

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

21ST JANUARY 2013

SUBJECT:	RAISING PARTICIPATION AGE 2013 AND 2015
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	ACTING DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report informs Overview and Scrutiny about the progress made in relation to the 14-19 Raising of the Participation Age (RPA) Plan 2012/13 (see appendix 1).
- 1.2 Delivery of RPA is a statutory duty for Council's across England and the duty will impact on current year 11 pupils who will have to stay in education or training during the academic year in which they turn 17 (2013/14).
- 1.3 Key areas of activity contained in the plan still to be achieved include:-
- a) Agreement of local participation targets,
 - b) Evaluation of the Risk of NEET (Not in Education, Employment and or Training) Indicator (RONI) Tool.
 - c) Identification of high impact interventions to support progression and participation.
 - d) Further development of the careers information, advice and guidance offer (pre and post 16)
 - e) Mapping the evolving and complex provision landscape for NEET young people.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 The Education and Skills Act 2008 legislated to raise the age of compulsory participation in education or training to the end of the academic year in which young people turn 17 from 2013 and to at least their 18th birthday from 2015. This was in response to the need for the United Kingdom to develop a more highly skilled workforce to compete internationally in a fast changing global economy.
- 2.2 In addition there is the desire to create a fairer and more equal society by dealing with the consequences of leaving education or training at the age of only 16, recognising the strong correlation between being NEET and engaging in risky behaviour, having poor health and low income.
- 2.3 Achieving full participation of young people in education or training until age 18 will require all parts of the education system to play a role. Ultimately, however, it is the council that is responsible for ensuring young people in our area participate, and for

providing the support young people need to overcome any barriers to learning. The 14-19 RPA strategy suggests that the council will need to work through the 14-19 Social and Economic Wellbeing Strategy (SEWB) Group to deliver a more integrated response and tailored offer to all young people.

- 2.4 The government subsequently made clear its commitment to RPA in the 2012 Spending Review announcement, the White Paper 'The Importance of Teaching' and Departments for Education, Work and Pensions, and Business, Innovation and Skills strategy ***Building Engagement, Building Futures: Our Strategy to Maximise the Participation of 16-24 year olds in Education, Training and Work***. The Building Engagement, Building Futures strategy states:

"We are raising the participation age (RPA).....Young people will have a number of participation options including full-time education in a school or college, an Apprenticeship, or other full-time work alongside part-time education or training. We want young people to participate actively and voluntarily and so we will ensure that the education system has in place attractive options and the necessary support to make young people enthusiastic about learning.....young people will be under a duty to participate, but it puts the onus on the system to offer young people the tailored education and training programmes and targeted support they need to engage" (para 3.3, 3.4)

- 2.5 The strategy sits alongside the new duty on schools to provide independent and impartial careers guidance for Years 9-11 (2012), the introduction of a new KS4 Destination Measure integrated into school performance tables, transforming vocational education following the Wolf Review, the review of the National Curriculum (2014), a new scheme to support colleges in testing out dedicated work experience schemes for 16-19 year old NEETs, the Youth Contract (Oct 2012 for Wirral) and further support for those most in need through the Work Programme, Job Centre Plus and ultimately the Universal Credit system.

3.0 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 Phase 1 of the National Department for Education (DfE) RPA trials ran between September 2009 and March 2010 with ten Local Authorities (LA's) involved. Phase 2 of the RPA trials began in April 2010 and ran until March 2011. Four new LA's were chosen to join the 11 phase 1 areas who all continued into Phase 2.

- 3.2. As in Phase 1 the trial areas in phase 2 were asked to focus on specific themes during the trial period:

- a) How LA's can work most effectively in securing full Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) offer for young people to support the increase in the participation age;
- b) How LA's can plan and deliver a system, building on the September guarantee, which effectively picks up those 16 and 17 year olds who disengage with learning though the year and re-engages them in education or training;
- c) The development of an area-wide strategy to enable full participation of all young people in education or training. This model will assess the overall challenges and barriers, and implement solutions at a local level.

