

POST-16 ROUTES - APPRENTICESHIPS AND THE DESTINATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE**Report of the Director of Children's Services****1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 At the Children and Families Scrutiny Committee meeting of 16/06/21, the item on work programme and agenda planning for the 21/22 municipal year included a request for an update on Post-16 routes into apprenticeships and the destination of young people and what the authority was doing to support this process.
- 1.2 This report provides the latest data on apprenticeships, the context around the performance and details of what the authority is doing, and will be doing, to support the borough's young people.

2. Latest data, performance, and context

- 2.1 The effective gathering of data and information about the destinations of young people is critical for services' understanding of their needs and how well those are being met.
- 2.2 The latest data and comparisons of performance is shown below:

December 2021	Not Known	In Learning	NEET
England	2.9%	92.6%	2.5%
North West	2.4%	92.1%	2.9%
Statistical Neighbours	2.1%	93%	2.6%
Stockport	0.2%	94.8%	2.8%

- 2.3 CFSE 27 in the PPRR reports the position for the percentage of 26 – 28-year-olds where their destination is “not known”. The Q3 position on this indicator is 0.2%, which equates to around 28 young people. This is the best performance in GM and the best it has ever been for Stockport. By knowing nearly all of your population's destinations, you have a more accurate view of what is happening.

- 2.4 For the cohort of young people finishing year 11 in summer 2021, the analysis of their destinations is shown below:

Post-16 Education Institutions	2,884	92.7%
Employment no training	33	1.1%
Employment with training (inc. apprenticeships)	99	3.2%
NEET	59	1.9%
Re-engagement provision (Princes Trust, Skills Support for Growth)	3	0.1%
Training (other than apprenticeships)	31	1.0%
Unknown / Unable to contact	2	0.1%
Total	3,111	

- 2.5 The table shows that most young people progress into positive destinations and the proportion that are NEET is relatively low. The number progressing into apprenticeships is encouraging at a time when the conditions for employers and training providers was very challenging. This is a good level of performance and is testament to the good work done on careers education, information, advice and guidance by school-based careers advice staff and the Council's Education and Careers Advice Service (ECAS) and Economy, Work and Skills teams.
- 2.6 As noted in the previous meetings of the committee, the Covid pandemic seriously impacted on the apprenticeships programme nationally. Apprenticeship providers reported that they had seen reductions of up to 80% in the number of young people starting on programmes during the 2020/21 period. Employers were very preoccupied with managing the economic shock to their businesses caused by the impact of Covid restrictions and the uncertainty of their finances etc. This meant that employers were not recruiting and taking on new staff or apprentices, particularly if they were not open for business or had relocated staff to home based working as this presented additional challenges around onboarding, training, and supervising new staff.

- 2.7 The information below shows the comparison of apprenticeship activity in Stockport with GM (only starts information available from DfE at this level of geographical grouping) and the England averages:

Stockport		Starts			Participation			Achievements		
		2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
	Intermediate Apprenticeship	180	170	70	400	340	270	90	80	10
	Advanced Apprenticeship	250	250	100	600	530	420	120	130	20
	Higher Apprenticeship	160	170	70	300	360	300	30	70	10
	Total	590	590	240	1300	1230	990	240	280	40
	Year on Year Change		100.0%	40.7%		94.6%	76.2%		116.7%	14.3%
GM										
		Starts								
		2019/20	2020/21	2021/22						
	Intermediate Apprenticeship	5420	4430	1830						
	Advanced Apprenticeship	7620	7690	3150						
	Higher Apprenticeship	4370	5150	1990						
	Total	17410	17270	6970						
	Year on Year Change		99.2%	40.0%						
England										
		Starts			Participation			Achievements		
		2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
	Intermediate Apprenticeship	99,220	84,150	35,740	225,320	185,420	128,600	61,630	53,380	7,400
	Advanced Apprenticeship	140,840	138,490	56,270	338,680	326,380	248,190	67,460	72,610	13,000
	Higher Apprenticeship	82,460	98,810	38,230	165,510	207,860	179,550	17,810	30,540	5,870
	Total	322,520	321,450	130,240	729,510	719,660	556,340	146,900	156,530	26,270
	Year on Year Change		99.7%	40.4%		98.6%	77.3%		106.6%	16.8%

- 2.8 It can be seen that the impact of the pandemic on Stockport's apprenticeship activity is line with what appears to have happened across GM and England (achievement levels for 2022 are still moving as the end of the period has not yet been reached).
- 2.9 Pre-pandemic, there was evidence that young people, parents, and carers were more receptive to the apprenticeship route as a progression opportunity. Media coverage of the cost of loans for university courses was causing people to think carefully about their options for entering employment with an apprenticeship training opportunity as they could "earn while they learn" compared to accruing large debts while attending HE provision.
- 2.10 As the economy starts to recover from the effects of the pandemic, employers currently have high levels of vacancies and there are many opportunities for joining these up with apprenticeship training opportunities wherever possible.

3. Council initiatives and support

- 3.1 A significant change to Council support for young people with information and advice about progression opportunities has been the creation and commissioning of Stockport Jobs Match.

