

16-19 STRATEGY East Sussex

ALL YOUNG PEOPLE LEARNING & WORKING

Our Ambition

1. By 2020 we want all young people to participate in learning or work appropriate to their needs and relevant to the local, regional and national economy. We want all our young people in East Sussex to become better qualified, skilled and ready for employment and to be fully equipped to play an active role in society.
2. Our strategy is based on understanding the data and the diverse interests and views of stakeholders gained through discussion at a 16-19 Summit, as well as the planning process and overall effort required to effect change. It builds on proven best practice and lessons learned, but also seeks approaches that are innovative, forward looking, creative and responsive to circumstance and opportunity. We know that we will all achieve greater impact with plans that are focused on what makes the biggest difference, are measurable and realistically achievable in an environment that includes dynamic change within the education sector and continuing pressure on resource availability.
3. This strategy, developed with stakeholders, outlines how the Standards Learning Effectiveness Service (SLES) will continue to plan, work and collaborate with all our partners to embed a whole system approach. Delivery of the strategy is shared across a range of stakeholders, SLES have responsibility for overseeing and co-ordinating the strategy.

Young people journey to the labour market

4. The ultimate success of this strategy in 2020 will be measured by the sustained engagement of young people in the labour market. So it is important we have shared understanding of the youth labour market and the features that differentiate it from the more general labour market
 - Education plays a more significant role than within the rest of the population
 - Employment and unemployment levels tend to be more sensitive to economic downturns than those of older workers
 - Movements between jobs are common, as young people search for and make moves into new positions that more match their skills or interests¹
 - Careers information, advice and guidance has greater importance as young people often need more help to make sense of the options they face, particularly for vulnerable young people

¹ National Institute of Economic and Social Research (2015) *The School to Work Transition: An Overview of Two Recent Studies*

- Parents and carers have a stronger influence – positive or negative – on the decisions and actions of their children.
5. Achieving a successful job outcome depends on a number of factors for each and every young person. We know that everyone’s journey is different and there is not any single factor that guarantees success in the labour market and all parts of the process must be considered. Through our participatory planning we know there is widespread view in East Sussex that improved education and job outcomes for 16-19 year olds requires intervention early on in young people’s lives including improvement to primary education outcomes; early help when barriers to engagement or progress in learning are identified; support with transition at the end of Year 11 and support into sustained work.
 6. Helping young people to find a job and sustain it is our ultimate objective, however simply defined outcomes such as a ‘job outcome’ or even a qualification are too narrow because they tell us nothing about how young people reach this point, and the journey they have to make to get there. Moreover, getting a job or a qualification is not the end of this journey; ideally each will have productive and fulfilling careers in their chosen area. Our strategy, its outcomes and outputs will reflect our shared understanding of a young person’s journey.
 7. Most young people in East Sussex already continue in education or training after they finish year 11, because it gives them the best chance to get the skills and qualifications that employers and universities look for. However, the group of young people not participating includes some of the most vulnerable in the county. The strategy will reflect our desire to give all young people in East Sussex the opportunity to develop the skills they need to join the workforce and to lead a fulfilling adult life.
 8. Due to the complex nature of the barriers that young people face they can require intensive intervention over time to provide tangible, additional outcomes. However the converse fact is that these individuals can also generate amongst the largest individual savings to the taxpayer by successfully overcoming such barriers. Over their lifetime, every young person who has been NEET will, on average, incur higher public finance (£56,000) and economic (£104,000) costs.²

Strategic themes

9. Our strategy is designed to engage and prepare young people for a competitive labour market. This means ensuring all young people are able to progress in their post-16 learning whether it is through school or college sixth forms, further education colleges, training providers, apprenticeships, traineeships, internships, work based learning, employment with training or university.
10. Our strategy is based around four themes:
 1. Education and skills that meet the needs of the labour market
 2. Career management
 3. Support for vulnerable learners
 4. Improving work readiness

² National Audit Office (2010) *Against the Odds: Re-engaging young people in education, employment or training*

