

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee:	Children's and Young People Committee
Date:	12 July 2022
Title:	Post 16 Education & Skills – An Update
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

Contact name: Phillip Walker, County Education Manager (Skills & Participation)

Tel: 07540 930270

Email: Phillip.Walker@hants.gov.uk

Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on Post 16 Education & Skills in Hampshire.
2. The report also provides an update on the Skills & Post 16 Education Act.

Recommendation(s)

3. That the Children and Young People Select Committee note the contents of the report.

Executive Summary

4. The development of Skills, and the acquisition and retention of Talent in the workforce, is of paramount importance to the recovery of the Hampshire economy. This report seeks to provide the Committee with an update on current developments in post 16 education and skills in Hampshire, national developments that are, and will, impact the sectors, and how the Local Authority, providers and partners are responding to support individuals, the community and employers.
 - 4.1. The report also seeks to provide an update on the skills profile of the County, participation by young people, post 16, the pattern of that participation, and curriculum reforms designed to affect those patterns by strengthening Technical and Work-based (Apprenticeship) pathways.
 - 4.2. Finally, the report appraises the Committee of the range of employment and skills programmes and initiatives that the County Council is directly delivering or partnering, how these are supporting individuals and employers, and what further actions are planned.

Contextual information

5. Hampshire has a large and strong education and skills system. It features the largest single area Further Education and Training network in the country, supports one of the largest local economies in the UK and facilitates high levels of participation and achievement by young people, above national levels.
6. For the current academic year, 2021/22, a total of 35,276 16-19/25 FT places were funded in Hampshire-based DfE funded post 16 providers. This is an increased from 33,277 in the previous year (c. 6% increase).
7. Of the 2021/22 total funded places, 977 places (<3%) that were funded as 'High Needs' (HN) places, and 643 T Level places (<2%). The figures for 2020/21 were 890 (HN) and 166 (T Level).
8. Of the total places funded this academic year, 31,528 (801 HN) are in Further Education colleges (note that three colleges, St Vincent, QMC, Farnborough Sixth Form, are designated Academies). The County Council has a direct allocation for 60 full time places.
9. Hampshire is a 'net importer' of learners, post 16, with approx. 25% of all places in Hampshire post 16 institutions taken by young people who reside in other LA areas, particularly the two cities and Surrey. At an individual college level, non-Hampshire learners account for between approx. 5% and 50% of total enrolments.
10. Colleges are independent corporations established by the Further & Higher Education Act (1992). Except for HN funding and SEND provision (part), they are outside of the Local Authority's funding and assurance regime, directly funded by the DfE using a national funding formula and regulated by Ofsted.
11. The Local Authority has a positive and impactful relationship with Hampshire colleges and wider post 16 network. This facilitates effective delivery of our statutory duties to support participation, post 16, and consequently, high level of participation and achievement by Hampshire's young people.
12. Against a 2020 recorded cohort of 28,660 (16/17-year-olds resident in Hampshire), 97.5% were offered a place in education or training under the September Guarantee entitlement. This compared to 94.3% nationally and 90.9% in the SE region.
13. Participation by young people (in recognised education, training, and employment - EET) was high at 96% in May 2022. This figure reduced to 91% when measuring 'compliant' participation, reflecting a growing cohort of young people in work without formal (regulated) training.
14. NEET (not in education, employment, training) figures remain low in Hampshire and in May 2022 were at 2.3% (665 count), whilst unknowns were

1.9% (551 count), 4.1% combined. By comparison, the 2021 national and SE regional combined averages were 5.5% and 6.4%. Note that the higher SE regional average reflects high unknown numbers in some SE LAs.

