

Children, Young People and Learning



**Strategy for reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training (2015 – 2018)**

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Document Author	Kashif Nawaz, Assistant Virtual School Head	
Document owner	Christine McInnes, Chief Officer, Children, Young People and Learning	
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Please contact:

Bracknell Forest Borough Council

Time Square

Market Street

Bracknell

Berkshire RG12 1JD

Email: [customer.services@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:customer.services@bracknell-forest.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01344 352000

Fax: 01344 354325

Minicom: 01344 352045

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## **1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF THE STRATEGY**

This strategy supports the participation of young people in Bracknell Forest who are not in education employment or training (NEET). This paper also highlights a range of strategies and actions to reduce the numbers of NEET young people in the Borough and further improve the outcomes. The Strategy is supported by an Action Plan.

**The Bracknell Forest Secondary (11-19) Partnership has;**

- i. noted and considered the issues relating to NEET in the Borough**
- ii. noted and considered the range and type of activities that could be employed to reduce the number of young people who become NEET**
- iii. endorsed a range of overarching actions for reducing NEET numbers within Bracknell Forest.**

## **2. BACKGROUND**

The government has aspirations that all young people participate in education, employment or training as identified in its raising of the participation age (RPA) guidance. As a result of the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act (2009) from April 2010 accountability for 'securing sufficient education and training' post-16 passed to the local authority.

While there is no national target the Department for Education suggests that a NEET figure of less than 5.0% represents good local practice. Historically NEET figures were agreed within the NI 117 indicator but this is no longer in place. Current data shows that Bracknell Forest has a NEET level of 3.77% (Feb 2015) representing 132 young people aged 16-18, of which 118 are available to participate in education, employment or training.

NEET figures follow a cyclical trend, which links to the academic year and changes in the labour market, showing variation from month to month. Even when figures appear to be static over a period, membership of the NEET group does not remain fixed. In any given month, some young people will move into education, employment or training, whereas others will become NEET.

Evidence suggests that the characteristics associated with those who are NEET are as follows, with a higher proportion of young people having low attendance, exclusion and low academic achievement.

- Poor educational attainment
- Persistent truancy
- Teenage Pregnancy
- Drugs and alcohol abuse
- Looked After Children
- Disability
- Mental health
- Crime and anti-social behaviour

As there are a range of organisations involved in reducing NEET, any planned actions are collaborative, coordinated, comprehensive and cost effective.

These actions will be overseen by Children, Young People & Learning Departmental Management Team and the 'Participation Group', reporting to the Secondary (11-19) Partnership and the Elevate Bracknell Forest Steering Group reporting to the Berkshire Elevate Steering Group and the Elevate Bracknell Forest Leadership Group. A representative from Elevate Bracknell Forest will also attend the Participation Group and the Secondary (11-19) Partnership.

### **3. PROPOSALS**

Action is two pronged to move more young people who are currently NEET into EET and, critically, to prevent those of statutory school age from becoming NEET in the first place.

Meeting the challenge means actions in the following key areas:

- Client information management systems need to be maintained rigorously
- Young people at risk of disengaging should be identified early so that action can be taken to reengage them
- Information about young people needs to be shared between partners
- Information should be used to plan and commission services as well as to evaluate those services and drive up performance

#### **3.1 Pre-16**

It is possible to identify and target young people who are at risk of becoming NEET at an early stage in their school careers by looking at patterns of behaviour and attainment. This is increasingly being done during years 8 and 9 through specific intervention projects, such as Energize; as well as at the start of Year 11.

