



1 Introduction

Appointment of the Committee

1.1 The Advisory Committee on Post-School Education and Training of Young People with Special Needs was appointed by the then Scottish Education and Industry Minister, Brian Wilson, in April 1998 to examine the range of needs among young people who require additional support to participate in post-school education or training. The Chairman of the Committee was Robert Beattie, MBE, FRSA, Community Investment Co-ordinator at IBM. The Committee has been known from the time of its appointment as the Beattie Committee. In the course of the Committee's period of work, Robert Beattie was appointed as Chairman of the new Scottish Further Education Funding Council.

1.2 The Committee comprised 15 members with a wide range of skills and knowledge drawn from various backgrounds such as education, training, careers service, the voluntary sector, social work and business. There were also representatives from The Scottish Executive and the enterprise networks. A list of members is set out at Annex A.

Purpose of the Committee

1.3 The Committee was established to take forward the Government's commitment, set out in the Lifelong Learning paper, "Opportunity Scotland" (Cm 4048, September 1998), to increase both the participation and attainment of young people in post-school education and training; and to help young people improve their employability. The establishment of the Committee is one of the Government's initiatives in this area. Others include: Higher Still; the Education for Work and Enterprise agenda; the right to time off for study or training; careers education and guidance; "Opportunities for Everyone"-a strategic framework for further education; and a new approach to community education. In March 1999, a consultation paper, "Opportunities and Choices," was issued to gather views on future post-school provision for 16-18 year olds. A key objective of all these measures is to address problems of underachievement by raising levels of skills and qualifications and, by doing so, to reduce the number of young people at risk of social exclusion.

1.4 The Government also recognises, however, that there is a significant number of young people who face major barriers to participation in post-school learning and future employment because of the severity and complexity of their problems. The range of needs can include physical disabilities, learning disabilities, mental health problems, low educational attainment,

Introduction

poor basic skills and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. These are the young people most at risk of social exclusion through low attainment, unemployment and subsequent disaffection. The challenge for the Beattie Committee has been to review that diverse range of needs and to make recommendations that will improve the nature and scope of provision, engage the young people and enhance their future employability.

Terms of Reference

1.5 The terms of reference, agreed by the Committee at the first meeting, and approved by the Minister, were:

"to review the range of needs among young people who require additional support to make the transition to post-school education and training or employment; the assessment of need; the quality and effectiveness of current provision in improving skills and employability; and to make recommendations to improve coherence, continuity and progression."

1.6 The terms of reference reflect the Committee's view that the term "special needs" did not fully reflect the range of needs among the young people who were to be the subject of their considerations. Nor did it fit with the wider concept of Inclusiveness which is the overriding theme of the report.

1.7 We should note that the Committee was not asked to include higher education in its terms of reference because of the significant activity already under way within the higher education sector to improve provision for students with disabilities, and to widen access for students. Also the terms of reference did not include schools. However, as the theme of transition was central to our report, the Committee looked at some aspects of school provision which specifically related to the transition of young people.

The Committee's Approach

1.8 The young people who have been the subject of the Committee's discussions are not a uniform group. They have distinct and different needs. This has been one of the prime concerns of the Committee from our earliest meetings. For that reason, we have adopted a consultative approach and sought views and ideas from all the relevant agencies and organisations. This has been a major part of our work. We also set out to get views from the "clients" of services, young people and their parents/carers.

1.9 Our first task was to identify the priority areas that we wished to address and which would form the basis of our consultation. We drew up a list of the key issues and this list subsequently became known as our "shopping list". The key issues were:

- transitions from school to college and/or training, and ultimately to employment;

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- assessment and identification of education and training needs;
 - staff development and training;
 - adequacy and appropriateness of provision;
 - arrangements for transfer and progression;
 - involving employers.

The full "shopping list" is set out in Annex B.

Consultation

1.10 The Committee undertook extensive consultation in a variety of ways from July 1998 to January 1999. This included:

- written consultation: the Committee received responses from a wide range of individuals and organisations;
- an Evidence Day: the Committee invited well-known academic researchers, practitioners and a parent to present evidence. There was also evidence from young people themselves presented by video and tape recording;
- Consultation Workshops: these were held in Glasgow, Dundee and Inverness in January 1999 to stimulate debate on the issues addressed in the written consultations. The workshops were attended by representatives of voluntary organisations, local authorities, LECs, colleges, career service companies, and parents and teachers;
- discussions with the business community: these were arranged through Scottish Business in the Community and held in Inverclyde, Easterhouse, Craigmillar, Dundee and the Borders;

Reports of the consultation exercises are contained in a series of background documents.

1.11 The Committee visited a range of provision across Scotland although this was a limited exercise due to the relatively short time period for our work. Visits were made to:

JET 2000: a training provider with centres in the Highlands. The visits were to Inverness and Dingwall.

Jobs 4 All: a supported employment programme and 'New Deal For Disabled' pilot project in Thurso.

