

REPORT TO: Executive Board
DATE: 27 June 2013
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Children and Enterprise
SUBJECT: Information, Advice and Guidance
WARD(S): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To provide an update to the Board on the current provision of careers information, advice and guidance to young people in Halton; outline the local authorities duty to Raise the Participation Age and seeks permission for the proposed approach to meet this duty by re-shaping the current provision from April 2014.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS: That approval is given

- 1) to a revised approach to delivering face-to-face services that encourage, enable and assist young people to participate in education and training, as outlined in section 3.4.1;**
- 2) to a Council based Raising Participation Age monitoring service – to meet the statutory requirement to track 16-18 year olds in the Borough and provide a report monthly to the Department for Education, as outlined in section 3.5;**
- 3) for Halton Borough Council to be the lead authority in a partnership approach to co-ordinating a Raising Participation Age monitoring service in a cluster of authorities, as outlined in section 3.6; and**
- 4) to further develop and implement the approaches above.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Policy background

3.1.1 Local Authorities have a statutory duty to encourage, enable and assist young people to participate in education and training, with a particular focus on young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and vulnerable young people. To understand and demonstrate the impact of funding and resources, there must be strong mechanisms in place for recording and reporting post-16 learning destinations of young people aged 16-19.

3.1.2 Under the Education Act 2011 Local Authorities have a statutory responsibility to record and report the education, training and employment status of their 16-18 year old residents (national curriculum academic years 12,13 and 14) to the Department for Education on a monthly basis. They also need to undertake further surveys to record the intended destinations of those in Year 11 and a follow-up survey with these young people in the autumn term.

The same Act determined that from September 2012 schools/colleges/providers have a responsibility to deliver careers information, advice and guidance (IAG) to their learners, and local authorities have had no duty to deliver a universal IAG service from that date.

3.1.3 Local authorities Raising Participation Age plans will now be inspected by OFSTED, as part of reviewing their arrangements for supporting school improvements.

3.2 Current contract

3.2.1 Careers information, advice and guidance services, and tracking services in Liverpool City Region (LCR) have been delivered through a contract with Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership Ltd first established in 2010 and which will end on the 31st March 2014. Halton Borough Council lead on the contract management for the LCR.

3.2.2 In order to fulfil their statutory duties LCR authorities also allocated a small budget to develop a web portal that can be used by any young person in Merseyside to enable them to access links to a range of key careers and labour market and skills information websites.

3.3 Planning for services from April 2014

3.3.1 Halton's 14-19 Division has undertaken a comprehensive review of services because of the:

- changing Government policy on careers information, advice and guidance (IAG) provision;
- Raising Participation Age agenda;
- impact of the Youth Contract and other Government programmes;
- opportunity to align with other services to young people;
- budget pressures.

3.3.2 The 14-19 Division has therefore explored options for the future scope of careers IAG services and tracking services, so that it can take an informed view as to how they might better align to other Council services.

In doing this it has considered:

- the cohort of young people that needs support;
- what services could support them;

- how these would need to align to other authority services and Government programmes supporting those cohorts;
- the need for greater control over services to young people to support the implementation of the Raising Participation Age plan; and
- service impact and value for money.

3.3.3 To develop its strategic view the 14-19 Division has made contact with a number of local authorities where provision has been either brought in-house or out-sourced. Considering these models has provided an understanding of the resources involved together with the identification of any benefits or weaknesses.

3.3.4 Best practice has been considered and the potential for joint working with other Authorities. For example, discussions have taken place with Cheshire West and Chester Council and Warrington Borough Council who have undertaken the specified Department for Education statutory duties as an in-house service since April 2012.

3.4 **Planned young people support services from April 2014**

3.4.1 The services proposed from April 2014 will alter the mix of support offered to young people. They are proposed to be delivered through a mixture of in-house and externally procured services, using some current Council services together with the purchase of targeted additional activity.

Proposed services include:

- **Careers information, advice and guidance support**, this will be a peripatetic, community based, service using qualified staff in Advice and Guidance, using tools such as a web portal (with links to a range of skills and careers websites) and U-explore (an interactive online careers information tool), and will record interventions on an authority owned database;
- **Engagement service**, this will be a peripatetic, community based service encouraging young people into positive activities, recording interventions on authority owned database;
- **Mentoring; coaching and work experience services** will provide be-spoke support to particular groups of young people.

These services will be supported and coordinated through the 14-19 Division.

3.4.2 **Web portal**

The web portal is a single access point that brings together all the skills and careers information for the area. Called 'MerseyInteractive' it provides in one place links to a range of national and local websites that will help young people discover information on future careers and job options.

The 14-19 Division will work with other local authorities to continue to support and

develop MerseyInteractive in 2014-15.

3.5 Raising Participation Age Monitoring service

3.5.1 This proposed service will be delivered in-house within the 14-19 team; the service will be based on the pilot work undertaken in 2012/13.

3.5.2 At the core of this service the authority will purchase a fully hosted Client Caseload Information Service (CCIS) compatible software system that will be able to record the learning and employment status of all young people aged 16-18 in the Borough (and aged up to age 25 if they have a learning difficulty or disability). The authority is required to use a CCIS system by the Department for Education (DfE) as part of their monthly reporting process.

