

REPORT TO: BEST VALUE SUB COMMITTEE

REPORT ON: BEST VALUE REVIEW OF INFORMATION AND ADVICE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE LEAVING SCHOOL

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

REPORT NO: 494-2006

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To report on the findings of the best value review looking at the information and advice for young people leaving school, and to seek approval to implement the recommendations arising from the review.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the improvement proposals set out in section 7 of this report be implemented.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications at this stage. The report recommends that the results of the review be incorporated into the development of the NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) strategy which will be developed in response to the Scottish Executive strategy "More Choices, More Chances: A Strategy to Reduce the Proportion of Young People not in Education, Employment or Training in Scotland". An element of the funding allocated to Dundee through the NEET strategy should be used to assist with the implementation of the recommendations arising from the review.

4. LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

This report has an impact on the following key themes:

- access to the skills, knowledge and information needed to enable everyone to play a fuller part in society
- the opportunity to undertake satisfying work in a diverse economy

5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

The report addresses the issue of how to better inform disengaged young people on the options available to them on leaving school.

6. BACKGROUND

6.1 At its meetings on 19 August 2003 and 16 March 2005, the Sub-Committee agreed a programme of best value reviews, including a review on the topic - 'is the variety of organisations that inform and advise young people leaving school delivering best value?'

6.2 A review group was established under the chairmanship of the Director of Economic Development, which included representatives from the University of Abertay, University of Dundee, Dundee College, Careers Scotland, and the Education, Leisure and Communities and Economic Development departments.

6.3 The full report of the review group is attached as Appendix 1, and details the process of the review, the information gathered, the issues identified and the recommendations for improvement. In summary the review found that a significant resource, within schools and also from partner organisations, is allocated to assisting young people prepare for leaving school and that most young people are generally satisfied with the assistance that they receive. Within this, however, the review identified that there are variations between schools in the delivery of support to young people and there are variances in the levels of satisfaction across the products and activities that are delivered. The review also identified that regular attenders were relatively well catered for but that young people that do not attend mainstream schools on a regular basis miss out on support available and, when asked, young people in "non-schools" provision evidenced lower levels of satisfaction with the provision they had received. Key recommendations include the establishment of a strategic overview and a framework for the planning and delivery of advice and information; a comprehensive programme approach to service delivery; and a focus on the most disengaged young people and early intervention. The full list of recommendations is set out in section 7 below.

7. IMPROVEMENT PROPOSALS

7.1 A Integrated Children's Services and the Dundee Partnership Employability Group should determine the most appropriate means of developing a NEET strategy for the city. Ensuring that advice and information to young people leaving school is delivered effectively and consistently and that the provision of support to the most disengaged young people, including pupils on part time timetables, is relevant and of value to them should form part of the NEET strategy. The strategic group should be remitted to:

- Involve relevant partners in developing the strategy and in implementation

7.2 A mapping exercise of provision by year group in each school needs to be undertaken to:

- Identify what is being delivered, what forms of delivery are most effective, good practice and gaps in provision. This should also include details of partners' involvement in delivery
- This data should be used to inform the strategic overview and enable it to ensure that delivery meets strategic and best practice policy objectives as outlined in the National Framework for Career Education and How Good is Our School in... and Determined to Succeed
- Allow schools to develop cohesive career education programmes for each year group which show partner involvement and can be used to communicate to pupils and their parents the sort of provision that they will receive during their time at school
- Identify the range of provision and gaps in provision for disengaged young people, in particular those pupils on part time timetables
- Identify the extent of young people on part time timetables

7.3 Particular attention should be paid to disengaged young people and more consideration given to where early intervention can be most effective and what forms this intervention should take.

7.4 Career Management Teams/Enterprise in Education Teams should play the central role in the implementation of the strategic framework in each school.

- 7.5 A clear strategy for engaging with parents should be developed by organisations delivering careers guidance, focusing on how to maximise opportunities for parental engagement and how to "influence the influencers".
- 7.6 Provision for S4 summer and S5 winter leavers' needs should be reviewed, as there are perceptions that provision for these groups of pupils could be more effective. Effective earlier identification of these potential leaving groups needs to be in place in all schools and appropriate provision made available to them.
- 7.7 An assessment should be undertaken to establish the impact of Educational Maintenance Awards on staying on rates and post school progression to ensure maximum benefits are being derived from this funding.
- 7.8 Ways in which relevant and up to date labour market information can be made more accessible to pupils, parents and staff should be investigated and methodologies developed to ensure that relevant staff, including subject teachers, are up to date and can impart accurate and relevant information.
- 7.9 The strategic group should define the objectives related to employer engagement and investigate opportunities for maximising employer involvement and support.
- 7.10 New approaches to service delivery developed by Careers Scotland need to be evaluated to ensure that they have been effectively implemented in all schools.
- 7.11 Effective pupil evaluation processes need to be developed to establish a cycle of continuous improvement for all partners to meet identified pupil needs.
- 7.12 The Scottish Executive should be approached with the aim of agreeing that "Determined to Succeed" innovation fund (2 years, approximately £50,000) and other monies identified for the "Not in Employment, Education or Training" group should be reallocated to assist with the implementation of these recommendations.

