

Overview
& Scrutiny
Confidence in your Council

Youth Unemployment in Torbay

FINAL DRAFT REPORT TO THE MAYOR
JUNE 2013



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Labour Market Statistics¹, published by the Office for National Statistics in April 2012, showed that 8.2% of 16-24 year olds in Torbay were claiming Job Seekers Allowance. This was an increase of 0.2% since March 2011 and equated to 1110 young people. The same statistics showed that 2.4% of this age group had been claiming for over six months.
- 1.2 It was with these figures in mind that the Overview and Scrutiny Board established a review panel to consider the factors which influence youth unemployment in Torbay and to facilitate partnership working across the public, private and third sectors to address the issue.
- 1.3 The scope of the review was:
 - To understand the issues facing young people looking for work and the providers, services and initiatives available to them.
 - To consider the views of employers on their needs and how young people are equipped with the skills that are demanded.
 - To ensure that Council policies support youth employment.
- 1.4 For the purposes of this review, the panel considered the situation for young people leaving full-time education until the age of 25.
- 1.5 The review panel was chaired by Councillor Pentney and also comprised Councillors Addis, Kingscote, James and Hill.
- 1.6 The panel sought the views of a range of young people through face-to-face discussions, questionnaires, feedback posters and social media as well as the views of local employers. The panel also met with a wide range of agencies and providers working to address youth unemployment in Torbay.

¹ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/subnational-labour/regional-labour-market-statistics/april-2012/index.html>

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2. Findings

Background

2.1 Between January and March 2012, 5.1% of 16-18 year olds who lived in Torbay were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). Young people are more likely to be NEET at 17 and even more so at 18:

NEET at 16 = 3.0%

NEET at 17 = 4.6%

NEET at 18 = 5.9%

2.2 At any one time, this means that around 200-220 16-18 year olds are NEET however this figure is not static as young people, for example, start courses and then drop out and re-start courses. Up to 900 young people may be NEET for at least one month in any year.

2.3 Torbay Council (via Careers South West) tracks young people after the age of 16 in order that various teams within Children's Services can undertake early intervention work to prevent 16-18 year olds from becoming NEET and to support young people who are NEET to move into education, employment and training.

2.4 Through effective partnership working, the percentage of 16-18 year olds who are NEET has remained low with Torbay being one of the best performing areas in the country. However, this does not appear to translate into good employment prospects for 18-24 year olds. In March 2012, 1125 18-24 year olds in Torbay were in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance which equates to 10.6%. This compares with 6.2% for the South West and 8.3% nationally. Of those 1125, 225 (2.4%) had been claiming for between 6 and 12 months and 85 (0.8%) for over 12 months.

The Council's Role

2.5 Torbay Council has a number of roles and responsibilities in relation to youth unemployment.

2.6 Through **Children's Services**, Torbay Council has a range of duties in relation to young people:

- Supporting 16-19 year-olds who are not in education, employment or training
- Tracking the educational progress of young people between the ages of 16 and 19
- Providing education up to the current statutory school leaving age (including where pupils/students have been excluded from mainstream provision)

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- Providing suitable education for young people with a statement of special educational need up to the age of 25 where educational progress can be shown
 - Providing impartial Information, Advice and Guidance and support to vulnerable young people who require greater levels of support to progress in post-16 employment, education or training than the National Careers Service can offer
- 2.7 In supporting NEETs, the Council works with all providers within the travel to learn area² to ensure that sufficient, high quality and relevant learning provision is available to meet learner needs. It also works to ensure that the September Guarantee (whereby every young person aged 16 or 17 is offered a place in learning each September) is met and is promoting and facilitating the Raising of the Participation Age (RPA). In fulfilling these roles, the Council works with schools with sixth forms, South Devon College, providers of apprenticeship training and delivery partners of specific NEET projects.
- 2.8 The Council is currently involved in locally led pilots: Phase 4, developing approaches to increasing participation and preparing for the introduction of RPA (see **below**). These will run from April 2012-March 2013. This will focus on improving post-16 transition support, employer engagement and communications.
- 2.9 In November 2012 the Council organised a large event at the Riviera International Centre to publicise RPA and the opportunities available with employers, schools, training organisations and support services exhibiting. Over 600 young people and parents/carers attended. There were over 50 exhibitors which included schools and colleges offering advice on post-16 course, local employers (such as the Met Office, South West Water and Centrax) and the National Apprenticeship Service.
- 2.10 Overall, the feedback about the event was good with the “range of exhibitors” and “range of information offered” rated highly. Parents commented that it was useful for them and their children to have more choices and information, and exhibitors stated that they found it useful to have a combined event to reach a wider audience. Currently there is no funding available to hold this type of event on a regular basis.
- 2.11 As more schools become academies, and thus offer their own guidance and support, links are being lost between the Council and schools and schools are pulling back from funding education partnership work for 14-19 year olds.
- 2.12 **Parkfield Youth Hub** is the centre of Torbay’s Youth Offer, and a key element of the Offer is in supporting young people into suitable education, employment and training. Initiatives run from Parkfield include the contracting of the café to Eat That Frog, who run this as a training kitchen