- 3.3. The approach taken by the 14-19 Team has been to review the DfE publication detailing 'Lessons from the RPA Trials' (DfE, 2011), and take from that document examples of best practice for inclusion in the Wirral 14-19 RPA plan to ensure the Wirral Council's statutory duty in respect of RPA will be met and how this will be achieved. The 14-19 Team also completed an initial assessment tool designed, published by the DfE, to enable local authorities to identify gaps in process and knowledge thus helping to inform the development of the 14-19 RPA Plan.
- 3.4. The Wirral 14-19 RPA plan is intended as a living document which is used to guide both major strategic decisions and operational day to day decision making. We owe the young people of Wirral the very best support on their journey from school or college into the world work, so that they may continue to make a positive contribution to society and economy.
- 3.5. Consultation took place with members of the 14-19 Social and Economic Wellbeing Outcome Group (SEWB) during January and March 2012. The RPA plan was signed off by the Children's Trust Board in March 2012.
- 3.6. The Wirral 14-19 RPA plan is split into the following six sections:-
- a. Understanding the cohort
 - b. Set local priorities and challenges
 - c. Manage transitions and tracking
 - d. Establish support mechanisms
 - e. Identifying and meeting provision needs
 - f. Communicating the message
- 3.7. **Understanding the Cohort**
- This section is the starting point in terms of planning for the achievement of full participation and is concerned with deepening our understanding of future cohorts of 16 and 17 year olds, how they are changing over time and where the future 16 and 17 year olds are in our current system.
- 3.8. The 16-18 cohort declined from 2008–2012 by 10.33%; this equates to 1336 young people. Between 2012 and 2013 the 16-18 cohort is projected to decline by 1.78% and between 2012 and 2015 by 4.99%. The first group of learners who will be affected by the RPA are those pupils in current year 10 (2011/12). The January 2012 Spring School Census states there are 3829 pupils on the Wirral who are in year 10; 19% (722) of these pupils are eligible for free school meals leaving 81% (3107) of pupils who are not eligible. Of the 3829 pupils in year 10, there are 58 (2%) who are looked after.
- 3.9. In April 2012 the 14-19 team were successful in bidding to DfE for RPA trial funding which has supported two family partnership secondments. The RPA project Family Partnership role is to work alongside the 14-19 RPA team in preparation for RPA; (One focuses on KS4 (16 year olds); the second focuses on Post 16 (17 year olds)). This is being done by piloting innovative activity with families to support NEET learners back into Employment, Education and or Training (EET). This compliments activity through the Wirral Council's family support service which adds value to existing practices.

- 3.10 Using research gathered from learner voice survey activity as a starting point into non-participation and dropout, further investigations are being made into the highest drop-out rates at schools in identified wards (targeting schools with poorest destination measures, highest persistent absences, highest fixed or permanent exclusions, low achievement and highest FSM) with a specific focus on vulnerable groups. The impact on families will have sustainable benefits for future cohorts of young people and their peers.
- 3.11 Currently work is being undertaken, led by the 14-19 in consultation with stakeholders, to understand the concept of which has been termed by the DfE as 'reasonable excuse' for a young person eligible for RPA but not participating. A paper has been drafted, for consideration, at the, January 2013, SEWB meeting detailing a proposed Wirral approach and key principles. It is also planned to agree targets for an increase in the participation rates of 17 year olds during 2013 from vulnerable groups at the January SEWB meeting inline with RPA.
- 3.12 The 14-19 Team have also building on the Spring 2012 Learner Surveys and have drawing up a long term plan for collecting learner voice information. The learner surveys have a focus on why learners leave. The next round of learner voice interviews (Sept 2012) is to identify and collate information around reasons given by 16 year old young people as to why they do not participate; why 17 years olds drop out in there first year and how 16 and 17 year olds feel about the availability and quality of targeted and universal information, advice and guidance.

3.13 **Setting Local Priorities and Challenges**

The question to ask now is what interventions will make the biggest difference to the chances of young people participating. Whatever the issues, the next step is identifying what actions or interventions could be taken that would help to address them. The Risk of NEET Indicators tool and other activity including Narrowing the Gap will enable the evaluation of intervention approaches.

3.14 **Manage Transitions and Tracking**

In this section the activity is to start to identify the range of support and activity that already exists to support young people at each stage of their education, starting with the support for young people in years 8 and 9. The focus will then move to the support that takes place whilst young people are studying for GCSEs or equivalents. Finally we will look at what support is offered to young people who might be at risk of not participating post 16, for example, the new council commissioned targeted information, advice and guidance (IAG) service for NEET young people aged 16 to 18 currently delivered by Connexions.

