

# Survey of councils on supporting 16-18 year old participation

June 2015



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# Summary

## Background

In March 2015 the LGA conducted a survey of councils with the statutory duty to support the raising of the participation age and the engagement of 16 to 19 year olds in education, work and training. The survey captured their views on the National Audit Office (NAO) assessment that councils are 'facing a challenge to meet their statutory duties while avoiding financial difficulties' and that 'this is an important risk to whether government achieves its goals' for the participation of 16 to 18 year olds.

The survey therefore asks councils about the impact of budget reductions and wider post 16 public service reforms on their council, on the services they provide and on young people in their area, and on the potential opportunities and need for public service reform.

The information was collected to provide an overview of how well, or otherwise, councils were able to provide support to 16 to 18 year old participation following the government reforms and will be used to inform LGA work with government and councils on the future of services supporting youth participation.

## Key findings

- The majority of councils (91 per cent) have reduced their level of expenditure on all services supporting the participation of 16 to 18 year olds since 2010. One in five (20 per cent) of those who could quantify the reduction have reduced it by 50 to 69 per cent while one eighth (12 per cent) have reduced it by 70 per cent or more.
- Nine out of ten (91 per cent) council's capacity to deliver their statutory duties to support the participation of 16 to 18 year olds have been reduced as a result of government reductions to their budget. Less than 1 in 10 (7 per cent) councils agreed that they had all the influence and funding they needed to fulfil their statutory duties to support the participation of all 16 to 18 year olds.
- To adapt to budget reductions almost all councils have developed new partnerships with partners outside the local authority (99 per cent), reformed and integrated services within the local authority (97 per cent) and made back office efficiencies (95 per cent).
- Additionally, three-quarters (73 per cent) have provided local authority services on a traded basis, over two-thirds (70 per cent) have bid to deliver elements of larger programmes, and half (54 per cent) have outsourced the provision of services to alternative delivery partners.

- Government's decision to modify their influence over schools and further education colleges has restricted the capacity of councils to deliver on their statutory duties to support 16 to 18 year olds in almost all (95 per cent) councils while 94 per cent were restricted as a result to changes to their level of influence over school-age career advice.
- Three quarters (75 per cent) of councils rated overall government policy for 16 to 19 year olds as 'requiring improvement'. The majority (89 per cent) of councils rated the effectiveness of government policy on schools career advice as either 'inadequate' (44 per cent) or as 'requiring improvement' (45 per cent). Almost three quarters (72 per cent) of councils said schools were either 'requiring improvement' (61 per cent) or 'inadequate' (11 per cent).
- Almost three quarters of councils (73 per cent) felt government's overall approach is failing too many young people in their local area. Four out of five (84 per cent) felt that the range of nationally funded services supporting participation were too complex, making it difficult to work together around the interests of young people locally. Just 12 per cent agreed that government's overall approach to funding services supporting participation delivered good value for money in their local area.
- Most (90 per cent) councils agreed that greater devolution of funding, flexibility and powers would improve outcomes for young people. Four-fifths (82 per cent) were confident it would reduce number of young people over 18 not in education, employment or training (NEET) and two thirds (65 per cent) said it would increase the number of students progressing from Level 1 to Level 2 or Level 2 to Level 3 qualifications.
- Almost all (97 per cent) councils believe that their capacity to fulfil their statutory duties to 16 to 18 year olds would be put at risk by 2020 should local authority budget reductions continue at the current rate without wider public service reform. Almost 9 in 10 (86 per cent) councils felt decentralised services would increase the value for money delivered by public investment in 16 to 18 participation.
- There was almost unanimous (98 per cent) agreement with the National Audit Office that councils are 'facing a challenge to meet their statutory duties while avoiding financial difficulties' and that 'this is an important risk to whether government achieves its goals' for the participation of 16 to 18 year olds.

## Methodology

The survey was conducted online, a link to the survey was sent to all 152 directors of children’s services at the beginning of March and reminder was sent later in the same month. A copy of the survey questionnaire is available in Annex B. A total of 87 responses were received giving a response rate of 58 per cent. Table 1 below shows a breakdown of responses by council type.

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
County	14	52
London Borough	18	56
Metropolitan District	21	58
Unitary Authority	34	62
Total	87	58

Base = 150 Note: Two responses were from councils with shared children’s services so the overall number of councils has been reduced to reflect these arrangements.