15. Broadly, and based on year 12 activity data only, in 2021/22, 53% of Hampshire's school leavers progress to a Sixth Form College or School Sixth Form (including outside Hampshire). Approx. 43% attended a FE College, and the balance to Training or Apprenticeship provider. These figures are based on the official designation of the institution to which they have enrolled and are not in themselves determining of the type of programme a student may follow.
16. Again, based on year 12 activity data only, in 2021/22 approx. 50% of Hampshire's school leavers enrolled on a Level 3 A-level programme as their prime learning goal, whilst 22% are following a Level 3 Technical or Vocational programme. A further 20% are studying at Level 2, primarily in Technical and Vocational subjects but GCSE English and Maths, too. The balance of the cohort is undertaking Apprenticeships (3.5%) and Foundation programmes Inc. SEND pathway provision. Note that a proportion of the cohort will follow a combination of programmes, sometimes at various levels.
17. Curriculum reforms and developments continue to apply to the post 16 sector and are intended to impact on standards and the pattern of participation. A key driver for policy is the want to increase participation in technical qualifications, supporting the future skills needs of the economy. To this end, in 2020 the Government licenced the first three of its new flagship Technical education programme, T levels. [T Levels | The Next Level Qualification](#)
18. T levels are intended to ensure that young people (and employers) have access to high quality, credible, and valued technical skills provision that will deliver the future skills needs of the economy. Offered at Level 3 only, they require 1500 hrs study (Inc. 315 hrs work placement), are the equivalent of three A levels and will eventually be available 23 subjects. T level attract between 72 (pass - DDD) and 166 (distinction* - AAA*) UCAS points.
19. T levels has been developed with relevant sector employers and employer representatives and are based on the same standards as Apprenticeships. A key feature of a T level is the requirement for undertake a 45-day work placement (315 hrs over two year) in an occupationally relevant role. This requires significant engagement and commitment by local employers.
20. To support the implementation of T levels, additional capital and development funds has been made available by government, and to which colleges can bid on a competitive basis. Also, the government has commissioned the Education Training Foundation to provide a national CPD programme for providers offering T levels, building the capacity of the FE workforce to implement the reforms.

21. Employers offering T level placements have also been able to access a grant as an incentive to support this flagship initiative. This is due to be withdrawn in 2022/23 but government has signalled that is looking at how it may further incentivise employers to engage.
22. T levels are designed to be 'rigorous and demanding,' as well as practical and relevant. As T levels are rolled out (a phased roll out is in-train, up to 2024/25), government intends to withdraw funding approval for equivalent BTEC and OCR Technical qualifications, leaving T levels as the only Level 3 technical option, post 16 (in England). Whilst recognising the potential benefits of a more coherent Level 3 technical offer, there exists risk around access, both geographically and educationally.
23. In Hampshire, T levels were first available from 2020 at Fareham College, Peter Symonds College, FCOT, and HSDC. A significant expansion of T levels is planned for September 2022 including delivery at Sparsholt and BCOT. T levels are to be made available in Eastleigh, Gosport, and the New Forest, although first delivery is not due until 2023. Access to T level provision therefore will be variable in the next 36-months and possibly beyond. Provision is also being made in the two cities, on the IOW, and in neighbouring LAs.
24. Funded T level places represented less than 2% of total places in Hampshire in the current academic year, 2021/22. However, significant expansion is anticipated in the coming years. Feedback from the first cohorts has been positive and the first set of T level results are due this summer, 2022.
25. Alongside the development of T levels, government has supported the piloting of a 'pre-T' programme. This is designed as a Level 2 transition programme to support progression to a full T level within 12-months. First run in 2021/22, the programme will be expanded across the county in 2022/23.
26. Access to T levels by learners studying at Level 2 and below is a point of discussion, as is the wider pre-Level 3 offer. Like at Level 3, government is seeking to reform (reduce) the technical and vocational offer at Level 2 to create a more coherent and credible suite of qualifications. Again, this represents both opportunity and risk to learners – the opportunity to follow relevant and valued qualifications that will support progression to employment, the risk that access to a narrower range of qualifications may impact on participation.
27. Other key programme developments include the expansion of Traineeships (Level 2 pre-Apprenticeship programme) and Supported Internships (work-based programme for young people with SEND – and core the County Council's post 16 SEND strategy). Both programmes predate the pandemic but have been afforded greater policy priority to address skills challenges, and to bring to bear everyone's talents to support social and economic wellbeing.

