

**REPORT TO:** Children, Young People & Families, Policy & Performance Board (PPB)  
**DATE:** 29 October 2012  
**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, Children & Enterprise  
**PORTFOLIO:** Children, Young People and Families  
**SUBJECT:** Halton Borough Council progress towards Raising the Participation Age (RPA)  
**WARD(S):** Borough-wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To provide Members with an overview of the latest Department for Education (DfE) policy regarding the raising of the Participation Age to age 17 by 2013 and to age 18 by 2015.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That**

**(1) Policy & Performance Board note the report.**

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 The Government is increasing the age to which all young people in England must continue in education or training, requiring them to continue until the end of the academic year in which they turn 17 from 2013 and until 18 years old from 2015.

3.2 Raising the Participation Age (RPA) does **not** mean young people must stay in school. They will be able to choose from one of the following options post-16:

- Full-time education, such as school sixth form, college or work-based learning  
or
- An Apprenticeship  
or
- Part-time education or training if they are employed, self-employed or doing at least 20 hours or more a week volunteering

3.3 RPA will mean that all young people are given the opportunity, provision and support they need to learn and participate after age 16. Remaining in learning for longer aims to;

- Help develop the skills needed for adult life
- raise aspirations and expectations
- increase income earning potential
- encourage positive attitudes towards lifelong learning

3.4 The first cohort of young people to which RPA applies started Year 11 in

September 2012 – these young people will be required to continue in post-16 education or training until the end of the academic year in which they turn 17.

- 3.5 The government is currently developing concise statutory guidance for Local Authorities (to be published in Autumn 2012) and focused secondary legislation to be laid before Parliament by early 2013.
- 3.6 DfE published RPA figures for Halton showing that in June 2012, 88.4% of 16 year olds and 83.3% of 17 year olds were engaged in education and training. The group of young people not participating includes those in jobs without training and some of the most vulnerable young people.
- 3.7 The proportion of 16 and 17 year old Halton young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) is currently around 8%, equivalent to 240 young people. In addition, in July 2012 6.6% of Halton 16-18 year olds were in employment without training, an increase from 5.1% from the same period in 2011.

### **What RPA means for Local Authorities and Schools**

- 3.8 The Education and Skills Act places duties on Local Authorities in relation to RPA. LAs will be required 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.
- 3.9 In Summer 2013 Local Authorities will become legally responsible for promoting participation and for making arrangements to identify those not participating.
- 3.10 This will complement the Local Authorities' existing duties to secure sufficient suitable education and training provision for all 16-19 year olds and to encourage, enable and assist young people to participate.
- 3.11 DfE plan to report on the success of schools and colleges in ensuring all their learners progress into further training, employment or university through the publication of 'Destination Measures' as part of the School league tables.
- 3.12 From September 2012 schools, colleges and providers are required to secure independent, impartial careers guidance for their learners to support them to make the right choice to progress.
- 3.13 Given that, at 16, young people should be starting to make – and take responsibility for – their decisions that affect their future, DfE have decided that the legal requirement to participate will be on the young person.

### **What RPA means for Employers**

- 3.14 Employers of 16 and 17 year olds (for 20 hours or more a week and for 8 or more weeks in a row) become legally responsible for checking the employee is enrolled

in appropriate training before starting work, and agreeing reasonable hours to allow them to attend the training. (Summer 2013 onwards).

- 3.15 As part of the DfE consultation, it emerged that plans to potentially fine employers for employing 16-17 year olds without training might discourage them from hiring young people altogether. DfE decided that the planned powers to fine employers within the RPA legislation will not be commenced in 2013.

### **Halton Position**

- 3.16 In June 2012, the proportion of Halton 16-18 year olds in NEET was 9.5%, a 2.1% reduction compared to last year. The NEET Strategy Group meets half termly to oversee and direct the strategy for NEET young people and monitor the delivery of the Halton NEET action plan. Task and Finish Groups meet to review barriers to participation through the review of latest datasets and data sharing agreements between services.
- 3.17 A Data Management Group meets to analyse and review the current NEET cohort and refer young people to NEET Case Conferencing meetings where they are matched with potentially suitable training providers.
- 3.18 A pilot is taking place with a secondary school to work with a small number of young people in year 9 who are believed to be vulnerable to becoming NEET with the aim of reducing the risk of them not engaging in provision post-16.
- 3.19 An emerging issue relating to RPA requirements is that an increasing number of young people are entering into jobs without training without regard for RPA legislation.
- 3.20 The 14-19 Division and the Employment, Learning & Skills Division will continue to work with schools to inform young people, parents and employers of the change in legislation that RPA has brought about.

## **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 11-19 Partnership members are involved in the planning and delivery of provision for 14-19 learners in Halton. They will enable Halton Borough Council to implement RPA requirements.

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

## 6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

Meeting the RPA requirement 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.

## 6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

RPA has a strong focus on Halton's key priorities to;

- Reduce the number of young people Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET)
- Increase the number of Halton young people achieving Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications

## 6.3 A Healthy Halton

Will create opportunities to reduce NEET, young people in NEET are more at 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 n/a

## 7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

### 7.1 Failure to implement RPA within the borough will lead to a mix and balance of provision driven by providers' priorities and 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 a learning difficulty assessment

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

### 9.1 N/A