

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 27 MARCH 2007

NEET STRATEGY

Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1** To seek approval for a NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) Strategy co-ordinated by the Education Service of East Ayrshire Council in respect of the interests that relate to Community Planning.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** At its meeting of 7 November, the Education Committee considered a report entitled “More Choices, More Chances: A Strategy to Reduce the Proportion of Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training in Scotland”. Those deliberations included approval of a general approach to the development of a strategy to benefit young people in East Ayrshire.
- 2.2** Since that outline approval was given, a number of officer meetings have been convened and a more detailed strategy has been produced. This draft has been approved by the Scottish Executive as meeting their criteria for the approval of funding.

3. THE POSITION

- 3.1** The East Ayrshire strategy is designed to address the needs of the population below the school leaving age, who might potentially enter the NEET category – sometimes called the “pre-NEET” population. It also seeks to address the needs of that part of the population who have become “NEET” in the years following compulsory schooling, but who have not yet attained the age of 19. In keeping with the general approach taken by the education authority, the main focus of activity is to address the needs of young people who are experiencing disadvantage – particularly those who are looked after by the Authority.
- 3.2** As work has continued following the November Committee report, there is already important information emerging about the NEET population which was previously not widely understood. These findings have been confirmed in consultation with other authorities and the Scottish Executive. It is important to recognise that the NEET group is in fact composed of a number of sub-groups, each of which have specific and different needs. A particular issue is that the vast majority of young people, as evidenced by reports annually given to Committee, actually leave school with a place in education, employment or training. It has been discovered that a significant characteristic of the “NEET group”, is that they are not in fact a group at all. Rather, they are a population whose individual status is continually changing. This condition, often

described as “churn” in the statistics reflects the fact that individual young people move in and out of the NEET category, or change between employment, education and training opportunities, perhaps with a relatively brief intervening fallow , or NEET, period.

- 3.3** Currently, there is a considerable range of provision for young people in the NEET and pre-NEET categories. A mapping exercise has been conducted by the partners involved in the development the strategy. This range of provision will continue to form the core of the strategy and overall approach and is presented at Appendix 1.

4. THE STRATEGY

- 4.1** The multi-disciplinary strategy group established as a result of the Education Committee report of 7 November has considered the range of provision that currently exists, and which will continue to exist into the future. Within this provision a number of particular areas have been identified that are relevant to the solution of the NEET issue. It is recognised that the sub-categories are not mutually exclusive and that particularly for the most vulnerable young people their needs will be met as a result of activity within more than one area. The identification of these groups and issues explicitly recognises the factors of disadvantage identified above. These areas are:

- Support for chronic school truants.
- Enhanced work and work-related experience for school-aged young people
- Enhanced provision for “Winter leavers” from school.
- Better managed transition processes – particularly for high risk groups
- Support to limit and prevent drop-outs from tertiary education provision
- Improved aftercare provision

A complete and detailed version of the strategy is available in the Members’ Information Point.

4.2 Support for chronic school truants

Some significant initiatives have been launched to tackle this problem, including those managed through the multi-disciplinary learning partnerships. Electronic systems have been introduced to secondary schools and these have succeeded in improving general attendance by one or two percentage points. The local Police have also mounted some very successful initiatives aimed at improving attendance.

Clearly if children are missing out from schooling, their chances of gaining the qualifications and work habits essential for later life will be substantially diminished. There is therefore a need to establish early intervention systems and approaches that will serve to limit chronic truancy patterns before they become established. These will not be based on the punitive systems that have proved ineffective to date. Systems will particularly require to take into account the needs of looked after children. Increased contact between

agencies will help, as will the vocational passport which is central to these proposals. This passport will include reference to volunteering.

