Purpose

1. This paper provides the Council with a report on the delivery of the September Guarantee in 2008.

Recommendation

2. Members of the Council are recommended to receive and comment on this report.

Background

3. At its meeting on 30 July 2008, Council agreed a programme of reports it wished to receive over the coming year on issues around young people’s learning and skills.

September Guarantee

Overview

4. The September Guarantee was introduced for the first time across the whole country in September 2007. It guarantees young people leaving school at the end of year 11 an offer of an appropriate place in learning by September of that year.

5. For 2008, the guarantee has also been extended to 17 year olds.

6. The September Guarantee has proved to be a successful way of harnessing information, advice and guidance and provision for young people with the effect of increasing young people’s participation in learning post 16.
This paper provides the final position on the delivery of the September Guarantee 2008; the issues arising and at annex A, consideration of the impact of the Guarantees in 2007 and 2008 and preparations for the Guarantee in September 2009.

Delivery of the Guarantee for September 2008

The final position on the delivery of the September Guarantee for 2008 (as evidenced by Connexions data as at the end of October) demonstrates that 94.2% of this year’s year 11 leaver cohort has been made an offer of learning i.e., 588,494 young people have been made an offer. Only 2.7% have not been made an offer (other categories into which young people are classified are: not ready for learning 2.9% and not recorded 0.2%). The same data for 17 year olds leaving learning shows 79.7% to have been made an offer i.e., 195,901 young people with 7.2% not having received an offer (not ready for learning 9.6% and not recorded 3.4%).

The final position for delivery of the ‘year 11’ Guarantee for 2007 was 91%. Clearly we have exceeded this in 2008. DCSF and LSC colleagues see this as a significant success for young people’s participation in learning post 16, particularly in driving down the numbers of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). Beverley Hughes MP will be writing in early December to local authorities, government offices and the LSC to congratulate them on this achievement. In parallel to this, Mark Haysom will write to all providers (as was also the case last year) to thank them for their role in this achievement and to pass on the thanks of the Minister.

Issues arising

The overriding message for the LSC is that whilst in general there have been few issues arising about a lack of provision to meet learner need, where this has been the case, it has been as a result of a lack of apprenticeship places for young people. This has been especially true for apprenticeship places in construction and engineering. In instances where an apparent lack of provision has been a barrier to a young person receiving an offer, LSC colleagues have worked closely with the local authority concerned to address this.

At a national level, we are currently discussing this within the wider context of the both the apprenticeship agenda and NEET agenda and the future role of the National Apprenticeship Service and the National Apprenticeship Vacancy Matching Service.

Process

A positive aspect of this year’s September Guarantee process has been the significant involvement of government offices in working with local authorities to monitor progress and address any issues arising. This results from the development, by DCSF colleagues with Directors for Children and Learners,

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1 This was the only form of the September Guarantee in place in 2007
of specific guidance for government offices on their role in achieving the September Guarantee.

13 Early in the process for this year, there were some issues relating to Connexions’ ability to enter data onto the National Client Caseload Information System (NCCIS) which led initially to a data back log. This issue appears to have resulted from a combination of the transfer of Connexions into local authorities and from the introduction of some new data systems. It should be noted that the latter has been more significant than the former and was subsequently successfully resolved.

LSC monitoring of delivery

15 During the period June to October 2008, the LSC’s national lead on young people’s participation met with DCSF colleagues on a monthly basis to discuss progress on delivery of the Guarantees and any issues arising. This information was then shared and discussed with the LSC’s 14-19 regional leads on a monthly basis. Since September of this year, this information has also been reported on a monthly basis to the LSC’s 14-19 Board.

Clearance

16 This paper has been cleared by Rob Wye, National Director of Young People’s Learning and Skills.

Communications

17 No external communications necessary.

Impact assessment

18 The various initiatives and activities described in this paper are intended to have a positive impact on the learning opportunities of young people, and in particular of disadvantaged young people.

Resources

19 The costs associated with the initiatives and activities described in this paper are within existing plans for increased participation by young people.

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Research into the impact of the September Guarantee in 2007 and 2008

1 In order to assess the impact of the September Guarantee in 2007 and 2008 and to inform its operation, we have begun some research to consider (in 2007/08) what programmes young people aged 16 have been studying; the length of these programmes and in which parts of the sector they are studying ie, has the Guarantee changed the profile across the sector. We will also be considering issues such as the impact of EMA and for those young people who did not take up the offer (across both years), why they did not take up the offer of a place in learning.

2 The outcomes of the research will be reported in early Spring 2009.

September Guarantee 2009

3 On 17 November, DCSF colleagues held a workshop which included both regional and national colleagues from the LSC as well as Connexions, Government Office and local authority colleagues. The purpose of this workshop was to inform and refine the September Guarantee process for September 2009.

4 Guidance on the Guarantees for September 2009 is expected to be published by DCSF in late December 2008.

5 In early 2008, as preparation for the delivery of the September Guarantee in 2008, the LSC’s 14-19 regional leads discussed the operation and issues arising from the delivery of the Guarantee in 2007. This discussion was invaluable to operation of the Guarantee in 2008 and as a result, it is envisaged that a similar discussion will take place early in 2009.