

Raising the Participation Age Strategy

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The following paper details the self assessment that was completed for the City 14-19 Progress Check, focusing on our preparations for the raising of the participation age (RPA) (page 2). It also details the subsequent response from the GOEM convened panel (pages 3-4).

Although it is disappointing that the panel did not agree with our 'amber / green' self assessment, it was made clear that the current national strategy for RPA is still developing and we were left with the impression that Local Authorities in the East Midlands were unlikely to be rated as anything other than amber / red for this self assessment.

The current position with regards to 16-18 participation, according to the latest Connexions data is as follows:

Year	% in EET	% in NEET
2009	90.4	5.7
2008	89	6.1
2007	87.7	7.3
2006	84	9.6

EET - Education, Employment & Training
 NEET - Not in Education Employment & Training

This shows a position of continued improvement as well as well as good performance in relation to the national averages and statistical neighbours. Raising the participation age is about engagement in learning however, not just a reduction of NEET and our challenges moving forward will be to:

1. Enable the young people that currently enter work without training to remain in some form of learning. This will partly depend upon legislation but will is likely to focus on increasing Apprenticeship or Apprenticeship-type provision.
2. Deliver post 16 provision that will remove the 5.7% of current cohort that become NEET as part of the wider NEET reduction strategy.
3. Deliver this extra provision within a position where budgets are likely to be declining.

4. Nottingham City Council 14-19 Progress Check Self Assessment

PI.12. Does the partnership have an effective strategy for RPA implementation and is there effective support and targeted provision for young people at risk on engagement?

Self Assessment rating: Amber / Green

The Nottingham City's 14-19 Partnership's 14-19 plan includes a series of targets and actions geared to raising the participation of 16-18 year olds as well as the NEET reduction strategy. These are monitored through the partnership structures and will feed into the CYPP. A separate NEET reduction strategy group has also met on a regular basis that is a sub group of the Children's Partnership Economic Wellbeing Group. This group works to the action plan that is within the 14-19 plan and effectively uses the specialist resources that Connexions provides to tackle NEET.

There is a good understanding of the issues facing participation and NEET within Nottingham thanks to the needs analysis work that has been commissioned to inform the 2010/11 plan and commissioning statement. Regular data on participation and NEET is made available to the 14-19 partnership through Connexions and the LSC and efforts have started to link such data in a more consistent way.

The provision in place to prevent disengagement from Key Stage 3 onwards in Nottingham is extensive, partly because of the significant proportion of young people displaying these symptoms within Nottingham. The Key Stage 4 School Engagement Strategy and the Dedicated Schools Grant for Practical and Collaborative Learning Options have been aligned with the overall approach to the PRU strategy for the City. A quality assurance framework has been developed and agreed across the City schools and providers.

Effective systems have been developed to implement the September Guarantee with strong results recorded in 2008 and further process improvements made in 2009, including the secondment of a Nottinghamshire Training Network member of staff into Connexions. Data sharing agreements are in place and working well.

Post 16 provision is generally strong, with improving success rates recorded in City Colleges and Apprenticeship providers. There remain some gaps in provision for key vulnerable groups such as learners with learning difficulties and disabilities and young offenders and these are being flagged up in the needs analysis and subsequent 14-19 planning exercise. The implementation of our Foundation Learning partnership and the agreed progression routes within this partnership for entry level/level 1 learners into post-16 should have a considerable impact on keeping young people in education. This could be essential for the most vulnerable young people that we struggle to keep in education up to 16 let alone 18.

Nottingham City Progress Checks October 2009

The East Midlands 14-19 Progress Checks Moderation Panel consisted of:

Peter Holmes, GOEM (Chair)
Sid Slater 14-19 Regional Adviser
Christine Cassell, CSA GOEM
Marcie Taylor, CSA GOEM
Helen Longland, CSA GOEM
Erica Williamson, LSC

Representatives from each of the 14-19 partnerships also participated in the Panel to enable a joint dialogue about performance, progress and the agreement of ratings.

The panel discussion focused on those categories of indicator which the DCSF guidance had specified (Indicator 12 and any qualitative indicators which the partnership had previously self assessed as 'red' or 'amber red'). However, the panel also discussed instances where the panel's assessment in 2008 had been 'red' or 'amber red' and any indicators that the partnerships had reassessed.

In the main, the panel agreed with the LA scorings, but where scores have been changed the Panel has provided comments.

Quantitative indicator ratings:

Indicator	Rating	Score
1	R	4
2	G	1
3	R	4
4a	AG	2
4b	AG	2
5a	AG	2
5b	R	4

Qualitative indicator ratings:

Ind	LA Rating	Panel Rating	Panel Score	Assessment/Issues
8	AG	AG	2	Previously assessed.
9	AG	AG	2	Previously assessed.
10	AG	AG	2	Previously assessed.
11	AG	AG	2	Previously assessed.
12	AG	AR	3	Panel downgraded the rating. Panel discussed the information provided by partnership and were encouraged to note the progress made, driven in part- by the 16-19 Transfer and which included plans to

				<p>develop a 3 year 14-19 strategic plan (which would focus on the needs of vulnerable groups learners building on the NEET reduction strategy); good progress in the sharing of data; and a strong commitment to the Diplomas across the city. However, the panel also reflected on the significant challenges involved for the partnership in meeting the RPA target and identified the following principal actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation and Attainment - key challenges in improving performance and progression (participation at 17, 5 A* to C GCSEs inc E&M, and Narrowing the Gap); • Post 16 – E2E – need to improve provision; • Foundation Learning – need to build on mapping work, increase provision and create pathway from level 1 to level 2, creating pathways to address high number of 19 year olds with no qualifications; • Apprenticeships – need to address gaps for vulnerable groups. • Development of Children’s Trust – inclusion within JISP would create opportunity to do further work, engaging the Trust Board and working to secure buy in from schools and colleges.
13	AG	AG	2	Previously assessed.
14	AG	AG	2	Previously assessed.