



Department
for Education

Social Mobility



Doncaster

Opportunity Area 2017-20

A local delivery plan to drive social mobility in Doncaster
through educational improvement



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A photograph of a man and a woman working together in a workshop or industrial setting. The woman, on the left, has reddish-brown hair tied back and is wearing a blue and white plaid shirt over a white top. The man, on the right, has short brown hair and a beard, and is wearing a red and black plaid shirt. They are both looking down at a workbench. The background is slightly blurred, showing industrial equipment and bright lighting. The image is framed by a white, jagged border, and a teal-colored banner with the text "OUR VISION" is overlaid on the right side.

OUR VISION

A message from the Secretary of State for Education



Beyond expectations

Everyone should be able to make what they can of themselves, and where they end up should not be dictated by where

they began. This should be the case for every single young person in Doncaster, regardless of their background or which part of the borough they have grown up in. No child should be trapped in personal circumstances that mean they cannot access mainstream society and opportunities.

Great teachers are the single most important factor in education and in this plan we are placing greater emphasis on the need to narrow the education gap in Doncaster. Young people will also be given greater opportunity to enhance their life skills which not only increase educational success but will support them to go as far as their talents and aspirations will take them. What happens after the school bell rings is just as relevant as what happens in the classroom.

Social mobility matters both in terms of people, but also in delivering economic growth. The world economy is changing and it is through education, skills and training from the early years into adulthood that we will make sure no one is left behind – delivering a modern country that is globally competitive and fit for the future. As a nation, we cannot afford to have talent going to waste. Doncaster will need to play an important role in supporting the South Yorkshire economy and supporting the region to thrive. Doncaster has a proud heritage

of manufacturing, engineering and in the railways, and the recently opened National College for High Speed Rail is providing new opportunities for young people to learn world-class technical skills alongside the country's existing workforce. It is vital that we offer young people a choice in pathways to higher education, providing alternatives to traditional academic routes.

It is important that the Doncaster Opportunity Area Partnership Board brings together leaders from education, enterprise and skills, but also those organisations that work directly with children and young people, including the most vulnerable. I am grateful to all of the board members, and local partners, for their invaluable contributions to developing this delivery plan. The plan sets out our shared ambition and the priorities for levelling the playing field on opportunity for children and young people in Doncaster, including how we will get this underway with pace over the coming year.

Finally, my thanks to Professor Chris Husbands for taking up the role as Chair of the Doncaster Opportunity Area Partnership Board but also for ensuring we place the Doncaster Opportunity Area programme in a wider regional context as part of 'South Yorkshire Futures', Sheffield Hallam University's own social mobility programme.

The Rt Hon Damian Hinds MP

Secretary of State for Education

A message from the Chair of the Doncaster Opportunity Area partnership board



Collaboration, no matter what

I began working with local partners in Doncaster around eighteen months ago following the Education

and Skills Commission's report 'One Doncaster'. I was struck by the sense of ambition the town has but also by its unique feel as a vast metropolitan borough made up of a number of smaller communities, each diverse and each with its own strong sense of identity born out of history. Some of these communities have flourished. However, some areas of the town have not and experience high levels of deprivation creating significant inequality of opportunity in the town between the economically disadvantaged and those who are more affluent. We will address this with urgency to improve social mobility for this generation as well as the next.

I appreciate the scale of the challenge we have in improving education and skills, and social mobility, in Doncaster. Too many children are being held back based on where they live in the town, not because of their ability, drive and determination. Too many young people from disadvantaged backgrounds do not get access to high quality teaching and learning in Doncaster. Too many do not get access to learning opportunities that enhance non-cognitive skills such as resilience and self-

efficacy that will support success in education and employment, and too many miss out on securing high skilled jobs that are available in the town.

I see collaboration across the borough as crucial, which is why the partnership board have made it one of our underpinning themes of this plan. We need to harness pride and motivation for change across the whole of the borough so that everyone works together to create inclusion and strength, not division and weakness. I am incredibly pleased to have a partnership board working with me that is made up of local leaders who will work collaboratively to address significant barriers Doncaster faces to improve social mobility. Board members have a wealth of expertise and experience and this has helped us create this delivery plan and shape the activity we will do against the four priority areas.

Professor Chris Husbands

Independent Chair of Doncaster Opportunity Area partnership board, Vice Chancellor of Sheffield Hallam University

GET IN TOUCH



Opportunity.areas@education.gov.uk



@ Doncaster_OA

A woman with curly hair, wearing a green uniform and a lanyard with a badge, is smiling and looking down at a young boy. The boy is looking intently at a tablet computer. The background is blurred, suggesting an indoor setting. The image is framed by a teal border with white jagged edges.

**DELIVERING OPPORTUNITY
FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE
OF DONCASTER**

Building on strong foundations

Strengths and opportunities

Doncaster is geographically the largest metropolitan borough in the country with a population of over 300,000 people of which around 72,000 are children and young people. It is extremely diverse – from the rurality of the north to the former coal mining communities in the south. This gives Doncaster a unique feel and helps to make it a fantastic place to live, work and go to school. In each of these communities there is a wealth of opportunity that can be used to inspire children and young people, enhance aspiration and guard against insularity.

- **The new National College for High Speed Rail** was officially opened by Education Secretary, Justine Greening, in October 2017 and will act as a catalyst to maximise the economic benefit of HS2 on local communities, bringing significant numbers of new jobs to the area and training thousands of new high skilled rail engineers. The college builds on Doncaster's existing national and international reputation for leading innovation in rail engineering and advanced manufacturing. It also supports Doncaster's position within the region, leading the way in a number of sectors including manufacturing and multi-modal logistics based at the Doncaster International iPort.
- **The Unity regeneration project** in Hatfield, Stainforth and Dunscroft proposes to create around 3,000 new homes, 180 acres of commercial manufacturing space and approximately 6,000 new jobs.
- Doncaster is a great place to live and work and **holds many significant cultural assets** for young people to access such as the Northern Racing College (who run a programme to support young people from disadvantaged backgrounds), the Yorkshire Wildlife Park and a multi-purpose sports stadium; The Keepmoat.
- Local leaders **have high ambition for children and young people** who live in the borough. Through implementation of the Doncaster Children and Young People's Plan it seeks to become 'the most child friendly borough' in the country by 2020. The plan signals a shift in partnership working in the borough and a change in approach to ensure the best outcomes for young people.
- There is a **strong youth alliance** partnership, EXPECT Youth, whose partner organisations provide children and young people with a range of support in arts, sports, careers advice and social action projects. At the Doncaster Chamber of Commerce Business Awards 2017, EXPECT Youth won

an award for delivering success through partnership working.

- The **National Collaborative Outreach Programme¹** run by the Higher Education Progression Partnership (HEPP) is already working with Doncaster College and six secondary schools in Doncaster's most deprived wards to increase the number of young people with academic potential, participating in higher education – either as part of a degree-level apprenticeship or a university course.
- **The local authority's Education Inclusion programme seeks to improve educational outcomes for all children in Doncaster**, with a particular focus on vulnerable and/or disadvantaged children. High numbers of fixed term exclusions, managed moves, persistent absence and poor educational outcomes for children and young people in alternative provision triggered a whole system review in relation to behaviour management.

“The Opportunity Area programme has brought honest conversations and challenge to the area.”

Helen Redford-Hernandez, Headteacher Hungerhill School and Lead Director of Secondary Teaching School, Partners in Learning.

¹ www.hefce.ac.uk/sas/ncop/

Work already underway

Since Doncaster was selected as an Opportunity Area, strong partnerships have been forged across the borough to build solid foundations for the programme. Through a number of key initiatives, we have introduced additional support for those working with children and young people across the town. Some of the work already underway includes:

- **Launch of a new EEF Research School²** – The Partners in Learning EEF Research School builds on and takes forward the organisation's existing work as a leading Teaching School Alliance in South Yorkshire.
 - **Appointment of a new Enterprise Coordinator** who is working with seventeen secondary schools and colleges that are now part of the Enterprise Adviser network to ensure pupils receive four quality encounters with the world of work. The Careers & Enterprise Company held a workshop in December with employers to share information about how they can engage in this programme.
 - **Three cornerstone employers have been announced** (Mantra Media, Adecco and Willmott Dixon) and are helping to prepare young people to make the most out of education, employment and training opportunities available to them so that they unlock their occupational potential.
 - **School improvement and continuing professional development (CPD):** ensuring national support is being delivered effectively at a local level, in particular:
 - Strategic School Improvement Fund (SSIF) – three teaching school alliances are already supporting seventeen schools across Doncaster. We will work with the sub-regional improvement board to maximise the impact of this fund locally.
 - Teaching and Leadership Innovation Fund (TLIF) – funded professional development training for teachers delivered by five providers in a number of different areas
- including phonics, STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) and school leadership.
- **Support for children and young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND):** Additional careers advice and guidance, and improved links with employers for children and young people with SEND.

To support this activity, the Opportunity Area team put in place by the Department for Education have:

- Worked with local partners to unlock their impetus and energy to improve social mobility in Doncaster and to create a shared urgency for securing improved outcomes for children and young people.
- Significantly increased collaboration through the coming together of the partnership board and four working groups that have co-constructed this delivery plan.
- Engaged regularly and meaningfully with stakeholders – three well-attended interactive events that have allowed stakeholders to input their views, give feedback on the priorities and shape the delivery plan. The team have also held a 'drop in' session for children, young people and their families so that they can share their views on the programme.
- Introduced research and academic thinking into the programme. A strong partnership has been developed between 'South Yorkshire Futures', a regional social mobility programme being led by Sheffield Hallam University, and the Opportunity Area programme that allows the university to share research and academic thinking.

