



Post-16 Education and Skills Strategy

London Borough
of Barnet

2024 – 2027

May 2024

Barnet Post-16 Education and Skills Strategy

A Introduction

This updated document highlights continued priorities for the Post 16 landscape in Barnet as well as new areas of work to be undertaken to ensure that young people have greater opportunities to access learning, employment and training. This document outlines the key priorities that will be undertaken by the Post 16 team and its partners until 2028. Reflecting on the last three years, there has been increased collaboration and partnerships with a wide range of internal and external partners. The Post 16 team have contributed to a range of wider agendas to include Children and Young People 2023-27 plan and the Education Strategy 2024 -2028. We have aligned our priorities with the borough's priorities in key areas to include the Early Help Strategy 2023-27, the Youth Justice Strategy, 2023-25 as well as the council's wider economic and growth 'Work, Skills and Productivity Action Plan' 2021-2025.

In the last three years we have intensively supported hundreds of pupils in schools, colleges and the wider community. Our work has impacted on wide range of young people and in 2023/24 we have totaled 36,399 interventions. We have worked collaboratively with many schools, Barnet and Southgate College, Middlesex University and other partners to provide a responsive and effective Post 16 offer to include one-to-one support, employability support, curriculum development and general guidance.

This updated document recognises that we still have more to work to do. It sets out the challenges facing some young people in Barnet in accessing appropriate education, training and employment and our plans for extending the opportunities available to all 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.

The priorities set out in this document will be reported back to a range of governing forums to include Children's Partnership Board, Schools and Settings Standards Partnership Board, SEND and AP Strategic Partnership Board, Youth Justice Board, Early Help Board, Growth and Employment Board and the Corporate Parenting Board.

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 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.

There are 27 secondary schools (inc two Sixth Form Academies), 89 primary schools, three all through schools, four nursery schools, eight special schools (inc one Early Years provision and one Sixth Form SEN Provision) and two pupil referral units. There is also one General Further Education College. Barnet and Southgate College was judged as good in its last full inspection in December 2018. Woodhouse College was judged outstanding at its last full inspection in 2023.

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:

- 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 to diminish the difference between them and their peers.
- Every child receives **high quality education** through a robust curriculum, which is delivered and assessed by expert practitioners. This is done by ensuring that:
 - There are enough school places
 - The provision in all schools is good or outstanding
 - There are high levels of achievement in all phases and strong outcomes
 - A relentless focus on meeting the needs of vulnerable pupils, including those with SEND, in Alternative Provision (AP), children looked after, children on a child protection plan, children in need and children eligible for free school meals
 - Good relationships with schools and settings enabling rigorous monitoring, challenge and support for all schools and settings including the learning that they undertake with their pupils
 - Effective partnership with council services and with external agencies and organisations
- Every child attends a **good or outstanding school**, as judged by Ofsted

Education Strategy - Strategic goals

The Barnet Education Strategy (2024–2027) 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 those needing alternative provision, 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.

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

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

- **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 including AP and special, from early years to post-16, including progress into Higher Education, Apprenticeships or employment.

- **Strategic goal 5 – Achievement and Inclusion – Levelling up and building resilience**

To “level up” 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 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.

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 and social problems relating to the aftermath of the pandemic. The Post-16 strategy aims to minimise the number of young people who are NEET.

One of the main priorities of our SEND and Alternative Provision strategy is to develop skills, knowledge and understanding across the workforce and local area to create supportive 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.

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.
- 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 1 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 Post 16 Education Act 2022

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 Act 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 Skills Post 16 Education Act 2022 set 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 Act outlined 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;

The Skills and Post 16 Education Act of Parliament (2022) sets the stage for a new outlook for post-16 education where every young adult has a range of opportunities open to them, removing the illusion that a degree is the only path to a good career.

The reforms outlined in the Act helps to create more routes into skilled employment in sectors the economy needs such as engineering, digital, clean energy and manufacturing, so more people can secure well-paid jobs in their local areas, levelling up the nation and supporting communities to thrive.

The BELS Post-16 Education and Skills team will work with the council’s employment and skills team and other partners to develop a plan for responding to and taking advantage of the Skills and Post 16 Education Act 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.

