



Post-16 Education and Skills Strategy

London Borough
of Barnet

2021 – 2024

June 2021

Barnet Post-16 Education and Skills Strategy

A Introduction

Barnet is well known for the excellent quality of its schools and settings and the diversity of its educational offer. These are at the heart of Barnet's continuing success as a desirable place where people want to live, work and study. Excellent educational outcomes and ensuring children and young people are successful in life and equipped to meet the needs of employers are vital to Barnet's future success.

Barnet has 25 secondary schools, three all-through schools, five special schools with pupils of secondary age and two pupil referral units. There is also one sixth-form academy and one General Further Education College.

In recent years children's achievements in Barnet's schools and settings have been among the best in the country and a high proportion of Barnet's young people progress on to higher education. Over 96% of Barnet pupils are at schools which were graded good or better at their last OFSTED inspection.

Barnet and Southgate College was judged as Requiring Improvement at its last full inspection in December 2018. The college has since made significant changes to its executive and senior leadership teams and can evidence significantly improved outcomes across its provisions. It was judged to be making reasonable or significant progress in all areas following a monitoring visit by OFSTED in November 2019. Woodhouse College was judged outstanding at its last full inspection in 2007.

This Post-16 Education and Skills Strategy sets out the challenges facing young people in Barnet in accessing appropriate education, training and employment and our plans for extending the opportunities available to young people, particularly those from disadvantaged groups, and for keeping the number of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) to a minimum.

B Resilience

Barnet is a Family Friendly Borough. Our approach to achieving this is to focus on developing families' resilience, which evidence tells us is pivotal to delivering the best outcomes for children and young people. The role that schools play in the day to day life of children and their families provides a unique opportunity to promote and embed resilience. Resilience based practice sits at the heart of improving outcomes for children and young people; an approach that is based on looking for strengths and opportunities to build on, rather than for issues or problems to treat.

At the same time our education vision recognises the barriers facing many disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people and includes a clear commitment to accelerating their progress and closing the gap between them and their peers.

C Ambition and Aims

Barnet is a growing borough and the quality of education plays a crucial part in making the borough a popular and desirable place to live.

Our strategic vision for education in Barnet is:

Resilient schools – resilient communities: We want Barnet to be the most successful place for high quality education where excellent school standards result in all children achieving their best, being safe and happy and able to progress to become successful adults.

In order to achieve this, our mission is: To ensure:

- Every child attends a **good or outstanding school**, as judged by Ofsted
- The attainment and progress of children in Barnet schools is **within the top 10%** nationally
- There is **accelerating progress** of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils in order to diminish the difference between them and their peers.
- Every child receives a high quality education through clear **curriculum intent and effective implementation**
- We **minimise the impact of the covid19 pandemic on learning**.

Education Strategy - Strategic goals

The Barnet Education Strategy (2021–2024) sets the framework for the overall direction of travel for all education and learning services in the London Borough of Barnet. The Strategy outlines 6 overall strategic goals:

- **Strategic goal 1 - Access**

To ensure there are sufficient high-quality school places to meet the needs of Barnet residents, including local specialist provision when required for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, and that school organisation and governance arrangements are financially sustainable.

- **Strategic goal 2 - Inclusion**

To ensure the provision of high quality local placements and support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities aged from 3 to 25 years.

- **Strategic goal 3 – Achievement - School Improvement**

To ensure that every school and setting is good or outstanding.

- **Strategic goal 4 – Achievement - Educational outcomes**

To improve the educational progress and outcomes for all children and young people across all phases and types of institution from early years to post-16, including progress into Higher Education, apprenticeships, training or employment.

- **Strategic goal 5 – Achievement and Inclusion – Minimising the impact of the covid19 pandemic on learning**

To ensure the negative impact of the pandemic is countered through an adapted curriculum post-lockdown, including for SEN pupils, high quality teaching and learning in school and at home and that schools are safe, that mental health and well-being of school staff and pupils are addressed and that attendance returns to pre-covid levels while exclusions are kept to a minimum.

- **Strategic goal 6 – Achievement and Inclusion – Diminishing the difference and building resilience**

To diminish the differences in attainment and progress between the most disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils and their peers by accelerating their progress and building resilience.

Contribution of the Post-16 Education and Skills strategy

This strategy is intended to contribute to the wider Education Strategy in the following ways:

Inclusion:

- Developing progression routes and opportunities for young people with special educational needs and disabilities aged 16 to 25 to enable them to develop the skills and independence they need to access employment.

- Working with partners to support disadvantaged groups, such as care-leavers, to access suitable progression routes into education, training or employment.

Achievement

- Working with secondary schools and colleges to offer every young person in Barnet access to an appropriate curriculum that leads to employment or other education or training opportunities and progression.
- Supporting post-16 providers in developing the employability skills of young people to ensure that they are resilient and able to cope with the changes in education and employment in the context of the COVID19 pandemic and its aftermath. This includes ensuring there is effective and timely support for young people at transition points, and, where young people 'fall through the net', ensuring intervention is in place to get them back on track.

Post-16 related priorities in our other education strategies

Progress and Progression Pathways

One of the key priorities and areas for development set out in the Education Strategy and the Schools and Settings Improvement Strategy is to ensure that sufficient high quality learning opportunities exist for children and young people to succeed across a range of skills and abilities, particularly those with SEND. In particular there is concern to ensure that post-16 pathways and opportunities result in as few young people as possible who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). It is therefore important that action is taken to support those young people who are at risk of being NEET or who are NEET, including those aged 16 and 17 but also those aged 18 and above where the numbers are rising due to the economic problems caused by the pandemic. The post-16 strategy aims to minimise the number of young people who are NEET.

Achievement of Disadvantaged Pupils, pupils with SEND and other Vulnerable Groups (including Children in Need)

This is another priority in our Schools and Settings Improvement Strategy. The aim is to eliminate differences in the performance of groups of pupils. The North London Disproportionality Dataset shows, for 2019, the ratio of black pupils in Barnet attaining the expected standard at KS2 and 4 compared to white pupils is low (a negative Relative Rate Index RRI) and in some cases is the lowest or second lowest in North London. The post-16 strategy aims to ensure no groups of young people aged 16 to 25 are educationally disadvantaged.

Looked After Children

Improving the achievement levels of looked after children is a key priority in the Schools and Settings Improvement Strategy. In 2019 Barnet ranked 18th nationally in Progress 8 for looked after young people and ranked 49th in Attainment 8 – both better than the national average position but much worse than the rankings for all Barnet pupils, where Barnet ranks in the top 10% nationally. There were 44 Barnet Looked After Children who took GCSEs in 2020. 28 of the 44 students attended schools outside of Barnet. 16 of the 44 LAC who took GCSEs achieved a 4+ in English (36%) and 12 achieved a 4+ in Maths (27%). 11 achieved a 4+ in both (25%). In addition to GCSEs, young people achieved a range of other qualifications e.g. BTECs and functional skills. In the Autumn Term 2020 Barnet had over 130 Looked After young people aged 16 years or over (106 male and 33 female), 91% of whom were from ethnic minority groups and 70 of these were unaccompanied asylum seekers. In 2019-20 the percentage of Barnet looked after 16- and 17-year-olds who were NEET was 10.8%, compared to 1% for Barnet as a whole. The post-16 strategy aims to ensure as few Looked After Children and Care-leavers as possible are not in employment, education or training (NEET).

Community integration and independence for young people with SEND

One of the main priorities of our SEND and Inclusion strategy is to develop skills, knowledge and understanding across the workforce and local area to create supporting environments that promote community integration and independence, enabling young people with SEND to make

informed decisions and have control over their own lives. Key to this is supporting children and young people with SEND to achieve a successful transition into adulthood.

Progress has been made, including the development of our multi-agency Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) Protocol (2018 – 2021), co-produced with parents, which details the responsibilities of the agencies involved in transition planning for young people with complex needs. This can be found on our Local Offer. We continue to need to strengthen our planning and tracking of post-16 provision to ensure that there are appropriate opportunities, including supported internships, for young people with complex needs and tailored work-based and voluntary opportunities.

