

Meeting: Education Advisory Board

Subject: Portsmouth Education Strategy 2020 - 2023: refresh for Year 2

Date: 14th July 2021

Report from: Alison Jeffery, Director of Children, Families and Education

Report by: Mike Stoneman, Deputy Director, Education

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Board Members with details of proposed changes to the Portsmouth Education Strategy 2020 - 2023 for Year 2 of the strategy (2021/222) which includes an additional priority focussing on young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). The report also sets out the agreed focus of the PEP Strategic Board for Year 2 following the meeting held on 14th June 2021.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **It is recommended that members of the Education Advisory Board note the following:**
- a. **The agreed focus of the PEP Strategic Board for Year 2 of the strategy as set out in section 3 of the report, namely: digital learning, peer review; improving literacy outcomes; and improving school attendance**
 - b. **The inclusion of an additional priority to the Education Strategy that focusses on NEETs as set out in section 4 of the report**
 - c. **The next steps and the refresh of the Education Strategy for Year 2 as set out in section 5 of the report.**

3. Portsmouth Education Strategy 2020 - 2023: Year 2 refresh

- 3.1 Section 4 of this reports sets out the detail of the new priority (priority 10) of the Portsmouth Education Strategy: 'Reducing the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) through NEET prevention and re-engagement activities'.
- 3.2 The PEP Strategic Board at their meeting on 14th June 2021, approved the addition of the 10th priority focused on reducing the proportion of young people who are NEET and noted the ongoing work to deliver the nine other priorities and the cross cutting themes of inclusion, early years and black lives matter.

3.3 The PEP Strategic Board also made a commitment to focus on four key areas in Year 2 which were felt to be the most critical and where most impact would be felt, details of which are set out in sections 3.4 to 3.7 of this report. All four areas featured in the PEP Summer Conference on 2nd July.

3.4 **Digital learning strategy** - the links to the highlight report and the digital strategy which were recently presented at the PEP Strategic Board are given below. This sets out the next phase of our ambition to become a digital learning city and to build on the progress that has been made during the pandemic in terms of the application of digital technology to improve learning both in school and at home.

[Digital Learning - highlight report
Portsmouth as a Digital City](#)

3.5 **Peer review** - following a survey to all schools and academies earlier in the year, the PEP School Leadership and Effectiveness Board have been working on the development of a framework for peer review that all schools can sign up to regardless of designation, whether part of a Multi Academy Trust or LA Maintained. The framework sets out a minimum set of expectations and a 3 stage review process. The link to the highlight report which was recently presented to the PEP Strategic Board is given below.

[Peer Review](#)

3.6 **Improving literacy outcomes** - led by the PEP Early Language and Literacy Development Group, the objective is to work collectively to look at how as a city we can improve literacy outcomes for all children and young people regardless of age or phase of learning. A link to the most recent highlight report presented to the PEP Strategic Board is given below. There are 3 workstreams. :

- Relaunch of the Portsmouth Early Language Plan on a Page document,
- developing reading in Portsmouth,
- improving literacy at transition points

[Early Language and Literacy - highlight report](#)

3.7 **Improving school attendance and reducing fixed term exclusions** - a link is provided below to a paper that was presented to the PEP Strategic Board and which considers the case for a renewed collective PEP focus on reducing time lost from school through non-attendance, exclusion or reduced/part-time timetables against the background of learning loss through the pandemic, holding ourselves and each other to account in a restorative and relational *high support: high challenge* way.

[Education Recovery: Attendance and Exclusions](#)

4. **Priority 10: Reducing the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) through NEET prevention and re-engagement activities**

4.1 **Background**

Local authorities have broad duties to encourage, enable and assist young people to participate in education or training. Specifically these are 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. To fulfil this, local authorities need to have a strategic overview of the provision available in their area and to identify and resolve gaps in provision.
- Make available to all young people aged 13 to 19 and to those between 20 and 25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), support that will encourage, enable or assist them to participate in education or training.

Tracking young people's participation is a key element of these duties. Local authorities are required to collect information about young people so that those who are not participating, or are NEET, can be identified and given support to re-engage. Since 2017, local authorities have been required to track and report on years 12 and 13.

The DfE monitors the participation of young people in employment, education or training in all local authority areas. This data is supplied by each local authority, all of whom have a statutory duty to do so on a monthly basis. The overall performance measure used is a combined average figure of young people who are NEET and unknown over a three month period. Reporting includes a combined figure for young people who are NEET or unknown to the local authority. This change was made after a number of local authorities reported low NEETs whilst having a high number of unknowns.

As a city we have made some significant improvements over the past 8 years. In 2013 NEET and unknown figures were significantly higher than the national average with NEETs at 7.7% and unknowns at 18.7%. To address this the council worked with schools and post-16 providers to improve progression outcomes for young people aged 16 to 18.

A key part of this work was the **Youth NEET Prevention Programme** which was launched in 2014. This partnership programme was initially funded by local colleges and the council. The pilot programme offered support to 108 year 11s who were considered at risk of not progressing to post-16 education. A Progression Adviser worked with the young people

during the spring term of year 11 through to post-16 enrolment. During the autumn term advisers were based in the colleges to support these young people and other Portsmouth students who were at risk of becoming NEET. The project had a positive impact on the NEET figures and this combined with close and collaborative work with the Data Team brought the unknowns down to 3.8% and the NEETs in line with the national averages at 4.8%.

The work of the council's Data Team in collaboration with schools and colleges has been instrumental in reducing the number of unknowns. There are robust data sharing agreements in place with colleges and at the end of 2016 the figures for unknowns and NEETs were 1.1% and 3.8% respectively.

Since 2017 the NEET score card has reported data for a three month average.