These students need:

- Access to learning opportunities which will motivate them, provide appropriate skills recognition of achievement and opportunities for progression e.g. vocational learning, work placements (both standard and extended)
- A programme of core and life skills which challenge the culture of low aspirations
- Literacy and numeracy support
- An opportunity to gain qualifications in the above areas
- Access to impartial information, advice, guidance and support to make appropriate choices
- Access to work related learning to develop skills for employment
- Support with managing personal and social issues

To support the above, schools need to:

- Take a lead in supporting pre-NEET activities and interventions in order to minimise the number of at risk young people becoming NEET.
- Take responsibility for young people who are at risk of becoming NEET and work with interested parties to ensure that opportunities are in place to ensure young people remain engaged in education and training.
- Use the Risk of NEET Indicators (RONI) for the early identification of young people at risk of becoming NEET and to work with relevant partners to ensure that the appropriate interventions are put in place and monitored.

### **3.2 The transition into further education, training and employment post-16**

For many young people progression into further education and training at the end of year 11 is a realistic option, hindered only by the transition from a largely structured school environment to one which facilitates a greater level of independence. Our work in a DfE funded Raising Participation Age (RPA) project around supporting young people at-risk of disengagement through the transition process saw 89.1% of supported young people continue in education after two terms (2013). This work has emphasised the importance of the transition process and underpins the work of our transition worker.

#### **Priorities for Action**

- To gain continued commitment from all schools, Bracknell & Wokingham College and independent training providers to reducing the NEET figures
- To continue to review and develop 14-19 curriculum provision with an emphasis on the breadth and volume of provision for young people who fail to reach level 2
- To identify those young people in Year 11 who are most vulnerable and to provide the appropriate coordinated support and access to appropriate and timely interventions
- To seek and act on the views of NEET and potentially at risk NEET young people
- To challenge the culture of low aspirations and value placed on lifelong learning, education and training amongst certain groups of young people
- To provide quality advice and guidance for young people
- To increase the range of appropriate training and employment opportunities available
- To provide quality support for transition at 16 for vulnerable young people.
- Ensure that appropriate learner information is shared between providers. Individual providers can agree the level of detail pertaining to learners using the Common Transfer File as a basis of these discussions.
- Use resources accompanying the City Deal initiative to increase the number of employers taking on young people into programmes leading to sustainable employment.

### **3.3 Enabling factors**

Research has identified that a key barrier to moving young people from NEET to EET is the thinking and behaviour of young people. A common characteristic among the NEET group is

their negative perception of school<sup>1</sup>. Many believe that success is due to luck and not effort. As a result they tend to live in the present, unable to plan for the future. They may be unwilling to try new learning experiences and may not even see the connection between the need to gain qualifications and their aspirations for employment and their future.<sup>2</sup> Research and experience suggests that support from a trusted adult is one of the key factors in reengaging children and young people. The following approaches are particularly successful:

- **Supporting clients through advocacy** - access to skilled Personal Advisers and key worker/mentoring services can help young people assess their needs, plan action and provide continuity through key transition points, and extra support during setbacks. This complements the guidance available from within schools and colleges. A range of specialist services provides support to particular groups of vulnerable young people such as young parents, those with mental health issues and young people in care.
- **Involvement of young people in service design** - many assumptions are made about what young people need; the most effective approaches are informed by client views. Work needs to be done to further engage the views of young people and Adviza in developing services for young people.
- **Focusing on transition** - young people should be supported to move to the next progression point as quickly as possible. We should ensure that the drop out from both learning programmes and employment is minimised through appropriate support targeted at those most vulnerable. Considerable emphasis is placed on the transition from primary to secondary school but the same is not afforded from secondary to post sixteen education, employment or training<sup>3</sup>.
- **Offering an integrated menu of programmes with flexibility in programme length, duration and progression** – a clear range of programmes are needed to enable this diverse group to succeed. These need to take into account changing behaviour as well as skills development, with flexible entry requirements and clear outcomes linked to progression.
- **Engaging Employers** – employers need to be consulted on how best to support NEET young people and, in particular, what structures are needed to help employers recruit more young people.
- **Demonstrating clear evidence of impact** – together with the hard impact measures and targets relating to NEET, other measures should be developed to measure “distance travelled” by young people.
- **Increasing the number of young people with LDD into supported employment** – a review needs to be carried out of the post 16 transition process. Data collected