E Local Context

Key Stage 5 outcomes

End of Key Stage 5 ‘A Level’ attainment is in the top 5% nationally on all key measures, except in the vocational qualification groups of technical qualifications or applied general qualifications.

Despite a drop in attainment the proportion of Barnet pupils who attained 3 or more A grades at A level in 2023 places Barnet within the top 10% of LAs nationally, and above the national and statistical neighbour averages.

3+ A grades at GCE/Applied GCE A Level and Double Awards					
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Barnet	18.1	30.9	37	30.7	21.6
Statistical Neighbours	13.55	24.73	31.5	24.04	16.8
England	12.3	22.5	28.9	22.7	15.7
Barnet Rank	7	-	-	8	7

KS5: Percentage of students achieving grades AAB or better

Despite a drop in attainment the proportion of Barnet pupils who attained grades AAB or higher at A level in 2023 ranks Barnet 7th LA nationally, and above the national and statistical neighbour averages.

Percentage of students achieving grades AAB or better at GCE A level, Applied GCE A level and Double Award A level					
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Barnet	27.3	43.6	51.4	44.2	34.2
Statistical Neighbours	20.72	35.92	44.08	34.77	25.59
England	20.3	33.5	41.4	34.1	25.2

KS5: Percentage of students achieving grades AAB or better, two in facilitating subjects

Despite a drop in attainment the proportion of Barnet pupils who attained grades AAB or higher (with at least 2 in facilitating subjects) at A level in 2023 ranks Barnet 7th LA nationally, and above the national and statistical neighbour averages.

Percentage of students achieving grades AAB or better at A level, of which at least two are in facilitating subjects					
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Barnet	23.2	33.1	38.3	32.7	25.7
London	15.4	24.6	28.8	22.6	17.7
Statistical Neighbours	17.8	28.4	33.8	26.2	20.5
England	15.8	24.2	28.6	23	18.1
Barnet Rank	7	-	-	7	7

KS5: Average Point Score per Entry**A Levels**

- The average point score per entry across A levels is ranked in the 10th percentile of LAs for pupils in Barnet.

Vocational

- The average point score across the vocational qualification groups of technical qualifications or applied general qualifications is in the lowest 50% of LAs, ranked at the 147th and 145th percentile of LAs, respectively.
- 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 Barnet 86% of the examinations taken at KS5 are A Levels, with 12% Applied General Studies and 2% Technical Level. This compares to only 70% nationally being A Levels, 24% Applied General Studies and 6% Technical Level. As such the vocational student cohort across the borough is relatively small (i.e. only 238 Technical Level Examinations and 1,421 Applied General Studies examinations were taken across Barnet in 2023), and this in turn means some schools have very small cohorts of vocational students compared to the A Level cohort, meaning each student is more statistically significant. The high quality of Barnet schools leads to a greater percentage of students (16 percentage points higher than the national average) following a Post 16 A Level pathway, as the schools are able to support them more effectively. This in turn means there is a disproportionately low proportion of higher-attaining pupils studying for technical and general qualifications. Nonetheless, this continues to be identified as a priority area by Barnet's Schools and Settings Standards Partnership Board (SSSPB) and is being reviewed on a regular basis. This greater focus has included a dedicated member of staff appointed into the Post 16 team and as a result support packages have been implemented for identified schools, an audit of non-academic Post 16 options, the continuation of a Post 16 vocational and technical qualification prospectus which highlights alternatives to A level options across the borough and further initiatives have been adopted to promote vocational and technical qualifications to students and parents/carers within Barnet.

	Best 3 A Levels		A Levels		Tech Level		Applied General	
	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023

Barnet	41.98	38.01	41.74	37.97	27.8	21.73	28.66	25.54
Statistical Neighbours	39.38	35.78	38.92	35.32	30.39	29.81	31.24	29.33
England	39.09	35.63	38.77	35.16	30.61	28.51	31.88	29.56
Barnet Rank	9	9	8	10	125	147	137	145

KS5: Attainment by Age 19

- Whilst the percentage of Barnet pupils achieving at least two A levels by the age of 19 decreased in ranking from 7th in 2022, it remains high in 2023 at 10th, and Barnet continues to be higher than London and national averages.