8. **CONSULTATIONS**

The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executives, Assistant Chief Executive (Community Planning) and Directors of Education and Leisure and Communities have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

9. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Report 551-2003 to Best Value Sub-Committee, 19 August 2003: 4 Year Best Value Programme.

Report 174-2005 to Best Value Sub-Committee, 16 March 2005: Best Value Review Programme.

DOUGLAS GRIMMOND
DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

10/08/2006

APPENDIX ONE

BEST VALUE REVIEW DRAFT FINAL REPORT

"Is the variety of organisations that inform and advise young people leaving school delivering best value?"

Executive Summary

The best value review was established by Dundee City Council to address the question "Is the variety of organisations that inform and advise young people leaving school delivering best value?"

In order to address the question a multi agency Review Group was established and a process for conducting the review set out which involved extensive investigation and evidence gathering, defining the issues and identifying options.

The process has culminated in a series of recommendations which respond to the evidence gathered and options considered.

The review found that a significant resource, within schools, and also from partner organisations, is allocated to assisting young people prepare for leaving school and that most young people are generally satisfied with the assistance that they receive.

Within this, however, the review identified that there are variations between schools in the delivery of support to young people and there are variances in the levels of satisfaction across the products and activities that are delivered. The review also identified that regular attenders were relatively well catered for but that young people that do not attend mainstream schools on a regular basis miss out on support available and, when asked, young people in "non schools" provision evidenced lower levels of satisfaction with the provision they had received.

The recommendations focus on the desirability of

- establishing a strategic group and a framework for the planning and delivery of advice and information which prepares young people for leaving school
- focusing on the most disengaged young people and early intervention
- mapping out exactly what provision is available for different groups
- developing a comprehensive programme approach to service delivery
- specific implementation issues

Background

Dundee City Council Best Value Sub Committee Report (No 174 - 2005) on the Best Value Review Programme remitted the Director of Economic Development to conduct a review on "Is the variety of organisations that inform and advise young people leaving school delivering best value?"

In response a multi organisational Best Value Review (BVR) Group was established comprising key stakeholders.

The BVR has been conducted with the express aim of identifying improvements in the value and relevance of guidance and advice services to young people leaving school.

The initial meeting of the BVR Group was held on 08 September 2005 and agreed a broad workplan. Subsequent meetings of the BVR Group and associated Task Groups focused on the detailed planning of the review, considered existing evidence and conducted research. Following this key issues arising from the review were established and options for addressing these issues identified.

The purpose of this report is to describe the BVR process, present the information that has been gathered, describe the issues that have been identified through analysis of the evidence, consider options which respond to these issues and outline remaining action that need to be agreed in order to complete the BVR.

Once complete the BVR will present a clear set of recommendations to elected members.

The BVR Team

In order to bring relevant expertise to focus on the BVR topic and ensure key stakeholders were engaged in the review the first action was to establish a Best Value Review Team to plan and oversee the review.

The BVR team was selected by identifying partner organisations and departments of the Council that have a strategic interest and a responsibility to deliver services which support young people leaving school

BVR Team Members

Douglas Grimmond	Director, Economic Development (Chair)
Allan Millar	Senior Policy Officer, Economic Development Department
Lesley Balfour	Student Recruitment Manager, University of Abertay
Gus Campbell	Senior Careers Advisor University of Dundee
Graham Stevenson	Quality Improvement Officer (10 - 18), Education Development Service
Grant McDougall	Careers Planning Manager, Careers Scotland
Kenny Lindsay	Manager (Young People), Leisure and Communities Department
Jack Scott	School and Community Liaison, Dundee College

The BVR process

The BVR process involved four key stages:

1. Planning
2. Define Issues
3. Select Options
4. Report

Each of the key stages is or has been supported by task group meetings and meetings with relevant individuals from the Council and partner organisations. Each key stage reports to the relevant Milestone Meetings.

The initial Task Group meeting was held on 20 September 2005 and concluded that there was little existing information on whether services preparing young people for leaving school represented best value, further investigation was required and that the information should be gathered from a variety of sources in order to allow the review to cross reference and triangulate views.

Gathering the Evidence

Task groups were set up by the BVR in with the purpose of gathering information on the views of young people who are or who have recently been in receipt of advice and guidance which assist them prepare for leaving school and to gather information and views from other stakeholders in the process

The task groups determined that, in order to make the evidence as comprehensive as practicable five separate but complementary research exercises should be undertaken:

1. Pupil Questionnaires
2. Schools Provision Audit
3. Schools Staff Focus Groups
4. Stakeholder/ Training Provider Audits
5. Pupil Focus Groups

This report summarises the findings of the research exercises. Full data sets and reports are available for reference.