² DEFINE TRAVEL TO LEARN AREA

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where young people can begin to learn both cookery skills, customer skills and money handling skills. A recent joint initiative with Eat That Frog is the grounds maintenance project for Parkfield. Again, this provides the environment for young people to learn under supervision and practice basic level horticulture and grounds maintenance while delivering a much needed service for the site.

- 2.13 There has also been an agreement to provide work experience within Parkfield which needs to be formalised so that it is a more constant arrangement with an understood resource commitment. A recent request from PLUSS to provide work experience has been taken up, and Parkfield will seek to establish ongoing experience for young people with disabilities.
- 2.14 Two apprentice posts have been set up and one is currently being advertised on the National Apprenticeship website. One post is a Business Support apprentice and the other is a Youth Inclusion apprentice who will work on the participation agenda enabling young people from hard to reach groups to shape their own services and to be more involved in running their communities. The training element of this post has held up a start date, but this should be on track now for June 2013.
- 2.15 Parkfield is also a base for Ngage, Flex and Pulse, and houses the educational provision for school phobics, all projects working to maintain educational and training engagement with our most vulnerable, hard to reach young people. A jobs club is run from there on a weekly basis and there are plans for careers advice and guidance sessions to be set up within the youth clubs, where around 150 young people attend for each session.
- 2.16 Next step plans are to establish some youth enterprise units and training at the centre.
- 2.17 **Torbay Development Agency** (TDA) is the Council-owned company responsible for delivering the Council's economic regeneration objectives. It aims to bring about the regeneration of Torbay and deliver economic benefits to the whole community by promoting Torbay as a business location, attracting inwards investment and providing support for existing businesses to develop and grow.
- 2.18 The Torbay and South Devon Employment and Skills Board was initiated by the TDA in 2009 to bring together representatives of key organisations who fund or deliver programmes of support to improve skill levels and the employability of residents within the Torbay and South Devon area. The Board has been designed to be employer-led and employer-focused in order to raise the skills, aspirations and productivity of the Torbay and South Devon workforce and to support the growth of a vibrant and successful local economy.
- 2.19 TDA have commissioned some entrepreneurship education support for several secondary schools who are working with organisations such as Young

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Enterprise, Outset Torbay, Real Ideas. This ranges from activities that benefit small selected groups within a school or may be offered to whole year groups in a school.

Schools and Other Learning Providers

- 2.20 **Schools** (including local authority maintained schools, academies and free schools) provide learning up to the statutory school leaving age. This is currently the end of the academic year in which a young person becomes 16. Maintained schools must deliver the National Curriculum whilst academies and free schools do not have to.
- 2.21 Section 29 of the Education Act 2011 placed schools under a duty to secure access to independent careers guidance for their pupils in school years 9 to 11 from September 2012. Schools can commission independent careers guidance from providers engaged in delivering the National Careers Service or other providers as they see fit.
- 2.22 Schools can retain its own careers advisor but, to meet the statutory duty, must devise a careers education programme supplemented with external sources of careers guidance. This could include an external careers provider, engagement with local employers, mentoring or website and telephone helpline. Taken together, the external sources must provide impartial information on the full range of post-16 options and access to face-to-face support where needed.
- 2.23 The duty to provide work related learning at Key Stage 4 in schools has been removed and the dedicated funding stopped. However, most schools in Torbay still enable pupils to carry out work experience to a greater or lesser extent. Support is provided by Devon Education Business Partnership who also run the STEM contract, to inspire opportunities in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths.
- 2.24 There has been an active Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance group in Torbay for many years which comprises schools careers co-ordinators and Careers South West Personal Advisors. Whilst the group used to meet termly to share good practice and to collaborate, it has met less frequently over the last year. There is a desire for the network to continue as a mutual support for staff who can feel isolated in a school where they are the only specialist.
- 2.25 Members of the Panel visited **Paignton Community and Sports Academy** and **Combe Pafford Business and Enterprise School** and received a representation from **Churston Ferrers Grammar School**.
- 2.26 At Paignton Community and Sports Academy members of the Panel met with the Careers Co-ordinator and discussed the work being undertaken by the College and the relationships that were developing between the Academy and other organisations in Torbay.

