

# Education Skills and Growth Overview and Scrutiny Panel Recommendations Report

## Transition from education to employment review

### Reason for the review

This review set out to look at whether children and young people in Bracknell Forest have suitable assistance to make good and timely career choices after secondary school. The panel also wanted to understand what support was available for the most vulnerable in the borough and those with SEND support.

“This review has highlighted many positive aspects of support for young people in the borough who are transitioning from education to employment. The panel took the opportunity to scrutinise the work undertaken by Elevate, the Virtual school, the careers hub, the Bracknell Forest skills hub and a secondary school within the borough and were impressed with the valuable careers support and guidance provided. However, an important area that requires continued development is to increase engagement with local companies and improve the numbers of apprenticeships available to meet demand, specifically to increase the provision of levels 1 and 2 apprenticeships. We believe our recommendations within this report will help address this and further enhance the opportunities for young people in the borough so they can make good career choices after leaving school.”



Councillor Watts

Chair: Education Skills and Growth Overview and Scrutiny Panel

### Recommendations

1. The Cabinet invites the principal of Garth Hill College and local skills partners to develop a forum between head teachers, heads of sixth forms and sixth form careers leads. The goal of this forum is to facilitate collaboration and sharing of information and ideas relating to careers and opportunities for young people transitioning from education to employment.  
Review in 6 months.
2. If recommendation 1 is approved and implemented, and a forum is developed, the Elevate team should present an annual report to the forum highlighting destination data for those in years 12 and 13. This would highlight how many young people are Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) across the borough, to inform and develop ways to continue to reduce these numbers.  
Review in 6 months.

3. That the skills hub be supported to continue to increase engagement with local companies to provide greater numbers of apprenticeships to meet demand, specifically to increase the provision of level 1 and 2 apprenticeships to 150, based on the current need identified. That a performance update is published on a 6 monthly basis and also shared with the re-developed forum as per recommendation 1. This recommendation is dependent on the extension of the funding for the skills hub beyond March 2025.  
Review in 12 months.
4. That the cabinet ensures communication to each school, relating to the value of developing and keeping an up-to-date register of companies offering work experience. They should ensure that schools are aware that [Learning to Work](#) can help manage placements for local schools. This recommendation can be monitored through feedback from the forum proposed in recommendation 1.  
Review in 12 months

## Background Information and local context

There are various options available to young people relating to the transition from education to employment. The education skills and growth panel wanted to investigate if children and young people have support to make good and timely career choices after secondary school. The panel heard from the following with specific focus on what options and opportunities are available for young people:

- The virtual school
- Elevate
- Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)
- Cabinet member for economy and regeneration who provided an update about Bracknell Forest Skills Hub

All these organisations provide various levels of support and options for young people, schools and local businesses and have an interest in the success and progression for young people moving on from education into employment.

Speaking directly with young people and hearing from the principal and assistant principal from Garth Hill College, who were keen to be involved, also provided insightful and valuable evidence that was used to develop recommendations within this report.

