

CITY OF DONCASTER COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY, 8TH DECEMBER, 2022

A MEETING of the CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL was held at the COUNCIL CHAMBER, DONCASTER on THURSDAY, 8TH DECEMBER, 2022 at 4.30 PM

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor Leanne Hempshall

Councillors Tim Needham, Bob Anderson, Laura Bluff, Steve Cox, David Nevett and Rob Reid

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

- Leanne Hornsby - Assistant Director, Education, Skills, Culture and Heritage
- Kevin Drury - Learning Transformation Manager
- Jane Cresswell – Head of Service (Virtual School)
- Neville Brown - attending from a social care perspective
- Martyn Owen - Head of Service, Inclusion
- Stephanie Douglas - Head of Service Early Intervention and Localities

		<u>ACTION</u>
14.	<u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u>	
	Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Susan Durant, Antoinette Drinkhill and Bernadette Nesbit.	
15.	<u>TO CONSIDER THE EXTENT, IF ANY, TO WHICH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS ARE TO BE EXCLUDED FROM THE MEETING.</u>	
	None	
16.	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY.</u>	
	There were no declarations of interest made.	
17.	<u>MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 13TH OCTOBER 2022</u>	
	RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings held on the 13th October 2022 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.	

18.	<u>PUBLIC STATEMENTS</u>	
	There were no public statements made.	
19.	<u>CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE NOT IN EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING (NEET)</u>	
	<p>It was reported that the Local Authority had a duty to carry out robust tracking and monitoring of the 16-18 cohort (up to age 25 for those with an Education and Health Care Plan). It was continued that the authority also offers targeted support (impartial information, advice and guidance) to all young people who were Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET).</p> <p>It was noted that monthly outcomes have continued to Doncaster as performing better than regional and national averages.</p> <p>It was commented that local NEET data was often higher in the autumn than in the spring. It was explained that this was due to decisions being changed once data became validated. Members were informed that once the data has been validated, it could be shared with the Panel.</p> <p>The Panel held a discussion and the following areas were highlighted;</p> <p><b>Care Leavers (NEET)</b> – Clarification was sought on the different age ranges referenced in Table 15 (for ages 17-24 Care Leavers) and Table 18 DFE Caseload in Table 18 (for ages 17-21 DFE Caseloads). Members were informed that historically, the DFE requested Care Leaver data from 17 to 21 years old. It was explained that there were young people at 22 and 23 years old, with cases that remained open for various reasons. It was continued that the DFE had agreed that as of April 2023, this age range would be broadened from 17-21 to 17-24 years old</p> <p>Concern was raised that the NEET percentage for care leavers in Doncaster was high at 30%, although the national figure was higher at around 41%. It was stated that this figure did not relate directly to housing issues and more towards mental health or substance misuse.</p> <p><b>Elective Home Education (EHE) (NEET)</b> - It was questioned whether there was data for those who were electively home schooled and considered at risk of becoming NEET. Members were informed that data for that particular cohort was not collected as it was not required, although it was felt that this could be considered in the future. It was added that there was a cohort of EHE young people in Year 11 that were known about.</p> <p><b>Careers Advice</b> – In terms of available careers advice, Members heard that this now sat within the Skills Portfolio (which had recently</p>	

joined the Education Portfolio) and that it was each secondary school or college's responsibility to strategically plan and allocate careers leadership for the delivery of impartial advice and guidance to their students. Members heard that schools could offer opportunities brought on site or accessed off site. It was explained that this took place with the support of the Enterprise Co-ordinators and businesses linking with the schools. Members were informed that there was a framework known as Gatsby Benchmarks that schools worked towards and was recognised as part of the Ofsted Inspection framework. It was added that young people also had access to the START in Doncaster website ([www.startindoncaster.com](http://www.startindoncaster.com)) live events and open evenings.