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<sup>1</sup> Provision for Young People not in Education, Training and Employment (NEET), Research Report, June 2005. Prof Paul Croll and Alun Davies

<sup>2</sup> The Thinking and Behaviour of Young Adults (aged 16-15). Social Exclusion Unit 2005

<sup>3</sup> Evangelous, M. Taggart, B. Sylva, K. Melhuish, E. Sammons, P. Siraj-Blatchford, I. 2008. What makes a successful transition from primary to secondary school. London: Institute for Education research report EPPSE3-14.



should enable settings to make appropriate learning offers for young people who have a LDD to ensure that they are benefitting from the programme. In the event that they are not (or that a suitable course of study is not available) employer engagement should be brokered to enable such young people into supported employment.

- **Apprenticeships** - apprenticeships combine practical work with structured training, to give a nationally recognised qualification and the experience needed to get a job. The Council has developed an approach to Apprenticeships which is due for publication in July 2015, and as part of that work plans to 'ring fence' an apprenticeship offer to some of our Care Leavers.

### **3.4 Partnership Commitment and Action**

The Secondary (11-19) Partnership is committed to working with all the agencies involved with NEET, particularly Adviza, Training Providers and the Youth Service. Collectively stakeholders will work to maximise the available funding to support Bracknell Forest young people in moving from NEET to EET. The Partnership must be aware of the cost of additional provision and support required. The Secondary (11-19) Partnership will drive forward collaborative action through its schools and the Participation Group, to develop joined up holistic services for these young people. The Partnership will identify an appropriate grouping of school/college leaders to manage the proposed actions at each institution level.

Elevate Bracknell Forest is committed to support for all young people post 16 into a meaningful destination. This is achieved by Elevate Bracknell Forest's four core aims:

1. Bringing together and co-ordinating relevant organisations and agencies to work collaboratively towards helping young people into a meaningful occupation

Joint multi-agency working is a key factor to make Elevate Bracknell Forest successful. Building on existing relationships to make a wide net of partners will ensure a blanket provision for the target group. Additionally it will help aligning funding, sharing information and working towards a streamlined and clear-cut pathway for the young people of Bracknell Forest.

This is one of the main contributions of Elevate to the Council's provision for the NEET agenda. Elevate is bringing together providers that support NEET and unemployed 19-24 year olds Elevate is working closely with the relevant departments, including the department for Children, Young People and Learning who provide a major part of the services under the Elevate "umbrella". Enhancing the communication between providers in the Borough and across Berkshire is creating a new way of working together that aims to increase effectiveness and cooperation now and in future to best support NEET young people and unemployed 19 – 24 year olds.

2. Setting up a co-located IAG (Information, Advice and Guidance) hub

By co-ordinating the Elevate partners – key players in the field of youth employment, skills and education – and successfully co-locating them in an Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) Hub the Elevate partners will work towards implementing a standardised system of recording "City Deal Active" young people, employing a new approach to outreach work and programmes specifically targeted at the most vulnerable groups such as young people with LDD or SEN, young offenders, care leavers and lone parents.

A successful collaboration between partners and other relevant agencies is key to making the Hub a success and to provide the 16-24 year olds in Bracknell Forest with a one-stop-shop to access the support they need to enter into meaningful education, employment or training.

Building on the first aim of Elevate is another key aspect supporting the Council's NEET work. The Hub includes Adviza, one of the main deliverers working with the Borough's NEET cohort. Additionally the National Careers Service, Nacro (crime reduction charity), Learning to Work, Bracknell and Wokingham College and other Council teams, including Community Learning and Breakthrough are contributing to the Hub's offer providing a holistic service to young people aged 16 – 24, including NEET young people and those at risk of becoming NEET.

3. Implementing a Bracknell Forest Elevate website called "ElevateMe Bracknell Forest"

ElevateMe Bracknell Forest provides young people with a tool to access relevant information, support and signposting on their journey towards employment. Being accessible by everyone the website can either provide local information on general support, CV's, interviews and opportunities to enhance their employability. Additionally the "City building" tool will help young people track their progress and enable them to build their own pathways. Advisers at the Hub will additionally use the website as a tool to engage with young people.

