

Review of Youth Unemployment in the Black Country by Sandwell Youth Employment Commission

1. Introduction

This is the final report of the Youth Employment Commission, which was established in May 2013 in response to the level of unemployment amongst young people in Sandwell and the surrounding areas of the 'Black Country'.

This report follows the interim report of July, 2014, within which a number of recommendations were made. Updates on the progress with implementing these recommendations are contained within appendix 1.

The Youth Employment Commission was established by the Council for a period of two years with the aim of reviewing the Council's, and wider partnerships' approach to delivering outcomes in relation to Youth Employment. Elected representatives from Dudley, Walsall and Wolverhampton were appointed to the Commission to support its work at a Black Country Level.

Having regard to the review into skills and employment in Sandwell being undertaken by the Housing, Jobs and Economy Scrutiny Board in parallel to this review, the Commission agreed to focus on the following:-

- Young people from 16 – 24 years, including those with disabilities and learning difficulties.
- The views and experiences of young people when trying to obtain careers advice, work placements, training and employment.
- The views of businesses within Sandwell and the Black Country.
- The views of Schools and Colleges within Sandwell and the Black Country.

2. Background

At the start of the review, the Commission was informed that UK National Statistics for July to September 2013 (released in November 2013) showed that there were 1.07 million young people (aged from 16 to 24) in the UK who were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).

Unfortunately the information on youth employment relating to Sandwell, Dudley Walsall and Wolverhampton only includes young people aged 18-

24 years and cannot be directly equated to the national 16-24 figures for July – September 2013. However, figures for those claiming Job Seekers Allowance in November 2013 showed that the Black Country has a higher percentage of claimants than the West Midlands as a whole (6.3%) or the UK (5.1%), with Wolverhampton having the highest percentage of claimants (11.1%) closely followed by Sandwell (10.6%).

The following tables provide information by Black Country Authority of those aged 16-18 who were NEET:-

March 2012

Authority	16-18 Known Number	16-18 Estimate Number	16-18 Estimate %	Not Known %
Dudley	11,063	730	6.6	24.7 (1)
Sandwell	11,210	710	6.3	7.9
Walsall	9,852	630	6.4	6.0
Wolverhampton	8,937	610	6.8	6.6

(1) The proportion 16-18 is more than 50% above England average. It is possible that either the number or proportion is inaccurate.

March 2015

Authority	16-18 Known Number	16-18 Estimate Number	16-18 Estimate %	Not Known %
Dudley	11,058	606	5.5	8.9
Sandwell	11,476	442	3.9	4.6
Walsall	9,937	438	4.4	5.2
Wolverhampton	8,820	331	3.8	8.6
WM average			5.3%	8.8%

Source – taken from the National Risk Scan, At Risk and Statistical Neighbours data for March 2015

The Commission was made aware that, in some Black Country wards, young people represent a third of all Job Seeker Allowance claimants and when non-claimants are added to the figures, the total unemployment for this age group increases significantly by 26%.

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There are a number of factors that affect a person's likelihood of becoming Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) including accommodation issues, family history, unemployment in the family, poor basic skills, learning issues, disability and poor school attendance. Over-represented categories include:

- Care leavers (including unaccompanied asylum seekers (UASCs));
- The young homeless;
- Children 'looked after' and unaccompanied asylum seekers;
- Those running away from home;
- Young people with special education needs or disabilities;
- Young people truanting from or excluded from school;
- Dropouts from post-16 education and training;
- Young people with mental health problems;
- Young offenders;
- Young people involved in the use of illicit drugs, alcohol and/or substance misuse;
- Teenage parents;
- Young carers.

3. Methodology

The Commission gathered evidence using a variety of methods including visits, interviews and desktop research.

The Chair carried out visits to:-

- Plymouth Council (1000 Club);
- Schools cluster meetings;
- St Michael's CE High School.

