

REPORT TO:	Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee 15 October 2013
AGENDA ITEM:	7a
SUBJECT:	The work of the Croydon Children and families partnership 14+ Schools and Colleges Partnership
LEAD OFFICER:	Sylvia McNamara Director of Learning and Inclusion
CABINET MEMBER:	Tim Pollard Cabinet Member for Children Families and Learning
PERSON LEADING AT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING:	Sylvia McNamara Director of Learning and Inclusion

ORIGIN OF ITEM:	This item is contained in the sub-committee's agreed work programme.
BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:	To examine the effectiveness of partnership working between schools, colleges and businesses in the borough to give school leavers a good start in the labour market

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1** The 14+ Schools and Colleges Partnership focuses on Raising the Participation Age (RPA) and improving 14-19 curriculum quality and breadth. Membership is encouraged but voluntary, and consists of school, academy and college senior leaders.
- 1.2** The Partnership's work plan is determined by analysis of information, identification of key issues and partners' agreement of shared priorities.
- 1.3** Government policy dictates that schools have greater autonomy (including use of funding and curriculum offer), responsibility for their own improvement and a greater emphasis on school to school support.
- 1.4** Schools and colleges now have the statutory responsibility for providing universal, impartial careers advice for students in years 8 to 13. The LA currently provides targeted support to up to 150 of the most vulnerable young
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NEET people and locality based activities (both provide and commissioned) to NEET young people and those at risk of becoming NEET.

- 1.5 Croydon LA brought the post-16 NEET/participation tracking function back in-house in 2012. This allows for greater control and access to our residents and institutions data, but is a very resource intensive function to undertake.
- 1.6 Local savings to be achieved will impact on the current service delivery, including operation of the partnerships, unless alternative delivery options and/or funding are secured.

2. OVERVIEW OF 14+ PARTNERSHIPS

2.1 Background

The 14+ School and Colleges Partnership ('the partnership') was established following the replacement of the Economic Wellbeing sub-group of the Children and Families Partnership (CFP) with two new partnerships focussing on specific priorities. For the purpose of CFP reporting, the activities of both these partnerships are combined and reported under 'Achieving Economic Wellbeing'.

The two new partnerships formed: 14+ Schools and Colleges Partnership (para 2.2) and NEET Reduction Partnership (para 2.3) were created in January 2013. This was seen as a better reflection of current priorities and better use of partners and stakeholders.

Further support and partnership activity is available to schools and colleges via the traded services offer for schools (para 2.4) and activities currently funded by the Council's School Improvement and Youth Services.

Both partnerships also have representation on the Croydon Skills and Employment Partnership which has as one of its objectives to 'Support young people to be employment ready'.

Currently officers from the School Improvement Service operate and drive both of these partnerships at no cost to partnership members. With a proposed move towards a traded service, and less council funding, this arrangement will need to be reviewed.

2.2 14+ Schools and Colleges Partnership

Membership is made up of senior representatives (head teachers, principals, vice principals and assistant heads) from Croydon schools, academies and colleges and the LA School Improvement Service. Other partners are invited when required and as dictated by the meeting agenda, for example apprenticeship providers, senior staff from private schools and regeneration.

Membership and participation by all relevant borough institutions, including academies and independent schools, is encouraged but is voluntary. Currently approximately 60% of local secondary schools (including some academies) and all of the colleges are active members.

This partnership is responsible for development, implementation, monitoring & evaluation of CFP priorities of:

- Raising the Participation Age (RPA),
- improving 14-19 curriculum quality and breadth, and
- raising aspirations of young people

These priorities also recognise the increasing Ofsted focus on schools, colleges and local authorities to ensure that all young people have clear and appropriate progression routes into higher education and/or skilled employment. Progression data will increasingly be reported at institution level in accordance with government policy of providing more information to inform student choice.

The Partnership is also developing opportunities for young people, regardless of their background, to enable them to have access to universities, Apprenticeships and employment which their existing social networks may not be able to provide. This includes brokering links between independent schools and maintained schools/academies, enabling our most able students to benefit from established relationships with top universities. Also the partnership is exploring the opportunities that will arise from local regeneration/development projects and the expansion in Apprenticeship opportunities in Croydon and the City.

Officers in Croydon's School Improvement Service currently supply extensive data analysis to inform the priorities and activities of this partnership. Although this work is sometimes hampered by some data sharing restrictions relating to some provider specific information which is not freely available in the public domain, data has been shared and resulted in positive actions.

