

BLACKPOOL OPPORTUNITY AREA

Graham Cowley – Chair of Blackpool Opportunity Area Board

Andrew Heydeman, Enterprise Co-ordinator



What is Social Mobility?

- 'Social mobility is the breaking of the link between a child's family background and where they get to in life, with their background and destination often measured by social class (which usually looks at their profession) or by income.'
- 'The UK has low levels of intergenerational social mobility compared to some other developed countries, like Scandinavia, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.'
- 'There is a strong association between income and educational attainment. Qualifications predict later-life economic and social outcomes. It will be hard to improve social mobility, unless poor children do better in school.'
- The Social Mobility Commission's Social Mobility Index found that London does well on measures of social mobility, but coastal areas, like Blackpool, Minehead and Scarborough and industrial towns - like Derby, Mansfield and Stoke, as well as some wealthier areas like Norwich are social mobility cold spots.



Opportunity Areas

– addressing Social Mobility

- “Opportunity Areas”, the programme set up to address social mobility, is the personal initiative of Justine Greening, the Secretary of State for Education
- 6 areas identified initially, now expanded to 12. Blackpool is one of the initial 6.
- Approximately £6 million bespoke funding for Blackpool over 3 years – plus significant additional “tilt” from other Department for Education funding
- Partnership Board in place featuring a wide range of key partners – impressive early collaboration on priorities
- Initial Delivery Plan published
- Key focus – evidence led and aligning activity (based on feedback from stakeholders)
- Town Wide Assessment of data underway – what’s the Blackpool story on social mobility (would the BBLG wish to hear the findings?)



Why Blackpool



Too few children secure a good level of development even though the quality of EY provision is high, take up is close to national average, and the majority of staff are qualified to level 3 in EY settings.



Despite making good progress in primary school, **too few children historically have met the expected standard at end of KS2**. However it should be noted that Blackpool primaries have excelled this year and KS 2 outcomes are above national average



Both **attainment 8 and progress 8** are well below national average – third from bottom in ranking of all LAs nationally. Attainment in English (particularly amongst boys) and maths is weak and Ebacc entry and attainment are low.



Exclusions and persistent absences are too frequent. This impacts on overall attainment at end of KS4 and adds to the NEET figures. The rates spike at secondary suggesting **young people have particular difficulty making transitions** between the two stages of education. This is one component of a major issue of **mobility** within the school system.



The percentage of 16-18 year olds in **sustained education and employment is below national averages**.

By 19 the number **qualified to level 2/3 qualification is lower than the national average** and the gap is particularly marked amongst those pursuing an academic route (A level AS level).



Stakeholders point to **low levels of resilience** among young people. There are **high levels of mental health** issues amongst children and adults in comparison to the national.

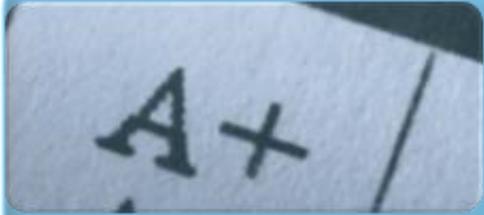


Stakeholders including careers advisers, youth workers, and school leaders confirm **that aspirations are low** (a recurrent theme in Blackpool Council's Development Plan)



Average salaries are low, and there is a large proportion of benefit claimants, particularly long-term sick. and cite an **issue with work-preparedness, which is borne out in the high numbers of NEET**.