² The Research Schools Network is a collaboration between the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and the Institute for Effective Education (IEE) to fund a network of schools which will support the use of evidence to improve teaching practice. www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/our-work/research-schools

Engaging young people in the programme

Engaging young people in developing the delivery plan

The partnership board have put children and young people firmly at the heart of our programme and we have engaged directly with over 100 young people in Doncaster from different social backgrounds. We have seen the National Citizen Service programme in action, attended a Youth Council meeting, spoken to the Youth Council alumni and run a large consultation event at The Doncaster Dome in conjunction with EXPECT Youth – Doncaster’s youth alliance. Our aim is to ensure that young people feel part of this programme and see this plan as something that they have directly added value to – ultimately they are the experts when we talk about a young person’s experience of education.

Young people tell us that:

- They have negative perceptions of Doncaster.
- There is a lack of clear careers advice and guidance available to all students – no matter what their ambitions or dreams.

Young people have told us that too often careers advice consists of researching jobs online with little support from a trained careers adviser. Many say they feel ‘forced’ to take a particular career route by those advising them at school, because they are told that they don’t have the skills to achieve the career that they might actually want. We have also heard that young people would find it useful if careers advice was delivered by professionals who are independent of school but with time built into the school day so that they can access it.

“I would like to see people from the Opportunity Area programme attend social events and take questionnaires to capture my views in the future.”

“I would like to see the Opportunity Area programme in schools interacting with students.”

“I would like to see the Opportunity Area programme continue getting people’s opinions and views.”

Engaging young people in implementing the delivery plan

At the consultation event we asked children and young people how they would like the Opportunity Area programme to capture their views in the future. A number of young people said that they would like interaction in schools with the programme; other responses included 'put on more events' and 'use social media and more communications'.

We will be working with children and young people to:

- **Promote Doncaster as a great place to live and work** – working with a group of children and young people to develop their own marketing campaign for the borough that will be rolled out to schools.
- Design and implement **the programme of work** to deliver our ambition that there are 'no careers out of bounds' for young people.
- **Recruit Doncaster ambassadors** from children and young people's groups including: care leavers; young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND); and young people from the lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and trans (LGBT) community. Ambassadors will ensure a 'youth voice' remains heard in this programme and will work with primary school pupils to open their eyes to opportunities.
- **Establish an alumni of former Doncaster school students** who have gone on to experience personal and career success, who can inspire future generations of young people in Doncaster to go as far as their dreams, ambitions and drive will take them.

WHY DONCASTER



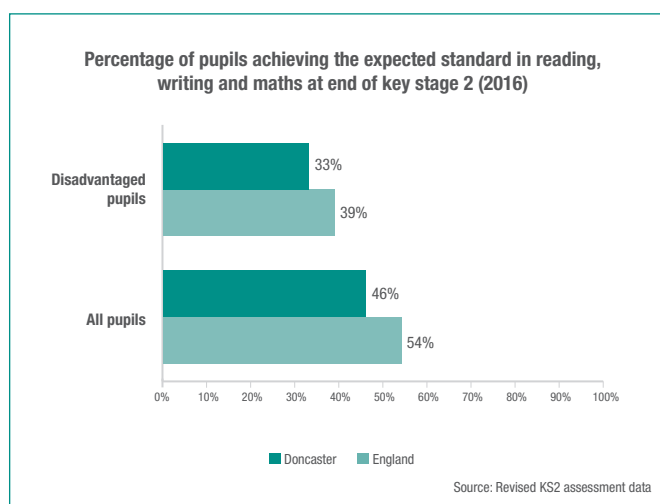
Why Doncaster

We must build on Doncaster's strengths to overcome entrenched failure in schools and remove barriers that prevent many children and young people from reaching their full potential.

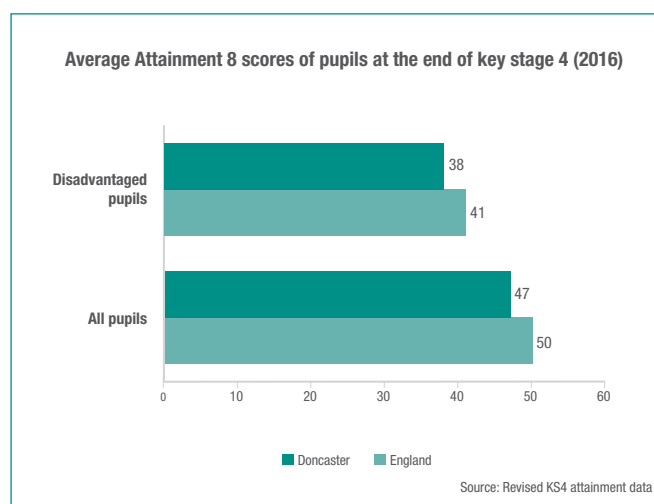
301st out of 324 districts

Doncaster's ranking in the Social Mobility Index (2016)³ that compares the chances that a child from a disadvantaged background will do well at school and get a good job⁴.

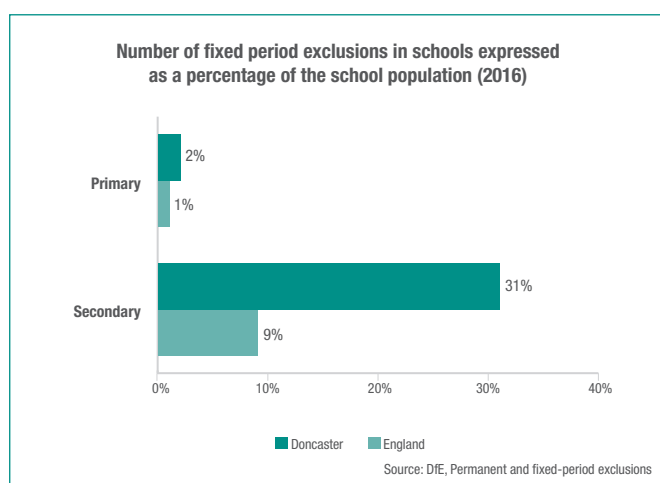
Attaining well – primary



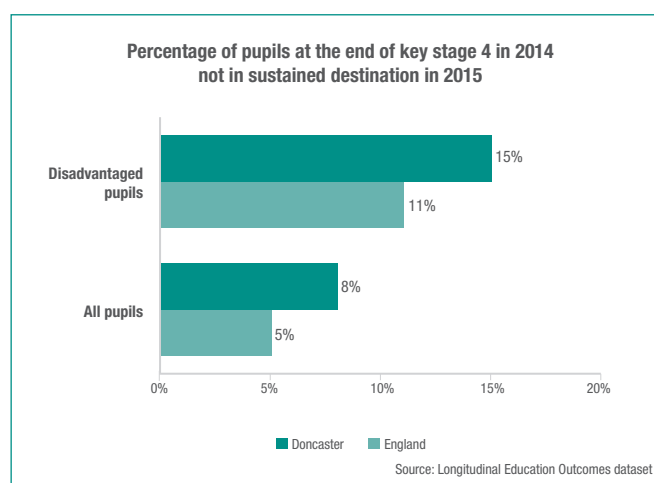
Attaining well – secondary



Thriving in school



Good guidance into adulthood



³ This is Doncaster's ranking within the 2016 social mobility index. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-mobility-index>. The more recent publication on the Social Mobility Index 2017, places Doncaster within a similar position at 298 out of 324 districts. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-mobility-index-2017-data>

⁴ For this analysis, we have grouped local authority districts into six groups (sextiles). The markers on the graphs described as 'high performing' and 'low performing' relate to the top and bottom local authority district sextile. Within this plan, the 'disadvantaged' group varies depending on the Department for Education data source. However, they all include the number of pupils who were eligible for free school meals at any point in the previous six years. For further details about the specific definition of 'disadvantage' for each Department for Education data source, see the 'Education statistics by local authority, district and pupil disadvantage' release found on the Department for Education Statistics page.



Our key challenges

Attaining well in primary and secondary

Children in Doncaster achieve relatively well in their early years education, up to the end of their reception class year. From this point onwards however, pupil attainment starts to fall away from national levels and the gap between outcomes for all children and those from disadvantaged backgrounds grows. Attainment at key stage 2 is below national for all children and disadvantaged children across the core subjects of reading, writing and maths and this continues to poor attainment at key stage 4 where Attainment 8 scores are markedly lower for all pupils and pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Thriving in school

Fixed term exclusion data for the area shows a markedly higher rate than is the case nationally, or even when compared to neighbouring local authority areas.

Coupled with high persistent absence data, this shows that too many children and young people are spending too little of their time accessing learning in school. We are keen to build a better culture of school attendance across the district and there is a commitment now to drive this forward.

Good guidance into adulthood

Analysis of post-16 and post-19 destinations data show that more young people in Doncaster fail to reach a sustained destination post-16 and post-19 than is the case nationally. In conversations with young people in Doncaster, there is a clear sense that they do not feel the guidance they receive reflects all the opportunities available to them and is of a sufficient quality and frequency to enable them to make the best decisions that they can.



STRENGTH THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

Club Doncaster Foundation is absolutely committed to improving lives of young people, particularly those who are from some of the most challenging areas of the borough. In association with EXPECT Youth, Doncaster's youth alliance organisation, we bring experience, energy and an enthusiasm that can add value to the social mobility priorities set out in this plan. I see the importance of partnership working across the area. I am confident that through this programme, which brings a wide variety of organisations together to work in collaboration, we will deliver more opportunities for children and young people in Doncaster that will have a positive impact on their lives."

