



Children and Education Select Committee
31 July 2013

Increasing the Employability of Young People in Surrey

Purpose of the report: The purpose of this report is for Members to scrutinise how Surrey County Council is working with partners to increase the employability of young people in Surrey.

Introduction:

1. The goal of Services for Young People is to support every Surrey young person to be participating in education, training or employment with training to age 19 and to 25 for those with a learning difficulty or disability.
2. The Service is an outcomes based commissioner and utilises a model of coproduction with young people and local communities to ensure that its services reflect the needs of its users. A broad range of suitable provision is needed to meet these needs and the Service has eight operating models. These include:
 - 2.1 **Youth Support Service (YSS)** – Specialist casework service that provides one to one and group support to the most vulnerable young people across Surrey. Casework is based on need but where appropriate, may be supported by specialists in family work, substance misuse, accommodation and mental health.
 - 2.2 **Pathways** – Works to develop new Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision in Surrey for young people aged 16 to 25, working in partnership with FE Colleges, Health, Social Care, parents, carers and young people to improve outcomes for SEND young people.
 - 2.3 **Surrey Outdoor Learning and Development (SOLD)** – Outdoor learning opportunities for young people across Surrey.
 - 2.4 **Centre Based Youth Work** – 32 youth centres across the county that provide face to face youth work with young people.
 - 2.5 **Skills Centres** - A daytime foundation level learning service based in youth centres, delivering employability skills, which target those young people who are not in employment, education and training (NEET).

- 2.6 **Local Prevention Framework** – A service co-designed by, and operating in, local communities to prevent young people from becoming NEET and to support their participation.
- 2.7 **Youth Engagement** – A universal service which provides a platform for engagement with all Surrey young people as well as providing a channel for delivering information, advice and guidance. The contract also seeks young people’s feedback on SYP services.
- 2.8 **Year 11/12 Transition** – providing support to young people in Year 11 who are at risk of becoming NEET and supports their successful transition to college or employment with training in Year 12.
3. The Service is assisted in achieving its goal of supporting participation for every Surrey young person through the Young People’s Employability Plan 2012-17 (Annex 1), which sets out the County Council’s strategy of full participation for all Surrey young people.
4. The Employability Plan helps to underpin the children and young people’s strategy 2012-17 and is structured around 5 key themes. These are:
- Preparing young people for participation
 - Commissioning and developing opportunities
 - Aligning aspirations with opportunities
 - Overcoming barriers to participation
 - Tackling worklessness in families
5. A copy of the Young People’s Employability Plan can be found in Annex 3. A useful glossary of terms used within this report are also contained within this annex. The 2013-14 Action Plan, based on addressing each of the objectives of the Employability Plan, was agreed at the 14-19 partnership on the 2nd of July 2013.

<p>Overview of the Peer Review:</p>
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6. Surrey has a firm commitment to continuously improving the services it provides and recently commissioned a Peer Review of the preparations being made for Raising of the Participation Age (RPA). This review had a particular focus on provision for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities a key group for successfully implementing the required changes.
7. The Peer Challenge took place on 25th and 26th of April 2013 and was headed up by Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director of Education, Learning and Skills at Kent. Patrick was supported by Hilary Omissi (Berkshire), Phillip Walker (Hampshire) and Steve Lambert (Bracknell Forest), all senior local government colleagues with a wealth of knowledge on the challenges of RPA.
8. The Children, Schools and Families Directorate Leadership Team commissioned this review as a consequence of the changes that are taking place in this area in relation to RPA. These changes are considered to be particularly significant for young people with SEND as this group has an

increased propensity to become NEET during the transition from Year 11 to 12 and is predicted to grow as a proportion of all young people.

9. The Peer Review was commissioned to identify best practice as well as where potential pressure points and gaps in provision existed which would affect the ability of the council to fulfil its statutory obligations in relation to RPA. Services for Young People prepared a Self Assessment of its services in preparation for this review. This can be found in Annex 2.