Percentage achieving at least two A levels by the age of 19					
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Barnet	88.6	92.4	93.5	94.2	92.7
London	80.2	86.9	89.6	90.0	88.8
England	80.0	85.4	87.8	87.5	86.0
Barnet Rank	4	12	14	7	10

KS5: Attainment by Age 19, by FSM status

- By the age of 19, a higher proportion of both FSM and non-FSM CYP have achieved at least two academic results, compared to the national and London averages.
- Attainment for non-FSM pupils in Barnet is ranked 6th, while attainment of FSM pupils is ranked 17th.
- For the proportion of pupils who achieve at least two academic results, the gap in Barnet is wider than the London average, but narrower than the national gap. (-7.9pp compared to -5.5pp and -8.4pp respectively).

Percentage achieving at least two academic results by Free School Meal eligibility		
	FSM	Not FSM
Barnet	85.9	93.8
London	83.2	88.7
England	77.6	86.0
Barnet Rank	17	6

NEETs

Overall, the number of Barnet young people aged 16 and 17 (Statutory reporting to the DfE) who are not engaged in education, employment, or training (NEET) is low. The percentage who were NEET in May 2023 was 0.7%, the second lowest in London; the percentage of who were 'not known' was nil. However, the number and percentage of young people aged 18 and above who are NEET is much higher and the unemployment figures show clear indications that there are many more unemployed among the years of 18-24 years (see below). The Post 16 Team will continue to work with this group to reduce unemployment rates.

Unemployment Rates in Barnet 2023/4

Age Group	Barnet Level	Barnet %	London %
Age 16 – 17	5	0.1	0.1

Age 18 -24	1,420	4.8	5.8
------------	-------	-----	-----

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 2023/24 the level in Barnet (average for January to March) was 0.7%, the second 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 2023/24 the level in Barnet (average for January to March) was 0.7%, the second lowest in London, so the target was met.

Barnet's Work, Skills and Productivity Action Plan 2021-2025

The council's Employment and Skills 'Work, Skills and Productivity Plan 2021-25', working in collaboration with local stakeholders including the Post 16 team aims to ensure that all Barnet residents are be able to succeed in sustainable, good work that benefits them, their families, and the wider economy. This action plan outlines how the council aims to achieve the following:

- Ensuring that young people have the best possible foundation through targeted learning and employment opportunities;
- Minimising the long-term impacts of the pandemic on workers and businesses;
- Creating the jobs of the future by supporting learning and work opportunities in our highest growing sectors;
- Boosting economic productivity and closing the skills gap by ensuring everyone has an opportunity to work, including those furthest from the labour market.

Priority 1 - Supporting Young People of the Plan identifies that: *'We know that those aged 16 to 24 are more likely to be out of work than other age groups, and that it can be a challenge for many young people to get onto a pathway to high quality employment. We will work with our partners to ensure that young people have access to the work and learning opportunities that allow them to succeed, and that we fulfil our role as a corporate parent for those in our care'*

BELS Post 16 Team will collaborate to the development of that plan and support and complement the council's broader strategy for the local economy.

The Post-16 Education and Skills Strategy is focused specifically on the development of skills and prevention of NEETs for young people from secondary school age to 25 years old. But this aligns our strategy with this action plan by working together.

The Post 16 team will support Barnet wider 'Work, Skills and Productivity Action Plan' by:

- Supporting the development of life skills and employability skills for young people.
- Supporting the development of job-focused 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.

- Targeting support for disadvantaged groups, including care leavers, young offenders 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 2023/24 is shown in Appendix 2 of this strategy.

Historically, Barnet has high participation rates for 16- and 17-year-olds, with NEET 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 other providers 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.

F Planned Activities in 2024-2028

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 from 2024- 2028 is to increase access to, and the take-up of, vocational provision.

We will continue to work with our Post 16 providers, discussing the viability of programmes and suggesting potential collaboration with other providers where learner numbers are not viable at a single institution.