4. Delivering business brokerage and relationship co-ordination with local employers.

The programme furthermore aims to implement a successful business brokerage system co-ordinated by the Business Relationships Co-ordinator of Bracknell Forest Council that will benefit both businesses by identifying and addressing their needs with regards to young people's skills and education as well as the young people by equipping them with the right skills and experience required by local employers.

By successfully implementing these four core aims Elevate is working towards an improved approach to tackling youth unemployment in the Borough. It hopes to support the Children, Young people and Learning department in their work and aims to contribute in supporting NEET and unemployed young people improving their life chances.

Elevate Bracknell Forest is funded until the end of financial year 2015/2016 aiming to have the multi-organisational change implemented by then. Plans for sustainability of Elevate are being developed in 2015/2016 to secure the continuance of effective and efficient multi-agency working, running of a co-located IAG Hub and the website after 2016/2017.

#### **4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS**

The NEET Strategy contributes to the Children and Young People's Plan key aims:

- OP1: Raise levels of attainment and pupil progress across all phases of learning for all pupils
- OP4: Improve outcomes for all children and young people, especially the more vulnerable.
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By addressing the issue of NEETs within Bracknell Forest the numbers engaged in education and training will be increased, contributing to the LA's '*Raising of the Participation Age*' strategy.

Through providing improved opportunities and support to vulnerable young people, social inclusion and equality will be promoted throughout the Borough. For example, this should in turn lead to a reduction in anti-social behaviour and offending. More young people with special needs gaining employment.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Actions should be planned within the existing budget allocations.

Alternative sources of funding as appropriate and as available will be sought for particular projects, such as the European Social Fund and Education Funding Agency grant funding.

Work with providers should be ongoing to ensure that curriculum initiatives are sustainable using conventional post-16 funding methodologies.

## BRACKNELL FOREST NEET ACTION PLAN 2015 - 2018

Objectives	Tasks	Lead Person	By when	Anticipated outputs and outcomes
Early Identification of vulnerable young people	Develop a system for early identification, intervention monitoring and tracking- RONI(Risk of NEET indicator) model with extended indicators	Kashif Nawaz	September 2015	Pilot with schools. Targeted early interventions can be made in years 7/8, or earlier in primary, to avoid later negative outcomes
	Use of Transition Coordinator referral form to identify risk of NEET - develop new process for referral for specialist support	Kashif Nawaz	September 2015	New process used by all agencies
Provide quality advice guidance and information	Existing arrangements reviewed with each school and college to ensure it meets individual pupil needs as well as statutory requirements	Helen Diffenthal	March 2016	Appropriate and effective IAG in place in all schools
	All schools working within the IAG Standards	Kashif Nawaz/Helen Diffenthal	March 2016	Standards embedded into practice
	Continue to review and develop 14-19 curriculum provision with an emphasis on the breadth and volume of provision for young people who fail to reach level 2	Helen Diffenthal/Kashif Nawaz	On going	Reduce number of 16 – 18 year olds that are NEET
	Realistic discussions about aspirations and intended destinations	Adviza/Transition Coordinator	On going	Young people have a better understanding of the range of options available relevant to their potential
Increase the range of appropriate training and employment opportunities	Support employers to take on young people	Partnership Group / Elevate	On going	Increased supported work experience programmes and opportunities for young people

