



## Report to CYPF Scrutiny Committee 27 Sept 2012

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**Report of:** Jayne Ludlam

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**Subject:** Raising the Age of Participation – the challenges for Sheffield and how these are being met

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**Author of Report:** Tony Tweedy, Director, LLSC (2296140)

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**Summary:** Since the formation of the Coalition in 2010, there have been a series of far reaching policy shifts that have impacted on both the course and career choices that young people make at 16. There is some evidence that these measures are beginning to alter significantly the choices that young people make at 14, 16 and 18 years of age. For instance, the number of school age students pursuing vocational qualifications is falling at a time when there is little meaningful alternative for that 20% or more of young people that are unlikely to perform well on an unremitting diet of GCSEs; the number of 16-18 year olds who are Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) remains stubbornly persistent both nationally and in Sheffield; the take up of apprenticeships remains low; and the proportion of young people that hold the qualifications necessary to progress to HE but who are choosing not to do so is rising. It becomes increasingly important therefore that young people and those, such as parents, carers, teachers and peers who influence them, are well informed and equipped from Key Stage 4 onwards with the good quality information, advice and guidance necessary to ensure that they make the right choices, to improve their chances of success and to reduce the likelihood that they will drop out of post-16 education and HE.

There are obvious educational grounds for the City Council seeking to ensure that young people make the right learning choices. The introduction of the Raising of the Participation Age now adds a statutory requirement to the local authority's drive to ensure that every 16-18 year old is in some form of meaningful education, employment or training. This paper sets out some of the key measures that are being introduced by *Learning for Life*, the city's 14-24 Learning Partnership to address the emerging challenges associated with RPA.

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**Type of item:** The report author should tick the appropriate box

Reviewing of existing policy	
Informing the development of new policy	

Statutory consultation	
Performance / budget monitoring report	
Cabinet request for scrutiny	
Full Council request for scrutiny	
Community Assembly request for scrutiny	
Call-in of Cabinet decision	
Briefing paper for the Scrutiny Committee	<b>x</b>
Other	

**The Scrutiny Committee is being asked to:**

— Scrutiny is asked to consider and comment on this report

**Background Papers:**

List any background documents (e.g. research studies, reports) used to write the report. Remember that by listing documents people could request a copy.

**Category of Report:** OPEN

Most reports to Scrutiny Committees should be openly available to the public. If a report is deemed to be 'closed', please add: **'Not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph xx of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).'**

## Report of the Director of Lifelong Learning, Skills and Communities

### **Raising the Age of Participation – the challenges for Sheffield and how these are being met**

#### **Introduction**

- 1.1 Since the formation of the Coalition in 2010, there have been a series of far reaching policy shifts that have impacted on both the course and career choices that young people make at 16. These include:
- a reaffirmation of the previous government's legislative commitment to **raise the age of participation (RPA)** in learning to 17 years of age by 2013 and 18 by 2015
  - the replacement of the Education Maintenance Allowance made available to all 16-18 year olds in learning who met the eligibility criteria with reduced **Education Bursary** provision distributed partly at the discretion of the learning provider to eligible young people
  - the transfer of responsibility for organising and delivering **Careers Guidance** for young people from local authorities to individual schools, academies and colleges from September 2012
  - the removal of funding for **Education-Business Partnerships** following the Emergency Budget
  - the affirmation by DfE that schools and academies are not required to organise **work experience** for their students in Key Stage 4 but advice to post-16 providers that this should form part of their programmes
  - the acceptance in full by the Secretary of State for Education of the **Wolf Report** including the recommendation that the curriculum up to the age of 16 should focus on traditional GCSE subjects, especially English and maths, at the expense of vocational qualifications
  - the withdrawal of the majority of, but not all, **vocational qualifications** from the list of those eligible for school performance tables at Key Stage 4 and a reduction of the points value of some of that which remains eligible
  - a drive to increase the number of **apprentices** recruited by employers and an increase in the Skills Funding Agency budget to reflect this
  - the introduction of a series of national programmes including the **Youth Contract** (DWP), **the ESF NEETs programme** (Skills Funding Agency) and **Talent Match** (the Big Lottery) designed to tackle the rising tide of NEETs and youth unemployment
  - the introduction of a charge to undergraduates of **HE course fees** up to a ceiling to £9,000 with the exception of disadvantaged students who qualify for remission
  - the announcement of **the City Deal** that, in pursuit of the localism agenda, invited cities and their city-regions to seek 'licensed exceptions' to existing national policy frameworks, funding regimes and procedures in a number of areas including skills.
- 1.2 There is some evidence that these measures are beginning to alter significantly the choices that young people make at 14, 16 and 18 years of age. For instance, the number of school age students pursuing vocational qualifications is falling at a time when there is little meaningful alternative for that 20% or more of young people that are unlikely to perform well on an unremitting diet of GCSEs; the number of 16-18 year olds who are Not in Employment, Education