- 3.15 To meet the duties and responsibilities that the local authorities have in the Education act 2011 the City Region IAG Connexions Commissioning Group (IAGCG), and the Directors of Children's Services have endorsed, the following 3 delivery strands:

- 1) Data and tracking – to enable local authorities to track young people and meet the requirements to supply data to Department for Education (DfE). This involves work and data exchange with schools and colleges. Given the travel to learn patterns this is a sub-regional solution, through a single provider.

- 2) Targeted IAG advisory service for NEET and vulnerable young people. One contract across the city region, but with costs, staffing and operational delivery determined in each LA.
- 3) Web/portal to provide accessible information and guidance to support young people. The portal offers some common themes across all local authorities (LAs), but each area has a tailored product to meet individual area needs.

3.16 The Wirral 14-19 Team have developed a number of resources and services to support schools in meeting their new statutory duties from September 2012 in relation to the provision of impartial and independent IAG, detailed in the Education Act 2011. On 1st April 2012 the LA launched the Greater Merseyside Interactive (GMI); this is an education resource aggregation system which aims to support Wirral schools and academies to independently and impartially present the breadth of learning, employment and FE opportunities available to their young people. In addition to the GMI we are also providing an additional package of support to schools and academies which includes full access to the U-Explore CEIAG tool and professional support from IAG qualified practitioners to assist in maximising the potential of U-Explore in Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) programmes. The U-Explore tool includes the following:-

- Excellent CEIAG teaching and learning resource for teachers and learners available online.
- 360 virtual tours.
- Work related learning and enterprise resources including job casts, business and sector info.
- Job bank – video case study interviews and text based profiles.

3.17 As mentioned above, the Council has also provided a new free interactive web portal, 'Mersey Interactive' (www.merseyinteractive.com). Mersey Interactive has been developed with the other five Liverpool City Region local authorities and it brings together a number of carefully chosen free and chargeable careers education resources. The resources can be accessed via the internet by young people, parents / careers and teachers to facilitate and enable informed career path decision making.

3.18 The RPA plan identifies a number of groups with specific barriers (e.g. Teenage parents, learners with learning difficulties and / or disabilities (LLDD), Children in Care (CiC)/Care leavers, under-aspirations in learners from disadvantaged backgrounds, FL); we will engage an RPA reference group to discuss and identify differentiated strategies and approaches which are needed to address their particular, individual needs. A full report will be received by SWEB in November 2012. The 14-19 team have already completed a provision mapping exercise in which gaps in provision have been identified; these will be discussed with relevant stakeholders.

3.19 **Establish Support Mechanisms**

The systematic identification pre and post 16 of young people becoming NEET through analysis of their data is a critical step which can compliment schools/academies and providers' own identification of young people who might be at risk. This for Wirral will be measured by a risk of NEET indicator (RONI).

3.20 In the trial areas, the first step in the process of identifying young people at risk of disengagement came from providers' own pastoral care and support systems and from sharing of information between pre and post-16 providers. Trial areas believe that provider systems can be complimented and enhanced by the development of an area wide RONI to identify those at most risk of disengagement and ensure the appropriate support is in place.

Indicators which have most often appeared in trial areas have been:

- Attendance indicators including Persistent Absence, Fixed or Permanent Exclusions, Number of Managed Moves, Number of schools attended, Out of year plus or minus one;
- Attainment indicators including both absolute measures of attainment and progression measures like number of levels, progress made between key stages;
- Free School Meals or some other postcode indicator (also to consider transport links);
- Other specific categories e.g. Statement of Educational Need (SEN) or School Action Plus, Gifted and Talented;
- Identified by Social Care through a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) or by the Youth Offending team;
- Identified as having suffered bullying at school;
- Identified as an alcohol or substance misuser;
- Identified as a being at risk of teenage pregnancy, already pregnant or have a child.

3.21 Based on the early pilot work Wirral have now developed and agreed a range of local "at risk of NEET indicators" associated with disengagement and social exclusion at pre 16. The indicators were developed by looking at the characteristics of NEET young people over 3 years to see how closely correlated each characteristic contributed to them becoming NEET at 16. This data will be used to inform discussion between pilot schools in terms of identifying young people who may require a period of early intervention and targeted support to help retain them in education. This activity is taking place between September and October 2012. A full roll out of the Wirral RONI tool will take place June 2013.

