

EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL 6 January 2016

Community Learning Service

1. Below is a short paragraph from one of the learners from the Community Learning Service, who with a little help with her English has managed to enrol herself on to an Adult Nursing degree course:
2. *'My name is Sarah. I am 29 years old, married with 2 children. I have always wanted to be a nurse but have having children at a young age, I waited until my children were of school age before going back into education. Upon applying for the Access to Health course, I was told that I needed to better my English skills and this is where my journey started.*
3. *I contacted Middlesbrough Community Learning and enrolled on the Functional Skills course where I met my tutor. I have always struggled with reading and writing and explained this to my tutor, who then arranged an assessment for dyslexia which revealed I had characteristics of dyslexia. Completing the Functional Skills course enabled me to enrol on the Access to Health course and they accepted the dyslexia assessment. I came out with merits and distinctions and was offered a place on the BSc Hons Adult Nursing degree course.*
4. *I am now entering my second year. I could not have done any of this without the help and support that originated from my tutor. Having a place on the Functional Skills course enabled me to grow, learn and build in confidence and my career has gone from there. I am really grateful to everyone who has helped me on my journey.'*

Business Administration Apprentices

5. The Mayor recently presented our Business Administration Apprentices with their certificates of Achievement. This was well attended by apprentices, parents and employers.
6. Below are some statistics re our leavers and their outcomes

Business Administration Apprentice Outcomes August 2014 to July 2015

37	-	Intermediate Level 2 Leavers
27	-	Advanced Diploma Level 3 Leavers

Intermediate Level 2 Business & Administration Apprenticeship

37 Apprentices Achieved 100%

Destinations

- 21 left with full time employment 57%
- 10 Progressed to Level 3 Diploma with Employment 27%
- 5 Progressed to Further Education/Other Occupation Apprenticeship 14%
- 1 Progressed to Higher Education 3%

Advanced Level 3 Diploma Business & Administration Apprenticeship

27 Apprentices Achieved 100%

Destinations

- 27 left with full time Employment 100%

SEND and VL Strategic Review

7. The complementary legislation of the Children and Families Act and the Care Act provide a basis for ensuring we can identify, assess and plan for all children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities from birth to 25 years.
8. There are increased expectations on all education settings to be responsible for the progress of all their learners, to seek help and advice from the services ordinarily available to them, and to use the Local Offer as a source for exploring other support, before making a request to the LA for additional resources through an Education, Health and Care Plan. The introduction of a national funding formula for schools and colleges is closely linked to the assessment and planning processes for those with high needs.
9. As part of planning for the future and to meet the diverse needs of children, young people and families within Middlesbrough, the Council is currently undertaking a Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and Vulnerable Learners Strategic Review.
10. On 4 November the SEND and Vulnerable Learners Commission which has been set up to support the review met for the first time. The commission have been charged with overseeing the research that will bring together local and national data, properly analysed; and will scrutinise and summarise the existing policies, strategies and guidance in this area. The SEND and Vulnerable Learners Commission will oversee an evaluation of our current Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision, vulnerable learners provision, previous reviews and provide support to develop a long term SEND and Vulnerable Learners strategy for Middlesbrough Council, including short and medium term goals.

Attendance Prosecutions

11. The case heard in the Isle of Wight Magistrates Court in October 2015 in relation to Leave of Absence has caused a ripple effect in Middlesbrough.
12. A father was prosecuted for taking his daughter out of school for the purpose of a holiday. He refused to pay a £120 penalty, and he successfully argued Section 444

of the Education Act, which required parents to ensure their children attended school “regularly”, and did not put restrictions on taking them on holiday in term time. The case was acquitted.

13. In Middlesbrough for ‘leave of absence cases’ we prosecute under the same act however, we stipulate a time period, eg failure to ensure your child attended school regularly between 2.11.15 and 13.11.15.
14. In a statement, the Isle of Wight Council said it took legal action based on “appropriate legislation, Department for Education regulations and guidance”. LEAs are trying to use the legislation intended to stop truancy to stop parents taking their children on holiday in term time.
15. This academic year to date, Middlesbrough have issued 186 penalty notices due to unauthorised leave of absence. Since the publicity surrounding the Isle of Wight case a number of parents have pleaded not guilty which in turn leads to a half day trial in court where Head teachers and the Attendance Manager are called to give evidence, we have two trials booked in for January 2016 and expect more in the coming weeks.
16. Isle of Wight Council has now started proceedings in the High Court to challenge the outcome of the leave of absence case (acquittal) in the Magistrates Court.

Councillor Janice Brunton
Executive Member for Education & Skills