The partnership has two traded sub-groups: the Post-16 Excellence Network (heads of sixth form and vice principals) and an Information, Advice and Guidance network (careers teachers and progression managers). These groups report into the partnership and their work plans are part of annex B.

The partnership's Terms of Reference can be found in annex A and work plan in annex B.

2.3 NEET Reduction Partnership

Membership is drawn from a range of providers (independent, voluntary sector and colleges) who offer local provision for young people who are NEET and/or for whom traditional full-time sixth form provision is not appropriate. The School Improvement Service, Integrated Youth Support and Job Centre Plus are also members.

The curriculum offer across Croydon is broad, and most is focused at level 2 and below, including: apprenticeships, the Youth Contract, vocational and employability programmes, plus a number of programmes targeted at specific vulnerable groups.

Meetings are supplemented by a weekly e-bulletin, sent to a wider group of

partners, which provides up to date information on relevant local activities, new programmes and 'live' apprenticeship vacancies.

This partnership is responsible for development, implementation, monitoring & evaluation of CFP priority of:

- NEET Reduction

In August the NEET Reduction Partnership worked together to run a successful two day event in the centre of Croydon to support young people at risk of failing to progress on to courses in September. This event took place on the GCSE results day and attracted a large number of young people, many of whom signed up to appropriate courses with local providers.

The partnership's Terms of Reference can be found in annex C and action plan in annex D.

2.4 Traded Services for schools

In recognition of central government policy changes since 2010 resulting in:

- significant funding reductions for local authority supplied services related to schools, education and support for young people;
- increased autonomy for schools to determine what support they need, when they need it and who they purchase it from; and
- an increased emphasis on school to school support,

there is an increased risk that local authorities' ability to influence local schools will weaken and impact on the ability to achieve local education priorities.

In anticipation of this, the LA School Improvement Service introduced a traded service to schools delivered under the 'learning without boundaries' programme in 2011. This model has allowed a wide range of services to introduce a charging model for all discretionary services which were previously supported by general funding and government grants.

Schools, academies and colleges have access to a broad CPD programme and bespoke training and support, which they can purchase in accordance with their needs. This includes 11-19 support services, governor training programme, Ofsted support & preparation, curriculum expertise and support for raising the achievement of specific groups of learners, such as: gifted and talented, travellers, ethnic minorities, English as an additional language, learners with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Several networks are also provided to support practitioners and leaders to share outstanding practice and to keep in touch with the latest developments in their specialist area. Those networks appropriate to 14+ education and support include (but not exhaustive):

- Post-16 Excellence
- Curriculum specialisms: English, maths, science, ICT
- Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)
- Health and wellbeing
- Increasing achievement in specific groups of learners

Full details of the 'learning without boundaries' offer can be found at www.croydonlwb.org

3 NATIONAL AND LOCAL POLICY CHANGES

3.1 Information, Advice & Guidance (IAG)

The statutory responsibility for the provision of universal, impartial careers guidance for years 9 to 11 was transferred to schools in September 2012. This responsibility was extended to include further education and sixth form colleges and broaden the age range to include years 8 to 13 in September 2013. Schools are free to make arrangements for careers guidance for young people that fit the needs and circumstances of their students, and are not required to engage with any one particular provider.

Local authorities retain their statutory duty to enable, encourage and assist young people's participation in education and training, which includes supporting vulnerable young people to engage in education and training. It is for local authorities to decide how they should make arrangements for supporting young people's participation, taking into account the needs of their local communities.

Central government funding for universal careers services has been withdrawn and has subsequently been replaced with National Careers Service, an online information service. Local authorities are free to determine the nature and extent of local delivery, however there is no expectation or funding for LAs to provide universal careers services. Therefore, Croydon LA ceased its funded universal IAG provision (delivered under the 'Connexions' brand) and replaced it with a smaller 'targeted' service for the most vulnerable NEET group of young people in July 2011.

