

North Yorkshire Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board
18th May 2009.
Update on the North Yorkshire NEET strategy.

1.0 Key points.

- 1.1 The problems encountered with the installation of a new Management Information System, the transfer of responsibility for management information to a newly formed team and the reduced workforce in Connexions had a significant impact on the recording and reporting of NEETs and not knowns and throughout 2008/09 North Yorkshire has been reporting extremely high numbers of both.
- 1.2 The multi-agency North Yorkshire NEET strategy group has agreed a number of actions to address the difficulties that were identified during the previous year including targeting resources at areas of highest need to reduce the risk of young people becoming NEET and establishing local NEET action plans.
- 1.3 The 14-19 reforms will impact on the existing NEET targets and early consideration needs to be made to the contribution that IYS/Connexions should be making to the changes.

2.0 Recommendations.

- 2.1 That the Board acknowledge the difficulties as highlighted in section 4 and the performance against the NEET and not known targets.
- 2.2 That the Board endorses the planned actions as outlined in section 5.
- 2.3 That the Board contributes further suggestions to improve performance and to ensure that Connexions is prepared for the requirements being presented as part of the 14-19 reforms.

3.0 Background information

- 3.1 Prior to 1st April 2008 the Connexions Partnership had responsibility for meeting the nationally set targets for reducing the numbers of young people that were not in education, employment or training (NEET) and for ensuring that not more than 3.5% of young people aged 16-18 were identified as being 'not known'. These responsibilities were transferred when Connexions Partnerships were integrated into Local Authorities.
- 3.2 There is a national indicator (NI117) set for NEET and North Yorkshire selected this indicator as a stretch target for the Local Area Agreement. Year 1 target (2008/09) set at 4.1%, Year 2 (2009/10) at 3.6% and Year 3 (2010/11) at 3.3%.
- 3.3 There is a multi-agency North Yorkshire NEET strategy group which monitors progress against the NEET strategy and action plan.

4.0 Summary of performance 2008/09.

- 4.1 The Connexions Management Information System (MIS) which was previously contracted out was brought in-house into NYCC and is now managed as part of CYPS Performance and Outcomes. As there had been problems with the previous operating system a procurement exercise was undertaken to find another supplier.
- 4.2 This resulted in the newly formed Performance and Outcomes team assuming responsibility for a brand new operating system in addition to the broader data recording, analysis and reporting requirements for Connexions.
- 4.3 A combination of factors have led to significant problems in relation to understanding and fully utilising the new system and this resulted in problems with data management. As a consequence North Yorkshire was identifying extremely high numbers of not known young people and this required additional effort to track young people and update individual records at a time when staff should have been concentrating on supporting young people into education, employment and training.
- 4.4 This difficulty coincided with the establishment of the new Integrated Youth Support delivery model which required some Connexions staff to transfer to the new IAG provider and some staff to transfer to NYCC. The Connexions workforce was affected by these changes and there were a high number of vacancies that could not be filled resulting in a reduced workforce attempting to address huge tracking and recording problems.
- 4.5 Together the above factors compounded the difficulties in accurately reporting on NEETs and not knowns and throughout 2008/09 North Yorkshire has been reporting extremely high numbers of both.
- 4.6 As of the end of March 2009 performance for the previous quarter was recorded as follows:

Adjusted NEET %

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Average
Adjusted NEET % 2008 - 09	4.8%	5.0%	5.1%	5.0%
Adjusted NEET % 2007 - 08	3.9%	3.9%	4.1%	4.0%
Adjusted NEET % 2006 - 07	4.7%	4.7%	4.8%	4.7%

% In Learning

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Average
% in Learning 2008 - 09	73.5%	74.3%	75.3%	74.4%
% In Learning 2007 - 08	79.2%	79.2%	79.1%	79.1%
% In Learning 2006 - 07	78.6%	78.8%	79.2%	78.9%

% Not Known

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Average
% Not Knowns 2008 - 09	10.9%	8.9%	7.8%	9.2%
% Not Knowns 2007 - 08	2.1%	2.9%	3.5%	2.8%
% not Knowns 2006 - 07	3.8%	4.5%	4.2%	4.2%

- 4.7 In addition to the NEET and not known targets there is a requirement that all Year 11 students Year 12 students receive an offer of learning. This is referred to as the September Guarantee. In 2008/09 North Yorkshire achieved the required 100% target for Year 11 but did not achieve the target for Year 12.

5.0 Plans to improve performance

- 5.1 Local targets have been set for NEET and not knowns. These will form the basis of local NEET action plans.
- 5.2 A joint data collection timetable has been agreed between IYS, the IAG providers in schools/colleges (igen) and Performance and Outcomes to address problems that were highlighted throughout the previous year.
- 5.3 An additional tracking adviser has been appointed to support the Performance and Outcomes team with data inputting.
- 5.4 The North Yorkshire Connexions Vacancy Service (Get Connected) has been established and is now operational. This facility enables local employers to place adverts and for Connexions to source and match prospective young people to jobs.
- 5.5 Vacant posts within the IYS hubs have been appointed to and this will increase the numbers of qualified staff able to provide impartial information, advice and guidance.
- 5.6 Staffing allocation to schools and colleges available through the IAG contract is being reviewed using current information on school cohort, numbers of NEET, young people with SEN and contributing factors including numbers of vulnerable young people. This will result in a more equitable allocation and better targeting of resources to young people with the greatest need.

6.0 Future considerations.

- 6.1 By 2015 all young people will be required to be in education, employment or learning until they are 18. This change relates to the wider 14-19 reforms which will see a broadening of learning choice and opportunities for young people and the transfer of some responsibilities currently held by the LSC into the Local Authority. The provision of impartial information, advice and guidance and more specifically careers education and guidance is critical to the success of these reforms will be taken into account as plans are developed across the county.
- 6.2 The current targets related to NEET will no longer be applicable but it is likely that there will be additional or different monitoring and tracking requirements. It is very likely that the role of Connexions within the reforms will be crucial.

Louise Dunn
Principal Officer (IYS)
27th April 2009.