

Lancashire County Council
Progress Made Towards the Development of a Youth Employment and
Employability Strategy for Lancashire.

1 National Context

- 1.1** Young people have been and are likely to continue to be harder hit by the recession than any other labour market group. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) recently reported that nationally youth unemployment rose to 1.027 million, a rise to 22% of the economically active population in the three months to October 2011, an increase from 20.8% three months earlier.
- 1.2** During the same period the number of unemployed 16 to 17 year olds increased by 8,000 to reach 211,000 and the number of unemployed 18 to 24 year olds rose by 46,000 on the quarter to reach 815,000.
- 1.3** As outlined in the paper 'Building Engagement. Building Futures: Our strategy to maximise the participation of 16-24 year olds in Education, Training and Work', (Dec 11) the Government sets out five strategic priorities to tackle the rising youth unemployment figures;
- Raising educational attainment in school and beyond.
 - Helping local partners to provide effective and coordinated services that support all young people.
 - Encouraging and incentivising employers to inspire and recruit young people through apprenticeships and work experience places.
 - Ensuring that work pays and giving young people the personalised support they need to find it.
 - Putting in place the new Youth Contract
- 1.4** Alongside this there are significant changes being made in relation to further and higher education. The Coalition Government has produced two main documents, Skills for Sustainable Growth, and its parallel publication, Investing in Skills for Sustainable Growth. These documents recognise that training and skills are essential to sustain economic growth and contain a number of important changes including;
- An ongoing commitment to basic skills
 - The raising of the participation age in education to 18 by 2015;
 - An overall reduction in Further Education (FE) budgets by £1.1 billion by 2014-15;
 - Importantly for LCC, a move from Council commissioning to individual schools and colleges in relation to FE provision and information, advice and guidance.
- 1.5** Apprenticeships are at the heart of the Coalition Government's approach to youth unemployment, with an increased national budget and specific funds to

support a greater number of Advanced level and Higher apprenticeships. These investments have been combined with a range of measures to encourage the creation of additional apprenticeship places by easing red tape and offering financial incentives to encourage smaller firms, with less than 50 staff, to take on apprentices.

- 1.6** The Youth Contract, announced in November 2011 sets out a £1 billion programme to help unemployed young people. The new programme will help the most disengaged 16 and 17 year olds by getting them back to school or college, onto an apprenticeship or into a job with training. The range of measures include subsidies for businesses who take on young people from the Work Programme, an additional 250,000 work experience placements and a £50 million programme to help persistently NEET 16 and 17-year-olds. The Work Programme, will also ensure that training will be linked to the receipt of benefits to support individuals in developing labour market relevant skills.
- 1.7** These initiatives have been introduced alongside significant changes to the educational landscape with the increase in academies, free schools, studio schools and the introduction of university technical colleges. Despite these differing options, the British Chambers of Commerce in October 2011, reported that business confidence in school leavers is "very low" due to a general lack of enterprise and employability skills which they feel should be built into the main curriculum.
- 1.8** This has come at a time when the National curriculum reform has seen a move towards more academic subjects with schools being measured on the new English Baccalaureate (EBac). However, an important change for Schools and Colleges which could support preventative action in relation to NEET young people is the requirement, for the first time, for destination data to be published for key stage 4 and 5 in September 2012.
- 1.9** Information advice and guidance remains one of the most important factors in helping young people make the right choices about progression through learning, increasing their confidence and motivation to succeed. The National Careers Service in England becomes fully operational in April 2012 offering a unified, consistent service that provides support to young people and adults alike through an online and telephone helpline. In conjunction with this there will be a new duty placed on schools from September 2012 to secure access to impartial and independent careers guidance to every pupil in years 9 to 11.
- 1.10** The findings and subsequent policy changes emanating from the Review of Vocational Education – (The Wolf Report) together with the end of the Education Maintenance Allowance, the introduction of the 16-19 Bursary Fund and the increase in Higher Education tuition fees offer a complex picture and the implications and impacts of these changes continue to be assessed by local authorities and their partners.
- 1.11** There have, therefore, been a significant number of recent national reforms which present both challenges and opportunities. Although our role is changing there is a continuing necessity for the County Council to play a significant role as

an influencer and enabler in addition to being a provider of services. The County Council is well placed, as the only strategic organisation in Lancashire capable of bringing key partners and policy agendas together, to better address the issue of youth unemployment and employability.