Glasgow City Building: a training provider managed by Glasgow City Council.

Introduction

Castlecliff Training: a training provider in Edinburgh

John Wheatley College: Glasgow.

Kilmarnock College.

Hansel Alliance: an organisation which offers residential accommodation and/or sheltered employment for people with learning disabilities.

Cleveden Secondary School: Glasgow.

The New School, Butterstone: Perthshire.

The Mary Russell School: Renfrewshire.

Reports of the visits are included in the background documents.

1.12 The Committee has also received, both formally and informally, a substantial body of evidence from young people and their parents/carers, voluntary organisations and practitioners. Much of this evidence is based on personal experience but, in our view, it is an important strand of evidence that complements the research reports and statistical information. It represents the actual experiences of young people and parents/carers in receiving the services and of practitioners in delivering them.

1.13 Among the responses to the consultation and other evidence there were examples of projects designed to meet the needs of young people who require additional support. Throughout the report, we have used some of these examples to illustrate the nature of the problems faced by young people and strategies for addressing those problems. It is important to emphasise that the examples used are not the only ones in their field and that, in almost every case, there are other examples of careers service companies, training providers, colleges and voluntary organisations adopting similar approaches.

1.14 The Committee commissioned the following research:

- a wide-ranging review of existing literature, focussing on material relevant to Scotland but drawing on experience from the rest of the UK;
- Focus Group research where discussions were held with a range of young people across Scotland, some with physical disabilities, learning disabilities or mental health problems, and others who had experienced emotional and social difficulties;
- a survey of further education provision in Scotland and an analysis of the data.

Full reports of the research are contained in the series of background documents. These documents are available from the address on the back page of the report

The Wider Context

1.15 The work of the Beattie Committee has covered a wide range of issues and has inevitably touched directly, or indirectly, on the duties and responsibilities of a wide range of agencies. We have, at every stage, sought to take into account best practice in current arrangements in post-school guidance, education and training. We have also considered, as far as possible, the potential links between our proposals and recommendations and new developments in other areas, particularly in local government where there are important and significant developments affecting children and young people's services.

1.16 The Committee has reviewed current arrangements on guidance, further education and training; the statutory and regulatory framework; and recent developments which will have an impact on the transition to post-school education or training, and employment. This was the context for the Committee's discussions and the shaping of the proposals and recommendations. This wider context is set out in Annex C.

Short-Life Working Groups

1.17 The Committee identified specific issues to be taken forward in short-life working groups. In line with our consultative approach, we invited representatives of a range of agencies to join Committee members on the sub-groups. This enabled us to draw on a wider pool of knowledge and expertise. A list of members of the short-life working groups is in Annex D. The sub-groups were :

- Further Education Survey (later enhanced to consider disability issues)
- Information Flow
- Inclusiveness
- Role of Key Worker
- Funding

Structure of the report

1.18 Chapter 2 is the cornerstone of the report. It presents the Committee's vision of Inclusiveness as the underlying principle that should underpin the design and delivery of guidance, further education and training to match the needs, abilities and aspirations of the individual.

1.19 The first part of the Committee's remit was to review the range of needs among young people. We have considered reports and research evidence about the nature and characteristics of the young people who are likely to require additional support to participate in post-school learning. Chapter 3 draws on this body of information and sets out a profile of the young people.

Introduction

1.20 Chapters 4 and 5 set out proposals and recommendations for improving communications and joint working between agencies (Chapter 4) and developing key worker support (Chapter 5).

1.21 Chapters 6 and 7 set out proposals and recommendations for improving transition arrangements for young people leaving school and to assist future transitions. Chapter 6 deals with aspects of guidance and support and Chapter 7 addresses issues arising in assessment procedures and practices.

1.22 Chapters 8 to 12 set out proposals and recommendations to improve the design and delivery of provision and promote an Inclusiveness approach to addressing the learning and support needs of the young person:

Chapter 8 covers aspects of further education and training;

Chapter 9 discusses the enhancement of learning opportunities for young people in Resource Centres;

Chapter 10 addresses funding issues;

Chapter 11 covers aspects of staff training and development; and

Chapter 12 covers quality issues.

1.23 Chapter 13 sets out the Committee's views on aspects of employability for young people who are likely to require additional support to enter employment; and sets out proposals and recommendations for improving support both for young people and employers.

1.24 Apart from social benefits and personal growth there is a potential for a saving to the public purse if more young people achieve employment. The Committee attempted a quantification of this benefit but could not obtain sufficiently robust data to allow a comparison to be made. This may be an attractive area for researchers in this field and we would welcome such a contribution to the debate.

1.25 Within the recommendations of the report we have attempted to quantify some of the costs related to mentoring and key worker support arrangements. We cannot quantify the costs for the new structures because they will be different for each area and should not only involve costs, but savings and other benefits resulting from co-operation in, and between, the agencies.