It should be noted that some respondents did not answer all of the questions in the survey so within this report some of the findings are based on different numbers of respondents, this number is shown below all tables.

Where the response base is less than 50, figures can be skewed due to the small sample size and care should be taken when interpreting percentages, as small differences can seem magnified. Therefore, where this is the case in this report, absolute numbers are reported alongside the percentage values.

Throughout the report percentages in figures and tables may add to more than 100 per cent due to rounding.

## Survey Findings

The majority of respondent councils (91 per cent) said that they had reduced their level of expenditure on all services supporting the participation of 16 to 18 year olds since 2010 while just one per cent said that they had increased it. Seven per cent reported that their level of expenditure had not changed and one per cent did not know if it had changed. These findings are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Changes councils have made to expenditure on supporting participation of 16 to 18 year olds**

	Per cent
Reduced expenditure	91
Increased expenditure	1
No change in expenditure	7
Don't know	1

Base = 85

The councils who reported a change in the level of their expenditure were asked to specify the approximate percentage by which it had changed. The council who reported an increase said that the level of expenditure had gone up by 50 per cent. Of the councils who had reduced the level of their expenditure, those who provided a figure (49) reported reductions ranging from less than ten per cent to over 70 per cent. One in five (20 per cent, 10) councils had made reductions of 20 to 29 or 30 to 39 while 18 per cent (9) had made reductions of 50 to 59 per cent.

A further 12 per cent (6) had reduced their level of expenditure by 70 per cent or more while eight per cent (4) had reduced it by 40 to 49 per cent. Just two per cent (1) reported reductions of less than ten per cent and four per cent (2) had reduced their expenditure by 10 to 19 or 60 to 69 per cent. A breakdown of these findings is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Percentage of level of reduction in expenditure on supporting post 16 participation**

	Per cent	Number
Up to 10	2	1
10 to 19	4	2
20 to 29	20	10
30 to 39	20	10
40 to 49	8	4
50 to 59	18	9
60 to 69	2	1
70 and above	12	6
Not known	10	5

Base = 49

Most respondents reported that government reductions to their budget had reduced their capacity to deliver their statutory duties to support the participation of 16 to 18 year olds. A third (32 per cent) said that it been reduced significantly, 38 per cent said it had been moderately reduced and a fifth (21 per cent) reported it was slightly reduced. Six per cent stated that there had been no change in their capacity as a result of the reductions while the remaining three per cent said it had increased, slightly for one per cent and moderately for two per cent, as shown in Table 4.

<b>Table 4: How much budget reductions have affected capacity to support participation of 16 to 18 year olds</b>	
	<b>Per cent</b>
Significantly reduced	32
Moderately reduced	38
Slightly reduced	21
No change	6
Slightly increased	1
Moderately increased	2
Significantly increased	0
Don't know	0

Base = 82

Respondents were asked to what extent, if at all, they had undertaken measures to adapt services to budget reductions, a list of suggested measures was provided. Of these, three had been adopted by the almost all of the councils who answered the question, 99 per cent had developed new partnerships with partners outside the local authority, a third (29 per cent) to a great extent, over half (56 per cent) to some extent and 14 per cent to a limited extent. Almost as many (97 per cent), had reformed and integrated services within their local authority, half (50 per cent) to a great extent, 41 per cent to some extent and six per cent to a limited extent, and a similar number (95 per cent) had made back office efficiencies, a third (30 per cent) to a great extent, half (48 per cent) to some extent and 16 per cent to a limited extent.

Three-quarters (73 per cent) of respondents had provided local authority services on a traded basis, over two-thirds (70 per cent) had bid to deliver elements of a larger programme, such as the Youth Contract or National Citizen Service, and half (54 per cent) had outsourced the provision of services to alternative delivery partners, such as youth mutual.

There were 19 respondents who had undertaken other measures, these included making changes to externally commissioned services, including bringing work back in-house and withdrawing funded support to local independent schools. A full list of the other measures undertaken is shown in [Annex A](#) and a breakdown of these findings is shown in Table 5.