What we are planning to do – summary priorities



RAISE ATTAINMENT AND PROGRESS IN BLACKPOOL'S SCHOOLS

- Raise attainment at KS2
- Raise attainment and increase progress at KS4
- Improve transition of pupils between all phases of education



SUPPORT FOR VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE AND OUTCOMES AND REDUCE EXCLUSIONS FROM SCHOOL

- Support schools to reduce the number of children excluded
- Improve the pastoral support to Blackpool's neediest children



IMPROVE ADVICE AND SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WHEN MOVING BETWEEN SCHOOLS/COLLEGES AND INTO WORK

- Building connections with employers and embed careers education in schools
- Increasing the % of young people in a sustained education, employment or training destination
- Reduce NEET amongst vulnerable groups



BUILDING LOCAL CAPACITY TO COORDINATE AND MANAGE INITIATIVES

- Build local capacity to co-ordinate and strategically manage interventions

Guiding principle

PRIORITY 3: IMPROVE ADVICE AND SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WHEN MOVING BETWEEN SCHOOLS/COLLEGES AND INTO WORK – What we plan to do includes:-

- **Transition between stages in the education cycle – a journey towards work.** The initial focus is on the critical Primary to Secondary transition but future focus will be on the older transition into work
- **Employability Skills Part 1** - An Enterprise Adviser Network to bridge the gap between employers and education (led by the Careers and Enterprise Company) . Provide at least 4 employer and work place encounters for young people – evidence this reduces their chances of being unemployed and improves career outcomes (Gatsby Foundation).
- **Employability Skills Part 2** – increase the extra curricula life skills opportunities for young people who aren't always able to access activity. Includes the National Citizenship Service (volunteering and social action) and a new Essential Life Skills programme
- **Start early in Primary Schools** (this is when career gender stereotypes can be established). Extend the successful work of Primary Futures, which raises aspirations by helping children understand the link between learning in school and the world of work to motivate them to improve their academic performance.
- **Support vulnerable groups** e.g. Improve employment opportunities for young people with Special Needs. The DfE has funded the National Development Team for Inclusion to bring together strategic partners in Blackpool to look at how careers advice and employer engagement can be improved for this group of young people.
- **Raising aspirations for high level skills and education** – The National Collaborative Outreach Programme (Future U) will support gifted youngsters from the Bloomfield ward to aspire to university or undertake Higher and Degree Apprenticeships.

PRIORITY 3: Enterprise Adviser Network – Andrew Heydeman

Role of Enterprise Adviser – business volunteers who work closely with a local school or college. Deliver and broker business activities in a school linked to an organisational careers plan.

Progress

All 13 educational establishments in Blackpool with 11 to 18 year old provision have now committed to being involved in the Lancashire Enterprise Adviser Network, and have been matched with an Enterprise Adviser (includes special schools and both local colleges)

Employers who have volunteered to work as Enterprise Advisers include Westinghouse UK, the Royal Bank of Scotland, Hilton Hotel Group, Hays Recruitment, Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), Blackpool Transport, The Winter Gardens, Baxter Life Care, Blackpool Football Club Community Trust and several micro-businesses/sole traders.

Role of Enterprise Co-ordinator – work with schools and business to build careers plans. Acts as the “glue” in the network

PRIORITY 3: EARLY IMPACT

Enterprise Adviser Network – Andrew Heydeman

The Enterprise Advisers have already arranged and been planning a wide range of activities, which have included the following:

- Extended workplace visits for pupils, and motivational talks delivered by employers to whole year groups on employability skills such as “confidence and resilience”.
- Mentoring activity has commenced in two schools for targeted pupils, with mentors working with three mentees each. Mentors are from employers including Network Rail, Voiteq and Lloyds Banking Group. School and pupil feedback on the value of this to date has been extremely positive.
- Careers and Enterprise Company Investment Fund has already allocated funding to support delivery of a wide range of Careers and Enterprise activities during this academic year. For example, volunteering and social action to help build a young person’s confidence and widen their life experience; participation in Young Enterprise projects to help develop entrepreneurial skills.

Collectively, these activities are focussing strongly on improving the “work readiness” of young people in Blackpool, providing a major benefit and positive impact for employers getting involved in the Enterprise Adviser Network.

- Would very much welcome additional support from employers in Blackpool to enable us to continue to develop and widen our “employer offer” to the young people of Blackpool.