

Post Sixteen Review 2018



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Foreword

In September 2017 I was commissioned by Team Doncaster to conduct a review of post 16 education in the borough. This review was a core recommendation of the One Doncaster report, and seeks to provide, through the recommendations and principles, improved clarity and coherence for the pathways and progression routes available to young people.

The report is based on a series of interviews and consultation, including a questionnaire, that was sent to providers. It is also formed from data and policy analysis as well as the central messages from a series of consultation events with young people. The report aims to identify the main areas of interest and concern in post 16 education in the borough, and advocates for a more systematic approach to the leadership and management of post 16 as system.

This report provides a framework to deliver solutions to the areas of concern regarding post 16 education provision in Doncaster. Its main recommendations seek to address those concerns and in particular outline a strategy for raising level 3 achievement across all three post educational routes. The intention is that these proposals are realistic and will act as catalyst to improve the post 16 education system.

During this review I have acutely been aware of the breadth of the change agenda being implemented across education in the borough. This makes me very appreciative of the time that people have extended to this review in terms of interviews, phone conversations and the completion of the questionnaires. Such courtesy and patience illustrates the desire across a wide group of people to support changes in education.

Dr Paul Lally

Executive summary

Post 16 education is an important phase because it provides young people with the basis for their transition into adult life. The educational basis of this transition is formed in different ways for different young people. For some it is the extension of learning that will enable them to progress to higher education. For others it is the acquiring of skills that will enable to progress into the labour market. For all young people it involves supporting their personal development in order to become adults. The challenge is to ensure that post 16 education fully meets such expectations.

There are over 6500 young people aged 16 and 17 in Doncaster and a similar figure in the Years 10 and 11 in school. These young people are faced with significant choices which are linked to their future development as adults. There are two central expectations associated with such choices:

- Firstly, that they are supported by a good understanding of the implications of each choice and their particular relevance to who is making them. Such a good understanding is informed by an awareness of all the options and an appreciation of their implications for the young person in terms of their development and future careers.
- Secondly, that the choices young people make involve participating in effective learning.

This report outlines the current nature of post 16 education in Doncaster and some of the main challenges it faces. It has focused on four key areas which impact on young people in terms of their learning and its support:

1. Academic education
2. Participation and Inclusion
3. Clarity of offer
4. Strengthening vocational routes into employment

Although post 16 education in Doncaster faces several challenges in terms of its organisation and performance, there is a growing strategic determination across the borough to address such challenges. Since 2016 there have been three major developments to support the framing of this strategic determination: One Doncaster, Doncaster Growing Together and the Social Mobility Opportunity Area. The One Doncaster report offers a comprehensive review of education and skills in the borough. It identified post 16 as an area for more detailed review and this report seeks to identify the central aspects of 16-18 education in Doncaster with a view to proposing significant changes to improve post 16 education.

The Doncaster Growing Together (DGT) prospectus published in October 2017 offers an holistic approach to transforming the borough. This report will use its principles of action as the basis for the principles of effective system of post 16 education and learning. Both the partnership working and the delivery plan for Doncaster as an Social Mobility Opportunity Area inform the analysis and recommendations in this report. The Opportunity Area partnership board offers the central mechanism for taking forward this review. If Doncaster is to fulfil the educational ambitions it sets itself, it requires the exercise of system leadership and management. This is very important for post 16 education.

This report indicates that rates of post 16 education in Doncaster have historically been lower than national and regional averages for achievement at level 2 and 3 for 19 year olds. This performance has implications for progression to higher education and levels of employment among 18 to 25 year olds in the borough.

The report also indicates concerns about the balance of provision post 16. The decline in the academic route needs to be reversed. The report calls upon the collective leadership of secondary schools working with New College Doncaster and supported by the borough partnerships to address this issue.

Key findings and recommendations

Key findings:

1. The viability and value for money of a number of sixth forms across the borough appears to be in question based on the DfE guidance for pupil numbers and breadth of curriculum
2. The introduction of New College Doncaster has seen numbers of pupils in schools sixth forms fall overall, but only a small net increase in the total number of learners
3. The number of young people achieving both Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications is lower than the national average in Doncaster, and has been declining slowly over the past four years
4. More work needs to be done to improve the contribution that apprenticeships make to increasing employment and access to higher education

Recommendations:

1. **Consolidation of school sixth forms In Doncaster:** Consolidate sixth form provision across the borough, to provide a tertiary town centre offer alongside a geographically distributed sixth form model that sees fewer sixth forms offering better breadth of curriculum and with higher student numbers **responsibility for delivery to sit with secondary heads**
2. **Inclusion:** That any consolidation of provision in the borough takes into account sufficiency of places, quality of provision and support and the preparation for transition to adult life of young people with special educational needs and disabilities **responsibility for delivery to sit with special heads, in partnership with secondary heads**
3. **Extending careers education, information, advice and guidance:** Extend careers education, information, advice and guidance so that young people (and their families/advisors) can access effective and timely information, advice and guidance both about post 16 options and the careers that can be supported through them **to be considered in line with broader work of priority 3 of the Social Mobility Opportunity Area, in particular the development of open data based solution to CIAG**
4. **Strengthening the vocational routes into employment and higher education:** The development of a collaboration to support apprenticeships in the borough with a view to enhancing the quality of provision and the number of apprentices going to university **responsibility to sit with schools and training providers to improve transitions between academic and vocational education & training**

Policy context

The national policy context has changed since the previous review of post 16 education in 2014. This change has seen a move away from the policy insistence that individual institutions were solely responsible for educational provision and performance. The Children and Families Act 2014 was the first signal of such developments where local partnership arrangements between local authorities and the health service were being encouraged to support schools and other educational institutions to support the learning of young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

Other changes in public policy have signalled a move towards balance between institutional autonomy and strategic coordination. The establishment of the Regional Schools Commissioner in 2015 signalled a moderation of the earlier policy initiative around academies. The recent development of an industrial strategy shows a determination to develop system wide change on the vocational routes post 16.

