

Provision of Flexible Learning Opportunities for Young People in Lancashire

Gap Analysis Report (Part 1) Geographical Factors

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1 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to analyse need for flexible learning opportunities across the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership area, to report to what extent the range of existing opportunities meet those needs and make recommendations for future action to address gaps in provision.

2 Background

Lancashire's needs for additional support for young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) or who are at risk of becoming NEET have been identified by the LEP¹ and projects have been commissioned by opt-in partners using the European Social Fund.

Under measure 1.2 of the European Social Fund (ESF), with the Skills Funding Agency as opt-in partner, a project has been commissioned to reduce the number of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) in Lancashire. The project, known as Moving On, has Preston's College as the lead accountable body, with a delivery partnership, LESEP, made up of Lancashire's colleges, work based learning providers and other third sector and commercial delivery partners. The project started delivery in June 2016 and runs until July 2018.

A further project for young people, under measure 1.1 of the European Social Fund, with the Big Lottery (Building Better Opportunities) as opt-in partner, is also running in the area. Invest in Youth has SELNET as the lead accountable body with a wide range of delivery partners, mainly from voluntary and community organisations. This project works with young people who face multiple barriers to the world of learning and work and who are furthest away from engagement.

An element of funding for the Moving On project is dedicated to capacity building. This includes the employment of a Strategic Partnership Manager and also the delivery of a range of activities to support the delivery of the project and the delivery partner network as well as aiming to leave a legacy of sustainable products to support work with young people in Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire.

One of the activities supported by the project is to provide a map of flexible provision detailing learning offers for young people who are NEET by local area. This is to be made available on the Moving On website² in 2017.

¹ <http://www.lancashirelep.co.uk/the-lancashire-offer/funding-and-business-support/european-structural-and-investment-funds.aspx>

² www.movingonlancs.co.uk/opportunities-map

The research for the mapping has been undertaken by the Strategic Partnership Manager through meeting with a range of providers of learning across the area. It is now possible to use the mapping, alongside performance information from the Moving On project and data from Local Authorities about young people who are NEET and not known to inform this gap analysis.

3 Methods

The findings in this report are from interrogation of existing statistical data and reports and from discussions with practitioners and managers working with young people across Lancashire to determine the learning offer for young people by geography.

4 Current Position

The following table shows a range of measures by district and unitary authority. This is to demonstrate the issues of NEET and achievement at 16 against size of relevant population. In order to focus the information, the top 7 districts/local authorities of the 14 in the area are listed.

Cohort Size Largest	NEET and Not Known number of 16/17 (high to low)³	5 A*-C % (low to high)⁴	NEET and Not Known as percentage of 16/17 (high to low)
Blackburn with Darwen	Lancaster	Blackpool	Burnley
Blackpool	Preston	Burnley	Rossendale
Preston	Burnley	Pendle	Lancaster
Lancaster	Blackpool	Hyndburn	Pendle
West Lancashire	West Lancashire	Rossendale	Hyndburn
South Ribble	Blackburn with Darwen	Blackburn with Darwen	West Lancashire
Chorley	Pendle	Preston	Preston

Table 1 Incidence of need by district/local authority

To note from the above table is that although not large in cohort size, the districts of Hyndburn, Rossendale, Burnley and Pendle feature in this table as having lower achievement and higher percentage of NEET and not known at 16/17.

³ Nov 2016 – Jan 2017 average – standard measuring point

⁴ Results provided by district by Lancashire

The districts which do not feature on this table and have lower incidence of NEET and higher achievement are Fylde, Wyre and Ribble Valley, with Ribble Valley having the smallest cohort and the lowest number and rate of NEET and not known and the highest achievement rate.

Available flexible opportunities, which are funded mainly through the Education and Skills Funding Agency core budgets to providers, not including Moving On or Invest in Youth provision, have been measured according to the district or unitary authority in which they are sited. Some young people may travel into neighbouring areas for learning (for example, from Accrington to Blackburn) but most re-engagement starts local to the learner's home base.

The following chart shows the volume of opportunities with flexible start dates available in each area across the year and includes:

- Employability study programmes
- Entry level and level 1 vocational programmes
- Prince's Trust Team programme
- Military preparation courses

The chart does not include traineeships⁵ as these are often demand led by employers and volumes and locations are not predicted by providers. Traineeship providers are listed in the mapping so that young people and their advisers can discuss current opportunities as required.

