

Every Child Matters: Achieve Economic Wellbeing

This paper is one of a series of 12 that presents the findings from NFER's analysis of Children and Young People's Plans (CYPPs) from a representative sample of 75 Local Authorities.¹ It sets out how 'Achieve Economic Wellbeing' features in this sample of plans and includes illustrative examples. Areas covered are:

- Priorities
- Actions
- Key Groups
- Targets
- Lead Agencies.

Summary of findings

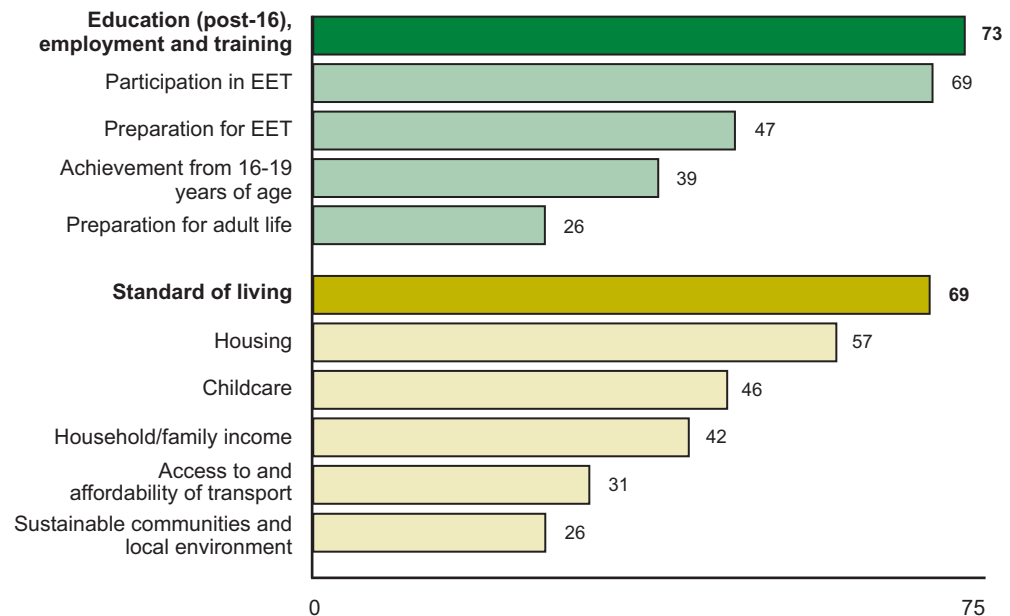
- **Priorities** referenced in the CYPPs for 'Achieve Economic Wellbeing' group into two main areas: **education (post-16), employment and training (EET)**, and **standard of living**.
- For EET, **actions** focus on curriculum development, post-16 provision for education and training, supporting young people's learning and decision-making, and education-employment partnerships. The inclusion of higher education is less common within this arena in the plans. For standard of living, actions centre on improving housing and transport for young people, and childcare and household/family incomes for parents and families.
- Children with learning difficulties and disabilities (CLDD) are the most frequently mentioned **key group**, as part of 'Achieve Economic Wellbeing' (with actions chiefly related to support their transition into post-16 and adult life). Looked-after children (LAC) including care leavers are also commonly mentioned, (with actions referring mainly to their housing and accommodation).
- **Targets** are predominantly numerical within EET, and non-numerical within standard of living. However, numerical targets for standard of living only appear in plans with numerical targets for EET (i.e. a whole plan approach). Overall, 17 different targets appear within 'Achieve Economic Wellbeing', the most common relating to 16–19 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET).
- Almost half the plans explicitly identify a **lead agent** responsible for actions and targets: chiefly Connexions, Education and the Learning and Skills Council within EET; and housing within standard of living, as well as the Children's and Young People's Service / Children's Trust.



'Achieve Economic Wellbeing' priorities in the CYPPs

Across the CYPPs, priorities found under 'Achieve Economic Wellbeing' can be grouped into two main areas; in effect, a conflation of the ECM aims for 'Achieve Economic Wellbeing'.

Figure 1 Coverage of 'Achieve Economic Wellbeing' priority areas



As shown in Figure 1:

- within **education (post-16), employment and training (EET)**, priorities focus on young people's participation in EET; preparation for transition into EET also features frequently, whilst transition into adult life in general is less commonly cited
- within **standard of living**, priorities concerning housing (including the quality of housing and youth homelessness) feature the most frequently, whilst priorities relating to sustainable communities and the quality of the local environment are less commonly cited.

In the plans, 'Achieve Economic Wellbeing' covers children and young people from birth to 19 (and in some plans to 24). Priorities within the EET agenda include both young people aged 16+ and those pre-16 (i.e. in preparation for 16+). Within **standard of living**, priorities are cited for children and young people, and for parents and families. Here, priorities for young people include their housing and accommodation, and the accessibility and affordability of transport. Priorities for parents and families centre on childcare and household incomes.