3.5.3 This database will be populated by information obtained from the interventions of the services outlined in 3.4 above. It will also decrease duplication by taking information from existing data systems within the Council and information supplied to the Council by schools, colleges and training providers under their Raising Participation Age duties. New data will be gathered from other youth services delivered by the Council. It could use social media and telephone call centres to contact those most dis-engaged.
To do this, the service will build on the existing data relationships internally within the Council and externally with schools, colleges, training providers, other agencies such as registered social landlords and JobCentre Plus, and other neighbouring local authorities.

3.5.4 This service will deliver the Councils statutory duty to provide a monthly return to the DfE on the learning and employment status of young people resident in the Borough. It will also deliver reports and 'real-time' information on young people that would support the Councils' business need.
It will enable data to be gathered for better quality monitoring of the support services outlined in 3.4 above together with the capacity to better assess the impact of these services to young people.

3.6 Raising Participation Age Monitoring service – co-ordination function

3.6.1 Young people travel across local authority boundaries to undertake learning and gain employment. Schools, colleges and providers recruit young people from authorities outside of the one in which they are based. Travel to learn/work patterns are varied and extend over wider areas for older teenagers.

3.6.2 With this in mind local authorities in Merseyside are keen not to lose an advantage of the current tracking service which is delivered centrally across the 6 Merseyside authorities.

3.6.3 It is therefore important to ensure that the delivery of the new Raising Participation Age Monitoring service can be co-ordinated across the region with a cluster of authorities that wish to work in that way.

The relationship could work in a way that is already operating in south Yorkshire between Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham councils.

3.6.4 The proposal is for Halton to lead on the procurement of a Client Caseload Information Service (CCIS) software system across a cluster of authorities that wish to work together. This would give considerable cost savings on the implementation of the database. Halton would lead on the relationship with the appointed software supplier, and would be the 'centre of expertise' in ensuring that all authorities in the cluster were making their returns to the Department for Education (DfE).

Agreement would be made on a minimum common timetable for data collection and sharing between the participating authorities.

3.6.5 Each authority in the cluster would be responsible for:

- ensuring that the data on young people resident in their area was uploaded correctly and regularly onto the database, in line with the DfE Management Information Requirement for the CCIS system.
- gathering the data from schools, colleges and providers based in their area – and would agree to share that with neighbouring authorities and others within the cluster.

3.6.6 Halton will have a Service Level Agreement with each authority in the 'cluster' that would detail the level of support to be provided, for some areas this might include data analysis and report writing, subject to agreement on price.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The budget for this area of work reflects the changes in responsibility over the last few years. Originally a £1.5 million contract with Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership Ltd in 2010 has decreased to reflect the changed responsibilities. The new service will be fit for purpose and cost effective.

4.2 The cost of the proposed package of new services outlined in sections 3.4 and 3.5 from April 2014 will be within the budget for all services in 2013/14.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 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.

5.2 Adopting this new approach will support the Halton Borough Council role in delivering the Raising Participation Age agenda.

6.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There is the potential that in the medium/long term the in-house monitoring service will allow better informed commissioning of other youth services within the authority.

6.2 Working in partnership with other authorities will help to reduce the cost of procuring and delivering these new services.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

7.1 Children & 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.

7.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

Ensuring timely reporting arrangements are in place linked to 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 3 qualifications

7.3 A Healthy Halton

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

7.4 A Safer Halton

Young people who are NEET are more likely to be involved in criminal activity.

7.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

n/a

8.0 RISK ANALYSIS

8.1 The following risks have currently been identified with the proposed changes:

- i) The new services are different to those currently being delivered; as the current contract ends whichever approach is adopted TUPE implications need to be considered.
- ii) The new services may take time to embed, there may be a temporary rise in the reporting of NEET and Not Known young people while new processes are embedded. The 14-19 division have mitigated this by running a pilot project in

2013-14 to trial collection methods and timescales.

- iii) The Liverpool City Region authorities will need to inform the supplier of the current Tracking Service of the pilot project as soon as possible to ensure a smooth transition to any new arrangements.

9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

9.1 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.

9.2 As the services outlined in 3.4.1 are developed a key focus will be to ensure that they are able to support the Boroughs most vulnerable young people. The most vulnerable may include, but are not limited to, those who are homeless, care leavers, travellers, teenage parents and young offenders and those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

10.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

Current contract for Information Advice and Guidance services ends 31 March 2014 and cannot be extended.

11.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

11.1 The option of all 6 Merseyside local authorities jointly commissioning all information, advice and guidance services was considered and rejected due to the different approach each authority has implementing Raising Participation Age, links to other services and the efficiency agenda.

12.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

1st April 2014

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
OFSTED requirements	See website below:	
http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-local-authority-arrangements-for-supporting-school-improvement		
RPA Guidance	See website below:	
http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/p/participation%20of%20young%20people%20-%20statutory%20guidancecv3.pdf		