**Table 5: Extent to which councils have undertaken measures to adapt services to budget reductions (Per cent)**

	To a great extent	To some extent	To a limited extent	Not at all	Don't know	Sample size (Base)
Reformed and integrated services within the local authority	50	41	6	3	0	80
Developed new partnerships with partners outside the local authority	29	56	14	1	0	80
Bid to deliver elements of a larger programme, for instance the Youth Contract or National Citizen Service	26	26	18	27	3	77
Provided local authority services on a traded basis	17	42	14	27	0	78
Outsourced the provision of services to alternative delivery partners, for instance youth mutual	9	26	18	43	3	76
Back office efficiencies	30	48	16	4	1	79
Other measures	63 (12)	16 (3)	0	11 (2)	11 (2)	19

Absolute numbers are provided for other measures as the response was less than 50

The survey asked councils to indicate the extent to which government's decision to modify their influence over particular services, from a list provided, restricted their capacity to deliver their statutory duties to support 16 to 18 year olds in learning. The change in influence over school-age career advice had the biggest impact with almost all (94 per cent) respondents reporting it had restricted their capacity, two-thirds (61 per cent) to a great extent, a quarter (27 per cent) to some extent and six per cent to a limited extent, only five per cent said it had not restricted it at all.

This was followed by schools where a quarter (26 per cent) of respondents stated it had restricted their capacity to deliver on their duties to a great extent, over half (56 per cent) to some extent and 13 per cent to a limited extent, giving a total of 95 per cent of councils affected and just five per cent not. The level of impact was similar in relation to further education colleges which also had 95 per cent of respondents reporting their capacity had been restricted, 12 per cent to a great extent, almost two-thirds (61 per cent) to some extent and a fifth (21 per cent) to a limited extent, only six per cent said it had not been restricted at all.

There was no area where less than three-quarters (74 per cent) of councils stated that their capacity to deliver had been somehow restricted with the majority (90 per cent), reporting it had in relation to overall services, 85 per cent in relation to both apprenticeships and traineeships, 80 per cent in relation to the youth contract for 16/17 year olds and financial support (such as the bursary fund), 77 per cent in relation to the European Social Fund and 74 per cent in relation to national careers service.

There were two councils who reported their capacity to deliver support had been

restricted in relation to services that had not been listed, both of these specified this service as Information, Advice and Guidance. A full breakdown of the findings is shown in [redacted] and a list of the other services affected is shown in [redacted] in Annex A.

**Table 6: Extent to which government's decision to modify councils influence over services has restricted their capacity to deliver on their statutory duties to support 16 to 18 year olds in learning (Per cent)**

	To a great extent	To some extent	To a limited extent	Not at all	Don't know	Sample size (Base)
Schools	26	56	13	5	0	77
Further education colleges	12	61	21	6	0	77
Apprenticeships	12	57	16	14	1	77
School-age careers advice	61	27	6	5	0	77
National careers service	12	37	25	16	11	76
Financial support (such as the bursary fund)	16	36	28	12	9	76
Traineeships	12	48	25	13	3	77
Youth contract for 16/17 year olds	19	40	21	16	4	77
European Social Fund	21	34	22	19	4	77
Overall services	16	63	11	4	6	70
Other services	100 (2)	0	0	0	0	2

Absolute numbers are provided for other services as the response was less than 50

Councils were asked to rate how effectively government policy enabled services to contribute to improving overall outcomes for young people in their area, using a list provided. The ratings showed a lack of confidence in government policy with no areas rated as outstanding by any of the respondents while at the other end of the scale just under half (44 per cent) rated the effectiveness of government policy on schools career advice as inadequate, a rating also given to the national careers service by a third (31 per cent) and the youth contract for 16/17 year olds by a fifth (20 per cent) of respondents.

Three quarters (75 per cent) of respondent councils said that government policy requires improvement in relation to overall services, as did two-thirds (61 per cent) in relation to schools, 57 per cent in relation to financial support and 55 per cent in relation to traineeships. The service where most respondents felt that government policy's effectiveness had been good was apprenticeships (49 per cent), this was followed by further education colleges (34 per cent) and youth contract for 16/17 year olds (29 per cent).

There was just one other service mentioned by respondents, this was 'sharing UCAS data' which was rated as inadequate. A full breakdown of these findings is shown in [redacted].