Actions

The plans analysed specify a variety of actions in relation to the ‘Achieve Economic Wellbeing’ arena. These actions range from those that are focused upon curriculum development and post-16 provision (especially for targeted groups of young people), to the development of strategies initiatives and services within housing, transport and community services.

Table 1 The ten actions most commonly cited in ‘Achieve Economic Wellbeing’

Action	Example
Develop curriculum (14–16, 14–19, flexible, vocational and personalised curriculum)	<i>‘Ensure a coherent and planned 14-19 phase across X that guarantees relevant learning opportunities for all 14-19 year olds and takes account of economic and employment trends and opportunities.’ (Metropolitan LA)</i>
Develop post-16 education provision and services – schools, sites and centres	<i>‘Establish the 14-16 vocational skills centre at X to provide supported training opportunities for up to one hundred and fifty vulnerable young people before they move on to education, employment and training opportunities.’ (County LA)</i>
Improve housing and accommodation services for young people 16+	<i>‘Sustain young people to be independent by creating floating support housing provision to sustain them in their own home.’ (County LA)</i>
Develop strategies, support and advice for young people’s decision-making (including careers education and guidance)	<i>‘Working with Aim Higher to identify and provide activities to raise aspirations for students and parents/ carers.’ (County LA)</i>
Develop childcare provision and services for parents and families	<i>‘Improving the availability of affordable and high quality childcare for families with young children and the availability of childcare for disabled children and their families.’ (County LA)</i>
Develop approaches, initiatives and programmes to support young people’s learning (including their motivation for learning and study skills)	<i>‘Providing impartial and comprehensive information, advice, guidance and support to young people aged 13+ with a particular focus on those at risk of becoming not in education, employment or training (NEET) and those 16-18s who are not in education, employment or training.’ (Unitary LA)</i>
Implement national plans and strategies (including 14–19 Learning Offer)	<i>‘Integrate the provision for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities into the overarching strategy for 14-19 learning.’ (County LA)</i>
Establish and develop services for children and families learning (e.g. Full Service Schools, Children’s Centres, Lifelong and Family Learning Centres)	<i>Develop Children’s Centres in 30% most disadvantaged communities. Centres will offer integrated children’s services offering daycare, early education, family support, health services, job centres and information on children’s services.’ (Metropolitan LA)</i>
Improve and develop identification and monitoring data and systems	<i>‘Working with learning institutions to identify and support (by group work and one to one interventions) young people who are not progressing on to higher education by 2006/7.’ (County LA)</i>
Increase and improve education-employment partnerships and collaboration	<i>‘Work with local employers to increase and improve the provision of work experience placements, high quality apprenticeships and other worked based training and develop incentives and support for businesses to offer young people work-based training and increase the provision of appropriate accredited training provision.’ (London borough)</i>



Actions specific to priority areas

Amongst the ten most common actions, some are unique to one of the two priority areas within ‘Achieve Economic Wellbeing’.

For example, actions which appear only **within the EET priority** include: develop the curriculum; develop post-16 education provision and services; develop approaches, initiatives and programmes to support young people’s learning (including their motivation for learning and study skills) and develop strategies, support and advice for young people’s decision-making (including careers education and guidance).

‘Link to UK Online for study support and information.’ (London borough)

‘All young people at the age of 14 will have a Learner Entitlement and Action Plan which sets out what they can expect from their education provision.’ (Unitary LA)

The action to improve and develop identification and monitoring data and systems also falls mainly within EET, and is chiefly related to the monitoring and review of 14–19 student destination and progression data.

‘Review the data relating to the destinations of young people post 16 and identify any concerns.’ (Unitary LA)

Actions to develop housing and childcare for families appear within the **standard of living priority only** (although childcare for teenage mothers does relate to the EET agenda).

‘Strengthen joint agency assessment and preventative measures for young people at risk of homelessness/temporary accommodation.’ (County LA)

Actions across both priority areas

Other actions contribute to both priority areas within ‘Achieve Economic Wellbeing’. For example, within EET, the **establishment and development of services for children and families’ learning** within EET includes: ‘Ensuring high quality accessible childcare provision is available to parents who wish to return to work, access training or require parenting support’ (Unitary LA). Within standard of living, it includes: ‘Provide accommodation for child minder networks in Children’s Centres’ (Metropolitan LA).

Less commonly referenced actions

Finally, at the other end of the spectrum, less commonly referenced actions within ‘Achieve Economic Wellbeing’ include:

- developments in community regeneration and in transport (both mentioned in a fifth of the plans), which were less commonly cited than other actions to develop infrastructure such as housing. That said, in rural areas, developments in transport include: “‘Wheels to Work’ moped schemes across the county’ and ‘innovative ways of meeting transport needs in the evenings and Sundays’ (County LA).
- actions specifically citing increasing and improving school-FE-HE collaborations – less common than other collaborations such as education-business partnerships and inter-school collaboration. Examples include: ‘To develop and broaden the existing 14–19 partnership



arrangements in the Borough to increase the involvement by employers, higher education and providers in the planning and delivery of 14-19 plus education and training.’ (London borough).