The following people/organisations attended meetings of the Commission to give evidence:-

- Sandwell's Senior Educational Psychologist;
- Sandwell Connexions;
- Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership;
- Sandwell Council of Voluntary Organisations;
- Representatives from Schools and Colleges;
- Future First;
- Job Junction;
- Sandwell Education Business Partnership;

- Black Country Talent Match;
- Black Country Training Group;
- Local businesses;
- Sandwell Targeted Youth Support Service;
- Sandwell Economic Regeneration Unit;
- Black Country Skills Factory;
- Sandwell Work, Enterprise and Development Agency (SWEDA);
- Walsall Works;
- The Sandwell Youth Parliament.

Desktop evidence was also gathered from the following sources:-

- NOMIS;
- Department for Education;
- Local Government Association;
- Ofsted – Going in the Right Direction? (September 2013);
- The Gatsby Charitable Foundation – Good Career Guidance (April 2014);
- Black Country Strategic Economic Plan ‘Made in the Black Country: Sold Around the World’ (March 2014);
- UK Commission for Employment and Skills – Catch 16-24;
- UK Commission for Employment and Skills – Growth Through People
- Ofsted;
- The Sutton Trust – Advancing Ambitions: the role of career guidance in supporting social mobility.

4. Review of Information

4.1 Training Providers and Employment Support

The Commission has found that there is a range of agencies throughout the Black Country providing support to help people of all ages into employment and/or training.

Each local authority has its own initiatives delivering a range of services to address long-term worklessness, including:-

- sourcing training providers
- provision of pre-employment support
- provision of mentoring services to young people and employers
- generating apprenticeship opportunities with employers
- match funding salaries for a limited period

- providing financial assistance to help people attend interviews
- provision of internal apprenticeship programmes in a range of disciplines
- commitments to provide work experience placements

4.1.1 The Sandwell Guarantee

In particular, Sandwell Council has launched the Sandwell Guarantee, which is a partnership with local businesses, Sandwell Council and local training providers to tackle worklessness in young people aged 16-24. Launched in September 2014, the initiative aims to support 4000 young people to enter an apprenticeship or job opportunity whilst supporting local businesses to recruit and providing wage subsidies for employers. The programme offers part funding for the young person's salary, of up to 50%, for a maximum of 12 months, with the employer contributing the remainder of the salary. The Council works with employers from all sectors to identify opportunities and to help create jobs. The initiative is focussing on engagement with small to medium enterprise employers and employers who have not taken on apprentices before. Sectors engaged include construction, manufacturing, voluntary and community sector and health and social care.

There has been a huge demand from employers within the borough for what the Sandwell Guarantee offers but this is unfortunately not matched by the number of young people looking for opportunities. It is envisaged that demand from young people will peak in the summertime when school ends. However, the Raising the Participation Age initiative also means that there are less 16-17 year olds engaging now, with the highest age group being 18-20 year olds.

The Commission was assured to hear that a significant amount of Sandwell Guarantee's work is being undertaken with looked after children and the Cabinet Member for Children's Services has negotiated a 100% wage subsidy to help in securing jobs for looked after children.

4.1.2 Walsall Works

Walsall Council has a programme aimed at reaching 3,500 young people claiming job seekers allowance by offering employers a subsidy to provide the young person with a contract of 35 hours per week, for at least 12 months. As part of the scheme, a number of young people have also accessed a 26 week pre-apprenticeship programme aimed at addressing poor grades to bring the young person up to Level 1 standard to enable them to access a full apprenticeship. To provide further support, the Council has negotiated a deal with Job Centre Plus which allows the young person to continue receiving benefits whilst they are on the programme.

The programme has been a huge success and for every £1 that Walsall Council has spent, it has secured £4 in match funding. The programme was on target to support 475 young people entering apprenticeships, 430 starting pre-apprenticeships/traineeships by 31st March, 2015 and a further 660 into other positive outcomes funded elsewhere, such as learning, employment or apprenticeships. Youth unemployment has significantly reduced in Walsall as a result. On 18 March 2015, its Cabinet gave approval for the continuation of the programme beyond the two years it was originally established for.