Members were informed of the role of Enterprise Co-ordinators, who worked across with skills and received some investment from Opportunity Areas. It was explained that there were also 3 Enterprise Advisers who supplemented the support provided to schools and worked at a sub-regional level.

**Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) (NEET)** – In reference to this data, Members were informed that these were unvalidated figures. It was outlined that Educational, Health Care Plan (ECHP) NEET was currently 2.7% and 2.2% for last year (for 16-17 years), which compared to a regional average of 5.4% demonstrated that Doncaster was above reported regional figures.

It was explained that those young people within the SEND NEET cohort was up to 25 years old. Members heard that if looking at mainstream NEET, they could look to provide subsequently up to 25 years old.

**ACTION** The Assistant Director for Education, Skills, Culture and Heritage offered to provide Members with a dashboard.

**Disadvantage Gap** – Members expressed concern that the disadvantage gap had widened since 2019 due to the various way groups of pupils had been able to access education and remote learning during the Covid pandemic.

It was explained that Ofqual had worked with exam boards and provided exam preparation support for subjects as well as making adjustments to content related questions. Examples of this included;

- A choice of topics or content on which students were assessed in GCSE English literature, history, ancient history and geography.
- Provided advance information on the focus of exams to support students' revision in subjects where there was not a choice of topics.

Member heard how schools were able to make adjustments to

curriculum learning for students to manage their exam preparation and also make considerations to reducing the number of subjects entered for. Finally, a National tutoring programme was put in place for those falling behind and recovery Premium funding was made available for those eligible through Pupil Premium.

Members were informed that digital devices and connectivity initiatives had been put in place throughout 2020 –2022 to support the vulnerable and disadvantaged with their learning. It was explained that remote learning was made available through different methods and to suit learners and family circumstances. It was also noted that schools continued to be open to vulnerable learners to access on site/face to face learning. Finally, Members were assured that safeguards for attendance and access to remote learning became prevalent during times lockdown and self-isolation.

**Impact of the Pandemic** – Members were concerned about the outcomes of young people going forward following the pandemic and were assured that this had been monitored. It was explained that work had been undertaken to work with families and schools to support those children. It was reported that with 4.4% of young people Not In Education, Employment or Training (NEET) had been considered as positive and demonstrated that there had been no significant impact from those children and young people that had endured Covid.

Members heard that all schools had the opportunity to change their curriculums. It was continued that there was also curriculum recovery assessed live work and a gap analysis was carried out to consider the points of where they were at and identifying what needed to be covered again.

Members were told that the allocation of devices from DFE had concluded September 2022 (although devices were still in place). It was explained that the Virtual School had commissioned a company to ensure that software updates and safeguarding filters continued to be kept up-to-date. It was noted that the device remained with the young person including when they moved school. It was noted that the young person could continue with access to programmes appropriate to curriculums and catch-up with those elements they did not understand through the support of the school.

**Minority Groups (NEETs)** – In respect of those young people within minority groups who were NEET, it was explained that the data available was below 2% Post 16. It was noted that data and work was taken by the locality and followed up to ensure that appropriate support was provided to those they have contact with.

**Identifying NEET** – It was explained that in Year 11, it was in September when this information was checked, before being checked