2 The local Picture

- 2.1** Statistics for November and December 2011 show that the proportion of young people 16-18 years not in education, employment or training (NEET) was 6% and 6.3%, an improvement based on the figure for November and December 2010 of 6.5% and 6.7% respectively. In Lancashire there are around 2,000 to 3,000 young people between the ages of 16 to 19 at any one time that find themselves NEET. This figure has remained relatively static for at least 3 years.
- 2.2** It has long been recognised that Lancashire's economy contains areas of significant deprivation which require appropriate interventions, delivered through joined-up and targeted services. There is a clear link between young people growing up in Lancashire's socially and economically deprived areas and increased chances of them becoming NEET.
- 2.3** Being NEET between the ages of 16-18 is a major predictor of later unemployment, low income, teenage motherhood, depression and poor physical health. Individuals who become NEET on leaving school have a very high risk of remaining unemployed in the medium term (up to 5 years) and have a greater risk of unemployment and lower wages in the long run (up to 10 years on).
- 2.4** Whilst the NEET figures have reduced overall this masks a worsening picture in some districts. For example NEET figures in Burnley increased from 8.3% in November 2010 to 8.5% in November 2011 and 9% in December 2010 to 9.8% in December 2011.
- 2.5** Similarly, whilst the overall % of NEET has declined in Hyndburn over the last 12 months the figure in December 2011 continues to remain over 8%.
- 2.6** The picture is further complicated by statistics for young people for whom we do not know a destination post 16. Across Lancashire the number of young people whose destination is not known has increased from 2.9% in November 2010 to 5.2% in November 2011. Whilst it cannot be assumed that all of these young people are NEET some of them almost certainly will be.
- 2.7** Statistics and trends indicate clearly that certain groups are at higher risk than others of finding themselves not in education, training or employment. In Lancashire particular focus is centred on teenage mothers, those in care and leaving care; and those with disabilities or learning difficulties.
- 2.8** In relation to the longer term skills challenge for Lancashire, demographic changes will have a significant impact on economic performance. There will be a decline in the youth population in some of Lancashire's highest achieving districts and a potential growth in areas with current low skills attainment.

- 2.9** Educational attainment is a critical factor in determining future employment prospects. The County Council works closely with schools and overall educational achievement levels have been rising. Lancashire performs above the national average at key stage 4 but within this there is variation across the County with some areas, particularly in the east of the county, lagging significantly behind the national average.

3 Lancashire County Council's Corporate Skills Framework

- 3.1** The County Council's Corporate Skills Framework was developed jointly between the Directorate for Children and Young People and Economic Development Service and was presented to Cabinet in September 2011. The document was underpinned by extensive research to better understand the key issues in relation to raising the skills base of Lancashire's residents and the full extent of activity taking place in support of this agenda across all of the County Council's services and key partner organisations. Of the five priorities identified within the Framework, the importance of providing young people with opportunities to progress in education, employment and through training was a key theme, with issues relating to NEETs, employability and apprenticeships particularly highlighted.
- 3.2** The focus of the Skills Framework was to adopt a cross Directorate approach in a way that eradicates inconsistencies and duplication in the quality of provision across the County but which suits local conditions. This approach has been adopted by Officers working together on the NEET agenda, to support an organisational cultural change from a supply side approach (*producing a workforce based on an assessment of need and external funding requirements*) to a demand side approach (*understanding and producing a workforce with the skills needed to help local businesses grow and develop*).

4 Lancashire County Council's Priorities for Action

- 4.1** In anticipating the developing national agenda the County Council has already made significant progress over the last year by refocusing existing mainstream services to address key priorities, whilst introducing new resources to deliver the change we require.
- 4.2** There is already a great deal of activity underway and many examples of good practice across the Council, but there are also opportunities for greater co-ordination and potential areas for development to prevent the ongoing 'churn' in the number of young people falling into the NEET category.
- 4.3** Cabinet has recently proposed to invest significant new resource via increased/more intensive support for NEETs and enhanced opportunities for young people through County Council initiatives and with private employers. This includes: a new £10m apprenticeships programme to help young people into work, supporting employers to take on apprentices and creating further

professional apprenticeships within the county council; an investment of £5m over five years to support the costs of young people travelling to education, employment and training and £6m for the extension of the Youth Zone programme to provide young people with more activities and opportunities to access information and guidance.

4.4 This report does not seek to detail all the activity taking place across service areas related to youth employment and employability, but seeks to highlight the progress made in key areas. These include:

- A) Youth Employability
- B) Early support
- C) Working together with Families
- D) Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG)
- E) Apprenticeships

4.5 The County Council recognises that improving youth employment and employability can only be achieved through close collaboration between a range of services, organisations and providers. Numerous strategic and operational partnerships already exist and effective relationships are evident between partners, focused on addressing the needs of young people.