28. The above developments – and many related County Council employment and skills initiatives – are premised on strong employer engagement. Whilst we have witnessed and benefited from employers recognising the value of engaging in such activity, the increasing demand for work placements and the emerging economic environment is likely to place pressure on the system.

Finance

29. Funding for 16-19/25 education and skills is managed by the DfE, not Local Authorities. The exception to this is High Needs funding for SEND provision.
30. Total funding associated with the above places was £181m. This is an increase from £167m in the previous year (c.8% increase). The total includes learner support funding, disadvantage uplift, and Element 2 HN funding. It excludes Adult and Apprenticeship funding, Element 3 HN funding, Higher Education funding, and any other commercial and project funding colleges generate. The total estimated value of the post 16 system in Hampshire, excluding Higher Education and Independent provision, is above £250m.
31. A full list of published 16-19 funding allocations is available from gov.uk at [16 to 19 education: funding allocations - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-education-funding-allocations)
32. Funding for the County Council's participation support activity, and the associated statutory duties, comes from three sources – LA central grant, DSG shared budget, European Social Fund (to 2023).
33. Funding for strategic, capital, curriculum, and statutory developments such as LSIPs and T levels is managed directly by HM Government. These funds do not come to the Local Authority.

Performance

34. In 2020/21, 'whole cohort' achievement by young people in Hampshire was at or above national and regional averages. Performance by those formerly entitled to FSM and/or with a EHCP varies against these averages.
35. The proportion of young people achieving a full Level 3 qualification by age 19 was 60.3%. This compared to 59.8% nationally and 60.6% for the SE region.
36. Level 3 achievement by age 19 by those previously entitled to FSM and/or with an EHCP was 28% and 27% respectively, both below national and SE regional averages.
37. Level 2 achievement (including English and maths) by age 19 was 73.8%, above both the national and SE regional averages of 70.4% and 72.2% respectively.

38. Level 2 achievement (including English and maths) by age 19 by those formerly entitled to FSM and/or with an EHCP was 41.5% and 35% respectively. This is below the national and SE regional averages for the FSM cohort but above for those with an EHCP.
39. Like schools, post 16 exam results, including A levels, have been subject to alternative assessment regimes because of the pandemic. The last full year exam results are available for is 2019. These showed that, at headline, Hampshire outperformed the national average.
- The average awarded A level grade was B- in Hampshire compared to C+ nationally (state funded and 'all'). The cohort size was 8274.
 - The average awarded grade for Level 3 Tech level qualifications in Hampshire was Distinction- compared to Merit+ (state funded and 'all'). The cohort size was 693.
 - The average grade awarded for Level 3 Applied General (Vocational) qualifications in Hampshire was Distinction- compared Merit+ nationally (state funded and 'all'). The cohort size was 1212.
 - The progress score of post 16 learners taking GCSE English and maths in Hampshire in 2019 was +0.18 and +0.10 respectively. Both these are above the national averages of +0.14 and +0.09 respectively (state only). The cohort size was 2541.

Skills & Post 16 Education Act (2022)

40. This spring, the government introduced a new Skills & Post 16 Education Act. At headline, the Act includes:
- Placing employers are the heart of the skills system – including a leading role in a new skills governance model (see below).
 - Statutory requirement for all young people to have access to information on Technical education options, post 16 ('Baker Law').
 - Prioritising 'green skills' to support transition to net zero.
 - New powers to intervene in (failing) FE colleges – and accountability measures to ensure provision reflect local skills needs.
 - Access to lifetime HE loans (from 2025).
 - Illegal to cheat in exams – linked to online assessment services.
41. The Act will also introduce a new skills governance system – Local Skills Advisory Panels (LSIPs). Led by employer representative bodies, e.g., Chambers of Commerce, these will replace LEP Skills Advisory Panels as the preeminent body for articulating local skills needs.
42. LSIPs will be established across England by end Summer 2023. They will follow the geographies of Combined Authorities (CA) or, where they do not exist, LEPs (and until such time at a CA may be formed). In Hampshire, we will initially have two LSIPs – Solent, led by the Hampshire Chamber, and EM3+, led by Surrey Chamber.