or Training (NEET) remains stubbornly persistent both nationally and in Sheffield; the take up of apprenticeships remains low; and the proportion of young people that hold the qualifications necessary to progress to HE but who are choosing not to do so is rising. It becomes increasingly important therefore that young people and those, such as parents, carers, teachers and peers who influence them, are well informed and equipped from Key Stage 4 onwards with the good quality information, advice and guidance necessary to ensure that they make the right choices, to improve their chances of success and to reduce the likelihood that they will drop out of post-16 education and HE.

- 1.3 There are obvious educational grounds for the City Council seeking to ensure that young people make the right learning choices. The introduction of the Raising of the Participation Age now adds a statutory requirement to the local authority's drive to ensure that every 16-18 year old is in some form of meaningful education, employment or training. This paper sets out some of the key measures that are being introduced by *Learning for Life*, the city's 14-24 Learning Partnership to address the emerging challenges associated with RPA.

## **2. The Raising of the Participation Age**

- 2.1 The Education and Skills Act (2008) signalled that all young people would be required to remain in education or training up to the age of 17 by 2013 and to 18 by 2015. Education and training, under the Act, encompasses:
- full-time education – school, FE, home education
  - work based learning – apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships
  - part-time accredited education or training for the equivalent of one day a week if employed, self employed or volunteering for more than 20 hours.

This commitment was reinforced by the coalition government in the Spending Review and the White Paper *The Importance of Teaching*.

- 2.2 RPA also introduces destination measures recording where young people are in March in the year after they leave school or college and the proportion of a school or college's students that went on to participate in education, employment or training the year after they left that institution.

### **2.3 Sheffield's RPA Plan**

In preparation for the introduction of the RPA in 2013, the city's *Learning for Life* partnership has developed and adopted a plan that addresses those critical elements necessary to improve post-16 participation in education and training. This is based on the work that the local authority initiated in 2011/12 when it was one of the Department of Education's (DfE) RPA trial areas. Here, the local authority, working with DfE, identified those key measures seen as necessary to engage and retain in education and training those young people completing Key Stage 4. These included:

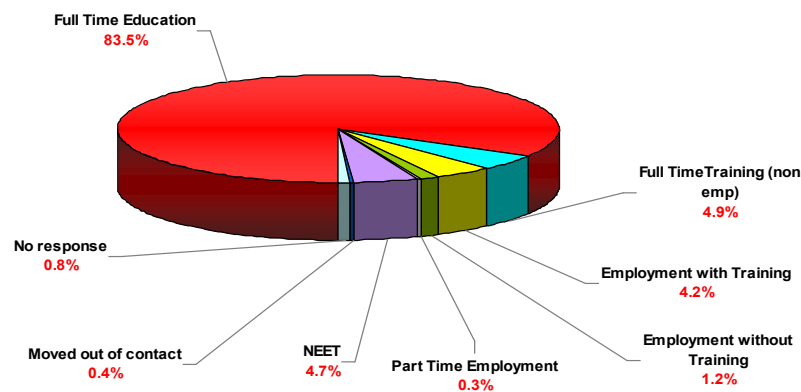
- raising the awareness of RPA and its implications
- developing a transition entitlement for those leaving school or moving from one post-16 activity to another
- understanding the cohort and its needs and aspirations
- ensuring the mix and balance of post-16 provision made available to 16-18 year olds was able to meet these needs and aspirations
- focusing on the provision of high quality, relevant and motivating post 16-provision and support for those young people who are most likely to disengage.

