

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education, Culture and Sport
DATE	15 April 2010
DIRECTOR	Annette Burton
TITLE OF REPORT	More Choices, More Chances Strategy 2010-2013
REPORT NUMBER:	ECS/10/037

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of the report is to seek committee's approval of the **Aberdeen City More Choices More Chances Strategy 2010-2013**. The Scottish Government published *More Choices More Chances: A Strategy aimed at Reducing the Proportion of Young People not in Education, Employment or Training in Scotland* in June 2006. The strategy set out a vision for lifelong learning and employability for young people aged 16-19 with the aim of eradicating the problem of young people not in education, employment or training.

The **School Leaver's Destinations Report (SLDR)**¹ provides national and education authority level data on the destinations of all young people leaving publicly funded schools in Scotland in 2008-09². A report summarizing the key facts from this publication was presented to the February meeting of the Education, Culture and Sport Committee. This report sets out our response based on the analysis of those key facts to ensure that Aberdeen City Council and our local partners in the More Choices More Chances Implementation Group work together to increase the proportion of young people in the city moving onto positive and sustained destinations post school.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- (i) For Committee to approve the Aberdeen City More Choices More Chances Strategy 2010-2013.
- (ii) To note that regular updates on performance against the (a) school leaver destinations (annually); (b) implementation of 16+ learning choices (bi-annually for summer and winter leaver cohorts) to the Education, Culture and Sport (ECS) Committee within the standing item: ECS Performance Report.
- (iii) To note that implementation will be reported quarterly through the Integrated Children's Services Planning process and annually through the Single Outcome Agreement.

¹ Data is collated by Skills Development Scotland and published by the Scottish Government.

² The data provides a snapshot of where young people are in the month of Sept following their departure from school. A follow up survey is carried out 6 months later.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Aberdeen City Council has agreed to continue to ring fence the allocated Fairer Scotland Fund for 2010-2011. This allocation includes £100,000 specifically targeted to support the implementation of the More Choices More Chances Partnership strategic priorities. An additional £74,000 funding was received from the Scottish Government to support the implementation of 16+ Learning Choices. The ICS Team are working with the Council's external funding officers to lever in additional resources to develop services locally and pilot new practice. Clear exit strategies will be developed to ensure that effective practice is mainstreamed within existing resources.

4. SERVICE & COMMUNITY IMPACT

This report links to the following actions under the education section of 'Vibrant, Dynamic and Forward Looking':

- Continue to work to improve attainment across city schools.
- Ensure education is appropriate to pupils' needs and ensure pupils leave school with skills essential for living.
- Ensure Aberdeen's teachers receive appropriate training and CPD to deliver the best quality education.
- Continue work to raise the achievement of vulnerable children and close the attainment gap across the City.

The developments outlined within this report also support progress towards meeting the following national outcomes outlined within the Single Outcome Agreement:

- National Outcome 2 – We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people.
- National Outcome 3 – We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation.
- National Outcome 4 – Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.
- National Outcome 5 – Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed.
- National Outcome 8 – We have improved the life chances of children and young people and families at risk.

Specifically, Aberdeen City Council is committed within the Single Outcome Agreement to meeting the Scottish Government's national performance indicator: *Increase the proportion of school leavers in positive and sustained destinations* thus improving employability and long term prospects for all young people.

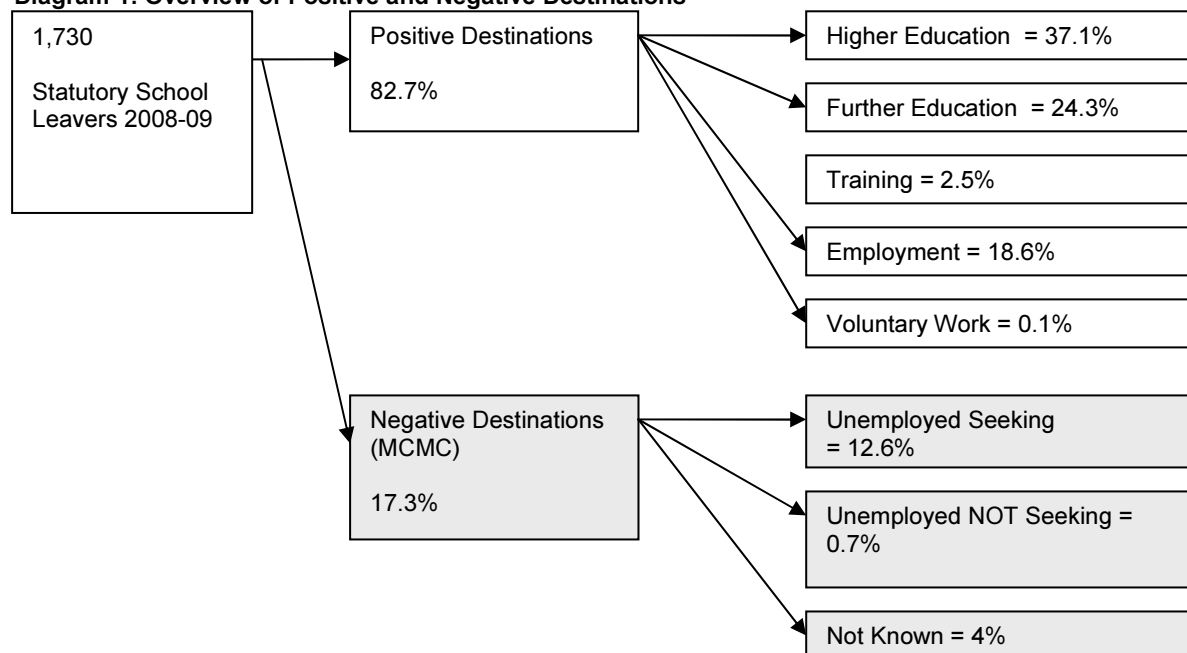
5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The developments contained in this report have contributed towards improved social inclusion for our most vulnerable children and young people. An Equalities Impact Assessment was carried out in relation to the MCMC Strategy.