Impact

- Loss of a local impartial universal IAG service with a high street presence with c60 personal advisors and data collection/analysis functions
- LA 'targeted' service based at the Turnaround Centre with 6 advisors working with up to 150 young NEET young people deemed to be the most vulnerable
- Due to significant resource reductions, change in focus and legal action (relating to the redundancy/TUPE matters of Connexions staff) which has only recently been concluded, it was not possible or appropriate to retain previous activities undertaken by the Connexions service
- We estimate that there are approximately 500 NEET young people (i.e. those not covered by school/college IAG or LA targeted support) in Croydon who need to self-navigate to find appropriate advice and support.
- An increased emphasis on schools providing impartial IAG to their pupils and undertaking appropriate NEET prevention activities to ensure appropriate post-16 participation
- The borough's Post-16 Prospectus, coordinated and supported by School Improvement, has continued to be produced but is now self-funding as providers pay for entries.

3.2 Raising the Participation Age (RPA)

The first stage of RPA has now been implemented, with all young people now required to participate in appropriate education or training until the end of the academic year in which they turn 17 years old. This will be extended to a young person's 18th birthday in 2015.

Participation is defined as:

- carrying on in full time learning at a school or college or a work based learning provider;
- an apprenticeship;
- part-time education or training, if they are employed, self-employed or doing at least 20 hours or more a week volunteering.

The immediate aim of this policy is that 100% of young people will 'participate' until the end of Year 12, starting in September 2013. The longer term policy aim is that all young people will continue in education or training until their 18th birthday; this begins with the current Year 10 (14/15 year olds).

The duty to 'participate' has been placed on the young people; however the Local Authority has statutory obligations to encourage and assist young people to participate, and ensure that there is sufficient, high quality and appropriate provision available. Council officers are working closely with schools, colleges and training providers to meet these duties and improve the participation rate amongst young people.

Participation statistics are published at borough level and schools/colleges will also be ranked in a published league table based on the proportion of their year 11, 12 and 13 students who stay in education/training for at least two terms.

Strategy and activities in relation to RPA are currently coordinated, developed and delivered by the School Improvement Service (supported by the Youth Service) and through the partnerships described in section 2 of this report.

Impact

- Participation rates in Croydon are traditionally higher than the national average, but the change in reporting (see 3.3), the fact that we've never had full participation and lack of legal enforcement means that 100% participation is a challenge and may never be achieved.
- Secondary schools in Croydon are now alert to RPA responsibilities, particularly as progress to HE and skilled employment is an Ofsted measure of success and also performance against this measure will be published at institution level.
- Further reductions in both School Improvement and Youth Services capacity will have an impact on the extent and nature of activities undertaken.
- Improved performance data is available but there is an increased burden on schools, colleges and local authorities to collect data and report participation rates.
- Anticipating an increase in post-16 participation arising from RPA and longer term growth in the cohort size, local post-16 capacity has been increased to meet future demand for places.

3.3 Tracking the participation and destinations of young people aged 16-18

With the increasing focus on RPA, we are currently in a transition period moving away from reporting NEET rates towards reporting participation rates. This means that local authorities' performance will increasingly be measured against their known participation levels. It is therefore more vital than ever to track the destinations/participation of all our young people aged 16-18 and reduce the numbers of young people whose destinations are 'not known'. Additionally, the collection, analysis and dissemination of this data is vital in order to inform appropriate prevention and interventions by both the LA and its partners.

Local authorities have a statutory responsibility to track the destinations and participation of all resident young people aged 16-18 and undertake appropriate reporting of this information. All providers (schools, academies, colleges etc., but not independent schools) are legally obliged to provide information on leavers from their provision (and known destinations) to the LA on a regular basis, so that the LA can encourage participation. LA's are also obliged to disseminate information regularly to other local authorities regarding the participation of non-resident learners who are studying and/or left local provision.

Prior to June 2012, Croydon was part of a south London cluster arrangement to collect data, track young people's current participation and undertake appropriate reporting requirements. In June 2012, Croydon withdrew from this arrangement and brought the function in house.

There have been ongoing challenges regarding the implementation of the IT system purchased and used to undertake this function, and also under-estimation in the extent of resources required to track approximately 15,000 to 20,000 young people annually.

Data sharing protocols have been implemented with a large number of schools, colleges, independent providers, national bodies (e.g. National Apprenticeship Service) and neighbouring boroughs where Croydon residents study. A very small minority of providers have refused to enter into an agreement with the LA to provide the required information, but we are continuing to pursue these agreements.

The LA is also working with all London boroughs, via London Councils, to implement a London-wide mechanism for the collection and sharing of information relating to young people who leave provision.