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- 2.27 Combe Pafford Business and Enterprise School is special school which caters for boys and girls who have moderate learning difficulties, physical difficulties or autism.
- 2.28 In September 2007 Combe Pafford was designated as one of the few special schools in the UK with Business and Enterprise as a specialism. The new status was the result of a deliberate strategy to capitalise on the school's work over a long period of time with Key Stage 4 pupils in the sphere of work-related learning, particularly business links, enterprise activities and work experience.
- 2.29 The overarching aim of the school is to maximise the academic, personal and social potential of all its pupils, irrespective of disability, through the medium of Business and Enterprise, driven by the lead subjects of Maths, ICT and Business and Enterprise. The curriculum is designed around three elements: Academic; Personal and Social Development; and Vocational and Work Related (which includes work experience arranged in local businesses).
- 2.30 Most pupils at the school are now able to choose two vocational options from the seven on offer: hairdressing, hospitality and catering, motor vehicle, construction, animal care, horticulture and health and social care. The facilities at the school include a hairdressing salon, motor vehicle garage and construction hall. There is a horticulture base at Brunel Manor and the Foyer Café at Torre has been leased from Devon and Cornwall Housing Association.
- 2.31 From September 2013, the school will be opening a Sixth Form with 12 places per year over three years. The five-day-a-week course on offer will focus on employment rather than qualifications with:
- Two days per week in a work experience placement
 - Two days per week in school working on English, maths, work skills and money management etc
 - One day per week taking a vocational qualification at a post-16 training provider
- 2.32 The Panel heard details of the work being undertaken at Churston Ferrers Grammar School in response to the requirement to provide Independent Careers Advice and Guidance. The Deputy Head of the Sixth Form is the member of staff responsible for Careers Advice and Guidance and has worked during the current academic year to ensure that:
- All Sixth Form students have received a one-to-one careers interview
 - All Sixth Form students have participated in a programme of careers-related learning during discreet timetabled lessons
 - All students have a clear understanding of all the options available to them at the end of Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5
 - The school is working with local businesses, Further Education and Higher Education institutions, the National Apprenticeship Service,

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parents and other stakeholders to facilitate work experience, provision of current LMI to students and appropriate guidance.

- 2.33 The Headteacher has also set up a working party to review and evaluate careers learning in the school which has resulted in a whole school audit and the production of a new Careers Policy for the school which embraces all key stages.
- 2.34 In addition to the Deputy Head of the Sixth Form, the school also has a designated Careers Co-ordinator and a Head of Careers. This ensures that, throughout the school year, there has been a continued programme of careers learning for all students which includes things such as:
- A two-day employability event at the end of the summer term for all Year 12 students involving local employers, the National Apprenticeship Service, and Further Education and Higher Education institutions
 - Liaison with external professions to provide careers interviews
 - Taster Days – whereby professionals from various careers areas come into the school for a half or full day
- 2.35 The Panel heard that it is the school's aim to work with other secondary schools, sixth forms and other interested groups to ensure that the careers education, information, advice and guidance it provides to its students enable them to make informed choices about their future.
- 2.36 **Post-16 learning** is offered by schools with sixth forms, Further Education Colleges (in the case of Torbay, this is South Devon College and Bridgwater College in partnership with Paignton Zoo) and training providers offering 16-18 and 19+ apprenticeships or other work based learning
- 2.37 **Higher Education establishments** offer a range of generally post-18 courses. They are independent of direct government control for their educational offer. Torbay has no higher education facilities.
- 2.38 With the Raising of the Participation Age (RPA), from Summer 2013 young people in year 11 will stay in education or training until the end of the academic year they become 17 and in year 10 and below until their 18th birthday. The mandatory school leaving age remains the same.
- 2.39 Young people have four options:
- stay in education at their current or transfer to a new school
 - go to a further education college
 - take up an apprenticeship, or
 - take up part-time employment or volunteering for 20 hours a week plus attend some part time learning.

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- 2.40 Therefore it is increasingly important for young people to receive impartial advice which may conflict, at times, when provisions are in direct competition.