Jim Lord – CEO, Club Doncaster Foundation

"Doncaster College is committed to working actively in partnership to ensure we make a positive difference to the lives of all our young people. We have a real opportunity here to make a step change and raise their ambitions, aspirations and achievement so that we secure their futures and Doncaster's future."

Anne Tyrrell – CEO, Doncaster College (part of DN Colleges Group)

The Doncaster Opportunity Area partnership board: Engineering success in Doncaster

The Doncaster Opportunity Area partnership board is made up of representatives from organisations across Doncaster including the largest Teaching School Alliance (and now EEF Research School), the Children's Services Trust and the charitable arm of Doncaster Rovers Football Club. It brings together those people who can make a difference in Doncaster by overseeing and influencing successful delivery of this plan. To support the partnership board, four working groups have been established that will help to deliver the activities set out against each of the priorities. The partnership board will meet regularly to oversee progress, working alongside the Department for Education and other national organisations to ensure the programme is coherent, effective and represents good value for money.

Doncaster partnership board membership

Chair – Professor Chris Husbands

Professor Chris Husbands is a university leader, academic, educationalist and public servant. His expertise in educational policy and improvement led to his appointment as Co-Chair of the former Doncaster Education and Skills Board. He became Vice-Chancellor of Sheffield Hallam University in January 2016 and during this time has been leading work across the region to drive improvements in education and skills – particularly through the South Yorkshire Futures programme.

Partnership board members

- **Damian Allen:** Director of People, Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council
- **Carolyn Blundell:** Associate Executive Principal, Outwood Grange Academies Trust
- **Nigel Brewster:** Partner, Brewster Pratap and Vice Chair Sheffield City Region Local Enterprise Partnership
- **Janet Foster:** Executive Headteacher, Kirk Sandall Academy Trust and Director of Primary Teaching School Alliance, Partners in Learning
- **Clare Hutchinson:** Area Manager – North, The Careers & Enterprise Company
- **Jim Lord:** CEO, Club Doncaster Foundation
- **Paul Moffatt:** Chief Executive, Doncaster Children's Services Trust
- **Helen Redford-Hernandez:** Headteacher Hungerhill School and Lead Director of Secondary Teaching School, Partners in Learning
- **Lisa Suter:** Headteacher, Heatherwood Special School
- **Anne Tyrrell:** CEO, Doncaster College (part of DN Colleges Group)

The board will also be attended by Department for Education officials, including the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Doncaster Opportunity Area team. A local programme manager will also attend as part of their role supporting the work of the partnership board.

Our partnership with national organisations

The partnership board welcomes the opportunity to work collaboratively with national as well as local partners to deliver success against the four priorities set out in this plan. We are currently working with two national partner organisations (The Careers & Enterprise Company and the National Citizen Service Trust) that can offer young people a range of personal development experiences – and we are being supported by the Education Endowment Foundation to implement evidence based good practice in schools in Doncaster.

The Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC)



Deliver encounters with the world of work: The Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) will ensure that every eleven to eighteen year old benefits from at least four high quality employer encounters over the lifetime of the Opportunity Area programme. This follows research from the Education and Employers Taskforce⁵ which shows that a young person who has four or more encounters with an employer is 86% less likely to be unemployed or not in education or training, and can earn up to eighteen percent more during their career. Delivering these four encounters will help schools achieve the Gatsby Benchmarks relating to ‘encounters with employers’, and ‘experiences of workplaces’.

Working with CEC, we will deliver 96,000 encounters over the lifetime of this plan. A share of the CEC’s £2m investment fund will also contribute to the delivery of four or more meaningful employer encounters for pupils aged eleven to eighteen in Doncaster.

This work will be supported by two dedicated Enterprise Co-ordinators for Doncaster, already in post and co funded by the CEC and the Local Enterprise Partnership. Enterprise Co-ordinators will offer every school and college in Doncaster access to an Enterprise Adviser (a senior business volunteer), who will help schools and colleges develop a strategy for their careers work with young people and help to better connect schools and colleges with employers. To leverage more encounters, including for young people with SEND, we will work with our cornerstone employers who will role model the closer working between employers, schools and colleges that we will create in Doncaster.

⁵ https://www.educationandemployers.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/its_who_you_meet_final_26_06_12.pdf

Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)



An independent charity dedicated to breaking the link between family income and educational achievement. EEF will support the partnership board by working with schools across the borough to make the best use of evidence about what works in education – particularly improving outcomes for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The EEF have designated Partners in Learning, a Teaching School Alliance, as the area's dedicated EEF Research School who already offer support to schools of all phases. The EEF Research School was formally launched in October 2017, and the event was well-attended by nearly 100 delegates including senior Department for Education speakers and the EEF who have already started working with Partners in Learning to develop a plan for the EEF Research School. The plan will include priority areas for accelerating school improvement across Doncaster and sharing evidence based good practice.

The National Citizen Service programme



Delivered by Club Doncaster Foundation (on behalf of the English Football League Trust (EFLT) and the National Citizen Service) this programme offers young people the chance to develop their personal skills including confidence and resilience, and helps them to build relationships with students who attend different secondary schools, in different parts of the borough.

Young people take part in activities as part of a residential trip, including: rock climbing; hiking; canoeing; and archery. After the residential trip, participants take part in a discovery week where they learn new skills that they might not get the chance to learn in school – such as an insight into politics. The final phase of the programme involves a community-based social action project. This project is planned by the young people and it helps them to build relationships with their local communities.

National Citizen Service graduates report that the programme has a long lasting impact on their lives, helping many young people to form friendships across the borough that they do not feel they would have done otherwise.



The 2017 cohort of young people on the programme was nearly ten times larger than it was four years ago, with 705 young people aged fifteen to seventeen taking part. 2017 graduates volunteered for 21,150 hours and raised £9,000 for local charities.

As a result of the Opportunity Area programme, National Citizen Service Trust, EFL Trust and Club Doncaster are looking to widen the scope of the programme and extend its reach locally. For example, a specific programme for vulnerable young people.

Through our engagement with young people in care and those who have left care, we have heard that they do not feel comfortable attending the programme at present, for fear of isolation as a minority – we must address this with urgency.

We will explore the feasibility of partnering the National Citizen Service with other local organisations to develop additional ways of enhancing young people's skills as part of the three week programme. For example, we have heard from young people that there is limited advice and guidance on starting up your own business and there is an opportunity for the National Citizen Service to work with Doncaster Chamber of Commerce to produce an enterprise-focused National Citizen Service programme which addresses this gap.

“Unforgettable week away in the Lake District with the National Citizen Service programme, amazing experience.”

National Citizen Service graduate

“Part of the course was actually learning new skills for the future. I thought that this was really good in that they didn't teach us useless skills...better yet having the National Citizen Service experience on your CV is just incredible.”

National Citizen Service graduate

OUR PRIORITIES



Overview of priorities

Levelling up attainment and opportunities for children and young people who face disadvantage.

Priority 1. Building solid foundations for all children

Narrowing the attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged primary pupils in literacy and numeracy, giving all children the strongest possible start to their schooling.

Priority 2. Brilliant teaching and leadership for all secondary pupils

Increasing the number of good school places so that every young person in Doncaster has access to high quality teaching and learning in a school that is run by strong leaders.

Priority 3. No career out of bounds

Helping more of Doncaster's young people to find the right academic and vocational routes for the careers they aspire to.

Priority 4. Opportunities extend to all

Taking active steps to help the most vulnerable to access opportunities that will support them to succeed in and out of education – and go as far as their ability and ambition will take them.

Underpinning themes

Collaboration

**Recruiting quality
teachers**

Essential life skills

Priority 1: Building solid foundations for all children

We will narrow the attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged primary pupils in literacy and numeracy, giving all children the strongest possible start to their schooling.

Why this is an issue

An improving picture in early years

According to 2016 data, children eligible for free schools meals in Doncaster outperformed their national peers in achieving a good level of development at the end of the early years phase and a higher percentage of pupils compared to national figures reached the expected standard in all early learning goals. The standard of provision for three and four year olds is high, with 87% of settings rated as good or outstanding in 2016. Participation in early years provision is above national average with 74% of two year olds and 96% of three and four year olds taking up funded early education places. These are strong educational foundations to build on.

The importance of building strong foundations

Prior attainment is particularly critical in helping children from disadvantaged backgrounds reach the expected standards in literacy and numeracy by the time they

leave primary. Employers place a high value on English and maths but locally, considering Doncaster's largest growth sectors – logistics and transport, advanced manufacturing, and financial and professional services – it is even more important that all children leave primary school and move to secondary school with solid literacy and numeracy attainment.

Too few children from disadvantaged backgrounds in Doncaster however are reaching the expected standard in literacy and numeracy by the end of key stage 2 – with reading and maths the areas of greatest concern. In 2016, less than half (43%) of all pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds reached the expected standard in reading and only 6% reached greater depth – compared nationally to 53% and 10% respectively. In the same year, of the 3,760 pupils who had a phonics screening check, one in five did not reach the expected standard – nearly a quarter of those were eligible for free school meals (FSM).

