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ESF Youth Programme Support

**Report of Programme Information Exchange event
on 3 November 2017**

Introduction

London Councils has been commissioned to support the London ESF Youth Programme.

This support aims to improve the impact of the Programme by providing opportunities for providers and partners, including local authorities, to:

- Identify and overcome barriers to successful delivery
- Exchange ideas, experiences and effective practice
- Manage transition between different strands of the Programme so that young people are better supported into positive destinations

The principal means of support is through a ***London ESF Youth Programme Information Exchange***, a termly event at which providers and partners can

- continually develop working relationships
- ensure that activities are appropriately targeted according to local need
- identify and share effective practice

and so increase the number of young people who are in education, training or employment.

The events bring together partner organisations (such as local authorities):

- (1) sub-regionally – where partners and all the London ESF Youth Programme providers operating in each of the sub-regional areas through which the programme has been contracted can work together to make the Programme work well locally
- (2) thematically – where partners and all the providers delivering each specialist strand of activity identify what works well.

The fourth Information Exchange event took place on 3 November 2017 from 1000 to 1300 at City Hall, The Queen's Walk, London SE1 2AA.

This is the report of the event and has been prepared to:

- ensure that the key actions arising from the event are taken forward
- enable the project's Advisory Group and sponsors to plan future events.

If you have any questions about this report or this project, please contact:

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Agenda



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Supporting the London ESF Youth Programme – Programme Information Exchange

Friday 3 November 2017 10.00-12.30

Location: City Hall, The Queen's Walk, London SE1 2AA

Agenda

10.00 Welcome and introductions	Yolande Burgess, Strategy Director, London Councils
Session One: The Targeted Mental Health Offer	Prime providers
Session Two: Referrals to the Targeted Mental Health strand	Discussion also involving Outreach providers and local authority officers
11.15 Refreshment break	
Session Three: Identifying effective practice and anticipating demand	Table discussions
12.15 Plenary discussion on moving forward to make the strand work better	
1230 Close	

Summary of Discussion

The project's Strategic and Technical Advisory Group considered the feedback from previous Information Exchange events and the current issues both in the London ESF Youth Programme and those young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) in London. It was decided to focus the November Information Exchange on mental health to understand better what is on offer through the Targeted NEET Interventions strand of the Programme and to increase referrals.

The event consisted of three sessions. In the first session, Dan Addison (Reed in Partnership) and Belinda White (SEETEC) set out what is offered in the Targeted NEET Strand. They explained how the strand is delivered in the different contract areas of London and the range of specialist help that is available to young people with mental health issues. They reminded the meeting that the strand included young people aged 18 to 24 who had mental health issues; problems with drug or alcohol abuse; learning difficulties or who were homeless (including 'sofa surfers').

Both Belinda and Dan referred to case studies of successful participation in the Programme and highlighted the challenges in securing participants' retention on the Programme, which needed to be flexible in delivery, and eventual progression into sustained employment (both mentioned that employment was the progression route of most participants on the strand). They described how they provided on-going support to participants and their employers.

The second session included input from providers of the Outreach Strand (Prospects Ltd and Reed In Partnership) and concentrated on referrals in each of the contract areas. In some of the contract areas, Outreach providers employed qualified counsellors who undertook home visits. There also appeared to be different levels of engagement between Outreach providers and the Targeted NEET strand.

Delegates from local authorities also contributed to the discussion saying that their staff who made referrals to the strand often did not have the capacity or capability to assess the extent of the mental health issues of young people. They also confirmed that co-location of services helped the referral process and created far less anxiety among young people with mental health issues.

Delegates also discussed different ways of working with Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Teams across London.

The final session was a table discussion followed by a plenary, during which the following points arose:

1. Cross-referencing different approaches with the performance of the strand would best demonstrate where practice was most effective.
2. Professionals making referrals need to have a thorough understanding of the different strands so that they can best help participants understand - and commit to – the education, training or employment outcome that's best for them. Providers said that they could work better in areas where local panels to address the needs of young people who are NEET have been maintained (for example, by ensuring referral to the most appropriate strand first-time; and generally making referrals more promptly).
3. In the future, a centralised approach to some activities, such as outreach and marketing might be considered. Communication between prime providers and local authorities was said to be inconsistent.