Careers South West and the National Careers Service

- 2.41 Careers South West (CSW) aims to help people engage in learning and work through providing careers information, advice and guidance. The organisation has a number of contracts – the main two being a contract with Torbay Council and the prime contractor for the National Careers Service which works primarily with people aged 19 and over to provide careers advice and information. The Torbay Council contract focuses on vulnerable groups so in several schools there will be a dedicated CSW Personal Advisor which focuses on helping young people who are vulnerable to make a successful transition to learning and work.
- 2.42 The organisation works directly with employers through the Devon Education Business Partnership Contract to offer support to schools and colleges in finding work experience placements for pupils and other curriculum support. Careers South West also works directly with employers in finding candidates for vacancies, including apprenticeships.
- 2.43 Advisors have an in-depth knowledge of the learning provision and other options that are available to young people in Torbay. Careers South West also contributes to the Safeguarding Children's Board, the Teenage Pregnancy Partnership Board and a range of other community forums. The organisation is a members of the Torbay and South Devon Employment and Skills Board which feeds into the Local Economic Partnership.
- 2.44 The **National Careers Service** was launched in April 2012. Within Torbay, the Service is delivered via Careers South West. The information and advice service will be available to everyone (13+) online, with a face to face service available for 19+ (18+ if on Jobseekers Allowance). It is designed to help people make informed decisions about careers, skills and learning.

Department of Work and Pensions/Jobcentre Plus

- 2.45 The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) (through **Jobcentre Plus**) is responsible for supporting young people aged 18-24 who are claiming a working age benefit. This support includes job search advice and agreeing an action plan towards employment. Jobcentre Plus also engages with employers to source work experience and employment opportunities.
- 2.46 DWP also supports 16/17 year old customers who are estranged from their families. They offer an advisory service and support for customers to make hardship claims for both Job Seekers Allowance and Income Support. In relation to these customers, Jobcentre Plus work extremely closely with Careers South West.

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- 2.47 Within 24 hours of a customer making a claim to benefit, a full diagnostic interview is arranged with a specialist 18-24 advisor. At this interview, background information is collected and an action plan agreed with the young person. The majority of young people are referred to the National Careers Service for a Skills Conditionality interview to gain an independent assessment of their skills and to identify any areas that need to be addressed (for example, numeracy, literacy or work related skills).
- 2.48 All 18 year old customers are also required to attend Careers South West so that they have additional support to return to work or training.
- 2.49 After the initial diagnostic interview, the customer will then be seen (usually weekly) by their named advisor and their assistant advisor when the action plan is reviewed and updated and customers are signposted to the most appropriate provision to support them to overcome their barriers to return to employment.
- 2.50 The targets of Jobcentre Plus are predominantly based on the percentage of customers returning to work after 13, 26, 39 and 52 weeks of claiming Job Seekers Allowance. Within Torbay, Jobcentre Plus are currently (as of DATE) exceeding their targets at 13, 26 and 52 weeks but are below target at 39 weeks.
- 2.51 DWP are active in building working relationships with employers. At a national level, a team works with national employers (such as Argos and B&Q) to gain agreements for work experience placements (of up to eight weeks) which cover their branches across the Country. Locally, Employer Engagement Managers have teams that are responsible for building working relationships with local employers. For example, in Torbay, Sandwell Community Caring Trust are working with Jobcentre Plus to provide pre-employment training for care workers and then guaranteeing interviews for vacant posts.
- 2.52 Jobcentre Plus have regular meetings with the National Apprenticeship Service and their advisors actively promote apprenticeships alongside work experience when talking to employers as well as job seekers.
- 2.53 Torquay Jobcentre Plus have recently recruited three apprentices into its office.
- 2.54 Jobcentre Plus works with, and refers customers to, a range of agencies who provide support in the Torbay area. The majority of these initiatives and programmes are publicly funded as a result of Government policy and they are therefore deemed to be sustainable.
- 2.55 The **DWP Work Programme** provides tailored support to customers who need more help to undertake active and effective jobseeking. Participants receive support to overcome barriers that prevent them from finding and staying in work. Within Torbay, Working Links and Prospects Employment

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and Training are the prime providers. They are responsible for supporting young people aged 18-24 from when they have reached 39 weeks on Job Seekers Allowance on their journey into work. In addition, some people (for example, those leaving prison) are eligible for early entry onto the Work Programme.

- 2.56 Working Links work with people from the age of 18 to help them find work. Their work involves an induction session and a diagnostic tour (which determines what support an individual needs followed by a referral to a specialist consultant who can provide the support needed. This support can take the form of help with a CV or identifying the appropriate training courses. Team building sessions at Grenville House in Brixham are also provided.
- 2.57 In delivering the Work Programme, Prospects provide support and resources for customers in dealing with issues such as literacy and numeracy, housing, dependency and debt. Prospects' ethos is "to create a service which helps to build customers' confidence and self-esteem, enabling them to get and sustain a job".
- 2.58 Prospects use the Ascent model which concentrates on challenging and changing ingrained behaviours in a systematic way through a combination of appropriate interventions, on-going assessment, one-to-one support and, where required, specialist assistance. It is built around an individual's need with all customers having an Ascent Advisor who will work with them to provide them with skills, experience and attributes to find a job which suits their needs and provides long term employment.
- 2.59 Providers are paid primarily for sustained job outcomes. A job outcome payment can be claimed after a participant has been in a job for 3 or 6 months with subsequent payments every 4 weeks up to a year, 18 months or 2 years.
- 2.60 Government figures published in November 2012³ saw at least 56% of the schemes earliest participants have come off benefits, with 19% spending at least 6 consecutive months of benefits. By the end of July 2012, 31,000 people had remained in a job for between 3-6 months. In Torbay the Work Programme has resulted in 40 job outcome payments from approximately 2000 attachments (2%) against 2.9% in the South West and 3.7% nationally.