	<p>again in October and November. Members were informed that where gaps were identified, further work would be undertaken to reduce that.</p> <p>In terms of other Local Authority children that had left care, it was noted that each individual Local Authority was responsible for their own care leavers.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the Panel note;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The continued work undertaken working closely with colleagues and partners, local post-16 providers, the Education Standards Funding Agency (ESFA) and directly with young people to establish the destinations for the 16-18 cohort.</li> <li>• That to fulfil our statutory duties, robust tracking continues on a monthly basis, helping to identify the destinations of the ‘Not Known’ cohort, offer support to those who are NEET, signposting where appropriate and promoting ‘participation in learning’ to increase the number of young people into EET.</li> <li>• Young people who are NEET who require more ongoing direct support are referred to the Pathways to Progression Ambition 16-18 NEET Education Standards Fund (ESF) programme.</li> </ul>	
20.	<p><u>EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT OUTCOMES FOR ALL KEY STAGES 2022</u></p>	
	<p>The report provided a summary of the action taken, changes made to learning improvement and an update in relation to the data, achievement and improvement across the following education phases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Years Foundation Stage</li> <li>• Key Stage 1</li> <li>• Key Stage 2</li> <li>• Key Stage 4 (GCSE)</li> <li>• Key Stage 5 (A Level, T Levels and Applied General)</li> </ul> <p>The Panel held a discussion and the following areas were highlighted;</p> <p><b>Attainment for Children and Young People with Early Health Care Plans (EHP)</b> – It was acknowledged that the outlook for this area was not positive and that further work was needed. Members heard how Special Educational Needs (SEN) across mainstream schools had a raft of options available to focus on ensuring that those needs were met, and that there were a number of plans and strategy in place for outcomes.</p> <p>It was recognised that there were some clear patterns that needed to be addressed through focusing more on attainment. Special Needs Co-ordinators measured delivery through Headteachers and SENCO groups. Regarding the planning of Educational Health and Care Plans (EHCP), it was felt that this needed to be refined, in order to</p>	

achieve better outcomes.

**Table (Page 24, Para. 30) indicative comparators and improvement in relative gaps to national as below for all entries, against disadvantage groups and by gender.** - Members sought detailed information on the breakdown of male and female around educational needs. It was explained that 'up to A-level' female data had performed very well compared to national performance.

**Actions/Implementation Strategy** - The report provided a summary of action taken and changes made to learning improvement. Members were informed that alongside the Skills and Education Strategy, there was a Schools Improvement Strategy that looked at all the data and information provided to identify priorities and support across schools in order to improve the teaching of reading, writing, maths and accelerated learning. It was noted that the school was responsible for the pupil's achievements and outcomes although the authority was in a position to effectively monitor and track this area.

Members were informed that the Implementation Strategy would be available by the end of 2022.

A Member of the Panel commented on the number of strategies across the Council and commented that it would be useful to see how those strategies worked together.

**ACTION:** For Panel Members to receive a visual diagram of how the strategies align with each other.

**Phonics** – Members considered it positive that the drop in phonics outcomes was lower than national performance. In terms of the targets for 2023, it was clarified that there had been a target of 79% in 2023, which overall had been less than what was previously set at 85% prior to the pandemic. It was felt that this was moving in the right direction with a long-term aspiration to reach 95%. It was explained that schools set their own targets and that the Local Authority would monitor schools for concern.

Members heard how a number of schools (that the Council had data for), were on track to meet targets and that in Year 2, the baseline had become much stronger in phonics.

It was outlined that work had been undertaken which included working with English Hubs, local hub merger and being a member of Steering Group for Reading, Writing and Maths.

Members heard there were a number of schools that had taken support and applied for funding. It was explained that those schools of concern (that had performed below target), had undertaken intensive work with the Local Authority on issues such as phonics and reading and support

with maths. In addition to supporting those schools of concern, it was noted that it could be for the authority to look at individual schools for cohorts of children that were not achieving as well.

**KS1 Results** – It was considered positive that the gap had not significantly widened from national figures. Clarification was sought as to why a focus on early reading and phonics would have caused a drop in reading outcomes at Year 2. Members were informed that there had been an impact from the pandemic with assessments undertaken last year and a strong focus on phonics in bringing back those children to be where they should be. Members heard that children on the threshold were not quite achieving, with hopes that the baseline was much stronger. It was expected that their outcomes would have risen by July 2023.

**KS2 Results** – Positive reading results were welcomed and linked to the work of the Reading Strategy. It was felt that results in writing were to be expected and part of a longer-term solution; however, concerns were raised around results in maths. It was commented that this was an interesting area to look at, as there were a number of different elements to achievement and gaps in learning.