Impact

- NEET levels amongst 16-18 year olds are currently low (4.4% in June 2013, compared to 6.0% in June 2012). 'Not known' situations have also reduced but continue to be high at 15.7% (20.6%). The impact of the high volume of 'not known' situations is that we have low recorded participation rates – approximately 80% across the 16-18 age group in July 2013.
- Reduction of 'not known's' will increase our participation rates but may also impact on our NEET rate.

- Effective local tracking of young people enables more targeted and timely intervention, but is very resource intensive.
- There is an identified current and ongoing increased resource requirement to undertake these functions effectively and appropriately.

3.4 Curriculum

The Review of Vocational Education – Wolf Report (2011) was commissioned by the Secretary of State for Education to consider how vocational education for 14 to 19 year olds can be improved in order to promote successful progression into higher education and employment. Wolf was particularly critical of the drift towards pupils taking more vocational qualifications pre-16 which did not have clear employability or higher education value. The impact of this and other Government policies on the 14-19 curriculum has been/will be:

- The removal of league-table incentives to enter students for large numbers of vocational qualifications pre-16
- At key stage 4 schools are free to offer any qualifications they wish from a regulated awarding body, subject to being age appropriate
- Key stage 4 performance measures increasingly emphasise pupil achievement in core academic subjects at GCSE
- The introduction of individualised 16-19 study programmes which do not limit options for future work or education. Learners must undertake a substantial academic (such as A Levels) or vocational qualification with English and maths (where GCSE grade A*-C has not been achieved), high quality meaningful work experience where appropriate and enrichment activities (Sept 2013)
- The removal of statutory duty for schools to provide work related learning in key stage 4 (Sept 2012)
- The DfE is also reviewing the Post-16 vocational curriculum offer with the aim of reducing the number of qualifications available
- A broader range of 14-19 providers of education and training: A wider range of 14-19 providers, including: schools, academies, university technical colleges, studio schools, free schools, FE colleges, sixth form colleges and the independent sector. From September 2013 eligible FE and sixth form colleges are also permitted to directly enroll students at age 14.
- Post-16 funding is learner driven and determined by the volume of learners in an institution in accordance with a national funding formula.

Impact

- Schools having responsibility for their own curriculum development and delivery, meaning that local authorities can influence but not dictate the local offer. Croydon currently exercises this influence via the 14+ Schools and Colleges Partnership and via link advisers (School Improvement Service) arrangements with all Croydon schools, academies and colleges
- Greater emphasis on academic curriculum at KS4 (14-16) and work-related learning at KS5 (16-19)
- 16-19 national funding mechanisms are driven by demand (student numbers) which inevitably influences the nature of the curriculum offer

- Overall this sector has seen a growth in the breadth and number of providers, resulting in greater choice for young people but also increases competition amongst providers

4 Issues relating to tracking the destinations of school leavers

Tracking the participation and destinations of young people aged 16-18

Local authorities have a statutory responsibility to track the destinations and participation of all resident young people aged 16-18 and undertake appropriate reporting of this information. This and other nationally held data feeds into the Government's database which the DfE uses to publish Key Stage 4 and 5 Destinations data. The destinations data shows whether the learners went into and stayed in education, training or employment with and without training for two consecutive terms i.e. until March in the following year. The most recent version of this data (published in June 2013) for these key stages are attached as Appendix A and B

Key Stage 4 Destinations

This spread sheet contains an overview and breakdown of what the borough's students who were in year 11 in 2009/10 were doing in March 2011, and is presented by England's overall percentages, Croydon's overall percentages and then by school. For this cohort there was no obligation to participate as there is now (Raising the Participation Age). Crucially however there was a Connexions service, with 42 advisers who supported the students with one-to-one interviews and support with applications, and tracked their whereabouts on a regular basis.

The baseline data (who was in year 11) was gathered in the schools in the Spring/Summer terms of 2010. Connexions then gathered data from the sixth forms, schools and training providers in the Autumn term of 2010 to establish where the students had progressed to and then again in the Spring term of 2011 to provide evidence of whether they had remained in their original destination (this is the definition of a sustained destination).

Analysis

Croydon's data indicates that 88% of year 11 students (2009/10) continued to participate in education, training or employment the following year until the end of the second term. This is slightly lower than the England average of 89%. The breakdown by school ranges from 65% at Addington to 100% at Archbishop Tenison. The schools with sixth forms tended to have the best 'overall' destinations, 'any education destination' and 'Destination not sustained' data indicating that their students make a smooth transition into their sixth forms.