Third Sector

- 2.61 The Voluntary Sector in Torbay provides some direct support to young people and their families including access to information and advice, including work

³ <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/newsroom/press-releases/2012/nov-2012/dwp128-12.shtml>

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clubs and training. Some of the services within Torbay are detailed in the following paragraphs.

- 2.62 Brixham Youth Enquiry Service (YES) is a local charity which supports young people in the community. It has a team of experienced staff, counsellors and volunteers and provides a drop in services for 11-25 year old young people and their families to access information, advice and support.
- 2.63 In February 2012 YES awarded a small Neighbourhood Challenge grant to aid Brixham Young People's Training and Employment Service (BYTES) which provides a weekly training and employment support drop in session for young unemployed and under skilled people ages 16-24. They have linked with Job Centre Plus for referrals, Princes Trust and older skilled craftsmen to provide training in practical skills e.g. woodwork, basic engineering.
- 2.64 YES has also sought to develop links with Jobcentre Plus (JCP), Careers South West and South Devon College and have had upwards of 30+ clients referred to them by JCP.
- 2.65 Hele's Angels is a neighbourhood management scheme covering Hele and Lower Barton. Part of its focus is to improve the job prospects of local people and it provides a weekly work club for 18-24 year olds as well as training, advice and guidance, access to computers and help with CV's. They have approximately 12-20 clients and have contacts with Careers SW and take referrals from Jobcentre Plus
- 2.66 Eat that Frog is an 'Active Living' centre for all ages providing an extensive training programme and support service as well as a work club.

Apprenticeships

- 2.67 Apprenticeship programmes are funded by the Government via the Skills Funding Agency through a fairly prescriptive model. Apprentices are paid employees whose training must be completed as part of their working week. Apprenticeships are designed by the Sector Skills Councils with business representatives from the relevant industry sector working with the Council to develop the course content which is set out in documents known as Frameworks. The duration of the apprenticeship varies by trade but they are usually between one and four years in length. Apprenticeships are standard across the Country.
- 2.68 The majority of training takes place "on the job" with the rest being undertaken at a local college or a specialist training organisation. Because of the prescriptive nature of apprenticeships they can be very inflexible for small businesses. This is an issue within Torbay where the economy is predominantly made up of small and medium size enterprises.

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- 2.69 Apprentices must be paid a wage with the National Minimum Wage for apprentices being £2.65 per hour⁴ although employers are free to pay above this rate. According to the National Apprenticeship Service, research has found that apprentices earn an average of £170 net pay per week.
- 2.70 The Government funds all of the training of apprentices who are 18 and under whilst those who are aged 19 - 24 have to pay 50% of the training costs.
- 2.71 There are currently 40,000 Apprenticeship Grants for Employers of 16-24 years olds (AGE 16-24) of £1500 available to employers with less than 1000 employees who take on an apprentice (and haven't had an apprentice in the last 12 months)⁵. This grant is subject to the employer committing to support the apprentice to the end of their programme and is paid in a lump sum after employing an apprentice for three months. Up to ten grants can be made to any one employer.
- 2.72 Data from the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) indicates that, for the first time in several years, the last quarter showed more employer vacancies than young people (16-18) applying for an Apprenticeship. This may suggest that young people may be choosing full time study instead. There is an increase in over 18s taking up apprenticeships in Torbay.
- 2.73 Some apprenticeships attract UCAS points (qualifying points used for entry to higher education) meaning that once an apprenticeship is completed there is an opportunity to go on to higher education in a college or university. However, whilst those who already have a degree can do an apprenticeship they would not be eligible for funding and would need to pay the full training costs.
- 2.74 Locally there are approximately 60 vacancies within a 10 mile radius of Torbay currently posted on the National Apprenticeship Service website. NAS have introduced 8 apprentices into Southern Devon NHS & is working with TDA, SDC and the High Tech Manufacturer Employers Forum to introduce an Electronic Engineering Apprenticeship framework for 10-12 young people.
- 2.75 Members of the Panel met with representatives from **South Devon College**.
- 2.76 South Devon College is a large Further Education college which provides a range of vocational, educational and recreational courses to many levels of attainment. The College is a training provider for over 30 different types of apprenticeships. It works with over 400 businesses and over 650 apprentices.
- 2.77 Young people apply to become apprentices through the College. The College provide assistance to help find employers for those young people who are

⁴ As at 1 October 2012

⁵ The AGE 16-24 is available from 1 February 2012 until March 2013

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unemployed and also provide assistance to help people find jobs for themselves.