Questionnaires

Pupil Questionnaires were conducted with three target groups:

1. Schools based pupils
2. Young People in non schools provision
3. Internet based survey

A seven page questionnaire was designed by a task group to elicit detailed information from pupils on what they thought about the help that was available to assist them prepare for leaving school.

1000 Questionnaires were distributed to 10 Dundee secondary schools during the week beginning 9th February 2006. The aim was to generate representative responses from S4, S5 and S6 classes across the city with one return from each year group from each school planned for. A total of 634 returns were received, all ten mainstream secondary schools participated. The returns from schools ranged from 45 (Grove Academy) to 90 (St John's High School). 318 returns were from S4 pupils, 225 from S5 pupils and 68 from S6 pupils, 23 respondents did not identify their year group.

The volume of returns ensured that the results were statistically robust achieving a confidence interval of 95% plus/minus 3.5%.

Additional Questionnaires were distributed to five "non school" providers of services to young people of school age comprising Off site provision, Looked after young people, Get Ready for Work clients, Dundee College's Pupil Access to College and Employability Group and Unemployed young people) This generated 62 returns.

A web based questionnaire was made available through the Dundee page of the Young Scot website, this generated 9 responses.

The survey and questionnaires were developed in conjunction with Dundee City Council's Information Technology Department and all returns were analysed by Dundee City Councils Information Technology Department using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) system.

Schools Questionnaires

Methodology

Once the questionnaires were finalised they were distributed to schools via the Careers advisor linked to each school. The careers advisors then agreed with the Principal Teacher guidance in each school which periods in Personal and Social Development (PSD) classes would be used for introducing pupils to the questionnaire and ensuring that they completed and returned the questionnaires. Once the classes and periods were identified the careers advisor, in liaison with the class teacher distributed the questionnaires in class, assisted with any pupil queries about the questionnaires and the purpose of the BVR, then collected the completed questionnaires and returned them to a central collation point.

A summary of the analysis of these responses is presented below. This analysis formed the background for follow up focus groups with S4, S5 and S6 students which took place during April/May 2006.

Summary of Results

Respondents were evenly split with regard to gender. 48.1% of respondents were in S4, 39.6% in S5 and the remainder in S6.

74.6% of respondents claimed to know where they want to go when they leave school. The majority of those that claimed to know what they wanted to do said they intended to move to University (47.6%) or College (38.8%).

The proportion of students in schools receiving products/activities related to information and advice to prepare them for leaving school ranged from 484 of respondents receiving Subject Choice Advice to 141 receiving Mock Interviews

Of those that received inputs (e.g. Careers Education lessons, interviews with careers advisors/guidance teachers and talks from HE/FE) the majority were either satisfied or very satisfied with the service provided, levels of satisfaction range from 59.6% to 84.4 %.

Relatively few respondents indicated that they were either dissatisfied or totally dissatisfied with the service that they received although there is a range evident in these responses from 1.9% to 10.5%.

There was no discernible relationship between reported levels of dissatisfaction for any of the activity areas, however, the levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction for the same activity could vary significantly across different schools. Respondents who were either "totally satisfied" or "satisfied" ranged, for example, from 37.6% to 78.9% across schools within one specific activity and from 33.3% to 77.9% within another specific activity.

"Family", closely followed by "Friends" were the form of support most frequently experienced by respondents who also identified a consistently high level of satisfaction with the input received from these sources of support.

PSD Careers Education and Careers Scotland Lessons were the next most frequently experienced activities, respondents recorded some of the highest levels of ambivalence "Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied" (30.7% and 26.3% respectively) for these activities.

Analysis of Results by Year Group

Trends are evident across year groups in relation to how pupils articulated their post school intentions as illustrated in table 1.

Table 1.

	S4	S5	S6
% who know where they want to go when they leave school	59.4	69.7	97.1
% that feel very well or reasonably well prepared for leaving school	54.5	56.3	75.0
% of those who know where they want to go that want to go to College	49.5	31.3	27.9
% of those who know where they want to go that want to go to University	37.1	53.3	60.3
% of those who know where they want to go that want to go into employment from school	4.8	7.3	4.5

Overall, S4 pupils feel less prepared for leaving school and are more likely to go to college and less likely to go to university than S5 and S6

The most commonly used activities and the highest levels of satisfaction across year groups were