Our aims are to ensure that:

- Young people with SEND leave school with an option of education, training or employment.
- There is good planning for adult life and young people with SEND and their families report increased choice and control with regard to living independently, having good health and opportunities to take part in a range of activities including supported internships and employment.
- Young people with SEND report that they have choice and control over their lives and the support they receive.
- There is an increase in the take-up of personal budgets, particularly by young people post 16.
- More young people with SEND are travelling as independently as possible, including introducing pick up points for SEND transport, where appropriate and increasing the offer of 'travel training'.

The post-16 strategy aims to contribute to the achievement of these aims.

Strategic objectives of the Post-16 Education and Skills Strategy

Our approach is underpinned by the following strategic objectives of the post-16 education and skills strategy:

Strategic Objective 1: ***Extend the opportunities for young people to access vocational and technical programmes*** by developing vocational pathways and the curriculum through partnerships and collaborative approaches with post-16 providers.

Strategic Objective 2: ***Minimise the number of young people who are NEET***, by developing the employability skills and resilience of young people and by ensuring excellent transition support and interventions for all young people, especially those at risk of becoming NEET or who are already NEET.

Strategic Objective 3: ***Increase the opportunities for disadvantaged young people to progress to suitable education, training and employment***, including care leavers and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

D National Context

Legal duties

The local authority has a duty to secure sufficient suitable education and training provision for all young people aged 16-18 (aged up to 25 for young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan). This is challenging as local authorities have little leverage on providers and most of the funding to providers is determined nationally. The main issue for Barnet is the strongly academic nature of school sixth-form provision and the corresponding lack of vocational provision in schools. The duty is met by close partnership working between the BELS post-16 team, secondary schools, colleges and other training providers.

The local authority also has a duty to encourage, enable and support young people to participate in post-16 education or training.

Appendix 2 provides more details of the legal duties of local authorities in respect of post-16 education and skills, and details of school responsibilities in respect of careers education, information, advice and guidance.

Skills for Jobs White Paper

In January 2021, the government published the Skills for Jobs White Paper: ‘Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth’.

The economic disruption and high levels of unemployment caused by the covid19 pandemic and the consequent rapid changes to the labour market mean that the commitment in the White Paper to financial support for a lifetime of learning is now more important than ever, particularly to ensure that the most disadvantaged have the means and opportunity to secure good, fulfilling work through access to high quality, flexible learning.

The White Paper sets out reforms to post-16 technical education and training to support people to develop the skills needed to get good jobs and improve national productivity. There is a clear focus on the pivotal role that further and technical education has in helping people get skills for good jobs now and in the future; and there is clear recognition of the value of technical education, dispelling the notion that only degrees can lead to a good job.

This White Paper outlines how the government proposes to ‘support people to develop the skills they need to get good jobs’, including measures to:

- give employers a greater say in the development of skills;
- provide higher level technical skills;
- provide a flexible, lifetime skills guarantee;
- simplify and reform funding and accountability for providers;
- support outstanding teaching.

The White Paper sets out 35 reforms which are split into five categories; “employers at the heart of post-16 skills”, “advanced technical and higher technical skills”, “a flexible lifetime guarantee”, “responsive providers supported by effective accountability”, “governance and intervention” and “supporting outstanding teaching”.

The key measures in the White Paper, in the words of the DfE, include:

- Business groups, including Chambers of Commerce, working alongside colleges to develop tailored skills plans to meet local training needs; supported by a £65 million Strategic Development Fund to put the plans into action and establish new College Business Centres to drive innovation and enhanced collaboration with employers.
- Giving employers a central role in designing almost all technical courses by 2030, to ensure that the education and training people receive is directly linked to the skills needed for real jobs.
- Boosting the quality and uptake of Higher Technical Qualifications – that provide the skills that many employers say they need and that can lead to higher wages – by introducing newly approved qualifications from September 2022 supported by a government-backed brand and quality mark.
- Changing the law so that from 2025 people can access flexible student finance so they can train and retrain throughout their lives, supported by funding in 21/22 to test ways to boost access to more modular and flexible learning.
- Launching a nationwide recruitment campaign to get more talented individuals to teach in further education and investing in high quality professional development including a new Workforce Industry Exchange Programme.

- Overhauling the funding and accountability rules, so funding is better targeted at supporting high quality education and training that meets the needs of employers; and introducing new powers to intervene when colleges are failing to deliver good outcomes for the communities they serve.

A full set of the decisions from the White Paper is attached as Appendix 2.

The BELS post-16 Education and Skills team will work with the council's regeneration team and other partners to develop a plan for responding to and taking advantage of the proposals in the White Paper in order to maximise the impact on skills development, reducing the number of young people who are NEET and the development of sustainable jobs locally. Initial planned action by BELS in response to the White Paper is set out in section F below.

The Covid19 Pandemic

As a result of the pandemic, the borough has seen an increase in unemployment over the last year, with 10,200 people out of work at the end of 2020, a rate of 4.9%, which is significantly higher than the pre-pandemic level of 3.9%. This is expected to increase further over 2021, in Barnet and nationally, as the impacts of the pandemic and wider structural changes to the economy continue to take effect. Nationally and locally it is clear that young people have suffered the most from the reduction in employment opportunities and disadvantaged young people, such as those with SEND and looked after young people/care-leavers, are impacted the most.

The Covid pandemic has also impacted on the ways in which young people learn and develop. The use of the Internet and digital technology in education and the development of remote/online learning have developed at a rapid rate. This is likely to mean that the post-16 education and training offer in the future will involve a blend of face-to-face and remote learning, which in turn means that providers should be better able to respond to the varying needs of young people and their different learning styles. This paper does not advocate a preferred style of learning but proposes that providers take into account the expansion of digital capabilities and the move towards blended learning when planning their offer.

This strategy aims to respond to the problems, challenges and opportunities that have arisen from the pandemic for young people in respect of their future education, training and employment.

E Local Context

Key Stage 5 outcomes

3+ A grades at GCE/Applied GCE A Level and Double Awards

The proportion of Barnet pupils who attained 3 or more A grades at A level places Barnet just outside the top 5% of LAs nationally in 2020.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Barnet						30.9
London						21.2
England						19.5
Barnet Rank	5 th	7 th	6 th	6 th	7 th	8 th

Percentage of students achieving grades AAB or better at GCE A level, Applied GCE A level and Double Award A level

The proportion of Barnet pupils who attained grades AAB or higher at A level placed Barnet within the top 5% of LAs nationally in 2020.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Barnet						43.6
London						32.2
England						29.9
Barnet Rank	5 th	7 th	7 th	6 th	8 th	7 th

Percentage of students achieving grades AAB or better at A level, of which at least two are in facilitating subjects

The proportion of Barnet pupils who attained grades AAB or higher (with at least 2 in facilitating subjects) at A level placed Barnet within the top 5% of LAs nationally in 2020.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Barnet						33.1
London						24.1
England						21.2

Average Point Score per Entry - Vocational Subjects and A Levels

The picture is less positive in respect of vocational qualifications.

The average point score per entry across A levels is in the top 5% of LAs for pupils in Barnet.

	A Levels	Tech Level	Applied General Studies
Barnet	42.44	30.08	30.43
London	38.91	31.12	31.49
England	38.42	31.21	29.76
Barnet Rank	7 th	110 th	71 st

Barnet ranking for APS for A levels increased in 2020 by one place from 8th to 7th. The rank of APS for Tech Levels has remained the same - between 2009 and 2020 at 110th. Barnet's rank for Applied General APS has declined from 44th to 71st.

It should be noted that the only attainment figure published nationally for Applied General and Technical Level results (vocational qualifications) is the average point score per entry. The average point score for Barnet across the vocational qualification groups of technical qualifications or applied general qualifications was in the lowest 50% of LAs in 2020.

