

#### **1.0 Background**

- 1.1 This paper describes how the council 14-19 Service has redesigned its services to support young people in making informed career decisions and ensure the council meets the statutory duties prescribed in the Education Act, 2011.
- 1.2 The 14-19 Service Participation Strategy (Appendix 1.) illustrates the new service developments for 2014/15, including an in house young peoples tracking and monitoring service. Appendix 1 also illustrates how specific vulnerable young people are being supported in 2013/14 by provisions commissioned nationally but delivered locally, for example, Youth Contract for 16 and 17 year olds with very low academic attainment. It is this alignment and recognition of nationally contracted programmes that has enable the council to make service financial efficiencies (-£200k) in 2014/15.
- 1.3 National policy changes and council budget efficiencies have significantly influenced the redesign of council targeted careers, education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) services delivered locally. Section 2 in this report describes the main recent policy changes that have influenced and shaped service changes for 2014/15.
- 1.4 The paper also seeks to illustrate how the council's financial efficiencies in this area have been realised, whilst maintaining a strong targeted CEIAG service for vulnerable and young people not in employment, education and / or training (NEET). The 14-19 service, in designing its 2013/14 services, has aligned and integrated services with nationally commissioned provisions. In addition, the 14-19 service has continued to benefit from a joint commissioning approach to securing services and resources, for example, the joint commissioning of a bespoke young people tracking software system, with four Liverpool City Region local authorities.
- 1.5 In looking to 2015/16 the paper seeks to illustrate what the major challenges to provision of CEIAG services will be.

#### **2.0 National Policy**

- 2.1 The responsibility for the delivery of CEIAG changed with the passage of the Education Act 2011 with schools, colleges and providers becoming responsible for the delivery of universal careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) to their pupils / learners. Delivery against these duties for schools and academies commenced September 2012. These duty's were further amend in 2013 to include delivery of universal CEIAG for all pupils from years 9 to 13 in schools and for young people aged 16 to 18 in further education institutions from September 2014.
- 2.2 Revised statutory guidance was issued by the Department for Education (DfE), April 2014, specifically to support senior leaders and governors in schools. The revised statutory guidance makes clear what schools must do and should do, including the promotion of all post 16 opportunities at key transition points, provision of impartial externally sourced face to face IAG where deemed appropriate, and recognising the importance of employers in supporting delivery of CEIAG. DfE makes reference to how local employers can provide young people with inspiration and facilitate the raising of aspirations. DfE make specific reference to the 'Inspiring the Future' national programme and system to support employer involvement in schools CEIAG. The 14-19 service has to date facilitated engagement between schools, the new Wirral Chamber of Commerce and the Inspiring the Future organisation. Local employer support and engagement has been strong.
- 2.3 The role of local authorities in delivery and provision of CEIAG has been spelt out by the Department for Education (DfE) in its guidance which states, "local authorities will

retain their statutory duty to encourage, enable or assist young people's participation in education or training". Although there is freedom and flexibility on how local authorities fulfil their statutory duties; they are expected to have regard to the following guidance when organising services:

- Tracking and supporting young people; monthly reporting to DfE using the Client Caseload Information System (CCIS). This must report on numbers of young people NEET and whether young people have secured an offer of education or training.
- Work with JobCentre Plus to ensure that NEET young people receive a complementary package of support.

2.4 The legislation that has significantly impacted more recently on the council's targeted CEIAG service design has been the raising of the age of compulsory participation in education or training to 18 by 2015 and until the end of the year in which young people turn 17 in 2013 – this is known as Raising the Participation Age (RPA). All council's in England are responsible for ensuring that young people in their area participate and that there is support for young people to overcome barriers to engagement. Local Authority RPA plans will now be inspected by OFSTED, as part of reviewing arrangements for their support of school improvements.

2.5 Outside of legislation that directly impacts on council's, The Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) has introduced the National Careers Service (with support from the Department for Education). From November 2014 this will deliver face-to-face services to those aged 18-24 and not in employment, education or training, together with telephone and web support to anyone aged 13 and over.

2.6 On a sub regional basis the Liverpool City Region secured a Deal with Government (July 2012) to support plans for the most responsive employment and skills system nationally. A key element of the Liverpool City Region Deal for Employment and Skills is the ambitious target to halve long term youth unemployment over the next three years. The task force established to make these plans a reality and in doing so sought the views of young people and local employers. One of the key published recommendations included overhauling local careers support following the fact that Careers education was high on young people's agendas – there was a clear perception that they got too little, too late, and that, combined with little practical work experience, they were ill equipped for the transition to the world of work. Businesses also had much to say on careers advice and displayed a clear perception that the education system undervalues vocational skills and experience.

### **3.0 2014/15 Council Services to encourage enable and assist young people to participate in education and training**

#### **Participation & Engagement Service**

3.1 The aim of the new 2014/15 service is to ensure greater engagement with internal and external agencies including potentially those external agencies with whom the council already works. The service is designed to support and influence young people to raise their aspirations, and increase their participation in employment and training. It has been secured as part of a range of support services that will enable the council to carry its statutory duties with regard to vulnerable young people, below the age of 19 and relevant young adults (i.e those aged 19 to 25 with learning difficulties).

3.2 The new service has been predicated on a number of key principles including:-

- Ensuring young people access services through other organisations that are now empowered to deliver, such as careers information advice and guidance through schools, colleges and training providers;
- Ensuring further reliance on and full use of other agencies notably the National Careers Service;
- Increasing the support provided to vulnerable young people in particular to overcome the disadvantages that are preventing them from work or training;
- Providing better co-ordination with other services being delivered within the council.

