

**From:** Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform  
Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director for Education and Young People's Services

**To:** Education and young People's Services Cabinet Committee  
Tuesday 15 December 2015

**Subject:** Education and Young People's Services NEET Strategy and Action Plan 2015/16

**Non-Key decision**

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Electoral Division:** All

<b>Summary:</b>	This report sets out the context and ambitions of the NEETs Strategy and Action Plan 2015/16
<b>Recommendation:</b>	The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse the NEETs Strategy and Action Plan for 2015/16

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Engagement in learning and educational attainment is critical if young people are to gain employment and make a success of their lives. Evidence shows that not being in education, employment or training (NEET) between the ages of 16 and 18 is a major predictor of later unemployment, lower job security and lower rates of pay. There is also greater likelihood of teenage parenthood, depression, poor physical and mental health, persistent youth offending, insecure housing and homelessness, use of illicit drugs, poor relationships and early death.
- 1.2 The new NEETs Strategy sets out our commitment to our most vulnerable young people to ensure that they are able to engage in education and training, to maximise their life chances and to make a successful transition to adulthood. The aim of the Strategy is to ensure full participation by all young people to age 18 and beyond and to significantly reduce the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training.
- 1.3 This Strategy sets out the key issues which contribute to young people not engaging in education, employment or training and identifies what, collectively, is needed to improve outcomes for young people who are vulnerable to becoming NEET and who are already NEET. It sets clear targets to ensure that the number of NEETs in Kent is reduced to 1% by January 2017. To achieve this ambitious target new approaches have been developed to reduce NEETs in schools, colleges and work based training providers.

- 1.4 This Strategy sets out new approaches to ensure that all 14-19 year olds (and up to age 24 for SEND learners) can participate in appropriate learning pathways which lead to sustained destinations. Young people need to have access to appropriate support and guidance to enable them to make key decisions about future employment and learning opportunities. The success of this Strategy is dependent on focused collaborative and integrated working, not only between services within KCC, but also between KCC, Schools, FE Colleges and work based learning providers.
- 1.5 The NEET Strategy builds on existing EYPS strategic plans and targets, by providing details of new approaches that will be used to ensure that all 14 – 19 year olds (and up to age 24 for SEND learners) can participate in appropriate learning pathways, which lead to sustained destinations for employment, training and higher education.

## **2. NEET Definitions and KCCs Statutory responsibilities**

### **2.1. Participation**

The definition of participation is for 16-18 year olds to meet the requirements of Raising the Participation Age (RPA.) The duty is on the young person to participate. Young people must continue in education or training until at least their actual 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, this is reported as young people aged 16 and 17 years (Academic Years 12 and 13).

A young person is participating if they are in:

- full time education (e.g. at a school or college)
- an apprenticeship or traineeship
- part time education or training combined with one of the following:
  - employment or self-employment for 20 hours or more a week
  - volunteering for 20 hours or more a week

### **2.2 Tracking**

The statutory responsibility for the Local Authority is to track all young people to their 20<sup>th</sup> birthday, which in Kent is achieved through the Integrated Youth Support System (IYSS). The IYSS is the database used to collect all the tracking, data and destinations. There is a responsibility to track every young person with SEND up to age 24.

### **2.3 NEET**

A young person is NEET if they are aged 16 to 18 or SEND aged 16-24 and not in education, employment or training. A person is considered to be in education or training if they are in:

- full time education;
- with a specialist provider;
- in part time education;

- an apprenticeship;
- EFA/SFA funded work based learning;
- training delivered through the work programme;
- traineeship;
- supported internships;
- reengagement provision; or
- full time education – custodial institution

A person is considered to be in employment if they are in:

- employment with accredited training/part time study that is accredited by Ofqual and includes 280 hours training or study per year. This is required for 16-17 olds to meet RPA;
- employment with non-accredited training if it provides training not accredited by Ofqual;
- employment without training;
- temporary employment;
- part time employment;
- self-employment; or
- voluntary work, if combined with accredited training

### **3. The NEETs Strategy**

3.1. The detailed actions required to deliver the NEET Strategy are set out in section 3 of the document attached to this report. A summary of the 3 key strands of activity are to:

- Implement an integrated and high quality data system to track all learners across all KCC services. This information is available monthly in detailed reports and is used to identify activities and target resources to support young people into learning
- Develop focused, collaborative and integrated working, not only between services within KCC, but also between KCC, schools, FE Colleges and work based learning providers. All services across KCC need to have efficient support systems that enable all young people to maintain successful learning pathways and positive destinations. This will include focused work and interventions for the most vulnerable groups, which includes Children in Care, SEND, Young Offenders, Teenage Parents, and Elective Home Educated.
- Provide high quality personalised pathways with positive destinations across all districts. During 2015/16 work is being undertaken to model new 14 – 19 pathways ( and up to age 24 for SEND learners ) to ensure that the learning and training offer in every district in Kent is aligned with employment opportunities, has provision for level 1 and 2 qualifications and enables access to progression to gain English and Maths qualifications. A particular focus is on ensuring vulnerable learners have the necessary support to progress into appropriate pathways, internships, supported employment, or apprenticeships. A recent activity to meet local demand has been to provide 6 week programmes for unaccompanied asylum

seekers (UASC) which provides ESOL support, living skills and vocational profile and guidance so these young people can move into a positive destination

3.2. Focused activities to identify those young people likely to become NEET are also being developed further. There are particular characteristics of NEET young people in Kent, for example:

- Over a third of NEETs have had more than one fixed term exclusion from school
- Over a third have had an SCS referral or are children in care
- Over a third come from 15 coastal High schools
- Over a quarter are known to Y.O.T
- 21% are from a Troubled Family group

3.3. Activities outlined in the Strategy use data and other research including Learner Voice information to develop a wider range of early intervention strategies and provide direct and individualised support to those young people most at risk of becoming NEET. The Strategy also outlines specific responsibilities and actions that will be taken by key KCC services to ensure their client groups do not become NEET. These include SEND, VSK, Early Help, Youth Offending, Troubled Families, Elective Home Education, and Pupil Referral Units.