This can largely be explained by the strong focus of nearly all Barnet secondary schools on the teaching of academic subjects at A level and the resultant strong pressure for pupils to take 'A level' courses. In addition to this, the high quality of Barnet schools leads to a greater percentage of students following a post-16 A Level pathway, as the schools are able to support them effectively. This in turn means there is a disproportionately low proportion of higher-attaining pupils studying for technical and general qualifications.

Nonetheless, improving performance in vocational qualifications has been agreed as a priority area by Barnet's School and Settings Standards Partnership Board (SSSPB) and within the School and Settings Improvement Strategy. This greater focus has included an audit of non-academic post-16 options and the creation of a post 16 vocational and technical qualification prospectus which highlights alternatives to A level options across the borough.

NEETs

Overall, the number of Barnet young people aged 16 and 17 who are not engaged in education, employment or training (NEET) is low. The percentage who were NEET in January to March 2020 was only 1.0%, the fifth lowest in London; the percentage of those who were NEET or 'not known' was 1.5%, the best in London. However, the number and percentage of young people

aged 18 and above who are NEET is much higher and there are clear indications that they will increase significantly because of the economic problems caused by the pandemic.

Key Performance Indicators

The Education Strategy includes a number of agreed Key Performance Indicators. One of these relates to the percentage of 16- and 17-year-olds who are NEET. There are two measures for this KPI:

- a) The percentage of 16- and 17-year-olds who are not in education, employment or training.
- b) The combined percentage of 16- and 17-year-olds who are not in education, employment or training or who current activity is not known.

The target for the first measure is 1.7% or the London Top Quartile, whichever is higher. For 2019-20 the level in Barnet (average for January to March) was 1%, the fifth lowest in London, so the target was met.

The target for the second measure is 3.0% or the London Top Quartile, whichever is higher. For 2019-20 the level in Barnet (average for January to March) was 1.5%, the lowest in London, so the target was met.

Barnet's Work, Skills and Productivity Strategy

The council is currently developing a Work, Skills and Productivity Strategy for the local post-covid economy in collaboration with local stakeholders. BELS will contribute to the development of that strategy and the Post-16 Education and Skills Strategy is intended to support and complement the council's broader strategy for the local economy.

The Post-16 Education and Skills Strategy is focussed specifically on the development of skills and prevention of NEETs for young people from secondary school age to 25 years old.

The team will support the wider strategy through:

- Supporting the development of life skills and employability skills for young people.
- Support for the development of job-focussed training for young people linked to employment.
- Supporting young people to find sustainable work, in particular supporting progression to jobs in local, high growth sectors, such as health, care, construction and trades, and creative industries.
- Targeted support for disadvantaged groups, including care leavers and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Leading a coordinated approach to communications over local apprenticeships and ensuring they are targeted at young people.
- Scaling up its activities, subject to the availability of funding, as the council responds to the rising problem of unemployment among young people.

Services provided by the BELS post-16 Education and Skills team

In September 2020, Barnet Council entered into a new strategic partnership with Barnet Education and Learning Service (BELS), a limited company wholly owned by the council, to provide the council's education services. The partnership was established in consultation with Barnet schools and the steering group of the Parent-Carer Forum.

The aim of establishing the partnership is to:

- Maintain and continue to develop Barnet's excellent education offer.
- Maintain and continue to develop the excellent relationship between the Council and schools.

- Achieve further budget savings if required.

The partnership is governed by a series of boards on which schools, settings and other stakeholders are represented that steer the strategic direction of the partnership in delivering school and settings improvement, services for children with special educational needs and school place planning.

The BELS post-16 education and skills team delivers the council's statutory duties in respect of post-16 education and skills and is the council's principal delivery agent in respect of projects to improve the skills and progression of young people and to minimise the number of young people who are NEET. It also supports secondary schools in respect of their duties to provide high quality careers education, information and guidance to their pupils.

The post-16 Education and Skills Team has a track record of delivering successful projects, with the aim of ensuring that young people in Barnet progress successfully to suitable programmes of education or training and then move into sustainable employment, hopefully settling to live and work in the area and contributing to Barnet's communities. A summary of the projects and work delivered in 2020-21 is shown in Appendix 3 of this strategy.

Historically, Barnet has high participation rates for 16- and 17-year-olds, with NEETs figures for this age group among the lowest in London. We have been able to achieve this by having excellent communication with our schools and they have responded by providing timely and robust data so we can report on destinations and follow up on young people not in employment, education or training.

Much of the budget for our post-16 education and skills service is based on fixed-term funding for individual projects and the service was facing a cliff-edge on funding in the second half of 2020-21 because many of the projects were coming to an end in that financial year. However, following a bid to the council by BELS for funding and for a longer-term strategy for investment in this service, the council agreed to new funding for all the project proposals submitted, with a total allocation amounting to £715,000 over the 15 months from January 2021 to March 2022. Details of the approved projects are set out in the following section of the strategy. The council has indicated its intention to review funding beyond that as part of its strategic planning in respect of the local economy, regeneration, skills and jobs.

F Planned Activities in 2021-2

Strategic Objective 1

'Extend the opportunities for young people to access vocational and technical programmes by developing vocational pathways and the curriculum through partnerships and collaborative approaches with post-16 providers.'

A key priority in 2021-22 is to increase access to, and the take-up of, vocational provision.

We will continue to work with our sixth form providers, discussing the viability of programmes and suggesting potential collaboration with other providers where learner numbers are not viable at a single institution.

We will encourage and support good practice networks to improve the quality of vocational provision across the borough; this will include networks in an agreed four vocational subjects in order to share best practice and improve outcomes for young people.

We will encourage the good practice networks to share the learning derived by providers from the Covid19 pandemic in respect of remote and online learning and the development of a blended learning offer of face-to-face and remote learning. We hope this will help providers to improve the offer and the opportunities for young people with a diverse range of needs and different learning styles.

We will continue to work with schools and colleges on developing and implementing a Key Stage 5 strategic plan. During 2021-22, that will include for example:

- Using best practice networks to improve grades across vocational provision within Barnet, e.g. by sharing strategies on how teachers can support students to gain distinctions.
- Researching what further curriculum provision is needed, especially within the vocational landscape, and then supporting groups of schools, and linking with local colleges, in working together to meet these needs, especially around careers advice and guidance and work-related learning within the curriculum.
- Working with secondary schools and local colleges to support the increased provision of, and access to, high quality technical and vocational provision, including the introduction of T Levels.
- Supporting school leaders in their consideration of the introduction of T Levels, and the implications of this for school sixth forms, linking with local colleges to draw on their experience and expertise in respect of technical and vocational education.
- Sharing with school governors the rationale for the KS5 strategic plan and strengthening their understanding of the current KS5 landscape, both nationally and within Barnet.
- Exploring options for extending technical and vocational opportunities through the creation of dedicated technical and vocational sixth-form provision attached to one or more existing sixth-forms; this would involve support for the school in identifying suitable premises and could involve a joint approach to central government to secure the necessary capital and revenue funding.

We will maintain a data dashboard for post-16 education in Barnet to enable providers to benchmark their performance and the achievement of their pupils against other providers.

We will continue to develop and produce the Barnet Vocational Prospectus so that young people are aware of the opportunities within Barnet. Hopefully this will lead to more young people embarking on vocational qualifications nearer to home without feeling the need to travel to other boroughs to access vocational pathways.

We will work with secondary schools and local colleges to ensure that positive messages are delivered to secondary pupils about technical and vocational education opportunities within Barnet and to give pupils easy access to the colleges' open events or to presentations in school from the colleges to promote this local offer. We recognise that Barnet and Southgate College is by the far the largest provider of technical and vocational education in the borough and we will therefore promote it as the local college of first choice for technical and vocational education.

In line with the Barnet's 'Work, Skills and Productivity Strategy' we will encourage young residents into jobs and learning opportunities that have good prospects for progression within the fastest growing sectors of the economy.

