

# Engaging all young people



Education, Employment and  
Training Strategy  
Leicestershire County Council

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## Foreword – The Road to Excellence

Leicestershire County Council believes that all children and young people have the ability to achieve excellence. The Council is committed to high quality evidence-based practice, and strong and effective management oversight. The strategy is set out in the Continuous Improvement Plan 2017-20 (Appendix 1) and includes key focus areas that have direct relevance to this Strategy:

- Consistently good services for children and their families
- Timely and proportionate way to bring about better outcomes
- Enable families, when safe to do so, to successfully parent their children
- Provide good quality care when children need to be looked after
- Robust commissioning and contract compliance

In the last ten years, the Council has invested in careers advice and guidance for 16 to 18 year olds through targeting young people who are most at risk of not participating in education, employment or training (NEET). It has had made a significant impact on many young people's lives, but we continue to be concerned about the most disadvantaged and vulnerable young people including:

- Children in care and those who have left care
- Young parents
- Young people involved in offending
- Young people with Special Education Needs
- Homeless young people



## **Leicestershire is the best place to live for children and families**

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This plan confirms our determination to work across departments and agencies to improve the wellbeing and educational outcomes for the most vulnerable young people in Leicestershire by actively and passionately shaping their learning and work experiences. Creating opportunities will be at the heart of what we do. This is a stubborn challenge for the county which requires specific attention if we are to achieve our vision:

### **What will success look like?**

- NEET will be 3% or below across all young adults aged 16-19
- Vulnerable groups of young adults aged 16-19 who are NEET will be 9% or below
- The known destinations of all young adults aged 16-18 will be 95% or above

## Principles – aspirations, engagement and collective responsibility

The strategy sets out a renewed focus to improve young adults' choices of education and training by *enhancing their aspirations and ambitions* for education attainment and engagement in employment. In doing so, the strategy recognises both the need to support those vulnerable young people who are finding it difficult to engage in employment and training and early intervention to support those at risk of experiencing disadvantage in later life.

### NEET

Not being in education, employment and training is a major predictor of low income, teenage parenthood, depression and poor physical and mental health, and for some older vulnerable young people, such as Care Leavers, vulnerability escalates if there is no clear access to support and provision.

***Engagement*** in learning and educational attainment is critical if young people are to make a success of their lives.

Evidence shows that being in education, employment or training between the ages of 16 and 18 is a major predictor of later employment and feeling confident. The Local Authority has a duty under the Education Act 1996, to secure sufficient suitable education and training provision for all young people in their area who are over compulsory school age but under 19 or aged 19 to 25 and for whom an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan is maintained or are Leaving Care.

We know that within Leicestershire the vulnerable groups post 16 can feel more isolated because of the withdrawal of services and that this impacts on their ability to engage in EET.

The NEET strategy must be about *co-operation, co-ordination*, multi-agency and inter-County Council Department working, and *collective accountability*. For children and young people deemed most vulnerable, there is a defined role for early help provision, children's social care, youth offending services, education providers, housing providers and health provision.

## Overarching Aims

The overarching aims of the strategy's approach are to target vulnerable groups and:

- Stem the flow into NEET for vulnerable learners – prevention rather than cure.
- Raise children's aspirations, self-esteem, confidence and self-belief and ensure those working with them have high aspirations for, and high expectations of them.
- Have a system-wide focus on ambitions for vulnerable young people, and ownership of the pre- and post-16 EET agenda.
- Position NEET reduction as one of the key indicators for measuring pre- and post-16 systems' success across all service areas.

Our strategy needs to address both pre-16 and post-16 areas of education, providing consistent and effective support across all years and phases of education for the most vulnerable children and young people.

Most children and young people will receive the support they need to find out about, engage with and sustain education, employment or training opportunities through education providers. Where additional advice and support is required, education providers will facilitate this.

For vulnerable groups, there needs to be an increased focus on a systemic approach – including harnessing the commitment and passion those working closest to young adults, such as foster carers and other carers in promoting general wellbeing and stability in all aspects of the child or young person's life.