4.6 For many of the actions the role of the County Council will be to provide strategic leadership, influence and governance alongside more focused support and changes to direct service delivery to help make the progress required.

A) Youth Employability

- 1 For young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) the Universal and Early Support Group in the Directorate for Children and Young People has been established as the single corporate point of contact for NEET provision with the Learning and Skills Team taking the corporate lead on this agenda.
- 2 A cross Directorate NEET internal working group has been established consisting of all service areas involved in supporting young people who are or who are at risk of becoming NEET including the Learning and Skills Team, Young People's Service (YPS), Alternative and Complementary Education and Residential Service (ACERS), Youth Offending, Early Support Services, Leaving Care Team, Communities and Citizens Talent Management and Employment Support Service together with colleagues from the Economic Development Service.

Actions to Date

- 3 Work has begun on developing a clear corporate NEET strategy which will be complete by March 2012 together with an implementation plan, detailing the actions which will deliver the NEET priorities. The production of a NEET strategy for the County Council is a key priority within the Skills Framework and

therefore all activity undertaken on this agenda sits within the broader context of a 'whole life' approach to up-skilling and supporting Lancashire's current and future workforce.

- 4 Whilst developing this strategy the NEET internal working group have conducted a comprehensive NEET mapping exercise to identify the totality of activity supporting the NEET agenda across all internal service areas. A similar exercise will be conducted with external partners to provide a complete picture of provision across the County.
- 5 The single, most important factor within the developing NEET strategy is the need to adopt new ways of working with NEET provision designed holistically around the needs of the young person. This will include the establishment of a single commissioning model for support and provision and a programme of preventative, wrap-a-round support that will lead to more positive outcomes.
- 6 As part of the new ways of working the internal NEET working group have committed to making improvements regarding the use of data that would better target support work where needed through the development of a discrete common data set drawn from existing County data sets and a client based tracking model.
- 7 The County Council has also been successful in winning £3.5m of European Social Fund (ESF) funding covering the period January 2011 to December 2013, for Young People who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET.
- 8 The funding targets Young People from the following vulnerable groups:
 - Young Offenders
 - In Care or looked after
 - Have learning difficulties/disabilities
 - Are teenage mothers
- 9 We have set a target of helping at least 1620 Young People with at least 50% of these young people expected to achieve the outcomes of progression into learning or employment and achievement of qualifications.
- 10 Lancashire County Council are managing this ESF project on behalf of a partnership which includes representation from schools, further education colleges, work based learning providers and the voluntary sector.
- 11 Resources have been allocated to all areas of Lancashire, with a concentration on areas of greatest need, where there are the largest numbers of young people who are NEET, Burnley, Hyndburn, Lancaster and Preston.
- 12 ESF for NEET is primarily aimed at 16 to 18 year olds, however, we have agreed some funding for 15 to 16 year olds. This funding is focussed on preventing young people becoming NEET at 16.

- 13 Communities and Citizens Talent Management service have made an offer to source work placements for the ESF YPS programme called Introduction to Future Horizons. Communities and Citizens Talent Management service are working with Young People's Service to offer suitable placements both in the private and public sector.

B) Early Support

- 1 Early Support provision is central to the prevention of youth unemployment by developing greater co-ordination to address intergenerational issues, and in some areas, engrained cultural barriers to education and work.
- 2 Central to a family's ability to support their children's learning is the need to build the families resilience and support capacity without which initiatives have generally resulted only in short term gains that have disappeared when projects have ended.
- 3 The biggest impact on under-achievement and low expectation is achieved through support in Early Years, to the end of Key Stage 1 in primary school, and at the start of secondary school. Attainment at 16 is the single most important factor in securing young people's participation and future achievement.
- 4 Early support strategies need to impact on children and families at the different stages of their life cycle and we need to focus, not just on families with young children but also on families with adolescent children at the earliest signs of difficulties. This has been described as ensuring that children and young people are school ready, job ready and critically, to break the cycle of low attainment and deprivation that often accompanies this, that families are child ready and supportive of progression into the job market.

Actions to Date

- 5 The Lancashire Early Intervention Strategy (EIS) was agreed by the County Wide Children's Trust in June 2010.
- 6 The underpinning principles for early support were identified as:
- A need to be focussed on the family which includes children, young people, parents and carers.
 - Working with children 0-19 years of age.
 - Building professional partnership working that addresses the needs of the family, working in a collaborative and cooperative way.
 - The need to pool resources.
 - Ownership and accountability through Lancashire's Children's Trust.
 - A coordinated and consistent approach within an overall Lancashire strategic framework.
- 7 Funding was secured in 2010 to allow the appointment of a Lead for Early Intervention / Support and for the appointment of an Early Intervention /

Support officer to work with each of the district children's trusts. These posts were appointed in February 2011.

