

**Decision Maker:** Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee

**Date:** Tuesday 19 March 2013

**Decision Type:** Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

**Title:** RAISING THE PARTICIPATION AGE

**Contact Officer:** Paul King, Head of Bromley Youth Support Programme  
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**Chief Officer:** Terry Parkin, Executive Director of Education & Care Services

**Ward:** (All Wards)

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1. Reason for report

- 1.1 To provide background on ' Raising the Participation Age' (RPA) which was written into the Education and Skills Act 2008 and places a duty on all young people to participate in education or training until their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday;
  - 1.2 To outline the Borough context and the key work strands that have informed the Borough's strategic planning for the introduction of the RPA in September 2013;
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2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 2.1 **Members of the Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee are asked to:**
  - 2.1.1 **consider and comment on the report**
  - 2.1.2 **note the inclusion within the 2013 Education Portfolio Plan of a plan for implementing RPA (see section 3.3.8 below).**

## Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy: Further Details
  2. BBB Priority: Children and Young People
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## Financial

1. Cost of proposal: No Cost:
  2. Ongoing costs: Not Applicable
  3. Budget head/performance centre: Education Services
  4. Total current budget for this head: £12m RSG (excluding DSG)
  5. Source of funding: ECS Approved Budget for 2012/13
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## Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): Current 334 staff in Education Services and 350 in Bromley Adult Education College BAEC
  2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours:
- 

## Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Statutory Requirement
  2. Call-in: Not Applicable
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## Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): Approximately 13,500 (all Bromley young people above the current Minimum School Leaving Age Year 12-14).
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## Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Not Applicable
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: Not Applicable

### **3. COMMENTARY**

#### **3.1 Background**

3.1.1 The Education and Skills Act 2008 places a duty on all young people to participate in education or training until their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. This is being implemented in two phases. From September 2013, young people will be required to continue in education or training until the end of the academic year in which they turn 17. From 2015, they will be required to continue until their 18th birthday. In effect this means that all young people in Year 11 in the 2012/13 academic year will have to continue in education or training until at least the end of the academic year in which they turn 17. If they are in Year 10 or below, they will have to continue until at least their 18th birthday.

3.1.2 Raising the Participation Age (RPA) does not necessarily mean young people must stay in school beyond the age of 16; they will be able to choose from one of the following options:

- full-time education, such as school, college or home education;
- work-based learning with training, such as an apprenticeship;
- part-time education or training if they are employed, self-employed or volunteering for more than 20 hours a week.

3.1.3 The Education and Skills Act 2008 places the following duty on Local Authorities (LAs):

- to promote the effective participation in education or training of young people in their area;
- to make arrangements to identify young people not participating in education, employment or training (NEET) – i.e. maintaining a comprehensive tracking system.

3.1.4 These complement existing duties to:

- secure sufficient suitable education and training provision for all 16-19 year olds;
- have processes in place to deliver the September Guarantee;
- track young people's participation. LAs will be supported by duties on learning providers to notify them when a young person leaves learning.

3.1.5 The Act also placed the following duty on learning providers:

- to promote good attendance of 16 and 17 year olds;
- to inform local authority support services if a young person has dropped out so that they can be contacted swiftly and offered support.

3.1.6 In the legislation, LAs are to be given statutory powers to enforce participation but these provisions are not yet being implemented and remain under review.

3.1.7 At their meeting of 20 March 2012, Members of the Children and Young People Policy, Development and Scrutiny (PDS) Committee were advised that the Government had launched a consultation on elements of RPA legislation (report DCYP 12048 refers). The Department for Education's (DfE) response and plans for implementation were published in a single document in July 2012 (a copy will be available in the Members' room).

3.1.8 Ministers are currently considering for approval draft statutory guidance for Local Authorities on RPA. (this had been scheduled for release to LAs in Autumn 2012).

- 3.1.9 Following the consultation, the Government has decided not to commence, in 2013, with the two duties originally placed on employers. This will mean that employers are able to employ 16-17 year olds full-time without the prospect of fines for not checking course enrolments or organising work to fit round training if they do not offer it in house.
- 3.1.10 16 and 17 year olds who do work full-time will still be under the duty to undertake education or training part-time alongside their work. It is the expectation of Government that Local Authorities will communicate with local employers to sell the benefits of training for their young employees.
- 3.1.11 Under the DfE National Pilots a range of local RPA trials have been taking place in 16 areas of the country, developing key approaches to increasing participation and reducing the number of young people who are NEET. These pilots will support and inform preparations elsewhere in the country in the run-up to the introduction of RPA in 2013/15.

