

Report to:	EDUCATION ATTAINMENT IMPROVEMENT BOARD
Date:	14 January 2020
Reporting Officer:	David Berry, Head of Employment and Skills
Subject:	POST 16 SKILLS AND PARTICIPATION
Report Summary:	This summary report sets out an overview of Level 3 post 16 performance and participation rates in Tameside. Tameside has good performance and levels of participation.
Recommendations:	The Board is recommended to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the report. 2. Support the continued good performance and participation Post 16.
Corporate Plan:	Good outcomes at Post 16 support the delivery of the Starting, Living and Ageing Well elements of the Corporate Plan.
Policy Implications:	Effective performance at Level 3 supports economic growth.
Financial Implications: (Authorised by the statutory Section 151 Officer & Chief Finance Officer)	There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.
Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)	Statistical data provides a valuable insight and means of gauging performance against past and national markers. It further provides useful data to inform the Council decision making as regards key strategic imperatives such as education, economy, health and wellbeing which are all inter-connected outcomes for the residents of Tameside and the most vulnerable within it.
Risk Management:	High quality Level 3 institutions and provision is essential for increased skill levels and economic growth
Access to Information:	This report does not contain information which warrants its consideration in the absence of the Press or members of the public.
Background Information:	The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting David Berry Head of Employment and Skills



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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The overall picture of Level 3 performance (equivalent to A-Level) and participation in education, employment or training is improving in Tameside with high quality institutions and an increasing number of residents engaged. This summary report provides an overview of performance and sets out next steps to continue our progression as part of a vibrant economy for Tameside. Our approach is to view skills as a continuum throughout the life course.
- 1.2 Level 3 provision includes a range of elements including academic, vocational and apprenticeships.
- 1.3 Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GM) launched the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) in 2019 which identified skills and productivity as key areas of focus. Tameside is currently developing an Inclusive Growth Strategy to shape and deliver on skills aligned to the GMLIS.

2. ECONOMIC CONTEXT

- 2.1 Improving skill levels is vital to Tameside's inclusive growth and population health and wellbeing. Tameside currently has challenges at all levels of skills for our adult working age population (set out in table 1 below). The percentage of Tameside residents with no qualification has improved from 10.9 to 10.1 in the last year. The last year has also seen a 1.2% increase of population with a level 2 qualification and an increase of 1.4% for level 3.

Skill level	% of Tameside population	% of England population
No qualification	10.1	7.8
Level 2+	70.3	74.7
Level 3+	47.5	57.8
Level 4+	26.2	39.3

- 2.2 The importance of achieving outcomes in education up to the age of 16 and effective basic skills provision (entry and Levels 1 and 2) by providers such as Tameside Adult Community Education will support the foundation of a higher skilled population.
- 2.3 Skill levels can be considered against levels of both pay and productivity, Tameside workers earn an average of £479.9 per week showing a slight increase in the last year, compared to the North West average of £549.8. With the advent of the Government's welfare reform programme including Universal Credit it is essential that Tameside residents who are in work are supported to raise their earnings. The GMLIS identifies in work progression skills and productivity as key areas and Tameside is keen to trial new services with partners in this area.
- 2.4 Tameside currently has an unemployment rate of 4% compared to the Northwest rate of 3.5%. The unemployment rate has fallen by 0.7% in the last year. Economic inactivity levels in Tameside have fallen from of 23.4% to 22.1%. They are above the UK average of 21.1%. Tameside's 18-24 year old unemployment is at 6.8% compared to a national rate of 4%, this is despite strong participation performance at age 16-17. Unemployment has fallen steadily across the UK although it should be noted that quality employment including jobs paid at or above the real living wage or requiring higher level skills are essential to developing a vibrant economy.

- 2.5 The latest data available shows that in 2017 29.4% of Tameside's 18 year olds gained entry to university slightly lower when compared to the England average of 32.6%. The growth of degree apprenticeships provides alternative options to academic study. It is important that Tameside residents' aspirations are raised and matched to broaden our higher level skill base.