#### **4. Action Plan**

4.1. To ensure no more than 1% of this age group are NEET by January 2017 is a challenge. However, the activities and actions set out in the Action Plan are designed to ensure that we are able to achieve this target. Last year Kent was in line with the national annual NEET average which was 4.7%.

4.2. The action plan will be monitored and reviewed by the NEETs Interdependencies Group, chaired by the Corporate Director, Education and Young People's Services. All KCC services involved in the NEET Strategy are clear about their requirements and contributions to this work.

4.3. Ensuring that the most vulnerable learners experience success is a top priority. This new strategy for 2015/16 sets out how we will support all young people to participate in education or employment with training until aged 18 and beyond. Examples of the types of activities included in the action plan are given below.

4.4. The Skills and Employability Service have several new participation projects for vulnerable learners for this academic year. As a result of the successful district offer made last year we have commissioned Skillforce and Adult Education to deliver 12 week engagement projects for those young people who are not ready to engage with traineeships or apprenticeships. These will take place in the four districts with the most need and will be repeated 3 times. This will engage 180 young people.

- 4.5. There is a SEND Supported Internship pilot engaging 20 young people in employment opportunities being delivered in partnership with training providers and Kent Supported Employment. This programme offers young people from Special Schools the opportunity to gain employability skills through internships.
- 4.6. Work is being undertaken with the Virtual School Kent, (VSK) training providers and the Community Learning and Skills Service to provide a six week Education and skills programme for the large numbers of unaccompanied young asylum seekers.
- 4.7. Virtual Schools Kent have appointed 4 new post 16 Participation Officers to support young people in care to remain in education and training until aged 18. This includes introducing new transitional support programmes and working closer with the FE sector.
- 4.8. The Early Help and Preventive Service's District teams have developed new support systems and programmes to work with NEET young people. A number of these programmes are already contributing to the significant reduction in NEETs particularly in Dover, Ashford, Shepway, Thanet and Maidstone.
- 4.9. The details of other activities to reduce NEETs and Not Knowns are set out in more detail in the Action Plan (section 11)

## 5. Performance

### 5.1. September Guarantee

All Year 11 and Year 12 aged young people are required to have an offer of further learning, education or employment with training for the beginning of the next academic year in September. This is called the September Guarantee. The LA has a statutory duty to monitor this guarantee and report back to the DfE. The table below illustrates the percentage of this cohort who have a recorded guarantee status, this includes those young people who may not be meeting the requirements of Raising the Participation Age.

	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
<b>England</b>	93.2%	94.1%*
<b>South East</b>	90.8%	92.5%*
<b>Kent</b>	88.6%	90.5% tbc

DFE September Guarantee tables – September 2014. Final report published December each year. \* Provisional data

### 5.2. Participation

Young people must continue in education or training until at least their actual 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, and this is reported as young people aged 16 and 17 (Year 12 and 13).

	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
<b>England</b>	90.2%	tbc mid-December
<b>South East</b>	88.4%	tbc mid-December
<b>Kent</b>	86%	tbc mid-December

DFE Participation tables – December 2014. Tables published for three census points a year: June, December, March.

### 5.3. NEETS

A person is NEET if they are aged 16 to 18 or SEND aged 16-24 and not in education, employment or training.

	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016 Projected</b>	<b>2016 KCC Target</b>
<b>England</b>	4.7%		
<b>South East</b>	4.3%		
<b>Kent</b>	4.7%	3%	2.5%

NCCIS LA Tables – January 2014. Tables published monthly

### 5.4 Not Knowns

Not Knowns are those young people aged 16, 17 and 18 who are not in a current activity status. This means it has either not been identified what they are currently doing or it has been identified but the time limit for that status to remain current has expired and needs to be checked again. Operational systems to collect this data have been significantly improved for 15/16. The results in these changes, plus working more closely with colleges and schools will ensure the Not Known figures will significantly reduce.

	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016 Projected</b>	<b>2016 KCC Target</b>
<b>England</b>	7.2%		
<b>South East</b>	9.5%		
<b>Kent</b>	11.22%	7%	7%

NCCIS Tables – January 2015. Tables published monthly

## 6. Conclusion

The NEETs Strategy and Action Plan is designed to ensure that there is a coordinated approach across all KCC services and key partners to support young people into positive destinations post 16 and beyond. The new systems and approaches introduced as part of the strategy will significantly reduce the number of NEETs and Not Knowns. The tracking and data capture of all 16 to 19 year olds( 19 to 24 for SEND learners) provides detailed information on a young person's progress which will ensure that appropriate support and learning programmes can be put in place for some of our most vulnerable young people.

## 7. Recommendations

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse the NEETs Strategy and Action Plan for 2015/16

**8. Background Documents**  
NEETS Monthly Reports

**9. Contact Details**

Report Author:

Sue Dunn

Head of Skills & Employability Service

Tel. number: 03000 416044

[Sue.Dunn@kent.gov.uk](mailto:Sue.Dunn@kent.gov.uk)

Relevant Director:

Gillian Cawley

Director for Education, Quality and Standards

Tel. number: 03000 419853

[Gillian.Cawley@kent.gov.uk](mailto:Gillian.Cawley@kent.gov.uk)