

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

**DATE:** 5<sup>th</sup> January 2015

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director Children & Enterprise

**Portfolio:** Children, Young People & Families

**SUBJECT:** Halton Participation Strategy Post March 2014, Young Person Strand

**WARD(S)** Borough-wide

## 1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

### 1.1 To inform PPB of:

- Progress in support of the local authority's statutory duties in relation to Raising the Participation age.
- Progress in working alongside other Greater Merseyside Local Authorities to jointly commission services for economy of scale.

## 2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That PPB:

- **Note the implementation of the Halton Participation Strategy (Young Person Strand) to date**

## 3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 In 2013 Local Authorities became legally responsible for promoting participation in education and training and for making arrangements to identify those not participating under the Raising of the Participation Age (RPA) legislation.

3.2 This means 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

3.3 On the 27<sup>th</sup> June 2013 the Information, Advice and Guidance paper that was presented to the Executive Board of the Council outlined the end of the Information Advice and Guidance contract with Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership (GMCP) from April 2014 and the intention to revise the approach to delivering services that encourage, enable and assist young people to participate in education and training to meet the Local Authority's statutory duties in relation to Raising the Participation Age.

3.4 To meet the Local Authorities statutory duties the 14-19 Team are implementing a Participation Strategy, Young Person Strand, to sit alongside the Halton Borough Council 14-19 Commissioning Statement. (ANNEX 1).  
The delivery of the Participation Strategy began in April 2014 to follow on from the end of the Information, Advice and Guidance contract with GMCP and to meet our new statutory duties. The Participation Strategy aims to progress young people to participate in education or training and comprises several elements;

### 3.5 **Young People Tracking Service**

3.5.1 Two data tracking officers were recruited to the tracking service and took up their post on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2014. It was intended that the transfer of data from the previous supplier would take place by the end of March 2014, however a considerable amount of negotiation had to take place with the previous supplier before an appropriate data transfer process was agreed and was finally completed mid-May 2014.

3.5.2 The service provides intelligence to front-line staff and commissioned services in identifying young people who are not participating and ascertaining client activities through data processing. The Service is responsible for meeting statutory duties in reporting information to the Department for Education (DfE) on a monthly basis.

3.5.3 Economies of scale have been achieved through purchasing Raising Participation Age monitoring and reporting software with Local Authorities across the Liverpool City Region. The Council's Executive Board approved Halton acting as the lead authority for this.

3.5.4 The Service has successfully submitted statutory returns to the DfE every month since May 2014 on behalf of Liverpool City Region authorities.

### 3.6 **Young People Case Workers**

3.6.1 Four Case Workers have taken up posts between June 2014 and November 2014. The fifth Case Worker role is currently a vacancy.

3.6.2 Case Workers use the information provided by the Young People Tracking Service by reviewing the data about individual young people and making a decision about the intervention to put in place to support them to participate.

3.6.3 The Participation Strategy presents Young People Case Workers as Halton Borough Council staff instead of commissioning the service externally and this has allowed the Case Workers to develop close working relationships with other services within the Council and share internal communications. Case workers are also independent of any particular delivery service and therefore neutral in the decisions they make to refer young people to provision or intervention.

3.6.4 Having the staff as integral to the Children and Enterprise Directorate allows for savings to be made because of the efficiency achieved from direct line management and direct communication with other services within the directorate.

### 3.7 Commissioned Information, Advice & Guidance (IAG) Services

The Careers information, advice and guidance service is a resource available to work with young people. The service offers appropriately qualified professionals giving face to face and via telephone discussions and are available Monday to Friday during office hours at community bases in Widnes and Runcorn.

### 3.8 Implementation to Date

3.9 As at October 2014, the proportion of 16-18 year olds recorded with “Not Known” activities is relatively high at 16.9%, which is artificially suppressing the proportion of young people recorded as NEET, which is 4.6%.

3.10 As indicated in 7.1.2, an identified risk of implementing the new strategy was the temporary rise in the reported Not Known figures whilst young people were tracked into learning destinations.

3.11 As planned, Halton Borough Council Canvassers have been commissioned to identify the Not Known cohort during October to December. Early figures received during the first two weeks of the exercise are positive.

3.12 HBC Canvassing update as per 19/11/2014;

<b>Destination</b>	<b>No. of 16-18 yr olds tracked</b>
Employment	86
University	75
College	69
Not known	40
Not working (NEET)	37
No response	14
Training	8
Apprenticeship	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>332</b>

3.13 Young People Case workers are working with young people identified as NEET ensuring they are fully supported by services to enable them to participate in education, employment or training.

3.14 The NEET Vulnerable Young People Case Conferencing Group met regularly during 2014 to discuss year 11 school leavers who were identified at risk of not making a successful transition to post-16 education or training. The group has been successful in ensuring 81% (76 of the 96 referrals made) of young people referred had a positive post-16 destination compared to 76% (35 of the 47 referrals made) in 2013. The number of referrals direct from school has increased by 49% from 2013 to 2014.

3.15 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) reform will change the statutory basis for support to Children and Young People from 0 up to the age of 25 and stronger focus on preparing for adulthood. The Halton RPA strategy will support the SEND reforms and the Development of Employment Pathways project which aims to engage with key stakeholders beyond Children's Services and the Communities Directorate and obtain employer/employment input

#### 4. **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 Council Corporate plan and Children and Young People's plan have key priorities to raise aspirations of young people. The Participation Strategy aims to ensure young people have the right support information available to them to participate in education or employment with training.

#### 5.0 **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There is the potential that in the medium/long term the in-house management of the strategy, including data and resources will allow better informed commissioning of other youth services within the authority.

5.2 Working in partnership with other authorities will help to reduce the cost of procuring and delivering elements of the services.

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

##### 6.1 **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 access support and information to inform their future participation choices.

##### 6.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

Ensure 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)

##### 6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

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

##### 6.4 **A Safer Halton**

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

##### 6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

With the significant investment in Urban Renewal project in Halton partnerships are ensuring that employment, learning and skills opportunities are written into key

performance indicators within all new development contracts. Linking through the Employment, Learning and Skills Strategic Partnership opportunities for pathways from education, including Alternative Provision, into employment opportunities can be identified in addition to opportunities for employer mentoring.

## 7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 The following risks have been identified:

7.1.1 As some of the interventions within the Participation Strategy are new ways of working with NEET young people their success is as yet unknown and will be monitored closely.

7.1.2 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 in relation to the Data Tracking Service's ability to transfer data from the current provider and gather and record new data.

## 8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 Halton Borough Council has a statutory duty to secure that it makes available to young people aged 13-19 and to those aged 20-24 with a Learning Difficulty Assessment support that will encourage, enable or assist them to participate in education or training. This duty is delivered within the Halton Participation Strategy.

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

None under the meaning of the Act.