4. The 'key worker' / 'adviser' role underpins the successful engagement of participants, their personal buy-in and their retention (which ultimately secures progression into a sustained positive destination).
5. Better quality assurance of self-declaration would have been welcome.
6. Sadly, providers and local authorities said that they felt that there was growing demand for this strand aimed at young people young than 18, though plenary discussion confirmed that the strand should not insulate itself from other specialist services, especially IAPT and CAMHS

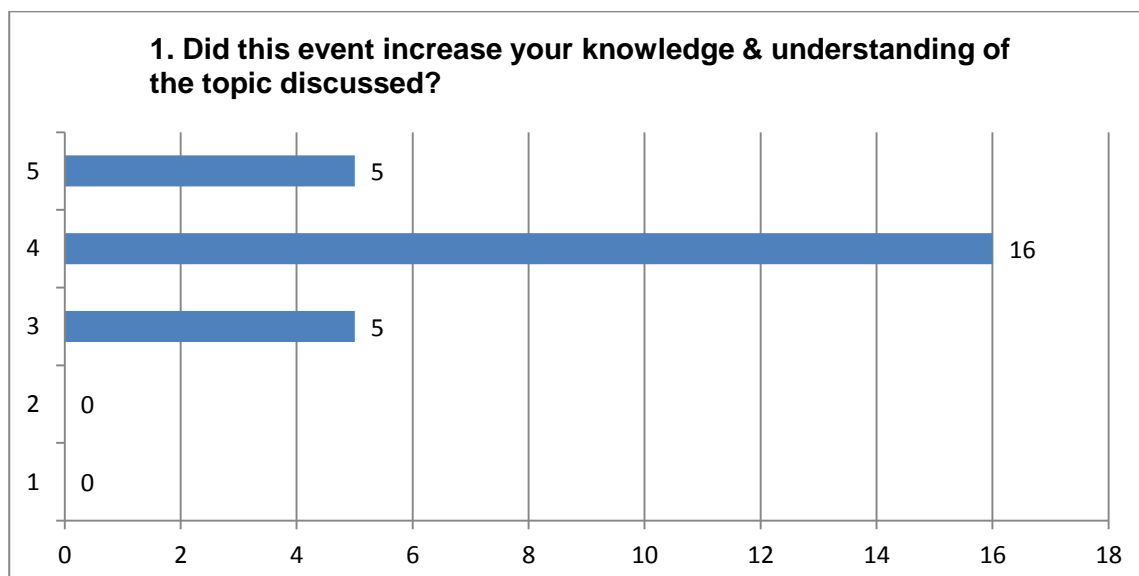
In conclusion, delegates said that they welcomed the opportunity afforded by the event to hold a focused professional discussion