The most significant aspect of this change is the establishment of Social Mobility Opportunity Areas. This involves a recognition that schools and colleges need to work in partnership with local and national government in order to effect change in educational performance. These moves towards area based solutions offer the strategic framework for the recommendations of this report.

Post 16 academic education

The central change to post 16 education at a system level was the introduction of more devolved and autonomous leadership of secondary schools through the extension of the academy schools and the introduction of free schools since 2010. In Doncaster all mainstream secondary schools have become academies and three free schools have opened, the most recent of those being the New College Doncaster as a sixth form college.

Such changes injected significant local autonomy into the system while at the same time offering significant competition for sixth form places in the borough. They came at a time when there was a reduction in the per capita funding of post 16 educations. The NUT estimated a 14% cut in funding from 2011 to 2014. The funding arrangement from 2015 to 2020 involves a cash freeze which with inflation (and other additional costs) is estimated at a further 8 % reduction. These funding reductions were made at a time when the overall cohort for 16-18 year olds has been in decline.

In response to forecast changes in the post 16 Education landscape in Doncaster, an independent consultant was appointed by the council in 2014 to review sixth form provision. The review outlined vulnerability in sixth provision, recognising a willingness among secondary head teachers for greater collaboration as well as a need for a collective approach to system leadership both by establishing a sixth form strategic group at head teacher level as well as improved exchange of strategic information between Doncaster Council and secondary heads to enable better strategic planning.

Participation and inclusion

In 2006 the Labour Government announced the intention to raise the age of statutory participation in approved learning. The phased introduction of this meant all young people up the age of 17 from 2013 had to participate in approved learning and, from 2015, all young people up to the age of 18. This participation is in any form of approved learning including employment. As local authorities were given the duty to secure this participation post 16, Doncaster established the Participation and Transition service.

This team has established an effective partnership of schools, Doncaster College and the various education and training providers organised through the Doncaster Association of Training Managers, securing an improved participation rate in the borough. The Children and Families Act 2014 established a set of duties for schools and colleges as well as local authorities in relation to supporting young people aged up to 25 with special educational needs and disabilities. The government published guidance on such duties in January 2015 which outlined several principles of the support for young people including young people's participation in decisions, high quality provision, greater collaboration, inclusivity and breaking down barriers as well as supporting successful transition to adulthood.

Doncaster's Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategic Framework 2016-2019 was developed, ratified and published in January 2016. This is currently under review as part of the transformation to a wider Inclusion Strategy. The intention is that the outcomes framework and action plan will be completed by the end of the calendar year 2018.

This is aligned to a review of special educational provision in the borough, particularly around High Needs support. There are implications from this review for the planning of provision post 16 and the support young people get. A focus is being given to the problems associated with improving transition to adult life and in particular employment for young people with special educational needs and disabilities. The Opportunity Area Partnership Board is supporting the work of Mencap and the NDTi to enable young people to be better supported in their transition to adult life. This review provides a welcome focus on the issues of sufficiency of provision, its quality and its ability to prepare young people for the transition to adult life.

Clarity and understanding of post 16 educational offer

A series of decisions were taken by the coalition government that transferred responsibility to schools for the preparation of young people for transition post 16. There had been an ending of financial support for work experience in Key stage 4, while schools were also given the responsibility for careers education, information, advice and guidance without any additional funding. This transfer involved the end of a national framework for local careers service and led to increasing fragmentation of provision.

The Careers and Enterprise Company was established in 2015, 'to transform the provision of careers education and advice for young people and inspire them about the opportunities offered by the world of work' (Nicky Morgan, the then Secretary of State for Education). This is a national body which supports the development of careers education, information advice and guidance as well as raise the awareness of young people of the world of work. Doncaster Chamber of Commerce has established itself as the central conduit in Doncaster for links between schools and employers. The Chamber have mobilised significant numbers of business volunteers to support this work. They are supported by the Edge Foundation and the Careers and Enterprise Company. This area of work has been prioritised by the Opportunity Area Partnership board and forms a central part of the activities being developed through their post 16 working group.

Strengthening the vocational routes into employment and higher education

The DfE Level 4/5 review, which was published in December 2017, will focus on how technical qualifications at this level can better address the needs of learners and employers. This forms part of the Government's efforts to support routes to higher-earning technical roles and address the skills needs of the economy. Alongside this, in October 2017 the Government published its industrial strategy which outlined in its key strategies for people the following:

- Establish a technical education system that rivals the best in the world to stand alongside our world-class higher education system
- Invest an additional £406m in maths, digital and technical education, helping to address the shortage of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) skills

To support this intent it published alongside the strategy a Post 16 technical educational reforms: 'T' level action plan. This action plan identified three core aspects of post 16 provision: academic, general vocational and apprenticeships. 'T levels' are new technical study programmes that will sit alongside Apprenticeships within a reformed skills training system. The plan is to introduce T levels from 2020 in 15 technical areas. The intention is that T levels are two year courses which will involve up to 3 months work placement. They will initially be at level 3 and be equivalent in size to 3 A levels. One of the intentions behind this reform is to simplify and reduce current vocational qualifications. Accordingly, it is likely to have an impact on current general vocational education provided in Doncaster. The One Doncaster report recognised both the importance of STEM subjects but also the need to develop creative and artistic skills among young people. It coined a different acronym to reflect this added dimension: STEAM. It acts as an important reminder that there needs to be both breadth and balance with a strategic focus on developing particular skills in post 16 education.

