

**EDUCATION, SKILLS AND GROWTH
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL
6 NOVEMBER 2024
6.30 PM – 7.30 PM**



Present Virtually:

Councillors Barnard (Vice-Chair), Gaw, Smith and Watts (Chair)
Victoria Stageman, Parent Governor Representative

Also Present Virtually:

Lorraine Peterson, Virtual School Headteacher, Education and Learning
Sebastian Evans, Transition Coordinator, Education and Learning
Duane Chappell, Assistant Director , Education and Learning

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Frost, Penfold and Webb

7. Apologies for Absence/Substitute Members

Apologies of absence were received from Cllrs Penfold, Frost and Webb

8. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip

Cllr Smith declared an interest as his wife is employed as a teacher at a school in Bracknell Forest.

9. Elevate and the virtual school

The Virtual School Headteacher, Education & Learning presented some slides. The following points were noted:

- Regarding careers plans Morrisby, a careers platform, is used to widen participation and raising aspirations, specifically for children looked after (CLA). Morrisby involved a simple set of questions to provide and outcome report to identify strengths and weaknesses that can be used to help identify types of jobs and qualifications to suit individuals.
- The platform is seen as aspirational for the users as it links qualifications to types of jobs and their outcomes.
- The PEP (Personal Education Plan) has a careers section that is to be completed by the school in line with their statutory duty (Gatsby Benchmarks). There are 8 Gatsby Benchmarks:
 - 1 stable careers programme
 2. Learning from career and labour market information
 3. Addressing the needs of each pupil
 4. Linking curriculum learning to careers
 5. Encounters with employers and employees
 6. Experiences of workplaces
 7. Encounters with further and higher education
 8. Personal guidance

- Any CLA who are at risk of need, or who have become need in years 12 and 13, would be referred to Elevate for additional careers advice and guidance.
- Virtual school were working with a Champion Higher to provide support for Year 12 and Year 13 students destined for university.
- An alumni group was set up for former care leavers who have been to university to give advice and guidance to those in year 10 and 11 with aspirations to go to University themselves.
- the Virtual School had arranged visits to Clifford Chance, a leading multi-national law firm based in London. Young people were given the opportunity to speak with law professionals and tour the offices and facilities available to staff. This gave them a chance to see the variety of jobs available in large companies such as security, secretarial, reception jobs that they may not have considered.
- Study Higher, a partnership of universities, further education colleges and other stakeholders, was working with the Virtual School to offer a program (Future Pathways) of activities exploring FE, HE, and apprenticeships through workshops and visits, over the course of the academic year. It was a roll on roll off program that started in September 2023. Recent highlight of this was a trip to Mercedes and gave them a different perspective of jobs in a large company.
- Work has taken place with John Lewis since 2022 who had developed a Job Ready Programme which included a series of face-to-face sessions aimed to support care leavers in becoming ready for the world of work. This continued to grow resulting with some young people getting jobs as a result of work experience.
- Something on that virtual school is looking at and that would require further work is the provision of support for children who haven't gone through the social care system but who are being looked after by other family members as they form part of the vulnerable group who share similar experiences to CLA.
 - A question about this was raised, how is awareness of these children raised?
 - In response it was noted that this was highlighted through difficulties in achieving qualifications in school. Noting school refusers, especially those refusing to go to exams and these individuals would be picked up by the virtual school and Elevate. It was also explained that tuition was brought in in 2024 to help NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) CLA achieve post 16 maths and English qualifications.
 - In response to a question about Sandhurst school and careers advice it was confirmed that as they had pulled out of the provision by Advisor they had approached Elevate who would be providing additional support to them as a one off basis for a year.
 - In response to a question about how young people, especially those hard to reach, were engaged with the interventions provided it was noted that wrap around mentoring was a solution. Whilst the funding for this wasn't available through the Virtual School it was something that Social Care could provide. It was also pointed out that the tutoring provision for CLA would provide an opportunity for young people to build a relationship of trust through stability and consistency with the tutors which would result in positive results that would encourage them to achieve qualifications.

Transition coordinator, Education and Learning presented some slides about Elevate covering the following points:

- Since the Connexion service that was available in the early 2000's (that provided support with careers advice alongside other barriers to progressing such as education, housing, health, relationship, drugs) disbanded careers

advice became the responsibility of schools for young people. The National Careers Service was created for adults.