- 8 Cabinet accepted proposals to provide an initial investment of £2 million available from the start of 2011/12 academic year to support a drive to make all children 'school ready'. Working in partnership with Primary schools 'Best Start Lancashire' ('Pupil Premium Plus') aims to boost the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals and reduce the gaps in educational attainment.
- 9 This programme provides £280 per free school meal pupil to augment the Government's Pupil Premium of £430 per free school meal pupil. This drive to improve attainment will be supported by changes the Directorate for Children and Young People is making to its Children's Centres to reconfigure them into Children and Family Centres with a focus on the 0 -13 age range rather than the current 0 – 5 focus. This investment will include wrap around approaches specifically to build on the activity already taking place in Children's Centres to help build resilience and support capacity within families.
- 10 Early Support provided to young people who start to show difficulties at school has contributed to Lancashire's results at key stage 4, which are above national average. Work continues to narrow the gap between the highest and lowest achievers at age 16.

C) Working Together with Families

- 1 Emanating from the national Total Place programme and the Department of Education's Think Family policy, Working Together with Families is Lancashire County Council's strategic approach designed to:
 - radically improve the experience, resilience and outcomes of families who access and use services across Lancashire;
 - develop collaborative ways of working which are ambitious and inclusive;
 - improve the value for money of public services.

Actions to Date

- 2 Established in March 2010 the working together with Families programme entails three main strands of activity;
 - **Communications and engagement**
To assess how services currently work with families and the opportunities for reform using a total family approach;
 - **Modelling**
A range of activities designed to examine the current reality of service provision and customer experience;
 - **Delivery mechanisms**
An ongoing review of some of the fundamental ways of working that contribute to effective delivery including delivery planning, needs

assessment, commissioning, information sharing, and workforce development.

- 3 There has been considerable progress made within the County Council to adopt this approach during the development of a Transitions Policy which will be formally launched in April 2012.
- 4 The Transitions Policy will provide targeted support for young people aged between 14 to 25 who may have a special educational needs (SEN) assessment, be known to Child and Family Support, have a child protection plan in place, be a child looked after, a young carer, have substance misuse or dependence, be known to the Youth Offending Team or be receiving support from Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service.
- 5 The policy has been developed jointly between the Directorate for Children and Young People and the Adult and Community Services Directorate and is based on the Working Together with Families approach of multi agency, co-ordinated, wrap-a-round support, with young people and families having a 'tell us once' assessment.
- 6 The Transitions Policy seeks to ensure that an appropriate plan is in place as young people move from children's to adult services which reflects the young person's needs and aspirations and specifies how these will be met and achieved. Any plan should cover future choices on issues such as education and employment.
- 7 It is expected that this approach will improve outcomes for young people and their families, improve professional partnership working and create opportunities for the pooling of resources which prevents duplication.
- 8 The Working Together with Families approach has also offered the opportunity to work with the European Social Fund (ESF) Families in Multiple Deprivation programme together with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Jobcentre Plus (JCP) and partner organisations responsible for the delivery of this programme.
- 9 This programme targets families where at least one member must be on a DWP working age benefit, either no one in the family is working or there is a history of worklessness across generations.
- 10 With families referred from the County Council providers will work towards achieving measures including;
 - Interventions to overcome family related barriers
 - Reducing social and economic isolation
 - Interventions to tackle work-related barriers
 - Addressing Health and Housing related barriers

D) Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG)

- 1 The provision of high quality careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) is vital in bringing about better outcomes for young people's employment and employability prospects. Effective and timely CEIAG can help young people to better understand their own abilities and interests, gain realistic insights into the working world, provide motivation for higher academic achievement and raise aspirations.
- 2 Schools need guidance and support on the new duty placed upon them, what they are responsible for and the procurement, management and quality assurance of externally provided careers service.

Actions to Date

- 3 The County Council has worked in partnership with VIA (previously CXL) to launch a joint traded service to schools offering a range of CEIAG services including face to face staff time and the County Council developed online careers guidance tool, Lancashire Interactive. This will enable the County Council to influence the quality and impartiality of CEIAG and tailor our offer to meet the demands of the Lancashire economy. VIA is owned by Lancashire County Council, Blackpool Council and Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and works with public, private and third sector organisations to deliver a range of products and services including CEIAG for young people and adults.
- 4 The local authority retains responsibility for securing CEIAG for young people in Short Stay Schools, Special Schools and Lancashire's Virtual School. The Young People's Service target, intensively support and deliver provision to all vulnerable young people; delivered mainly in a schools context.