4.1.3 The Voluntary Sector

Voluntary sector organisations such as Sandwell Work, Enterprise and Development Agency (SWEDA) and Wolverhampton's Access2Business provide a range of similar services with some providing additional personalised support to address confidence issues and personal budget management. These two organisations have secured funding of £249,500 from the European Regional Development Fund for the Supporting Employment and Enterprise Development project (SEED). The SEED project encourages residents of the Black Country to explore their entrepreneurial spirit by setting up new businesses with access to vital pre-start support.

4.1.4 Black Country Talent Match

At a regional level Black Country Talent Match targets specific groups of young people aged between 18-24 years old who have been out of work, training, or education for at least twelve months, such as, disabled young people, members of travelling families and young offenders. It has been set up with £10million of Big Lottery funding and is led by the third sector.

It is based at six Hubs, one in each Black Country local authority area plus a central Hub. These Hubs engage with local employers and local voluntary and community organisations to develop local boards or forums and act as ambassadors drawing on local contacts such as local businesses, further education colleges, MPs and councillors. Young people are also involved in designing their own tailored support with a mentor to develop their own personalised pathways, bespoke support and access to the right advice and guidance.

Since the project opened on 13th October, 2014 a total of 351 referrals have been received. At the time of writing this report, the scheme is at capacity and Walsall, Wolverhampton and Sandwell Hubs were operating a waiting list.

The Commission is concerned about potential disengagement of young people on the Talent Match waiting list, particularly as they are already distanced from the job market (as per the Talent Match criteria). Whilst it acknowledges that support is still provided from other organisations and that Talent Match is working on a strategy to ensure that those young people do not disengage, the Commission feels that more could be done by local authorities to engage with these young people. In Sandwell in particular, given the imbalance between the opportunities identified under the Sandwell Guarantee scheme and the number of young people coming forward for those vacancies, the Commission feels that the resources available through the Sandwell Guarantee could be used to support Sandwell's young people on the Talent Match waiting list. (*See Recommendation 1*)

4.1.5 Black Country Skills Factory

The UK is one of the world's largest manufacturing economies and one of the largest manufacturing exporters. The Black Country is at the heart of this with 5,000 companies involved in high value manufacturing and the expectation that this will grow in the coming years, which provides opportunities for a new generation of skilled workers.

Black Country Skills Factory (BCSF) is an employer-led education and training collaboration project, coordinated by the Black Country Consortium Ltd, funded via the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES). The project aims to address the current shortfall in high value manufacturing (HVM) skills in the Black Country, increase the pipeline of suitably skilled staff to respond to the growth of the sector and establish the Skills Factory as a self-financing first point of contact for skills development.

There are three main strands to the project:-

- **Up-skilling of the existing workforce** by offering subsidised bite-sized training courses and bespoke engineering training.
- **Increasing the uptake of engineering apprenticeships** in level 2 and 3 by offering wage subsidies to support small companies taking on new apprentices.
- **School engagement** Changing the perception of the manufacturing sector by targeting schools, further/higher education, education, teachers, parents and pupils.

There is a drive to promote HVM as a positive career choice and apprenticeships as a sustainable career path. The Skills Factory has developed a number of resources to support this, such as a careers pack and smart device 'app' to educate pupils, parents, teachers and careers advisors and provide impartial advice on the various available routes into a career in HVM, and average salaries for the Black Country.

The project has found that there is anecdotal evidence that suggests that companies want to take on apprentices but cannot find the right calibre of candidates. The Commission heard similar thoughts from the Service Director of Lift & Engineering Services, a company with offices in West Midlands, East Midlands and London.

The Commission has been made aware that there is a shortage of suitable training providers in the Black Country for certain sectors of the HVM industry; for example, foundry training, with the nearest facility being in Sheffield. With funding through Growth Deal, Black Country Consortium is conducting a feasibility study to look at how this can best be addressed and how suitable and sustainable facilities can be provided to meet the skills shortages across the Black Country. The results of this study are expected to be published in September 2015.