We will work closely with colleagues across the council to analyse trends in employability and skills to identify 'growth' employment areas such as health, care, construction & trades, and the creative industries sectors that forecast the fastest growing numbers of new entry level jobs (and realistic progression pathways) to ensure that we provide training and support for young people to meet the demands in employment from local and regional employers.

We will develop employer links to enhance and enrich the vocational curriculum offer, working with a range of partnership groups to identify opportunities and promoting work experience and work opportunities to schools to enhance and complement their curriculum offer. We will disseminate good practice regarding employability initiatives at regular networking events with schools and colleges.

We will develop an Education and Business Partnership to link post-16 education and training providers with local businesses in order to:

- Help to deliver the main aims of the Jobs for Skills White Paper
- Develop the borough's capacity to offer work experience and occupational links to young people to fulfil technical qualification requirements.

- Coordinate future audits of post-16 education provision (building on the work behind the post-16 Prospectus) and plan how the new T- Levels at level 3 will be implemented across the borough so that young people have access to a wide range of technical programmes.
- Link with Further Education and Higher Education providers to encourage and support the development of higher technical pathways that are promoted to young people in Barnet with increased accessibility secured by developing 'access' or 'compact' agreements with these providers.
- Support the development of new traineeships and specialist employability provision by encouraging existing education and training providers with good or outstanding outcomes to develop their existing capacity/provision or to develop new provision within Barnet.

In developing links with local employers, we will take account of the make-up of Barnet's business community, especially the high number of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and micro-businesses. The post-16 team will work with colleagues in the council to seek to engage these types of employers or their representatives.

We will work to ensure that we maximise the benefits for young people arising from the construction phase of the Brent Cross/Cricklewood developments and the end-use jobs arising from that.

We will also work to ensure that we maximise benefits for Barnet young people arising from sub-regional partnerships and opportunities.

Strategic Objective 2

'Minimise the number of young people who are NEET, by developing the employability skills and resilience of young people and by ensuring excellent transition support and interventions for all young people, especially those at risk of becoming NEET or who are already NEET.'

Employability skills and resilience

'The world of work is constantly evolving, with employers looking for a wide range of occupational skills, qualifications and personal competencies. When it comes to recruitment, however, attitudes and aptitudes are often seen as more important than formal qualifications. Although technical and basic skills are required to get past the initial application stage, other aspects such as personal qualities, attitudes, and general aptitudes are then seen as far more critical. Resilience is frequently cited by employers as an essential quality for young people to possess, the ability to cope with setbacks and criticism, be motivated to overcome obstacles, and stay calm under pressure. A positive attitude to work, punctuality, flexibility, verbal communication skills, and the ability to make a professional introduction are all crucial when deciding whether to recruit a young person'. (UCAS 2020)

Our plans for 2021-22 include:

- Developing an employability group with post-16 providers to look at the core skills needed by young people to be effective in the workplace and to develop the resilience to cope with the changes in employment that may be an evitable part of career progression.
- Working with all the post-16 providers in Barnet we will develop employability skills in young people. We will create networks to promote sharing of good practice between providers in the development of employability skills in young people.
- Encouraging and supporting schools to develop work placements and/or employer links.
- Supporting providers to embed employable skills into the curriculum to ensure that young people have an awareness of the skills needed to cope with the transient nature of employment.
- Providing information and support to our providers to ensure that young people can be supported onto programmes that are reactive to training and skills shortages; we will do this based on research and will share with post-16 providers an awareness of skill shortage

areas, so that they may respond to this by developing the appropriate curriculum and programmes.

- Supporting and advising providers to develop in young people the skills needed for employers and industries. We will do this by working with the employer engagement forum to identify local needs, gaps and opportunities and we will promote workshops offering sessions to schools in how they can respond to these.
- Working with employers to identify apprenticeships, supported internships and work placement opportunities.
- Developing a business 'protocol' through the proposed Education Business Partnership to establish the needs and requirements of employers in terms of soft skills and competencies
- Communicating this on a borough-wide basis to schools, colleges and training providers.

NEETs

Overall, the number of Barnet young people aged 16 and 17 who are not engaged in education, employment or training is low. However, the focus must now be on reducing the number of young people dropping out from their programme during the transition from Year 12 to Year 13. There has been an increase in dropout rates where young people move into Year 13. The rate now varies, with some providers having dropout rates of up to 10% of the cohort.

Current NEET figures for young people aged 18 and above are high. 'London Councils' conducted research with Impetus in 2019 that analysed data for young Londoners' outcomes; this established that the levels of NEET for the 18 plus age range in Barnet was 15% before the Covid pandemic. (London Councils 2019)

Young people, particularly those from deprived backgrounds, have had their earnings and job prospects hit hardest by the coronavirus pandemic, adding to fears for the long-term impact on their futures. People aged 16 to 25 were more than twice as likely as older workers to have lost their job, while six in 10 saw their earnings fall. The report also highlighted the impact of school closures on young people and added to growing evidence that students from poorer backgrounds have fallen behind compared with their more privileged peers.

This has led to an extension of measures, such as the Job Support Scheme and the furlough scheme. The Kickstart Scheme, which is operated locally by the council with wraparound support provided by BOOST, provides funding to create new job placements for 16- to 24-year-olds on Universal Credit who are at risk of long-term unemployment.

In August 2020, the DfE wrote to local authorities to reinforce and underline the importance of supporting young people to ensure that they continue to participate in education or training (for 16- to 18-year-olds) and their role in ensuring a continuation of support for keeping high numbers of 16- to 24-year-olds in education. The Government acknowledged that young people have been affected by COVID-19 and that there is a need to ensure that this does not continue to hinder young people's opportunities beyond school, and that they still go on to succeed. Barnet's statutory responsibilities are critical in delivering this. This includes ensuring young people who have their Year 11 education halted or interrupted have an offer for September; and tracking those no longer engaging and supporting them back into participation.

In line with Barnet's 'Work, Skills and Productivity Strategy, we want to enable residents from all backgrounds and communities of the borough to have access to high quality employment, learning and skills opportunities, and for this to happen at a scale that is consistent with the challenge facing us as a result of the pandemic.

The key priority is to ensure that young people are supported onto the correct programmes, so they do not become NEET. At the beginning of the pandemic, we recognised that young people needed timely support and advice on available education courses, as well as employment advice or information on training programmes. In response, we developed a vacancy resource list to give young people up-to-date information on opportunities. We will continue to update this resource and make it more widely available to schools, other providers and partner organisations.

We also developed a dedicated careers and information telephone line to provide support to young people. We will continue to provide this.

During 2020 we established specialised 'pathways' leading to employment for long-term NEET young people, taking into account the impact of COVID on the employment prospects for young people aged 18-24 years. We will continue to provide and develop these targeted pathways.

Our plans for 2021-22 also include:

- Extending our tracking of young people to those aged 18. Statutory guidance indicates that we are required to do this for 16- and 17-year-olds, but in response to the pandemic and the significant increase in NEETs among young people aged 18 and above, we will draw on the additional funding allocated to BELS for post-16 projects to track 18-year-olds and to organise interventions to prevent those at risk of being NEET becoming NEET and to get those who are NEET into education, training or employment.
- Ensuring good quality information and guidance, along with transition support, are provided to young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET, through a mixture of school-based sessions, virtual sessions and through the post-16 IAG and Careers Information Telephone line.
- Continuing to offer a borough-wide careers education service on a traded basis for young people in Years 8 to 13. The aim of the provision is to ensure young people have a clear understanding of the provision on offer in both schools and colleges and the pathways to employment.
- Continuing to offer audits of schools' and colleges' IAG provision to ensure IAG is independent, sufficient and impartial and in line with Gatsby Benchmarks.
- Developing further our communication strategy with young people, schools and parents so that they are fully aware of the range of Post-16 options available to them.
- Creating a calendar of regular careers and networking events for schools and Post-16 providers.
- Working with providers:
 - to develop further the Barnet Post-16 Transition Protocol to ensure it is a suitable tool to support post-16 providers with information on how to support young people as they go through the transition between education providers and programmes or as they move from education into training or employment.
 - to ensure relevant information on young people with additional needs is transferred from the existing provider to the new provider in time for sufficient and suitable support to be put in place for each learner.
 - to promote good knowledge of post-16 options to young people, so that young people can be supported through the transition between and within settings.
 - to ensure parents and carers have good information on available pathways and opportunities and are supported to have high aspirations for young people.
 - to ensure young people have sufficient information to choose the most suitable Post 16 provision in relation to their employment and higher education aspirations.
 - drawing on the expertise and resources of Barnet and Southgate College and the BELS Careers, Information, Advice and Guidance Service in ensuring appropriate support, guidance, careers advice and training and learning opportunities are offered to NEET young people aged 18 and over.