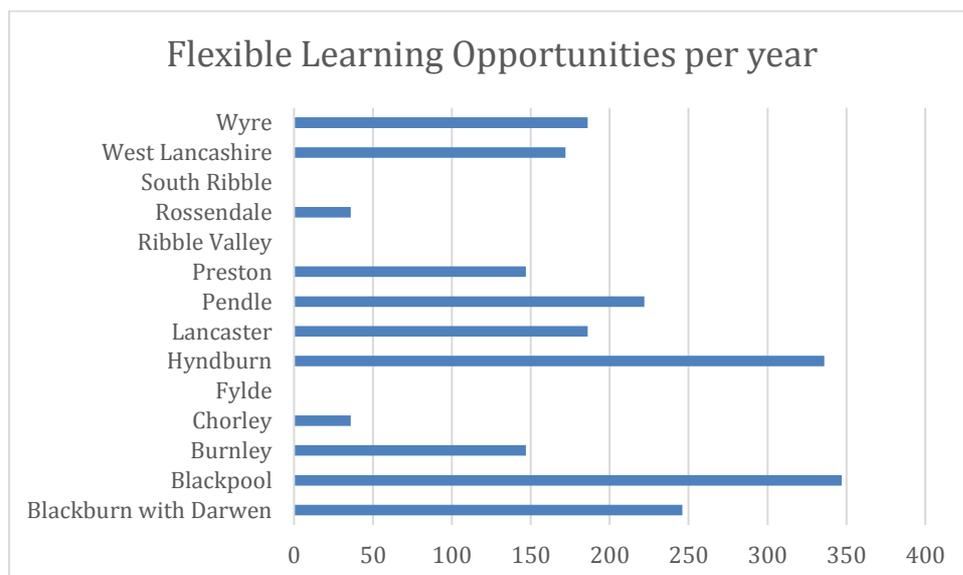


Chart 1 Flexible learning opportunities per year

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/traineeships-programme>

To put this information into context of NEET and not known in each district/local authority area, the following table presents the number of opportunities per young person who is NEET or not known in each area:

District/Local Authority	No of opportunities/NEET & not known 16/17	District/Local Authority	No of opportunities/NEET & not known 16/17
Blackburn with Darwen	1.00	Pendle	0.91
Blackpool	1.27	Preston	0.49
Burnley	0.50	Ribble Valley	0.00
Chorley	0.21	Rossendale	0.17
Fylde	0.00	South Ribble	0.00
Hyndburn	1.54	West Lancashire	0.68
Lancaster	0.57	Wyre	1.38

Table 2 Number of opportunities by district/local authority per young person who is NEET or whose activity is not known

Whilst Fylde and Ribble Valley have lowest rates of need for flexible learning opportunities and this is reflected in the information above, some of the areas with higher need, such as Rossendale and Burnley do not have correspondingly higher rates of provision.

In recent years changes to core Education Funding Agency (EFA) funded programmes and rationalisation and movement of provision has meant withdrawal of a number of offers in Rossendale, Chorley, Preston, Blackpool, Blackburn, Burnley and West Lancashire.

5 Contribution of the Moving On Project

During the planning of the project, local authorities were asked to identify target wards for the project.

The number of target wards identified in each district is as follows:

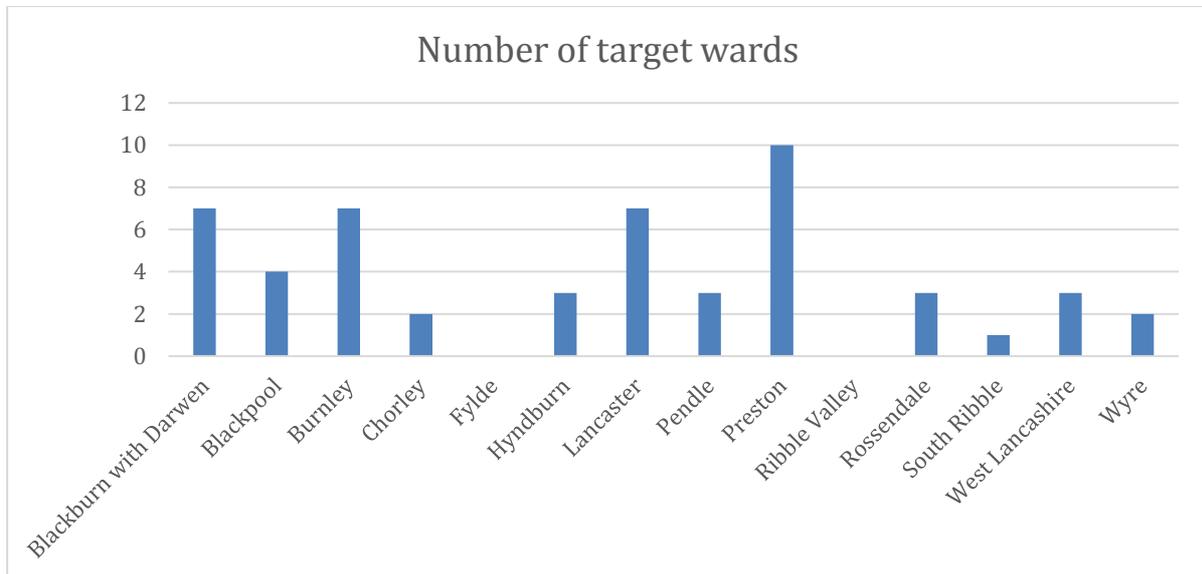


Chart 2 Moving On – number of target wards

Latest validated data from the Moving On Project gives us the number and percentage of starts in target wards for each district, shown in the following table.

