

Committee: **Scrutiny Committee for Children's Services**

Date: **9 September 2008**

Title of Report: **Part time Timetables**

By: **Director of Children's Services**

Purpose of Report: **To update the Committee on recommendation 12 of the Action Plan from the Scrutiny Review of the Youth Offending Team.**

Recommendation:

The Scrutiny Committee is recommended to consider and comment on the report.

1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from this report.

2. Supporting Information

2.1 This report updates the Scrutiny Committee on recommendation 12 in the Action Plan approved by the Cabinet on 1 May 2007, following the Scrutiny Review of the Youth Offending Team.

Recommendation 12:

The Children's Services Scrutiny Committee to receive a report from the Children's Services Department regarding the effectiveness of the new guidance limiting the use of part-time timetables by schools, particularly with regard to young people known to the Youth Offending Team. This report will be used by the Committee to decide if a further scrutiny review is required.

2.2 The new guidance on part-time timetables took effect in September 2007. Monitoring the impact of the new guidance has, however, presented a particular challenge because the implementation of new national registration codes from September 2007 has resulted in the removal of the code that was previously used to identify the use of part-time timetables in East Sussex schools. Under the national registration code system schools should now code sessions when pupils are not required to attend as 'other authorised circumstances'. This presents an issue for accurate data analysis of the use of part-time timetables since this code also covers a range of other circumstances when a pupil is not required to attend. Attendance officers therefore have to check the circumstances of every individual pupil included under this code to identify those who are subject to a part-time timetable.

2.3 The evidence one year after implementation is that a relatively small number of schools in the county are demonstrating good practice in applying the new guidance on part-time timetables. Although the guidance has not to date had as great an impact on reducing the use of part-time timetables as was anticipated, there is more systematic evidence emerging to show which schools are implementing the guidance effectively and which schools still have some way to go to demonstrate this. These schools have an action plan to improve their practice and will be revisited by Attendance Officers by the end of September to monitor progress.

2.4 In relation to young people known to the Youth Offending Team (YOT), there has been a marked improvement in the level of engagement in full-time education over the past year. This is

reported at the point that the young person completes their court order or final warning programme and is illustrated in the table below:

	April-June 2007	%	April-June 2008	%
Total no. of young people of statutory school age completing court order in quarter	77		75	
Of the above:				
Those in full-time education (25 hrs pw)	42	55	51	68
Those receiving 16-24 hrs pw	5	6	12	16
Those receiving 1-15 hrs pw	19	25	8	11
Those receiving no provision	11	14	4	5

2.5 The key points to highlight in this table are:-

- the reduction from 14% to 5% of those receiving no provision
- a shift in the distribution of those receiving a part-time programme from 1-15 hours per week to 16-24 hours per week
- the increase from 55% to 68% of those in full-time provision

2.6 A number of factors have contributed to this improvement in performance. Firstly, there has been a positive effort by the specialist YOT education staff to raise the profile of the team with schools; this culminated in a successful conference held by the YOT in June 2008. Secondly, the appointment of a second YOT Personal Adviser in 2007 with specific funding from the Learning and Skills Council has enabled the team to increase the level of intensive support it provides to young people to help them back into full-time provision. Thirdly, the YOT has found the new guidance on part-time timetables to be a helpful tool in its work with young people on part-time programmes, particularly where a young person has been receiving part-time provision for a lengthy period at the time the case is first referred to the team. Finally, there has been active monitoring at Deputy Director level of current YOT cases where young people on part-time programmes are being supported back into full-time provision.

3. Community Safety Issues

3.1 The active engagement of young offenders in full-time education, training or employment is recognised to be one of the key factors in reducing the risk of their reoffending. Since reducing youth reoffending is also one of the targets that forms part of the new East Sussex Local Area Agreement, this aspect of the work of the Youth Offending Team plays a vital role in the prevention of youth crime.

4. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendation

4.1 The Scrutiny Committee is invited to consider and comment on this report.

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Local Members: All

Background Documents: None