Projects

Risk of NEET project

The Risk of NEET (RON) programme has been devised to minimise the number of young people who become NEET aged 16-19 years. Schools and colleges already have in place interventions to support learners who are vulnerable or likely to disengage. However, there is a hard to reach cohort of young people who, after these interventions, are still at high risk of being NEET by the age of 19 and therefore are likely to be become dependent on state benefits. The RONI programme has two elements:

- use of data to identify those at risk of becoming NEET and
- a mentoring and IAG support package as part of re-engagement support.

The post-16 team will continue to work with local secondary schools to develop and refine data system for early identification of young people at risk of becoming NEET at the end of Year 11 and to create programmes for students from Year 10 upwards aimed at ensuring those at risk progressing to a sustainable destination of employment, education or training (particularly learners with SEND and young men from black heritage backgrounds and white British backgrounds). The team will also work closely with the Youth Offending Service to identify those at risk and suitable programmes.

Future Pathways – Targeted NEETS project

BELS has also been successful in bidding for funding from the Mayor of London's European Social Fund. The charity, Catch 22, was appointed as lead bidder for the West London area and BELS put its name to the bid along with the London Boroughs of Hounslow and Ealing. Funding has been approved over the next two years.

The project provides extra funding for work on NEETS with a focus on young people aged 16 to 24 who are:

- Looked After or care leavers; or
- Homeless or at risk of being homeless; or
- Who fall into two or more of the categories below:
 - lone parent
 - in problem debt (minimum of £1,000)
 - young carer
 - involved in substance misuse
 - involved in criminal activity

The project will focus in particular on Looked After Children who are NEET, linking with the Care-Leavers project (see below).

Access for All – Routes to Construction project

Barnet Schools perform well, particularly at end Key Stage 4 and 5 (academic levels). However, there are groups of vulnerable young people who do not perform so well and there are significant pockets of young people who are not in employment, education or training. In addition to this, many learners with SEN (without EHCPs) do not have access to sufficient diverse pathways, particularly pathways that lead to employment and independent living.

Working with the council's Regeneration team (S106), the post-16 team established and have been delivering the Routes into Construction programme since 2019. The project is designed to align with employers' needs and is designed predominantly to support young people who are NEET at Post-16.

During Phase 2 of the programme from January 2021 to August 2022, we will recruit unemployed young people aged 16 to 24 and will provide training and support to enable them to move into sustained employment in Construction sites within Barnet.

BOOST Project

This project offers intensive support to young, unemployed people in Burnt Oak ward as part of the council's Working People, Working Places project.

The post-16 team will:

- Use a range of proactive engagement techniques to reach out to young unemployed people in Burnt Oak ward with the aim of getting young people interested in the Jobs Team offer and signing up for support.
- Provide one to one, holistic assessments taking into account job barriers and next steps, job goals, skills and experience, income, any vulnerabilities and risks and links with other support (including statutory organisations)
- Develop action plans including relevant signposting, information sharing and case conferencing.
- Arrange delivery of interventions including a mix of one to one and group sessions.
- Offer support that develops young people's skills to live independently and maintain a tenancy.
- Link up with employer engagement activities within the Jobs Team and directly link to employers with a focus on employing young people
- Conduct job brokerage for the targeted young people, supporting them into paid employment and providing in-work support to help them sustain the role.

Strategic Objective 3

'Increase the opportunities for disadvantaged young people to progress to suitable education, training and employment, including care leavers and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.'

In addition to the Care-Leavers and Supported Internships projects, described below, we will continue to prioritise targeted support for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.

We will develop specific targeted work for any groups who appear to be disproportionately affected by the reductions in employment opportunities as a result of the pandemic, such as young black people.

We will produce a post-16 resource focusing on mental health services for young people. We will work with community organisations that support mentoring and mental health support for young people. Young people using this resource will be signposted to online resources specifically aimed at them. We will also provide information and any resource information to providers so that they are able to support young people.

We will also seek to support young people with additional needs through transition by aiming:

- to prioritise advice and support for children with additional needs from Year 9 onwards and for young adults who will transition to adult social care.
- to signpost transition pathways for all young people who require SEND support.
- to ensure, in line with our Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) Protocol, that all Year 9 Annual Reviews include a transition plan and that all Year 9 pupils with EHCPs have transitions explicitly discussed and documented as part of their Annual Review.
- to have a SEND IAG Adviser available to work with schools to improve IAG for young people with SEND.

- to review existing protocols for permanently excluded and home educated young people to support transition choices.

As part of our SEND and Inclusion Strategy, we will:

- Develop the Local Offer to include a dedicated post-16 Zone for education providers and we will work with young people to develop more information for the Young People's Zone which is relevant, interesting and useful to those who access it.
- Facilitate the sharing of best practice in support for young people with SEND across colleges and other post 16 providers.
- Embed preparation for adulthood at the earliest point in Annual Reviews.
- Continue to develop and embed a range of pathways for post-16 young people with SEND, including supported internships, apprenticeships, voluntary and paid employment.
- Strengthen the offer of Personal Budgets for families and further develop this process to give them greater choice and flexibility about how their child's needs can be met.
- Support young people with Independent Travel Training.

Projects:

Care Leavers Participation Project

The Care Leavers Participation Project delivered by BELS, has been commissioned with the aim of increasing Education, Employment and Training (EET) levels amongst care leavers aged 16-25 in line with Barnet's Corporate Parenting priorities. This work includes delivering sessions, and running events to promote post-16 options, and working with key stakeholders to develop an understanding of best practice in supporting care leavers.:

The BELS post-16 team will work with Family Services managers and key staff to identify, track and improve data quality on Care Leavers who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET. We will support and develop pathways at post-16 including re-engagement, traineeships and apprenticeships. We will also support 'Onwards and Upwards' practice through surgeries and one to ones with staff and personal advisers and provide coaching and mentoring.

Supported Internships Project

The aim of supported internships is to prepare young people with complex needs for paid employment by: supporting them to develop the skills valued by employers They enable young people aged 16-24 with an Education, Health and Care Plan to achieve sustainable paid employment by equipping them with the skills they need for work, through learning in the workplace. This allows young people to become financially independent and to contribute practically, socially and financially within the wider community.

We will identify and recruit more employers to provide supported internships and apprenticeship opportunities; aiming for a 10% increase each year in the number of supported internships available. We will seek to ensure that initiatives such as job sharing and job carving are negotiated for the interns so that they can cope with long term employment.

Appendix 1

Responsibilities of local authorities in relation to young people in post-16 education, employment and training

As set out in the Government's statutory guidance for local authorities '*Participation of young people in education, employment or training, September 2016*' local authorities have a) broad duties to promote participation and b) specific duties in relation to RPA (Raising the Participation Age).

Broad duties: Local authorities have a broad duty 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 13-19 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 under Section 68 of the Education and Skills Act 2008.