Key findings

System performance

There are several strengths and weaknesses in post 16 education in Doncaster. Its strengths lie in its overall participation rates which are based on significant numbers of young people on apprenticeships and other work related routes. This is demonstrated in the breadth of the offer taken up by young people and the variety of providers who support it. This raises the need for an holistic approach to understanding the combined effectiveness of this range of provision.

The analysis will explore the outcomes for young people in terms of levels of attainment. Collectively, lower than national average performance at level 2 and 3 qualifications will impact on progression rates into higher education and employment which are also below national averages.

Participation

The post 16 review of Doncaster education in 2014 indicated the participation as follows:

In 2014 Doncaster has 17 secondary schools all of whom are academies, 16 of the 17 schools have sixth forms which vary in size from 80 pupils to 537 (2014 census). The post 16 cohort in 2014 was 7180 young people, 46% were recorded as attending sixth form, 33% were in Further Education and 5% had an Apprenticeship.

The corresponding position in January 2018 indicates a different picture. There are 19 secondary schools with the addition of the two XP schools. In 2017/8 academic year, 13 of these secondary schools recruited for post 16 provision. This provision varies in size from 38 to 584 (2017 Autumn census). The overall participation figures in the main routes as reported in January 2018 were as follows:

	Year 12	Year 13	Total cohort - 6550 pupils
School sixth forms	1100	1074	2174 (33.2%)
Sixth form college	431	117	548 (8.4%)
FE College	1118	1018	2136 (32.6%)
Apprenticeships	314	847	801 (12.2%)
Employment with training	55	180	235 (3.6%)
Work based learning	91	58	149 (2.3%)

January 2018 Activity survey

Performance in terms of attainment and progression

Over the past ten years Doncaster has consistently been below national and regional averages for level 13 at 19. In 2016 there was a worrying deterioration in that this gap increased. The position with level 2 has been more positive with the borough approaching national and regional averages in 2010 and 2014. However there has been a growing gap between 2014 and 2016.

% Achievement at 19	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Doncaster Level 2	81.7	83.1	81.4	77.5	78.9
National Level 2	85	85.6	86.1	85.3	83.6
Doncaster Level 3	48	47.8	47.9	44.9	44.5
National Level 3	56.3	57	57.5	57.1	57.5

Level 2 attainment (Table 16) Level 3 attainment (Table 18) published in Level 2 and 3 attainment by young people aged 19 in 2017 - DfE 24 May 2018

The 44.9% achieving level 3 at 19 in Doncaster is broken down by the DfE to 28.3% academic provision and 16.6% other (primarily vocational). Both are below the national averages of 36.1% and 21% respectively. This indicates that attention needs to be given to both routes.

One of the problems with these indicators is that they represent performance at 19 at least a year ago. As a result they capture the attainment levels of young people who finished year 11 four years ago. Because of this time lag they have a limited implication on current system performance.

There are also fragilities in progression at 18. Doncaster is below national averages in progression to Higher Education.

Percentages of 18 year olds going to Higher Education 2016 by constituency, and sub-regional, regional and national averages

Don Valley	28.3
Doncaster Central	26.9
Doncaster North	23.1
South Yorkshire Average	27.3
Yorkshire and Humber average	31
English average	32.5

Source HEPPSY 23.11.17

Claimant counts for young people aged 18-21 are significantly above national averages, but the gap has narrowed over the past year. Doncaster has been awarded Social Mobility Opportunity Area status due to a number of indicators of low achievement and progress being made young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. The Opportunity Area delivery plan illustrates a wide range of data which indicates the impact of this on achievement and progression between 16 and 19 years of age.

The National Collaborative Outreach Programme being run in South Yorkshire under the title Higher Education Progression Partnership South Yorkshire (HEPPSY) is supporting young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to consider HE as an option. HEPPSY started in this academic year and is working with six schools and Doncaster College. Its in-depth support for young people will be a source of invaluable intelligence of how support can be delivered in future.

Four key areas of post 16 provision

Academic route

Concern about the size of sixth forms was raised in the One Doncaster report as well as Opportunity Area delivery plan. Such concerns were echoed in the responses of some of the stakeholders in the course of this review. The concerns are:

- A decline in the number of young people accessing A levels post 16
- A general decline a reduction in the number taking 3 A levels
- Levels of performance at A level
- The financial viability and sustainability of some small sixth forms

In 2014 over 44% of the cohort (3,300 young people) attended sixth forms. In the January activity survey 33.2% of the cohort (2,174) was recorded as doing so. This is a significant decline in the numbers accessing A levels and only partially mitigated by the establishment of the New College.

Comparison of total numbers in school sixth forms and sixth form colleges at Year 12

	Year 12 2016/17	Year 12 2017/18
School sixth forms	1355	1100
Sixth form college	103	431
Total	1458	1531

Source January Activities survey 2017 and 2018.

Nationally, at the end of 2016, 47% of young people were studying A levels across England. In this academic year when the schools and the sixth form college are combined ,41.6% of the cohort attend such provision in Doncaster and not all of them are taking A levels.

The DfE published advice on the minimum size of schools sixth forms. This was intended for schools considering establishing a sixth form but it does act as a guide for the viability of those schools who offer the breadth of provision to support 3 A levels for each student. Several sixth forms in Doncaster are below the 200 minimum they suggest, while some have been below that figure for a while. Many schools have responded to declining numbers by changing the nature of the offer they make. It appears that there are three types of school sixth form in Doncaster:

1. Schools providing primarily vocational courses with a minority offer for A levels alongside
2. Schools providing a balance of vocational course and A levels but most young people are taking two A levels or less
3. Schools providing the majority of their students 3 A levels or more.