Objectives	Tasks	Lead Person	By when	Anticipated outputs and outcomes
	Develop the Council's capacity to take on apprentice's	Kashif Nawaz / Business and Enterprise Service	December 2016	A well structured and supported offer of apprenticeships in place with priority given to particular vulnerable groups such as Care Leavers.
	Commissioned spaces from Learning to Work to be more focused on developing employability skills amongst targeted school age young people at risk of being NEET.	Kashif Nawaz/Learning to Work	March 2016	Schools identified and target groups set up.
	Further work with local economy and local business through the Partnership Group and Elevate project	Kashif Nawaz / Business and Enterprise Service	On going	Increased opportunities available. Young people more fulfilled following work experience and contacts. Employers more satisfied by employing young people with more appropriate skills
Challenge the culture of low aspirations and value placed on lifelong learning, education and training amongst certain groups of young people and to provide support for the transition of vulnerable young people	Identify and support all 16 – 19 year old care leavers into EET	Care Leavers Service/Virtual School/Adviza	On going	All young people in care offered additional support
	Increasing the number of young people with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LDD) into supported employment. Review post 16 transition and data collection process.	Kashif Nawaz / Adviza	March 2016	Young people with LDD able to access the same level of opportunities as their peers.

Objectives	Tasks	Lead Person	By when	Anticipated outputs and outcomes
	Discuss strategies with schools where numbers higher than the LA average of NEET originate from.	Kashif Nawaz	March 2016	Engage senior leadership. Raised awareness. Discuss strategies to engage those young people likely to be NEET
	Consider extending the CAF form to include referral (if relevant) from the Transition Coordinator.	Kashif Nawaz / Peter Hodges / Karen Frost	September 2016	Vulnerable young people benefit from a more informed support plan which includes consideration for their potential NEET situation
	Involvement of young people in service design	Participation Development Worker / Kashif Nawaz	On going	Young people benefit from being involved in processes such as interviews, planning activities and service development.
	Youth led interventions possible such as Duke of Edinburgh	Kashif Nawaz / Transition Coordinator	On going	Varied range of activities to engage with are available for vulnerable young people
To provide support to fathers, mothers, carers and others support	Develop links with Foster Carers through group work session	Childrens Social Care, Virtual School	On going	Foster Carers able to support their young people into education, training or employment
	Review parenting support programmes and interventions <i>Eg - Consider referrals to Troubled Families Programme for parents and young people at risk of becoming NEET</i> - Consider availability and appropriateness of other parenting interventions eg Parents of Teenagers course. - Positively offer opportunities at	Kashif Nawaz / Transition Coordinator	March 2016	Key workers report improved outcomes. Early intervention addressing families' needs avoids negative consequences. Parental interest supports YP. More support available for families with older teenagers YP more likely to have positive view about, and seek, education, employment or training

Objectives	Tasks	Lead Person	By when	Anticipated outputs and outcomes
	<p><i>conclusion of parenting interventions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>engaging in the community</i></li> <li>- using opportunities to engage with parents at times of exclusion</li> <li>- working with schools to be more creative about linking with parents</li> </ul>			
To provide activities and support for young people who are NEET	Focused job search with small groups of young people	Adviza / Transition Coordinator	On going	All NEET to have an up to date CV and regular contact with centre
	Ensure all NEET are able to access National Career Service resources	Adviza	On going	Young people gain confidence, motivation, achievement, self-worth, employability skills etc. Reduced NEET.
	Develop specific support for young people to volunteer if not in work	Participation Group	On going	Improved employability for these young people
	Increase number of young people benefitting from Work Pairing	Kashif Nawaz / Transition Coordinator	On going	Activities provided at alternative venues. Numbers of young people attending increase. More employers supported to take on young people for this purpose.
	Explore wider Youth Service led accreditation models	Youth Service / Kashif Nawaz	March 2016	<p>Analysis of data yields greater insight to better target interventions and avoid negative outcomes.</p> <p>Young people benefit from more joined up interventions</p> <p>Young people have higher self esteem</p>

Objectives	Tasks	Lead Person	By when	Anticipated outputs and outcomes
				Young people are more “work ready”
	Maximise opportunities through Elevate project	Elevate	On going	Young people benefit from a range of services available from a central location
Communications	Positive material about successes of YP in difficult circumstances included in Council publications and offered to local media.	Communications team	September 2016	At least one article in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Council publications</li> <li>- Local media</li> </ul> YP/parents see success and realise it could be them.