4.3 Enhanced work and work-related experience for school-aged young people

Presently, existing systems do not have the capacity to deliver 100% entitlement to work experience. This aspect of provision has proven indispensable in the wider context at motivating learners and preparing them for later life. The delivery of this entitlement will require close partnership between the schools sector East Ayrshire's Department of Corporate Resources, Careers Scotland (as the providers of the database of work experience opportunities), Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire, Ayr College, Kilmarnock College, employers and the voluntary sector. This initiative would see the development of work-related experiences to complement existing provision. It is recognised that placing young people in work experience with challenging behaviours and complex needs present significant challenges. This is an area of work that will require to be further developed within this strategy.

4.4 Enhanced provision for "Winter leavers" from school

Although the introduction of the Educational Maintenance Allowance has reduced the number of Winter leavers, there are still a number of young people in this category. This group do not benefit from the advantage of structured year-long programme. There is a need therefore to develop more effective provision and better prepare them and create opportunities for their future careers. The needs of this group requires to be profiled with much greater precision than hitherto.

4.5 Better managed transition processes – particularly for high risk groups

There has been much recent attention to the matter of transition between pre-school and primary on the one hand and primary and secondary on the other. With the exception of children with additional support needs it is therefore surprising that post school transitions have received such little attention. It is to be noted that this issue, although it can be prioritised to particular groups, in fact applies equally to all ability and social groups. The drop-out rate from first year university courses is, for example, being increasingly recognised as an issue. This notwithstanding, it is possible to identify a hierarchy of need for this area of activity:

- (i) Children on the child protection register
- (ii) Looked after children (including those who are accommodated)
- (iii) Children or young people with additional support needs
- (iv) Offenders
- (v) Children "at risk"
- (vi) All other children and young people

Psychological services will develop a “passport” for young people to assist with transition. Social Work will develop an enhanced package of support to address the needs of offenders many of whom become part of the NEET group.

4.6 Support to limit and prevent drop-outs from tertiary educational provision

There is agreement that numbers of young people are starting courses in Tertiary education (mainly FE College, but also University). For such young people, re-joining educational, training or employment streams will be doubly difficult. The reason for this is that they are re-entering the market at a time when alternative courses and programmes have already started. Secondly, a disrupted career history will not be attractive to employers or other providers.

A structured approach to Transitions should in its own right limit the drop out rate from post school opportunities. It appears clear, however, that young people require support certainly through their first year in the tertiary sector. They also require to be much better prepared for what lies ahead of them in terms of learning styles, and harmonisation of the curriculum. This will require work by both schools and the tertiary sector.

4.7 Improved aftercare provision

There is no shortage of initiatives designed to improve employability and the future opportunities available to young people. Experience has proved that where young people enter an opportunity where there is structured and effective support, then the chances of success are substantially increased. There is a need, however, to ensure that all young people have access to improved aftercare. This issue is particularly significant for those young people in the most hard-to-reach groups. These will represent key challenges for all partners in ensuring that services can best meet the needs of these young people. These services must be capable of following young people in response to changing circumstances.

4.8. Other key action areas

4.8.1 It was identified that all young people in this area require experiences developed within the framework of “A Curriculum for Excellence” that will improve their self-confidence and resilience. This is a core area of provision, but important initiatives have been piloted within the scope of “Schools for Ambition” and “20:20 vision”, for example involving Columba 1400. There is scope to extend these initiatives to other areas and groups of young people. The facilities offered by the Glaisnock Trust and the associated personnel development will provide a unique local opportunity to develop this provision.

4.8.2 It was further recognised that there is a clear need to gain a better understanding of the world-view of these young people, and to profile them and track their progress with much greater precision than hitherto. Presently the NEET problem is perceived and interpreted very much as either a

statistical issue or one the economic efficiency of society. Since the opportunities are clearly there for all young people, the fundamental question is why individuals are unable to capitalise on them either fully or partially. It is therefore fundamentally about the needs and perceptions of individuals and groups. It will require the identification of individual cases, in-depth discussion and research and the ultimate clarification of what measures are needed at the various stages of their career to support individuals.