Our Guiding Principles

11. The four strategic themes are underpinned by core principles that guide the way this strategy was developed and how we will work together to realise our shared ambition:
 - **Partnership, strong local leadership and shared accountability.** Our strategy involves proactive, integrated interventions across all sectors; effective partnership and collaboration across all sectors and all levels is essential. This takes place in a range of contexts, including sixth forms, colleges, apprenticeships, traineeships, work based learning and employment with training. We also want all young people to progress at 18 years into sustained employment directly or via higher education.
 - **Building on existing strengths.** Since 2012 significant progress has been made across the County in delivering our Raising the Participation Age (RPA) strategy; *Creating Opportunities 2012-16*, to increase participation in learning and reduce the proportion of young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). East Sussex performs better than the national and regional averages in terms of encouraging participation in education, employment and training for 16-18 year olds. Both the number of 16 to 17 year olds and the number of 17 to 18 year olds participating are higher than the national and regional averages. We will continue to build on what we know works.
 - **Bringing together the world of education and the world of work.** The education and skills environment is not separate from the economy and the economy cannot be detached from education and skills. Ensuring both sectors understand and work effectively with each other is vital. We will ensure a shared approach with the county's strategic body for employment and skills, Skills East Sussex, which is linked to the South East LEP.
 - **Knowing our young people and area.** In order to meet the needs of our young people we need to know not just who is participating in learning and who is not, but we must collectively understand the reasons that hinder participation so our interventions are targeted appropriately.

A whole system strategy

12. Responsibility for achieving full participation in education, training and employment is shared across all sectors and this is why our county's whole system approach is so critical. However, schools, colleges, training providers, Multi Academy Trusts, East Sussex County Council, District and Borough Councils, businesses and charities are historically developed, socially located, complex organisations that are continually responding to political, economic, market and social pressures. There are significant dividing lines in responsibilities and our strategy embraces rather than shies away from this complexity.
13. East Sussex County Council has key legal Duties to:
 - promote the effective participation in education or training of all 16 and 17 year olds resident in their area and to make arrangements to identify young people resident in the area who are not participating

- secure sufficient suitable education and training provision for all young people aged 16-19 and for those up to age 25 with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan in the area³
 - make available to all young people aged 13-19 and to those up to age 25 with an EHC plan, support that will encourage, enable or assist them to participate in education or training⁴
 - additional specific duties to young people in and leaving care⁵, young offenders⁶ and young people with Special Education Needs and Disability.⁷
14. Schools, academies and further education college have a Duty⁸ to secure access to independent careers guidance for pupils from year 8 (12-13 year olds) to year 13 (17-18 year olds). The Duty states that careers guidance must be presented in an impartial manner and promote the best interests of the pupils to whom it is given. Careers guidance must also include information on all options available in respect of 16-18 education or training, including apprenticeships and other work-based education and training options.
15. All young people have the responsibility to participate in education or training until their 18th birthday and so there is clear responsibility on individual young people and their parents/carers to engage in learning⁹.

Accountability and Monitoring

16. This strategy sets the overall direction and ambition to be achieved by 2020. We want to have impact and so we will initially set short and intermediate priorities to be achieved by 2018. Specific action plans will be established for each strategic theme through the Increasing Participation Operational Group which has been the driving force behind the Creating Opportunities RPA Strategy 2012-16. This group will monitor the delivery of the strategy and action plans on a quarterly basis.
17. In 2018 we will establish new priorities that respond to the new and emerging situation. Our strategic priorities will be reviewed by representatives from the Post16 Education Improvement Partnership and the Increasing Participation Operational Group.

³ Sections 15ZA & 18A of the Education Act 1996 as inserted by the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009

⁴ Section 68 of the Education and Skills Act 2008

⁵ Children & Young Persons Act 2008

⁶ Crime & Disorder Act 1998

⁷ Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 and associated regulations including SEND Code of Practice 0-25 Years – Statutory Guidance, January 2015

⁸ Education Act 2011 inserted a new duty (section 42A) into Part VII of the Education Act 1997

⁹ Part 1 of the Education and Skills Act 2008

Strategic Theme 1: **Education and skills meet the needs of the labour market.**

The context

The East Sussex Growth Strategy 2014-2020 sets a shared vision for a more innovative, productive and faster growing East Sussex economy. Acknowledging that “..it is clear that we need a skills system which is responsive to the needs of business and which supports residents to fulfil their potential.” Skills East Sussex (SES), which is the county’s strategic body for employment and skills helps drive this work and our 16-19 Strategy will reflect SES priorities, including: Improving the quality and relevance of CEIAG, helping young people become ready for work, addressing gender imbalance in key sector, helping to stimulate the uptake of apprenticeships and where possible a curriculum shaped by employers. Activities will focus on key priority sectors for East Sussex: including engineering and advanced manufacturing, construction, health and social care, creative and digital, land based and visitor economy.

