apprenticeship recruitment.
- Continuing to use the District data packs to develop appropriate provision in schools and colleges following an analysis of gaps in provision to support young people into apprenticeships. We will identify where there are shortages in provision to meet the needs of the local

economy. The new district data packs are currently being finalised and will be published during August.

- Increasing the number of pre apprenticeship programmes with appropriate progression routes. This will include expanding the offer delivered by Kent Training and Apprenticeships, and other work-based training providers.
- Exploring additional funding opportunities to enable the Kent Employment Programme to continue for a further 2 to 4 years.
- Identifying opportunities to expand the Assisted Apprenticeship programme to offer 200 placements over the next 12 months.

9. Recommendation:

The Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee is asked to endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member on the proposed activities to reduce NEET numbers and increase the number of 16-18 year old apprenticeships (set out in Section 8 of this report)

Background Documents

- NCCIS Activity Survey report to DfE January 2013
- NCCIS Activity Survey report to DfE January 2014
- National Apprenticeship Service figures
- NCCIS March 2014 Tables
- CXK performance data
- FE Data Library: Apprenticeships. Data Service

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