Table 2

	S4	S5	S6
Most commonly used activities	Family (237), Friends (234) PSD Careers Education Lessons (206), Subject Choice Advice (201) and Careers Scotland Lessons (200)	Family (210), Friends (200) Subject Choice Advice (200) Careers Scotland Lessons (200)	Family (63), Friends (62) Subject Choice Advice (62) Interview with Guidance Teacher (61)
Highest levels of satisfaction	Family (85.7%) Work experience (82.1%) Friends (79.5%) College talk (76.5%)	Friends (86.5%) Family (82.9%) Interview with Guidance Teacher (82.9%) Interview with Careers Advisor (81.4%) Work experience (79.9%)	S6 Open days (93.1%) Interview with Guidance Teacher (88.5%) Family (85.7%) Work experience (84.6%) Talks from Universities (82.2%)

These results show that the majority of pupils in school are satisfied with the majority of provision which they receive which is aimed at supporting them in leaving school. However, results indicate a significant variation in the proportion of pupils receiving products and services across activity areas within schools and variations in the level of satisfaction reported by pupils across activity areas and across schools.

Questionnaires - Young People in Non Schools Provision

Methodology

Five specific groups of young people whom the mainstream "schools" questionnaire did not necessarily capture were identified by the BVR task group, these were:

- Pupils in Off Site provision
- Looked After Young People
- Participants in "Get Ready for Work" courses
- Pupil Access to College and Employability Group (PACE)
- Unemployed young people

Professionals working with each of these groups of young people (for example, Social Work staff with Looked After Young People) were asked to work with them in small groups and assist them complete a questionnaire which was similar to that completed by school pupils but which contained additional sections to reflect their different circumstances.

Summary of Results

62 Questionnaires were returned from non school provision of whom 22 were still at school and 39 had left school, the majority of whom had left after S4.

Intended destinations

Of the 37 that answered the question about intended destination, 19 knew where they wanted to go when they left school. The majority of these 19 respondents wanted to go to college. In contrast with the schools responses, very few (2) wanted to go to university.

Levels of satisfaction

Across the whole survey group and in common with the Schools survey group the majority of those that received support tended to be satisfied with the service of product they received

Levels of satisfaction with services were, however, lower than levels of satisfaction recorded for pupils in mainstream schooling in 13 out of the 16 activity categories identified in the questionnaire. The areas of activity which, for the out of school group received higher satisfaction ratings than the schools pupils' survey were PSD Careers Education Lessons, Friends and Family.

More than half the survey group did not engage in eight of the activities identified in the questionnaire, this compares with only three activities in the schools survey where more than half the survey group did not participate.

At this point in the questionnaire those that have left school were separated from those still at school.

The sample size for those that have left school reduced to 20, the responses should, therefore, be treated with caution due to the small sample size. Of the 20 respondents that answered whether they achieved their intended destination, 8 answered that they did, 12 respondents stated that they did not.

Of 22 respondents that were still at school 13 knew where they wanted to go on leaving (5 college, 3 university, 3 employment, 1 training, 1 other), evidencing a larger range than the responses from the schools questionnaire

The experience and expectations of the respondents to the "out of school" survey are considerably different to those of respondents to the "mainstream" schools survey. Out of school respondents were less likely to use services and were, generally, less satisfied with the services that they did use.

Respondents to the "out of schools" survey also displayed lower levels of expectation in terms of destination related to academic achievement.

Web based Questionnaire

The questionnaire was posted on the internet via the Dundee Pages of the "Young Scot" website and promoted to young people in Dundee through the City Council's youth work services. An additional incentive (which was also available to all other respondents) was entry into a free prize draw for one of four iPods. Only nine responses were received at least two of which were from outwith Dundee and it was decided that such a small sample size was not worth analysing

Summary of Questionnaire Results

- Most pupils are either totally satisfied or satisfied with the services they receive
- Family and Friends are the most frequently cited means of support, information and advice
- Pupils develop a clearer idea of what they want to do as they progress from S4 to S6
- Preparedness for leaving increases but in S4 and S5 less than 60% of respondents said they were prepared for leaving
- Satisfaction levels varied across activities
- Satisfaction levels for the same activity vary across schools
- Young People participating in non schools provision are less likely to use services
- Young People participating in non schools are less likely to find services satisfactory

Schools Provision Audit

Methodology

A comprehensive 13 question audit questionnaire was developed by a task group over a series of meetings from November - January and sent to all schools during February 2006 with an explanation that the provision identified in the responses and issues raised would help provide a comprehensive view to the BVR and advising that the audit exercise would be followed up with staff focus groups.

Schools were asked to provide an audit on the career planning related advice, information and guidance provided to young people in their school and were encouraged to raise issues which they deemed pertinent to the review.

Audit returns were received from

St John's High
Baldrigon Academy
Menziehill High
St Saviour's High
Craigie High
Morgan Academy

Summary of Results

The Audits demonstrate that there is a great deal of activity taking place in school for pupils within the school and that there is a significant staff resource focussed on preparing young people for leaving school. There is variation in the products and activities which are delivered across schools.