This typology is fluid across each year and can only be confirmed by the schools themselves. The analysis below is an assessment of each type drawn from 2017 performance figures. The typology is used to indicate that some small school sixth forms may well be viable and the DfE minimum should apply only to type 3 schools. Year 12 recruitment figures are used to illustrate patterns of recruitment. If a school is to be compared with the 200 number the figures must be doubled to give an approximate idea.

Year 12 recruitment since 2013 analysed by constituency and estimated typology

Name	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14
Doncaster North					
Mexborough (2)			33	54	48
Adwick (2)	63	80	106	79	76
Don Valley* (2)	74	77	99	92	140
Campsmount (2)	39	31	43	44	36
Ridgewood (3)	106	135	126	127	123
Doncaster Central					
Balby Carr (1)	59	84	91	150	151
Armthorpe (1)			46	33	68
Danum (3)	57	131	136	200	237
Hall Cross (3)	352	277	303	279	314
Don Valley					
Ash Hill* (1)	30	49	59	69	94
De Warenne* (1)	36	29	39	49	37
Rossington AS* (1)	45	76	49	45	55
McAuley (3)	119	130	156	188	182
Sir Thomas W (3)	33	57	81	96	85
Hayfield (3)		66	111	138	125
Trinity (3)	88	84	103	80	117

* schools that are part of the Doncaster Sixth form collegiate

** all numbers are Spring except for 2017/18 which is September census.

There are significant implications of the decline in recruitment. Schools will be considering them in light of their future planning of the sixth form. One of the data challenges in this report is to identify accurately the number of young people who are taking 3 A levels. There is published information but it includes students who only take 2 A levels. The estimates given by the data team in DMBC suggest 513 young people with 3 A levels in 2017: a drop from 716 in 2013. The number of young people taking 3 A levels has implications for STEM as well access to competitive HE provision and it should be reviewed continually by the local partnership including the Heads partnership.

Performance data at A level is available in the DfE published comparisons on colleges and schools post 16. Recent figures highlight concerns in A level performance. At A level the average point score per cohort entry in Doncaster was 134 th out of 150 LEAs and this was a decline since 2016. The average A level grade in Doncaster was C. The national average was a C+. Only through the collective leadership of schools with sixth forms can the issues of performance, viability and breadth of A levels be addressed. Local schools, now joined by the sixth form college, have a collective responsibility for academic routes. The partnership arrangements fostered by Opportunity Area status can support them with this responsibility.

Inclusion

Doncaster is currently reviewing its Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategic Framework 2016-2019 as part of wider inclusion strategy. This review seeks to set planning for this provision under the framework of the Doncaster Growing Together strategy.

The post 16 elements consider the sufficiency and quality of provision as well as progress and transition to adult life. It has engaged a wide group of stakeholders to develop breadth in the offer as well as look at the nature of provision overall. There is also a focus on the preparation for adult life that special schools provide for young people. Recently a Preparing for Adulthood project has been established to with the support of the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi) and Mencap.

A particular emphasis of these considerations is High Needs provision. Doncaster has recently updated Special Provision Fund Plan on the 14th March 2018. This is part of a strategic review of their High Needs provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

This plan indicates that following the SEN reforms in 2014, there has been a significant growth in the number of young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan attending a post 16 provision (17% of the total cohort 0-25). 13% of children and young people attend a general further education college; this is 4.5% higher than the national average. There is a slightly higher percentage of young people attending specialist post 16 institutions in Doncaster than nationally.

The plan also indicates the amount of joint support for improving provision for young people in Doncaster:

