

12 November 2020		ITEM: 7
Extraordinary Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Inspire 2019/2020 Report		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: N/A	
Report of: Kate Kozlova-Boran, Strategic Lead – Employability and Skills		
Accountable Assistant Director: Michele Lucas, Assistant Director – Education and Skills		
Accountable Director: Sheila Murphy – Corporate Director of Children’s Services		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

This report outlines the work that has been undertaken by Inspire in the academic year 2019-2020. It provides an overview of the work against the key services in Inspire.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 O&S to scrutinise the work that has been undertaken by Inspire in 2019-2020 and offer challenge and support.**
- 1.2 O&S to consider how they could support the various Inspire services, especially when faced with the challenges of the pandemic.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 This report sets out the work of Inspire Your Future which is our integrated Youth Hub working with young people 16-19 and up to 25 with additional needs. As we continue to navigate a very difficult landscape due to Covid 19 we cannot underestimate the significant challenges this presents to our young people 16-25 around gaining employment. We recognise that youth unemployment has increased significantly and that nationally the pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on this age group. Clearly our focus has to be on supporting these young people going forward. We have a strong track record around delivery of programmes, evidenced by our successful On Track Thurrock programme which has provided bespoke tailored programmes to support skills development. However this needs to work in conjunction with our local businesses to identify the vacancies and employment opportunities

going forward. The Adult Community College will also provide support for this on our programme of continual learning.

2.2 Thurrock has maintained its strong commitment to ensuring that young people can access an integrated youth offer which incorporates the following:-

- Inspire - Careers focuses on supporting Thurrock young people in the Skills agenda by providing a high quality careers service which is Matrix (the national quality assurance assessment) it offers impartial careers advice to young people aged 13-18 and up to 25 with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
- Inspire - Skills builds on developing employability skills of Thurrock young people by bringing the world of education to the world of work, this is undertaken via our Careers Enterprise work which links business to schools to support with careers information advice and guidance.
- Inspire – Head Start Housing provides suitable accommodation for care leavers.
- Inspire – Return Home Interview service provides opportunities for missing young people to talk about who, what, where and when to enable coherent, intelligence led interventions.
- Inspire - Youth and Outdoor Team develops young people's confidence by using informal education thus preparing our young people to be resilient as they enter the world of work.
- Inspire – Post 16 SEND works closely with young people with SEND to enable them to access the educational, training and employment opportunities available in Thurrock and looks to provide opportunities for SEND young people of the borough.

2.3 Inspire Thurrock Careers (ITC) work effectively to deliver Careers, Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) to schools in Thurrock under the Section 42A and 45A of The Education Act 1997. Additionally, ITC provide impartial CEIAG to schools as a traded service under the duties of The Education Act 2011. Our statutory responsibilities derive from the 2008 Education and Skills Act (ESA 2008) to make available such services as it considers appropriate to encourage, enable or assist the effective participation in education or training and to collect information about young people in their area in order to identify those who are not participating, or who are at risk of not doing so, and to target resources on those who need them most.

2.4 In providing this duty Inspire Thurrock Careers have successfully kept the NEET and Unknown 16-18 year old figure at 2.5% at end September (compared with 6.2% nationally and 7% statistical neighbours). All three annual reports to Department for Education (Activity Survey, Intended Destinations and September Guarantee) had 100% completion satisfying our statutory duty on tracking and encouraging participation in EET whilst making sure that every single young person in Thurrock had an offer of an education place in September 2020. Thurrock is placed 4th Local Authority in the

country for its combined NEET and Unknown figure, which is a fantastic achievement.

- 2.5 ITC has successfully applied and awarded external funding with National Apprenticeship Service, Make Happen to run programmes encouraging young people into HE, apprenticeships, delivering inspiring apprenticeship and HE awareness assemblies and apprenticeship application workshops. Much of this work due to Covid has been undertaken on digital platforms – engagement figures are being collated to provide evidence of learning from the sessions which will be used to inform the future development of the programmes.
- 2.6 During the Covid-19 pandemic ITC worked closely with our Year 11 and Year 13 students by contacting our young people on an individual basis and creating a Results Day 2020 Aftercare Support Guide which was very well received by all students.
- 2.7 ITC are intensively working with NEET LAC young people by providing weekly innovative Employability workshops, participating in DofE scheme and Prince's Trust teams. This links with our work around Headstart Housing which provides good quality accommodation for our care leavers.
- 2.8 During Covid-19 ITC has provided careers and employability advice from the Inspire Youth Hub, virtually from March 2020 to August 2020, and a blended delivery including some physical meetings from September 2020 ensuring that the most vulnerable are provided with tailored support to enter EET.
- 2.9 Inspire - Head Start Housing is responsible for the provision of suitable accommodation for care leavers. Head Start Housing's remit has extended to include Sanctuary Housing which provides hostel accommodation, as well as provision for Care leavers with special educational needs and or disabilities and a mental health condition(s).
- 2.10 Head Start and the Housing Directorate has identified 3 properties to purchase and modify, for exclusive use by care leavers. The first property, in Grays, should be ready for tenants to move in early November. The second property, in South Ockendon, should be ready for tenants to move in early January 2021.
- 2.11 Head Start is working towards all properties having wifi, council tax relief applied, TV licence, a welcome pack, communal cleaning and garden maintenance as standard.
- 2.12 An equitable rent system is being piloted. Care leavers in employment, sharing accommodation with care leavers in receipt of Personal Allowance/Universal Credit, make a contribution towards the cost of their rent.
- 2.13 From November, the School Wellbeing Service will pilot the provision of a therapeutic space for the high level needs care leavers to explore what is

possible and be signposted to services. Inspire Youth Service mentors will offer mentoring to care leavers with lower level needs. Working in partnership cross directorate and with external partners, we are seeking practical, engaging ways to equip young people with skills to be independent.