3.3 The new service was jointly commissioned with Halton Borough Council, Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council and Liverpool City Council. At the end of the commissioning process Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership were awarded an initial 2 year contract to deliver the service.

3.4 The service specification has been strongly focused on securing a cadre of Engagement Workers. The Engagement Worker role is focused on working with young people aged 16-18 to engage them in positive activities, support their personal development needs to enable them to make effective decisions and take positive action and progress into education, learning and training opportunities or employment with training. The Engagement Workers provide advice to people about the range of opportunities available to them and ensure full use of other agencies.

3.5 The service is aligned to the council access strategy with the service being provided from 5 key One Stop Shops / Libraries. No council funding is spent on providing external accommodation for service delivery.

3.6 The service also includes provision of five level 6 qualified professional careers education, information, advice and guidance practitioners. The service is to primarily support young people aged 16 and 17 (and up to 25 if the individual has a Learning Difficulty Assessment) who are referred to them, by the engagement workers, requiring careers support to participate in education or training.

3.7 The service workload is directed, monitored and quality assured by the council 14-19 service.

#### **2014/15 Young People's tracking and monitoring service**

3.8 Linked to the new Participation and Engagement service has been the strategic move to bring the young peoples data tracking and monitoring statutory function in to the council 14-19 service. This strategic change has also been replicated by the four other Liverpool City Regional councils and the bespoke database required to support this function has been jointly commissioned.

3.9 Bringing the monitoring and tracking and function in-house has given the council much greater access to its data and is facilitating improved service (Participation & Engagement) deployment, coordination with other council databases, targeted support for vulnerable groups and will ultimately provide financial efficiencies.

3.10 The monitoring and tracking function has enabled the 14-19 service to creatively work and coordinate the work of nationally contracted external agencies, for example, Groundwork Cheshire and Gingerbread (Youth Contract providers) and more locally contracted services including Talent Match (Youth Federation / MYA).

3.11 The 14-19 service now has direct responsibility for delivering the 16 and 17 year old September Guarantee process and performance, making the statutory monthly council data returns to the Department for Education, and facilitating all participation and NEET reporting locally.

### **Provision of universal skills and careers resources for all Wirral young people**

- 3.12 Universal skills and careers resources have been further developed in 2013/14 to better promote the evolving employment and education opportunities market. For 2014/15 the 14-19 Service has continued as lead commissioner, contract holder and service provider for the Liverpool City Region local authorities Mersey Interactive shared resource. Mersey Interactive is a web based portal that brings together all of the careers information, advice and guidance available in Wirral and the other areas of the Liverpool City Region. The interactive website provides 24/7 access to skills, careers information and resources for all young people, parents and teachers. At present Mersey Interactive receives in excess of 44,000 hits per year.
- 3.13 During 2013/14 the 14-19 Service have commissioned and supported U-Explore (Mersey Interactive developer) to redesign and develop new resources on the site linked to Wirral's transformational / growth sectors. Recently a high value manufacturing sector wall has been launched showing some of Wirral's manufacturing sector employers, including Cammell Laird and Heap & Partners.
- 3.14 The manufacturing sector wall is a really innovative approach to bringing an insight in to specific careers to the young persons home or school classroom through, for example, interactive multimedia 360 degree tours of the workplace. Other resources available through this development include 50 plus manufacturing job profiles and career access information and multi blogs featuring interviews with company employees.
- 3.15 The 14-19 Service has continued to update and operate a licence with UCAS Progress for the provision of an online electronic post 16 education and training opportunities prospectus. The online prospectus receives over 44,000 site hits per year and details over 1,550 qualifications / opportunities. The online prospectus features as an application on Mersey Interactive.

## **4.0 Conclusions and Recommendations**

- 4.1 **The Children's Trust Board need to be aware that NEET rates have the potential to rise and participation to fall due to reduced overall capacity in this area.** This is a service area that has been subject to significant planned structural change in which any potential delivery risks that might impact on NEET rates have been managed. Further financial change in this very lean service area will have significant negative impact on Wirral NEET rates and direct support for the most vulnerable young people aged 16 to 18.
- 4.2 **The government's Youth Contract provision for vulnerable 16 and 17 year olds NEET will cease 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015. The cessation of Youth Contract, and its funded intensive mentoring, will leave a gap in this service area with increased potential for NEET rate to grow and participation to dip.** The strategy behind the new 2014/15 Participation and Engagement Service is based on integrating and maximising the potential of nationally contracted services, for example, Youth Contract (see appendix 1.). Embracing Youth contract provision has brought significant additional intensive mentoring capacity to the service area. This intensive mentoring has been used to great effect, with young care leavers and our most vulnerable young people with no GCSE attainment.
- 4.3 **Further work needs to be done by the 14-19 service to fully understand the new role of the National Careers Service (NCS) and its work specifically with NEET 18 year olds. The scope of the NCS service has the potential to leave a big gap in planned support for our most vulnerable young 18 year olds.** Young people aged 18 NEET for over 60 percent of the current NEET cohort of 640 young people (as June, 2014). Contracts for NCS delivery have only recently been announced and Wirral service delivery has been further complicated by the awarded provider commissioning service delivery out. However, this activity has now concluded and Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership will now deliver the NCS provision locally on behalf of Greater