- 3.2 Stockport Jobs Match was originally created as a crisis response at the start of the pandemic to support employers that were looking to recruit additional staff because of increased work (e.g. supermarkets and delivery drivers), and to help people who had lost work because of the pandemic to find new paid employment.
- 3.3 Over the past 2 years, Stockport Jobs match has evolved into providing support to schools with their information, advice and guidance activity from year 9 onwards. This support includes the provision of high quality resources, including web site content such as streaming video, and very detailed sector specific information about job roles and where there will be growth in jobs available – the link to the Jobs Match web site is - [Find the Best Jobs in Stockport - Stockport Jobs Match \(stockport-jobsmatch.co.uk\)](https://stockport-jobsmatch.co.uk)
- 3.4 Stockport Jobs Match has also provided support to schools in the national Careers week periods and has just completed activity in support of National Apprenticeship week. Examples of the support provided and a report on the last Careers week support to schools are included at appendix 1 of this report.
- 3.5 The Council is also accessing and leveraging the funded support programmes for young people to get into work and apprenticeships that are provided through the devolution arrangements under the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA).
- 3.6 GMCA have commissioned Ingeus to deliver the new “FutureYou” programme. The aim of FutureYou is to proactively connect with vulnerable young people aged 18-24 who are disengaged from mainstream education, work and skills services. Innovative engagement and mentoring programme to mitigate the impacts on those young people most affected by the covid-19 pandemic. It will focus on those who are experiencing greater disadvantage and are not accessing or being adequately supported through existing provision and will provide a differentiated and personalised wellbeing and support offer that builds confidence, resilience, and motivation to progress into a positive transition outcome and link young people to local labour markets.
- 3.7 Council officers have good experience of working with Ingeus to provide employment support to local residents through the GMCA’s previously commissioned “Working Well” and “Work and Health” programmes and they are an effective provider. More information on the FutureYou programme is provided at appendix 2 of this report.
- 3.8 The Council has commissioned Stockport Homes to deliver a “Steps to Work” initiative in Stockport. This provides funding to employers in the form of a wage incentive to recruit target young people aged 16-24 who are either care experienced or who have additional needs into long-term sustained work. The initiative provides staff who will be able to support the employers and young people to look at opportunities for apprenticeships. The programme will support 27 young people.
- 3.9 The Council continues to operate its own supported apprenticeship programme that provides 14 fully funded places for care experienced and SEND young people to achieve apprenticeship opportunities in a discipline of their choice with a host employer. This programme is very successful in supporting some of our most vulnerable young people to get into work, achieve a good qualification and to

improve their life chances. Recent successes have included young people gaining long term positions with their employers in gas engineering and a local GP practice, for example.

- 3.10 Further support will be made available through the GMCA's Skills for Growth commissioning of additional providers and activity to work with NEET young people across GM, including Stockport, to reduce the number of young people out of work. Council officers are engaged in the design, procurement, and commissioning of these programmes.
- 3.11 Work is currently being carried out by the Council and its partners to produce a new Economic Plan for Stockport, which will be ready in 2022. This Plan will complement and support the One Stockport Borough Plan and the new Local Plan. The Economic Plan will inform and support strong local strategic leadership and delivery of key actions to maximise the contribution of Stockport's local economy in addressing priorities such as the inequalities seen in youth unemployment levels and their access to good, sustained employment.
- 3.12 The Economic Plan will also support the development and production of a new NEET (Not in Education, Employment and Training), strategy and delivery plan with a specific focus on young people and their issues/barriers, and how best to support them to get into employment and training. The Plan will also help to identify where and how the existing and future funding of employability provision can be better aligned and leveraged in Stockport to increase its impact on reducing the youth claimant numbers.
- 3.13 Early stage thinking on possible new initiatives to be developed from the Economic Plan include the creation of boot-camp style programmes with a particular sector focus, such as manufacturing or creative and media, for example. These would operate along the same lines as the model being run by Regeneration Brainery - [Regeneration Brainery – Regeneration Brainery is a not for profit collaboration, we increase diversity in the property sector through the mentoring of young adults with project tours, workspace visits, talks and workshops.](#) Officers in the Council's Development and Regeneration team have already been working in partnership with this initiative and the learning from that experience will be used to build partnerships with schools, colleges and employers to provide a Stockport version.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 There is no doubt that the performance of apprenticeship programmes was significantly negatively impacted by the effects of the Covid pandemic. Analysis of the data appears to show that Stockport was impacted in a similar way to Greater Manchester and England, and there is reason to be hopeful that recovery will also be like these comparator areas.
- 4.2 Additional future risk to the progress of young people into positive destinations post-16 may however be looming because of the current forecasts for the impact of various increases in costs for the economy and consumers, and the effect that these issues could have on consumer and employer confidence and consequently the number of jobs and apprenticeships available.

- 4.3 For now, there is a very healthy jobs market for young people to enter, and the Council has a good range of support, initiatives, and programmes that it is either directly running or that can be accessed by referrals to partners.
- 4.4 Officers will continue to develop existing and new initiatives to support young people to achieve the best possible outcomes regarding destinations and progression.
- 4.5 The Committee is asked to note the report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are none

Anyone wishing to inspect the above background papers or requiring further information should contact Richard Mortimer on telephone number Tel: 0161 474 3864 or alternatively email richard.mortimer@stockport.gov.uk