- 8.3** All of the issues described in this strategy and plan are complex and involve a range of partners in their solution. It was identified that within the scope of the available funding and the duration of national support, there was a need to develop provision with enhanced continuing professional development that is organised and delivered on a multi-disciplinary basis. This will secure a greater shared understanding across professional boundaries with the stated outcome of producing better co-ordination of support for young people.

5. POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** Nil

6. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** The development of this strategy has taken place within the overall framework for Community Planning and has the approval of the main partners. Development of the strategy has taken place in consultation with the Council's Community Planning Unit.

- 6.2** The Scottish Executive intends to monitor implementation through the arrangements for Community Planning.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1** Although the education authority has been given the lead role in tackling the NEET issue, funding to support this strategy has been allocated through the Community Regeneration Fund.

- 7.2** It is proposed to allocate funding between the various priorities in the strategy, according to:

Action Area	2006/07	2007/08
Support for chronic school truants.	45,000	45,000
Enhanced work and work-related experience for school-aged young people	45,000	45,000
Enhanced provision for "Winter leavers" from school.	45,000	45,000
Better managed transition processes – particularly for High risk groups	45,000	45,000
Support to limit and prevent drop-outs from tertiary education provision	45,000	43,000
Improved aftercare provision	50,000	49,000
Improving confidence	50,000	50,000

Multi disciplinary CPD	5,000	15,000
Data collection and tracking	25,000	20,000
Programme support	45,000	43,000
TOTAL	400,000	400,000

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- (i) approve the Strategy in respect of Community Planning interests as described in this report;
- (ii) note that this report has been considered by the Education Committee; and
- (iii) otherwise note the contents of this report

Graham Short
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

GRS/GRS
27 February 2007

Members requiring further information should contact Graham Short, Executive Director of Educational and Social Services, tel: (01563) 576017.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. More Choices, More Chances: A Strategy to Reduce the Proportion of Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training in Scotland, Education Committee, 07 November 2006

Implementation Officer: Graham Short

APPENDIX 1A

Pre- NEET related support activities in East Ayrshire

Organisation leading Programme	Name of Group or programme (numbers in brackets)	NEET client identification & key/support worker engaged?	In School mainstream provision (available in all EA schools)	In school ad-hoc provision (e.g. NEET avoidance)	Additional support e.g. literacy, numeracy, drug/alcohol misuse. Childcare etc	Life/Core skills support	Vocational Training Access to job related training + placements	Employability Job Search skills, CV prep, interview prep, etc.	Support in transition to destination (key worker?)	Leave School	Support in transition Post school
Careers Scotland	20:20 Vision (50)			Cumnock Academy							
Careers Scotland	Enhanced Resource Pilot (40)			Kilmarnock & Auchinleck Academies							
Careers Scotland	Core service delivery		Plus additional days in St Joseph's and Grange Academies								
Careers Scotland	Key Worker Support (150)										
Careers Scotland	School/College support (270 inc 70 winter leavers)										
Careers Scotland	Activate (20)			Doon Academy							

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Kilmarnock College	Various P/T school link and SFW courses										
Kilmarnock College	P/T dance Summer School										
Kilmarnock College	P/T H&S (Rathbone) (10)										
Educational Services	Rathbone Xmas 2006& Summer 2007 (20)										
Educational Services	Youth Strategy Xmas 2007										
Educational Services/CLD	DOE Award										
Educational Services/CLD	Fire Reach										
Educational Services/CLD	Princes Trust XL										