It was explained that following an analysis of different papers, children performed better at arithmetic, but were not as good in reasoning and therefore indicated that this required more focus. It was considered that there was a great deal of support for maths individually, through group networks as well as the Maths Hub. Members heard how this had been identified as a priority for the Local Authority, in order to close gaps so that children have a better opportunity to improve.

**GCSE Results** – Concern was raised that GCSE results in Doncaster, were below national performance and that the gap had not narrowed.

It was shared that the achievement of children who do not speak English as their first language, had improved. It was noted that there had been some improvements in outcomes with ECHPs.

Members were informed that the gap relevance must only be taken within each own schools or college's context. It was explained that each provision would identify its own methodology to address under performance from different groups of learners. Schools would use credible research strategies to aid improvement in the performance of disadvantaged learners.

It was outlined that the activity survey produced by the Participation and Transition (PAT) team, showed where the current Y12 and Y13 population was currently active. Members heard that this was reporting a figure that was comparatively better than this time last year, and continued to be better than our statistical comparators and national data. It was explained that this suggested that more young people

were accessing Education, Employment and Training (EE&T) than those who were not, although cohort numbers were continually increasing. Reference was made to Pupil Premium strategies and how it was still expected of schools that they would include the improvement of attainment. Members were told that funding was still available for schools to access to support the education of the disadvantaged.

It was explained that next year's exam process was expected to return to pre-pandemic arrangements with the majority of adjustments being removed

**A-Level Results** – It was felt that A-Level results looked positive with increased percentage and the gap against national performance closing. There was concern around the male results and it was questioned whether there was a strategy in place for narrowing the gap with national figures.

It was explained that schools and colleges would put in place what they believed was right in their own settings using credible research. There was the potential to look deeper into it to see what they were using in practice and performance of certain areas.

Clarification was sought in terms of the take-up at a Technical Level. It was explained that the numbers of students taking Technical Levels had increased from last year and now doubled the national average. It was added that conversely, there had been a drop in students taking A-Level courses and that the take-up of applied courses was in line with national.

**Strategies** – It was acknowledged that there was a need for higher paid jobs in Doncaster and Members asked what was being doing in terms of improving educational outcomes.

It was recognised that this aspiration was part of the Education and Skills Strategy and a significant part was about how we springboard young people into being in a position to take-up those jobs. Reference was made to the importance of employers making a commitment to young people, such as that made by the Council through its in-house Apprentices Programme.

Members heard how 1300 additional children had taken up Level 3, which was equivalent to an A-Level and would gain entry into university. It was stressed that we needed to reach a place where people viewed vocational learning the same as A-levels. Clarification was provided that in terms of points, Level 3 was different to those of an A-Level.

Concern was raised that although many strategies were now being developed, it was difficult to make improvements and not much progress had been made to date.

	<p>It was confirmed that the provisional data would be validated at the beginning of 2023.</p> <p>ACTION: Validated data to be forwarded to the Panel by the end of February/Early March 2023.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the Panel notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That all data included in the report has been published on a provisional basis, and is subject to further checking and validation, which could lead to small changes in some figures when the final results are subsequently published.</li> <li>• The achievement outcomes for all key stages for Doncaster Children and Young People, alongside areas for continued development.</li> <li>• That this is the first year of formal assessments since 2019 and the relative impact both locally and nationally that the Covid period has had on overall outcomes.</li> <li>• The improved outcomes specifically for Key Stage 4, Children and Young People in Care, the gap between boys and girls and for those for whom English is an Additional Language (EAL).</li> </ul>	
21.	<p><u>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORKPLAN AND THE COUNCIL'S FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS</u></p>	
	<p>The Senior Governance Officer introduced the Overview and Scrutiny Work Plan and Council's Forward Plan of key decisions to the attention of the Panel.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the information, be noted.</p>	