

Charter 6.5 Positive Destinations for Winter Leavers

Improvement Project Title: Improving Positive Destinations for Young People who leave school in Winter
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Aim statement Reduce the number of winter leavers with no positive destination by 50% by 2021
Link to Local Outcome Improvement Plan: This Improvement Project will support Stretch Outcome 6: <i>95% of children living in our priority localities will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026</i> The project sits with the Attainment and Transitions (A&T) Improvement Group which is an Integrated Children's Services (ICS) sub group. The project is also supported through Aberdeen Foyer's Early Action Systems Change initiative which includes a wide range of individuals from across the system and young people using a Collective Impact approach. Learning and fresh insights from the project will be shared with the A&T group and ICS board.
Why is this important Overview Winter Leavers are young people whose 16 th birthday falls between 1 st October and the end of February. These young people join school under 5 years old and rather than leave to go to college or other positive destinations at the end of the summer term in S.4 they are required to return to school until the Christmas holidays of S.5. They are outside the standard cycle of college entrance and do not always fit with or wish to access the school curriculum which is geared towards Highers. There are approximately 250 young people who leave school in winter. On average and according to SDS data, around 50 of these young people do not move on to a positive destination and that after 6 months around 35 are still not in a positive destination. (SDS) All schools know who is a winter leaver or potential winter leaver in terms of their birthday, and for most of these they will know their intended destination and intended leaving date. By the end of S.2 most schools know who is having a positive transitional experience and who

is not. It is also very common to start to lose young people from Easter in S.4 as there are no external exams sat for Nat 4. Disengagement from Easter could form part of the reason that there is currently no dedicated offer that can work for young people planning on leaving in winter and appropriate activities that are dedicated to this. The numbers are smaller too so there is difficulty in achieving economy of scale to ensure choice.

The Early Action System Change (EASC) initiative supports both prevention and early intervention and intends exploring short, medium and longer-term change ideas that will reduce educational disadvantage and give young people real choice in their futures. The Early Action System Change have formed an improvement team to work together with the aim to reduce the number of winter leavers with no positive destination by 50% by January 2021. This ensures the EASC initiative is supporting a LOIP project and contributing to the LOIP stretch outcome aim to increase positive destinations and raise attainment.

Costs will be reduced in the future due to more young people moving into quality sustained positive destinations. The costs of supporting young people following their departure from school through health, community justice and housing could be reduced.

Understanding the Problem Space

We have broken down the general term Winter Leavers into three cohorts - **current** (leaving in Dec 19, **past** – left in Dec 18 and Dec 17 and **potential** – those who have anticipated leave dates of Dec 19 and Dec 20). What is missing is the voice of young people. We have key data sets for each cohort however little evidence around lived experience. Understanding the transition journey of Winter Leavers will improve understanding of how to identify vulnerable young people who are and will be Winter Leavers and the interventions that could support young people more effectively enabling co-produced solutions.

It has been challenging and time consuming to identify what data is gathered and to drill down to what the data can tell us, bearing in mind that our analysis is only as good as the data on the system. We know for each cohort of Winter Leavers that the following data sets exist:

Winter Leavers

Potential

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) capture 'Anticipated leave dates' and 'Preferred Occupation' routes from schools for S.4 pupils via the Data Hub with the aim of having this captured by November. Anecdotally, some schools are able to identify who will be seeking to leave school at 16 as early as S.2 which raises the question –
Can we capture data at S.2 and what difference would this make in planning?

Current

Again the 'Anticipated leave dates' provide an indication as to who is anticipating leaving school as a winter leaver.

Correlation with attendance rates would provide information on those most at risk of leaving with no positive destination.

This raises the questions - How can we plan for a group of young people across the city if there is a little pocket in each school – how do we coalesce around this? Although the data is present it is not known at a city-wide level so solutions at present are only developed at individual school level.

Left

Data around this cohort can be found using SDS info that captures 'School leaver destinations'. These are captured when a young person leaves school, in the October following and then published by Scottish Government in the next February resulting in a significant lag. For instance, a pupil leaving in December 19 will have their initial destination captured (SEEMIS), then a snapshot taken of their destination on 1st October 2020 before stats are published in February 2021. Due to the time lag it is difficult to use this data to support planning, but it can be used to track impact.

On a practical level SDS report that their post school team work with leavers who may be vulnerable and who have no destination. Work coaches are working with schools to support transition for young people. SDS and partners find that tracking and confirming destinations becomes harder as leavers get older and further away from their school date left. Most, if not all, 16-year olds have known destinations but there are increasing numbers of unconfirmed destinations once they are 18 or 19 years of age (as can be seen in the Participation Measure)

Data from DWP is less effective as a means of tracking outcomes due to Universal Credit as young people can be in work and still on benefits. GDPR has made data sharing more complicated.