- 2.4 These measures have now been taken forward in the Sheffield RPA Plan (see appendix 1) and are supported by everyday practice in the city's secondary schools and academies. For instance, the RPA plan is being used as an assessment tool by schools, colleges, academies, Sheffield Futures and specialist services for young people to measure how they are each prepared for RPA in 2013, a Risk of NEET Indicator (RONI) has been adopted by institutions to help identify those young people in school who are most likely to disengage and there is collaboration between specialist services to provide improved 'wrap around' support for the most vulnerable of these learners.
- 2.5 The delivery and impact of the RPA Plan will be monitored through an RPA Steering Group that will report to the city's *Learning for Life* Partnership.

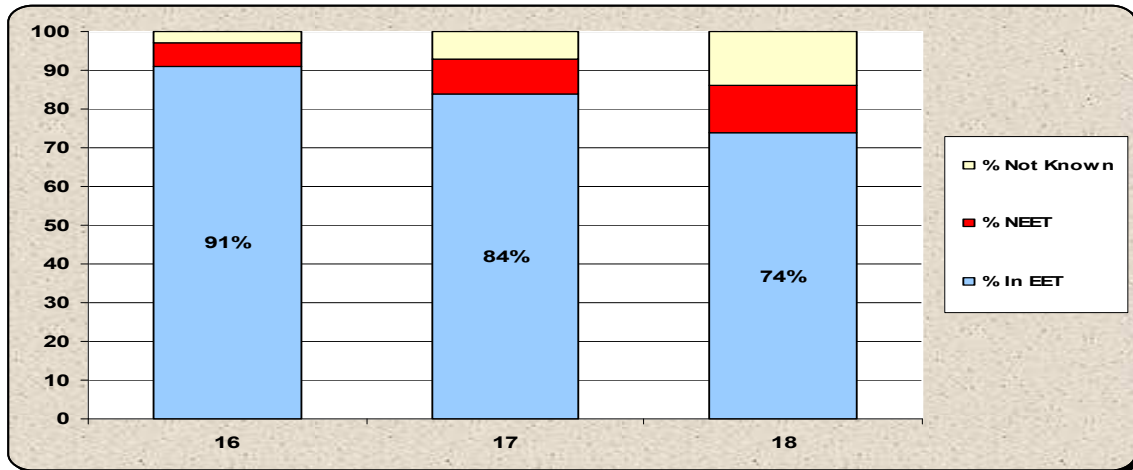
### 3. Meeting the needs of young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

- 3.1 The main challenge in meeting the statutory requirements of RPA is less about ensuring that school leavers progress to some form of post-16 education or training and more about ensuring that they are retained in meaningful activity beyond the age of 17.
- 3.2 As in most areas of the country, Sheffield's retention of young people at 16 in education or training is improving, however, by the age of 17 the number of those retained in education or training is less encouraging and the city's NEETs figures reflect this. The situation has deteriorated further by the age of 18.

