
RAISING OF THE PARTICIPATION AGE (RPA) UPDATE

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the implementation of the requirements of the Raising of the Participation Age, to look at the impact locally and to detail the work being undertaken to meet the local authority's responsibilities.

Summary

2. The Education and Skills Act (2008) places a duty on all young people to participate in education and training until their 18th birthday, this is known as the 'Raising of the Participation Age' (RPA). RPA had a phased approach with young people being required to stay on in education and training until 17 years old from 2013 and 18 years old by 2015.
3. The act also places a duty on local authorities to 'promote the effective participation in education and training of all 16 and 17 year olds resident in their area'.
4. This report outlines the requirements of RPA, the current position regarding participation and the actions being undertaken to ensure that the local authority meets its requirements.

Recommendation

5. It is recommended that:-
 - (a) Children and Young People Scrutiny note the content of the report and the actions being undertaken.
 - (b) A further report is produced in January 2015 to monitor the impact of the actions undertaken by the local authority and the progress towards full participation.

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Director of People

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S17 Crime and Disorder	Increased engagement in education and training could have a positive impact on crime and disorder.
Health and Well Being	Increased engagement in education and training could have a positive impact on health and well-being.
Carbon Impact	There are no issues this report needs to address.
Diversity	There are no issues this report needs to address.
Wards Affected	This report does not impact on a particular ward, but Darlington as a whole.
Groups Affected	16 and 17 years olds and any employers of those young people.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	Relevant to the education and skills outcomes of the sustainable community strategy.
Efficiency	This report does not identify any efficiency savings.

MAIN REPORT

Background

6. From summer 2013, young people were required to continue in education or training until the end of the academic year in which they turned 17. From 2015, they will be required to continue until their 18th birthday. This doesn't necessarily mean staying on in school. Young people will be able to choose how they participate post 16, which could be through:-
 - (a) Full-time education such as school, college, other training provider or home-education (a minimum of 540 hours per year).
 - (b) An Apprenticeship.
 - (c) Part-time education or training if they are employed, self-employed or volunteering for 20 hours or more a week.
7. The Education and Skills Act places duties on local authorities, in relation to RPA. Local authorities will be required to:-
 - (a) promote the effective participation in education or training of all 16 and 17 year olds resident in their area; and
 - (b) make arrangements to identify young people resident in their area who are not participating.
8. These complement the existing duties to:-
 - (a) Secure sufficient suitable education and training provision for all 16-19 year olds.
 - (b) Encourage, enable and assist young people to participate.
 - (c) Put processes in place to deliver the 'September Guarantee' and to track young people's participation. Local authorities are supported by a duty on learning providers to notify them when a young person leaves learning. This was previously done on a voluntary basis.

Current Situation

9. The Department for Education publishes details of local authority participation levels in June each year. The latest release in June 2013 shows data for the end of 2011 and in Darlington:-
 - (a) 84% (86% in 2008) of 16 year olds participated in education or training, below the North East average of 92% and a national average of 91%.

- (b) 76% (75% in 2008) of 17 year olds participated in education or training, below the North East average of 84% and a national average of 84%.
10. This means that in 2011 only 2,170 Darlington 16 and 17 year olds participated in education and training out of a cohort of 2,720. Conversely, 550 (20%) 16 and 17 year olds did not participate.
 11. On a more positive note, the NEET figures returned as part of the November 2013 NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) return showed that 94.63% of the Year 12 cohort and 81.07% of the Year 13 cohort were participating.
 12. In 2012 2,024 16 and 17 year olds were identified as being in employment, education and training (EET) by November 2013 this had risen to 2,228, an increase of 204. However, it should be noted that a large number of these may previously have been classified as 'Not Known'.
 13. It should be noted that participation data and NEET data are not directly comparable. Participation data looks at the whole year, whilst NEET data is a snapshot in time.