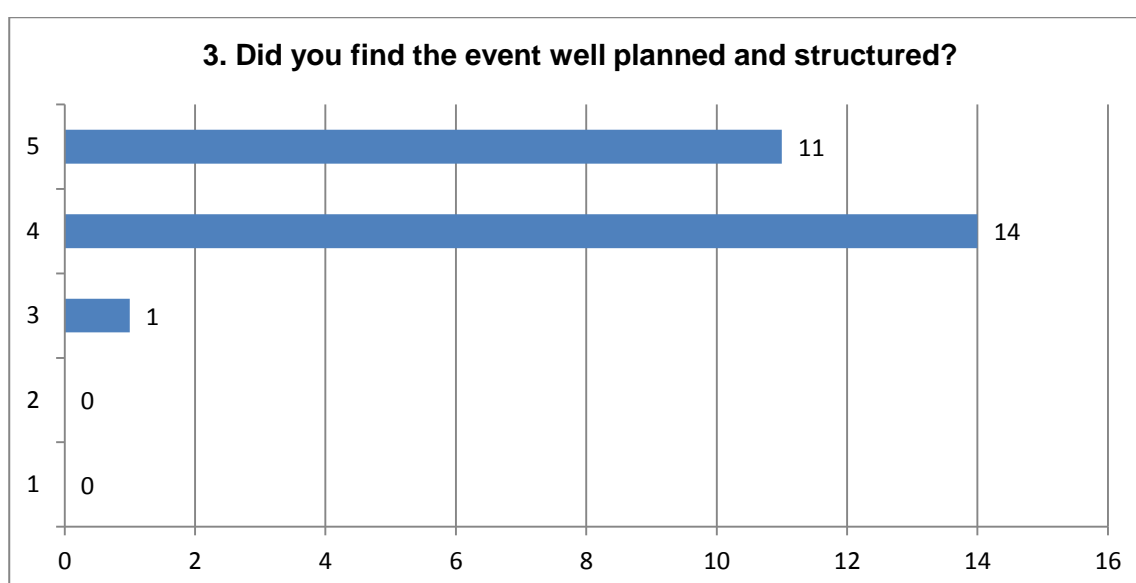
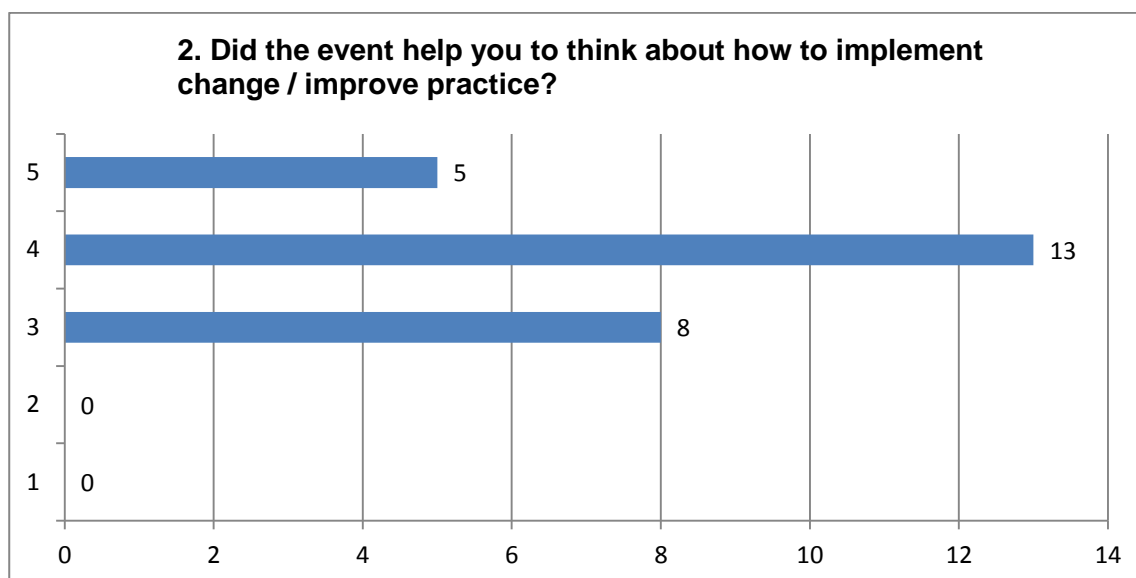
Actions

- Key learning points from providers' experiences in delivering the Programme will help shape its formal evaluation and inform the design of future programmes / solutions.
- The Strategic and Technical Advisory Group will further explore any systemic failures in the Programme or the wider education and skills system that could potentially be taken up either by the Young People's Education and Skills Board or Skills for Londoners Taskforce. In particular:
 - The value of co-location
 - The benefit of specialist teams (possibly operating peripatetically)
- Future programmes should also ensure greater consistency in evidence of outcomes
- It would be very helpful to produce a 'heat map' of each strand's performance so that the success of different approaches and structures can be demonstrated clearly.
- The Strategic and Technical Advisory Group will discuss the different delivery models and relationships between Outreach providers and Targeted NEET providers and recommend to the ESFA specific courses of action that could be taken through the contract management process.
- In the future, the challenge will be to ensure still further customisation of support that is centred on young people and family needs.

Feedback

Attendees were asked to complete an evaluation form at the event and the results (based on 26 completed evaluation forms) are as follows:





Delegates said on their forms that they welcomed the opportunity to network on a very focused agenda. They said that it was useful to compare approaches and understand where the strand sat alongside other support to young people. Some delegates said that they now had a deeper understanding of the challenges in making referrals, securing attendance and retention on the strand's activities and working with employers to support employment outcomes.

Several responses mentioned that this type of focused event worked better than large and more general events (these respondents were from a mix of backgrounds); some said that they wished the event would have happened earlier in the Programme's life.

Most delegates responded that they liked the venue and structure of the event (though the low attendance of local authorities was noted by some providers; the absence of some sub-contractors was noted by local authorities).

These results were circulated to delegates after the event. Delegates were invited to provide any additional comments about the event or what they wanted to cover in the future. No additional feedback has been provided, but one Youth Talent provider has asked if there could be a similar event themed on boosting referrals to Youth Talent.