Schools Partners

The main organisations used by schools in supporting young people for leaving school also varied from school to school. Careers Scotland and Dundee College were identified as the most commonly used partners (four out of the six schools placed these organisations at the top or in second place in their lists of partner organisations). Work Experience/Employers and Dundee University were the next most commonly cited organisations. Nine other organisations were each cited on one single occasion.

Resource Levels

Schools generally identified that they have between six and eight guidance staff and that these staff are generally supported by senior staff, for example a Principal Teacher Guidance and a Deputy Head Teacher with a particular responsibility for guidance. Across the secondary sector then, we can extrapolate that approximately 60 - 80 schools staff are involved directly in providing advice and guidance to pupils and that these staff are supported by more senior staff within the school. The schools staff are supported by a variety of resources, products and activities.

The type of support received changes and develops in all schools as pupils move through school. There is a wide range of activity delivered within schools, over twenty distinct activities or products were delivered across schools. The most commonly delivered activities included:

Options Choices, A Day in the Life (Dundee College), Careers Box, Work Experience, Progress File and individual interviews.

The types of product and activity delivered varied across each individual school. For example three of the schools use "Careers Box" consistently through S1 - S4, two other schools do not use "Career Box" but do use "Progress File" extensively through S1 through to S4. Other examples of the variability between

schools in which activities/products were used include the "Aim Higher" road show which was cited by two schools and Enterprise Challenge was identified by only one school.

All school used non guidance staff, other than careers advisers, in careers education, most commonly Resource Centre staff.

Additional Provision

All schools identified additional provision including activity for S4 Christmas leavers, particular provision for XL pupils, offer of "Course Ready" to all pupils, S4 summer leavers having the opportunity to undertake an XL world of work unit and Special Educational Needs (SEN) link courses. The level and content of additional provision varied across schools.

Four of the schools identified that they provided support for specific target groups over and above mainstream provision

Areas for Development

When asked what areas they'd like to see developed four schools specifically mentioned employer involvement and two schools specifically identified more vocational training. More resources to support enterprise activity, an enhanced work experience database, and a more imaginative approach were also identified.

What is working well

When asked respondents identified a range of activity that is working well in schools including comprehensive S1 - S5 Careers Education programme delivered by whole Guidance Team, Careers Scotland links, Work experience, Interview Skills, Talks from Careers Scotland Advisors, links with local employers and specific Initiatives e.g. Make it in Scotland, Activate and Business Dynamics.

Summary

The picture that emerged from the Schools audit is that there is a great deal of activity in schools which is well resourced but that the level and type of activity and the partners involved in delivery varies from school to school.

Schools Focus Groups

Methodology

Schools Staff were invited to attend one of two focus groups on 08 and 09 March 2006 with the purpose of sharing the initial findings from pupil questionnaires and the schools audits and double checking that the findings from these exercises resonated with the experience of school staff.

Turnout to the focus groups was disappointingly low, the first focus group did not engage any participants. However, the second focus group was attended by three staff who emphasised key issues from their perspective:

Summary of Findings

- Young people do become disengaged at an early stage, even in Primary School and early intervention with these individuals is required.
- The most successful way of engaging young people was through hands on experience, preferably when employers are involved.
- Some pupils appear to stay in school because it is a "comfortable" environment although this will not be the best choice for them in terms of progression or achievement.
- Christmas leavers seem to be a group with whom more positive work could be done.
- Services, from a staff perspective, could definitely be better joined up.
- Its better if something goes wrong at the start or end of a year - it can be very difficult if pupils become disengaged part way through a year when provision is less likely to be available

Stakeholder and Training Providers Audit

Methodology

The Stakeholder and Training Provider Audit was conducted over January and February 2006

The stakeholder audit aimed to map the advice, information and guidance services to young people provided by stakeholders and training organisations over the period when young people are preparing to leave school and for a period of not more than six months after they had left school. The audit was structured through an eleven page questionnaire developed by a BVR Task Group which sought to identify what support is being provided, by whom and to whom, and to identify issues relating to the provision of information and advice to young people preparing to leave or who had recently left school.

Audits were returned from:

Rathbone Training
JHP Training
HELM Training Ltd
Careers Scotland
Scottish Enterprise Tayside
Xplore Partnership
University of Abertay, Dundee
University of Dundee, Admissions and Student Recruitment
University of Dundee, Wider Access Study Centre
Dundee College
Dundee City Council, Social Work Department

Summary of Findings

The returns from the audit demonstrate that there is a wide range of activity in Dundee targeted at a wide range of young people which directly addresses young people's preparedness to leave school. Activity undertaken by respondents typically comprises: One to one guidance, Group work, Class talks, Visits, using a Website, Information Packs, Tasters, Open days, Summer Schools, Telephone helpline, Exhibitions, Conferences and Challenge Days.

There appear to be in excess of 40 Full Time Equivalent members of staff in the various organisations working with young people and assisting them prepare for leaving school. Although information on the financial commitment of organisations was limited the money invested in assisting young people prepare for leaving school in certainly exceeds £1 million per annum.