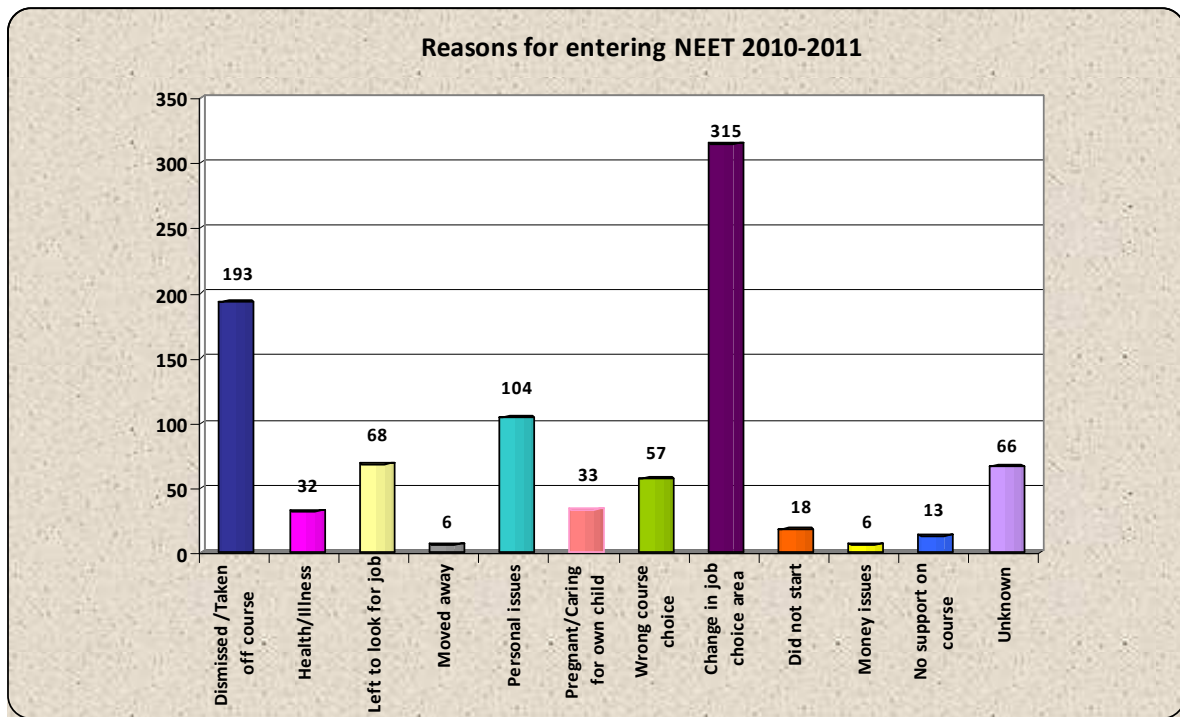
City Wide - 2011 Y11 Destinations



Sheffield 2011/12:



3.3 An in depth analysis of why young people leave post-16 provision has been undertaken. Some of the reasons are unforeseen but patterns emerge, as illustrated in the table below.



3.4 To address these issues resulting in disengagement from education employment or training, Lifelong Learning, Skills and Communities (LLSC) has commissioned a range of innovative provision from a wide selection of providers in the city under its *Future:proof* brand.

3.5 In this it has been supported through two rounds of bidding by ESF funding awarded to LLSC by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) to tackle NEETs. The programme has built up an extensive network of 33 quality assured providers across the city, and has, to date, delivered a learning or training experience to more than 1,200 16-18 year old NEETs since 2008. The providers, drawn from the public, private and third sectors, have been selected to join the commissioning framework through a robust selection procedure through which they have been required to demonstrate a track record of delivery, an

innovative approach to the needs of the NEETs cohort and high quality delivery. Providers on the framework can expect to be connected to disengaged young people wherever their specific provision is judged to be the best option for the individual.

- 3.6 The success rate of *Future:proof* is significant because the courses that can be selected from the framework allow provision to be tailored to the needs of the most challenging young people and those most likely to disengage. As a result, 65% of young people engaged by *Future:proof* either progress into mainstream provision at college, take up an apprenticeship, or move into employment with training. The SFA sees the model as a national exemplar for how to keep challenging teenagers and the most vulnerable in learning.

