

EDUCATION & YOUTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday 9 th June 2016
Report Subject	Skills for Life and Progression
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Education & Youth
Report Author	Chief Officer (Education & Youth)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report provides an overview for Members regarding the provision available through Flintshire schools, to support learners with the required skills to move on successfully from compulsory education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Members recognise the breadth of activity undertaken within schools to support learners to engage effectively in a suitable outcome, including employment, post 16.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE LEARNER OPPORTUNITIES
1.01	Schools play an important role in preparing children to become independent citizens equipped to deal with adulthood. Academic qualifications are an important part of this however, schools are also required to support the development of employability skills.
1.02	The introduction of the Learning and Skills Measure (2009) enabled learners to follow a more individualised curriculum at Key Stage 4, suited to their particular areas of interest. Many learners complete vocational qualifications at school which enable them to develop appropriate work-related skills.
1.03	The range of vocational options on offer has been supplemented through the use of additional funding from the Flintshire 14-19 allocation of the Education Improvement Grant (EIG). This enables groups of learners from all Flintshire secondary schools to access vocational courses through a range of external providers e.g. Coleg Cambria, North Wales Training and Motivational Preparation College for Training (Military Preparation).
1.04	<p>Careers and the World of Work (CWW) is also an integral part of the Key Stage 4 curriculum. This focuses on the relationships between young people, their learning and the world of work and helps learners to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• explore the attitudes and values required for employability and lifelong learning;• plan and manage their pathway through the range of opportunities in learning and work;• make effective career choices;• become entrepreneurial;• flourish in a variety of work settings;• become motivated, set long term goals and overcome barriers;• see the relevance of their studies to their life and work;• develop Key Skills and other skills required by employers;• prepare for the challenges, choices and responsibilities of work and adult life. <p>Access to this curriculum ensure that all learners are informed regarding the requirements of employers and have the opportunity to develop important employability skills.</p>
1.05	The Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification (WBQ) provides further opportunities for learners to develop their work-related skills. The qualification combines personal development with academic and/or vocational qualifications to make one wider award that develops work-based competencies and inspires confidence. The Welsh Baccalaureate (WB) qualification provides further opportunities to develop applied skills and gives learners valuable experience in business and industry situations. The focus of the WB is to provide experience of the real world and through the qualification learners get involved in teamwork, go on placements and have to use their own initiative.

1.06	The revised WBQ (from Sept 2015) has the primary aim of enabling learners to develop and demonstrate a greater understanding of, and proficiency in essential and employability skills, namely Communication, Numeracy, Digital Literacy, Planning and Organisation, Creativity and Innovation, Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, and Personal Effectiveness. The emphasis is on applied and purposeful learning and to provide opportunities for assessment in a range of real life context through three Challenge Briefs and an Individual Project.
1.07	A number of Flintshire schools are working in partnership to deliver the WBQ. Many engage with staff at the Business School at Glyndwr University who work with learners to develop confidence, presentation skills, business planning skills, marketing and promotional skills etc. These are often combined and integrated into 'real life' projects, where learners have to use their skills to create a business and raise funds for a local charity.
1.08	Further support is available for learners who may need additional input to maintain their engagement in their education and to develop self-confidence, self-esteem and employability skills through the TRAC programme. This is a regional project funded through the European Social Fund and provides a range of bespoke provision and support for 11-19 year olds in school or further education settings.
1.09	Flintshire has a well-established 14-19 Network which oversees and drives the strategic direction of provision for learners across Flintshire. The Network has a diverse membership including a range of education providers, employers and the third sector and provides the opportunity for all parties to raise issues and discuss solutions and opportunities. More recently an Education, Employment and Training Strategic Group has been established to pull together wider representation to coordinate and drive the local provision for children and adults.
1.10	Flintshire County Council has developed an Apprenticeship Academy to maximise the creation of skilled local jobs, arising out of the major housing construction and refurbishment programmes over the next five years. An Apprentice Fayre was held in March to raise learner awareness of the positive opportunities offered through apprenticeships. The possibility of developing a 'skills village' to offer work experience and training opportunities on site is being explored through the work of the Academy.
1.11	The success of Flintshire's schools in preparing young people to move on effectively from compulsory education can be seen through the low NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) figures. Flintshire has maintained the lowest national rate of Year 11 NEET learners in Wales, i.e. 1.3%, for two consecutive years indicating that learners are well prepared and able to transition effectively into Post 16 education, training or employment. NEET figures are measured in the November following the completion of Year 11. Similar measurements are taken for Year 12 and Year 13 learners and Flintshire figures are also very low for both of these categories, i.e 0.9% for Year 12 (3 rd lowest in Wales) and 2.6% for Year 13 (2 nd lowest in Wales).

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	Schools are under pressure to offer a broad and balanced curriculum which ensures learners are literate and numerate, have access to a broad and balanced curriculum and leave education with the required employability skills. These requirements place a resource pressure on the available curriculum time to deliver these requirements. The breadth of curriculum also places a resource pressure on schools in terms of appropriately trained and skilled staff who are able to deliver the curriculum.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	None undertaken as a result of this report.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	Ongoing financial pressures on secondary schools created by the increase in personnel related costs place a risk on the ability of all establishments to continue to offer and deliver the work-related/employability skills aspect of the curriculum in a meaningful and realistic manner. Schools are maximising the opportunities offered through external funding, as outlined above, to offset the impact of these financial pressures.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Year 11 Destination Data 2015
5.02	Appendix 2 – Year 12 Destination Data 2015
5.03	Appendix 3 – Year 13 Destination Data 2015

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
	<p>None.</p> <p>Contact Officer: Jeanette Rock Senior Manager – Inclusion & Progression Telephone: 01352 704017 E-mail: jeanette.rock@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	Learning and Skills Measure (2009) - The Measure is a means of driving the implementation of 14-19 Learning Pathways. It has ensured that all learners key stage 4 in Wales are able to choose from a minimum of 25 courses of which three must be vocational and that 30 choices are available to 16-18 year old learners, of which 5 must be vocational.