**Table 7: How effectively government policy enabled the following services to contribute to improving overall outcomes for young people in respondents' areas (Per cent)**

	Outstanding	Good	Requires improvement	Inadequate	Don't know	Sample size
Schools	0	25	61	11	3	75
Further education colleges	0	34	50	9	7	74
Schools career advice	0	9	45	44	1	75
National careers service	0	3	41	31	26	74
Financial support	0	11	57	15	17	75
Traineeships	0	22	55	15	8	74
Apprenticeships	0	49	39	9	3	75
Youth contract for 16/17 year olds	0	29	44	20	5	74
European Social Fund	0	25	44	16	15	75
Overall services	0	12	75	7	6	68
Other services	0	0	0	100 (1)	0	1

Absolute numbers are provided for other services as the response was less than 50

When asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a list of statements respondents showed their dissatisfaction with government policies and approach to services supporting post 16-18 participation. Most (90 per cent, 69 per cent strongly) agreed that greater devolution of funding, flexibility and powers would improve outcomes. The same proportion (90 per cent, 35 per cent strongly) also agreed that these services can do more to equip young people to succeed in employment, education or training after they turn 18.

Four out of five (84 per cent, 41 per cent strongly) respondents felt that the range of nationally funded services supporting participation were too complex, making it difficult to work together around the interests of young people locally, and three-quarters (73 per cent, 15 per cent strongly) agreed government's overall approach to funding services supporting participation is failing too many young people in their local area.

A mere seven per cent (none strongly) of respondent councils agreed that they had all the influence and funding they needed to fulfil their statutory duties to support the participation of all 16 to 18 year olds. Only one in ten (10 per cent, one per cent strongly) agreed there is a coherent national strategy for improving participation of and just 12 per cent (none strongly) agreed that government's overall approach to funding services supporting participation delivered good value for money in their local area. These findings are shown in full in .

**Table 8: The extent to which councils agree with the following statements (Per cent)**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My local authority has all the influence and funding it needs to fulfil its statutory duties to support the participation of all 16 to 18 year olds	0	7	8	53	32	0
The range of nationally funded services supporting the participation of 16 to 18 year olds are too complex making it difficult to work together around the interests of young people locally	41	43	7	5	3	1
Government's overall approach to funding services supporting the participation of 16 to 18 year olds delivers good value for money in my local area	0	12	19	49	17	3
There is a coherent national strategy for improving the participation of 16 to 18 year olds	1	9	16	45	28	0
Services to 16 to 18 year olds can do more to equip young people to succeed in employment, education or training after they turn 18 years old	35	55	5	3	1	1
Government's overall approach to funding services supporting the participation of 16 to 18 year olds is failing too many young people in my local area*	15	58	18	5	3	1
Greater devolution of funding, flexibility and powers over services to 16 to 18 year olds to my local authority and our local partners would improve outcomes	69	21	7	0	1	1

Base = 75 except for statement marked with an asterisk where the base was 74

Councils were asked for their view on the effect devolution of services supporting 16 to 18 participation to their local authority and partners on a number of scenarios provided. The answers provided showed that respondents thought services would be improved with four in five (82 per cent) saying it would reduce the number of young people over 18 not in education, employment or training (NEET), a quarter (23 per cent) significantly and 81 per cent (28 per cent significantly) believing it would reduce the proportion of 16 to 18 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET).

Three-quarters (76 per cent, 35 per cent significantly) of councils felt that it would reduce skills mismatches between the training gained by 16 to 18 year olds and the jobs available locally while two-thirds (69 per cent, 28 per cent significantly)

thought that the proportion of 16 to 18 year olds who's participation status is 'not known' to the local authority would be reduced as a result of devolution of services.

Only 5 per cent of respondents thought that it would reduce the value for money delivered by public investment in 16 to 18 participation, conversely, 86 per cent felt it would increase it and a third (35 per cent) of these thought it would increase it significantly. Finally, just 13 per cent (9 per cent significantly) felt that the number of students progressing from Level 1 to Level 2 or Level 2 to Level 3 qualifications would be reduced while two-thirds (65 per cent, 13 per cent significantly) thought that the number would increase. A breakdown of these figures is shown in