The Commission recommends that an update on the work of the Black Country Skills Factory is incorporated into the work programme of the appropriate scrutiny board/s at each local authority. (See *Recommendation 2.*)

4.2 Careers Advice

Since September 2012, schools have been legally responsible for securing access to independent and impartial careers guidance for all their students in Years 9 through to 11. Ofsted published a survey in September 2013, which found that the new duty was not being implemented well enough. Of the 60 schools that Ofsted visited, only 12 had ensured that all students received sufficient information to consider a wide breadth of career possibilities. The DFE subsequently revised and re-issued statutory guidance in April 2014 to provide clarity on what is expected of schools in providing careers advice.

It is clear from desktop research that approaches to the provision of careers advice differ across the Black Country with some authorities buying in services such as Connexions, and some choosing to provide their own in-house advice. The Commission has received anecdotal evidence from school pupils that supported this thought. Local businesses also suggest that school leavers are not adequately prepared for the work environment.

What is also evident from reports like the Gatsby Foundation Trust's report *Good Career Guidance (April 2014)* and The Sutton Trust's: *Advancing Ambitions: The role of career guidance in supporting social mobility* is that the national picture differs very little.

With the increased number of academies, the Commission acknowledges that it is difficult to direct schools down a specific pathway for the provision of careers advice and that the choice as to how they deliver that is largely dependent upon budgets. The Commission also recognises the value to schools and academies in retaining their pupils in terms of the financial incentives.

From September 2014 Ofsted's inspection framework was extended to include careers advice so it is hoped that this will have an impact in the future on driving up standards of careers advice and ensuring that advice is truly independent and meets the needs of the individual young person, as opposed to a universal service. However, the Commission recommends that local authorities review the way in which they challenge their schools and academies in relation to the careers advice that they provide. (See *recommendation 3.*)

The Commission feels that schools, academies and local authorities need to ensure that young people, and their parents/carers, are fully aware of what careers advice they are entitled to receive, in accordance with the DFE statutory guidance. This would enable them to access the information when they need it, but also it would empower them to challenge schools and academies that are not providing adequate advice and information. It is felt that this information needs to be provided in a format that is easily accessible on their websites, for example a dedicated webpage, linked from their homepage, (as opposed to just a PDF policy document), with links to appropriate places such as training providers, local businesses, and colleges. It is also felt that the propensity for young people to engage with social media should be embraced and that links to these webpages should be promoted regularly through various social media channels such as Facebook and Twitter. (See *recommendations 4 and 5.*)