## Identification of Target Groups

Young people in the following vulnerable groups are significantly more likely to be NEET in Leicestershire than those in the general cohort, although those with special educational needs are statistically less likely to be NEET than those in the other vulnerable groups. The following children and young people represent the target group deemed most vulnerable and are the focus of this strategy:

- Looked after Children
- Care Leavers
- Teenage Parents
- Young Offenders
- Young people with Special Education Needs, Learning and/or Disabilities
- Young Carers
- Homeless Young People

## Background - Understanding the NEET Group

Leicestershire has a headline figure of 292 (2.2%) (April 2019) young people between the ages of 16 and 18 who are NEET, living in Leicestershire. This statistic represents a wide range of circumstances. For some young people being NEET is a finite transitional phase, ending in a positive outcome. For others NEET is a symptom of disadvantage and disengagement in earlier years and indicates a lifelong disengagement from actively participating in and benefitting from a relatively prosperous county.

National research by York University in 2010 suggests that there is a reasonable expectation that one in six young people who are NEET will never secure long-term employment, with the average individual lifetime public finance cost of a young person who is NEET at £56,300 equating to £12 billion across all young people who are NEET. The total associated loss to the economy is just over £22 billion.

The National Audit Office report highlighted three sub groups in the NEET cohort:

- **Open to Learning** - Made the wrong choice; awaiting start date for a more suitable option, short term course/job has come to an end. Likely to re-engage in the short-medium term. Generally low level support needed.
- **Undecided** – Unsure what to do or dissatisfied with the available options. Likely to participate in education or training. Start courses but do not complete them.
- **Sustained NEET** – Unlikely to re-engage in the short term without interventions. Often have negative school experience and low levels of qualifications. Can face multiple barriers to progression into Education Employment or Training (EET).

The strategy presents an analysis of the NEET group, recognising that definition is important to determine where our effort and resources should be targeted. In reality the NEET status represents a dynamic group whilst the overall numbers of NEET remain broadly static month by month, many of the actual individuals within the group are changing at a rapid rate, but that within this there is a core cohort that does not change over time.

The sub groups we know are most likely to be or become NEET are Care Leavers, young carers, young offenders, young parents and young people with learning and/or disabilities.

## The importance of education and support for children younger than 16

Wide ranging action is needed across education and wider children's services to improve the educational experience of children most at risk of disaffection and under achievement and of leaving school with few or no qualifications.

For children and young people deemed most vulnerable, there is a defined role for early help provision, children's social care, youth offending services, education providers, housing providers and health provision.

Areas of dependency for the success of this strategy include:

- The provision of strong and sustainable education places
- A passionate and robust Educational Providers
- An emotional wellbeing support pathway
- An effective Youth Offending, Children in Care and Care Leavers Service
- Well supported and confident foster carers and parents, who understand the importance of child development and attachment needs.



*"I don't think I could do it if it wasn't for my friends,"  
Izzy (learner).*

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## **The importance of education, employment, training and support for young people aged 16 and older**

Creating opportunities for children and young people who are vulnerable and disadvantaged, will be at the heart of what we do. This driving ambition will be evident in individual providers and manifest in our collective working.

Some children, their families or carers will benefit from a holistic, co-ordinated assessment of need so that they receive the support they need, when they need it, through close working relationships with trusted professionals. Other children or young people will require more intensive support, over longer periods through close working relationships with professionals they know and more specialist provision. Cooperation and collaboration will be essential to ensure that the child or young person experiences consistent and tenacious support. The views of the child or young person will inform the support that is offered.

For these vulnerable groups, education providers will be key agencies in identifying risk and alerting other professionals to escalating need. A coordinated, agreed plan will set out the next steps to promote stability and engage with education, employment or training.

Good quality careers advice should continue into post-16 setting, ensuring that the young person, his or her carers and professionals have the knowledge and skills to offer the best support and encouragement.

