

## **RAISING THE PARTICIPATION AGE**

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**Service Group:** Setting and School Effectiveness

### **Executive Summary**

The Government is increasing the age to which all young people in England must continue in education or training from 2015. Young people currently in year 11 and below are affected. This overview paper provides some further detail alongside local contextual data and information on work underway across the Local Authority to enable Milton Keynes to respond to this change.

### **1. Key Issues**

1.1 Raising the Participation Age (RPA) legislation was contained within the Education and Skills Act 2008 and increases the minimum age at which young people in England can leave learning from 16 to 18 years of age.

This change is being implemented in two stages:

- From September 2013, young people will be required to continue in education or training until the end of the academic year in which they turn 17;
- From September 2015, young people will be required to continue until their 18th birthday.

1.2 The present Government made clear its continued commitment to RPA. There is one exception however, there will not, at this time, be any mechanism for enforcement action against young people and their parents for non participation or against employers offering employment without training. Enforcement was originally included as an element of RPA.

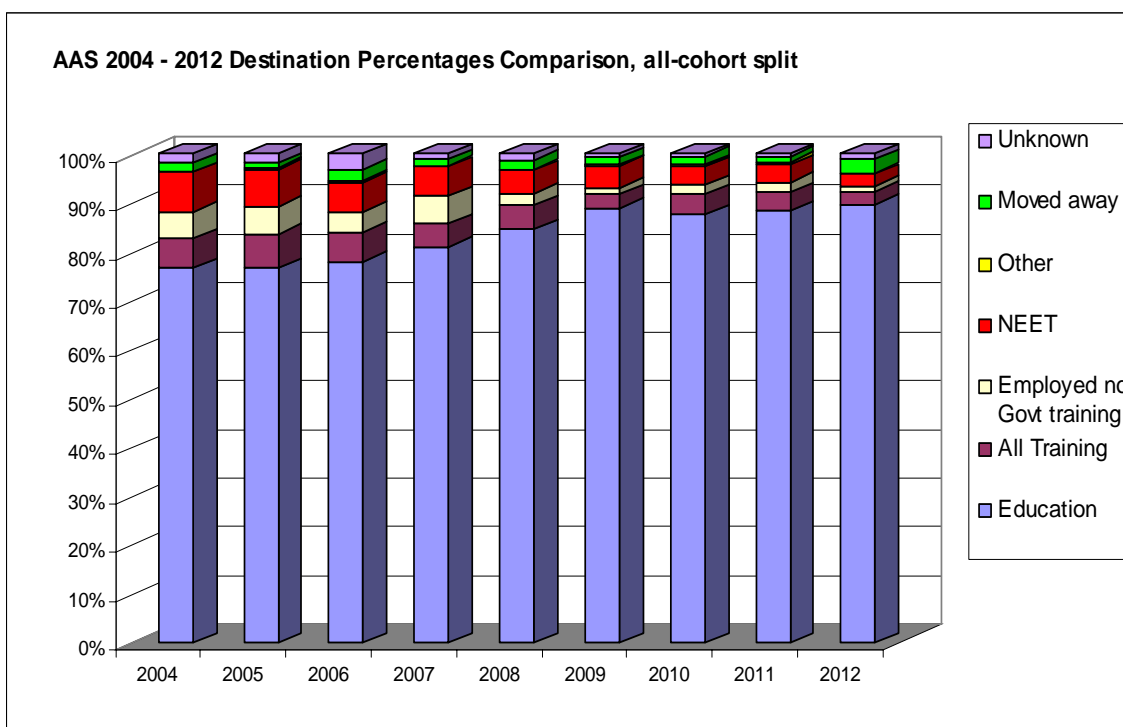
1.3 RPA does not necessarily mean young people must stay in school beyond the age of 16; they will be able to choose from one of the following options:

- Full-time education, such as school, college or home education;
- Work-based learning with training, such as an apprenticeship;
- Part-time education or training if they are employed, self-employed or volunteering for more than 20 hours a week.

- 1.4 The Wolf review of vocational education and subsequent response from the Government provides the context for the reform of education and training and is leading to significant change to the 16-18 education and training environment within which the Government expects the RPA to take place.

## 2 Points to highlight

- 2.1 Provision in Milton Keynes is delivered through a mix of school sixth forms, colleges, private training providers and employers. Provision offers standard study programmes, foundation learning, traineeships, apprenticeships, the *Youth Contract* and other work based learning. The market is dynamic and funding is 'learner-led'. Quality, appropriateness and responsiveness of provision is variable.
- 2.2 The chart below provides an overview of the 'destinations' of young people leaving Year 11. It is a snapshot of their activity taken on 1 November of Year 12. The chart indicates a generally improving performance over a nine year period, with the proportion of young people engaged in learning rising from 80% in 2004 and 92.2% in 2012.



- 2.3 Young people who are NEET (not in education, employment or training) or who are in jobs without training or where activity is classed as 'unknown' are the priority target group for RPA.
- 2.4 Records indicate that within the Year 12 age group there are 95 young people who are NEET, 16 young people in employment with no Government funded training (although this group may be benefiting from employer funded training) and 30 young people where activity is currently 'unknown'; taken together, this

priority target group numbers 141 young people. Within the Year 13 age group this number increases to 214.

2.4 Whilst recognising that there is a significant challenge ahead with regard to RPA, Milton Keynes has a relatively low rate of young people who are NEET compared to our statistical neighbours and for England as a whole.

2.5 The Department for Education 'Adjusted NEET' comparisons for November 2012 provide a reliable benchmark:

	Milton Keynes	Statistical Neighbours	England
Year 12	2.8%	3.5%	3.2%
Year 13	4.3%	5.8%	5.5%

2.6 Work is ongoing across the Local Authority to ensure Milton Keynes is well placed to respond to RPA. It continues to be a regular agenda item at meetings between the Director of Children's Services and secondary head teachers and principals. Key activity includes:

- The funding of tracking and targeted youth support work being led by the Head of Productivity (Integrated Support and Social Care) which includes commissioned services provided by Prospects under the *Connexions* brand;
- The development and quality improvement work across training providers and employers (including apprenticeships) being led by the Employability and Participation Officer within Children and Families;
- The planning and funding of Post 16 education and training places being led by the Head of Sufficiency and Access within Children and Families alongside the work on 'high needs' planning and funding being led by the Head of Disability with the support of the Schools Forum;
- The important economic development work being led by the Corporate Head of Economic Development and Inward Investment which is positioning Milton Keynes as one of the best local authority areas for investment and business.

### Background Papers / Useful Links

Name of document	Web link
NEET statistics and information (Department for Education)	<a href="http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeople/participation/neet">www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeople/participation/neet</a>
Ofsted Data View	<a href="http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/statistics/data-view">www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/statistics/data-view</a>