Apprenticeships East Sussex (AES), a strategic partnership aligned to SES, supports this work through an annual action plan aimed at securing the coordination and growth of apprenticeships across East Sussex.

Young people need education, skills, qualifications and behaviours that are relevant to the labour market and economic needs and opportunities of the county, region and the country. Employers in the county raise the issue of skills shortages in basic literacy, numeracy and IT¹⁰. Young people also need good attendance and good behaviours.

Our priorities 2016-2018:

- 1.1 Develop the breadth of the post-16 learning offer for young people and increase attainment levels and increase the take up of STEM subjects to support the growth of knowledge-intensive sectors.
- 1.2 Improve attainment in English and Maths at all levels, through all schools, colleges, training providers and targeted support agencies. These settings should promote the importance of these subjects to labour market entry and sustained employment. , including the importance of functional literacy and numeracy skills appropriate to the work place.
- 1.3 Grow the number of apprenticeships and traineeships, including at higher and degree levels across East Sussex. Inform and support the implementation of the apprenticeship reforms and levy
- 1.4 Inform and support the proposed new post16 Skills Plan¹¹, which aims to have 15 full-time technical pathways after the age of 16, each with a single awarding body, as recommended by the Sainsbury review report¹²

¹⁰ East Sussex Growth Strategy 2014-2020

¹¹ Post16 Skills Plan July 2016

¹² Report of the Independent Panel on Technical Education April 2016

To achieve these, we will:

- Use labour market intelligence to understand and forecast future changes and draw on this to inform skills gaps, curriculum design, sufficiency of provision and careers information, advice and guidance. We will issue an annual statement of provision need
- Encourage schools, colleges and training providers to work together, informed by employers and to offer a suite of vocational and academic learning opportunities and qualifications that best suit the needs, abilities and aspirations of all young people, to inspire and motivate their progression to the local and national labour market.
- Contribute to and support the work of the Post16 Education Improvement Partnership (EIP), with a particular focus on improving attainment at Key Stage 5 and improving English and Maths, in accordance with its action plan.
- Promote parity of esteem between vocational and academic pathways by increasing the emphasis of vocational learners into further/higher education and ensuring that vocational qualifications are promoted as equally viable routes to employment
- Work with Apprenticeships East Sussex (AES), Sussex Council of Training Providers (SCTP) and colleges to ensure local employers understand the implications of the apprenticeship reforms and levy. Contribute towards the options and plans to meet public body employer obligations under the levy from April 2017.
- Promote clear progression pathways and routes to employment through schools, colleges, training providers and careers IAG services. This will include the pathways for young people to re-engage or have a 'second chance', and promoting widely the benefits of participation.
- Ensure close alignment to the East Sussex County Council corporate Employability & Skills Strategy 2014-18, the Apprenticeships East Sussex action plan and to Skills East Sussex priorities and plans.

Strategic Theme 2: Career management

The context

A Gatsby Foundation report¹³ led by the University of York noted “good career guidance is important for social mobility because it helps open pupils’ eyes to careers they may not have considered”. The report also notes that “so many young people are kept in the dark about the full range of options open to them”. Ofsted reported in 2013 that “[nationally] only one in five schools were effective in ensuring that all students were receiving the level of information they needed”. In its Statutory Guidance for schools, the DfE states “young people who are uncertain or unrealistic about career ambitions are three times more likely to spend significant periods of time not in education, employment or training (NEET). Providing improved careers services will ensure that young people can select educational routes (and then begin their working life in a job) that are suitable for them”.

National research suggests an important implication of labour market changes is that the youth labour market is increasingly less gendered, with male and female young people increasingly competing for the same jobs. However, in East Sussex, we have much more to do to encourage girls and young women to view STEM sector careers as an option for them. It is important that effective careers advice and guidance, as well as education and skills provision, reflects the nature of the labour market.