The local authority will monitor the progress of learners beyond age 16 in order to ensure good progress of individual young people and identify those at risk of becoming NEET. This monitoring will inform the Implementation Plan underpinning this Strategy and will be reviewed annually.

# More about Vulnerable Groups - Children in Care (Looked after Children)

## Scope

Looked After Children and Care Leavers (0-25 years).

## Actions to reduce and prevent NEET amongst Looked After Children/Care Leavers

**NEET rates for children in care and care leavers are much higher in comparison to their peers both locally and nationally.** Figures fluctuate across the seasons but tend to increase as young people get older.

**CFS must implement an agenda of NEET prevention and reintegration to EET,** raising the aspirations of looked after children of all ages from primary through post-16 into adulthood.

- **We must** provide information about educational opportunities and encourage and support access to relevant guidance.
- **We must** have appropriately trained stakeholders with relevant knowledge and a commitment to providing a varied and comprehensive package of support.
- **We must** deploy all resources currently available in the most efficient and effective manner.
- **We must** commission to cover gaps in provision and monitor impact efficiently to ensure good success rates and value for money.

## Issue

Lack of basic information about children's existing and developing interests and skills. Children may have little knowledge and understanding of the opportunities awaiting them later in life.

## Action

Information to be supplied at and from:

- Personal Education Plan meetings (PEP)
- Participation events
- Care leaver PAs
- Children In Care Council (CICC)
- Supporting Young People After Care (SYPAC)

- Children's Rights Officers

Recorded by Virtual School in order to tailor specific participation opportunities that engage and motivate them and promote educational aspirations.

### **Issue**

Children in care have not had parental support to guide them into Post-16 EET and, in care, may not have knowledgeable support to access information.

### **Action**

Carers and PAs to be trained to support young people with informed advice about career pathways

- ASDAN training for foster carers to be involved, particularly in modules 8 & 9
- Information in fostering newsletter to include: how to support choices and career planning – attendance at college open days and participation events.
- VS website links, supporting young people through FE/ HE, including financial advice, sources of funding, pastoral support and accommodation.

Continue to promote REACH events

### **Issue**

LAC-focussed careers events and information is not widely available and carers do not always know which events to attend

### **Action**

Arrange a biennial IAG careers fair with local businesses and education providers who offer visits, work experience, internships and apprenticeships specifically for LAC (and PLAC).

Event proposal to go to DMT for funding and to be commissioned from partner provider. Event will raise the aspirations of children and young people and broaden their employment horizons, promote taster opportunities, work experience, mentoring, exploring entrepreneurial options, role models and inspiring speakers.

Collaborate with City VS to broaden audience and investigate LCFC Community Trust participation (to provide venue)

### **Issue**

Statutory school careers guidance sometimes does not enable children to make informed subject choices.

Some children are more at risk of NEET than others

## **Action**

Challenge schools in relation to statutory individualised input for vulnerable groups.

Seek agreement with schools to collaborate on facilitating early individual support/intervention and encourage schools to commission additional careers advice to complement and build on their own input and act as catch-up for new entries to care.

Work with schools and colleges and other post-16 providers to identify 'at risk of NEET' in order to target them for additional support to participate in education or training and make positive and well-informed choices.

Schools to be challenged on quality of impartial advice for individual LAC in PEPs

## **Issue**

Some Year 11s are unable to identify post-16 destinations and risk ending up NEET, leading to high Post-16 levels of NEET of CIC and care leavers.

## **Action**

Some Year 11 PEPs to be attended by careers advisor and where necessary deliver individualised and ongoing support at school in order to identify destinations and support transition. SENA and Careers Service to be invited to attend Y11 PEPs as appropriate

## **Issue**

Young people do not access work experience and will not be given the chance to learn about employer expectations.

## **Action**

Identify partner agencies and commission summer holiday work experience through partners for Years 10 and Year 11.

Identify funding for work experience arrangements.