E) Apprenticeships

- 1 The County Council has made award winning progress with a range of apprentice and pre apprentice programmes managed by the Communities and Citizens Talent Management Service (CCTM), ambassadors across the Northwest for the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS).
- 2 The emphasis on apprenticeships nationally provides the County Council with an opportunity to build on these successful programmes, offering the same cost benefits and workforce development solutions and the potential for branding apprenticeships with companies in high growth sectors.
- 3 The Communities and Citizens Talent Management Team continue to develop new and innovative workforce planning solutions that help address youth unemployment and improving skills, each with an appropriate progression route to further learning and/or employment.

Actions to Date

- **Apprenticeships**
2 year apprenticeships up to level 3 across the County Council and the Schools workforce. Since 2006 there have been over 800 apprentices with 309 apprentices converted or recruited across the Schools network in the last 14 months. An additional 50 apprenticeships in small to medium enterprises have been secured through the Future Horizons Apprentice@your business programme.
 - **WorkStart/WorkStart+**
A public sector 30 day work trial devised by Lancashire County Council in partnership with JobCentre Plus to help people who are actively seeking work and have been claiming lone parent, employment and support allowance or job seekers allowance. In 2011, 156 clients completed their WorkStart placement with 94 securing employment after their placement.
 - **WorkStart**
 - 4 Armed Forces
 - Get Britain Working (18-24 year olds)
 - 4 Graduates
 - Offenders
 - Ability Focused
 - Family Focused
 - **Future Horizons /Future Horizons +**
A 20 week pre-apprenticeship programme for NEET young people aged 16-18, including children looked after and those leaving care. Candidates work with North Lancs Training Group or West Lancs College on the Foundation Learning programme to improve their employability skills for 12 weeks followed by an 8 week work experience placement at the County, local District Council or within the private sector. In 2011, 119 NEET young people have started the Foundation Learning Programme with North Lancs Training Group or West Lancs College. 72 of these young people have commenced placement with Future Horizons, with 39 already securing employment with others from October – December still on programme.
 - **Future Horizons Gold and Future Horizons Gold+**
For those already in receipt of a level 2 qualification a 12 week fast track model.
- 4 Pilots will shortly take place to offer 20 day work experience placements linking with the AQA Personal and Social Education qualification delivered by the Young People's Service for looked after and hard to help NEETs and 2 weeks work experience to 14-16 year olds who are at risk of becoming NEET called Introduction to Future Horizons. This programme will also provide 2 week work experience placements for the ACERS service. This is initially on a pilot basis with Shaftsbury House.

5 Next Steps

5.1 Over the past year there has been a great deal of work to ensure that the County Council works corporately to address this important issue for Lancashire. Activity is ongoing, as outlined above, and further actions and priorities will be defined within the Council's NEET Strategy.

5.2 However, already it is clear that the new ways of working introduced will have a positive impact on youth unemployment and employability and a range of key outcomes are to be achieved over the next 3 years. These are addressed within the Corporate Skills Framework and include:

- The development of 8 additional 'Business Class' business to school relationships.
- Increase the number of apprenticeships within LCC by 50%
- Increase the proportion of apprenticeships within the private sector by 2%
- The number of young people in Lancashire classified as NEET to be no more than 6.5%
- Improve the attainment levels of Lancashire schools through the achievement of 5 or more A* - C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and Maths to 59.5%
- Increase the proportion of pupils eligible for Free School Meals performing at the expected level at key stage 2 to 55% and key stage 4 to 32%.
- Increase the number of looked after children who go on to further education, training and employment to 75%

ACRONYMS

ACERS	Alternative and Complementary Education and Residential Service
AQA	An educational charity and leading provider of GCSE's and A levels
CCTM	Communities and Citizens Talent Management Team
CEIAG	Careers Education Information, Advice and Guidance
CYPP	Children and Young People's Plan
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EBac	English Baccalaureate
EIS	Early Intervention Strategy
ESF	European Social Fund
FE	Further Education
JCP	Jobcentre Plus
LCC	Lancashire County Council
LEP	Lancashire Enterprise Partnership
NAS	National Apprenticeship Service
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
ONS	Office for National Statistics
SEN	Special Educational Needs
VIA	VIA is owned by Lancashire County Council, Blackpool Council and Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, delivering CEIAG for young people and adults to public, private and third sector organisations