# Raising of Participation Age – supporting young people not participating in Education, Employment or Training

## Report of the Divisional Director, Education

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### Accountable Divisional Director: Jane Hargreaves

### Accountable Director: Helen Jenner

### Summary:

This report sets out performance and activities relating to young people who are not recorded on the local authority’s database as participating in any form of Education, Employment or Training (EET). Young people who are not participating fall into three categories:

- Not in full time Education, Employment or Training (NEET);
- Unknown (a young person’s current EET status is not known to the local authority);
- Other (for example a young person has moved away with no forwarding address/teenage parent/part time education/young carer/employment with no training etc.).

This report highlights the local’s authority’s statutory responsibilities relating to the Raising of Participation Age, set out in Appendix 1.

Appendix 2 provides the Committee with an overview of the performance and activities specifically relating to the Learn2Live (Leaving Care) team and NEET work.

### Recommendation(s)

The Children’s Select Committee is recommended to:

(i) review and comment upon performance information and the activities set out in this report and Appendix 2 – Learn2Live team NEET paper.

### Reason(s)

This area of work underpins the delivery of the Borough’s key priorities: *Ensure every child is valued so that they can succeed and maximise growth opportunities and increase the household income of borough residents.* The Local Authority now has statutory responsibilities relating to the Raising of the Participation Age; from this September all 16 year olds are required to continue in some form of full time learning programme or in employment with training, until the end of the academic year in which they turn 17. From
September 2015 this changes as they will be required to continue until at least their 18th birthday.

The latest the current youth unemployment figures are improving but remain the worst in London – see notes.

1. Introduction and Background

1.1 From Summer 2013 all young people up until the end of the academic year in which they turn 17 will be required to participate in education or training. From 2015, this requirement will apply until their 18th birthday. This policy is known as Raising the Participation Age (RPA). RPA places a number of responsibilities on local authorities including supporting young people aged 13-19 and those aged 20-24 with a Learning Difficulty Assessment to participate in education or training.

1.2 Statutory RPA guidance for local authorities has been produced and a local authority must have regard to it when exercising its functions relating to RPA. However, it is up to each local authority to decide how to fulfil their statutory duties. An RPA strategy has been developed and includes an Action Plan. The Strategy and Action Plan set out the steps the local authority and its partners have agreed to, and are delivering to, to support young people not participating. This Strategy and Action Plan now incorporates and replaces the local authority’s NEET strategy and action plan.

2. Issues and Actions

2.1 In Barking and Dagenham we are facing a number of key issues in meeting RPA:

- the 16 -19 resident cohort continues to rise, contrary to national and local trends – 8,039 cohort August 2013, + 184 compared to 7,855 August 2012;
- the level of NEETs is rising - 7.7% (662) NEET August 2013, + 3.7% compared to 4% (311) August 2012;
- the number of young people who are classified as unknown has increased – 14.2% (1,138) August 2013, + 0.7% compared to 13.5% (1,063) August 2012 and
- the proportion of young people classified in learning has fallen - 76.8% (6,175 ) August 2013, - 1.5% compared to 78.3% (6,154) August 2012.

2.2 However the data for 16-17 year olds, comparing a year by year using the last set of publicly published data (June 12 – June 13,) the changes are the same as the London average:

- Overall participation of 16 and 17 year olds is up by 1.7% and
- Unknowns are down by 1.5%.

2.3 For young people fully participating, the local authority continues to work with education providers to ensure learners complete their programmes, achieve appropriate qualifications and progression pathways are in place.

2.4 To ensure resources are re-directed effectively to support young people recorded as not participating, a young person’s data records need to be accurate as possible.
This means we need to establish the current position of young people classified as unknown so, e.g. if they are NEET we can provide the right support to re-engage with education.

2.5 Therefore to address the challenges of improving participation levels and reducing non-participation levels the following key actions are under way:

Data

- Set-up a temporary tracking team for three months to reduce the number of young people recorded as unknown, through telephone contact and booking appointments with careers advisers.

- Undertaking a community door knocking exercise using electoral canvassers to contact young people at their home to establish their current education status, update our records and refer to a careers adviser if NEET status established.

- Adopted the use of a pan London web-based recording system to capture data from education providers more consistently and regularly about young people joining, leaving and at risk of becoming NEET – again this is providing an opportunity for careers advisers to start supporting young people with a smooth transition from one institution to another.

- Data sharing pilot with Barking and Dagenham College and the Technical Skills Academy, which provides each institution with secure information about young people who are classified as unknown or NEET to be contacted directly by the college staff to recruit onto provision.

- More targeted work with schools in providing a firm September offer to young people in their last year of school, so they know they have a place starting once they have left school.

- Sharing of NEET and Unknown data periodically with Integrated Youth Services to ensure records are as up to date as possible.

Support

- Dedicated careers advisers continue to support vulnerable groups e.g. Learners with Learning Difficulties and or Disabilities, Teenage Mothers, Young Offenders, Leaving Care, alternative provision learners.

- The 14-19 Team become a local delivery partner to deliver the support programme of the national Youth Contract – this a payment by result scheme which provides the local authority with additional income if we are successful in supporting young people who meet a set of NEET criteria, access a sustained EET outcome.

- The development of the use of social media channels such as Facebook and Twitter to communicate and remain in contact with young people more easily so they have a clearer understanding of the support mechanisms and provision available to them.
• A traded careers service remains in place with secondary schools, Barking and Dagenham College, the Technical Skills Academy and Barking and Dagenham Adult College which replaced in parts the old Connexions service, so strong links between local education providers and the local authority continue.

• Good partnership working with other services that work with young people to ensure that NEET work is embedded across the partnership, e.g. Social Care and Integrated Youth Services.

3. Options Appraisal
3.1 Detailed options to support young people to participate are described in the RPA Action Plan and progress reported and reviewed at the NEET Board.

4. Consultation
4.1 The LA’s RPA Strategy and Action Plan has been developed and agreed by the NEET board, 14-19 partnership and CS DMT. An Equality Impact Assessment is to be undertaken.

5. Financial Implications
5.1 2014/15 budget savings place further pressures in sustaining staff capacity so the local authority can address the issues and meet its statutory duties.

5.2 Therefore based on the current trajectory of funding and further 2015/16 budget reductions it will be even more challenging to deliver against RPA objectives and provide services which support young people into EET.

6. Legal Implications
6.1 None applicable to this report other than the Local Authority’s RPA statutory responsibilities as set out in Appendix 1.

7. Conclusion
7.1 Although overall participation levels have remained steady and an evolving and updated Action Plan is in place to improve participation levels, an increasing 14-19 cohort poses a major challenge to the local authority in reducing non-participation rates. Together with budget pressures which ultimately reduce staffing levels, from 2015/16 onwards the local authority will need to explore and identify different service delivery and funding models in order to meet its statutory responsibilities, and ensure educational outcomes impact on improved employment opportunities for young people.

Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report:
The LA’s RPA strategy and RPA statutory guidance.
List of appendices:

Appendix 1 – RPA statutory guidance and an outline of the LA’s seven main RPA strands.

Appendix 2 – Learn2Live – NEET paper

Notes for Youth unemployment - in terms of progress over March-October 2013:

- Overall Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) count: has fallen by 24.2% (at 4.6% of working age claimants it is the joint highest in London);
- JSA count for 18-24 year olds: has fallen by 26.1% (at 7.8% the rate is the highest in London)
- Long-term unemployed/12+ months: has fallen by 12.0% (at 1.5% this is the fourth highest in London)