In relation to these broad duties, the statutory guidance states that local authorities should provide strategic leadership in their areas to support participation in education, training and employment - working with and influencing partners by:

- ensuring a focus on participation is embedded and communicated throughout the authority's services for children and young people;
- ensuring the services for young people in the local area come together to meet the needs of young people – including funding for education and training places and re-engagement provision;
- agreeing ways of working with other partners such as Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), Jobcentre Plus, employers, voluntary and community sector organisations, health services (including mental health services), youth offending teams, the police, and probation services; and working with neighbouring authorities, especially where young people routinely travel out of the area to access education and training, for work or other services.

Specific duties: There are two specific RPA-related duties on local authorities with regard to 16 and 17 year olds:

- **Duty to promote participation:** Local authorities must promote the effective participation in education and training of 16 and 17 year olds in their area with a view to ensuring that those persons fulfil the duty to participate in education or training. A key element of this is identifying the young people in their area who are covered by the duty to participate and encouraging them to find a suitable education or training place.
- **Duty to identify young people not participating:** Local authorities must make arrangements – i.e. maintain a tracking system - to identify 16 and 17 year olds who are not participating 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. Robust tracking also provides the local authority with information that will help to ensure that suitable education and training provision is available and that resources can be targeted effectively.

Every young person who reaches the age of 16 or 17 in any given academic year is entitled to an offer of a suitable place by the end of September, to continue in education or training the

following year. Local authorities are required to lead the process (September Guarantee) for 16 year olds who are educated in their area and 17 year olds who are resident in their area.

Careers guidance

Local authorities no longer have a distinct careers guidance duty. The Education and Skills Act 2008 section 69 provided the Secretary of State with the power to issue directions to local authorities relating to support services; this section was the means by which the Secretary of State previously instructed local authorities to deliver the Connexions Service. The Education Act 2011 repealed section 69. More responsibilities now rest with schools and colleges.

Along with the establishment of the National Careers Service, the repeal of section 69 means that local authorities are no longer required to provide careers guidance when supporting young people not in education, employment, or training (NEET). However, in practice, the requirement to 'support' vulnerable young people has led to some ambiguity (as there is no statutory definition of 'vulnerable') as to whether support without IAG can be effective.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 amended the Children Act 1989 to introduce a new duty on local authorities to promote the education of certain previously looked-after children. Local authorities now have a duty to ensure that care leavers have access to careers advice and are offered work experience.

The Government's careers strategy was published on 4 December 2017¹ and was followed by statutory guidance issued in January 2018 ('*Careers Guidance and access for education and training providers - Statutory guidance for governing bodies, school leaders and school staff*')

This guidance sets out the legal requirements for schools:

- Every school *must* ensure that pupils are provided with independent careers guidance from Year 8 to Year 13. (This legal duty came into force in September 2012).
- Every school *must* ensure that there is an opportunity for a range of education and training providers to access all pupils in Year 8 to Year 13 for the purpose of informing them about approved technical education qualifications or apprenticeships. (This legal duty came into force on 2nd January 2018).
- Every school *must* publish a policy statement setting out their arrangements for provider access and ensure that it is followed. (This legal duty came into force on 2nd January 2018).

In addition, the guidance states that:

- From January 2018 to the end of 2020, every school *should* begin using the Gatsby Benchmarks (see below) to improve careers provision now, and meet them by the end of 2020. The benchmarks are not a statutory framework but there is a clear expectation that schools will use them to ensure they are meeting the above legal requirements.
- Every school *should* begin to offer every young person seven encounters with employers – at least one each year from Year 7 to Year 13 – and meet this in full by the end of 2020. Some of these encounters should be with STEM employers.
- From September 2018, every school *should* appoint a named person to the role of Careers Leader to lead the careers programme.
- From September 2018, every school will be expected to publish details of their careers programme for young people and their parents.

Gatsby Benchmarks

The eight Gatsby benchmarks are:

- A stable careers programme
- Learning from career and labour market information
- Addressing the needs of each pupil

¹ *Careers strategy: making the most of everyone's skills and talents, December 2017*

- Linking curriculum learning to careers
- Encounters with employers and employees
- Experiences of workplaces
- Encounters with further and higher education
- Personal guidance

Improving the delivery of careers advice in schools and colleges

The Skills for Jobs White Paper published in January 2021 (see Appendix 2) includes specific proposals to improve careers education in schools and colleges.

The government introduced the 'Baker Clause' in 2018, which requires schools to provide opportunities for every pupil, including those with special educational needs and disabilities, to meet apprenticeship providers and learn about technical education options.

The White Paper indicates that the government will now introduce a three-point-plan to enforce the Baker Clause: a new minimum requirement about who is to be given access to which pupils and when; tougher formal action against non-compliance; and government-funded careers support for schools to be made conditional on Baker Clause compliance.

Alongside this, they proposed to lower the age range of the duty on schools to provide independent careers guidance, requiring schools to offer this support from year seven, bringing it in line with the Gatsby Benchmarks.

The government will publish updated guidance setting out what it expects for secondary schools (as statutory guidance) and colleges (as a requirement for funding). They also propose to ask Ofsted to undertake a thematic review to provide an up-to-date assessment of careers guidance in schools and colleges and provide recommendations to improve practice.

Appendix 2

Skills for Jobs White Paper - Summary of decisions

The following is lifted from the DfE's Executive Summary of the White Paper.

This White Paper sets out planned reforms to the further education and technical training system. Subject to parliamentary approval, it is the Government's intention that many of these reforms will be implemented through future primary legislation. We will also consult on proposals where appropriate and where that is the case the final policy will be subject to taking consultation responses into account. A summary of key decisions is included here.

Putting employers at the heart of post-16 skills:

- Give employers a central role working with further education colleges, other providers and local stakeholders to develop new **Local Skills Improvement Plans** which shape technical skills provision so that it meets local labour market skills needs.
- Pilot Local Skills Improvement Plans in **Trailblazer local areas**, exploring an approach where they are led by accredited **Chambers of Commerce** and other business representative organisations in collaboration with local providers; and engage employer and provider groups to ensure we create the most effective models of employer representation before wider rollout.
- Make **Strategic Development Funding** available in 2021/22 in a number of pilot areas to support colleges to reshape their provision to address local priorities that have been agreed with local employers.
- Ensure government has up-to-date and expert advice on the labour market and national skills gaps from the **Skills and Productivity Board**.
- Align the substantial majority of post-16 technical and higher technical education and training to **employer-led standards** set by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, so skills provision meets skills need.
- Continue to improve and grow **apprenticeships**, so more employers and individuals can benefit from them as part of the **Lifetime Skills Guarantee**.
- Improve the quality of **traineeships**, to better support young people to transition to apprenticeships and other occupations.
- Continue to support participation in **English, maths, and digital training** to meet employers' needs and support people to progress in employment or further study.
- Invite proposals through the Strategic Development Fund to establish **College Business Centres** within further education colleges to work with employers in a designated sector on business development and innovation.

Providing the advanced technical and higher technical skills the nation needs:

- Use the new £2.5 billion **National Skills Fund** to enhance the funding to support adults to upskill and reskill. This will include an offer, backed by £95 million in 2021-22, for all adults to achieve their first full advanced (level 3) qualification as part of the Lifetime Skills Guarantee.
- Expand our flagship **Institutes of Technology** programme to every part of the country by the end of this Parliament, to spearhead the increase in higher-level technical skills in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths.
- Continue to roll out **T Levels**, to prepare students for entry into skilled employment or higher levels of technical study, including apprenticeships.

- **Reform higher technical education** (levels 4 and 5) with a new approval system based on employer-led standards.
- Create clear **progression** routes for students towards the higher-level technical qualifications that employers need.