Vocational Curriculum Challenges

The defunding of level 3 vocational qualifications (applied generals) which have been identified as overlapping with A levels and T Levels planned in a phased manner from September 2025 presents schools and colleges nationwide with a challenge. Alongside A Levels and T Levels it is proposed students will be able to opt to study one Alternative Academic Qualification (AAQs) alongside 2 A Levels. This curriculum pathway may not be suitable for students who would have historically studied 3 single applied general qualifications as it is more academically rigorous and perhaps therefore not accessible for these students. This leaves students with a lack of options. Examination boards have been developing Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQs) and specifications are yet to be confirmed, these new courses are set to be delivered from September 2025.

Despite the numerous challenges, we will continue to work with schools and colleges on developing a broader a Post 16 curriculum. During 2024-28, 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 T Levels.
- Sharing with school governors the rationale for the KS5 strategic plan and strengthening their understanding of the Post 16 landscape, both nationally and within Barnet.
- 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 Action Plan' 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 a forum to link Post-16 education and training providers with local businesses in order to:

- Develop the borough's capacity to offer work experience and occupational links to young people to fulfil technical qualification requirements.
- 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 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.
- 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 2024-28 include:

- Facilitating and contributing to 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 employability 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 collaborating 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.
- Communicating this on a borough-wide basis to schools, colleges, and training providers.

NEETs and young people who are unemployed.

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. Unemployment rates for young people aged 18 plus are significantly higher than those young people aged under 18. We will work with a range of statutory agencies, community groups and charities to decrease the number of people who are currently unemployed between the ages of 18 – 24 years.

All People	Barnet Level	Barnet %	London %
Age 16 +	11,490	4.6	5.2
Age 16 – 17	5	0.1	0.1
Age 18-24	1,420	4.8	5.8
Age 18 -21	650	4.3	5.8
Age 25 - 49	7,310	5.0	5.3
50+	2755	4.1	5.2

The Post-16 education and skills team have 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 by the end of September for each year. This provides the baseline data for the Post-16 team to establish where to prioritise support. We will use the same approach and processes to support those young people aged 18 – 24 to move in education and training or employment.

- Post-16 Advisers will contact young people without an offer of education or employment and supporting them to gain an opportunity by September of that year.
- The Barnet Employment and Skills group are collaborating 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 have established a significant number of employment, apprenticeships, 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.

In line with Barnet's 'Work, Skills and Productivity Action Plan,' 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.

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

Our plans for 2024-28 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.
- We will deliver the 'Path2Success' programme; this will target pupils in Year 11 who are likely to become NEET at Post 16. This group of pupils will be given support and targeted interventions to ensure a successful transition to a positive destination by the end of Year 11 and follow up support to ensure that they enroll in September of that year or start their employment.
- Support young people who are unemployed up to age of 25 years to find employment or accredited training; working with a range of agencies to include job centres, community centres, housing associations and charities.
- Ensuring good quality information and guidance, along with transition support, are provided to young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET, with face to face, virtual sessions and through the Post-16 IAG and Careers Information Telephone line.
- 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.
- Working with providers:
 - to promote good knowledge of Post-16 options to young people and young adults, 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.

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.

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. Sustainability and upskilling young people.

- 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.
- We will develop our interventions and strategies to ensure that care leavers sustain job outcomes and develop their skills in preparation for further career opportunities.

The Post 16 Team are also working with National Development Trust for Inclusion (NDTI) as part of a DfE project to increase the number of young people who take Supported Internships and move into employment. Our borough target is to have 60 young people with EHCP's enrolling on Supported Internships each year by 2026.

- We will continue to increase the number of young people with education and health care plans to enroll on supported internships. Supported Internships prepare young people with special 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 continue to market supported internships to schools, parents and young people at different forums and through targeted marketing.
- We will continue to increase the number of supported internship providers to increase the breadth and diversity of the programme offer, we have new or developing provision with a range of providers to include Barnet and Southgate College, Mencap and NHS.
- We will continue to monitor the quality of supported internships to ensure that young people are given the appropriate support and opportunities to move into sustainable employment.
- We will continue to work with schools to implement vocational profiles for pupils to support them with transition to vocational pathways at Post 16.
- 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.