Table 1: three month average 2017 - 2021

	2017 (Dec 2016 - Feb 2017 3 months average)	2018 (Dec 2017 - Feb 2018 3 months average)	2019 (Dec 2018 - Feb 2019 3 months average)	2020 (Dec 2019 - Feb 2020 3 months average)	2021 (Dec 2020 - Feb 2021 3 months average)
NEET	3.8%	3.7%	3.8%	4.2%	4.4%
Unknowns	1.1%	1.6%	1.1%	0.8%	1.1%
Combined	4.9%	5.4%	4.8%	5.0%	5.6%

The most recent figures for April 2021 however show a concerning trend and it is clear that the pandemic has had a negative impact on the figures. Due the high quality and robust data gathered by the data tracking team we have an accurate picture of the number NEETs and unknowns in Portsmouth. We are aware that some local authorities do not have this level of current information so will have higher numbers of unknowns the majority of whom are likely to be NEET

4.2 Currently, there are a number of programmes that are running in the city to support NEET prevention and re-engagement details of which are set out below:

- **Youth NEET Prevention Programme** - following the successful pilot project, the programme has continued with ongoing financial contributions from the colleges. Schools now contribute £135 per pupil referred to the programme (this was waived for 2020 due to concerns about the progression of year 11). Further funding has been available via the ESF funded STEP programme although this will cease in

2022. This project is now underfunded and will require a review and a new approach moving forward. A bid has been submitted to the Careers and Enterprise Company for a 3 year project to support progression from year 10 for 60 students. This will be a joint research project with Hampshire, IOW, Portsmouth and the Solent LEP.

- Currently the **STEP programme** also funds support for young people who are NEET to support them to re-engage. Advisers work within the community to support young people to re-engage and progress to education and employment with training. Prior to March 2020 the team used a variety of venues across the city for regular drop-ins for young people who are NEET. Youth Centre premises are now subject to rent for these purposes so we will need to look for alternative options.
- The Southern University Network Programme has grant funded a progression programme for 60 **Uni Connect** students over the past 3 years. We have confirmation that this will continue to for at least one more year and had been held up as an example of good practice.
- The **Virtual School & College** currently funds a 0.5 term time Careers and Progression Adviser. From August 2021 this will move to a full-time post to support both Care Leavers and Looked after Children. This post will be based within the Careers and Progression Team.
- As part of the DWP funding, the **Youth Hub** service is funded for one post to support young people aged 16 to 25 who are claiming universal credit to seek employment. The majority of the referrals are likely to be over 18 so will not support the majority of young people aged 16 to 18.
- Funding from Southern Universities Network (SUN) has supported delivery of a year 11 transition website **Flying Start**. This brand has been used for the post-16 transition programme - Flying Start Live.

4.3 **Key actions for 2021/22:**

1. **Establish a network of Year 11 progression leads in schools -**
Year 11 progression and post-16 destinations are a key responsibility for schools. At the start of the academic year each secondary school will be asked to identify a lead for year 11 progression who will be the link for the school for specific progression issues including resources, group meetings, September Guarantee, updates from post-16 providers and delivery of support from Portsmouth City Council.

- 2. Securing suitable provision** - the curriculum review has highlighted the ongoing issue of a lack of roll-on roll off provision. Discussions with other statistical neighbouring authorities, including Coventry, has confirmed that this is vital in re-engaging NEETs. Portsmouth has been impacted by the closure of Catch 22 and the lack of a traineeship offer in the city. Before the second lockdown Fareham College offered a traineeship programme from the Enterprise Centre and this was delivered virtually during lockdown. The council will therefore work with the new City of Portsmouth College and other local providers to improve the provision for young people who are NEET. This work will focus on courses with regular entry points and partnerships with other providers including the Princes Trust, MPCT and training providers. This work will be developed and led by a task and finish group to include providers and potential providers of post-16 provision and re-engagement provision.
- 3. Ensure there is proactive support from all professionals who work with young people** to help young people progress and succeed in post-16 education and training and in future employment or further training. This includes professionals from Children's Social Care, Early Help and Edge of Care Service.
- 4. Review of the Youth NEET Prevention Programme** - in order to ensure the long term viability of the Youth NEET Prevention Programme we will work with colleges and schools to review the model and programme funding. A proposal will be taken forward to the Post-16 Forum and traded service offer in Autumn 2021.
- 5. Embed Windmills iCAN programme across schools and colleges in travel to learn area** - for young people creating a meaningful vision for their future can be difficult. The complexity of choices and routes may impact on this. Research also shows that for many young people who have more limited networks e.g. through employment and mentors this will impact on successful planning and progression. In addition to this it is vital that young people's influencers (e.g. parents or carers) are enabled to support them with careers related activity. Funding from the SUN project has enabled the roll out of the Windmills iCAN programme. The programme enables young people to create a meaningful vision for their future, connect with people who can make that a vision a reality and contribute to their progress. The programme is designed to create social capital for young people. During 2021/22 will continue to training mentors and champions in schools and partner organisations to support delivery of the Windmills iCAN career development programme. In addition to this we will support parents/carers to access the programme and work with schools to implement a positive progression programme for year 10/11.

5. Next steps

- 5.1 A revised version of the Portsmouth Education Strategy 2020 - 2023 will now be prepared which includes:
- the agreed focus of the PEP Strategic Board for Year 2 of the strategy;
 - the additional priority focussing on NEET; and
 - updates on all key actions for all 10 priorities for Year 2 of the strategy.
- 5.2 A final version will be circulated to Members of the Education Advisory Board later this month.

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Signed by Director of Children, Families and Education

Appendices:

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location
Portsmouth Education Strategy 2020 - 2023 Year One	PEP Portsmouth Education Strategy 2020-2023 Year 1.pdf portsmoutheducationpartnership.co.uk