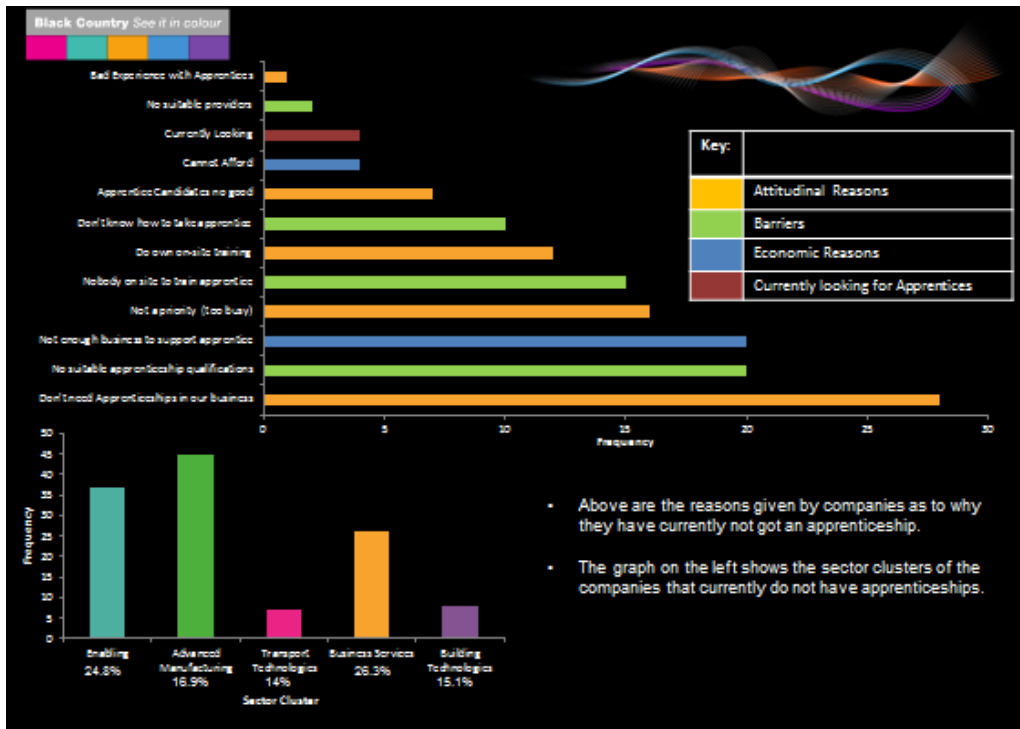
4.3 Employer Perspectives

The Skills Funding Agency launched a project, assisted by the Black Country Consortium, in 2014 to undertake an exercise to establish local businesses' attitudes towards apprenticeships. 622 strategic companies were contacted in the Black Country and asked whether they had taken on apprentices within the last two years. Those companies that had not taken on apprentices were asked why.

Of the 622 companies contacted:-

- 274 had apprentices;
- 184 were not contactable or had data that was not relevant to the Black Country;
- 164 companies had not taken on apprentices.

The remaining companies were asked why they had not taken on apprentices, and their responses were broken down into attitudinal reasons, barriers, economic reasons, and those that were currently looking for apprentices, as demonstrated the by graph below:-



These companies were then contacted by independent consultants to discuss their experiences and the options available to them.

The Commission is pleased to note that the number of companies that had cited a bad experience with apprentices was much smaller than the number of companies stating that apprenticeships were no good, and have concluded that the latter view is largely based on perception rather than actual experience. It is clear that there is a significant amount of work taking place across the Black Country to raise the profile of apprenticeships and that local authorities are working hard, with initiatives such as the Sandwell Guarantee and Walsall Works, to encourage employers to offer apprenticeships and support the young people taking them up.

4.4 Support for Self-Employment

The Government has attempted to provide support for self-employment in the form of the New Enterprise Allowance, which has been available since 2011, and provides advice and support for people aged 18 and over wishing to establish their own business. Participants are also able to access financial support in exchange for ceasing to claim benefits. However, the Commission heard that there are limitations on the support that is available, which it feels affects the scheme's ability to provide meaningful support.

In early 2015 the Sandwell Enterprise Hub was launched, which utilises library spaces to provide advice and guidance to people looking to set up their own business from the idea stage to having a stable business. The Sandwell Enterprise Hub involves a number of stakeholders and partners from across Sandwell and the Black Country, including Sandwell College, Black Country Growth Hub, Trident Housing, and SWEDA coming together to provide a wide range of skills and knowledge relating to business start-ups. In support of the Hub, the Council has purchased a key database, [Cobweb Cobra](#), to support business start-up customers in Sandwell for the next 12 months. The database is available at all Sandwell libraries and provides information on business opportunities, sector profiles, market research and local area profiling, in addition to information on finance opportunities, legislation and qualifications. It is available to anyone with a Sandwell library card.

So far the scheme has received a positive response and it is hoped that it will progress and result a number of successful new businesses. Whilst the scheme is not specifically aimed at young people, there is no reason that they could not choose the self-employment route and access the support straight from school or college. The Commission was made aware, that there may be opportunities for the Council, through Youth Employment Initiative funds, to offer a more intensive programme of mentoring, with a focussed approach to targeting young people and welcomes this.