<b>Table 9: Council's views of how devolution of services supporting 16 to 18 participation effect the following (Per cent)</b>						
	<b>Significantly reduce</b>	<b>Reduce</b>	<b>No impact</b>	<b>Increase</b>	<b>Significantly increase</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
The proportion of 16 to 18 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET)	28	53	7	3	4	5
The proportion of 16 to 18 year olds who's participation status is 'not known' to the local authority	28	41	19	4	3	5
Skills mismatches between the training gained by 16 to 18 year olds and the jobs available locally	35	41	5	9	1	8
The number of students progressing from Level 1 to Level 2 or Level 2 to Level 3 qualifications	9	4	12	52	13	9
The number of young people over 18 not in education, employment or training (NEET)	23	59	5	5	4	4
The value for money delivered by public investment in 16 to 18 participation	5	0	1	51	35	8

Base = 75

Almost all (97 per cent) respondents said that their capacity to fulfil their statutory duties to 16 to 18 year olds would be put at risk by 2020 if local authority budget reductions continue at the current rate without wider public service reform, three-quarters (77 per cent) to a great extent and a fifth (20 per cent) to some extent. None of the respondents said that it would not put their capacity at risk, as shown in

**Table 10: The extent to which continued budget reductions would put capacity to fulfil statutory duties to 16 to 18 year olds at risk by 2020**

	<b>Per cent</b>
To a great extent	77
To some extent	20
To a limited extent	0
Not at all	0
Don't know	3

Base = 75

There was widespread agreement with the National Audit Office that councils are 'facing a challenge to meet their statutory duties while avoiding financial difficulties' and that 'this is an important risk to whether government achieves its goals' for the participation of 16 to 18 year olds, with 98 per cent of respondents in agreement, two-thirds (68 per cent) strongly while just one per cent disagreed. These findings are shown in .

**Table 11: The extent to councils agree with the National Audit Office findings in relation to statutory duties for the participation of 16 to 18 year olds.**

	<b>Per cent</b>
Strongly agree	68
Agree	30
Neither agree or disagree	0
Disagree	1
Strongly disagree	0
Don't know	1

Base = 77

Respondents were given the opportunity to add their own comments on support to 16 to 18 year old participation at the end of the survey. Most of the comments fell into three broad categories; funding challenges, lack of local control/devolution and the mismatch between the training on offer and the skills needed by employers. In relation to funding challenges comments mentioned the way reductions in funding had led to reductions in services provided and difficulties in providing services, a number of respondents were only able to provide the statutory minimum which they did not feel was sufficient to give the required level of support.

Councils voiced frustration at their lack of influence over some aspects of how services were being delivered and at the curriculum offered to 16-18 year olds. However, there was also some caution that devolution could see councils given more responsibilities but not the funding necessary to carry them out. A number of comments mentioned that there was a mismatch between the education offered to 16 to 18 years old and the skills required by employers locally and beyond. Some respondents expressed the view that some of the training was of little or no value

but was just a mechanism to keep young people in education and training.

There were also some comments which mentioned the work councils were doing to support 16-18 year olds, including targeting vulnerable learners, bidding for funding and working with partner organisations to provide better services. A full list of all the comments provided is available in                      in Annex A.

## Annex A

### Answers provided to open text questions

<b>Table A1: Other measures undertaken to adapt services to budget reductions</b>
Alternative delivery preparations underway
Answers reflect service coming in-house on 1/4/15
Better links with Economy and Planning part of council - e.g. Skills for Success programme
Bid for Youth Engagement Fund was unsuccessful
Brought externally commissioned Tracking service in House
Competitively re-tendered transitions and support contract
Implementation of EHC Plans
More specific about what the service provides
Premises changes
Recruitment freeze for last two years
Reduced offer
Reformed outsourced services
Significantly reduced commissions
Withdrawn funded support to local independent schools
Worked with existing commissioned external delivery partner to deliver services participation support services more efficiently

<b>Table A2: Other services where government's decision to modify local authority's influence has restricted their capacity to deliver support 16 to 18 year olds in learning?</b>
Devolving IAG budgets to schools
Statutory duties also affected by changes in IAG responsibility and lack of LA role in funding and commissioning of post-16 provision