A flexible Lifetime Skills Guarantee:

- Implement the flexible **Lifelong Loan Entitlement** to the equivalent of four years of post-18 education from 2025.
- As a pathway towards the Lifelong Loan Entitlement, we will stimulate the provision of high-quality higher technical education (levels 4 and 5), as we work towards making it as easy to get a **student finance** loan for an approved Higher Technical Qualification as it is for a full-length degree.
- Introduce pilots to stimulate higher technical education and incentivise more flexible and modular provision.
- Determine how we can best stimulate credit transfer between institutions and courses.
- Consult on the detail and scope of the Lifelong Loan Entitlement in 2021.
- Improve how teaching is delivered so that it is more accessible, with the use of **digital and blended learning**.
- Provide **clear information about career outcomes** through occupational maps, wage returns data and ensuring providers give pupils information about all options.

Responsive providers supported by effective accountability, governance, and intervention:

- We will consult on the following proposals to reform our funding and accountability system:
 - **Simplification** and streamlining of funding for further education to support high-value provision relevant to the labour market, with elements of simplified and streamlined funding to be tested ahead of consultation.
 - Give more certainty to providers over their funding, including considering how we could move to a **multi-year funding** regime.
 - Reform our accountability approach, relaxing ringfences and reporting; instead focusing on **outcomes**.
 - Introduce new accountability structures to underpin the **delivery of Local Skills Improvement Plans**.
- We will continue to invest in the college estate, to transform facilities and enable high-quality provision.
- Introduce **new powers for the Secretary of State for Education**, so the government can intervene quickly and decisively in cases where there are persistent problems that cannot otherwise be addressed, either with colleges not delivering effectively or where local providers are unable to deliver the skills priorities for that area.
- Strengthen the **governance** of colleges, by taking a clearer position on what good governance and leadership looks like and placing specific requirements on colleges and other provider types.
- Ensure that **subcontracting** practices improve educational outcomes.

Supporting outstanding teaching:

- Launch a **national recruitment campaign** for teachers in further education settings.
- Base **Initial Teacher Education** on employer-led standards.

- Improve the provision of high-quality **professional development** and support progression for teachers.
- Facilitate a strong relationship between **industry** and providers.
- Support **apprenticeships** teachers and lecturers with a tailored professional development offer.
- Introduce comprehensive **workforce data collection**.

Appendix 3

Projects and work delivered by the BELS post-16 Education and Skills team in 2020-21

1. Projects during the 2020-21 financial year

1.1 Risk of NEET Project

The Risk of NEET programme worked intensively with 8 Barnet secondary schools, where it identified young people who were at risk of exclusion or at risk of not progressing into post-16 education, employment or training at 16. It is an early intervention programme using 'Risk of NEET' indicators to target at risk young people and to work with them (mentoring, careers advice, support in accessing further education, training or employment) to try to prevent them from becoming NEET. The programme worked with over 100 young people in Year 11, provided mentoring and specialised IAG support and guidance.

Work continued with these young people over the summer months ensuring that they made a successful transition into education or employment. The success rate for this programme was 90%.

The project was funded from the GLA's 'Strategic Investment Pot' (funded from business rates) via the West London Alliance. The funding ended in July. The programme was already operating at a substantially reduced level compared to 2016-17 and 2017-18 when it operated under the Opportunities for Young People (NEETS) programme. However, an expanded programme was agreed with effect from January 2021 (see section F of the post-16 Education and Skills Strategy)

1.2 Skills Escalator

The Skills Escalator programme was designed to work with working adults in receipt of housing benefit. The programme mainly provided information advice and guidance for people in work and receiving benefits with the aim of supporting people into better paid employment and signposted them to in-work support to help them sustain their role in better paid employment with the aim that they would stop claiming benefits.

The aim was to involve over 50 participants, with at least 35 receiving two or more IAG sessions. This was achieved. Funding for the Skills Escalator project ended in July 2020.

1.3 BOOST

The post-16 team delivers key aspects of the 'Working People, Working Places' programme (BOOST).

Working with Barnet Homes, our 'Barnet Education, Employment and Training Service' (BEETS) Advisers provide Intensive support to young, unemployed people in Burnt Oak ward. Referrals come from a variety of organisations. Young people can also walk into the centre and see a Careers Advisers then or make an appointment.

Advisers have a caseload of 100 young, unemployed people per year. They provide an Active key worker role with 20 hardest to reach, and 40 'other' young unemployed people. To achieve this number, it takes numerous interventions, constant pursuing, supporting with CVs, interviews, mentoring, and generally guiding them, as a lot of the client are extremely vulnerable. There are also quite a few gang affiliations that need to be addressed as part of the process. Advisers work hard on developing motivation for the young people to turn up for the interview and then to turn up for the first day of work if they secure employment. Their work also includes follow ups at various times once the young person is employed, to ensure sustainable employment.

Our Advisers also provide a 'checking in' role with 40 young people - checking in and chasing up any young people who are not yet in Education, Employment or Training (EET), or are in EET

but need support to sustain this. Advisers also undertake Assessments, Action Plans and interventions.

Barnet Homes commissioned two Advisers from BEETS in 2019-20, reducing to one Adviser in 2020-21. Funding was due to end on 31 March 2021 but the council has agreed to fund it for a further year.

1.4 Routes into Construction

Working with the Regeneration Department (S106) we established and delivered a new and bespoke training project - 'Routes into Construction programme'. The project was designed to align with employers' needs and was for young people aged 14-16 and Post-16.

We worked with local secondary schools to identify students from Year 10 upwards at risk of becoming NEET at the end of Year 11. We also worked with long-term NEET young people to support them to progress to a sustainable destination of employment, education or training (particularly learners with SEND).

This project recruited 35 unemployed young people aged 16 to 24 and has been training them for job roles in Construction sites within Barnet. We worked with Re- to identify opportunities for Apprenticeships and how we could support young people to gain these opportunities. The first cohort started on 4th November 2019 and were trained by 'Skills Training' and undertook work experience with construction companies based in Barnet. In addition to this, we worked with 16 young people aged 14-16 years at risk of exclusion or at risk of being NEET - providing basic training and work experience including site visits.

This project was funded initially for 10 months but delivery was interrupted by the Covid19 pandemic. The project recommenced in September working with a group of 17 learners who undertook CSCS training and were supported into work placements with Transport for London and local construction companies. The target was for 60% of young people to progress into Education, Employment or Training. The initial funding (phase 1) was due to end in August 2020, but was extended to the end of December 2020.

The council has now approved a second phase of the project, which will provide continued funding until August 2022.

1.5 Care Leavers Project

This project was commissioned to support care leavers who became NEET. This has been a very successful project and was praised by inspectors during the ILACS inspection in 2019. The Care Leavers Participation Project was commissioned with the aim of increasing Education, Employment and Training (EET) levels amongst care leavers aged 16-25 in line with Barnet's Corporate Parenting and Ofsted Improvement Plan priorities. This work included delivering sessions and running events to promote post-16 options and working with key stakeholders to develop an understanding of best practice in supporting care leavers and disseminating key findings to key stakeholders to shape corporate service improvements. The project involved working collaboratively with a range of partners including:

- The Onwards and Upwards team
- The Virtual School
- Job Centre Plus
- The Growth and Development Team in the Commissioning Group

Key Project Outcomes

Prior to the project, of the 242 care leavers aged 18-25, 87 (36%) were NEET, and the destinations of 23 (10%) were not known. The key project objectives were:

- To increase participation by 20%.
- To reduce the numbers of NEETs, and not knowns by 25%.

- To improve practice in increasing EET (particularly in Onward and Upwards, Virtual School, and education providers).
- To ensure care leavers progress to education, employment or training (EET).

To date the programme has achieved the following:

- 51 participants supported into Education, Employment or Training;
- Increased participation by 32%
- Reduced numbers of NEETs and not known by 56%
- Adviser is available 2.5 days per weeks for young people and staff

The funding for the care leavers programme was due to end in March 2021, but the council has extended the funding until March 2022.

2. Core, statutory and traded work undertaken by the post-16 Education and Skills team

As well as the commissioned projects listed above, the post-16 Education and Skills team carried out a range of other work in 20-21, including:

2.1 Development of vocational education provision

In 2019 and 2020 the post-16 team, in collaboration with secondary schools and colleges, produced a post-16 Vocational Education Prospectus, which signposted young people to all the post-16 vocational courses available in Barnet. This helped to provide a strategic overview of the post-16 landscape across the Borough.