The Commission notes that there are plans to bid for European funding to enable the Sandwell Enterprise Hub model to be replicated across the Black Country and welcomes this prospect.

In addition, Sandwell Work, Enterprise and Development Agency (SWEDA) and Wolverhampton's Access2Business have secured funding of £249,500 from the European Regional Development Fund for the Supporting Employment and Enterprise Development project (SEED). The SEED project encourages residents of the Black Country to explore their entrepreneurial spirit by setting up new businesses with access to vital pre-start support such as market research assistance, support writing business plans and support submitting funding applications.

The Commission welcomes the work being undertaken to encourage and support new business development and the benefits this has on reducing worklessness and supporting economic regeneration. The Commission feels that local authorities should negotiate with landlords of empty retail premises with a view to offering these spaces to support new businesses, alongside financial incentives such as reduced rent and business rates to assist new businesses. Members are aware that many of these premises are privately owned and so negotiations would need to take place with landlords in terms of what incentives they would be willing to provide. (See *recommendation 6.*)

4.5 Other Initiatives of Particular Interest

4.5.1 The Driving Project

Members of the Commission are of the general view that holding a full driving licence increases an individual's employability. It is felt that not only does it assist with travel to a place of training/work, but it also demonstrates motivation and an ability to commit to the achievement of passing both a written and practical examination.

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The Driving Project, based in the South, provides driving lessons in schools to students aged from 14 upwards. Students are taught the basics of driving with the aim that they require less driving tuition when they turn 17, saving them time and money on driving lessons. The project also provides BTEC qualifications in Safe Road Skills and Attitudes (Level 1) and Demonstrating Safe Driving (Level 2). If school funding is not available, the cost to each student is less than £11.50 per hour. This is effectively over 50% off a normal driving lesson.

There has been media coverage in recent months suggesting that there is a short fall of 35,000 HGV drivers in the UK, with this figure expected to rise to 40,000-50,000 in the next five years. There is also a shortage of van drivers. The recent announcement of the new Lidl distribution centre in Wednesbury and the creation of at least 500 jobs, including driving related jobs, could be an opportunity for the local authority to look at ways to address the shortage in terms of driving related roles as well as seeking to reduce youth unemployment. It is acknowledged that there are age requirements for certain driving related qualifications, however, the Commission feels that the provision of driving lessons in schools, linked to a relevant qualification, could incentivise pupils to continue in their education and address a local skills shortage. (*See recommendation 7.*)

4.5.2 Alumni Programme

In its first year, the Commission received a presentation from representatives from Future First, a UK registered charity, on the work they do with Secondary Schools and Colleges in the UK to harness the talents and support of former students via an alumni network.

Future First has found that alumni networks are more prevalent in private schools. It feels that there are opportunities for public sector schools to provide inspiration and motivation to students that do not have working role models at home by inviting former students in to talk about their journeys from school/college to the jobs market.

The Commission still feels that this is something that should be investigated for schools and academies in the Black Country. (*See recommendation 8*)

5. Conclusion

There is considerable interest from national and local governments in tackling youth unemployment and reducing the number of NEETS. Indeed, from the evidence considered by the Commission it is evident that each of the local authorities in the Black Country have taken steps towards reducing the number of NEETS.

The Commission has heard evidence which suggests that national schemes such as the Welfare to Work, Work Programme and the New Enterprise Allowance are not as effective as they could be because they are working towards different incentives, for example, Welfare to Work providers are incentivised to get someone into a job without necessarily building the right skills. Furthermore, schools and colleges are in the business of supporting learners to achieve qualifications and not necessarily preparing them for work. The relationship between Councils and schools is not always consistent, with a high proportion of schools now being Academy or Trust status, they are able to run autonomously and so can make independent decisions about what they provide, and how and who provides it. Local authorities tend to offer a more holistic support packages that focus on building an individual's skills as well as getting them into an appropriate training programme or work placement.