Young people need access to effective Career Education Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG), to understand the job market, have contact with employers, be able to search for apprenticeship and work vacancies, complete background research, understand work etiquette, be well presented, and be able to describe their achievements in person and writing. Young people need their parents/carers to understand the changing labour market, and the range of routes to progress into different careers and vocations.

Stakeholders express that access to quality CEIAG is patchy across the county. Young people at the ESCC Youth Conference (March 2015) told ESCC RPA Scrutiny Board members that the provision of careers advice and guidance was not consistent across East Sussex and there were particular concerns that work experience was also not being offered across all schools.

The ESCC supports the achievement of the Investor in Careers kitemark for schools as a benchmark of quality. The Enterprise Adviser Network is also being supported and embedded within our schools and colleges.

Our priorities 2016-2018:

- 2.1 Continue to co-ordinate and support a local CEIAG network, which consists of CEIAG leads from our schools and colleges and share good practice through these networks. Continue to raise the importance and profile of CEIAG and work experience.
- 2.2 Encourage and support all schools, colleges and training providers to develop careers education and IAG programmes for young people, and to achieve Investor in Careers (or an equivalent nationally recognised kitemark), as a measure of standards and impartiality.
- 2.3 Once published, support schools and stakeholders to embed the new DfE CEIAG strategy and statutory guidance across East Sussex.

¹³ Gatsby Foundation (2014) *Good Career Guidance*

- 2.4 Ensure CEIAG is informed by Labour Market Information, that it challenges stereotypes and is aspirational and stretching for young people.
- 2.5 Discover and maintain understanding of young people's preferences in courses, jobs and careers, and seek to match this with available learning provision and the labour market.
- 2.6 Ensure progression for young people with SEND from school and college through outcome focused progression plans, developed with the young person and their family, the school, and colleagues in health and social care.

To achieve these, we will:

- Further encourage all schools and colleges to link with the Enterprise Advisers Network to establish links with local businesses.
- Further develop the CEIAG Network to include a greater Continuing Professional Development (CPD) element and encourage employer involvement in CPD for careers leads in schools and colleges.
- Encourage and support all secondary schools and colleges to work towards achieving full Investor in Careers accreditation (or an equivalent quality kitemark).
- Support the planning and implementation of the new DfE CEIAG strategy and statutory guidance.
- Explore with partners how the impact of CEIAG across the county can be monitored and measured.
- Ensure parents and carers know where to access information about career options and progression routes for their children, including new and alternative pathways, such as Apprenticeships at degree level. And work readiness or Traineeships programmes for those who are not quite ready to enter an apprenticeship or employment.
- Encourage and assist schools and college to complete SEN support plans for those not eligible for EHCP, but who need additional support to identify and progress through their chosen career pathway
- Work closely with our local job centres to help co-ordinate the roll out of the national job centre support in schools programme
- Encourage independent travel and new learning opportunities for young people with SEND in East Sussex, including scaling up of Supported Internships and Traineeships on offer.
- Increase targeting of CEIAG to those students who are most at risk of NEET.
- Promote the engagement of Governors in CEIAG within their schools and colleges.
- Support and embed UCAS Progress, the online application and course finder system, within all our schools and colleges.
- Promote education and training opportunities consistently through C360 website, careers fairs, localised events and skills competitions. C360 website will be modern and relevant to young people, parents and providers.

Strategic Theme 3:

Support for vulnerable learners

The context

Young people face unique and often complex situations in their lives that can be barriers to engagement, retention, achievement and progression in learning and employment. They need support to resist and overcome these barriers. We know that sustained engagement in learning and work can have an enabling and stabilising effect on young people and families.

