

Report to:	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager
Date of Meeting:	8 December 2022

YOUNG PEOPLE CLASSED AS NOT IN EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION OR TRAINING (NEET) SCRUTINY REVIEW PANEL

1.0 Purpose of the report:

- 1.1 To note the outcome of the Young People classed as Not In Employment, Education or Training (NEET) Scrutiny Review Panel meeting held on 26 September 2022.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

- 2.1 That the outcome of the scrutiny review panel meeting be noted; and
- 2.2 That details of the impact of work taking place be reported back to the Committee in September 2023.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

- 3.1 To allow an overview of the review work being undertaken by the Committee and ensure outcomes are recorded.
- 3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? Yes/No
- 3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes/No

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

- 4.1 None.

5.0 Council priority:

- 5.1 The relevant Council priority is
- "Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience"

6.0 Background information

- 6.1 At its 7 June 2022 work-planning meeting members of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee agreed to undertake a review of the issues effecting Young People Classed As Not In Employment, Education Or Training (NEET).
- 6.2 The meeting was held on 26 September 2022 and was attended by

Councillor Rick Scott;
Ms Jo Snape, Co-opted Member; and
Ms Gemma Clayton, Co-opted Member
- 6.3 The meeting was also attended by the following Council officers;

Mr Paul Turner, Assistant Director of Children's Services
Ms Sara McCartan, Head of Adolescent Services
Mr Peter Legg, Head of Economic and Cultural Services
- 6.4 Members considered the training opportunities available to young people and how services are promoted to them. Issues facing work with young people were outlined at the meeting and included:
- 6.5 Low educational attainment – This was reported as the largest factor in young people becoming NEET. Attendance rates at secondary schools in Blackpool are below the national average and many young leave education with low or no qualifications.
- 6.6 Transience – Some young people arrive late in their education journey, having experienced a stalled education up to that point and no obligation to continue in traditional education once they had reached 18 years of age.
- 6.7 Reduction in Work Experience Opportunities – This factor had made it more difficult for those young people not suited to traditional education streams to find and gain experience in other areas.
- 6.8 Unstable domestic situation – Many young people in Blackpool live in families where they have to act as a carer to a parent or sibling, where they prioritise this role ahead of their own education. It was also highlighted that the care leavers were disproportionately regarded as NEET.
- 6.9 Employer willingness to employ NEET young people – A lack of understanding among employers regarding young people classed as NEET and especially those who are also care leavers means that many are not willing to offer opportunities to those in need.
- 6.10 Children's Services was seeking to address these issues through the wrapping around of support for young people in schools, looking to promote better attendance and improve the educational offer. The offer of greater vocational opportunities was also being promoted

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such as in the hospitality sector and construction. Adolescent services had also sought to target support to the most vulnerable groups of young people. The available data

- 6.11 The Council had sought this approach to operate vocational training commissioned jointly with partners in addition to the offer in schools. This had been the adopted approach to prevent adding pressure to schools' limited resources and ability to deliver the existing curriculum.
- 6.12 The rate of young people who were NEET was in part tracked by monitoring those between 18 and 24 who had claimed unemployment benefits. Although this number had fallen since the end of the Covid pandemic, Blackpool's average remained approximately double the national average. The Council had therefore sought to work with employers to generate work placements working with the Job Centre. This had generated 184 paid job placements, of which 80 were within Blackpool.
- 6.13 A youth hub, The Platform, had also been established through funding from the Community Renewal Fund. The Platform, located in Bickerstaffe House, receives referral of young people from the Job Centre as well as walk-ins from young people looking for training and employment opportunities. Originally it had been hoped that up to 300 young people could be engaged by the Platform, however over 370 had been signed up, with 84 subsequently finding employment and 85 entering training. Although this had been regarded as a success work was still need to evaluate what had been done and identify areas for further learning going forward.
- 6.14 It had been recognised in the long term that for the Platform to be a success, engagement needed to be maintained with young people and ensure that they could be helped into employment.
- 6.15 The Review Panel welcomed the information that it had received and asked that an update on the impact of all the work that had been outlined at the meeting be brought to a meeting in twelve months' time.

6.16 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 None.

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 None.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 None.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 None.

11.0 Equalities considerations:

11.1 None.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 None.

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

13.1 None.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.