Agencies identified that the following were working well:

- Networking due to personal links, contracts replacing grants
- There is a focus on the NEET Group

Areas where improvements could be made included

- More secure/longer term funding allowing for more stable work planning
- Common Assessment process
- Allowing young people to "hop" between training providers.
- Getting maximum value from the resources that are collectively allocated to young people
- Streamlining the amount of meetings/groups
- Greater collaboration in areas of common interest.
- A coordinated approach to employer engagement
- Early intervention with the less academically able pupils
- Ensuring we engage with young people before they disappear from the system
- Engaging parents

A number of organisations expressing concern that although for young people who attend school regularly careers advice seems to work well, disaffected young people often miss out on this advice and there are issues about their perception of the relevance of provision to them.

Student Focus Groups

An integral part of the BVR process which was planned in by task groups from the inception of the evidence gathering plan was to hold "focus" or discussion groups with pupils to explore in more detail some of the issues raised by pupils in the questionnaires.

The analysis of the pupil questionnaires identified a number of consistent emerging themes deemed worthy of further investigation. These issues were also discussed with the school staff attending the feedback session on the initial pupil survey results and confirmed as meriting further investigation.

The topics discussed at the focus groups and a brief summary of responses are outlined below.

Methodology

The plan was to hold pupil focus groups in 6 schools selected as being representative of those across the city:

Grove Academy, Lawside Academy, St Saviour's High, Craigie High, Morgan Academy, Braeview Academy

The plan was to hold group sessions with 10 pupils from each of S4, S5 and S6 resulting in a total of 180 pupils involved.

Staff from Dundee City Council Leisure and Communities Department and Careers Scotland (from outwith Dundee) were recruited and briefed to hold discussion groups to ensure as much consistency as possible. They then worked in pairs to facilitate the pupil discussion groups.

Quantitative Outcomes

Table 3

Number of pupils participating

	S4	S5	S6	Total
Grove Academy	0	0	0	0
Lawside Academy	8	4(S5+S6)	0	12
St Saviour's	10	7	6	23
Craigie High	10	0	0	10
Morgan Academy	10	8	7	25
Braeview Academy	0	0	0	0
Total	38	19	13	70

Grove Academy decided not to participate in the arrangement of pupil focus groups and in Braeview Academy it was not possible to arrange the group sessions in the timescales available in the run up to the Easter school holidays. However, the purpose of the focus groups, to gather good quality qualitative data to inform and complement the quantitative data received via the questionnaires was achieved.

Influence of Friends and Family

*Why are **Friends** and **Family** most used and most highly rated in terms of satisfaction? Are there ways in which the advice and information from families or friends could be improved?*

Although there were mixed views as to relying on family and friends it was widely acknowledged that support of family is essential and a wide range of reasons were given.

The focus groups identified that pupils have insight as to the limitations of family assistance and although pupils rate it the highest this seems to be based on their families' knowledge of them as individuals not on their ability to provide job/training etc advice. Pupils also commented that although family and friends

know you better than anyone else, they felt that meetings with guidance teachers and careers advisers had more influence.

Pupils recognise the need to access advice from friends and family and also school and careers services. The key added value would be for the professionals to ensure parents are better placed to give their children the best advice and information possible.

Reasons behind staying on for S5 and S6

The number of young people staying on at school has increased in recent years. Why do pupils think this is?

Perhaps not surprisingly a wide variety of responses were given to this question. The consistent answers given as to why pupils stay on at school were:

- pupils see the value of qualifications to their future aspirations – better job / pay
- parental and school encouragement to stay on at school to gain qualifications
- a few remain because of age i.e. they are Christmas S5 leavers
- a few still seem to remain because of the comfort zone aspect i.e. it's easier than thinking of what to do when they leave school.
- Perception of limited job opportunities in the local labour market
- friends' staying on was quoted as an influence.
- Experiences of older siblings

There were mixed views as to the influence Educational Maintenance Awards had on decisions to stay on at school. This ranged from little or no influence to a strong direct influence – schools which had the largest number of participants, gave the latter view. Pupils there all felt strongly that the Educational Maintenance Award affects this decision; if the amount was more and not based on family income then more people would stay on.

Is it a cause for concern that half in S4/S5 don't feel totally prepared for leaving?

Around a quarter of pupils in S4 and S5 say that they feel unprepared for leaving school. Is this something that we should feel worried about? Or is it because a lot of pupils will be staying on so don't have to be prepared for leaving school? Are there things which they feel would help prepare them earlier?

