

Young People's Education and Skills Operational Sub-Group

Supporting tracking and monitoring

Item No: 4

Report by: Yolande Burgess

Job title: Strategy Director

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Contact: Yolande Burgess

Telephone: 020 7934 9739

Email: yolande.burgess@londoncouncils.gov.uk

Summary

To enable local authorities to deliver the duties to encourage, enable and assist young people to participate and to support those young people not engaged in education, employment or training (NEET), authorities must have in place robust client management systems and client tracking arrangements.

Significant changes to Connexions services over the past eighteen months have had a number of impacts across London, including a steep rise in the number of young people whose activity was 'not known' during the period November 2011 to January 2012.

This paper outlines some of the critical dependencies across London's local authorities for both tracking and recording young people's activity and makes recommendations for maintaining some consistency for these activities across London.

Recommendations OSG members are asked to agree to the Young People's Education and Skills team investigating further the current tracking and recording arrangements to:

- establish a set of 'minimum arrangements' that London's local authorities should operate to; and
- make a recommendation to ALDCS to maintain a London-wide agreement to co-operate over tracking and recording.

1 Background

- 1.1 To enable local authorities to deliver the duties to encourage, enable and assist young people to participate and to support those young people not engaged in education, employment or training (NEET), authorities must have in place robust client management systems and client tracking arrangements.
- 1.2 Local authorities are required record information about young people's current activity, characteristics and aspirations on a caseload management system (CCIS). This data is then provided to the National Client Caseload Management Information system

(NCCIS). Information from CCIS and NCCIS is used by local authorities for a number of purposes, including to:

- inform local planning and measurement of the NEET group;
- target resources towards young people who are NEET;
- identify trends in the characteristics of the NEET population to develop interventions to prevent NEET;
- compare and benchmark performance against other areas;
- identify where they need to commission new provision;
- meet Department for Education monthly reporting requirements;

1.3 Accurate and timely recording of information is important, but critical to ensuring that up-to-date information is available are the tracking arrangements in place to confirm all young people's activity. For clarity, throughout this paper *recording* refers to the input of information to a database or databases and *tracking* refers to the activities necessary to discover that information.

1.4 Significant changes to Connexions services over the past eighteen months have had a number of impacts across London, including a steep rise in the number of young people whose activity was 'not known' during the period November 2011 to January 2012. In terms of the physical resource available to undertake tracking, the number of Personal Advisers previously responsible for tracking had reduced precipitously prior to the rise in 'not known'. Additionally, a change to the methodology for calculating the number of young people who are NEET and 'not known' is also a factor.

1.5 The two key adjustments to the methodology for calculating the number of young people who are NEET and 'not known' are:

- the number of young people in the cohort considered for participation, NEET and 'not known' is now calculated using *academic age* i.e. school Years 12 to 14, which includes 19 year olds (the previous methodology included young people up to age 18) - this has increased the cohort size in London, equating to an average of 27,704 additional learners between November 2011 - January 2012 (a 12.9% increase);
- under the previous methodology the initial tracking of young people with 'not known' status was the responsibility of the boroughs that young people were studying in - they are now the immediate responsibility of the borough they reside in. London is high student mobility, high school density area, which makes tracking under the new methodology more complex.

1.6 Although changes to Connexions services and the counting methodology for NEET have had an impact on 'not known' figures across the country, London's performance has been poor by comparison. For example the average 'not known' rate between November 2011 and January 2012 in London was 13.7% compared to 9.4% nationally. This increase prompted the Department for Education to write to the 38 boroughs in the country with a 'not known' figure higher than 10%; 21 of those boroughs were in London (excluding the City).

1.7 Even though the 'not known' position has improved the issues noted above highlight that London needs to consider carefully how local authorities maintain some form of sub-regional and regional working arrangements for both tracking and recording.

2 Current arrangements

- 2.1 In London, there are five sub regional units that support local authorities. These units administer local CCIS systems, collect and input cohort and admissions data, track young people (see paragraph 2.3 below) and submit relevant data to NCCIS (see [Tracking, Monitoring and Supporting young people's participation in London](#) for details on the geography and services of the sub-regional units).
- 2.2 Importantly, in addition to local systems and NCCIS there is also a London CCIS Index. This draws on each of the five sub-regions systems to track young people across sub-regional boundaries, which supports local authorities in tracking the destinations of their resident young people travelling out-of-borough to study. For example, sub-regional units receive student lists from local colleges with information on many boroughs residents; this information is fed into the London Index, which feeds back to local systems. This commitment to regional co-operation through the London Index was made by the Association of London's Directors of Children's Services (ALDCS) in 2008.
- 2.3 Tracking of young people can vary from borough to borough dependent on resources however, in general the range of tracking activities include:
- mass mailings by post to solicit student responses or 'moved away' returns;
 - home phone calling, mobile phone calling, text messaging, emailing;
 - late evening door-knocking.
- 2.4 Even with variations in tracking from borough to borough, different operational models for the delivery of services and the decline in the number of Personal Advisers across London, the inter-dependencies and working arrangements between boroughs and sub-regions remain critical to ensuring good tracking and recording, and performance monitoring at a regional level.

3 Managing risks to the London infrastructure

- 3.1 As local authorities continue to work through substantial budget reductions, shifting reduced resources to services that target those in most need and making difficult decisions about non-statutory services, some local authorities will look to change their current arrangements for tracking and recording young people's participation. Additionally, the recent poor performance in terms 'not known' may also prompt some local authorities to review their service arrangements.
- 3.2 In light of this it is important that boroughs considering any changes fully understand the current arrangements so that they can make a fully informed decision about new arrangements.
- 3.3 For example:
- all local authorities in London have their CCIS systems managed through the sub-regional units, which are provided by a single software supplier; that software supplier also provides the London Index. Should a local authority choose to procure a CCIS system outside of the sub-regional arrangements and from a different software supplier they will need to consider inter-operability with all the existing systems, and consider the licence arrangements for the London Index.
 - The sub-regional units receive information from a number of sources to assist with tracking – local colleges, the Department for Education, the National Apprenticeship Service. This information will still be needed under any new arrangements.

4 Recommendations

- 4.1 OSG members are asked to agree to the Young People's Education and Skills team investigating further the current tracking and recording arrangements to:
- establish a set of 'minimum arrangements' that London's local authorities should operate to; and
 - make a recommendation to ALDCS to maintain a London-wide agreement to co-operate over tracking and recording.