<b>Table A3: Comments</b>
<b>Funding challenges</b>
All LAs face different pressures, however, it is of great concern that reduction in support for 16-18 year olds will have an impact on them for the rest of their lives and have an impact on the local/UK economy for a generation or more. Whilst we can deliver our minimum statutory duties this is not enough to provide young people with the support they need.
Although we are a small LA the majority of our 16 - 18 year old residents are educated /trained out of borough and across London therefore a lot of time/effort is spent on tracking and checking they are receiving support. We



<p>have IAG services for several years as we don't have the capacity to do this in house.</p>
<p>Government Funding within the local authority has reduced services for 16 to 18 year olds however there are currently a number of opportunities to bid for funding Youth Employment Initiative etc that will greatly improve services and lead to good outcomes for this group of young people</p>
<p>In this authority we have prioritised engagement of vulnerable and have made enormous efforts to persuade partners to invest in bespoke engagement provision with some good success. However funding challenges in facilitating this are constant.</p>
<p>Recent budget statement by Chief Exec states " We continue to face unprecedented financial challenges due to cuts in the funding we receive from Government...we have to continue to make fundamental changes to the way we do things and in some cases stop providing services altogether and ... This includes increasing Council Tax by 1.99% and making cuts across the board. ..Over the next year, we are likely to reduce the number of posts by an additional 100 – this is on top of the 1,400 posts already predicted to leave the authority</p>
<p>Statutory IAG duties on schools and learning providers are not fulfilled or rigorously inspected, leading to greater demands on a reduced team within the local authority to deliver</p>
<p>Study programme reforms could be a step in the right direction to improve preparation post-19 and value for money. However the funding gaps between sectors are re-opening and there is serious pressure on FE colleges. With a risk the choices will narrow for young people in a number of ways. The 16-18 sector needs to be re-invigorated with such a high economic and societal premium placed on higher level, technical skills and HE progression. It needs its national and local champions to work together effectively.</p>
<p>The LA continues to work with all organisations supporting young people to achieve the best outcomes, but this is increasingly challenging given the reduction on resource, powers and ability to influence providers of services.</p>
<p>This local authority has a very high commitment to supporting the participation of 16-18 year olds and commissions a transitions support contract to track and work with the young people in our area. Increasingly this work is becoming targeted towards the needs of the most vulnerable learners but there is also an emphasis on NEETs prevention. Our NEETs and not knowns are very low and we strive within limited resources to maintain this position.</p>
<p>This was a narrowly focused survey in some respects. Taken as a whole, the effectiveness in supporting young people into employment and education requires a balanced approach to statutory and non-statutory work. As non-statutory work is curtailed as a result of broader budgetary constraints the effectiveness of all partners in achieving the outcomes required in statute diminishes. The meaning of a few statements were difficult to interpret. The delay in signing off the youth programmes within the ESIF is causing a particular challenge at this time.</p>
<p>We are about to undergo a further restructure of services to accommodate a 30% cut (£468K) to the budget supporting (14-19/Connexions activity) as part of the staged £60million reduction in council budget over the next 4 years. This will equate to a loss of 10-12 staff (30%) of current team.</p>

### **Lack of local control/devolution**

Devolution could be a positive development but we do not have sufficient information so far as to how it will operate and benefit our own LA.

Resources would be better targeted at local needs if there was greater discretion at local partnership level

RPA as a duty alongside securing sufficient post-16 place for all 16-18 year olds without any levers (funding, commissioning, quality assurance, etc) over learning provision appears a bit of a nonsense, especially in the context of shifts in responsibility for IAG and a post-16 funding model based upon 'bums on seats'. In other words, LAs can try and work in partnership with colleges, providers and sixth forms to influence but has no real power in determining the offer and study programmes as this is left to the market. Whilst RPA figures might look positive in <council name> and across the country, this is probably more down to the above funding rather than specific interventions, other than with vulnerable groups.

The devolution issue is difficult- there is a track record of devolving duties but not resources. The strings attached are not defined so it is hard to comment- full devolution of powers, duties and resources to deliver would mean we could do a much better job than currently.

We need to be careful about arguing for responsibility to be devolved to the local level without corresponding changes to structures and funding arrangements e.g. mechanisms for FE funding, autonomy of schools etc. Having the power to use funds much more flexibly would be likely to deliver better results but could also provide an opportunity for government to reduce funding even more and then scapegoat LAs for non-delivery!

We seem to have responsibility without powers. We need local solutions to our local problems.