The earlier a pupil leaves school the less well prepared they feel for leaving and this is reflected in the questionnaire results. In S4 / S5 the majority of pupils feel more focussed on exams than post school options. Staying on longer at school, the maturity it brings and the fact that advice and guidance inputs are perceived to be more targeted at S5/S6 pupils were factors commented upon. This means that those pupils leaving at the end of S4 are in danger of "missing out" on provision if not delivered until S5 /S6

When asked "are there things which they feel would help prepare them earlier?" a range of responses were received. The overriding view was that the more interactive an input was the more successful it was perceived to be.

There was unanimous condemnation of talks which tended to be delivered in the form of a presentation/ lecture with multiple PowerPoint slides

Pupils suggested that hands on / interactive activities were much more enjoyable and beneficial. Workshop type format is deemed successful.

Pupils commented that there was a lack of inputs on jobs, training and that inputs on part – time working and sources of vacancies were seen as valuable

Relevant timing of activities was deemed to be crucial as was an explanation as to the relevance/appropriateness of some activities. Pupils did not always feel that it was clear why they were doing something at the time they were doing it

Learning points from interventions need to be made more explicit for pupils e.g. what they'll get out of a session.

Earlier interventions were requested which seemed to relate to the desire to have a clearer overview of the various options open to them in S4, S5 and S6 and what these options would cover

Activities with low satisfaction levels

Pupils told us that levels of satisfaction were lowest for Mock interviews and Talks from Universities - why is this? Is it that they feel these activities are not relevant or delivered at the wrong time?

The responses from one school in particular give an insight to this issue. S4 and S5 pupils had little experience of mock interviews and regarded College and University talks as boring, However, about half of S6 have had mock interviews and found them beneficial, this group also found talks from Colleges/Universities useful and found attending open days at University beneficial.

The key point here appears to be that if the timing of an activity is right and the pupils can see the benefit of it then the satisfaction rating increases

Is there other provision they would like to see?

Very few pupils used any services activities or provision outwith the 16 which were listed on the questionnaire - is this because the existing provision is adequate? Are there other activities they feel would like to help prepare them for leaving school?

The overall feeling was that the existing range of activity was good but that more focus on hands on activity and experiential learning would improve the quality of the provision.

Is provision as joined up as it could be?

A lot of different organisations make sure that services that are put in place to help pupils prepare for the world of work. Do pupils feel that they are joined up and work together to assist them?

Generally participants expressed a view that services were not as joined up as they ought to be. Simple examples include notice boards not being up to date and pupils not sure about which visitors to school represent which agencies.

Making things even better for future school leavers

What do they think would help prepare pupils better for leaving school?

More mock interviews and help with subject choices were identified as specifics which could help.

Other general issues?

- Why not take small groups to the college for a visit or to see an employer.
- Time to use websites.
- Better provision for S5 winter leavers
- Pupils commented on the "reward" systems in operation, namely that the perception is that pupils who misbehave are rewarded with treats while well behaved pupils get nothing.
- Pupils want and like to be listened to and would welcome genuine opportunities to talk to teachers and others openly

Milestone Meeting Two - Issues

Milestone meeting 2 took place on 20 February 2006 and considered the issues raised during the investigation phase and review group members subsequently agreed that the range of issues should be consolidated and articulated as set out below:

- 1 How do partners better inform and prepare the most disengaged young people and enable them to understand and relate better to the options available to them upon leaving school, specifically:
 - o Are the resources available commensurate with the number of most disengaged young people presenting each year?
 - o Are early interventions with these young people as well resourced and effective as they could be?
 - o Is the range of provision well synchronised and coordinated?

- 2 What factors explain the variations in the reported levels of access and satisfaction between elements of provision and between schools and how can the best practice be shared between schools?

- 3 Should existing arrangements be developed and are new arrangements required to ensure more effective joined up working?

It also became evident during discussions at milestone meeting 2 that, although there is provision for disengaged young people, a number of the most disadvantaged young people move onto part time timetables and do not receive structured and comprehensive support.

Milestone Meeting Three - Options

Officer meetings were arranged in order to generate options/ideas to address the issues identified at milestone meeting two. These meetings produced a total of 19 options as listed below which were presented to milestone meeting 3 on 05 May 2006. Milestone meeting three considered and evaluated the options and select preferred options. During this process the meeting amalgamated and linked up some of the options that had been presented and produced

Recommended Options - Issue 1

Developing a Strategic Overview

The **primary option** emerging from the evidence gathered and discussions with stakeholders is that the Education Directorate should establish a **strategic group** comprising senior management team members (or that the Best Value Review findings and options are incorporated into the remit and workplan of an existing group) with input and support from delivery partners to **ensure that a strategy for delivering advice and information to young people leaving school and particularly the most disengaged is delivered effectively and consistently**

Mapping and Coordination

A mapping exercise should be undertaken to identify the range of provision and gaps in provision for disadvantaged young people. The meeting agreed that Pupil Referral Teams, with their knowledge of pupil numbers and activity, were well positioned to complete this review. The group considered that information on the profile of the part time group should also be gathered as part of the mapping exercise as this will be essential to inform the type of provision that will be suitable (e.g. reasons for pupils moving onto part time timetables and the school based activity that pupils are still involved in). The coordination of the mapping exercise should be the responsibility of a named officer within the Education Directorate. Longer term, coordination of the activities of Pupil Referral Teams across the Authority should be the responsibility of a named officer within the Education Authority.