It is important to note that 18% of Addington's data was not captured which means that 29 students were not found which may have impacted negatively on their data. The reason for this large number of students who were not found is unknown but may be due to a number of factors such as the transient nature of

the cohort who could have moved out of the region or country; the lack of sixth form provision at the school or that these young people did not respond to requests for this information.

An important column to consider is that entitled 'Destination not sustained'. This column indicates that 7% of the borough's year 11 students (2010/11) which is in line with the England average. However some schools are significantly worse than this which could suggest that their information, advice and guidance was not effective and that they started courses which were inappropriate. It would also suggest that these students may have been ill-prepared for year 12 and did not have a well-supported transition.

Key Stage 5 Destinations

This spread sheet contains an overview and breakdown of what the borough's students who were in **year 13 studying Level 3** courses in 2009/10 were doing in March 2011. Again it is presented by England's overall percentages, Croydon's overall percentages and then by school/college. For this cohort there was and is no obligation to participate. This cohort did have Connexions support for considering options and applications.

The baseline data (who was in year 13) was gathered by Connexions in the schools/colleges and other providers in the Spring/Summer terms of 2010. The DfE then gather data from a number of national sources in the Autumn term of 2010 to establish where the students had progressed to and then again in the Spring term of 2011 to provide evidence of whether they had remained in their original destination (this is the definition of a sustained destination).

Analysis

Croydon's overall participation in education, training or employment is 64% which is 5% below the England average. However, it is important to note the data in the 'Activity not captured in data' column which shows that 26% of Croydon's cohort was not included in these findings, which undermines their use as a method of judging the success of the students and their schools or colleges. This 'Activity not captured' figure is highest for those institutions with the lowest overall destinations figures, for example The BRIT school (one of the borough's largest post 16 providers) which has a 49% 'Overall Destinations' figure and a 42% 'Activity not captured' entry. The BRIT school accounts for near 15% of the Croydon cohort, and therefore impacts on the overall borough result. Another very large provider with a similar negative impact is Croydon College, which had a 59% 'Overall Destinations' entry and 30% in the 'Activity not captured' column. Other than their size (their combined 'Activity not captured' totals account for 14% of the total cohort) these two institutions also share another feature that they are both major providers of vocational education which is often a pathway into employment. The data about employment is notoriously hard to collect as there is no obligation on an employer or young person to tell the local authority who collects destinations data on behalf of the government. Therefore many of those unaccounted for may well be employed.

In order to establish the validity of the data The BRIT school were asked for a detailed breakdown of their own records and can confirm that all but 3% were participating in education, training or employment. A good number are

attending private higher education colleges which may not be counted on this spread sheet as they do not receive state funding and therefore may not appear in the Higher Education Statistics Agency data.

A great area of interest for the DFE is the proportion entering Higher Education and then whether they are going to the Russell Group Universities. In Croydon 46% of this cohort went into higher education, which is 2% below England's overall figure. Four of the schools got a much higher than average figure in this column, these were Coloma and NMBEC with 71%, St Joseph's with 68% and Archbishop Tenison, 61%. However, only 10% of the Croydon cohort went to Russell Group universities against an England average of 14% and less than 1% entered Oxford or Cambridge. Coloma was a notable success in this area, getting 29% of students into Russell Group Universities. This data reflects two realities of post 16 education in Croydon: one is the nature of the provision of which 50% is vocational and therefore is for many a route into employment, and the second is that the low percentage of learners achieving the highest grades which precludes them from entering the top universities or professional university courses such as medicine.

Future data issues and their impact

As stated above Connexions collected the data needed for the reporting requirements for the cohort that has been reported on so far. They did this job using 42 Connexions advisers who visited all of the schools, colleges and other providers. They also devoted in many hours of overtime so that those who could not be tracked were later found. The results of this investment can be seen in this paper; data that is useful but does not always stand up to scrutiny.

As we move forward local savings measures, including the reduction of funding allocated to Youth Support and School Improvement, will impact substantially on the Local Authority's ability to collect the required data effectively and to improve the borough's performance.

Kate Ambrosi
14-19 Improvement Advisor

CONTACT OFFICER: Sylvia McNamara

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Annex A: 14+ Schools & Colleges Partnership Terms of Reference

Annex B: 14+ Schools & Colleges Partnership Work Plan

Annex C: NEET Reduction Partnership Terms of Reference

Annex D: NEET Reduction Partnership Action Plan