#### **4. Community Youth Teams: supporting young people into education, employment and training**

- 4.1 Providing good quality learning and support programmes for teenagers who have disengaged is one thing but the first task is for schools and academies to use the RONI to identify to the Community Youth Teams (CYTs) those young people most likely to disengage and who are therefore in need of early intervention and for the same teams to reconnect with school leavers who are NEET and no longer involved with the educational system.
- 4.2 Community Youth Teams (CYTs) were established in April 2012 following the redesign of all youth services and the reorganisation of Sheffield Futures. The CYTs have brought together Youth workers employed by Sheffield Futures, prevention workers from the Youth Justice Service and officers from other services including the Police, Health and the Sexual Exploitation Service. CYTs are organised as three locality-based teams (North, East & West). The teams are targeted at more vulnerable young people in need of additional support, in particular young people who are NEET or at risk of being NEET, young people engaged in behaviours that damage themselves or the communities in which they live and those who are at risk of offending. Community Youth Teams therefore play a pivotal role in reducing the number of young people who are NEET.
- 4.3 In September 2012, the CYTs introduced a new delivery model for identifying and supporting NEET young people into appropriate post-16 learning provision. A key feature of the model is the introduction of a small 'tracking' team which is dedicated to contacting young people. Teenagers who have recently become NEET and are ready to move on into a new opportunity are fast tracked into appropriate provision through close partnership working with post-16 learning providers and employers. This part of the service is delivered by Sheffield Futures at Star House. Star House also has a daily duty system where young people are able to drop in and speak to a qualified advisor who can support them into an available opportunity.
- 4.4. In addition, young people with complex needs e.g. young people who are Looked After or young people who have learning difficulties or disabilities are supported on a one-to-one basis into appropriate learning, training or employment opportunities by specialist qualified advisors.
- 4.5 The needs and aspirations of all other NEET young people are assessed by qualified advisers who provide one-to-one, or group work support which both prepares young people for moving into a new learning or employment

opportunity. This includes work to strengthen interview skills; CV writing as well as support for any wider difficulties that a young person may have which is holding them back from accessing appropriate provision. For example, a young person may access counselling or a group work programme which is aimed at building confidence and self esteem.

- 4.6 Part of the remit of Community Youth Teams is to offer informal learning opportunities through youth work provision thereby supporting the overall aim of reducing the number of NEET young people in the city. CYT workers already have a role in engaging with hard-to-reach young people who are NEET. This involves home visits to encourage and support young people back into provision. In addition, several youth clubs run by CYTs offer popular homework clubs for young people after school. The teams are also keen to develop partnerships with community-based study support providers and other learning initiatives. For example, the North Community Youth Team is currently exploring an opportunity to work with the ESCAL (Every Sheffield Child Articulate & Literate) programme as it has been recognised that youth clubs and youth support services provide informal learning settings which may be more attractive to some young people who struggle to engage in a formal school setting.
- 4.7 The CYTs recognise the value of working alongside parents and carers to support NEET young people into learning and training. As a result, the CYTs are undertaking a consultation workshop with the BME Parents Assembly in November and CYTs will be seeking parent and carer views on how they can be both involved in the work of the teams and made aware of the opportunities available for their children.

## **5. Careers Guidance (Information, Advice and Guidance)**

- 5.1 Making young people and those who have most influence over them, such as parents, carers and teachers, aware of the range of opportunities available and helping them to make the right choices with good quality and independent advice and guidance is widely recognised to be of vital importance in securing good outcomes for teenagers. Poor decision making about course choices and career paths too often leads to attendance, behaviour and attainment issues whilst young people are in education and, later, can increase the chances of unemployment.
- 5.2 There have been major policy changes with regard to Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) for young people since the advent of the Coalition. One of the first acts of the new government, following the Emergency Budget, was to dissolve the Connexions service and to remove the ring fence of youth budgets. The result was that in Sheffield, as well as all over the country, the resources made available to support youth work and IAG was reduced dramatically as part of the necessary spending reductions undertaken by local authorities.
- 5.3 Following this, the Education Act (2011) established the intention, by September 2012, to remove the responsibility and the funding for local authorities to organise universal IAG for young people and, instead, transferred the requirement to offer 'Careers Guidance' to schools and colleges. The exception to this change of roles was the continued duty for local authorities to provide targeted IAG to the most vulnerable of young people. It was this requirement that, in part, led to the creation of the CYTs.