3.22 Early intervention has been identified as the key building block for delivering enhanced outcomes for vulnerable children and their families. Intensive early support can make a positive difference to the lives of children and their families in even the most challenging circumstances. An estimated 20-30% of children and young people have additional needs at some point in their lives. It is this group for whom targeted support within universal settings will be the most appropriate.

3.23 **Identifying and meeting provision needs**

Getting the right offer and provision in place to meet the needs of young people in Wirral is one of the biggest challenges in delivering RPA. Having a better understanding of our specific gaps and provision needs is essential if we are to have a chance of successfully filling them. We will also need to think creatively and imaginatively about how to secure changes in existing provision or establish new provision, at a time of significant resource pressures. This will involve working collaboratively with existing providers, potential new entrants to the market and other groups like employers.

- 3.24 Meeting RPA requirements means we need to ensure that we have the provision in place across the borough which is able to support a wide range of diverse needs. A provision mapping exercise was carried out to look at what is available at each of the levels in each of the sectors and also to look at available progression routes. We are currently looking to identify to what extent current provision meets the current interests and aspirations of learners and those in 2013/2015.
- 3.25 A NEET Action group was set up with the remit of reducing the numbers of NEET young people in Wirral and increasing sustained participation in line with priorities identified in Wirral Children and Young People's Plan, through a case conference approach.
- 3.26 The September Guarantee thresholds were met in Wirral, with 94.95% of Year 11 leavers having a recorded offer of a place in Education, Employment or Training and 80.51% of 17 year olds identified for the Guarantee (inc. those young people on one year programmes, those on Entry to Employment (E2E) / Foundation Learning (FL) and those young people who are NEET in April, May and June 2012) having a recorded offer of a place in Education, Employment and Training.
- 3.27 From August 2012, Wirral have been working with Groundwork as part of the Deputy Prime Ministers £1bn Youth Contract with the remit of supporting 16 and 17 year olds (without any GCSEs) back into work or training. Groundwork have many years experience of delivering bespoke projects that use the environment and local community as catalysts for building a more sustainable future. The programme is to be delivered over three years with the help of a number of other charities such as Barnados, YMCA, Riverside Housing, Prince's Trust and Brathay.

3.28 **Communicating the message**

Although the final element of the Wirral 14-19 plan, communicating the message underpins everything else that we need to do to deliver RPA. It comes last in the draft plan in many respects but it was one of the first things that we needed to get actions agreed for.

- 3.29 The 14-19 team identified early on the key stakeholders we would need to reach in order to ensure the RPA message was communicated as widely as possible. It is important that all of these stakeholders understand the contribution that they can make to supporting RPA in Wirral and that young people and parents know and understand what the impact of the raising of the participation age will mean for them.
- 3.30 It is equally important that the education and training workforce understands not only the practical implications of the raising of the participation age, but also the range of learning options available through the current curriculum reforms. The workforce is critical because evidence suggests young people naturally turn to their teachers / trainers for Information, Advice and Guidance (this also came out of the Spring 2012 learner voice survey) and it is important to equip the workforce for this role. This is an area that we need to focus on over the coming months.
- 3.31 We have raised the profile of RPA by communicating the key messages through a range of mediums, including the use of the Council's internet and intranet; screens at one stop shops and connexions. Further work with schools is planned to reinforce the message with parents; particularly those who do not have access to the internet. We

will build on existing communication channels with FE colleges, schools and providers to ensure that they are well informed and actively support the implementation of Wirral's RPA strategy.

4.0 RELEVANT RISKS

4.1 None.

5.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 Not applicable.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 The 14-19 Social and Economic Wellbeing Group has been the reference and consultation group. The current 14-19 2012/1 RPA plan was agreed and signed off by the Children's Trust.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

7.1 The voluntary, community and faith sector have been involved in approving the 14-19 RPA Plan as members of the Children's Trust Executive. The voluntary, community and faith sector are also consulted in respect of 14-19 RPA Plan developments as members of SEWB Group.

8.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

8.1 None.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Delivering Raising Participation Age for young people age 17 in 2013 and young people aged 18 in 2015 is a statutory duty for the Council. Early indications are that the Council will have to submit performance data to DfE, via the National Client Caseload Information Suite, on a quarterly basis.

9.2 Performance against RPA and our locally agreed targets will also potential come under scrutiny in a Council Children and Young People's Department Ofsted inspection scenario.

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

(a) Yes and impact review is attached –

<http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/children-young-people>.