The Commission feels that national schemes could be more successful if funding was given to local authorities to act as an "Honest Broker", and work in partnership with schools, academies, colleges, universities, training providers and businesses to ensure that both the individuals' needs are met, as well as the employer's. This would ensure that a robust, consistent approach was taken and all young people had the same access to advice, development and opportunity.

6. Recommendations

1. That Sandwell Council utilises underspend on the Sandwell Guarantee to provide interim support to any Sandwell young people on the Talent Match waiting list and that Dudley, Walsall and Wolverhampton Councils be encouraged to support their own young people on the Talent Match waiting list in a similar manner to prevent disengagement.

2. That an update on the work of the Black Country Skills Factory be incorporated into the work programme of the appropriate scrutiny boards of each local authority for 2015/2016.
3. That each local authority in the Black Country request their appropriate scrutiny board to review the way in which their authority challenges schools and academies in its area in relation to how they provide careers advice in accordance with the Department for Education's Statutory Guidance *Careers Guidance and Inspiration in Schools (April, 2014)*.
4. That the relevant Director for each Black Country authority contact schools and academies in their borough to request that they publish on their websites, in a format appropriate to young people, information and advice on what careers advice and support they are entitled to receive under DFE statutory guidance; and that they make use of social media to raise awareness of the existence of the information and promote links to it.
5. That the relevant Director for each Black Country authority ensure that their websites publish appropriate information on the careers advice that young people are entitled to receive under DFE statutory guidance, and that they make use of social media to raise awareness of the existence of the information and promote links to it.
6. That each local authority in the Black Country undertake negotiations with landlords of empty retail premises in their area, to request that they support young people setting up new businesses by providing financial incentives, such as reduced rents and business rates for a limited introductory period.
7. That the relevant Director for each Black Country authority request that secondary schools and Academies in their borough be requested to consider facilitating driving lessons for their students in order to provide them with a useful life and work skill.
8. That the relevant Director for each Black Country authority request that schools and academies within their borough investigate ways of engaging former students to share successful journeys from school to the world of work to provide inspiration and motivation to school children, but in particular those without access to working role models at home.

8. Scorecard Priorities

The overall aim of the Youth Employment Commission is to review the Council's, and wider partnerships', approach to delivering outcomes in relation to Youth Employment. This is in accordance with the aims and objectives of Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, in partnership with partner agencies and representatives from the other Black Country boroughs of Dudley, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

This review will also support Sandwell's Scorecard priority 'Great People' - our children, Sandwell's future and 'Great Prospects' - investing in businesses, people and jobs, with a view to sustaining continuous improvement in the economy of the Black Country and providing better prospects for young people in the Borough.

Update on Recommendations set out in the Interim Report of the Youth Employment Commission

Recommendation	Progress
<p>Recommendation 1 That the Leader of the Council, in consultation with the Area Director - Regeneration and Economy, Sandwell Metropolitan Council, be requested to formally write to schools and academies in Sandwell (with YR9 pupils) to ask that they contribute, in a timely fashion, to the dataset information required by Sandwell's Senior Educational Psychologist and the Connexions Service which would identify those students that are at risk of becoming NEET - not in education, employment or training.</p>	<p>A letter was sent on the 12th November 2013 and the feedback received from the Connexions Service was very positive. Following the letter, many schools contacted the Connexions Service to ensure that they asked the questions required and to ensure that they provided the dataset information in a timely manner.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2 That in order to support businesses, the relevant Chief Officer in each local authority in the Black Country be asked to write to their respective colleges requesting them to provide courses relevant to the needs of local businesses, such as engineering.</p>	<p>Work is taking place in Sandwell with Sandwell College and the Chamber of Commerce is also working with colleges. Colleges have a place on the Employment and Skills Board so intelligence is fed into appropriate places.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3 That the relevant Chief Officer in each local authority in the Black Country request schools in their respective area to make themselves more accessible to local businesses to enable them to act as ambassadors either in the role of a business governor or by inviting them to provide information to young people about the work they do and the career prospects they can offer.</p>	<p>This is part of the Education Business Partnership's role.</p> <p>All Sandwell schools, including academies and local training providers and voluntary sector organisations have signed up to the Sandwell Council's Pledge on Raising the Participation Age. Academies have business sponsors and the remaining schools actively want more businesses involved as governors.</p>