We will reduce the number of NEET young people known to the Youth Justice Team.

- In line with the Youth Justice Strategy and action plan, we will continue to have an active representation on the Youth Justice board to shape and support service delivery.
- We will continue to develop our service further to provide a high level of support to meet the needs of young people known to Youth Justice Service.
- We will continue to have an Employment and Education adviser attached to the Youth Justice Team to provide integrated support to young people whilst collaborating with a wide range of professionals on the 'Turnaround' programme.

We will provide more resources to support young people with mental health needs into education and training; the number of young people who are unable to participate in employment, education and training has increased significantly. In response to this need:

- We will produce a Post-16 resource focusing on mental health services for young people. We will collaborate 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 employ a mental health specialist to work with young people to prepare them for employment and training and provide ongoing support to enable these young people to sustain employment.
- We will create a new young people's training and development provision to support a small group of young people who are anxious and unwilling to attend large education and training provision. They will be supported with training in employability and support to gain some form of 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
- Linking curriculum learning to careers

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

- 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 and Post-16 Education Act 2022 (the 'Act') was recently enacted on 28 April 2022 with the aim of ensuring that the Baker Clause is now legally enforceable. Most notably, the amendments establish a specific set of minimum legal requirements for provider access, as set out below:

The obligation on schools to give providers access to their registered pupils has been qualified to include a minimum of 'at least two occasions during each of the first, second and third key phase of their education;'

- Schools need to ensure that each registered pupil meets (our emphasis added) with a representative range of education and training providers to whom access is given and that the providers are providing the following set of prescribed information:
- Information about the provider and the approved technical education qualifications or apprenticeships that the provider offers;
- Information about the careers to which those technical education qualifications or apprenticeships might lead;
- A description of what learning or training with the provider is like;
- responses to questions from the pupils about the provider or technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- the requirement to provide access to a representative range of education of training providers will need to include, where practicable, a university technical college;
- school policy statement's must now include 'an explanation of how the provider proposes to comply with the obligations' of the Baker Clause;
- Ofsted has updated its school inspection handbook to clarify that inspectors will always report where a school falls short of the requirements of the provider access legislation (i.e. the Baker Clause) as well as considering how it affects a school's inspection grade.

Appendix 2

Projects and work delivered by the BELS Post-16 Education and Skills team in 2023-24

Risk of NEET Project

The Risk of NEET 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 become dependent on state benefits. The 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.

Outcomes: We have worked with a total of 200 young people on this programme who were able to sustain their education programmes with the support of their post 16 adviser.

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

Outcomes: we were able to support care leavers to gain a total of 45 jobs and 41 education and training programmes.

Supported Internships

The team has a central resource for promoting and facilitating Supported Internships for young people with Education, Health and Care Plans. In 2023- 2024. 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 provided to the council by the DfE working with NDTi for 2023-24 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.

Outcomes

We have worked intensively with young people and providers; this year 13 young people have gained sustained employment with an additional 5 young people moving into education and training.

- **Core, statutory and traded work undertaken by the Post-16 Education and Skills team**

In 2023- 24, 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 courses available in Barnet. This helped to provide a strategic overview of the Post-16 landscape across the Borough.

Schools and colleges now offer a number of T level qualifications with the aim of enhancing the Post 16 vocational offer thus ensuring a greater proportion of Barnet students are catered for within the Borough instead of travelling to sixth forms and colleges outside of the Borough. The range of T Levels is forecast to increase as we move forwards.