Analysis of school leaver destinations by SDS and partners indicate that the majority of Winter Leavers for Dec 19 are male and live in the following school areas: St Machar, Hazelhead, Lochside, Northfield, SIMD areas (where they live as opposed to which schools they attend is recorded by SDS).

Further analysis of school leaver destinations show the following broad characteristics:

- Those most likely to be in a negative destination have left school earlier than the main cohort (winter leaver as opposed to staying on to summer)
- The bulk went to school in a SIMD area
- Males are disproportionately represented in negative destinations as opposed to females

- Characteristics of those who have moved into a negative destination include: motivation/engagement, sporadic attendance, dropping off engagement when opportunities become real (confidence?), homelessness, criminality and influencers (lack of positive and also some negative influencers)

Generally significant numbers who are not moving into positive destinations from SIMD areas are winter leavers. We need to be confident that our assumptions and trends are correct and engaging with young people directly in understanding their own journeys will be essential in future planning of solutions and further change ideas.

In the last year SDS captured experiences and stories with a small number of young people – that surfaced insights into patterns of non-attendance, other issues going on in their lives meant that planning for their future was way over there, all complex. SDS concluded that interventions at S3 or S4 was too late and that earlier intervention might have meant the negative experiences could have potentially been avoided. Foyer have also gathered various case studies over the years that demonstrate earlier interventions that are based on strong relationships can and do make a difference.

We are also aware that there are challenges around young people choosing options – difficulties in gaining access to the learning opportunities as they may not be in school, may have put in forms late. Some young people are nowhere near equipped to choose and express anxiety about choosing. SDS have been in negotiations with schools and advisors have been reviewing ideas. SDS have cross referenced attainment with engagement rates and found outcomes are better, indicating coaching relationships are really important.

This has informed our test of change around SDS working with S.2 and S.3 outlined below.

Offers to winter leavers makes it difficult to provide accredited learning between Aug-December. This can and does lead to young people disengaging. Some young people are being directed to college as exceptional entrants, and further analysis is required around the data captured by NESCOL around early leavers. When a young person leaves school to go to college they are removed from the register to go on to the college register.

We are conscious that we do not want this Improvement project to have unintended consequences in particular any unnecessary duplication that is in our system and to avoid bits of system working against each other by accident. We are therefore aware of other Improvement Projects taking place across the city through being a member of the ATA Outcome Group around improving outcomes for vulnerable learners including e.g.

Increase the number of care experienced young people accessing a positive and sustained destination by 25% by 2022.

Increase the confidence of parents and young people to recognise and seek support in response to deteriorating mental wellbeing by 2022.

Increase the range and number of accredited courses being provided by schools & partners by 25% by 2021.

Increase the number of young people taking up foundation apprenticeships to 142 by 2021

Increase the number of young people who leave school with a minimum of SVQ 3 in literacy and numeracy and 4 other qualifications to 98% 2021.

Increase the number of young people living in Quintiles 1,2 and 3 who achieve a sustained positive destination by working with communities to 90% 2022.

Measures:

Outcome measures

- % of Winter Leavers with a positive Destination
- % of Winter Leavers who attain qualification on leaving

Process measures

- School Attendance Rates for Winter Leavers between March to December each year
- Number of Winter Leavers offered an individualized curriculum between April to December each year
- % of Winter Leavers who report their learning experience on leaving as good or very good

We may identify other process measures when we clarify which change ideas we intend to take forward.

Balancing measures

- Number of young people recognising improved mental health and wellbeing
- Number of young people reporting hope for their future
- Number of young people reporting increased self-worth

Change ideas

It is anticipated that we will break the improvement programme down into smaller improvement projects so that we can underpin challenges and barriers – to continually test and learn. We have identified the following change ideas taking into account the three identified cohorts of winter leavers – current (leaving in Dec 19, past – left in Dec 18 and Dec 17 and potential – those who have anticipated leave dates of Dec 19 and Dec 20):

- **To what extent does individual journey mapping with young people increase understanding and planning around improving outcomes for young people who leave school in winter with the aim of gaining understanding from young people's lived experience to be able to share learning?**

- **What solutions can be introduced in relation to accredited Literacy and Numeracy within two schools during 2019/20 through building partnerships that would allow us to trial a Winter Leaver Curriculum?** Aim would be to enhance young people's attainment and that they value and see as worthwhile doing plus employers see value too. Focus on some of the growth areas. E.g. Food sector, Care – where there is employment opportunities.