3. PARTICIPATION

- 3.1 Local Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) data is up from 2.4% to 3.0%, however this currently includes 4 people awaiting a start date. National data published in September 2019 shows Tameside performing above the national average for 16-17 year olds (NEET and unknown) at 4.8% compared to 5.5% for England. Our strong performance in keeping unknowns to a low level sits behind this outcome. Tameside is in the top quintile nationally for September Guarantee performance at 98% compared to 94.5% for England. The September Guarantee measures the offer of an education place to 16-17 year olds. Our participation rate remains above the England average at 93.1% compared to 92.5%. Good participation is important for achieving outcomes in learning.
- 3.2 This is positive performance supported by good quality careers advice. Participation rates need to be understood in the context of outcomes and transition into well paid employment. Young people should have access to a high quality Career Guidance and Support Service (CGSS) that caters for a broad range of needs and which contributes to improving the outcomes and progression for young people. The service will also be required to track outcomes and destinations of young people leaving school and report on these quarterly to commissioners. Positive Steps has recently secured the CGSS contract to deliver the service until 2024.

4. PERFORMANCE AT LEVEL 3

- 4.1 Tameside's A-Level performance in 2019 is comparable to England with an average grade of C+. Tameside's average points score is 29.9 slightly lower than 31.84 for England. Participation in A-Levels is increased to 999 in 2018/2019 from 934 students in 2016/17 and 774 in 2014/15. Tameside's increases in A-level students are marginally better than the national trend. The future of local provision is strong with both Tameside College and Ashton Sixth Form College rated as 'Good' by Ofsted. High quality teaching and learning is essential to improve learning outcomes.
- 4.2 Tameside's Tech Level 'vocational' performance in 2018/19 at Level 3 is positive with a 32.78 average point score, higher than the England average of 28.43. Tameside's Applied General 'vocational' performance was 25.00 slightly below the England average of 28.
- 4.3 Tameside has maintained consistent with 2,050 apprenticeship overall starts (all age) in 2018/2019 This is the same amount as in 2017/2018. Tameside has increased its level 4 apprentices (degree equivalent).
- 4.4 The percentage of 19 year olds achieving a level 3 was 52.7% in 2019 compared to 57.2% in England. This shows that further work is needed to increase Level 3 outcome rates at 16-19 as well as across the entire population.

5. CONCLUSION FUTURE PROVISION AND NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 The opening of the Tameside One campus has provided further high quality skills facilities and provision for the Borough. This includes the opening of an Advanced Skills Centre alongside Clarendon College. To further enhance the Borough's offer a new Skills Construction Centre in will open in 2020. Vision Tameside continues to be a key strand of our work to raise aspirations, skills and to grow the local economy.
- 5.2 The Tameside Learner Provider Network (LPN) was relaunched in 2016 and has grown into a strong strategic and operational network of providers to support the development of new and quality provision. The network now provides an opportunity to lead a multi-agency approach to the local skills agenda identifying gaps and supporting shared solutions to provision. With the devolution of the adult education budget from central government to GMCA the local LPN will take a strong role in coordinating and improving provision.
- 5.3 As set out in this report there are some core strengths in Tameside's Level 3 provision which can be further strengthened through the pursuit of the following activity as part of a wider strategy for Inclusive Growth in 2020:
- Raise educational performance pre Level 3 and through the life course
 - Improve the quality and availability of Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG), utilising externally funded provision in co-ordination with locally commissioned services.
 - Realise the potential of the Vision Tameside Campus and new construction campus
 - Develop a stronger Level 4 (degree equivalent) offer in Tameside building on Vision Tameside
 - Ensure the Devolution of Adult Education Budget to Greater Manchester supports residents to gain basic skills essential for progression into employment or higher level learning
 - Continue to develop of an Inclusive Growth Strategy, including a clear and ambitious action plan for Skills.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 It is recommended that the Board note the content of the report.