During 2023-24, the following was achieved:

- We held a Vocational Heads of Sixth Form meeting; the purpose of the meeting was to facilitate the sharing of good practice and therefore support practitioners to work with students to achieve higher grades.
- We have planned subject specific CPD sessions in partnership with exam boards to support practitioners in being better equipped to deliver vocational subjects and in turn support students in achieving higher grades.
- We partnered with Pearson who delivered a CPD session for school leaders on free exam board resources/ tools to support with examination analysis and assessment preparation. The CPD was to support school leaders in being able to identify areas for improvement within their results and the assessment tool provides student resource to address findings.
- We have connected schools with subject specific Senior Standards Verifiers from exam boards for one-to-one meetings seek individualised support
- 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, university entrance tests.
- Support offered to school to enhance curriculum delivery and improve distinction grades in particular schools; to include:
 - Support from academics at Middlesex University in delivering workshops to consolidate learning and provide access to high quality equipment
 - A review of vocational provision in a school to establish strengths and areas for developments and provide an action to support the school
 - Connecting practitioners with relevant employers
 - Accessing subject ambassadors from Middlesex University to support current BTEC students in lessons/ with exam preparation.

Barnet T Level Landscape – programmes on offer to Post 16 students.

T Level Early Years Educator T Level Laboratory Sciences T Level Plumbing and Heating Engineering	T Level Early Years Educator T Level Laboratory Sciences T Level Plumbing and Heating Engineering T Level Heating Engineering & Ventilation T Level Supporting the Adult Nursing Team T Level Electrical & Electronic Engineering T Level Content Creation & Production T Level Digital Production Design & Development T Level Digital Infrastructure T Level Assisting Healthcare Science
T Level Digital Design, Production and Development T Level Health	T Level Digital Design, Production and Development T Level Health T Level Management and Administration

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.

Outcomes: The team achieved 46 job starts and 16 Apprenticeships starts for young people in Barnet, also moving numerous young people into education and training.

We have offered general careers and guidance support through face to face, online and telephone interventions to over four thousand young people as well as provided over 200 work experience placements.

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 2023. This provides the baseline data for the Post-16 team to establish where to prioritise support. Barnet's September Guarantee figures for 2023 were 99.4%. 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 2023.

Chart 1 – Outcome September Guarantee 2023.

	Year Group	2023 Offers		June 2023 Cohort (Baseline)	2023 Yr11/Yr12 offers combined
Barnet	y11	4803	99.8%	4814	99.4%
	y12	4104	98.9%	4150	

Brent	y11	3417	98.1%	3482	97.7%
	y12	3927	97.3%	4035	
Ealing	y11	3509	96.9%	3622	96.5%
	y12	4202	96.1%	4370	
Hammersmith & Fulham	y11	1607	90.6%	1772	84.7%
	y12	1049	78.8%	1331	
Harrow	y11	2686	98.7%	2721	98.4%
	y12	2931	98.1%	2989	
Hillingdon	y11	3728	97.9%	3809	97.5%
	y12	3656	97.0%	3771	
Hounslow	y11	3367	94.8%	3550	96.5%
	y12	3151	98.1%	3211	
West London & Barnet	y11	23117	97.2%	23775	96.9%
	y12	23020	96.5%	23858	

Job opportunities and apprenticeships

The Barnet Employment and Skills Group (made up of officers from the council's Growth and Skills, Boost 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.

Chart 2 - Number of interventions and support provided to young people in 2023/4.

	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sep 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23	Jan 24	Feb 24	Mar 24
Type of Intervention 13-19 year olds & Totals	1721	3943	3868	3718	2762	4042	3069	3937	1759	2550	3021	2009

Intensive Support	398	580	718	639	343	390	275	407	305	394	381	238
Needs Support	126	373	373	413	316	480	263	472	256	284	326	258
Minimum Needs Support	1197	2990	2991	2666	2103	3172	2531	3058	1198	1872	2314	1513
Intervention Contact Type & Totals	1721	3943	3868	3718	2762	4042	3069	3937	1759	2550	3021	2009
One to one Personal Contact	57	126	122	118	67	78	94	85	26	58	30	26
One to one Telephone	169	186	243	307	202	216	236	214	111	173	247	111
Client Related Activity (YP not Present)	26	35	39	29	5	30	33	44	26	49	30	27
Assessments	0	0	3	3	1	0	1	2	3	0	2	2
Group Contact	2	639	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
E-mail/letter	673	1240	1651	1501	1004	2114	673	947	801	652	521	309
SMS	136	135	114	130	180	142	106	132	90	139	171	66
Telephone	73	131	112	151	111	93	99	102	79	77	58	32