## 3.2 The Bromley Context

- 3.2.1 There are currently 10,576 young people within the Bromley resident cohort, academic years 12-14 (*source: DfE Client Caseload Information System (CCIS) 16-18 participation report, December 2012*).
- 3.2.2 Of the full cohort, there are currently 79.6% (8,414) young people participating in full time education, work based learning (such as apprenticeships) or employment with training. Overall participation is marginally higher in the female cohort (79.7%) compared to their male counterparts (79.1%).
- 3.2.3 Of the 20.4% (2,162) young people not participating in full time education work based learning or employment with training, 360 are currently in full time employment without training. A further 175 are currently undertaking a part time activity (either education or employment) and 127 have taken a gap year.
- 3.2.4 Of those young people categorised as not participating (either in full time or part time activities) there are 314 young people who are NEET and 1186 young people whose participation status is not known
- 3.2.5 The 'Not Known' total has increased in recent years and is having an effect on reported participation levels as many of the young people recorded as 'not known' will actually be participating in EET and some of those reported as 'not known' will also actually be NEET. To assist with addressing the issue, officers are participating in a DfE programme of support aimed at a number of Boroughs encountering difficulties with the tracking of student participation in EET.
- 3.2.6 A factor contributing to the increase in the "Not Known" total is that the Borough relies on the co-operation of schools/academies and colleges to provide relevant student participation data. During 2011 and 2012, all of Bromley's secondary schools became Academies. This has reduced the Authority's ability to collect timely and comprehensive pupil destination data and has also had an impact on the ability of the Authority to provide timely targeting of support to those school leavers who require it if they are to participate beyond the minimum school leaving age.

## 3.3 Delivering the RPA

- 3.3.1 The DfE is now in its 4<sup>th</sup> phase of local RPA trials which have identified 6 key work strands that need to be addressed in order to deliver RPA. These are:

- 3.3.2 **Understanding the cohort** – through data collection and analysis the LA needs to develop an awareness of the characteristics of current and future 16 /17 year cohorts and of the factors pre and post 16 associated with non-participation. Accurate and comprehensive cohort data will need to be maintained and managed.
- 3.3.3 **Determine local priorities** – the local authority and its partners need to establish a basic governance model for the monitoring and implementation of RPA and to prioritise actions to achieve RPA having established a clear trajectory between the current level of participation and the level of full participation with interim milestones identified.
- 3.3.4 **Managing transition and tracking** – the local authority needs to have an overview of the support available for young people at each transition point and to work with partners to identify gaps and agree where additional support may be needed. Under new legislation from September 2012 schools have become responsible for securing access to careers guidance for pupils in years 9 -11. Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) has a key role to play in supporting progression and participation and in future schools will be held accountable for the proportion of students progressing on to a positive destination, through the new KS4 and KS5 Destination Measures. The local authority will also need to monitor how schools are responding to this requirement to secure IAG and ensure partners are aware of the level of ‘targeted’ support for young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN) or at risk of becoming NEET that the local authority will continue to provide. Participation will continue to be measured nationally through the Client Caseload Information System (data collection and reporting to the DfE is currently managed on behalf of LBB by Royal Borough of Kingston as reported in ED 12010). Effective information sharing arrangements will need to be in place with all learning providers and include protocols for the notification of ‘drop out’ and improved arrangements for the management of the September Guarantee.
- 3.3.5 **Establishing support mechanisms** – successful and effective transition from KS3 to KS4 and from KS4 into post-16 provision for vulnerable groups is central to meeting the requirements of RPA. The range of learning provision and support available for young people in vulnerable groups and young people with SEN will need to be reviewed. Early intervention strategies will need to be effectively deployed supported by the development and use of pre and post 16 ‘at risk of NEET’ indicators (RONIs). Effective systems will need to be in place to enable the managed transfer of students between courses and between providers where appropriate.
- 3.3.6 **Identifying and meeting provision needs** – ensuring access to a choice of high quality courses with progression pathways will require a co-ordinated approach to provision development and strategic commissioning, working in partnership with the Education Funding Agency (EFA) and the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS). There will need to be a clear picture of unmet demand or over-supply of existing provision and provision in place to support a wide range of diverse needs. Schools, colleges and learning providers will play a key role in delivering an innovative and flexible curriculum offer as will the Youth Support Service, youth work providers and the voluntary sector. Maximising funding opportunities via European Social Fund and Youth Contract projects will also enable the development of tailored support which meets the needs of the most vulnerable learners. In addition, the local authority will need to work with Employers to identify where young people are in jobs without training and to increase the number of apprenticeships.
- 3.3.7 **Communicating the RPA message** – there is a need to communicate the RPA message to all stakeholders including young people, parents, guardians, schools/colleges, governors, employers, voluntary sector organisations and employers. The message will need to be communicated through a range of mediums including websites, news bulletins and workshops. A communication strategy will need to be developed and agreed with key partners.

3.3.8 Officers have drawn up an action plan for the delivery of RPA in Bromley. This is included within the 2013 Education Portfolio Plan scrutinised by the Education PDS Committee at their meeting of 23rd January 2013 and has been agreed by the PH as one of seven education and learning action plans for business planning and implementation (**Report number ED13017 Appendix 1. Section titled: Ensure high quality provision for those leaving school and others over the school leaving age whether through preparation for employment, apprenticeship or higher education**).

#### 4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Authority's RPA action plan is included within the 2013 Portfolio Plan and reflects the Building a Better Bromley 2020 vision and both the local and national policy direction for Education Services.

#### 5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Four Year Financial Strategy provides an overview of the key service and financial pressures facing the Council and identifies in detail the cost pressures facing the Education and Care Services department. As part of the portfolio planning process linkages are made with the Financial Forecast to ensure that any additional cost pressure or savings that arise are taken into account.

#### 6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report. Any legal implications arising from the implementation of the various actions contained within the RPA action plan will be reported to the PDS committee separately.

<b>Non-Applicable Sections:</b>	Personnel Implications
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	[Title of document and date]