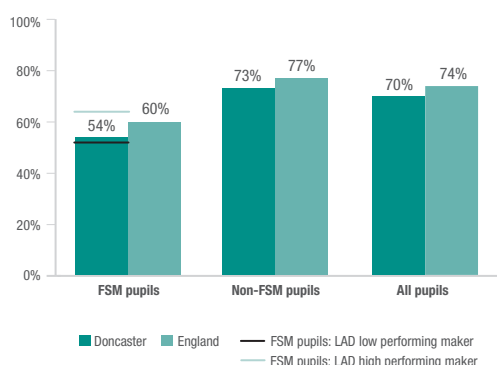
Why this is an issue

In maths, outcomes for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds were also below national average in 2016: only 51% reached the expected standard and 6% reached greater depth of understanding – compared nationally to 58% and 9% respectively. Data shows a strong relationship between schools that were below the Government's floor standard in 2016 – i.e. the minimum it expects all schools to achieve⁶ – and those situated in areas with highest levels of deprivation, with greatest numbers of disadvantaged pupils. Some schools in Doncaster are bucking this trend. For example, at one school 36% of pupils were eligible for free school meals (FSM) in 2016 yet outcomes were above national average, including those for disadvantaged pupils: 70% met the expected standard and the average progress score in maths was +3.1 (significantly more progress than children make on average).

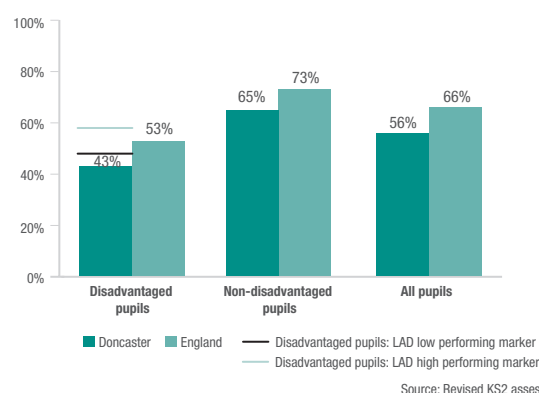
Simply driving standards up across the entire borough may not address the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged children in Doncaster. We need to be more targeted. Evidence shows that pupils eligible for FSM will still have comparatively worse attainment even when they attend good schools.

The most important school-level factor in raising attainment for disadvantaged pupils is ensuring that high quality teaching, together with strong leadership, are in place in the schools with the highest numbers of children from disadvantaged backgrounds. For Doncaster, this means supporting the best teachers and leaders to work in schools serving the most disadvantaged and deprived communities so that we narrow the gap, remove education inequality and ensure all pupils have the same opportunity to succeed.

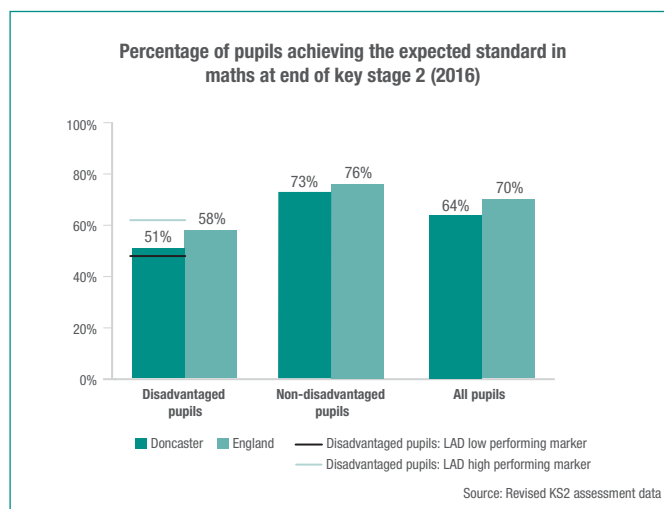
Percentage of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading at the end of key stage 1 (2016)



Percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading at end of key stage 2 (2016)



⁶ In 2016, the Department for Education set the floor standard at 65% of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths or sufficient progress across all areas.



What we will do

We will concentrate our efforts on narrowing the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils at the end of key stage 2 so that more disadvantaged pupils meet the expected standards – focusing specifically on reading and maths. To do this, we will target all schools for some interventions but in most, we will adopt a targeted approach working with schools with the greatest number of disadvantaged children or the most significant attainment gaps. We have already established a new primary headteacher group, led by the Partners in Learning Teaching School Alliance. This group will oversee successful delivery of this ambition and will develop and implement a cross-borough primary school improvement plan.

This plan will set out how we will:

- Raise the bar on training and development to increase the number of great teachers who are advocates of learning and are passionate about the craft of teaching.** There is an urgent need to increase the number of outstanding teachers within Doncaster's primary schools. We want to retain existing talent so that they are able to have influence in schools operating in challenging circumstances and make sure high quality teaching and learning is delivered to children who need it the most. We will ensure teachers in mainstream and special schools get access to the best evidence based professional development, including support being offered by through the Teaching and Leadership Innovation Fund.

What we will do

We will also commission a new and complementary continuous professional development (CPD) programme tailored to the needs of schools in Doncaster. The combined national and local CPD programmes will help schools retain good teachers by growing existing talent and making Doncaster stand out as a great place to teach.

- **Improve the quality of maths teaching and learning to achieve better outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.**

There are examples of outstanding maths practice within the borough, where brilliant teachers have narrowed the gap in maths attainment between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils. There is also an active network of maths hubs (the South Yorkshire Maths Hub, the West Yorkshire Maths Hub and the Yorkshire and Humber Maths Hub) who all support work to improve maths outcomes at key stage 2 in Doncaster. Using the mastery specialist and teacher research groups approach embedded in maths hubs, we will cascade a mastery approach to teaching across the borough. In addition to this, the Partners in Learning EEF Research School will deliver training to schools in understanding and using the new maths guidance report produced by the EEF and more widely will ensure evidence based good practice is disseminated throughout the local primary schools network.

- **Create a new literacy campaign that will draw on evidence based good practice**

such as that from the EEF and the local authority's existing reading strategy. We will work with all schools to improve the quality of literacy teaching, focusing on improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils by promoting classroom practices that are shown to have greatest impact in closing the gap. We will draw on the EEF Toolkit⁷ and its guidance on developing meta-cognition, ('learning to learn') and collaborative and co-operative learning. Priority support will be given to those schools in areas of deprivation and targeted towards 30 schools where reading outcomes at key stage 2 are a concern.

- **Ensure schools receive help from an education adviser.**

The adviser will work supportively with them to access the right school improvement programmes to improve educational outcomes. This offer will help 25 schools where outcomes are below the minimum expected. An education adviser will be deployed to work with these schools to identify areas for improvement with a high level of specificity, and to navigate the school improvement system so that schools access the best and most appropriate support available.

⁷ <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/teaching-learning-toolkit/>

Our 2018 activity will include:

- **We are using the Teaching and Leadership Innovation Fund to provide primary school leaders and teachers with quality professional development.** Ruth Miskin Training will provide teachers with training in reading and phonics. STEM Learning will deliver the Aspire to STEM programme. Edison Learning will work with a network of primary schools to deliver training to school leaders on teaching and assessment for learning and strengthening school leadership. These programmes are already being targeted at schools judged to require improvement or special measures (Ofsted categories 3 and 4).
- **We are supporting schools using the Strategic School Improvement Fund – targeted, evidence based school improvement support.** We will implement successful bids to ensure that they deliver agreed outcomes for our schools most in need of support and we will look for opportunities to ‘scale up’ successful bids where we feel they could have greater impact on schools in Doncaster.
- **We will commission a bespoke professional development programme** that will use robust evidence and research to support leaders of teaching and learning to embed a change leadership model. This will lead to sustainable improvements to the quality of teaching and learning. This programme will focus on catch up strategies, reading, maths and meta-cognition and self-regulation (learning to learn). We will target ten schools that have the weakest outcomes in reading, writing and maths (combined) at key stage 2 and those that are in areas of greatest deprivation.
- **We will ensure two more primary maths leads from Doncaster commence training as teaching for mastery specialists** in order to support other schools in implementing this approach.
- **A new dedicated education adviser will work with 25 primary schools from March 2018** to improve their access to school improvement programmes and additional support.

Our targets for 2020/21 are:

- 75% of all pupils to achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and maths combined at the end of KS2 in 2020/21 (equating to 1,290 more children). Nationally, 54% of pupils reached this standard in 2016 and 62% in 2017.
- We will narrow the attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-

disadvantaged pupils by six percentage points so that 69% of disadvantaged pupils achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and maths combined at the end of key stage 2 in 2020/21 (equating to 260 more disadvantaged children achieving the combined outcome).



Priority 2: Brilliant teaching and leadership for all secondary pupils

We will increase the number of good school places so that every young person in Doncaster has access to high quality teaching and learning in a school that is run by strong leaders.

Why this is an issue

As with primary attainment, research shows that the biggest educational influence on raising secondary attainment is the quality of teaching and leadership⁸ – and this is again particularly important for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Data from 2016 indicates that the overall quality of secondary schools in Doncaster is poor, with only 61% of pupils attending a school rated good or outstanding. By comparison, a higher percentage of pupils nationally (82%) attend schools rated good or outstanding. There is even less opportunity for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in Doncaster to go to good schools, with only 50% of pupils eligible for FSM attending schools that have been rated good or outstanding for overall effectiveness.

Locally, secondary leaders report difficulty recruiting enough high quality subject-specific teachers – particularly in science, English and maths – which means schools are forced to draw on existing teaching staff to teach outside of their specialism without having received good quality training. In some schools, this is overcome by teachers

retraining in the core subjects and by schools developing resources, training and CPD to upskill existing staff. In other schools, there is not the capacity to do this 'in house'.

