

REPORT TO: Children, Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 20th February 2012

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Children and Enterprise

PORTFOLIO: Children, Young People and Families

SUBJECT: Changes to arrangements for supporting young people in education and training.

WARDS: ALL

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To inform PPB of Changes to arrangements for supporting young people in Education and training

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- (1) **PPB Board endorse the report**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 There have been a number of infrastructure changes affecting financial and other support mechanisms available to young people in Halton since 2010. The purpose of this paper is to set out a brief statement on changes affecting 14-25 year olds including information on any new arrangements that have been established in Halton.

14-19 Commissioning Statement

- 3.2 In response to these changes Halton Borough Council has completed an overview of provision for 14-19 year olds (up to 25 for those with a learning difficulty and/or disability). This will enable the borough to take account of these changes and shape provision by identifying gaps, supporting new provision and developing the market. The following priorities have been identified:

Priority 1: Improve participation and achievement of vulnerable groups

Priority 2: Ensure all Halton young people have access to appropriate independent, information, advice and guidance

Priority 3: Put in place effective strategies to reduce the number of young people at risk of becoming or who are already NEET

Priority 4: Plan for the raising of the participation age to 17 by 2013 and 18 by 2015

Priority 5: Ensure access to higher level qualifications that supports progression through to learning and employment

Priority 6: Respond to the changes in the Local and National Educational landscape

- 3.3 The 14-19 Strategic Commissioning Statement is coherent with the purpose of positive activities for young people supporting them with their health, lifestyle and career aspirations enabling them to achieve their full potential in their transition to adulthood. The majority of our young people will achieve this through their family, school, college and social activities.

The changes to support for young people are detailed below:

Education Maintenance allowance (EMA)

- 3.5 The coalition government removed the entitlement to EMA for the academic year 2011/12 and put in place the following transition arrangements:
- All students who applied for an EMA in 2009/10 will continue to receive payments at the same level until the end of the 2011/12 academic year.
 - Young people in their first year of post 16 study who were in receipt of maximum weekly EMA payment of £30 will be eligible for £20 until end of 2011/12 academic year.

16-19 Bursary Scheme

- 3.6 A new Bursary Scheme was announced on 28th March 2011 to support the most vulnerable 16-19 year olds to continue in full-time education. Eligibility to the bursary is at the discretion of Schools, colleges and training providers and distributed to the providers through the Young Peoples Learning Agency who gave a set allocation of funds to each provider.
- 3.7 The school, college or training provider decide when bursaries are paid, and set conditions that students should meet to receive a bursary, for example, this could be linked to behaviour or attendance.
- 3.8 The bursary fund is made up of two elements:
- A guaranteed group of the most vulnerable young people will receive a payment of £1,200. This group includes: children in care, care leavers,

young people in receipt of income support and disabled young people who are in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance and;

- A discretionary fund for those young people facing genuine financial barriers to participation, such as: cost of transport, food or equipment.

- 3.9 In Halton, schools, colleges and training providers met and agreed to distribute the discretionary fund to those young people who were eligible for free school meals in Year 11 of their school.
- 3.10 To facilitate this Halton Borough Council provides details of young people who were eligible for free school meals in Year 11 to the schools, colleges and training providers in Halton.
- 3.11 The way in which this is being administered varies by provider; some are paying their students monthly and some of paying their students weekly. The majority of providers have based their existing policy on EMA to form the basis of their policy/contract with learners on bursaries and those policies/contracts will identify the structure of the payments, criteria for attendance and behaviour and will also document how to appeal against any decisions made.
- 3.12 The Bursary scheme has been well promoted to young people with information provided in the local press, the Council Web site and through the provider network.

Hardship Funding

- 3.13 Funding has been secured to pilot a project to provide a breakfast during the spring term for those young people facing financial hardship. Historically this is the term when attendance dips and young people are more likely to leave their provision and fall into to NEET. The intention of this initiative is to test whether the offer of a free breakfast during the winter months will motivate attendance at the start of the day and provide a nutritious boost that will help them to remain engaged.

Aimhigher

- 3.14 Funding for the Aimhigher programme by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) was removed in 2010 and program closed. Aimhigher Halton worked across educational institutions in Halton to raise young peoples' aspirations and awareness of the benefits of Higher Education.
- 3.15 The staff delivering the program secured alternative employment either within the authority or within schools. Activity regarding the raising of

aspirations to HE is now included in the IAG strategy however the wider range of bespoke activities delivered by this team has ceased.