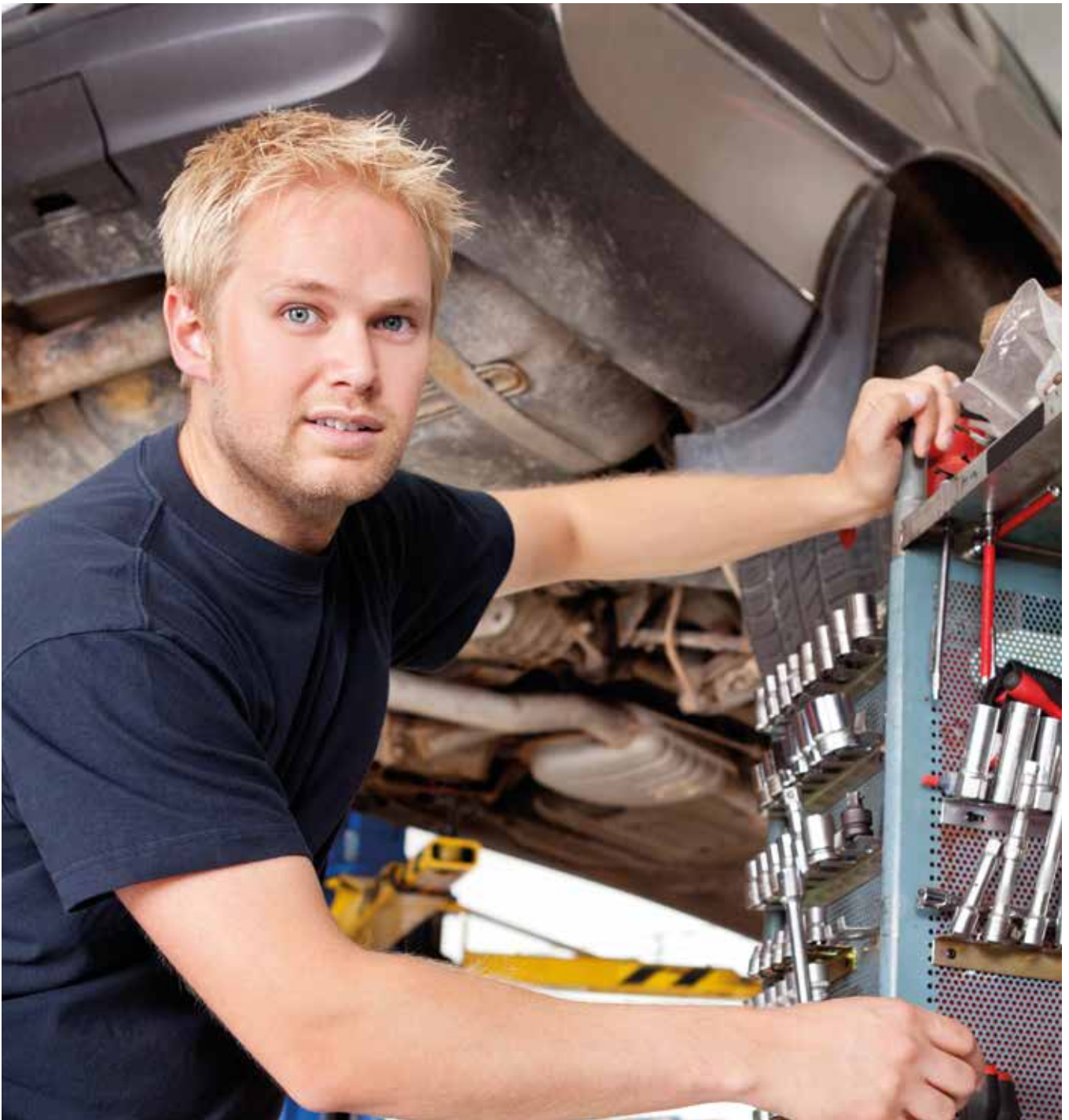
- A series of meetings with head teachers from Doncaster's state funded special schools and PRUs, and an engagement event involving parents, mainstream schools, Doncaster College, specialist providers, partner agency colleagues have evidenced a strong will to work in partnership to achieve our aims.
- At a consultation event on the 12 th March 2018 there was 'a clear focus on assuring the sufficiency of Post-16 specialist place provision, extending the range of available opportunities that are meaningful to our young people and that provide them with the opportunities to achieve the best possible life outcomes.'
- There is clearly an active and engaged partnership working to secure better outcomes for young people with special educational needs and disabilities. This is supported by data, a clear consultation process as well as closer partnership working between all agencies involved.
- The SEND team in the local authority have recently conducted a peer review self-assessment with four other Yorkshire local authorities. The focus was on preparation for adult transitions 14-25 including post 16 and 19. This is an example of good practice and an opportunity for system learning with other local authorities.

Understanding the post 16 educational offer

The Opportunity Area partnership board's third priority is: no career out of bounds, with the intention to help young people find the right academic and vocational routes for them. As the 2015 House of Lords report on Social Mobility indicated, young people and their parents know much less about the various vocational options that are available to them.

Education in Doncaster is a rich and complex offer. Young people take up a wide variety of learning opportunities post 16. Over 50 different destinations were recorded in the November 2017 activity analysis of 16 year olds. The majority of these destinations would be the school sixth forms, the new sixth form college and Doncaster College. There is also a rich employer based set of destinations: in November 2017, 274 young people leaving school that year were recorded as being on apprenticeships. The increasing range and diversity of provision adds urgency to the need for improved careers education, information, advice and guidance. All young people should feel that they have made the most appropriate choice for them. There is still work to be done to enable this to happen across the board.

The Opportunity Area delivery plan sets out the consultation with young people and other stakeholders which raised concerns about access to good quality careers advice and guidance both pre and post 16. The DMBC Make Your Mark consultation in 2017 identified significant



concerns among young people about their preparation for the world of work and a desire for better work experience opportunities. The Opportunity Area delivery plan also indicates the impact of this poor careers support on destinations for young people and in particular on those who are disadvantaged.

Strengthening the vocational routes into employment and higher education

It is likely that there will be an increasing proportion of young people achieving level 3 through alternative routes as schools continue to increase their provision. Ofsted reports that schools 16-19 provision generally records good vocational provision. Doncaster College and Club Doncaster Sports College have also been commended by Ofsted for their vocational provision.

In 2017 results the general vocational education point score in Doncaster was 44 th out of the 150 Local authorities and this was an improvement since 2016. Although these results should feed into improved performance at level 3 at 19 over the next couple of years, it is unlikely that on their own they will bridge the gap with regional and national averages.

The DfE do publish figures indicating separate data which identifies the progress of young people who did not have Level 2 in English and Maths at 16. This provides a sense of how 16-19 provision is performing at level 2 among these core skills. For example, in English at Level 2 Doncaster 25.3% of the 2015/16 age 19 cohort achieved level 2 after year 11. The national percentage was 32.7%. The gap with maths at level 2 was significantly closer. In English and Maths, Doncaster sees 19.4% of the cohort achieving at level 2 combined, compared to a national figure of 24.1%.

The overall progress at Level 2 between 16 and 19 shows similar gaps between local and national performance. The progress of level 2 performance both in core skills and generally is an important area and one which should be kept under annual review by the partnership. There are three areas of vocational education that need further attention:

1. The first is the identification and development of pathways that support Doncaster's identified strategies for developing niche advanced skills area.
2. The second is the implication of the introduction of T levels on Doncaster's provision.
3. The third area is around developing the contribution that apprenticeships make to increasing employment and access to higher education.

The growing development of Doncaster as a recognised centre for higher education is a welcome development which can raise aspiration within the borough as well as raise the level of advanced skills in the borough. The challenge for vocational providers of post 16 education is that they need to ensure appropriate pathways to allow young people to access such provision.

Doncaster has submitted an application for a University Technology College. This application is strongly supported by the Partnership. There is a need for a better engagement with vocational learning and the UTC would assist this greatly. Whatever the outcome of the bid, there remains the need to foster better vocational learning linked to the growing skills development in the bid. The borough needs to support the development of vocational pathways aligned to their strategic intent for skills.