11.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None.

12.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 Not applicable.

13.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 Council Members please note report and progress being made in preparation for 2013.

14.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

14.1 Not applicable.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Wirral 14-19 Raising Participation Age Plan 2012/13

REFERENCE MATERIAL

None

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date

Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit (from May 2012)

Section 1: Your details

EIA lead Officer: Paul Smith

Email address: paulsmith@wirral.gov.uk

Head of Section: Vivian Stafford

Chief Officer: Julia Hassall

Department: Children and Young People

Date: 7th January 2013

Section 2: What Council proposal is being assessed?

The Council 14-19 Raising Participation Age Plan 2012/13. The plan details the Council approach, strategy and actions necessary for the Council to ready to meet its new statutory duty in 2013.

Raising of the Participation is concerned with the statutory duty for young people aged 17 in 2013 and those young people aged 18 in 2015 to continue to participate in either education, training or employment.

Section 2b: Will this EIA be submitted to a Cabinet or Overview & Scrutiny Committee?

Yes – CYPD Overview and Scrutiny, 21st January 2013

<http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/children-young-people>

Section 3: Does the proposal have the potential to affect..... (please tick relevant boxes)

- √ **Services**
- The workforce**
- √ **Communities**
- √ **Partners**

If you have ticked one or more of above, please go to section 4.

- None** (please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 4: Does the proposal have the potential to maintain or enhance the way the Council (please tick relevant boxes)

- √ Eliminates unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- √ Advances equality of opportunity
- √ Fosters good relations between groups of people

If you have ticked one or more of above, please go to section 5.

- No** (please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 5:

Could the proposal have a positive or negative impact on any of the protected groups (race, gender, disability, gender reassignment, age, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership)?

You may also want to consider socio-economic status of individuals.

Please list in the table below and include actions required to mitigate any potential negative impact.

Which group(s) of people could be affected	Potential positive or negative impact	Action required to mitigate any potential negative impact	Lead person	Timescale	Resource implications
Race, Religion and belief, gender, disability	Insufficient provision available to meet demand.	Complete an annual strategic review of learning opportunities and potential demand on an annual basis. Ensure and gaps in provision are highlighted to the Education Funding Agency using the appropriate process.	Paul Smith	September 2012	None
All young people	Young people unaware of their duty to participate.	Ensure that the marketing and communications plan promotes the new statutory duty to all young people, specifically those aged 14 to 16.	Paul Smith	January 2013	None
Socio-economic status of individuals	Those young people from low income backgrounds unable to access education and / or training opportunities.	Ensure providers are appraised of any individual difficulties identified by the targeted CEIAG service and are using the 16-19 Bursary funding as appropriate.	Paul Smith	From 1 st April 2013 - ongoing	None

Race, Religion and belief, gender, disability	Young people do not have access to the Council commissioned targeted careers, information advice and guidance service (CEIAG).	Ensure young people have access to the targeted CEIAG service in geographically accessible locations. Ensure that CEIAG resources and support are also available remotely via the internet.	Paul Smith	31 st January 2013	None
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Section 5a: Where and how will the above actions be monitored?

All actions will be monitored via 14-19 Team meeting and through the Social and Economic Wellbeing Outcome Group as appropriate.

Section 5b: If you think there is no negative impact, what is your reasoning behind this?

Section 6: What research / data / information have you used in support of this process?

- Borough statistics for those young people aged 16, 17 and 18 not in employment, education and / or training (NEET). Specifically geographical hotspots.
- Demographic information.
- Attainment data for vulnerable groups.
- Consideration of protected characteristics groups by geography.
- Information on Wirral education and training opportunities.

Section 7: Are you intending to carry out any consultation with regard to this Council proposal?

yes

If 'yes' please continue to section 8.

If 'no' please state your reason(s) why:

(please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 8: How will consultation take place and by when?

Consultation will take place with young people through 1:1 direct and telephone interviews.

Consultation will also take place with other key stakeholders through the 14-19 Social and Economic Wellbeing Outcome Group, the NEET Action Group, Learning Provider Network etc....

Before you complete your consultation, please email your preliminary EIA to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk via your Chief Officer in order for the Council to ensure it is meeting it's legal requirements. The EIA will be published with a note saying we are awaiting outcomes from a consultation exercise.

Once you have completed your consultation, please review your actions in section 5. Then email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for re-publishing.