### **Learning/jobs mismatch**

New 6th form provision to meet Academy & Free School agendas is providing a surplus of provision in the area. Young people are directed to stay on at school to meet the needs of the institution not the young person leading them to study programmes that do not lead to successful entry into HE or employment. This destabilises the post 16 landscape by diluting the income available across existing providers in the borough reducing the breadth and quality of the offer. The LA has no influence over this.

Post 16 funding is currently learner led, although young people are able to access provision there is sometimes a mismatch with what local employers need. However, to change to employer led system could have a negative impact on the number of young people accessing provision and participating in post 16 education. It is important to have a balanced approach to funding that meets the needs of young people, and employers locally/regionally and local authorities are best placed to implement changes. Improved IAG to ensure young people are better informed would help reduce the skills mismatch but it is important that young people are free to be able to access a range courses to support their aspirations as well as meeting the needs of employers.

The plethora of nationally contracted activities is confusing for young people and their families. For example, a young person can access a number of 'engagement' projects one after the other, with providers achieving their

contracted outcomes, without actually accessing a legitimate study programme by the time they are 18.

We have a Vulnerable Learners Strategy, and an overall Education Employment and Skills Strategy - the key is success has to be involving the community and wider economic partners in delivery. The challenge is increasing vocational pathways to employment for 16-18s. Ref curriculum, a focus on English / maths is welcome but there is a danger in leaving behind those who are not functioning well in respect of academic studies. The school careers service needs to focus on holistic careers options not just looking parochially at what the sixth form has to offer. We have plenty of sixth form centres and not enough centres delivering vocational pathways. We could really make a difference if LA had more control over the commissioning of post 16 provision.

#### **Other comments**

Participation has improved nationally, to maintain this momentum we need:

- 1) Better Government cross departmental data sharing on where YPs are with LA's (DWP, HMRC)
- 2) More locally devolved resources to more effectively target those at risk of disengagement or NEET/not known
- 3) Resources for work with EY and parents
- 4) Better employer engagement for apprenticeships
- 5) More flexible level 3 and higher programmes of learning to be delivered with schools/colleges and employers. Remove obstacles to competition between 'A' levels and Higher Apprenticeships.

There are positive developments within < council name > which includes high level and Political commitment to the Youth Promise for < council name >. Work integrated and partnership developments are ongoing to develop an application for a grant to develop this area and up to 25years olds. It is also intended to include Care Leavers, SEN & D as well as NEET in the commitment to take the matter forward.

While Connexions was not perfect it did represent a significant financial investment in the careers knowledge and pathways for young people. The impact of these changes is not just on those who are NEET and NK. But on the unknown number of young people who have taken the wrong pathway as can be seen from the high numbers who 'drop out' which is bad for them the public finances and the future economic growth of the country.

Whilst participation at 16/17 has risen over recent years, this is only delaying the point where young people are finding themselves floundering in the job market.

## Annex B

### Survey form and notes of guidance

#### 16 TO 18 YEAR OLD PARTICIPATION SUPPORT SURVEY

##### Introduction

The National Audit Office (NAO) has found that councils faced a large challenge to meet their statutory duties while avoiding financial difficulties, and flagged this as an important risk to whether government achieves its goals for raising the participation age and supporting the participation of 16 to 18 year olds.

This short survey seeks your views on the NAO assessment, your views on the impact of budget reductions and wider post 16 public service reforms on your council, on the services you provide and on young people in your area, and your views on the potential opportunities and need for public service reform involving greater devolution.

The survey, which consists of 10 questions and will take no longer than 10-15 minutes to complete, depending on your answers, will play an important role in informing the LGA work with government on the future of services to young people.

##### Instructions

You can navigate through the questions using the arrows at the bottom of each page. Use the back arrow if you wish to amend your response to an earlier question.

If you stop before completing the return, you can return to this page using the link supplied in the e-mail and you will have the option to continue from where you left off.

Please complete the survey at your earliest convenience and no later than Wednesday **18 March 2015**.

If you have any queries relating to completion of this survey please contact Helen Wilkinson (Helen.Wilkinson@local.gov.uk) 020 7664 3181.