- 2.14 Inspire – Return Home Interview service was launched 1 April 2020. The service support young people with return to home interviews. The data outlined below shows the current position after two quarters of reporting:-

	Interviews offered within 72 hours (target 95%)	Successfully interviewed (target 80%)	Report completed within 2 working days (target 95%)
Q1	89.47%	61.18%	88.81%
Q2	97.27%	76.36%	93.63%

- 2.15 Inspire - Skills lead on the work of partners to support pathways into employment, e.g. work undertaken with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). Ongoing work with the LEP is gaining momentum; schools have been partnered with Enterprise Advisers whose work will complement the Careers Strategy in each school. Future exciting projects on enhancing collaboration of education with business are underway an example is work around opportunities to work with young people with learning disabilities.
- 2.16 Inspire – Skills hosted Opportunity Thurrock October 2019, the largest careers fair in Essex in place for 10 consecutive years, where students from Years 8 to 13, attend the event at the London Cruise Terminal, Tilbury, and have the opportunity to meet over 100 exhibitors and learn about the different career opportunities available across the borough and in the immediate surrounding areas. Businesses exhibit from sectors including: construction, creative and cultural, engineering, hospitality, logistics, public services and retail. Universities and educational establishments also attended the event from across the country to promote their courses and further education offer. Clearly as a result of Covid 19 we have had to consider how to take this work forward – we are looking at digital platform to support both learners and employers to explore work opportunities.
- 2.17 Inspire - Youth and Outdoor Education Team have adapted their offer in 2019-2020, principally as a result of Covid-19 the team have delivered extensive detached work in Grays, Tilbury, Ockendon and Purfleet, focusing on providing mentoring and well-being support to Thurrock young people. Since the COVID lockdown the team have engaged with over 1500 young people and their families in a range of activities from our virtual youth programme to learning to sail. The youth team provide a virtual delivery timetable to Thurrock young people which was well received and supports them to stay connected and less isolated.
- 2.18 Inspire – Prince’s Trust continues to deliver the Team programmes even during lockdown; teams that are run post Covid-19 are smaller in size , focus

on young people with SEND and provide a blended delivery programme in line with national guidance. Young people on the programme feel supported and grow in confidence.

- 2.19 Inspire DofE Team have been supporting schools to deliver awards to the students. All young people will have the opportunity to either gain a certificate of achievement or alternatively complete the full award next year. The team are engaging with the National Autistic Society to support them in achieving their Bronze award, and have recently reached out to SENCOs in school to encourage a more inclusive offer.
- 2.20 Inspire -Youth Cabinet have a blended learning approach with a combination of virtual and face to face meetings each month. Focussing on our SEND Young people, the Cabinet are creating workshops and Q&A sessions around youth employment to raise awareness of the barriers SEND face in everyday life in particular with employment.
- 2.21 Inspire – Grangewaters offer a range of outdoor learning opportunities to Thurrock residents. The summer programme was extremely busy. The schools based programme which include alternative education has continued over the summer term and into the autumn. A key area of development has been around SEND provision – this has been designed with young people and is looking to address the need to provide more post 16 provision for this cohort of learners.
- 2.22 During the complex and rapidly changing situation of Covid-19, Inspire have supported Thurrock young people by understanding the challenges facing young people and schools, ensure that we are providing them with the necessary resources to support and tackle youth unemployment. Inspire has joined the National Youth Employment Forum enabling Inspire to be at the forefront of youth developments in the country. This involvement has led to Inspire progressing with the Government-led Kickstart flagship programme providing employment opportunities to Thurrock young people. This scheme will come into effect in November 2020 and will begin to tackle youth unemployment in the borough which has seen an increase due to the pandemic.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 The Council has a statutory duty to track and provide educational and training opportunities for its young people and as such Inspire are working on ensuring that the whole system approach is taken to ensure young people are supported, have the best possible careers guidance which is inspirational and aspirational and that they are developing their skills necessary to prepare them for the world of work.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 Children's Overview and Scrutiny have a clear and accountable governance responsibility around supporting children and young people – the report will enable committee members to be reassured of the progress of Inspire in delivering on the objectives of the Local Authority and provide scrutiny. We would ask committee members to consider how they would like us report back on progress in the future.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

5.1 Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

6.1 This report contributes to the following corporate priorities:- create a great place for learning and opportunity

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **David May**
Strategic Lead Finance

There are no financial implications related to this report – however it should be noted that Inspire has generated income to support the work around skills development which has enabled Inspire to offer more support to young people across Thurrock.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Lucinda Bell**
Education Lawyer

The Committee is asked to note the report content under the remit of the Committee's terms of reference and powers and to consider how best to support Inspire projects at this difficult time. It is not asked to make any particular decision.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**
Team Manager – Community Engagement and Project Monitoring Officer

Supporting our children and young people who have special educational needs is a key strategic priority for Thurrock Council – with the current

position around the global pandemic we recognise that young people will be struggling around employment opportunities. As a result the partnership arrangements with local businesses will provide opportunities for young people going forward.

7.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

None

Report Author:

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