Work with Local Authority Employment Broker Service, National Citizenship Service, Duke of Edinburgh and Princes Trust, Talent Match, employability study programmes.

## **Issue**

NEETs remain so throughout Years 12 and 13, into Year 14 as they fall out of education (not attending) and do not want to engage in alternatives leading to high levels of care leaver NEET

## **Action**

CFS-wide strategy identifying care leavers:

- at risk of NEET
- EET but with potential to drop out
- without qualifications

EET panel to discuss individual cases and implement an action plan for each.

Provide a menu of provisions that deliver qualifications, employability skills, including mentoring opportunities and list of course start dates e.g. adult learning.

Liaison with Job Centre Plus in respect to job clubs / employment searches.

Careers Service young people action plans to be discussed at PEP meetings

## **Issue**

Leicestershire children in care and care leavers resident outside Leicestershire and at high risk of NEET may not have the same opportunities to access careers advice as their peers in Leicestershire

## **Action**

Local careers service to be accessed by LAC and care leavers living in other authorities.

Other careers services to be notified of Leics. children and care leavers in their areas who at risk of, or are, NEET.

Communication re young people moving back to Leicestershire and smooth transition to Leicestershire services

## **Issue**

Lack of opportunities for entry into manual / industrial traineeships / apprenticeships

## **Action**

Develop opportunities to access traineeships/ apprenticeships manual/ industrial/ clerical etc. (in-house and external).

- Proposal (through members) to hold a promotion event to publicise barriers to CiC/care leavers, inviting local industry to attend.
- Extension of LCC ring-fenced apprenticeships for care leavers
- Link with district councils to get their engagement with ring-fencing apprenticeships to care leavers

- Work with LCC contractors to promote opportunities within industry
- Sign-post Care Leaver Covenant to potential signatories to sign up
- Sign-post care leavers and their PAs to local signatories and check the opportunities offered

### **Issue**

Care leavers may not have current CVs or be able to produce one quickly enough to satisfy timeframe of application process

### **Action**

PAs to ensure all care leavers have an up to date CV lodged with the VS.

Start with NEET and looking for EET, ASDAN modules 8 and 9

Promote the online Get Set careers resource during PEPs. EIOs to check if young people have CVs at PEPs, CVs to be uploaded onto Mosaic by PAs

### **Issue**

Employers may not have the knowledge and understanding of issues affecting care leavers and consequently may not offer the right support to ensure apprenticeships and work placements are successful

### **Action**

Publicise the Care Leaver Covenant ([MyCovenant.org.uk](http://MyCovenant.org.uk)) with local businesses by engaging with the Spectra organisation to ask them to present the covenant to local business forums. Training to employers who offer apprenticeship. Employer Care Leaver grant from Levy could support companies to attend our training.

# More about Vulnerable Groups - teenage parents

## Scope

Parents under 21 and their children who live in Leicestershire (All levels of the wider workforce working with children, young people and families in Leicestershire).

## Actions to reduce and Prevent NEET amongst Teenage parents

Public health commissions the Children and Family Service to co-ordinate the Teenagers with Babies Action Group (TBAG) Meetings (there is a TBAG group in every District/Borough within the County).

## Aims of the Service

1. Ensure early access of support for young parents/parents-to-be.
2. Support the development and maintenance of seamless support pathways for young parents to ensure their engagement with appropriate services and a reduction in negative outcomes
3. Improve access of educational opportunities for young parents and improve the proportion of teenage parents that are in education, employment and training.

## Outcomes

- More robust data on the young parent cohort
- More robust referral routes and support packages between agencies, with direction to Care to Learn
- Increased engagement and accountability of all partners – a shared focus and aspiration for progression of young parents in to EET (Education, Employment and Training)
- Work with partners in localities to identify gaps in the local service offer and how to address these.
- Case management approach to work with partners to achieve consistent, seamless support pathways for the specific young parent cohort discussed at the meetings.
- Support the facilitation of knowledge, insight and data to enable the monitoring of progress in regards the engagement and support of young parent's in Leicestershire.
- Young parents have access to, and engage readily with, information about local services in their areas and know how and when to access them.