All responses will be treated confidentially. Information will be aggregated, and no individual or authority will be identified in any publications without your consent. Identifiable information may be used internally within the LGA.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

## About You

Please amend the following information, if necessary

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Authority \_\_\_\_\_  
 Job title \_\_\_\_\_

Q1. What, if any, changes has your local authority made to the level of your expenditure on all services supporting the participation of 16 to 18 year olds changed since 2010?

- Reduced expenditure
- Increased expenditure
- No change in expenditure
- Don't know

Q1a. By approximately what percentage has your expenditure changed?

Q2. Overall, to what extent have government reductions to your local authority's budget effected your capacity to deliver your statutory duties to support the participation of 16 to 18 year olds?

- Significantly reduced
- Moderately reduced
- Slightly reduced
- No change
- Slightly increased
- Moderately increased
- Significantly increased
- Don't know

Q3. To what extent, if at all, has your local authority undertaken the following measures to adapt services to budget reductions?

	To a great extent	To some extent	To a limited extent	Not at all	Don't know
Reformed and integrated services within the local authority					
Developed new partnerships with partners outside the local authority					
Bid to deliver elements of a larger programme, for instance the Youth Contract or National Citizen Service					
Provided local authority services on a traded basis					
Outsourced the provision of services to alternative delivery partners, for instance youth mutual					
Back office efficiencies					
Other (please specify) _____					

Q4. To what extent has government's decision to modify your local authority's influence over the following services restricted your capacity to deliver on your statutory duties to support 16 to 18 year olds in learning?

	To a great extent	To some extent	To a limited extent	No impact	Don't know
Schools					
Further education colleges					
Apprenticeships					
School-age careers advice					
National careers service					
Financial support (such as the bursary fund)					
Traineeships					
Youth contract for 16/17 year olds					
European Social Fund					
Overall services					
Other (please specify)_____					

Q5. Generally speaking, how effectively has government policy enabled the following services to contribute to improving overall outcomes for young people in your area?

	Outstanding	Good	Requires improvement	Inadequate	Don't know
Schools					
Further education colleges					
Schools career advice					
National careers service					
Financial support (such as the bursary fund)					
Traineeships					
Apprenticeships					
Youth contract for 16/17 year olds					
European Social Fund					
Overall services					
Other (please specify)_____					

Q6. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My local authority has all the influence and funding it needs to fulfil its statutory duties to support the participation of all 16 to 18 year olds						
The range of nationally funded services supporting the participation of 16 to 18 year olds are too complex making it difficult to work together around the interests of young people locally						
Government's overall approach to funding services supporting the participation of 16 to 18 year olds delivers good value for money in my local area						
There is a coherent national strategy for improving the participation of 16 to 18 year olds						
Services to 16 to 18 year olds can do more to equip young people to succeed in employment, education or training after they turn 18 years old						
Government's overall approach to funding services supporting the participation of 16 to 18 year olds is failing too many young people in my local area						
Greater devolution of funding, flexibility and powers over services to 16 to 18 year olds to my local authority and our local partners would improve outcomes						

Q7. In your view, how would the devolution of services supporting 16 to 18 participation to your local authority and partners:

	Significantly reduce	Reduce	No impact	Increase	Significantly increase	Don't know
Effect the proportion of 16 to 18 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET)						
Effect the proportion of 16 to 18 year olds who's participation status is 'not known' to the local authority						

	Significantly reduce	Reduce	No impact	Increase	Significantly increase	Don't know
Effect skills mismatches between the training gained by 16 to 18 year olds and the jobs available locally						
Effect the number of students progressing from Level 1 to Level 2 or Level 2 to Level 3 qualifications						
Effect the number of young people over 18 not in education, employment or training (NEET)						
Effect the value for money delivered by public investment in 16 to 18 participation						

Q8. To what extent would local authority budget reductions, should they continue at the current rate up to 2020 without wider public service reform, put your capacity to fulfil your statutory duties to 16 to 18 year olds at risk by 2020?

- To a great extent
- To some extent
- To a limited extent
- Not at all
- Don't know

Q9. To what extent do you agree with the National Audit Office that your local authority is 'facing a challenge to meet their statutory duties while avoiding financial difficulties' and that 'this is an important risk to whether government achieves its goals' for the participation of 16 to 18 year olds.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Q10. If you would like to add any comments, you may do so here.

Thank you for your time.





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please contact us on 020 7664 3000.  
We consider requests on an individual basis.