The concept of a key officer with a coordinating role regarding part-time pupil activities and collation of information, ties back strongly to the development of a strategic framework and overview through a strategic group.

Programme Approach

It had been established by the review that a comprehensive and cohesive programme does not seem to exist for part-time pupils.

The key option in relation to issue 1 is that a **programme approach** to working with disengaged young people in schools should be developed. A programme approach would be characterised by the availability of a spectrum of provision from which a package of support for individual pupils would be built.

The strategic group proposed above should develop the programme approach, although the group recognised that resource limitations on provision means that suitable options may not always be available for all pupils and that that current frameworks, for example, Individual Education Plans which focus on academic outcomes, were not necessarily suitable for part time pupils.

Recommended Option - Issue 2

The variations which had been identified in the report analysing the school pupils' questionnaire returns had been confirmed by a series of focus groups with school pupils in 6 schools in which approximately 90 young people had participated in.

The questionnaires and focus groups had identified that provision for S4 and S5 Christmas leavers had potential to be developed.

Pupil feedback identified that Careers Education was at times disjointed and learning outcomes were not always clear.

The information from the questionnaires and focus groups provide good information for improving the way services are delivered and provide a rich source of evidence for Career Management Teams.

Best practice can be shared between schools by means of the strategic group providing a framework for Career Management Teams to undertake this role.

Recommended Option - Issue 3

Options recommended for Issues 1 and 2 address issue 3 concerns about effective joined up working:

- 1 A strategic group should be established
- 2 Career Management Teams should play a key role in local implementation and ensuring good practice is shared between schools

RECOMMENDATIONS

The evidence gathered through questionnaires, audits and focus groups and the consideration of issues and options by officers, task groups and milestone meetings has generated a series of recommendations:

1. **A Strategic Group should be established by the Education Directorate, Careers Scotland and other relevant partners to ensure that a strategy for delivering advice and information to young people leaving school is delivered effectively and consistently and that the provision of support to the most disengaged young people, including pupils on part time timetables, is relevant and of value to them**

The strategic group should be remitted to:

Involve relevant partners in developing the strategy and in implementation

Ensure that the strategy ties in with the emerging "Not in Employment, Education or Training" (NEET) strategy

2. **A mapping exercise of provision by year group in each school needs to be undertaken to:**
 - **Identify what is being delivered, what forms of delivery are most effective, good practice and gaps in provision. This should also include details of partners' involvement in delivery**
 - **This data should be used to inform the strategic group and enable it to ensure that delivery meets strategic and best practice policy objectives as outlined in *the National Framework for Career Education and How Good is Our School in... and Determined to Succeed***
 - **Allow schools to develop cohesive career education programmes for each year group which show partner involvement and can be used to communicate to pupils and their parents the sort of provision that they will receive during their time at school**
 - **Identify the range of provision and gaps in provision for disengaged young people, in particular those pupils on part time timetables**
 - **Identify the extent of young people on part time timetables**
3. **Particular attention should be paid to disengaged young people and more consideration given to where early intervention can be most effective and what forms this intervention should take**
4. **Career Management Teams/Enterprise in Education Teams should play the central role in the implementation of the strategic framework in each school**
5. **A clear strategy for engaging with parents should be developed by organisations delivering careers guidance focusing on how to maximise opportunities for parental engagement and how to "influence the influencers".**
6. **Provision for S4 summer and S5 winter leavers needs should be reviewed as there are perceptions that provision for these groups of pupils could be more effective. Effective earlier identification of these potential leaving groups needs to be in place in all schools and appropriate provision made available to them**
7. **An assessment should be undertaken to establish the impact of Educational Maintenance Awards on staying on rates and post school progression to ensure maximum benefits are being derived from this funding**

8. **Ways in which relevant and up to date labour market information can be made more accessible to pupils, parents and staff should be investigated and methodologies developed to ensure that relevant staff, including subject teachers, are up to date and can impart accurate and relevant information**
9. **The strategic group should define the objectives related to employer engagement and investigate opportunities for maximising employer involvement and support**
10. **New approaches to service delivery developed by Careers Scotland need to be evaluated to ensure that they have been effectively implemented in all schools**
11. **Effective pupil evaluation processes need to be developed to establish a cycle of continuous improvement for all partners to meet identified pupil needs**
12. **The Scottish Executive should be approached with the aim of agreeing that "Determined to Succeed" innovation fund (2 years, approximately £50,000) and other monies identified for the "Not in Employment, Education or Training" group should be reallocated to assist with the implementation of these recommendations.**