Data from 2016 also highlights the borough's challenge in ensuring all young people attend a school with strong leadership – a prerequisite of raising attainment for all pupils but particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The opportunity for young people to attend a school where the leadership and management has been rated good or outstanding is lower than national levels, particularly for those pupils who are eligible for FSM.

There is also correlation (as with the primary) between schools with the lowest numbers of pupils securing good outcomes, those situated in wards with highest levels of deprivation (for example, Balby and Hatfield) and schools with greatest numbers of disadvantaged pupils. The secondary school system in Doncaster has not had sufficient stability in recent years, with work needed to ensure all secondary academies are part of strong, high performing multi-academy trusts with capacity to deliver school improvement.

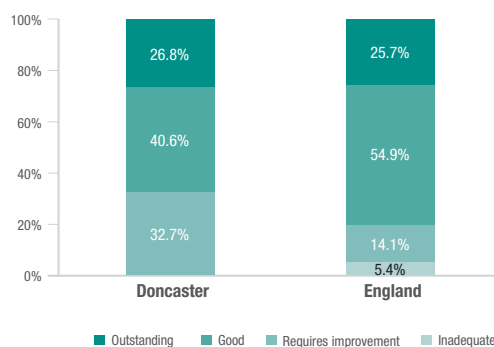
⁸ See for example Sutton Trust (2014) What makes great teaching? Review of underpinning research. <https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/What-Makes-Great-Teaching-REPORT.pdf>

Why this is an area of focus

In terms of the impact that this has on outcomes, on average young people in Doncaster make significantly less progress than their national peers. The average Progress 8 score for all pupils in Doncaster is -0.21 compared to -0.03 nationally. This is particularly evident in STEM subjects (crucial for many of the high skilled jobs in the local and regional labour markets) and specifically in maths where the average Attainment 8 scores for disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils is 9.1– 0.7 points lower than the national rate.

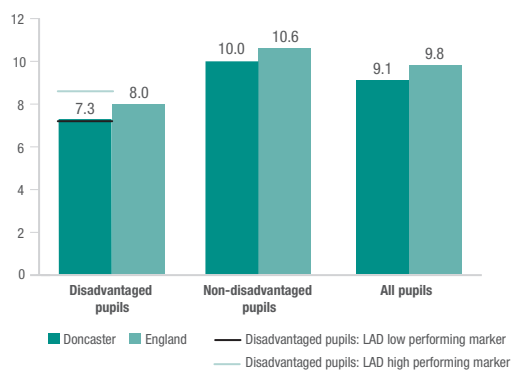
The number of pupils entered for the EBacc qualification is also far lower than national average – denying some young people a broad set of academic qualifications from which they can build on further academic or vocational learning. Based on 2016 data, 27.4% of pupils were entered; over twelve percentage points lower than the national rate and out of the 830 entered, only 147 were pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Percentage of FSM pupils in secondary schools by Ofsted rating for effectiveness of leadership and management (January 2017)



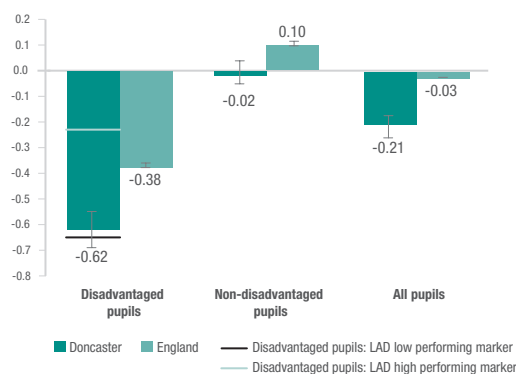
Source: School Census, Ofsted

Average Attainment 8 scores of pupils at the end of key stage 4: maths component (2016)



Source: Revised KS4 attainment data

Average Progress 8 scores of pupils at the end of key stage 4 (2016)



Source: Revised KS4 attainment data



What we will do

We will address the urgent need for all secondary schools to work together for the benefit of pupils in Doncaster. We will increase the number of excellent leaders at every level and ensure existing high quality teaching, developed in schools and within multi-academy trusts, is used to support those schools most in need of improvement. Collaboration and collective ownership for better outcomes for Doncaster's young people will be the underpinning principles for how we will ensure better outcomes for all.

We will work with the Regional Schools Commissioner (who holds all secondary academies to account for outcomes in Doncaster) and Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council to carry out granular analysis that will inform development and implementation of a cross-borough secondary school improvement strategy. The strategy will set out how we will:

- **Continue supporting multi-academy trusts to be high performing and sustainable** – targeting support in particular to those trust that accountable for the eight schools rated requires improvement or inadequate⁹. We are helping them to access support, both financially and in expert advice and guidance, to ensure they are well managed and run by strong leaders. Where this aligns with the urgent need to improve school standards in Doncaster schools, we are encouraging strong multi-academy trusts to access financial support to grow their school improvement capacity using the Department for Education's Multi-Academy Trust Development and Improvement Fund.
- **Build leadership capacity at all levels** – we will boost teacher retention and leadership capacity by supporting teachers to progress in their careers and in turn

⁹ In addition to these schools, we will also support those schools who do not currently have an Ofsted rating but under their predecessor school were rated as 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate'.

What we will do

allow the secondary school network to increase the number of strong leaders at every level. We will support secondary schools to access fully funded places on the newly accredited National Professional Qualification (NPQ) training, with a strong focus on developing middle leaders, as well as promoting take up of training programmes that develop leadership skills at all levels.

- **Create a comprehensive CPD offer available to all Doncaster's secondary school teachers** – to help retain talented teachers in the area and to ensure more children experience great teaching we will ensure there is a package of high quality training for schools in Doncaster to access. This will include the existing offer of whole-school leadership development from Teach First and physics CPD being delivered by the Institute of Physics – both funded through the Teaching and Leadership Innovation Fund (TLIF). We expect the schools facing the greatest challenges to access this support and we will help ensure resource reaches those who needed it the most. At a stakeholder event designed to get feedback on our priorities, a structured, borough-wide CPD offer was identified by school leaders and multi-academy trust CEOs as a priority area of need.

- **Improve subject specific leadership and pedagogy models in English, maths, and science**, as core subjects critical to many progression routes. Through the data analysis exercise, we will identify good teaching and learning practice in each of these subjects that can be used to develop and deliver subject specific training to specialist teachers and subject leaders. Support through the CDP offer will be targeted based on the outcomes of peer-to-peer curriculum reviews that all secondary schools will participate in, with support from expertise within maths hubs and science learning partnerships to upskill those carrying out the reviews. The curriculum reviews will identify schools and departments that need additional support to improve pupil attainment and progress, as well as capturing good practice. Following the curriculum reviews, we will provide schools with a training bursary to match fund the cost of additional training needed where it cannot be sourced via other funding mechanisms. While all secondary schools will be encouraged to participate in this programme, the core priority will be to support those schools with the weakest outcomes and greatest gaps for disadvantaged pupils in these three subjects.

Our 2018 activity will include:

- We will invite all secondary schools to participate in curriculum reviews in English, maths and science, drawing on expertise within the multi-academy trusts operating in Doncaster schools to identify good practice that can be shared across the borough and aspects of teaching and learning that could be improved.
- We will work with all secondary schools to develop a shared inset opportunity for teacher training and network building for subject specialists. The opportunity will also be used to launch the curriculum reviews and deliver CPD to staff.
- We are working with Teach First to double the number of graduate placements working in Doncaster's secondary schools from September 2018 as part of a wider strategy to increase the number of specialist teachers in post across the borough.
- We will prioritise leadership development, targeting a fully funded package of at least 80 NPQs at existing and aspiring secondary school leaders.

Our targets for 2020/21 are:

- 700 more secondary pupils, who are eligible for free school meals, are able to access a place in a mainstream secondary school rated good or outstanding.
- In 80% of mainstream secondary schools at least 40% of young people secure a level 5 pass in English and maths.
- 240 more young people achieve the EBacc element of science.



Priority 3: No career out of bounds

Helping more of Doncaster's young people to find the right academic and vocational routes for the careers they aspire to.

Why this is an issue

As well as succeeding in education, securing good careers advice is vital if young people are going to seize the opportunities around them in the growing Doncaster economy and within the wider region. As new technical education routes are developed, there has never been a better time for young people to follow academic or vocational pathways that truly lead to promising careers. But guiding young people in the right direction is critical, and they must know about these routes and which one is right for them. Young people who see a career path that they can follow, and a next step to work towards, are more likely to commit to their education and work to secure a good outcome at the end of key stage 4.

Too many young people in Doncaster, however, do not find a career path that inspires them. 8% of the area's young people don't reach a sustained destination (employment with training, training or education) in the first six months following the end of key stage 4.

This increases to 15% for disadvantaged young people. Of some 995 disadvantaged young people, 150 didn't find a post-16 option which they continued with during the first six months of post-16 education or training in 2014/15. This puts Doncaster in the worst performing grouping nationally.

At age nineteen, a similar picture exists, whereby again 15% of disadvantaged young

people in the key stage 5 cohort (2013/14) did not reach a sustained destination post-19. Access to good, impartial careers advice is critical to improving on this. Young people need to know the full range of options available to them and be supported to make the right decisions for themselves.