Organisation leading Programme	Name of Group or programme (numbers in brackets)	NEET client identification & key/support worker engaged?	In School mainstream provision (available in all EA schools)	In school ad-hoc provision (e.g. NEET avoidance)	Additional support e.g. literacy, numeracy, drug/alcohol misuse. Childcare etc	Life/Core skills support	Vocational Training Access to job related training + placements	Employability Job Search skills, CV prep, interview prep, etc.	Support in transition to destination (key worker?)	Leave School	Support in transition Post school
Educational Services/CLD	Dialogue Youth										
Educational Services/CLD	Youth Outreach project										
Educational Services/CLD	EA Youth Award										
Educational Services/CLD	PEER Education										
Educational Services/CLD	New Directions (Youth Literacies)										
EAC	Transition Team (8)										
STU	Life Skills project E.A.S.Y.										
Ayr College	Youth Theatre										
Ayr/Kilmarnock Colleges	Cumnoch Youth Curriculum										

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Ayr College	Various school/college link courses S3-S6										

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APPENDIX 1B

Post 16 NEET related support activities in East Ayrshire

Organisation Leading Programme	Programme Name (numbers in brackets)	Identification/ Assessment First point of engagement e.g. referral from pre-16	Specialist Support Mechanisms e.g. Debt advice, Drugs/Alcohol support etc	Signposting Service Referral to appropriate destination	Destination 1 : FE and Training	Generic Core/Key Skills Core skills support - communication, numeracy, literacy etc	Vocational Training Access to job related training	Job Readiness Job search skills, CV prep, interview prep, equipment required, etc	Transitional Employment "supported employment" option e.g. ILM	Destination 2 – Entry into employment	Aftercare Actions to sustain outcome, tracking of client
Careers Scotland	Key Worker Support (150)										
Careers Scotland	GRFW PA service										
Careers Scotland	Enhanced Services pilot (40)										
Careers Scotland	Activate Programme (20)										
Careers Scotland	Core Employability Service										
Kilmarnock College	Princes Trust Programmes										
Kilmarnock College	Various Access, NC & SVQ Courses (374)										
Kilmarnock College	F/T pre-Apps Engineering, Motor veh (24)										
Kilmarnock College	F/T Vocational Assessment (10)										
Kilmarnock College	Various P/T inc SFW (22)										

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Educational Services/CLD	Learning Centres: North west, Shortlees, C&DV Area										Some
Educational Services/CLD	Information & Guidance										
Educational Services/CLD	Essential Skills Project										
Educational Services/CLD	New Directions – Youth Literacies										
Educational Services/CLD	Community Based Learning										
EAC	CONDUIT Project										
EAC	Job Rotation										
EAC	Woodlands Project										
EAC	Working for Families										
EAC	Supported Employment										

Organisation Leading Programme	Programme Name (numbers in brackets)	Identification/ Assessment First point of engagement e.g. referral from pre-16	Specialist Support Mechanisms e.g. Debt advice, Drugs/Alcohol support etc	Signposting Service Referral to appropriate destin	Destination 1 : FE and Training	Generic Core/Key Skills Core skills support - communication, numeracy, literacy etc	Vocational Training Access to job related training	Job Readiness Job search skills, CV prep, interview prep, equipment required, etc	Transitional Employment "supported employment" option e.g. ILM	Destination 2 – Entry into employment	Aftercare Actions to sustain outcome, tracking of client
Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire	Skillseekers (550 Ayrshire)								Support in work		Limited
Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire	Modern Apprenticeships (16-24yrs) (300 Ayrshire)										
Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire	Get Ready for Work (250 Ayrshire)								Work experience		Limited
Ayr/Kilmarnock Colleges	Cumnock Youth Curriculum										
Ayr College/Police	The Big World										
Ayr College/Police	The Road to Nowhere										
Ayr College	First Steps to College										
Ayr College	Girvan FM										
Ayr College	Community Tutors Scheme										

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Ayr College	Jill of All Trades										
Ayr College	Tenants Welcome Pack										
Ayr College	ASDA pre-employment training										
Jobcentre Plus	Mainstream services 16-17										
Jobcentre Plus	Mainstream Services and New Deal 18-19										
Jobcentre Plus	Progress 2 Work										
Jobcentre Plus	Specialist Advisers										