- Elevate was introduced as an in-house function for Bracknell Forest in 2019.
- The aims of Elevate service are to improve the lives of the Boroughs most disadvantaged and vulnerable young people through the provision of careers education known as CIAG (careers, information, advice and guidance). To also encourage self-belief, increase knowledge about a range of careers and explore alternative qualifications available.
- They primarily provide careers information for 16 to 18 year olds but also work with schools as part of prevention to help those who have been identified as being at risk of need, and would then work with individuals up to age 25. If the young person was a care leaver or if they had previously had an EHCP support would be provided. This support would involve one to one careers advice sessions, both with the individuals themselves or with their family/parents if they wanted them involved. Elevate would help with looking for job vacancies, at college courses, apprenticeships, alternative pathways and preparation for interviews.
- All Elevate careers advisers had the Level 6 QCF Diploma in Career Guidance and Development. Elevate careers advisers used a range of resources and websites to provide careers information, advice and guidance.
- The Elevate Me website had lots of information on how to write a CV, how to search and apply for job vacancies, and useful tips for preparing for an interview. Referrals, from professionals, parents or the young person themselves could also be made to Elevate via the Contact tab.
- Careers Information referred to the provision of factual information which related to learning and careers, but without exploring the relative pros and cons of the different options. Information could be imparted verbally by an adviser, by printed material and the internet.
- Careers Guidance involved in-depth appointments, or more likely a series of sessions between the adviser and the learner, which in between time allowed the learner the opportunity to carry out their own independent research and to reflect upon their options.
- It was noted that there was a grey area between EET (In Education, Employment and Training) and NEET (Not In Education, Employment and Training) where a young person could be in employment but not receiving any training.
- Elevate had statutory reporting duties which are the September Guarantee and the Annual Activity Survey.
 - The September Guarantee helped LAs fulfil their duty to provide education and training to young people by ensuring they have successfully secured an appropriate offer of post-16 education or training.
 - The purpose of the Annual Activity Survey was to establish young people's post-16 destinations and confirm whether they took up their September Guarantee offer and entered further education or training.
- In order to fulfil these statutory duties, Elevate requested from schools the intended (May), and then the actual (September), post-16 destinations of year 11 and year 12 pupils. Additionally, so they could continue to track the participation of young people and offer support if needed, they also requested basic information of name, date of birth and address, and additional information of email addresses and telephone numbers.
- Elevate Bracknell Forest was not a recruitment agency and did not advertise job vacancies, but they do have an awareness of the types of jobs in the local area.

- Elevate did not offer universal careers provision in schools, i.e. a career appointment for every pupil. Elevate did provide targeted CIAG in schools for those pupils with significant RONI (Risk of Neet) and those with significant barriers. They would work with schools to identify indicators that may suggest a pupil might become NEET. Preventative work with young people from Year 9, 10 and 11 before they get to post 16 could also take place.
- Work had taken place with Storry Group to provide 1-2-1 mentoring and industry specific 5-week programmes to the NEET cohort, the goal to support the hardest to reach NEET to gain confidence, improve their mental health and ultimately re-engage in EET. The programme had been running since December 2023 and ended in October 2024. They had nearly 150 young people over the last 12 months that used the program with positive results.
- If a young person missed out on CIAG due to missing school then they could be referred to Elevate.
- Data around the September Guarantee, participation data and those with EHCP's was shared.

The following responses were provided to questions:

- Young people from the age of 13- 18 could be referred to Elevate. Young people up to the age of 25 can be referred if they are a Care leaver or have an EHCP.
- Elevate didn't undertake a lot of work with over 18's due to the more specialist services provided by the National Careers Service for that age group.
- Young people up until the age of 18 should be gaining qualifications or training not just in paid employment.
- Child missing education (CME) was noted as a term used for young people up to year 11 who weren't in education. In response to a question around how these young people were managed to prevent them falling into the NEET category it was explained that from the perspective of CLA they would be worked with on an individual basis to find appropriate provision for them. EHCP's for CLA were noted as problematic due to the delays of transferring these if a young person moved out of the borough. The access to education facility provided help. Tracking systems via Studybugs was able to monitor attendance and wellbeing of pupils.
- Tracking young people once they had gone to college was done via a data sharing agreement with colleges and also other local authorities. If young people weren't in College they would be followed up using emails, phone calls, text using census data from schools.

10. **Update from the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People**

Cllr Bailey was unable to attend this meeting so an update was provided by Assistant Director Education and Learning. Cllr Bailey would be invited back to attend a panel meeting at a later date.

Assistant Director Education and Learning provided an overview of the process of the school journey for those with EHCP's and the transition between the key stages from starting school through to secondary school was provided. The key points relating to post 16 included:

- Once a young person with an EHCP reached post 19 there would be plans in place to see if their educational outcomes had been met.
- Once a young person leaves education for a job or to go to university their EHCP doesn't continue. If however they enter a supported internship the plan would continue until the post became permanent

The following responses were provided to questions:

- If a young person stopped their university course or job and wanted to get their EHCP plan reinstated they would need to reapply for it. This however wasn't a situation that had ever happened.
- Destination data of school leavers was tracked by schools.
- Measurement of progression, whilst clear in terms of an academic route, was more difficult for non-academic routes and it was hard to specify a definition for progression. The importance of addressing the availability of level one, two and three courses was noted to enable people to access and progress. It was acknowledged that there are multiple routes available for young people to progress.

CHAIR