6. REPORT

- 6:1 The Scottish Government's More Choices More Chances Strategy published in June 2006 was aimed at reducing the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training in Scotland. Since that time, the onset of the economic recession has demanded a revised response to both national and local challenges, particularly for young people who have been most affected by the recession.
- 6:2 In 2008-09, of the 1,730 statutory school leavers, 82.7% entered positive destinations in education, employment or training. This represented a 2.9% reduction on the previous year and was well below the national average of 85.7%. In comparison to the national trend in positive destinations, Aberdeen had a higher proportion entering Higher Education or Employment, a lower proportion enter Further Education, Training or Voluntary Work. In relation to negative destinations, Aberdeen had a higher proportion of Unemployed Seeking and the highest national proportion of Unknown Destinations.

Diagram 1: Overview of Positive and Negative Destinations



- 6:3 The Aberdeen City More Choices, More Chances Strategy, encourages the local authority, community planning partners and local employers, to undertake a broad range of interventions to meet this challenge and will ensure that young people in Aberdeen are supported to reach their full potential and make positive and sustained contributions to both the local economy and their communities.
- 6:4 The aim of the Aberdeen City More Choices, More Chances Strategy is to reduce the number of young people disengaged from learning before completing compulsory education by ensuring that robust processes and practices are in place locally to offer more opportunities for all young people to

enter positive and sustained destinations in education, employment and training, providing targeted support to those young people in need of more choices, more chances.

6:5 The strategy proposes a threefold approach to tackling the issues that lead to young people being in need of *more choice, more chances*:

- (i) Early identification and intervention at the pre 16 stage with young people identified as being in need of *more choices, more chances* in order to stem the flow of young people entering negative destinations;
- (ii) Universal offer of an appropriate 16+ learning choice for all young people from publicly funded schools in advance of their statutory school leaving date;
- (iii) Supported opportunities targeted at young people aged 16-19 in need of *more choices, more chances* where there is a need to coordinate *First Step Activities (or informal learning opportunities)*, provide additional multi-agency support to enable young people to take up positive destinations, or to identify appropriate alternative offers for young people who have been unable to sustain their first choice of a positive destination.

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6:6 To achieve our aim requires continuous improvement across the following five objectives:

- i) Develop an effective partnership to ensure local leadership, planning and delivery through joint commitment and action;
- ii) Improve information management to support timely, proportionate and appropriate multi-agency information sharing;
- iii) Ensure early identification of, and support to, young people in need of more choices, more chances to stem the flow of school leavers moving onto negative destinations;
- iv) Deliver a universal offer of 16+ Learning Choices to all young people in advance of their statutory school leaving date;
- v) Ensure the right levels of support and provision to enable young people in need of more choices, more chances to take up offers and sustain positive destinations in education, employment or training.

6:7 The two main factors that lead to young people moving onto negative destinations are educational disaffection and socio-economic disadvantage. These target groups include young people within the following cohorts, those:

- Living within the 15% most deprived areas of Scotland
- 20% lowest attaining pupils
- Young people who persistently truant in secondary school
- Young people identified as having enduring, multiple, and complex additional support needs
- Young people with long term sickness, young people with disabilities, and those with lifelong debilitating illness
- Young parents
- Young Carers

- Young People who are 'Looked After' (at home or away from home) by the local authority and Care Leavers
- Young people engaged in offending behaviour
- Young people engaged in substance misuse

6:8 In 2010, the Partnership will develop stretch targets for the following schools to increase the proportion of school leavers entering positive destination for young people in need of *more choices more chances*. These schools have also been identified as pilot areas for the implementation of 16+ Learning Choices for the Winter Leaver Cohort 2009:

- Harlaw Academy
- St Machar Academy
- Northfield Academy
- Torry Academy
- Hazlehead Academy
- Kincorth Academy
- Special School Establishments

6:9 All of the actions set out in the Strategy are about ensuring that young people are able to access the universal services from which they should benefit, aligning mainstream provision to meet the needs of all young people with additional help and resources to support those young people who are in need of *more choices, more chances*.

7. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

Kay Dunn
 Strategist for Integrated Children's Services (ICS)
 Education, Culture and Sport
 Email: kdunn@aberdeencity.gov.uk
 Tel: (52)3882

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Skills Development Scotland School Leavers Destination Return for Aberdeen City Council, December 2009
- Research into the Unmet Employment, Education, and Training Needs of Young People involved in Persistent/Serious Offending Behaviours, Aberdeen Foyer & Bernard's New Directions Project, Jennifer Lambert, Elaine Dunlop.
- Aberdeen City, More Choices, More Chances Partnership, Service Mapping & Future Development Options, Smart Consultancy and Eddy Adams Consultants, April 2008
- Scottish Government Evaluation of Aberdeen More Choices, More Chances Partnership, June 2009