- Quarterly data and annual summary reports on TBAG Data are shared with the PH Commissioner.

The reports detail:

- Overall numbers of parents in each locality (those who have given permission for data to be shared and those who haven't)
- New/existing referrals
- Age breakdown of parents
- Number of second children
- Levels of need (via RAG ratings) (broken down by age ie under and over 20)
- NEET (Not in Employment, Education and Training) and EET information
- Presenting issues
- Wider intelligence e.g. Domestic Abuse, repeat conceptions
- Information on parent's outcomes
- Qualitative case studies on the impact of the TBAG meetings.

## **More about Vulnerable Groups - young offenders**

### **Scope**

Children aged 11 – 18, supported through the Youth Offending Team (YOT) within the Children and Family Wellbeing Service.

Children within the YOT are likely to have a diverse range of needs, some of which will impact upon the offer available to them around their education, training and employment outcomes. These could include criminal behaviour, sexually harmful behaviour, SEND support and children with needs that have yet to be identified. Criminal convictions can further impede a child's learning journey.

### **Targets and Support**

The YOT are required to have children on relevant disposals actively engaged in suitable education, training and employment (ETE) when the disposal closes. This is further defined as 25 or more hours for young people of school age and 16 or more hours for those above statutory school age. Children need to remain engaged in such provision upon the closure of their statutory contact with the YOT.

Locally, the YOT aims to engage a minimum of 70% - 80% of children in education, training and employment.

In achieving this, the YOT has support from a dedicated Education Worker and Careers Advisors who focus on children. In addition, all children will have an allocated Case Manager, and some will have access to additional wrap-around support based on an assessment of their needs.

The foundations of Youth Offending Teams are built on partnership working. In relation to education, training and employment, this involved working with the LCC Inclusion Team, Inclusion Partnerships around the County, schools, colleges, alternative providers and employers.

The YOT will work to advocate for children within the remit of 'child first, offender second', recognising that stable positive pro-social identity and desistance from crime can be achieved through meaningful education, training and employment.

The YOT provide statistical data for children around their EET status to through the governance process of the Youth Justice Board and the YOS Management Board.

## **More about Vulnerable Groups - young people with Special Education Needs and Social Emotional and Mental Health needs**

### **Scope**

SEND (with EHC Plans and with support plans).

Young people with learning difficulties and disabilities including cognition and learning, communication and interaction, social emotional and mental health and sensory and / or physical difficulties.

Young people also present as being looked after, care leavers, young offenders, held under mental health legislation. Some young people will not leave their homes to engage in education.

Generic age range for SENA 0-25 years

Age range for post 16 cohort 14-25 years

Young people are educated in mainstream, area special, independent special schools, mainstream and independent specialist colleges. Some are home educated, educated in prison or alternative providers.

### **Actions to reduce and Prevent NEET amongst young people with Special Educational Needs**

- To expand the range of alternative providers for young offenders / NEET school or college refusers.

LA has developed working partnerships with Enstruct training agency to provide vocational education and realistic working opportunities for a number of young people in the category above. Staff here have experience in working with young offenders and those with challenging presentation. This opportunity is expanding this new academic year to include functional skills training and hair and beauty alongside construction and environmental studies. The Local Authority is also supporting Enstruct to develop supported internships alongside the range of work experience placements option already in place. Enstruct also uses strong links with Leicester College to enable young people to have a progression route.

The Local Authority is also working with WHM provider, traditionally used for social care packages, to provide accreditation alongside realistic learning opportunities on their farm, in their garden centre and café. This opportunity suits the needs of young people who become overwhelmed within formal educational placements,

The Local Authority has also developed partnerships with SEED and New Leaf Triangle providers, who specialise in young people with complex difficulties including communication. These providers are able to focus on developing communication skills and life skills to enable young people to make choices.