Potential challenges

10. The findings of the Peer Review were broadly complimentary and a summary report prepared by the review team, outlining the key findings, can be found in Annex 3. However, this summary report also highlights a number of challenges ahead which we are aiming to address in the lead up to the RPA changes in 2013 and 2015.
11. An action plan to address the challenges and build on good practice is being developed through the 14 to 19 Partnership where the report was discussed on the 2nd July 2013. The Partnership will be developing specific actions based on these challenges during a dedicated workshop scheduled for 4th of October 2013. The views of the Select Committee will inform the action plan development.
12. It is envisaged that any actions identified through this workshop which are not already being addressed through the Young People's Employability Plan will be linked to the Public Service Transformation proposal which is a separate work stream reporting to Cabinet in July 2013.
13. The service recognises that the sustainability of our provision was one of the concerns set out in the findings of the Peer Review. While the overall participation agenda is benefiting from investment in the Leader's Ready for Work Programme, the proposed scale of future budget reductions in the medium term financial plan are very significant. For the five year period 2012 to 2017 there are proposed budget reductions of 0.8% in 2014/15, with a further 8.9% in 2015/16 and 19.7% in 2016/17. This would see the budget for Services for Young People reduce from £18.35million in 2013/14 to £12.96million by 2016/17. These challenges are being addressed across the Children, Schools and Families Directorate as part of the Public Value Programme.
14. Another key area of concern is the expected growth in the number of SEND young people in Surrey. This group is over-represented in the NEET cohort with 56 per cent of these young people having SEND. Going forward, there will be a statutory requirement for all young people to be participating in education, training or employment (PETE) in Year 12 from 2013 and Year 13 in 2015.
15. This could create a possible pressure point in relation to the sustainability of the approach to supporting participation, as more resource is drawn in to supporting our statutory obligations in this area. As a consequence, we are undertaking an evaluation of our commissions to establish what provision has the highest degree of impact for young people. Additionally, we are undertaking a 0 to 25 SEND needs analysis and mapping of provision which will identify possible

gaps in provision for this age group. This analysis will inform the development of new provision for the future.

Employability and links to the corporate strategy

16. The following paragraphs set out some of the highlights from the Self Assessment which was prepared by the service prior to the Peer Review. We have limited these to reflect Surrey County Council's six corporate priorities and four values.

Residents

17. The YSS restorative approach, which involves victims in reparations for criminal activity, has helped to reduce offending and anti-social behaviour. In total, there have been 854 Youth Restorative Interventions that would have otherwise seen young people enter the criminal justice system. The programme has seen high levels of victim satisfaction and has led to reduced rates of re-offending delivering value for money. This is alongside a range of other successful activities aimed at preventing offending among those identified as being at risk.
18. We are committed to a model of provision that utilises community co-creation in its approach. The review identified the Local Prevention Framework (LPF) as an innovative programme that engages at risk young people in innovative, locally driven, preventative programmes, to support their re-engagement and prepare them for participation.
19. For example, the Leatherhead Youth Project delivers high quality youth work through its excellent facilities and existing strong relationships with young people and the local community. By supporting this Project, the LPF helps to enhance and extend community based provision that is already proven to work. Therefore, by **listening** to what local communities tell us, we are developing provision that closely matches their needs.
20. However, the review found that we could go further in ensuring that there was more local coordination and ownership in relation to the delivery of our strategy.

Value

21. Surrey has good universal provision which helps to ensure that participation levels are above regional and national averages and that most young people who use our services receive positive outcomes.
22. As an example of an innovative approach, individual prevention grants have been used effectively in a pilot in Runnymede where 60 per cent of young people involved have had barriers addressed and are now participating. For the remaining 40 per cent, the scheme has helped move them closer to participation.
23. Individual payments in this pilot ranged from just over £200 down to less than £1. These payments are closely monitored by the YSS but the scheme is essentially about devolving decisions to the micro level and **trusting** that it is young people who are best placed to understand their barriers and develop

suitable solutions. If the total cost of £1,466 for the pilot can be compared to the potential costs to society of £104,000 for each NEET young person through a loss earning potential and increased reliance on benefits throughout their life (Audit Commission 2010), such a scheme could clearly deliver significant value.

Partnerships

24. Our strategy is well communicated which helps to secure a sense of commitment and buy in from our partners. Our programme of engagement with employers has helped us to learn about their needs and to **respect** their opinion that young people need to gain more genuine employability skills. We are helping to provide these types of skills through programmes such as Ready 4 Work and Skills Centres.

Quality

25. The high profile of the apprenticeship programme in Surrey has also served to foster a greater level of engagement with employers. Over the last year, the number of apprenticeships in Surrey has been increasing, while the number available in Surrey's statistical neighbours has been decreasing.
26. We have achieved this by working more collaboratively with our contractors and partners in the third sector, influencing Surrey based employers and leading through example by directly employing apprentices.

People

27. The Transformation in 2011 reorganised Services for Young People, saving £25 million, around half of the service's previous budget. This was at a time when we managed to deliver an increase in front line staff. We recognise that we have a **responsibility** to continue to invest in the development of staff as they are key to the success of our services.

Stewardship

28. The review found that the work we undertake to improve the employability of young people was being supported by significant additional investment, including strong political and professional commitment to the apprenticeship programme.

Recommendations:

29. The Select Committee is asked to scrutinise the Peer Review findings, Self Assessment and the Young People's Employability Plan and make a recommendations for the Peer Review Action Plan and wider action in the Council.

Next steps:

Select Committee recommendations will inform the Peer Review Action Plan, future development of the Young People's Employability Plan and Services for Young People.

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Sources/background papers: Peer Review on Raising the Participation Age Self Assessment (Annex 1), Peer Review on Raising the Participation Age summary report (Annex 2), The Young People's Employability Plan 2012-17 (Annex 3)