Many stakeholders, including the local authority, college leaders and school sixth-form leaders have reported concern about the market for post-16 provision in the area, with the area's place capacity exceeding the population of post-16 learners. Almost every secondary school offers post-16 provision in Doncaster and almost 50% of all post-16 destinations in 2014/15 were to a school sixth-form. This is alongside a broad range of provision on offer in Doncaster College, apprenticeships and the new sixth-form college – New College Doncaster.

Young people we have spoken to have raised their concerns over access to good quality careers advice and guidance that starts in their formative primary school years and continues through to post-16. Young people have also told us that they want more support to enhance their employability skills such as help with CV writing and signposting to opportunities – something which was also highlighted as an opportunity at a wider stakeholder event.

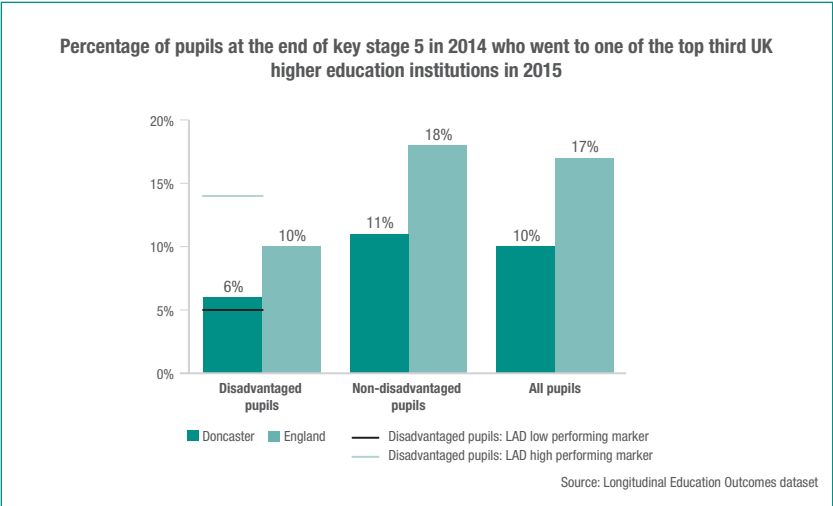
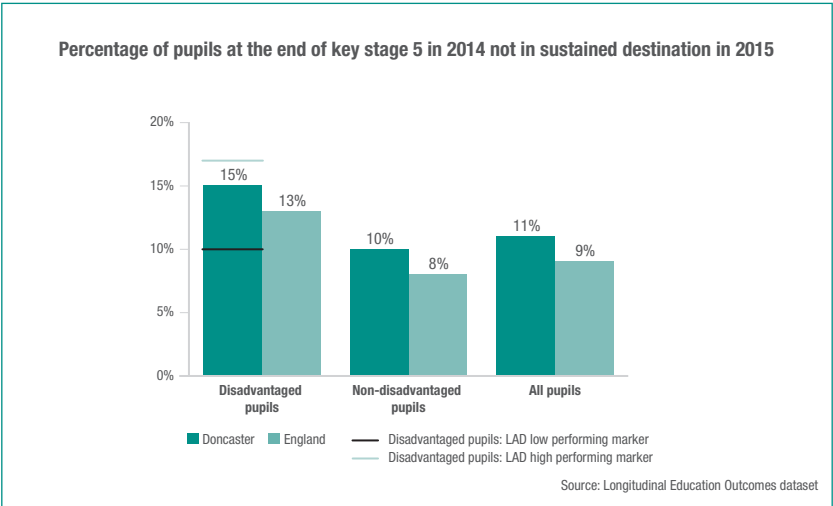
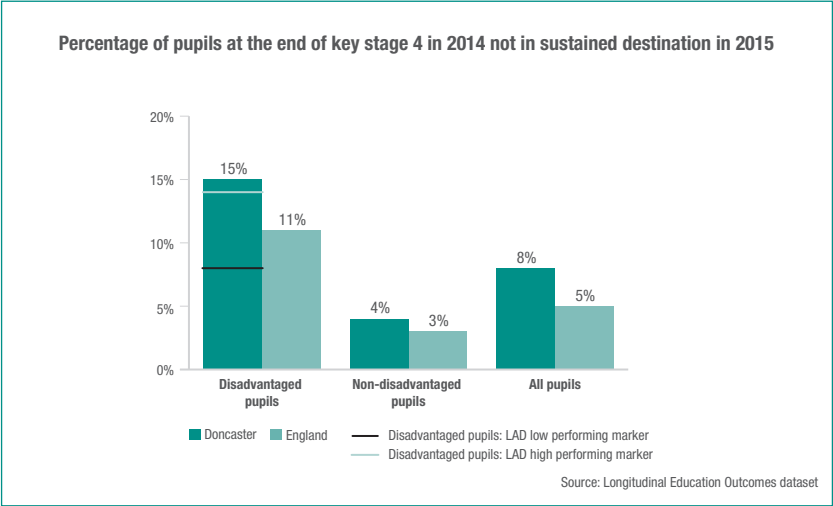
Many career routes are unlocked through participation in higher education. However,

Why this is an area of focus

progression of young people to UK higher education institutions in Doncaster is below the national average for all young people as well as young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Within this, there are some communities in Doncaster where progression to higher education is notably low – with eleven wards in Doncaster falling in the list of lowest higher education participation areas nationally.

Progression to the most selective universities is also significantly lower in Doncaster than it is nationally, particularly for disadvantaged young people, with only 6% securing places in the top third of universities compared to 10% nationally.

Priority 3 – No career out of bounds



What we will do

We will help more of Doncaster's young people to find the right academic and vocational routes for the careers they aspire to. We will rapidly build a best practice system for providing careers advice in Doncaster, based on collaboration between partners. This system will have a relentless focus on what is right for young people, in both schools and colleges, to help them achieve their career aspirations. In order to do this, we will:

- **Improve how we deliver careers information, advice and guidance.**

We will bring together existing careers, information, advice and guidance (CIAG) leaders to establish a new careers 'network' for Doncaster linked to the Enterprise Adviser Network – a network of senior representative from business who advise schools and colleges on their strategies for careers and enterprise support. We will pilot a new approach to the provision of CIAG, ensuring greater collaboration and information sharing. We will ensure there is funding available to upskill all careers leaders in schools and colleges and help them to move towards meeting the eight Gatsby Benchmarks. These leaders will be skilled to become effective 'air traffic controllers' of the offer to young people. Through a new collaborative approach, all schools in Doncaster will meet their responsibilities to ensure providers of both vocational and academic learning can talk to young people about their offer. The partnership board will also assess the outputs from the local authority led project with the Open Data Institute (ODI) on opening up

data around careers information, advice and guidance. We will commission a comprehensive survey of young people's views on the careers advice they receive in Doncaster at the start and end of the programme.

- **Deliver encounters with the world of work:** The Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) will ensure that every eleven to eighteen year old benefits from at least four high quality employer encounters over the life of the Opportunity Area programme. Delivering these four encounters will help schools achieve the Gatsby Benchmarks relating to 'encounters with employers', and 'experiences of workplaces'. By working with CEC, we will deliver 96,000 encounters over the lifetime of this plan. A share of the CEC £2m investment fund will also contribute to the delivery of this target. This work will be supported by two dedicated Enterprise Co-ordinators for Doncaster, already in post and co funded by the CEC and the Local Enterprise Partnership. Enterprise Co-ordinators will offer every school and college in Doncaster access to an Enterprise Adviser, who will help schools and colleges develop a strategy for their careers work with young people and help to better connect schools and colleges with employers. To leverage more encounters, including for young people with SEND, we will work with our cornerstone employers who will role model the closer working between employers, schools and colleges that we will forge in Doncaster.

What we will do

- **Develop better routes for young people with SEND as they transition to adulthood.**

We are already working with Mencap and the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi) to ensure there is greater ambition set out in education, health and care plans. This will mean young people with SEND can realise a career of their choice and can secure more independence in preparing for adulthood. NDTi have brought together senior leaders from the local authority, education providers and employers to focus on supported employment for young people with SEND. They are also working closely with Mencap who will roll out work preparation workshops for young people with SEND to prepare them for employment.

- **Widen participation in higher education:** We will encourage more young people from economically disadvantaged backgrounds to consider higher education after secondary school, or post-16 study, where they have achievement that meets entry criteria but personal circumstances might otherwise hold them back. The National Collaborative Outreach Programme, run by the Higher Education Progression Partnership in Sheffield, is already working with Doncaster College

and six secondary schools in Doncaster's most deprived wards to increase the number young people participating in higher education.

- **Test approaches to working with primary schools:** We will explore with local stakeholders and the CEC how, in schools with high numbers of disadvantaged children, we can test approaches to raising career aspirations and preventing career stereotypes emerging, and join work nationally to build the evidence base on what work in this area.

The range of post-16 provision in Doncaster is being reviewed to ensure it meets the needs of a modern economy and is of good quality and is sustainable. The local authority has commissioned an independent review of post-16 provision in Doncaster, working with the Local Enterprise Partnership and the Regional Schools Commissioner. This includes an in-depth assessment of current post-16 provision, taking account of leadership, and how the different post-16 options impact on student destinations. When this review reports in April 2018, the partnership board will consider its finding and take steps to act on any changes to provision that are needed.

Our 2018 activity will include:

We will help more of Doncaster's young people to find the right academic and vocational routes for the careers they aspire to.