- 5.4 The new duty on schools and colleges, from the start of this academic year, requires them to provide their learners with access to independent careers guidance. To support schools to plan for and manage their new statutory duty and to protect the interests of young people during this transfer of responsibilities, Sheffield City Council put in place transitional funding for the financial years period March 2011–March 2013 inclusive to ensure that each school could expect the continued support of a Personal Adviser provided by Sheffield Futures.
- 5.5 At the same time Secondary Heads, with the support of CYPF, tasked its Curriculum Managers Network that is made up of representative Deputy and Assistant Heads from across the city to develop both a Careers Guidance Entitlement, setting out what young people should be able to expect of any school under the new arrangements, and a self assessment framework that allows each school to gauge how far the arrangements that it is putting in place for Careers Guidance meet this entitlement and the Ofsted inspection requirements. The self-assessment asks schools to consider their readiness in terms of leadership and management, delivering the entitlement, the arrangements put in place to support the most vulnerable and those most likely to disengage and the institution's plans for staff training and continued professional development. Schools are combining this self-assessment with their use of the city's RPA plan to provide a summary of strengths, weaknesses and recommendations for action in each institution with regard to the new challenges they face in terms of the introduction of RPA and Careers Guidance.
- 5.6 The aim of the transitional funding has been to allow Sheffield Futures sufficient time to develop a fully traded service in Personal Adviser support to schools and to allow schools the time to undertake the necessary budget planning. All secondary schools and colleges have used the one day per week of Personal Adviser support made available by Sheffield Futures through the City Council's transition funding to provide face to face guidance to Year 11 students, and have been strongly encouraged to top this up with additional days of Careers Guidance support, provided by Sheffield Futures, to be met from school budgets. To date 16 (60%) of the Sheffield secondary schools have bought some form of support from Sheffield Futures but the remainder have yet to declare their intentions. As part of the transition, schools are developing consortium models in the south east (involving three 11-16 schools and a 3-16 school) and the north west (involving two 11-16 schools and an 11-18 school) to buy the services of a Sheffield Futures Personal Adviser.
- 5.7 In the academic year 2011-12, as a result of the transition arrangements, Sheffield Futures provided Personal Adviser guidance to 2,216 Year 11 students (about half the Y11 cohort) using the free day to schools funded by CYPF and supplied a further 1,105 students with Careers Guidance paid for by the schools.
- 5.8 A significant change resulting from the transfer of responsibilities, the reduction in funding and the reduced time that Personal Advisers can devote to any institution is that only a small number of schools now invite the advisers to parent evenings and options events. This is particularly concerning as, in the main, parents still have the biggest influence on the course and career choices their children make. As a consequence, CYPF and Sheffield Futures are discussing ways in which parents and young people can be encouraged to access high quality information about courses, careers and labour market

opportunities independently using the city's *Sheffield Interactive* portal [www.sheffieldinteractive.co.uk](http://www.sheffieldinteractive.co.uk).

5.9 In summary, schools have been given an additional duty that can have a considerable bearing on the outcomes and life chances of young people but without the funding previously allocated to the IAG function. They are seeking to meet this duty whilst balancing the considerable and competing demands made upon their budgets. At the same time schools and colleges will be required to play their part in delivering RPA and the extent of their success in doing so will be made transparent by the publication of destination measures for each institution. CYPF and Sheffield Futures are working with schools and colleges to provide the city-wide plans, self-assessment tools and new ways of working, such as the use of the RONI, to help them meet these challenges. In addition, both CYPF and Sheffield Futures have undertaken far reaching redesigns of their services, including the creation of multi-agency, co-located CYTs and a traded service in Personal Adviser support that can provide a more focused, effective and sustainable model of support to young people, their parents and carers and the school staff who teach and advise them.

## 6. Recommendation

Scrutiny is asked to consider and comment on this report.