Doncaster College is also actively preparing for the introduction of T levels. This expertise could be shared with other providers of post 16 general vocational education to ensure that the borough maximises the benefit for young people. In a similar way there is a need for greater collaboration between those organisations that offer apprenticeships. There are welcome signs that the College and the Council have recently agreed to increasing collaboration in this area. Apprenticeships should also be monitored at a borough level, which could provide the balance between each level of apprenticeship as well as the completion data for the borough as a whole.

Principles of a high performing system

Post 16 education and learning is successful when it supports the transition of all young people into adult life. The nature of this transition varies according to the needs and interests of each young person but there are several central aspects to the transition.

For most young people the transition will involve acquiring new skills and qualifications, and for a significant proportion those skills will be at a higher level than achieved during their compulsory education, enabling the young person to matriculate into higher education post 18. For many young people 16-18 education will afford the opportunities to learn new skills at level 2.

However, success at transition is not merely a reflection of new qualifications but also a growing maturity and sense of self. Effective post 16 education needs to foster such growth and offer a range of opportunities in which young people can develop. The basis of such success in transition is that the experiences they are offered both in terms of formal qualification and the wider learning are organised around the needs of the learner. This focus on the learner is the fundamental basis of effective learning. There are three organising principles for a post 16 education and learning system to support this learner focus:

1. Collaboration
2. Viability and value
3. Co-leadership

It is through the operation of these principles that all providers of post 16 education can work with wider strategic partners to ensure the effectiveness of their provision and the success of their learners.

Collaboration

The principle of collaboration can enable greater benefit from post 16 learning. There are at least five areas in which such collaboration can operate:

1. Pre-entry to courses
2. On provision of post 16 education and learning offer
3. Support for learners
4. Raising performance and outcomes
5. Supporting progression

One of the problems that young people face is that post 16 education appears as a variety of single learning offers being made by their home school in most cases and then other providers. Such problems can be mitigated if providers work together to enable a common approach to supporting information about courses, application processes including commonly agreed entry requirements as well as a single process of application.

One of the respondents to the consultation recorded that 'there are too many islands in post 16 education'. Perhaps this comment was directed at the lack of collaboration in some areas but it is likely to have referred to the insistence by some providers who make a distinct offer without seeking to align that offer with other provision. This is a particular issue in a borough as geographically dispersed as Doncaster. Sixth forms cannot offer the full range of options for 16 year olds but they can work with others to do so. In the absence of such collaboration some young people are travelling out of borough and a long way to find learning that is appropriate for them. Such travel would be unnecessary if Doncaster providers worked together in a more effective way.

There are some common issues that operate across all post 16 education. Several respondents to the consultation have identified attendance as an issue that needs attention in post 16. The schools are working with the local authority to address this important issue during the years of mainstream education. Schools, the college and other learning providers could support each other in exchange of good practice and ideas of how to support young people maximise the benefit of their two years beyond statutory education.

There is already good practice being developed by providers sharing expertise and information and additional learner support. A training event was organised in the college to do this in the autumn of 2017. This could be extended as a model of good practice across all the issues that learners present in post 16 education.

This would offer important support to the post 16 element of Doncaster's developing inclusion strategy. There is a common theme of lower than expected performance in many areas of post 16 education and learning in Doncaster. All providers need to reflect on their processes to support young people succeed. This could involve sharing good practice and developing teaching and curriculum support in shared areas of learning.

The final opportunity for collaboration is in supporting progression. There is already good partnership working between providers to secure appropriate places between the ages of 16 and 18. Further collaboration could be developed to ensure young people make successful progression into further/higher learning or employment as a result of their post 16 learning.

Viability and Value

Effective post 16 education requires as far as possible stability of funding and outcome. The viability of provision is intimately connected to the value added it confers. As already indicated the context for post 16 education and learning is challenging particularly in regards to school based provision. The introduction of a new sixth form college from 2017 was signalled within the post 16 review of 2014 as a significant event which would increase the vulnerability of some sixth forms.

Those responsible for sixth form leadership are re-evaluating the viability of their provision. Such analysis needs to be made within the overall shape of the post 16 system. There is considerable room for consolidation of provision but it needs to be planned in a way that maintains and extends academic provision across the borough.

Doncaster needs vibrant sixth forms. It needs them to increase the numbers of young people getting good A levels. Such improvements must be based around more students achieving academic qualifications; more students attaining 3 A levels and the general level of achievement to be raised within academic qualifications.

Co-leadership

Responsibility for post 16 education rests with the individual institutions that make its provision. However such responsibility is most effectively wielded in a collective way informed and supported by strategic alliances generated by the local authority and the Department for Education.

This co-leadership sits first of all the partnership arrangements driven by the opportunities area programme board but also within the wider borough partnership of Team Doncaster driving forward transformational change. Post 16 institutions can benefit significantly from collective decision making informed through strategic partnerships.

This benefit enables them to exercise their institutional autonomy in way which that not only enables collective benefit but improves both the quality of their decision making as well as the quality of their performance. The developing partnership through the Opportunity Area and the closing working between the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services in Doncaster Council creates a better landscape for this to occur. An urgent and necessary task for such co-leadership is the completion of the consolidation of post 16 school based provision that was started by the post 16 review in 2014.

Recommendations

Consolidation of school sixth forms In Doncaster

There is an immediate need to rationalise and strengthen sixth form provision. This involves a return to the ideas set out in the post 16 review in 2014. The aim should be to secure and broaden A level provision while at the same time maintaining effective general vocational education in schools. What is needed is urgency.

The pressures are already in the system and need a response by October half term in the 2018/19 school year, when recruitment for the 2019 intake of sixth forms will begin. Schools in Doncaster have responded to the challenges of diminishing numbers in post education in schools within the context of a reducing funding unit per student.