- We will establish a Doncaster-wide career network by September 2018 that will bring together all careers leaders across schools and post-16, and build a new best practice system.
- We will commission a survey of young people's views on the quality of careers advice they receive to establish a robust baseline and to monitor progress as we improve the careers system.
- Through the Enterprise Adviser Network we are providing every school and college with a dedicated Enterprise Adviser and support to develop a plan for achieving each of the Gatsby principles of good career guidance by September 2018. Through this, we will make sure careers leaders in all schools and post-16 settings are upskilled to lead their own institution's

improved offer to young people.

- We will implement the NDTi action plan to support development of employment outcomes in education health and care plans by March 2018. This was created as a result of the priorities identified at an employment pathway workshop in November 2017.
- The National Collaborative Outreach Programme is placing outreach staff in six schools and one college who will work with students in year 9 and 12 to double the number of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds moving into high education.
- We will test approaches to early careers work in up to four primary schools with high numbers of disadvantaged children during 2018 and join national work to understand what careers activities work well in primary schools.

Our targets for 2020/21 are:

- 96,000 encounters with employers delivered in Doncaster through the Enterprise Adviser Network (equating to four encounters for every young person aged eleven to eighteen).
- All schools and colleges based in Doncaster assessed to be meeting all eight Gatsby benchmarks using tools such as the Careers & Enterprise Company's Compass careers benchmarking tool.
- Reduction in the number of disadvantaged young people who do not secure a sustained destination post-16 to below 50 (currently 150)¹⁰.
- Increase in the number of young people, when surveyed, who rate the quality of the careers advice they have received as good or better.



¹⁰ The Partnership board will agree a quantified target when the baseline survey has been completed.

Priority 4: Opportunities extend to all

Taking active steps to help most vulnerable to access opportunities that will support them to succeed in and out of education – and go as far as their ability and ambition will take them.

Why this is an issue

Children and young people with multiple barriers to opportunities: Doncaster has significant numbers of children who fall under the seven categories of vulnerability set by the Children's Commissioner¹¹ which include children in care of the state, those supported by national programmes like the Troubled Families programme or those with Special Educational Needs. There are approximately 530 children in care in Doncaster and around 270 care leavers who are all supported by Doncaster Children's Services Trust. There are nearly 5,000 children eligible for free school meals (an indication of short or longer term economic disadvantage) and of the total number of pupils, over 16% are known to be part of the Troubled Families programme (known locally as Stronger Families). We have carried out a data mapping exercise to assess the number of children who experience multiple layers of disadvantage

and vulnerability. For children and young people in these circumstances, life in Doncaster can be extremely challenging, resulting in a lack of experiences and access to enrichment opportunities, and reduced engagement in education. We will do a small number of specific and targeted programmes to support this group to thrive.

Vulnerable young people miss out in developing essential life skills: Along with high quality teaching, research shows the link between educational attainment and extra-curricular activity that enhances resilience, self-efficacy and emotional and social skills. The Education Endowment Foundation have also published evidence on how extra-curricular activities can benefit disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils, such as helping to improve education outcomes.

¹¹ See <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/CCO-On-vulnerability-Overview-2.pdf>

Why this is an issue

Opportunities currently bypass vulnerable children and young people:

outside of school, vulnerable children and young people need more support to engage in extra-curricular programmes that are already operating:

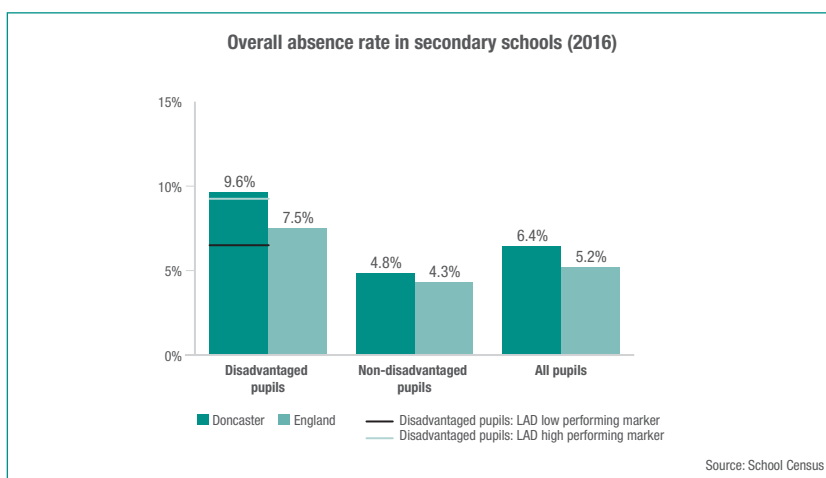
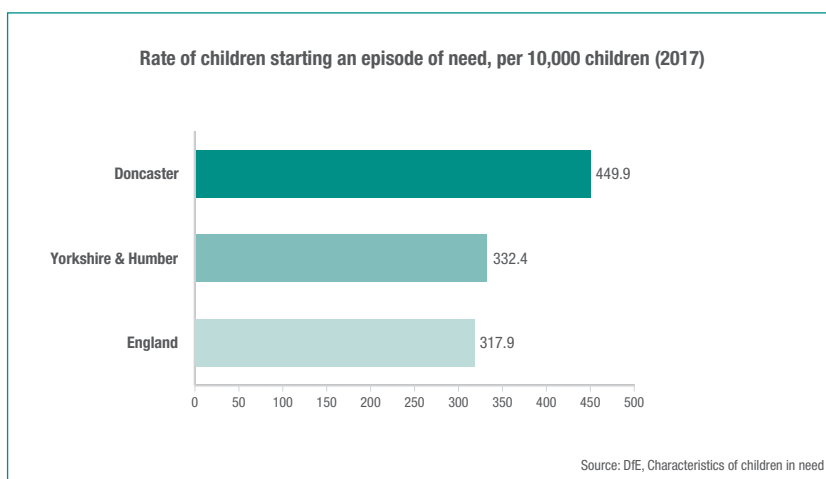
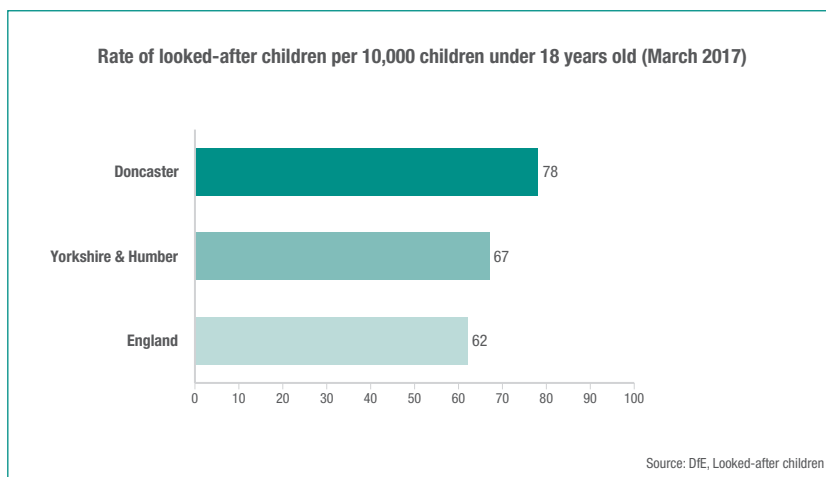
- The National Citizen Service is well established in Doncaster and in recent years take up has increased rapidly. Last year however, just under 10% of recorded graduates who took part in National Citizen Service were eligible for free school meals and only a very few were children in care. Anecdotally, we have heard that young people in care drop out of the National Citizen Service programme in Doncaster more regularly than those not in care, largely because they feel the programme is not currently tailored to their needs. In particular, we have heard that the residential trips designed to broaden horizons put too much strain on vulnerable young people who have had limited experience of new environments and life outside the borough.
- Doncaster also delivers the Children's University¹² programme, operated by Doncaster College. In this programme, children aged five to fourteen are given a passport to record all activities they do outside of school (where the club or organisation is registered with the Children's University). Schools buy the passports from the Children's University and although some schools use pupil premium funding to reduce the cost for pupils, the cost of the passport – and the subsequent activities – creates a barrier to accessing the programme for some disadvantaged children.
- Through our engagement with children and young people, including those in the care system, we have heard first hand that they want more access to activities outside the curriculum including sports, out of school clubs and personal development opportunities. However, these should be bespoke and tailored to groups of vulnerable children and young people who need additional support.

“Doncaster Children's Services Trust are delighted to see vulnerable children at the front and centre of all the priorities especially priority four in this plan.”

Paul Moffatt, Chief Executive, Doncaster Children's Services Trust

¹² <http://www.childrensuniversity.co.uk/>

Priority 4 – Opportunities extend to all



What we will do

We will make sure that all children and young people, regardless of their background, can access activities that enhance personal skills such as resilience, character and confidence. We have analysed data to identify the most vulnerable children and young people in Doncaster using the categories of vulnerable children set out by the Children's Commissioner – to fully understand the true level of vulnerability some children and young people face. We will continue to work with Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council and local agencies to evaluate their specific needs before providing them with bespoke support. We will also capitalise on the enthusiasm of a number of employers in the area and the voluntary sector to make a change to the lives of the most disadvantaged young people in Doncaster. To do this we will:

- **Develop and implement an innovative coaching and mentoring programme** for the most vulnerable children and young people (including those at risk of entering the criminal justice system). The programme will be tailored to meet the needs of different age groups but with the universal objective of supporting vulnerable children and young people (and their families) to maintain engagement in

school – particularly through key periods of transition so that they go on to further education, employment or training after school. We will build on the social action project being led by EXPECT Youth which has received around £1m of funding through the iWill campaign and evidence of what works such as the EEF's mentoring strand of the teaching and learning toolkit.