The Local Authority has long standing and successful working relationships with both local independent specialist colleges RNIB and Homefield College. The Local Authority has supported both colleges to develop a supported internship programme which has provided paid employment to some young people.

The Local Authority has supported Homefield College to develop a new provision for those young people who require vocational training and supported internship with support to develop life skills for greater independence. The Local Authority aims to have young people move into employment at an early stage rather than accessing multiple mainstream college courses.

The Local Authority has also used online school Nisai to provide education packages for young people who cannot find the GCSE courses they require in colleges. Nisai has also provided a new service to one young person that includes online learning and 25 hours per week with a mentor who supports this young person to leave the home environment and access community activities.

The Local Authority has successfully brokered hybrid package of education between mainstream and independent specialist colleges to enable skills gaps to be addressed.

Development of transition plans and transition pathway guidance.

Development of person centred planning.

Training to providers.

Use of contractor to develop supported internship options.

Inter-department working groups.

## Careers Guidance

It is recognised that careers guidance has a key role to play in supporting young people to develop effective career plans and signpost them to provision that meets their needs. The Council's Inclusion Team provides information, advice and guidance services for 16 to 18 year olds in the most vulnerable groups detailed above. In order to keep Leicestershire's NEET at 2%, other NEET young people will be given initial advice and referred to web resources.

To that end, the Inclusion Team will:

Identify which NEET young people need ongoing information, advice and guidance.

Work alongside SENA, The Wellbeing Service, the Virtual School and Social Care to provide effective Career advice.

Support the co-delivery of training for social workers and advisors for children in care, care leavers, Wellbeing Services to enable them to deliver more effective support.

Coordinate and attend multi agency panels for the most vulnerable NEET learners to address a range of needs to support a sustainable path of education, employment or training.

Homeless young people who do not fall into any other vulnerable group will be given the full range of one to one NEET support.

## Conclusions and Governance

A range of solutions are in place, but sustained action is needed. Our ambition is to continue to significantly reduce NEET by targeting the most vulnerable groups and to do so in a manner that is collaborative and engaging.

The Inclusion Manager will be the nominated senior officer leading on:

- The implementation plans for EET.
- Arranging meetings to ensure that the four respective implementation plans are effective (Children in Care and Care Leavers, Youth Offenders, SEND and Teenage Mothers).
- Engagement of schools to promote successful transition of young people in school to education, employment or training.
- Providing reports on delivery to the Senior Management Team and other governance boards.

Tony Barnard, the Virtual School Head and Angie Lymer-Cox, the Service Manager for the 16+ Team will be the nominated officers leading on the implementation plan for EET for Children in Care, Care Leavers.

The Service Manager for the Wellbeing Service with a remit for Youth Offending will be the nominated officer leading on the implementation plan for EET for young people involved in offending.

Marian Sutton, SENA Manager and Marie Harris, SEN Officer Post 16 Lead will be the nominated officers for leading on the implementation plan for EET for children and young people with disabilities. A new post and team of 3 caseworkers, 2 casework assistants and 2 administrators developed in 2017/18 to address preparing for adulthood and transition to adulthood.

The Public Health Commissioning Lead for the service for Teenage Parents is Jane Roberts. The lead for co-ordination of the TBAG meetings is Katie Herbert, Children and Family Service.

Partnership working has been agreed with DWP Jobcentre Plus and details of their offer to NEET young people in Leicestershire are shown below.

Jobcentre Plus support the full range of vulnerable customers and they have agreed the following actions to reduce and prevent NEET amongst those in vulnerable groups.

- We have set up mentoring circles, whereby, employers come and do three workshops with 18-24 year olds to give them an insight into the world of work and advice on skills and training.
- We have a schools' advisor team that work in schools offering a wide range of workshops to children and types of work, finance, interview skill,

apprenticeships etc. The team has organised two careers fairs for special schools.

- We have signed a protocol with the County Care Leaver team to enhance closer working.