However such responses have been institutionally led. Collaboration to date has been with fellow institutions within the same academy trust. The successful establishment of New College Doncaster in 2017 has seen a reduction in pupil numbers for several sixth forms in the borough. Such trends are likely to continue as the New College will expand its numbers. There are two alternative approaches to such pressure:

1. The first is that schools with sixth forms develop singular solutions either through unilaterally closing their post 16 provision or seeking to work with other sixth forms and/or Doncaster College.
2. The second approach is the one favoured in this recommendation and that is the schools collectively seek a Doncaster wide solution to the pressures and vulnerabilities sixth form provision has in the borough.

Such an approach allows for consolidation of sixth form provision without reducing the number of young people accessing A levels and other level 3 provision. It also would help in seeking to secure increased participation across the borough as well as improving performance. Other boroughs in the region have developed such approaches to improve their post 16 offer. They have done so by aligning their planning with the institutional planning of academies that provide sixth form provision.

Leeds: a case study

After the 2013 review of post 16 education conducted in Leeds secondary schools, in collaboration with the local education authority they set about re-evaluating and consolidating sixth form provision.

This process involved an area based approach to post 16 planning which involved dividing the city into 9 areas and considering the viability of provision in light of declining cohort and funding per learner as well as in terms of the achievement levels being generated.

Leeds at the time achieved average point scores at A levels which were significantly below statistical neighbours and the regional and national averages. In 2017 their A level provision had improved in relation to these 22 markers. Officers in Leeds Council also report that GCSE results had improved in schools that no longer provided sixth form.

Bradford: a case study

Bradford Council also conducted a review in collaboration with the schools in the borough. It published in July 2016 a joint approach to the improvement of post 16 education in the borough.

This approach anticipated the development of New College Bradford due to open in the centre of the borough in 2019 as well as one multi-academy trust centralising its sixth form provision in one centre.

The key to the approach adopted by both councils was to work with the schools in developing the solutions. Due to the success of this kind of approach, it is recommended that this be replicated in Doncaster, in line with the principles of effective post-16 provision outlined above. This would see schools working together with the authority and DfE in order to make sensible changes to the post-16 offer they provide.

The approach must be school led and supported by a range of strategic partners, including the local authority. It could be that one head takes the lead on this and works with colleague head teachers to come up with a solution. It could take the form of an area based approach by segmenting the borough into four or five areas. Such decisions need to be taken alongside their implications on transport.

Consolidated sixth form across the borough needs to be supported by the transport support to enable access.



Inclusion

The issues of sufficiency of places, the quality of provision and support and the preparation for transition to adult life were identified as central in the recent consultation on developing the post 16 elements of provision for young people with special educational needs and disabilities. In the consultation sufficiency was also linked to diversity of providers to ensure a range of choices and avoid an over dependence on a single provider. In its 2016 Ofsted report there was favourable comment about the inclusion activities in Doncaster College. It is to be welcomed that the College are developing a good, strategic partnership with the local authority in this important area of work. The college is committed to growing its provision as part of the borough wide strategy. There will be other providers who can support the increasing numbers young people with special needs and the developing collaborative arrangements among post 16 education providers can facilitate this growth. As indicated in the principles above, such collaboration can assist the sharing of good practice as well as support mechanisms for young people.

The Opportunity Area has identified developing young people with special education needs and disabilities to develop better routes for transition to adult life. The work with NDTi and Mencap will support many young people to make such transitions. It is clear that both a strategic and operational approach is being adopted in this area. In addition there is a focus on improving careers information and advice for young people when they are leaving schools at 16 or 19. The bid that Doncaster has made for the special fund provision represents a significant strategic attempt to address many of these issues on inclusion and is important for the borough.

Extending careers education, information, advice and guidance

Extending and developing careers information advice and guidance is a central support for post 16 education. This is a key part of the successful transition to adult life, and this review supports the significant efforts in this regard.

The breadth of take up of post 16 provision in Doncaster gives weight to the policy emphasis being placed upon this area. It is important that young people (and their families/advisors) can access effective and timely information, advice and guidance both about post 16 options and the careers that can be supported through them. It is important that such policy determination is based on up to date views of young people and accordingly the proposed consultation of Years 8-13 on their experience and understanding of careers education, information, advice and guidance is welcomed. There is considerable discussion taking place about



the development of a careers hub. The idea of improved work experiences hubs was identified in 2017 as a major issue in the Make your Mark consultation of young people in Doncaster. The planned consultation of Years 8-13 will assist in refining what young people would want to see from this. It is clear there is concern among young people about their access to improved understanding and experience of the world of work.

The delivery plan for the Opportunity Area indicates the ambition for all schools and colleges to be meeting all 8 of the Gatsby benchmarks. The development of key encounters with employers as well as providers of further and higher education are to be welcomed as a central aspect of promoting better informed progression at 16. Recently there has been the change given a statutory right for such providers to access gain to schools. The developing collaboration and partnership working will improve young people's awareness of apprenticeships and the other options available to them at 16 and beyond.

Strengthening the vocational routes into employment and higher education

The findings demonstrate that there is a need to enhance current technical and vocational education post 16. Such education needs to support the developing higher education in the borough as well as offer better routes into employment. There is an expectation within Doncaster Growing Together of an improvement in the level of skills required in the labour market as a result of employment growth in different sectors. The challenge for those planning post 16 education is that there is a need to reflect both the current and future opportunities for jobs in the provision at post 16. The efforts to improve the dissemination of labour market intelligence as part of the approach to improving understanding about work will assist here. However the communication of demand in the labour market to providers of education is an issue that needs to be regularly revisited.