- **Break down the barriers that prevent vulnerable children and young people from accessing the Children's University and the National Citizen Service programmes.** We will help more vulnerable children and young people make the most of existing opportunities. For the National Citizen Service, we will provide tailored support before, during and after they access the existing programme. We will be more innovative in our means of engagement with schools but also work with children's homes and residential care centres to recruit participants on to the programme, to ensure young people feel reassured that they are specifically supported. For the Children's University, we will learn from best practice and ensure the reach of the initiative is extended to schools in areas of high deprivation and those with greatest numbers of vulnerable pupils.

What we will do

- **We will give additional help to vulnerable young people so they can make informed choices about their post-16 options and not be held back by personal circumstances.**

Local anecdotal evidence suggests that there is great inconsistency in the way careers information, advice and guidance (CIAG) is provided to vulnerable children especially where they have lower level SEN or emotional and mental health issues. Building on this, we will also work with local universities and colleges to find innovative ways of enabling vulnerable young people to access higher education (university and higher-level apprenticeships) to ensure they have every opportunity to reach their potential.

- **Support teachers and schools to explore alternative options to fixed term exclusions for vulnerable children and improve attendance:**

We know that the majority of fixed term exclusions in Doncaster are issued in response to relatively low level classroom disruption and that fixed term exclusions are commonly issued to pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. Building on evidence of what works from existing programmes, such as the Safer Schools Partnership run by Sheffield based charity Remedi, we will work with teachers, schools and multi-academy trusts to test new restorative approaches to manage conflict in classrooms, and encourage a reduction in the numbers of fixed term exclusions issued. As a result of the safer schools partnership, Remedi found that behaviour and attendance of pupils they were working with significantly improved. For example, prior to the programme, the average attendance rate was 88%; afterwards it increased to 96%. This work will be closely linked to the local authority's Education Inclusion programme.

Our 2018 activity will include:

- **We will develop and launch a new coaching and mentoring programme** by April 2018 for vulnerable children and young people, supporting them to develop life skills outside of school that in turn will incentivise and support school attendance and improved confidence and resilience.
- **We will extend the reach of the Children's University initiative** so that schools with the highest proportion of vulnerable children are actively supported to enable their children to engage strongly in this programme.
- **We will provide a bespoke package of support to vulnerable young people who want to access the National Citizen Service programme.** Help will be given before, during and after they attend the programme to help to address their barriers to engagement.
- **We will work with local universities to develop a guaranteed interview pilot** that will provide additional support for vulnerable young people to consider and enter higher education. Alongside this, we will maximise the reach and impact of existing programmes that are already offering support to vulnerable students to help with applications and financial costs.

Our targets for 2020/21 are:

- At least 1,000 more children facing disadvantage access the Children's University scheme in Doncaster between year 1 and July 2021. Doncaster College estimate that currently between 800 and 1,000 disadvantaged children participate.
- By summer 2021, we will extend the reach of the National Citizen Service programme, ensuring at least one in five (20%) participants are young people facing disadvantage. In 2016 only around 8% of participants were disadvantaged young people.
- At least 300 vulnerable young people with two or more characteristics of vulnerability, participate in an enduring coaching and mentoring relationship and through this are accessing one or more extra-curricular programme as part of the Essential Life Skills programme or other routes.
- Fixed period exclusion rate (expressed as a percentage of pupil population) will have reduced by half from the rate in 2016/17 (31%).



Underpinning themes

Collaboration across the borough – no matter what

Why is this important?

To address the priorities in this plan, and make significant progress in improving social mobility in Doncaster, collaboration across the borough is essential. The geographical make up of Doncaster, as well as institutional differences, can sometimes make this difficult

but with the Opportunity Area partnership board leading the way, Doncaster must come together and work together to drive change. This starts at leadership level, with those people who hold position of influence and can inspire confidence in the borough.

Year one activities

We will work with the Regional Schools Commissioner to build a strong network of collaboration between the eighteen secondary academies who will work together in partnership for the benefit of the borough and all young people in Doncaster. The network will facilitate the sharing of good practice – such as pedagogy and subject leadership approaches in core EBacc subjects, disseminating effective behaviour attendance and parental engagement approaches, and strategies for raising the attainment of disadvantaged children. Schools that are part of the Wakefield City Academies Trust will be supported by a Transition Board as they are moved to new preferred sponsors. The Board will ensure a focus on rapid school improvement and a smooth transition period. Collaboration will be at the heart of school improvement for the whole town, providing assurance that no matter where you live; no child will be left behind.

We will work with local partners to develop a young people's corporate social responsibility strategy to ensure support continues for vulnerable children and young people. Some programmes and organisations are already supported by large, local businesses who want to reinvest in Doncaster and its residents. We want to capitalise on this and ensure investment in supporting those who need help the most continues.

We will ensure that the partnership board works together beyond the Opportunity Area programme – we want to be at the forefront of improving social mobility and part of a wider movement of people who truly believe in making Doncaster the best borough to live, work and go to school in.

Recruiting quality teachers

Why is this important?

Primary and secondary headteachers report difficulties in attracting and retaining talented teachers to the borough, citing examples of where good staff have left after only a short time in post to work in other parts of the region. Two of the four priorities in this plan focus on the need for quality teaching in schools, particularly those situated in areas of high deprivation and include a strong focus on teacher retention. To complement this, we

want to improve the strategy for recruiting the best new teachers, something that is crucial to raising educational outcomes in Doncaster – particularly for those pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. As part of the links with the South Yorkshire Futures programme, we have a unique opportunity to think about a recruitment strategy on a regional basis.

Year one activities

We are raising awareness of Teach

First as an alternative route into teaching and encourage more schools to take up placements. We will host an event for headteachers to hear about the scheme and use case study examples to demonstrate the benefits of graduate placements in schools.

We will create a highly motivated teaching workforce.

Through the Partnerships for Attainment project – a collaborative project between Sheffield Hallam University, The University of Sheffield, Doncaster SCITT (school centred initial teacher training), Sheffield SCITT and the Modern Languages SCITT – we will develop

a new approach for recruitment to initial teacher training and attract more high quality people who are keen to work across the schools in Doncaster. Within this project, we will also develop a consistent approach to newly qualified teacher and recently qualified teacher support in Doncaster to ensure that all new teachers have access to the support that they need.

We will maximise the impact of Doncaster's status as part of the 'Get into Teaching' campaign. The generous, tax-free funding available will lead to a lot of focus locally on recruiting into the profession.

Essential life skills

Why is this important?

It is essential that all children and young people have the tools to deal with the demands and challenges of everyday life including education and later in life, employment. According to The Sutton Trust, 90% of employers, teachers and young people say that essential life skills are as or more important than academic qualifications. There is also evidence that links non-cognitive skills such as resilience, self-efficacy, emotional and social skills with improved educational outcomes. These skills are shown to be highly predictive of education and labour market success, and good mental health¹³. Extra-curricular activities can benefit disadvantaged pupils, including improving outcomes and attainment. Yet the 2014 Sutton Trust report

found that wealthier children are more likely to access and utilise extra-curricular provision¹⁴.

In October 2017, the Department for Education announced a new two-year Essential Life Skills programme for Opportunity Areas, worth £22m. The programme will allow children and young people aged five to eighteen years old to participate in regular activities, outside of school, that will help to develop personal skills but also enable them to take part in sport, volunteering and social action projects.

The Doncaster Opportunity Area has been allocated approximately £2.75 million that will be spent over the two years of the Essential Life Skills programme.

¹³ Cunha, F., Heckman, J. J., & Schennach, S. M. (2010) Estimating the technology of cognitive and non-cognitive skills formation. *Econometrica*, Vol 78 (No 3), 883-931).

¹⁴ Sutton Trust 2014 "Research Brief: Extra Curricular Inequality"

Year one activities

We will put in place a programme that specifically targets children and young people facing disadvantage in Doncaster

to ensure that they have access to the same activities to enhance life skills, that their more affluent peers in the borough do. In total we aim to reach around 5,000 children and young people in the borough. To achieve this, we will commission local providers to deliver a range of opportunities for disadvantaged learners. There will be a 'menu' of up to six activities (including sports, outdoor education, health and wellbeing) that primary and secondary schools will be able to select from – targeting places at children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds as a priority. The menu of activity will be agreed by the partnership board. The 'life skills' we will seek to develop will include, but are not limited to:

- Resilience, perseverance and persistence
- Hard work, self-control, discipline and good time keeping
- Self-confidence, leadership and team working
- Honesty, integrity and engaged citizenship
- Attitude, respect and empathy
- Curiosity and problem solving

We will also develop a plan for year two (2018/19) of the Essential Life Skills programme building on evaluation of activities offered in year one in Doncaster and other Opportunity Areas but also considering more innovative ways of investing the money based on research and evidence – such as what works in the independent school sector. We will also explore the potential for using the funding to deliver on the Global Competencies as set out in the OECD 2030 report on how to create an inclusive world, focusing on openness towards people from other cultures, respect for cultural otherness, global-mindedness and responsibility.

“Personal development would have been key in school because I lacked confidence and had low self-esteem until I left school.”

Feedback from Community Café Event

GET IN TOUCH



Opportunity.areas@education.gov.uk



[@Doncaster_OA](https://twitter.com/Doncaster_OA)

A white outline map of Doncaster on a teal background. A white rectangular box is overlaid on the map, containing the word 'Doncaster' in teal text.

Doncaster