Positive improvements have been achieved in East Sussex, with more vulnerable young people participating in learning or work, particularly our look after children, care leavers and those supervised by the Youth Offending Team (YOT) and we want this work to continue. However, it was also acknowledged by stakeholders at the Summit and through the RPA Scrutiny review board that there is a need to identify and support other vulnerable young people who may not be as easily identified as 'vulnerable', including those with mental health or emotional support needs

Our priorities 2016-2018:

- 3.1 Narrow the attainment gap for those eligible for Free School Meals achieving Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications by their 19th birthday.
- 3.2 Work to prevent young people from becoming NEET through schools, colleges, training providers, targeted IAG and youth support services. Increase transition support for young people from KS4, starting before they reach Year 11.
- 3.3 Target intervention and preparation for NEET young people, including a work readiness programme for those who are not ready to access education, training or employment opportunities.
- 3.4 Encourage focus across all partners on developing the resilience of young people; too many young people experience anxiety, stress and poor emotional health, which can become a barrier to participation.
- 3.5 Encourage a 'think family' approach. Develop a system understanding that not all young people have someone advocating for them. We recognise there are emerging risks such as child sexual exploitation for vulnerable young people, in particular the NEET cohort.
- 3.6 Create the environment in which young people with SEND are enabled to progress in their education, training and employment in East Sussex.

To achieve these we will:

- Work with young people and other organisations, including early help services to overcome barriers to entering EET. We will prioritise early help and targeted intervention and employability programmes to tackle issues of substance misuse, poor mental health, young carers, young people in the youth justice system and those living independently. We will promote engagement programmes which help promote and develop an active, health lifestyle, well-being and independent living skills. We will provide targeted support with partners for

looked after children, care leavers, young offenders and young parents to enable their choice and progression in to education, training and employment.

- Continue to reduce the level of fixed term and permanent exclusions within our secondary schools and colleges.
- Review and strengthen our risk of NEET identification processes. Build on progress in recent years to further strengthen post 16 tracking to increase communication from all providers about joiners, leavers (particularly early leavers), attendance and risk to attainment and progression.
- Develop integrated approaches to tackle family worklessness through the early help systems, targeting families with children who are NEET, on the edge of care and involved in the youth justice services.
- Encourage young people and their families to actively engage with information and support from year 9 onwards around Preparation for Adulthood
- Monitor and review the support given to young people with SEND to assist their progression into post16 learning and employment
- Explore how the remit of ESBAS and YES East Sussex might be expanded to benefit more students in school below Year 11, as well as potential early leavers from post-16 learning.
- Better understand how young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing can be better supported in schools, colleges and training providers.
- Explore whether, within the scope of data security and privacy, more value can be derived from the Aspire database to enable better information sharing and a cross-system referral process. Including sharing information with education and training providers
- Generate much greater emphasis on recognising and celebrating successes, particularly for those young people unlikely to experience a school, college or university graduation event.
- Work with the Career Enterprise Company and other funding bodies to explore a countywide mentoring offer.
- Work with our local job centres to support the implementation of the Youth Obligation* from April 2017

*(Youth Obligation: 18-21 year old job seekers receiving Universal Credit will be expected to take part in an intensive activity programme from day 1 of their claim. They will be referred to training and encouraged to take up an apprenticeship. Should they not be on either after six months, they will be referred to a mandatory work placement)

Strategic Theme 4: Improving work readiness

The context

Young people need to understand the world of work and be ready to embrace its opportunities and challenges. Businesses in East Sussex tell us they are concerned that young people (and adults) in East Sussex can sometimes lack the basic skills and positive attitude towards work that they expect. This is a clear challenge for schools and colleges, and the young people themselves. Employers in the county raised the issue of skills shortages in basic literacy, numeracy and IT, and those essential softer skills of communication, team working, initiative and work ethic. This is a basic requirement in all sectors of the economy.¹⁴

Young people also need the right attributes and mindset for learning and work: specifically they need aspiration, grit and determination, self-awareness, receptiveness, self-assurance and resilience.

The Gatsby Foundation report¹⁵ identifies correlation between the number of different meaningful contacts a young person has with employers and employees, and their readiness for work. It recommends “every pupil should have multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace. This can be through a range of enrichment activities”, and further that “every pupil should have first-hand experience of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience to help their exploration and expand their networks”.