District/Local Authority	No of starts in district/local authority	No of starts in target wards	% of starts in target wards
Blackburn with Darwen	40	13	33%
Blackpool	124	56	45%
Burnley	119	61	51%
Chorley	17	4	24%
Fylde	28	0	0
Hyndburn	49	21	43%
Lancaster	75	48	64%
Pendle	242	85	35%
Preston	113	80	71%
Ribble Valley	8	0	0
Rossendale	25	9	36%
South Ribble	29	1	3%
West Lancashire	31	7	23%
Wyre	42	8	19%

Table 3 Participant starts by district/local authority and target wards at R08 reporting point

Whilst there is not a target volume for each district in the Moving On project, delivery partners are requested to give particular priority to learners from target wards.

A higher number of wards were identified for targeting in Preston, Lancaster, Burnley and Blackburn with Darwen, and this is reflected in the above table, with the exception of Blackburn with Darwen, where only 33% of validated starts⁶ to date have been from target wards.

When reviewing overall starts in a district/local authority, the low number of starts in Ribble Valley is consistent with the lower incidence of need. The four districts/local authorities with the highest volume of starts, Blackpool, Burnley, Pendle and Preston all present with higher needs.

Performance in Pendle has been particularly strong and very much ahead of other areas.

Areas which show a low participant rate to date are Rossendale, West Lancashire and Chorley.

Preston's College has already used early information about performance of the project in certain areas to inform procurement of provision from a further 5 delivery partners and also to direct existing provision where appropriate.

6 Contribution of the Invest in Youth Project

This project aims to work with young people who are furthest away from learning and work. As an example, a valid outcome from this project is for a young person to be actively looking for learning or work. The age range is broader for this project, being up to 24, however it is worth reporting the progress to date for this project, which has been actively recruiting for around 6 months at the time of writing this report.

Invest in Youth has planned starts by district or groups of districts and performance to date is shown alongside this in the table below:

⁶ There are a number of starts known to have taken place in Blackburn with Darwen which are not validated at the point of reporting which may impact significantly on this figure.

Districts	Planned Participants over life of project	Actual Participants at April 2017	Percentage of Plan Achieved
Blackburn with Darwen	124	37	29.84
Burnley and Pendle	124	10	8.06
Hyndburn, Rossendale and Ribble Valley	57	23	40.35
Blackpool	124	23	18.55
Fylde and Wyre	62	2	3.23
Lancaster	53	30	56.60
Chorley and South Ribble	62	20	16.13
Preston	106	10	19.42
West Lancashire	58	1	1.72

Table 4 Invest in Youth planned participants and participant starts to March 2017 by district/local authority

Invest in Youth is also showing lower numbers of participants from West Lancashire and Rossendale as well as Burnley and Pendle and Preston. Lower numbers are also reported for Fylde and Wyre. There is stronger performance in Lancaster, Blackburn with Darwen and Hyndburn against planned numbers.

7 Conclusions

The findings of this report demonstrate a shift in vulnerable characteristics and how they should be considered in the development of learning provision for young people, particularly for those who are not in education, employment or training.

There is reduction in reported incidence of certain characteristics, which would indicate that less targeted provision is needed, particularly for young parents. On the other hand, the rise in incidence and impact of mental ill-health and estrangement need specific consideration in the design of future provision and wraparound support.

All of this is within the context of rising cases of multiple disadvantage, demonstrating that there is not a 'one size fits all' solution to designing learning provision to meet the needs of young people, engaging, retaining and achieving success.

Whilst multiple disadvantage is often a feature of the lives of young people who have experienced the care system or who are known to youth offending teams, it is important to recognise the endemic lower rates of success in learning and the work environment for these young people.

8 Recommendations

The purpose of this report is to identify the barriers which are hindering young people's progress in learning and work in Lancashire and to inform future commissioning of discretionary funded learning provision for young people in Lancashire, alongside previous Gap Analyses (1, geographical need and 2, risks to provision in Lancashire).

It is therefore recommended that:

- These findings are used by the LEP machinery to help inform the design of future calls for activity for discretionary funding, recognising the role that ESF funded programmes have historically fulfilled in this area.
- These findings are shared with upper tier local authorities (Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire) for consideration alongside their Statement of Priorities for post-16 education and training and their discussions with the ESFA.
- These findings are shared with professionals working with young people facing the disadvantages featured in this report for further comment and discussion.
- The Lancashire Youth Steering Group should review the report and recommend any action needed for the current or potential future projects in light of the findings and discussions.
- Where appropriate, the findings of the report should be noted in the evaluation of the Moving On Project.
- The findings should be made available as a research document to learning provider networks, for consideration in design of both discretionary and mainstream provision.