- 2.78 The College reported that, each year, they have a large number of people who want to become apprentices but who cannot find vacancies. It was reported that they can have between 200 and 300 such cases each year with these young people then tending to take up full-time education instead. As the Government funding for apprenticeships follows the young person, the College would have the capacity to train these apprentices if they were to find employment.
- 2.79 South Devon College holds regular sector focus groups which enables local businesses to engage with the College to discuss employers' needs and requirements within that particular sector. These groups provide the opportunity for professional discussions to ensure that the College can meet the needs of the employer through each apprenticeship Framework. Once a year, the College holds an event when all employers are invited to attend to share their experiences.
- 2.80 In terms of securing permanent, full-time work, South Devon College encourage their students to gain skills and experience in a range of ways. It was reported that work experience is crucial to this both from the students' point of view and in changing the perceptions of employers about young people. Full-time students are used as ambassadors for the College, apprenticeships and young people in general. Many students also work part-time and students need to identify the skills they have gained in these jobs when applying for full-time permanent work.
- 2.81 It was reported to the panel that there is a great desire to work among the College's students and over 90% have work experience of some kind. Finding placements for work experience continues, however, to be a challenge. The College have found that the employers who provide apprenticeships are also those who provide work experience placements. The College feel that there is a very strong core of employers locally who have made a commitment to help young people find the skills and experience they need to move onto permanent employment and careers. Further influence needs to be brought to the vast majority of employers however do not provide these types of opportunities.
- 2.82 South Devon College are involved in other initiatives to help young unemployed people in Torbay including the Flex Programme and running Work Clubs and Sector Based Work Academies for Job Centre Plus.
- 2.83 In terms of the Sector Based Work Academies, the College can provide training in a range of industries with a very short lead time. For example, when the Premier Inn at Brixham Road, Paignton was recruiting for staff for its opening, South Devon College provided a two week training programme which covered food hygiene, health and safety, presentation skills and

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interview techniques. Job Centre Plus identified clients to attend the course after which Premier Inn guaranteed an interview.

- 2.84 In October 2011, Torbay Council re-introduced an Employing Apprentices Policy and an Apprentice Grade and Training Job Description. As at May 2013, there are eight apprentices (who have been recruited through an application and interview process) across Torbay Council. This represents 0.6% of core-Council staff. These include posts in Youth Support, Business Support and Engineering. There are also 11 apprentices employed in primary and secondary schools within Torbay.
- 2.85 The Council is also looking to introduce 2-8 week work experience trials across all service areas. One placement is already in place.

Views from Young People

- 2.86 To consult with young people, questionnaires were made available online and distributed directly. A total of 74 surveys were completed, 62% from young people aged 16-18 (25% under 16, 12% 19-24).
- 2.87 When asked about their career ambitions for the next 5-10 years, 90.5% of respondents wanted to be in employment with 11% mentioning Further Education. Half stated that further education and qualifications would help them to achieve their career ambitions. Work experience and training were also popular responses.
- 2.88 43.1% felt that there was something stopping them from achieving their career ambitions, a lack of jobs and a lack of experience being the most frequent reasons given. A few mentioned age as an inhibiting factor, not getting the same opportunities as older people and being 'labelled'.
- 2.89 Just over half (54.4%) of young people felt positive about their career opportunities. 36.7% were negative about their future prospects.
- 2.90 The Careers Office at school or college was the most frequently mentioned place young people go for advice about getting a job (23) This was followed by the internet (19), Family (16), Careers South West (11) and the Job Centre (11). 44.7% of respondents agreed that the advice that they receive is good or very good only 9% thought the advice was poor or very poor.
- 2.91 When asked how careers advice could be improved 27.3% felt that more specific information could be given, 21.8% stated it could be more focussed to jobs.
- 2.92 Nearly all (95.9%) of respondents were aware of apprenticeships and most of the respondents (75.4%) had a positive opinion of apprenticeships. However, 31.3% of respondents stated a lack of experience was an issue when trying to gain employment. Other themes mentioned were to improve the help and

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advice given to young people and a need for more vacancies suitable for young people.

