

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 31 JANUARY 2006

DESTINATIONS OF SCHOOL LEAVERS

Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform members of the destinations of leavers from East Ayrshire schools 2004/05, as published on the National Priorities web-site.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Scottish Executive presents annual national and education authority level statistical information on the destinations of young people leaving Scottish schools. These reports are available through the National web-site and additionally are issued electronically as statistical bulletins. The previous practice of issuing , annual, printed statistical bulletins has been discontinued.
- 2.2 For the third year school level data has been released in a new format on a website in December 2005. Information is now given according to gender.
- 2.3 The Statistics Publication Notice and accompanying tables (Appendix 1) can be found on the Scottish Executive Web Site: www.scotland.gov.uk

3. MAIN FINDINGS

- 3.1 The main findings for leavers from East Ayrshire schools compared to national averages are:
- The proportion of young people who entered into full-time higher education has changed from 28% in 2003-2004 to 30% in 2004-2005 compared to a national rise from 29% to 31% during the same period.
 - The proportion of young people who entered into full-time further education has changed from 22% in 2003-2004 to 21% 2004-2005. The national picture was also stable at 21% during the same period.
 - The proportion of young people who entered training has risen from 6% in 2003-2004 to 9% in 2004-2005 compared to national stability at 5% during the same period.

- The proportion of young people entering employment has remained stable at 19% between 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 compared to a national rise from 25% to 27% during the same period.
- The proportion of young people with other known destinations in 2004-2005 was 19% compared to a national average of 13%.
- The proportion of young people the destination of whom was unknown was 2% compared to a national average of 3%.

It is worthy of note that in 1995-96 25% of East Ayrshire young people entered full-time higher education and 13% entered further education – a combined figure of 38%. In 2004-05, the equivalent figure was 51%, a rise of 13%. This is particularly significant when viewed alongside a 4% increase in young people entering training and a 2% increase in those entering employment over the same period. Therefore, taken together there has been a 19% increase in leavers entering education, employment and training in the life of East Ayrshire.

- 3.2** Increasing emphasis is being placed nationally on the numbers of young people who are Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET). The concern being to reduce these numbers. Over the past 3 years there has been a reduction of 3% in the NEET population for East Ayrshire. It remains an Authority objective, as reflected in the response to the national priorities in education to further reduce this figure. This will be achieved by working with secondary schools on specific projects which are targeted at the young people most at risk.
- 3.3** The approaches developed in response to the issues identified in paragraph 3.2 also relate to the more general responsibility to raise the attainment of the lowest achieving young people. This is sometimes described as “Closing the Gap”, or meeting the needs of the lowest 20%. On 19 January 2006, Her Majesty’s Inspectors of Education (HMIe) published a report “Missing Out”. Although this report dealt with the general issues, the media coverage associated with it published data for individual authorities. This ranked authorities on levels of deprivation together with standards of attainment. Under this analysis East Ayrshire was shown to be performing better than similar authorities, those in our comparator group, and significantly better than another 7 authorities which have higher levels of affluence.
- 3.4** For purposes of self evaluation and benchmarking, Her Majesty’s Inspectors of Education (HMIe) group East Ayrshire with Falkirk, West Lothian, North Ayrshire and North Lanarkshire. The statistics for the comparator group of authorities is shown at Appendix 1. In terms of entrance to higher education, only one authority this year had a higher proportion of young people entering higher education than East Ayrshire. Similarly, only one other authority had a higher proportion of young people entering further education. Two authorities had higher proportions of young people entering employment. Members will be interested to note that West Lothian, which has a number of geographic and

economic advantages over East Ayrshire had lower proportions of young people entering higher and further education, although more entering employment.

3.5 Many factors affect the destinations of leavers, including:

- the increasing number of school leavers taking a year out before continuing their education;
- the rural nature of school leavers' home locations;
- economic factors affecting the availability of employment in the local area;
- the pattern of destinations may be affected by the implementation of Skillseekers, education-business partnership or special arrangements for entry to higher education;
- there may be a strong local tradition for pupils to stay on at school or to leave school as early as possible;
- fluctuations in year-on-year figures are likely.

The most important point is perhaps the last one. These statistics tend to be very unstable from year to year, but simultaneously tend to vary about the same mean points both at local authority and national levels.

3.6 It continues to be the policy of the authority to work with schools and Careers Scotland to ensure that all young people, including those with additional support needs gain a meaningful placement following full-time statutory education. East Ayrshire gives a high a high priority to enterprise education and world of work experiences. Such initiatives assist the personal development of young people equipping them for further or higher education and ultimate employment.

4. LEGAL/POLICY/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

5. LINKS TO COMMUNITY PLAN

5.1 The statistics provided in this report, and the associated analysis are relevant to the Improving Opportunities section of the Community Plan. The overall improvement in the position of leavers entering meaningful placements over the life of East Ayrshire is of particular note in this connection.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members note the contents of this report:

John Mulgrew
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

GRS/GRS
09 January 2006

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Destinations of Leavers Statistics, Education Committee 01 February 2005

Members wishing further information should contact Graham Short, Head of Service:
Quality Improvement, Tel: (01563) 576192

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: GRAHAM SHORT

Appendix 1

Destinations of Leavers 2004/05: The East Ayrshire Family Group

2004/05	Number of leavers	Full-time higher education (%)	Full-time further education (%)	Training (%)	Employment (%)	Other known destinations (%)	Destination unknown (%)
Clackmannanshire	577	25	24	7	29	12	**
East Ayrshire	1,588	30	21	9	19	19	2
Falkirk	1,560	26	17	8	29	18	3
North Ayrshire	1,275	34	21	7	19	17	2
North Lanarkshire	3,735	30	17	6	30	15	2
West Lothian	1,897	27	20	4	25	16	7
Comparator Family Ave	1,809	28	20	6	26	16	4