<p>Recommendation 4 That the relevant Chief Officer in each local authority in the Black Country request schools and colleges in their respective area to encourage and support local businesses to take on more apprentices and to offer, where possible, opportunities for students to visit their premises to learn about the working environment.</p>	<p>Under Raising the Participation Age most schools want pupils to remain in education rather than direct them to apprenticeships. However, some schools in Sandwell do engage the services of the Economic Regeneration Unit to give talks about apprenticeships.</p>
<p>Recommendation 5 That to ensure 'Talent Match' is able to help those young people that have been out of work, education or training for more than twelve months, local authorities and councillors of the 'Black Country' be encouraged to support the work of 'Talent Match'.</p>	<p>All local authorities are supportive of Talent Match and have a place on its Advisory Board.</p> <p>Talent Match is presently full to capacity, however, there is a possibility that Youth Employment Initiative funding can be used to double the capacity of the programme and officers are investigating this.</p>
<p>Recommendation 6 That the Area Director – Regeneration and Economy, Sandwell Metropolitan Council, investigate the feasibility of building on the existing work arrangements with private sector employers, Job Centre Plus and the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership to develop Plymouth City Council's 1000 Club Model for Sandwell, with the intention to bring together employers and job seekers in Sandwell and this to be made available on the web.</p>	<p>The Sandwell Guarantee, which was launched in October 2014, is a scheme with many similarities to the Plymouth 1000 Club.</p> <p>Details on how the scheme is performing are set out in section 4.1.1 of the report.</p>
<p>Recommendation 7 That the Chamber of Commerce, Local Enterprise Partnership and the Black Country Consortium develop a Black Country wide strategy to work with schools and colleges and to encourage more businesses to offer work experience placements.</p>	<p>Also relates to recommendation 3. Sandwell offers 400 work experience placements but most other authorities concentrate on their own areas.</p> <p>Black country wide co-ordination of this would be beneficial and it is hoped that this will be addressed by the Combined Authority.</p>

<p>Recommendation 8 That the Area Director – Regeneration and Economy, Sandwell Metropolitan Council, conduct a feasibility study to ascertain whether Sandwell Metropolitan Council, by working with Future First, could potentially enhance the ‘Job Junction’ career aspirations programme within Schools.</p>	<p>Schools have their own budgets so the local authority cannot direct them on how they spend it.</p> <p>Contract Procedure Rules would need to be followed before entering into an arrangement with a particular provider.</p> <p>The Commission still supports the idea of an alumni type scheme and has made a further recommendation in relation to this.</p>
<p>Recommendation 9 That in the event of any enhancements being identified arising from Recommendation 8 above, consideration be given to rolling out the careers aspirations programme to all secondary schools in the borough, possibly through Future First or another provider, subject to European procurement/tendering regulations.</p>	<p>Schools have their own budgets so the local authority cannot direct them on how they spend it.</p> <p>Contract Procedure Rules would need to be followed before entering into an arrangement with a particular provider.</p> <p>The Commission still supports the idea of an alumni type scheme and has made a further recommendation in relation to this.</p>
<p>Recommendation 10 That the relevant Chief Officer in each local authority in the Black Country consider writing to all secondary head teachers of schools in the in their respective area recommending that they undertake individual discussions with representatives of Future First or other similar providers to ascertain whether their school would benefit from a careers aspiration programme.</p>	<p>Schools have their own budgets so the local authority cannot direct them on how they spend it.</p> <p>Contract Procedure Rules would need to be followed before entering into an arrangement with a particular provider.</p> <p>The Commission still supports the idea of an alumni type scheme and has made a further recommendation in relation to this.</p>