Views from Employers

- 2.93 A questionnaire was created for employers which asked for their views on employing young people and the skills needed and on offer. Despite a low return rate (22) the results showed some common themes.
- 2.94 The most popular skills and attributes sought by employers when employing young people were enthusiasm (54.5%), communication skills (50%) and a willingness to learn (45.5%). The majority of respondents (63.6%) said they could not find these skills and attributes easily within the younger generation in Torbay.
- 2.95 40.9% of employers look for specific qualifications when employing young people but 62.5% of these employers answered that they could not easily find young people with these qualifications in Torbay.
- 2.96 In considering what schools and colleges could do to help young people in the job market, suggestions included help with interview techniques, educating about the expectations of local employers, developing reading and writing skills, employability skills, developing life skills such as time keeping, attendance, positive attitude and assisting to gain work experience.
- 2.97 Just under half of the employers (47.6%) offer Jobcentre Plus work experience placements and 87.5% of these employers have had a positive experience of them. The most common reason for not offering Jobcentre Plus work experience placements was that organisations were already providing alternative forms of work experience. 71.4% of respondents offer other kinds of work experience, with most of these being arranged with schools and colleges.
- 2.98 71.4% of the employers offered apprenticeships and the majority of these had a positive experience of them saying they were a good way of introducing new employees to an organisation and beneficial for existing staff in developing coaching and mentoring skills.
- 2.99 A variety of suggestions were put forward by the employers including the need to encourage more vocational routes, preparing young people for employment and for more partnership working across the local authority, voluntary organisations, employers.
- 2.100 The results of the Panel's survey are confirmed by recent findings⁶ from the Federation of Small Businesses which show that eight out of ten businesses don't believe that school leavers are ready for work and that more should be

⁶ The Federation of Small Businesses surveyed members of the 'Voice of Small Business' Survey Panel from 12-26 June 2012 and received 2,774 responses. The study was undertaken by Research by Design on behalf of the FSB. For results go to www.fsb.org.uk/fsb-survey-panel

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done to help prepare them for employment. Of the 2,774 survey respondents that employ 16 to 17-year-olds, 59 per cent of survey respondents reported that their young employees had poor literacy skills with numeracy judged to be poor by 55 per cent. 56 per cent said communication skills fell short and 77 per cent also found that school leavers' general business awareness was poor.

- 2.101 The Federation went on to say that early careers guidance was key and equipping young people with skills such as CV writing, time-keeping, problem solving and team working would not only help employers, but would give young people a better understanding of potential jobs and career paths. Whilst schools continue to be judged against GCSE and A Level results, employability skills will continue to be a “nice to do” rather than being seen as essential.

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3. Issues

- 3.1 With the range of options open to them as a result of the Raising of the Participation Age, young people more than ever need access to impartial information, advice and guidance to help them choose the right pathway.
- 3.2 The Panel heard from young people themselves that they do not always get the information they need at the appropriate time.
- 3.3 There is a tension for schools in that they want to expand their sixth form provision and offer new facilities and courses but are also in increasing competition with other providers (such as neighbouring schools and colleges). This produces a conflict of interest over the ability to offer truly impartial information, advice and guidance.
- 3.4 The Panel have heard from a number of sources that the message around RPA is that it means young people need to stay on at school.
- 3.5 The Panel also heard that it appears that the Department for Education's view is that parents will be one of the biggest influences on how the careers education programme and access to impartial information, advice and guidance is delivered in local schools. Within the most deprived areas of Torbay (where third generation unemployment is not uncommon) this parental influence may not be what it should.
- 3.6 National surveys are beginning to show concerns that school teaching staff do not always feel qualified or experienced enough to give universal careers advice and, with limited access to external staff, young people may be losing out.
- 3.7 It appears that the changes in the statutory duty around careers advice may have led to a less cohesive framework for careers guidance. Schools and providers are providing a range of careers-focussed activity but this is happening individually and the former collaborative approach has diminished.
- 3.8 As more of Torbay's schools become academies there is less requirements on them to share their developments with the Council and therefore, measuring the success of the provision of careers advice within schools will be difficult. Ultimately Ofsted will report on the quality of the provision although with all our schools rated Good or Outstanding these reports are not due in the near future.
- 3.9 The Panel also heard from a number of sources that the advice received in schools about apprenticeships/self employment/entrepreneurship was not as good as it could be. It has been suggested to the Panel (again from a number of sources) that this could be because many school teachers feel ill equipped to inform or advise about (or even advocate) these options as a valid career option due to their lack of experience of vocational sectors due to their personal academic career routes.