- **How would a Multi-disciplinary Winter Leaver Programme targeted at a cohort of up to 10 identified Winter leavers improve young people's ability to develop confidence and life skills empowering them to improve their own outcomes during 2019/20?**

Lots of young people who are winter leavers can end up wasting time as there are fewer choices to access an appropriate option for attainment. What are the essential life skills that young people require and how can this drive the options? Food Home Ec, etc. College provision, working with SDS and Foyer Futures to support coaching, college experience to build capacity to do so. Experiencing lifestyle and autonomy

- **What impact can SDS interventions during S.2 and S.3 have on the engagement levels of vulnerable learners and potential winter leavers between 19/20 and 22/23 across two schools?**

As part of the School - SDS partnership agreement in St Machar Academy, and aligned to the school improvement plan, earlier engagement activities will be tested for younger pupils. E.g. S2 pupils being offered an employability option as one of their master classes. (The master classes run three times per year, over 2 periods over 10 weeks)

Similarly, in Northfield Academy, as part of the School-SDS partnership agreement, and aligned to the school improvement plan, we have agreed test an increase in the one to one offer to S3 pupils who have more needs. Also, for pupils who are struggling to attend school, SDS will test the offer of career appointments in a community venue in Northfield.

- **To what extent does an 'early alert' system, in addition to the data hub, to inform careers and other support staff about learners who are at risk of dropping out of college have on college retention rates of winter leavers during 19/20 and 20/21?**

Potential risks and/or barriers to success & actions to address these

- Resources
- Effective Communication
- Competing improvement projects in the same localities
- Lack of connection with DYW
- Lack of buy in from young people plus their parents and carers

- Climate for change
- We are aware that the national data reporting methods around positive destinations has a time lag of anything up to a year. Therefore, we will attempt where possible to record and monitor outcomes directly using local data.

Project Team:

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 Nicola Graham (SDS Area Manager)
 Carole Sneddon (Aberdeen City Council Opportunities for All)
 Joanne Hesford (ACC Head Teacher St Machar)
 Gavin Morrison (ACC Head Teacher Northfield)
 Beth Finnigan (Aberdeen Foyer Team Leader)
 Martyna Lambon (Aberdeen Foyer Educational Psychologist)
 Young People/Families
 Brian Dunn (NESCOL Head of Faculty)
 Sacha Will (ACC Improvement Programme Manager)

Outline Project Plan

Project Stage	Actions	Timescale
Getting Started (Project Score 1-3)	<p>Convene working group</p> <p>Mine data to identify locations where most vulnerable winter leavers go to school and where the yp are who are currently likely to not be in positive destinations when leaving at Winter (Observatory can zone in on postcodes)</p> <p>Map current options for Winter Leavers</p> <p>Engage with young people and their families and carers who are Winter Leavers and potential winter leavers to find out more from them.</p> <p>Understand perspectives from the ‘Influencers’ in yp life really important. Key process measure may be family engagement</p> <p>Map Quality and sustainability of positive destinations achieved Identify and understand the correlation between winter Leavers without a positive destination and those who are not educated in their home community ie those who are accessing their education in another locality. Is there a role around community? Aberdeen City Leavers data indicates a significant number of the non-positive destinations were children who did not attend their local school.</p>	By September 2019

	<p>College course piloted in January 2019 by NESCOL need to capture learning.</p> <p>Coordinate with other Project charters, e.g. Extent to which we can pull together the variety of resources to provide a more coherent pathway. Alec Duncan – DYW lead starting to map out what all the partners involved in DYW and what activity support they are delivering. E.g. Career ready – what do they offer and what do they do? Overview and summary page, directory?</p> <p>Review PEF directory – Caroline HT at Orchardbrae</p> <p>SDS Performance Team session</p>	
<p>Designing and Testing Changes (Project Score 4-7)</p>	<p>What activities are required to start testing changes?</p> <p>Any change ideas must be informed by lived experience as well as data.</p> <p>Prototype change ideas with working group including young people and their parents/carers.</p> <p>Where is the right climate? Go where the energy is where the conditions for change are right.</p> <p>Need to take into account changes as a result of No one Left Behind policy changes to employability, DYW review, FA's</p>	<p>By January 2020</p>
<p>Implementing and sustaining changes that demonstrate improvement (Project Score 7-10)</p>	<p>What actions would be required to implement and sustain the changes that have resulted in improvement?</p> <p>The successful elements of the change ideas would be tested in other schools. Would need engagement, support and understanding of schools, young people and their families/carers.</p> <p>Changes to data recording and use of data to aid coordination and development of solutions with young people enabling a city wide approach through improved data sharing.</p> <p>Engagements in and with local communities to support and add value to the change ideas</p>	<p>By December 2020</p>
<p>Spreading Changes (Project Score 9-10)</p>	<p>What actions are required to reach the full scale of the project?</p> <p>Shift resource to earlier interventions</p>	<p>By December 2022</p>