The question of young people’s resilience, aspiration, character and mindset for work and learning has increasingly moved to the forefront nationally, and it has been a recurring theme raised within stakeholder engagement in East Sussex. All agencies and services, including schools, should encourage young people to become responsible citizens, who are able to lead fulfilling lives, as well as be ‘successful’. Achievement of good character requires intentional and planned approaches to character education; developing confident and compassionate young people who are effective contributors to society, successful learners and responsible citizens. Young people also need to grow in their understanding of what is good or valuable, and their ability to protect or advance what is good. Character development involves caring for and respecting others as well as caring for and respecting oneself.¹⁶ Programmes such as the National Citizen Service and Duke of Edinburgh’s Award are established opportunities nationally and locally for young people to develop character and positive mindset, and crucially are recognised by employers and UCAS.

Research published by the Cabinet Office (March 2015) provides evidence that young people who take part in programmes promoting social action, develop vital employability and life skills in the process. It also showed improved levels of well-being and, in one group, levels of anxiety reduced by more than a fifth in the young people who participated in youth social action. This is further supported by a national study which concluded that youth social action has a transformative effect on young people’s character, and in turn character development benefits both the individual and society.¹⁷ It is supported further by an Ofsted report, which spoke about volunteering improving and developing young people’s self-esteem, growing their sense of personal and social responsibility, motivation, resilience, political awareness, leadership and employment skills.¹⁸

¹⁴ East Sussex Growth Strategy 2014-2020

¹⁵ Gatsby Foundation (2014) *Good Career Guidance*

¹⁶ University of Birmingham (2015) *A Framework for Character Education in Schools*

¹⁷ Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues (2015), *Building Character through Social Action*

¹⁸ Ofsted (2012), *Choosing to Volunteer*

Activities outside of formal learning enrich civic pride and young people's skills, attitudes to learning and readiness to work. These activities should include work experience, social action and volunteering, where young people lead activities that help them to develop their resilience and mindset, and also better understand what work is like.

Our priorities 2016-2018:

- 4.1 To bring the worlds of work and education closer together.
- 4.2 All young people encouraged to participate in volunteering and social action programmes in schools, colleges, training providers and targeted support services, including through funded programmes such as National Citizen Service and Duke of Edinburgh award scheme.
- 4.3 To work closely with Skills East Sussex to ensure the Progress project funded by Career Enterprise Company achieves its goal to prepare young people for the world of work.
- 4.4 Encourage activity that encourages those identified as at risk of NEET or eligible for Free School Meals to have meaningful employer contacts.

To achieve these we will:

- Further encourage schools to link with Enterprise Adviser Network.
- Improve awareness in schools about apprenticeships and traineeships.
- Work with Skills East Sussex to actively engage employers. Specifically survey employers to have local evidence as to the skills they are wanting from young people and then develop a common language for the education and employer sectors to use.
- Actively promote to employers the different ways in which they can enrich young people's experiences and opportunities.
- Further develop and embed the use of the East Sussex Employability Passport.
- Encourage and celebrate school and post-16 projects that relate to the world of work
- Research the viability of a job coaching system for young people (especially vulnerable young people) in the work place.
- Support employers to have realistic expectations of young people when they start an apprenticeship/traineeship or work experience. Explore the potential of a peer support network for employers when they have concerns about taking on a young person in the work place.
- Bring additional focus to the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme as an employability preparation programme. Encourage all schools to sign up to DofE and agree a targeted approach for those young people who might not have traditionally signed up for DofE, particularly our more vulnerable learners
- Work with the NCS Trust, south east prime contractor and local delivery partners to ensure the National Citizen Service reaches and engages with all young people, including vulnerable learners. Specifically encourage use of the 2017 and 2018 programmes to maintain summer

engagement of vulnerable learners and embed Autumn NCS programmes within colleges to support re-engagement and retention in post-16 learning.

We would like to take the opportunity to thank all our partners who have contributed to this strategy and to the third sector provider Medway Youth Trust who facilitated the Summit and collated the responses put forward by over 70 attendees to help create this strategy. We would also like to thank the RPA Scrutiny Committee for their review and recommendations, which we have incorporated within the strategy and for the ongoing support and commitment from the members of the Increasing Participation Operational Group who continue to help drive participation into learning and work across the county.

East Sussex County Council: Paying due regard to equality, the 16-19 strategy proposals are likely to have a positive impact on the equality protected characteristic of 'gender' and 'disability', in particular, girls, SEND and other vulnerable groups. We will continue to monitor impact on different characteristics through our data systems.

October 2016