HE provision

- 3.16 From 2012/13 universities can offer degree programmes at full cost with fees ranging from £5,800 - £9,000 this could result in a total loan of £27,000 for fees alone not taking account of living expenses.
- 3.17 Maintenance and/or Special Support Grants are available to full-time students starting their course after September 2012. Maintenance Grants help with living costs and are available to students whose household income is £42,875 or less. The maximum Maintenance Grant is £3,250 if the household income is under £25,000. If a student qualifies for Income Support or Housing Benefit a Special Support Grant may be given instead of the Maintenance Grant.
- 3.18 Colleges can now bid for more HE places and can secure full time places. Riverside College plan to offer a varied curriculum of full time and part time across a range of courses. Riverside College is considering setting fees at £4,900 per year for a full time degree with students receiving a £1,000 bursary. The courses will be delivered from the Runcorn Campus in due course.

Riverside College

- 3.19 In 2011/12 Riverside College received funding cuts totalling £1000,000. The College carried out a strategic review relocating provision as follows
- Cronton Campus - 6th Form College
 - Kingsway – Vocational centre
 - Runcorn – Skills Centre/HE/Professional courses
- 3.20 The College plans to expand into new disciplines including HE and Professional courses at the Runcorn campus. Bus services are provided from all parts of Runcorn to Kingsway and Cronton Campuses.

Work Related Learning

- 3.21 The Statutory responsibility on schools to provide Work Related Learning (WRL) activities and 10 day work experience placements was removed for 2011/12. Most schools are continuing to provide work experience opportunities for some or all of their year 10 learners provided through a service level agreement with Halton Education Business Partnership.

Information Advice and Guidance

- 3.22 Schools will be responsible for securing access to IAG careers guidance for pupils in years 9 to 11. This new duty comes into force in September 2012. Government expects that schools will work in partnership with local authorities and external careers guidance providers to ensure that young people are appropriately supported, without the need for legislation.
- 3.23 Local Authorities have a duty to ensure that vulnerable young people receive the support that they need and that there will be local arrangements in place.
- 3.24 Contractual negotiations are taking place at city region level led by Halton to secure local arrangements to meet the Local Authorities Duty to provide a service vulnerable young people.
- 3.25 In order to support schools a web portal is being developed and a careers guidance tool called U-xplore purchased. This is an on-line learning resource accessible to young people and parents 24/7.

Apprenticeships

- 3.26 The Coalition Government is committed to the growth in Apprenticeships and Apprenticeship starts for Halton residents continue to show an increase. There remains a need for more level 3 Apprenticeships particularly for the 16-18 age group and more provision in growth sectors in the borough. There is an Apprenticeship strategy and working group established to meet these priorities.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Council Corporate plan, Children and Young People's plan and Employment Learning and Skills Strategies have key priorities to raise aspirations of young people and increase local employment opportunities for local young people and adults.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The 14-19 Strategic Partnership members are involved in the planning and delivery of provision and support for 14-19 learners in Halton. They will enable Halton Borough Council to carry out its strategic commissioning role by responding to the borough 14-19 Strategic Commissioning Statement.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

Supports key priorities to ensure that Children and Young people do well wherever they live and provides opportunities for young people to

be successful when they leave school by raising aspirations of young people and increase local employment opportunities.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

Apprenticeships and providing employment opportunities for local people are an important part of the Employment Learning and Skills Strategic Partnership and as such strong linkages must be maintained to ensure that the Commissioning Statement reflects the pathway from education and training into employment opportunities available.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Will create opportunities to reduce NEET, young people in NEET are at a higher risk of ill health.

6.4 A Safer Halton

Young people who are not engaged in education, employment or training are more likely to be involved in criminal activity.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 Failure to understand and influence the commissioning of 14-19 provision in the borough will lead to a mix and balance of provision driven by providers' priorities which may not meet the needs of young people or employers.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 Halton Borough Council has a statutory duty to secure that enough suitable education and training is provided to meet the reasonable needs of—

(a) persons in their area who are over compulsory school age but under 19, and

(b) persons in their area who are aged 19 or over but under 25 and are subject to learning difficulty assessment.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of inspection	Contact Officer
Apprenticeship Skills Children and Learning Act 2011	Children & Enterprise Grosvenor House	Simon Clough