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- 3.10 Equally there needs to be wider promotion of apprenticeship schemes in order to encourage more employers within both the private and public sector to take on apprentices. The Council has a role to play both in employing and promoting apprentices and encouraging its partners and contractors to employ apprentices.
- 3.11 There is a need to ensure that young people are fully aware of the range of successful sectors within Torbay. These include nationally recognised training schemes within the retail and hospitality sector offered by national and multi-national companies operating in Torbay and the hi-tech manufacturing, fisheries and healthcare sectors.
- 3.12 Whilst all schools claim to have excellent employer links, employers are still saying (both locally and nationally) that young people are leaving school without employability skills and an understanding of the world of work. There still appears to be a predominant view amongst schools that a strong set of academic qualifications is the best way into employment. This is to be expected when schools continue to be judged on their pupils' achievements in exams and when little, if any, funding is available to support employment skills development.
- 3.13 Employers need to continue to be encouraged to engage with schools whilst schools need to keep in mind that employers look for tenacity, enthusiasm and passion, good English and maths skills and teamwork when looking to employ someone.
- 3.14 The views gathered by the Panel from organisations within the Third Sector highlighted that there was a feeling that whole system did not join up adequately. Some organisations expressed difficulties in establishing links with South Devon College whilst others believed that there was not enough focus on providing training and support to those aged 19-24
- 3.15 It was felt that there was a need for a holistic approach to build young people's confidence, motivation and direction.
- 3.16 The Panel have heard through its meetings with and visits to a number and variety of organisations in Torbay that there is a lot of good work going on in Torbay to improve levels of youth employment. Similarly reports have been presented the Overview and Scrutiny Board about the Mayor's economic regeneration ambitions and the work of the Torbay Development Agency to increase the number of jobs available in the area. Young people are continuing to leave Torbay's schools with better and better examination results.
- 3.17 However, there appears, to the Panel, to be a lack of clarity about the routes that young people can take on journey to employment. Organisations are working in partnership with one another but there appear to be many partnerships rather than a single partnership. The competition between different organisations (which in many ways has been imposed (either

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intentionally or not) by Government) does not ultimately help young people receive the right advice that need to ensure that take the approach that suits them.

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4. Conclusions

- 4.1 The academic achievements of Torbay's schools are high. However, from the information it has gathered during the course of the review, the Panel feel that schools are not preparing their students well enough for the world of work. There does not appear to be enough emphasis placed on employability skills such as communication, time-keeping and attendance. Equally students need to have the skills to prepare CVs and to be successful at interview.
- 4.2 Further, the achievements of young people who live in Torbay can be masked by the numbers of students who attend Torbay schools but live outside of Torbay. Schools need to be challenging young people's expectations for their future. The negative and/or inaccurate views of the employment opportunities available in Torbay also need to be challenged.
- 4.3 Further work needs to be undertaken to identify the training that is needed to fill the skills gap within Torbay. There is some concern that training opportunities are made available to ensure that young people are not classed as NEET rather than training being focused to maximise the young person's employment opportunities.
- 4.4 In terms of the options available to young people once they leave school, there is a multitude of agencies and organisations available to provide advice. However, there appears to be lack of understanding (and, in some cases, knowledge) of what each organisation provides. This means that young people find it hard to navigate through the system to their best advantage.
- 4.5 The Panel does not believe that Torbay Council has a strategic approach to employing apprentices or providing work experience placements. It believes that the Council should be "leading by example" and helping to encourage other public sector bodies to work to reduce youth unemployment in Torbay. Consideration should also be given to how the Council's contracts and procurement procedures can encourage the use of apprentices.

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5. Recommendations

- 5.1 Torbay Council must lead by example to ensure that young people in Torbay have access to the:
- Right careers education, information, advice and guidance
 - Right skills
 - Right employment opportunities
- 5.2 The Council should strengthen and streamline the partnership arrangements it has with Jobcentre Plus, schools and colleges, the community and voluntary sector and local employers to model a new approach that provides a multi agency hub (or hubs) with a focus on creating opportunities for young people to reach their full potential and access employment based on the current work being undertaken at Parkfield, Brixham Youth Enquiry Service and Combe Pafford Business and Enterprise School
- 5.3 By ensuring the Employment and Skills Board has a focus on reducing youth unemployment in Torbay, the Council can help to ensure that every young person reaches their full potential.
- 5.4 The Employment and Skills Board should bring together employers and schools and colleges to collaborate in the further development of careers education programmes which include the skills necessary for employment and an awareness of the opportunities available in Torbay.
- 5.5 In bringing together the various agencies and organisations which support young people to gain employment, the Council should apply any learning from other authorities, for example the 'Cornwall Works' programme.
- 5.6 The Council should also review its recruitment, contracts and procurement policies to ensure that they promote the employment of young people, apprenticeships and work experience opportunities and that this should also be promoted with other public sector bodies.