The analysis in this report indicates there is a need for more young people in Doncaster to take vocational qualifications particularly at level 3. There are two recommendations being made here to promote that aim.

1. The first is the development primarily in the city centre of a partnership between Doncaster College and the schools that offer sixth form provision (hopefully with the new UTC playing a central role).
2. The second recommendation is for the development of a collaboration to support apprenticeships in the borough with a view to enhancing the quality of provision and the number of apprentices going to university.

The first recommendation builds on growing partnership working between Hall Cross Academy and Doncaster College. The proposal is that this partnership works with the Teaching Hospital in Doncaster to explore the development of vocational pathways around health, care and science. The aim would be to enhance current provision and attract more young people onto such pathways. This sector specific approach could be used as a model for other employment sectors (such as, logistics, engineering and digital/creative industries). The roll out could be determined through Team Doncaster. This is an important area in which the potential of the ambitions in Doncaster Growing Together can be realised. Planning for such innovative provision needs to take place within a robust and effective conversation with the people who are changing the employment landscape in Doncaster. If this is done correctly increasing educational performance among young people will dovetail with increasing demand for their skills.

The second proposal builds on the developing partnership between Doncaster College and the Council to support apprenticeships. The recommendation is that this partnership extends to include all the major providers of apprenticeships and it looks to support the exchange of good practice as well as the increased development of level 3 apprenticeships. The Partnership in Doncaster is fortunate in that Sheffield Hallam University is one of the leading developers of Apprenticeship degrees and has recently opened a centre for this programme. The collaboration on apprenticeships should extend to developing links with Hallam so that many young people can progress through the apprenticeship route to degree level skills.

A call to action

As is set out in this report, previous attempts to drive change in the system have not had the effect that was hoped for.

This time, it has to be different - there is an increasing need for schools and training providers to make bold decisions that have the young people of Doncaster at their heart.

There is a strong strategic mandate, set out by the Education & Skills Commission and the Social Mobility Opportunity Area, and the support of core partners such as the local authority, local MPs, the DfE and the Regional Schools Commissioner.

The support and challenge to make the decisions needed is there, and I strongly recommend that schools provide the pace, energy and leadership needed to improve outcomes in the short, medium and long term for young people.

Appendix 1 - sources of evidence

Sources of Findings and Recommendations in the Review

The interim report published in early February indicated that Doncaster would only overcome the fragilities identified in post 16 education if it adopted a system wide approach to its leadership and management.

The challenge in the final report was to identify a set of findings and recommendations based upon a firm evidential basis which could inform how such system leadership and management could be developed and exercised. The underlying methodology of the review was to weave together comments made about the system by partners with the evidential basis provided by previous publications and the datasets available.

The key recommendations are based upon both the evidence of such data as well as the collective picture drawn from the consultation. In order to obtain the fullest and most useful data it was necessary to indicate confidentiality to the respondents.

The final report itself was subjected to a series of consultations to ensure that the collective reporting of partners' ideas was appropriate and to test that the report fitted with both the intentions identified in the interim report as well as the wider expectations of the partnership. The final report findings and recommendations are based upon four main sets of evidence:

- Previous published reports with an impact on post 16 education
- Preliminary Interviews and feedback on interim report
- Questionnaires sent to providers of post 16 education in Doncaster
- Analysis of datasets on participation, achievement and progress in post 16 education

Publications with an impact on post 16 education

There were four important published documents that influenced this report:

- One Doncaster Report
- Doncaster Growing Together Prospectus
- Doncaster Opportunity Area Delivery Plan
- Doncaster Special Provision Fund Plan

The principles of effective post 16 education and learning system are derived from the discussion in the first two documents and in particular the principles of actions adopted by Doncaster Growing Together.

The Opportunity Area Delivery Plan highlights the issue of sixth forms in the borough as well as the need for all young people to have access to good careers information, advice, education and guidance. The publication of the Special Provision fund plan and its associated consultation indicated the partnership working and thinking behind the borough's developing post 16 inclusion plan.

Preliminary interviews

- Principal of New College Doncaster
- Head-teacher of Hall Cross Academy
- Principal of Doncaster College
- Head-teacher of Heatherwood
- Executive Director Club Doncaster Foundation
- Regional Schools Commissioner
- Assistant Director of Skills Employment and Education Sheffield City Region
- Regional Director of Post 16 Delta Academy Trust
- Manager of Doncaster Skills Academy
- Director of South Yorkshire Futures
- Director of Higher Education Progression Partnership South Yorkshire (HEPPSY)
- Sheffield City Region Lead on Careers Information, Advice, Education and Guidance
- Director of Education at Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospital

- Education Manager Doncaster YMCA
- Business Manager Independent Training Services
- 14-19 Managers in Bradford and Leeds
- Advice, Transition and Quality Manager Doncaster MBC
- Service manager Transition and Participation (Post 16 SEND)

Consultation on Interim report

- Secondary Head-teachers
- Doncaster College
- Club Doncaster
- New College Doncaster
- Doncaster Association of Training managers (DATM)
- Doncaster Chamber of Commerce
- Team Doncaster
- Doncaster MPs, including written submission from Caroline Flint MP

Questionnaires sent to

- All schools with sixth forms
- Doncaster College
- New College Doncaster
- Club Doncaster Sports College
- All independent training providers in DATM

Sources of intelligence and data

- Summary of 2017 Make your mark consultation from 9154 Young people in Doncaster aged 11-18 years.
- Data published by DfE on 16-18 participation and achievement in Local Authority Interactive Tool, Compare schools and colleges performances as well as Statistical First Releases (SFR) on achievement at 19
- Data provided by DMBC on participation and achievement of young people post 16
- Data on progression to HE provided by HEPPSY
- Data on youth unemployment provided by Office of National Statistics Claimant Count