Higher Skills and Talent

43. A key challenge in responding to the current skills challenge and future talent demand, is that of higher skills – Level 4 plus, i.e., post A level. Although variable across districts, at a county level, Hampshire has historically performed at or above national and regional averages. However, data collected during the pandemic suggests our position has slipped, in part because of the volume of well skilled individuals leaving the workforce.
44. Whilst 2022/23 data is required to fully validate the position, the need to increase the proportion of people in work with a Level 4 plus qualification remains, particularly in key growth sectors such as marine, digital, low carbon, professional services, aerospace, and life sciences.
45. In response to the above, several initiatives have been developed, or are to be pursued, inc.
 - The Solent Institute of Technology (IoT) – operational from 2023, the Solent University-led initiative, working with local FE colleges, will offer Higher Technical Qualification (HTQ) in marine and digital.
 - The County Council, collaborating with providers and the EM3 LEP, intends to develop a proposal for a IoT for Hampshire. It is hoped this can be secured for 2025 or 2026, and will support higher skills development for key sectors, the specifics being determined by the LSIP.
 - Hampshire’s Apprenticeship Levy Programme and Transfer Scheme – the County council is using its Level to support an increasing proportion of corporate and school Apprenticeship starts at Level 4+. For example, a cohort of 50+ will start the Social Work Degree Apprenticeship in 2022/23. Further, through our £3.5m (and then £1m p.a. rolling) Levy Transfer Scheme, the County Council is supporting more Level 4+ Apprenticeship starts in Hampshire employers.
 - The Retrofit Academy – a strategic partnership to develop the domestic homes retrofit skills, supporting the County Council’s climate change programme. Qualifications will be offered at Levels 2-5.
 - Progression to higher education and university by young people – the County Council and Hampshire FE colleges and schools have been partnering the SUN universities UniConnect project, targeting unrepresented cohorts in the High Education system and supporting their progression to Level 4 plus studies. Part of a national project, evaluation is expected to report impact from 2022/23.
46. The backdrop to the above is a reduced and maturing talent pool (workforce) in the Hampshire economy. Nationally, there are c. three—quarters of a million less people in the working age population (ONS class this as 16-64). Many have chosen to retire, often before they may have otherwise been planning, and many more have chosen to change careers and/or reduce their working commitments. At the same time, there are more people on PAYE than before the pandemic, and fewer people registering as self-employed.

47. The profile of the workforce in Hampshire, where 20.9% of those working is above aged 50 (above national and SE regional averages) underlines the importance of talent attraction and retention strategies, as well as upskilling and retraining of the existing workforce to meet skills needs.

Conclusions

48. Hampshire has a strong and high performing skills system– at all phases. It is responsive to policy direction and curriculum changes, particularly in relation to technical education.
49. Participation and achievement by young people in Hampshire, post 16, is also strong – but even more is needed to be done to ensure all cohorts benefit from the aforementioned strong system.
50. The government’s new Skills Act provides a framework to respond to the skills and talent challenges faced by employers, now and in the future – but it is important to develop initiatives in the context of the Hampshire economy.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	Yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	No
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	No
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	No

Other Significant Links

Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

See guidance at <https://hants.sharepoint.com/sites/ID/SitePages/Equality-Impact-Assessments.aspx?web=1>

Insert in full your **Equality Statement** which will either state:

- (a) why you consider that the project/proposal will have a low or no impact on groups with protected characteristics or*
- (b) will give details of the identified impacts and potential mitigating actions*