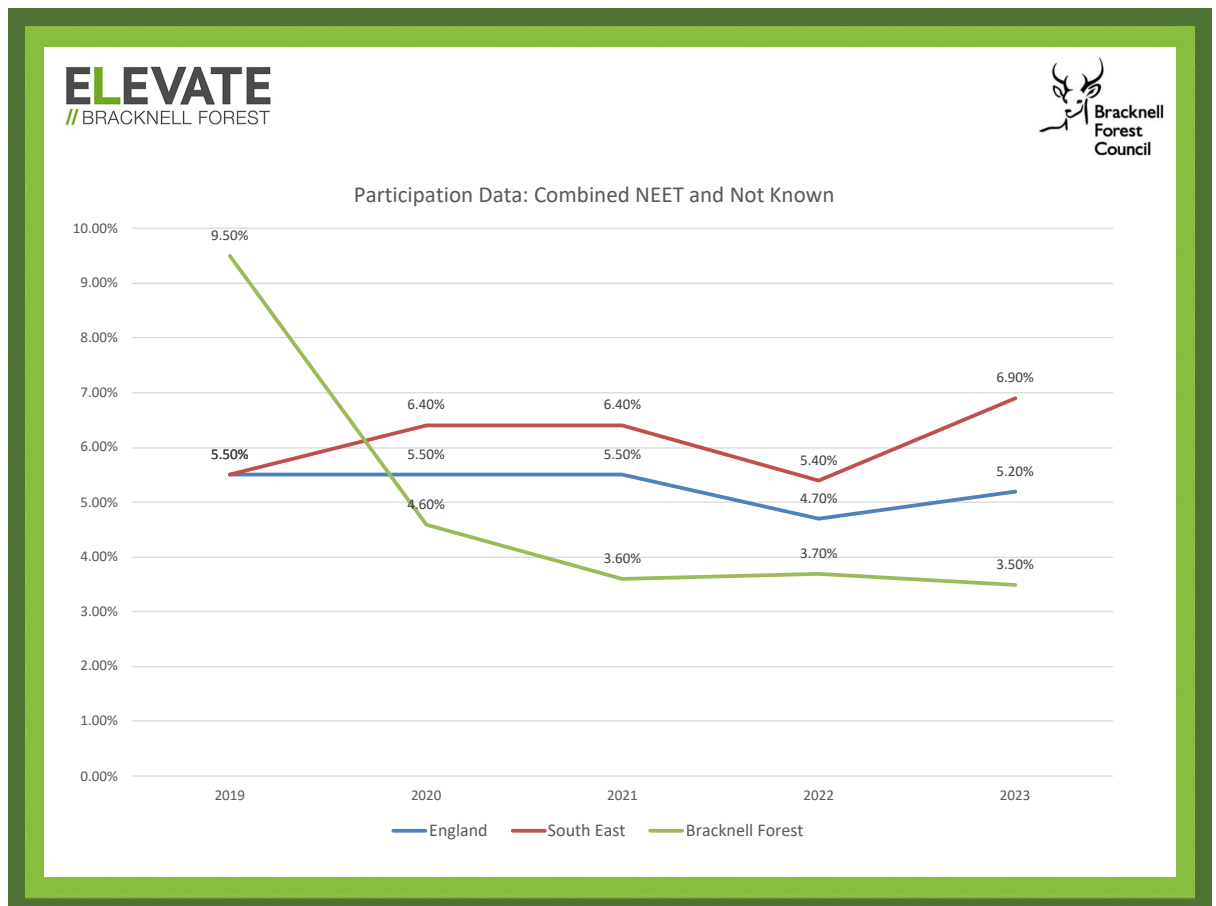
## Good Practice

During the review many areas of good practice were identified. Careers advice and guidance across schools and colleges in the borough is strong with extensive support and information provided in person and via online resources. There is specific provision for care leavers and those with an education, health, and care plan (EHCP).

Key points identified were:

- Young people at Garth Hill College were keen to share their positive experiences of careers support which included unlimited access to 1-1 support with a career's co-ordinator, webinars and Unifrog a specialist careers platform website.
- Development of links with local businesses to address skills gaps and provide apprenticeships is in place.

- Positive and continued work is in place with young people who are or are at risk of becoming NEET to identify barriers and encourage and support their career development and progression.
- Good support and tracking of data are in place for Children Looked after (CLA) and those with SEND. This has contributed to Bracknell Forest avoiding the national and regional trend of an increase in NEETs and Not Knowns and has instead gradually reduced the percentage, as shown in the graph below.



## Review Findings

### **Elevate and the Virtual School**

The Elevate service aims to improve the lives of the borough's most disadvantaged and vulnerable young people through the provision of careers education known as CIAG (careers, information, advice and guidance). They encourage self-belief, increase knowledge about a range of careers and explore alternative qualifications available. Elevate also provide targeted CIAG in schools for those pupils with significant RONI (Risk of Neet Indicator) and those with significant barriers. They work with schools to identify indicators that may suggest a pupil might become NEET.

The virtual school supports education outcomes for CLA through educational interventions, but also by addressing broader issues that might impact on their attainment such as the psychological factors of attachment and trauma, relationships, and mental health. They act as a key link to bring together partnerships across agencies working with the child/young person including, schools, social care, health and SEND services.

As part of their work Elevate collect data through the annual activity survey which needs to be completed and submitted to the Department of Education by 31 January each year. The purpose of the annual activity survey is to establish young people's post-16 destinations and confirm whether they took up their September guarantee offer and entered further education or training.