RPA Progress (NEET Data - Nov 13)	Year 12	Year 13
Cohort	1,230	1,257
Participating	94.63%	81.07%
Working Towards	1.06%	0.80%
Temporary Break from Learning	0.41%	0.48%
Not Known	0.57%	10.42%
Adjusted NEET	4.17%	6.02%
Adjusted NEET	51	71

14. The November 2013 NEET data (Year 12-14) for Tees Valley shows Darlington has the lowest adjusted NEET figure across the five authorities at 6.8% (Tees Valley average 8.4%). In November 2012 the Darlington adjusted NEET figure was 8.4%, a year on year reduction of 61 young people (306 down to 245).
15. There are a number of issues that impact on the implementation of RPA. These include:-
 - (a) There has been no change to the statutory school age.
 - (b) In September 2012 the provision of information, advice and guidance to pre-16s regarding post 16 options moved from local authorities (Connexions) to schools.
 - (c) Enforcement duties for local authorities, against young people who fail to participate, were written into legislation but have not been enacted. This will be reviewed in 2014.
 - (d) Enforcement duties for local authorities, where employers fail to ensure that young people they employ are participating in part-time education or training,

have also not been enacted due to the current economic climate.

16. In addition there is a small percentage of young people may have a 'reasonable reason' for non-participation. This category could include those medically ill, in final stages of pregnancy, in custody etc.
17. To support schools in increasing participation the DFE now publishes annual destination data for all school leavers. The latest data published in August 2013, for 2009/10 KS4 leavers, shows that for 2010/11 90% of all Darlington school leavers went into a sustained education, employment or training. However this varies across schools:

School	Sustained Destination
Hummersknott	95%
Hurworth	93%
Carmel	92%
Longfield	91%
Haughton	86%
St Aidan's	86%
DSMS	85%
Darlington overall	90%
England overall	89%

Actions

18. In line with the duty on local authorities to promote participation, the LA has co-ordinated the dissemination of information on RPA. There has been no national marketing campaign by the DFE and there is no funding for RPA, therefore it is necessary to utilise existing communication channels. To date this has included:-
 - (a) Encouraging schools to promote RPA, through the 11-19 Partnership and its sub-groups, through newsletters to parents, letters to pupils and through staff in contact with the young people.
 - (b) Making information available to council staff through articles in the Briefing, on the DBC website and targeted meetings with key groups.
 - (c) Disseminating information on RPA more widely through Darlington Together, Interface, Secondary School Admission Booklets and external groups such as provider networks.
19. This promotion of RPA sits alongside existing work to increase participation (and skills levels) that is being undertaken by the local authority, schools, post 16 providers and other partners. This includes the work of:-
 - (a) The Council's 11-19 Learning and Skills Team who lead on RPA and the statutory duty to ensure there is sufficient high quality education and training available, as well as acting as the link between the local authority, the 11-19 Partnership and post 16 providers.

- (b) The Early Intervention Teams who have responsibility for engaging those young people who are not participating and for co-ordinating the September guarantee (ensuring the offer of a place in education or training for 16 and 17 years olds).
 - (c) The Economic Regeneration Team and their work around the skills and employment agenda, particularly through Foundation for Jobs.
 - (d) Work with providers to facilitate early identification of young people at risk of disengaging.
20. These teams work closely together with partners and utilise initiatives such as the ESF young engagement projects, the Youth Contract, Troubled Families and Foundation for Jobs to encourage young people to participate in education and training and develop their understanding of local skills needs.
21. This partnership working is essential considering that a large number of the young people that are NEET often have multiple social issues that prevent them engaging in education and training. In November 2013:-
- (a) 65% of teenage parents (46) were NEET
 - (b) 40% of young offenders (35) were NEET
 - (c) 36% of care leavers (14) were NEET

Conclusion

22. The latest NEET data indicates that participation is increasing at both Year 12 and Year 13, however there remains a core of young people, often with complex social needs and a history of poor engagement in education, who continue not to participate in further education or training despite the potential economic benefits.
23. The local authority in conjunction with its partners is on track for the implementation of RPA and to meet its duties regarding the promotion of RPA. However, it must be recognised that without any sanctions in place 'promotion' may not be sufficient to ensure 'full' participation.