

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

12 APRIL 2012

SUBJECT:	VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY & FAITH SECTOR WORK PLACEMENT PROGRAMME FOR NEET
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	ACTING DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	CLLR SHEILA CLARKE
KEY DECISION?	YES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 As part of a complementary suite of budget policy options for Your Family – Services for Children and Young People, Members have requested that the Director of Children and Young People bring forward a report detailing how a work placement programme with the Voluntary, Community and Faith (VCFS) sector will be developed and delivered to tackle NEET.
- 1.2 This report sets out the proposed delivery model for the programme and seeks Members approval to commence delivery.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 On 25 November, 2011, the Government announced almost £1 billion of funding to deliver a new Youth Contract over the next three years from 2012-13 to support the participation of 16-24 year olds in education, training and work
- 2.2 The Youth Contract contains three main elements. The first is additional support for unemployed 18-24 year olds, including Work Experience places, wage incentives and additional support from Jobcentre Plus advisers. The delivery of this element is being led by the Department for Work and Pensions
- 2.3 The second is subsidies for small businesses taking on an apprentice aged 16-24. This element is being led by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and the National Apprenticeship Service
- 2.4 The third is a new programme of additional support aimed at 16-17 year olds who are not in education, employment or training. The programme will give providers freedom to address young people's individual needs. It will be strongly based on payment by results, incentivising organisations to help young people to reengage sustainably in education, training or employment with training.

- 2.5 In total, £150 million of funding was announced to support this element in 2012-15. £24m of this funding will be provided to Devolved Administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to put in place support for young people in their areas. An overall funding envelope of £126m will support delivery in England.
- 2.6 This programme will make a key contribution to achieving the Government's commitment to reach full participation of 16-17 year olds in education or training by 2015, as well as helping to reduce the risks of long-term unemployment.
- 2.7 In December 2011, the Departments for Education, Business, Innovation and Skills and Work and Pensions published *Building Engagement, Building Futures*, a joint strategy to maximise the participation of 16-24 year olds in education, training and work.
- 2.8 The Wirral 16 and 17 year old voluntary work placement will fit within the overall context set out in that strategy, helping to achieve the Government's commitment to achieving full participation of 16 and 17 year olds in education or training.
- 2.9 Research shows that around two-fifths of young people who are NEET at 16-17 are 'sustained', facing significant barriers to re-engagement, with a greater likelihood of long-term disengagement. These are the young people that we most want to support through the VCFS work placement programme.

3.0 PROPOSED NEW PROGRAMME

- 3.1 In developing a voluntary work placement programme to tackle 16 and 17 year old NEET consideration has been given to determining the proposed interaction with DWP services as well as identifying gaps in national provision to meet local need. As a result, Members are requested to support delivery of the following activity to tackle NEET which adds value to DWP services and maximises investment in the borough. The model that has been developed complements and adds value to the NEET Participation model in place for care leavers. Placement opportunities will be offered Wirral wide in Partnership with the Voluntary, Community and Faith sector.
- 3.2 The main aim of the programme is to support 16 and 17 year olds who are not in education employment or training (NEET) and at risk of long term disengagement to move into education, training or employment and to sustain this outcome.

To increase these young people's experience and qualifications so that they have the opportunity to continue in education and successfully find work, reducing the proportion that become unemployed in adult life.

To test methods of local delivery and payment by results, increasing the effectiveness of these models and developing best practice.

- 3.3 The target group for this programme will be 16 and 17 year olds who are:
- Currently not participating in education, employment or training (NEET)
 - Currently not receiving job seekers allowance

- 3.4 As of the end of February 2012 there were 1086 (9.15%) young people NEET in Wirral, of which 40 were claiming jobs seekers allowance. This brings 1046 young people into scope for this programme.
- 3.5 The target is to engage 10% of the NEET cohort on the programme.
- 3.6 It is proposed that the voluntary work placement programme adopts the same application and referral process as that already in place for the successful Wirral Apprenticeship programme (see Appendix 1).
- 3.7 Voluntary, Community and Faith organisations will be invited to bid to offer a voluntary placement opportunity that may last between 4 and 10 weeks. Each placement proposal will include additional costs associated with accommodating work placement opportunities. This may include for example a maintenance allowance, travel costs, PPE, child care costs. Organisations will be asked to demonstrate how they will successfully help some of the most disengaged 16-17 year olds into education, training and work with training within a potential funding envelope of £1600 per placement.
- 3.8 This programme will be based on a system of payment by results, with three payment points
- An **engagement payment** when a young person has joined the programme and the organisation has agreed an action plan with them. Proposed payment £100.
 - A **retention payment** when the organisation successfully retains the young person in the placement opportunity. Proposed payment £200
 - A **progression payment** when the young person is successfully engaged in one of the sustainability outcomes for 3 months after the date of the retention payment
- 3.9 Young people will be referred to the programme by Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership who has been commissioned to deliver Wirral's new targeted information, advice and guidance service from 01 April 2012.

4.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 4.1 The Council will project manage the programme through existing staff in Children and Young People's Department who have the expertise and proven track record in managing work related learning and work experience programmes.

5.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 Consideration was given to commence a procurement exercise to tender with an external contractor to deliver the programme within a single contract. This option was discounted as we wanted to encourage the widest range of opportunities from a broad cross section of large and small organisations. In addition we wanted to mitigate against Health and Safety and safeguarding risks associated with extended work experience for this cohort of young people.

6.0 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The new programme is helping to deliver Wirral's corporate priorities. These priorities were reviewed through extensive consultation with Wirral residents and our external partners as part of the refresh of the Corporate Plan in 2011.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 7.1 Members will be aware that the budget policy option specifically stated a programme that encouraged placements with organisations from the voluntary, community and faith sector.
- 7.2 Officers will seek to second, from the voluntary, community and faith sector, a project co-ordinator to be based in Children and Young People's Department.
- 7.3 The application process for the programme will enable smaller organisations, including voluntary, community and faith groups to bid to deliver voluntary placements.

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

8.1 Financial

The total proposed allocation to support NEET Work Placement is £220,000 (Full budget breakdown is listed in Appendix 2).

IT

No direct implications arising from this report.

Staffing

The NEET Work Placement Programme will be project managed in-house by existing staff resource within Children and Young People. Members are asked to support the costs of

- A Placement Co-ordinator to be seconded from the VCFS to work alongside the 14-19 Team. 1 x fte at band G. Total cost including on costs £27,332
- A administrator at 0.5 fte at band B. Total cost including on costs £8,111

Assets

No direct implications arising from this report.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

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 will be published on the web site, hyperlink below.

<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 There are no direct Carbon usage implications arising from this report.

12.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no direct planning or community safety implications arising from this report.

13.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 Members are requested to approve the delivery model for the NEET 16 and 17 year old work placement programme.

14.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

14.1 Reducing NEET is a fundamental priority in Wirral's Corporate Plan and Children and Young People's Plan. As part of a complementary suite of budget policy options for Your Family – Services for Children and Young People, Members have requested that the Director of Children and Young People forward a report detailing how a programme of work placements for 16 and 17 year old NEET will support NEET reduction.

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APPENDICES

None

REFERENCE MATERIAL

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet – Council budget 2012/2013	21 February 2012