Additional reporting duties throughout the year include:

- Monthly tracking and reporting of the NEET cohort (years 12 to 13)
- Tracking and reporting on young people who have left education (years 12 to 13)
- Reporting on the destinations of the SEND cohort until the age of 25 or when their EHCP has ceased.
- Tracking of young people on apprenticeships or in employment with or without training.

Panel members agreed there was a lot of high-quality data available but felt it would be beneficial if the visibility of this could be increased by sharing it with schools. This was addressed by recommendation 2, that if recommendation 1 is approved and implemented, and a forum is developed the Elevate team should present an annual report to the forum highlighting destination data for those in years 12 and 13

The virtual school work with local businesses such as John Lewis and have developed a Job Ready Programme which includes a series of face-to-face sessions aimed to support care leavers in becoming ready for the world of work. This continues to grow and has resulted with some young people getting jobs as an outcome of the work experience.

Online tools such as Morrisby are used by the virtual school. This is a careers platform used to widen participation and raise aspirations, specifically for children looked after (CLA). Morrisby involves a simple set of questions to provide an 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.

### **Careers Hub/Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)**

The careers hub is run by a team of seven people including the strategic hub lead, operational hub lead and enterprise co-ordinators who work with schools. Enterprise advisors are volunteers who come from businesses and provide support to schools, colleges and the wider network. Reducing numbers of NEET is a key target of their work.

Feedback from young people is sought via a new questionnaire, the Future Skills Survey with questions around their understanding of apprenticeships and their next transition. At the time of this review four schools had completed this but results data was not yet available.

Level 2-7 apprenticeships are available but it was noted that there was a lack of level 1 apprenticeships across Berkshire. Whilst a lack of funding is an issue the careers hub is looking at ways to collaborate with local authorities and aiming to increase the network of providers.

### **Feedback from local schools**

The panel considered evidence from some schools within the borough, the following key points were noted:

- All schools provided in house advice from a level 6 qualified careers advisor.
- Careers advisors in schools found value from using the 8 Gatsby benchmarks of career guidance as a guide to key deliverables. These benchmarks are:

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
- Careers guidance was delivered through various ways including assemblies, workshops, visits from local industries, bespoke lessons, advertisement of opportunities, CV building and mock interview support and running internal careers fairs.
  - The importance of developing personalised careers guidance for students was acknowledged.
  - A small group of young people provided feedback and were keen to share positive experiences of support they are given whilst making decisions about the future careers and options after school. They felt supported and knew where to go to find further information.
  - Concern was raised by pupils about a lack of options available for work experience, specifically during year 10. This was something the panel felt should be addressed and links to recommendation 4, that the cabinet ensures communication to each school, about the value of developing and keeping an up-to-date register of companies offering work experience. They should ensure that schools are aware that [Learning to Work](#) can help manage placements for local schools.

It was noted whilst speaking with the principal and vice principal of Garth Hill College that it would be beneficial to re-develop a forum, that was in place pre-covid. This would improve connections with other schools and develop collaborative working to continually inform and develop careers provision and guidance for young people in Bracknell Forest. This information was used to develop recommendation 1, to re-develop a forum between head teachers, head of sixth forms and sixth form careers leads.

### **Bracknell Forest Skills Hub**

The skills hub was launched in September 2024 and is hoping to receive a further year's funding to continue work beyond 31 March 2025 when current funding ends. It has been developed so that feedback from young job seekers, around the types of work and apprenticeships they are looking for can be fed back to the colleges and local businesses. It provides support for job seekers, training providers and Bracknell based businesses, forming links between all three groups.

Since the launch there has been a lot of interest with 41 out of 60 expected businesses attending. Three training providers are fully engaged with a further three looking into this. Three businesses are fully engaged with one apprenticeship programme in progress.

Engaging local business and training providers is an important step in making sure young people can be provided with suitable options to transition from education to employment, especially with the provision of apprenticeships which has been identified in this review as an area that needs improvement. This information supports recommendation three which is for the skills hub to continue to increase engagement with local companies to provide greater numbers of apprenticeships to meet demand, specifically to increase the provision of levels 1 and 2 apprenticeships.

## Financial Considerations

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

## Review Panel

Councillor Barnard (vice-chair)

Councillor Frost

Councillor Gaw

Councillor Penfold

Councillor Smith

Councillor Thompson

Councillor Watts (chair)

Victoria Stageman (parent governor  
representative)

## Contributors to the review

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Lorraine Peterson, Virtual School Headteacher, Education and Learning