During 2019-20 the post-16 team also commissioned a local enquiry into Key Stage 5 provision in Barnet. The enquiry investigated the reasons behind a dip in A level performance in 2019 and the disparity between academic and vocational outcomes. Nearly all secondary schools and both colleges were involved.

The enquiry identified a need to increase opportunities for vocational provision within Barnet while focusing on the quality of provision by developing good practice networks and partnerships.

The post-16 team has started to work with schools individually that are unable to offer courses that are in demand, to support the development of partnerships with other schools (supported by a Barnet A Level prospectus) to give access to those courses to their students; building on the development of blended learning that has occurred through the covid pandemic (a mixture of face to face and online/remote teaching).

Schools and colleges have agreed to collaborate on the development of a Key Stage 5 strategic plan with the aim of enhancing the Key Stage 5 offer, with additional vocational provision, and ensuring a greater proportion of Barnet students are catered for within the Borough instead of travelling to sixth-forms and colleges outside the Borough.

During 2020-21, the following was achieved:

- A Forum of Key Stage 5 Leaders was established which will advise on the development of the KS5 strategic plan
- A 'Google Platform' was developed, which functions as the conduit for all information and collaborative work that participating schools can access and contribute to easily; in particular this facilitates the sharing of student work and the potential for further moderation, and planning as a result of collaborative assessment
- Teacher Networks were established for a range of vocational and A Level subjects (currently three vocational, with more planned, and five academic), where this is a need. The networks are increasingly self-managed. Sharing good practice workshops have begun again with good attendance from schools. The purpose of the workshops is to support practitioners to work with students to achieve higher grades.

- The brokering of arrangements to ensure students are supported more fully by a pan-school approach where this would help them – currently being developed for Oxbridge applications, Medical Entrance Tests, and the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ).

2.2 General NEET work

Advisers from the team use the IYSS database to track young people and record planned destinations of all school leavers. The team then checks their destination via school and college census information or confirmation of proof of employment. For those who have no planned destination the team tracks them to support them to find employment or training contacting individual young people who are not in Education, Employment or Training on a regular basis for targeted support. Each intervention with a young person is logged on IYSS so we can see what work has been done with them and how we can support them to become EET.

This work does not have the same impact as the preventative work carried out through the RONI project but is an essential underpinning of the that project.

2.3 The September Guarantee and Destinations programme

The Post-16 Education and Skills team worked with all providers within and outside of the borough on the September Guarantee Initiative; this is a statutory collection of data provided to the government on how many young people aged 16-18 have been offered places in education, training and employment for September 2020. This provides the baseline data for the Post-16 team to establish where to prioritise support. Barnet's September Guarantee figures for 2020 were 99.2%. This is the highest figure ever achieved for Barnet since the reporting of figures to the DfE began. This figure was also the highest within the West London Alliance Boroughs for 2020.

To help achieve that, the post-16 team had written to all school sixth forms, colleges and private training providers to establish live vacancies that were available across the borough, so that post-16 Advisers could refer young people for apprenticeship and education vacancies that were immediately available. This vacancy list is then regularly updated so it provides an important resource for post-16 Advisers to guide young people, in order to avoid disengagement and disappointment of applying for vacancies that have already been taken or have closed.

The September Guarantee was a particular challenge during 2020 due to the disruption to education and the economy caused by the covid pandemic. Barnet and Southgate College played major role in helping to meet the Guarantee target through its 'Back on Track' initiative. This was a guaranteed by the college of a place on a course for any young person who applied. The post-16 Team worked with the college to support young people to enrol on suitable college courses. This initiative was also promoted to young people via social media by the College and Barnet Council's Communications Team.

2.4 Careers Advice in schools

Advisers from the team provide a traded Careers, Information and Guidance service for Year 11 pupils in schools, including support with next steps and transition. Ten secondary schools buy into this service. As a result the team works with over 3,500 students every year, equipping them with the skills, knowledge and support they need to achieve the career they want. During the period of school closures from March to July 2020, students were supported remotely through a mixture of telephone and online meetings.

The team also works with individual schools to help identify gaps in provision and to develop the school's careers curriculum and support them to achieve the Gatsby benchmarks and meet statutory duties. The eight Gatsby benchmarks of Good Career Guidance are:

1. A stable careers programme
2. Learning from career and labour market information
3. Addressing the needs of each pupil
4. Linking curriculum learning to careers

5. Encounters with employers and employees
6. Experiences of workplaces
7. Encounters with further and higher education
8. Personal guidance

Full details of the Gatsby benchmarks can be found here: <https://www.goodcareerguidance.org.uk/>

2.5 Transition Strategy for Post-16 providers

The post-16 team developed a Post-16 Transition Strategy in the summer of 2020 with school sixth forms, colleges and training providers. The strategy outlined a number of support mechanisms, including advice and guidance for schools and colleges, a list of available support for students both within and external to Barnet and an Action Plan outlining the support available to students.

If young people needed to change their programme at a Barnet post-16 provider, this was supported by the provider and an alert was sent to the BELS post-16 Team, so that an adviser could be deployed to support the young person to a successful transition. The post-16 Team worked with schools and post-16 providers to ensure they were notified where a young person left a provider programme of learning. This would then be updated on the central management information system, IYSS (Integrated Youth Support Service System – check), and the young person would be offered support.

The post-16 team worked with post-16 providers to ensure that all post-16 students received a 'Transition Entitlement' over the Summer of 2020. This included:

- opportunities to continue to develop skills for learning, life and work with a continuous focus on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing;
- personal support to enable them to gain as much as possible from the opportunities that the school or college can provide;
- a coherent and well-planned transition programme delivered by the school/college;
- a close liaison between schools and colleges to ensure a smooth transition for all students;
- for students in the Pavilion and Northgate PRUs access to a "Transition Worker/Mentor" with weekly mentoring for the most vulnerable;
- signposts to available sources of support including emotional and wellbeing support;
- events or careers fairs to support the next stage of learning;
- support in moving into positive and sustained destinations within and beyond school/college.

The government allocated funding to Alternative Providers during the pandemic to support the transition of Year 11s to Post-16. The Executive Head of the Pavilion Pupil Referral Unit established a robust plan of support for the young people leaving last year. This included employing a Transition Mentor to work with young people, a summer engagement programme including targeted events at Barnet and Southgate College, plus ongoing support whilst on programme to ensure young people stayed on their courses.

2.6 Supported Internships

The team has a limited central resource for promoting and facilitating Supported Internships for young people with Education, Health and Care Plans. In 2020-21 16 young people secured places with Mencap on the Supported Internship Programme. An adviser from the post-16 team monitors and quality assures the work placements and provides support for the individuals to secure further employment.

The project is beneficial for young people with special educational needs as it means that they move into employment at the end of the programme, resulting in their financial independence and ultimately contributing to Barnet's communities.

Additional funding has been approved by the council for 2021-22 to enable the post-16 team to expand this provision, increasing the number of internships supported and supporting interns with job coaching and sourcing sustained employment. The team will seek to engage more with employers ensuring that initiatives such as job sharing and job carving are negotiated for the interns so that they can cope with long term employment. This would make the SEN commissioning less reliant on college-based programmes that often do not lead to employment.

2.7 Job opportunities and apprenticeships

The Barnet Employment and Skills Group (made up of officers from the council's Regeneration and Finance teams, Barnet Homes and BELS) have been working with developers with existing S106 commitments to identify work opportunities and apprenticeships for young people in Barnet. In addition to this, the Brent Cross Employment and Skills Steering Partnership has established a significant number of employment, apprenticeship and work placement opportunities for young people. This Partnership has identified apprenticeship and supported internship opportunities targeted to young people aged 16-24 years old.