- those related specifically to developing the range of qualifications, assessment and accreditation, mentioned in a fifth of the plans, which were less common than actions citing curriculum development (e.g. with regard to vocational, flexible and personalised learning).
- to promote and develop advice and support to young people about employment and finances, which was less common than other actions related to support and advice to young people (e.g. with regard to their transitions into post-16 education, and decision-making). Examples include: ‘We will ensure that children and young people from homeless families can access transport funding to support continuity of learning.’ (Metropolitan LA).

Level of detail of actions

The level of detail of actions presented varies across CYPPs, for example, between plans that detail actions in the form of low-level statements, characterised by a basic outline of proposed intentions, and those that provide high-level action statements, which often provide information related to what they are proposing, explicit operational details, an attached timescale and a lead agency responsible for the action.

Low-level statements include: ‘A prospectus of learning opportunities to be available to each young person’ (Metropolitan LA). **High-level action statements** include, for example: ‘Deliver an ambitious programme of early years’ education and childcare to include 18 children’s centres by 2008 that will reach almost 15,000 children (including 500 new childcare places by 2006 and a further 200 by 2008) giving them a good start and enabling parents to access the labour market’ (London borough).

Key groups

Within ‘Achieve Economic Wellbeing’, the CYPPs analysed make reference to 26 different key groups of children and young people and the families they grow up in. Within ‘Achieve Economic Wellbeing’, by far the two most commonly mentioned key groups are children with learning difficulties and disabilities (CLDD) (cited in more than two-thirds of plans) and looked-after children (LAC) including care leavers (cited in just over three-fifths of plans). The third most frequently cited groups are young offenders and teenage mothers/young parents, each referenced in a third of the plans.

The other key groups most frequently and specifically mentioned in relation to ‘Achieve Economic Wellbeing’ include black and minority ethnic (BME) groups and young carers (as well as groups described generally as vulnerable young people). Examples of actions for these commonly cited key groups in relation to ‘Achieve Economic Wellbeing’ are provided in Table 2.

Other key groups, featuring in a limited number of plans, include those related to:

- mobility – refugees, asylum seekers and recent arrivals, young homeless and Travellers (with actions related to their housing and finances)
- participation in EET by under- and low- achievers (including those with less than 5 A*-C grades at GCSE), those with long periods of NEET, and young people in jobs without training
- families – low income families and single parent families
- areas/wards – including areas of disadvantage and young people in rural areas.



Table 2 Most commonly cited key groups in CYPPs in relation to ‘Achieve economic wellbeing’

Key group	Example of actions cited
Children with learning difficulties and disabilities (CLDD)	<i>‘Improve the management of transition reviews for stated young people with learning/physical disabilities, including supported transition in and out of appropriate provision. Provide targeted support for young people with learning/physical disabilities so that more young people continue in education, employment and training beyond the age of 16 and have better access to adult services.’</i> (County LA)
Looked after children (LAC)	<i>‘Ensure that looked after children benefit fully from the implementation of the lead professional role and the Common Assessment Framework.’</i> (County LA) <i>‘Improve the life chances of looked after children through effective corporate parenting and multi-agency working.’</i> (Unitary LA)
Young offenders	<i>‘Ensure that young people involved with the Youth Offending Team are in full time employment, education, or training at the end of the period of intervention.’</i> (County LA)
Teenage mothers / young parents	<i>‘... working with partners to provide improved health screening and care for young parents, teenage mothers and their families.’</i> (Metropolitan LA) <i>‘All lone teenage parents under 18 (with parental responsibility) provided with support and safe, suitable accommodation.’</i> (Unitary LA)
Vulnerable groups/children and those in need	<i>‘Provide appropriate accommodation and multi-agency support for all vulnerable young people in need of support, so that no young person sleeps rough.’</i> (Unitary LA)
Black and minority ethnic groups (BME)	<i>‘Establish an ‘Achievement Service’ for children and young people in these groups ... [including] those from underachieving black and racial minority communities ...’</i> (Metropolitan LA)
Young carers	<i>‘Development of coordinated Parenting Strategy to address needs of parents/carers, including young carers.’</i> (London borough) <i>‘Ensure that targeted support is provided to groups of young people with specific needs, e.g. young parents, care leavers, recent arrivals, those who have not succeeded in school education, young people with special educational needs and young carers.’</i> (London borough)

Targets

Where mentioned in the CYPPs, targets and indicators for measuring progress with regard to ‘Achieve Economic Wellbeing’ are:

- **more frequent for EET** than for standard of living (targets for the former feature in more than four-fifths of the plans and for the latter in almost two-thirds)
- **mainly numerical in nature for EET**, including setting out baseline and projected figures (i.e. quantified change) by which success will be measured, for example, ‘Percentage of 16–18 year olds Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). Current performance 2005 6.7%, Future Target 5.5%’ (Metropolitan LA); although specified targets are notably rare in relation to higher education



- **chiefly non-numerical for standard of living**, e.g. statements (often without numbers attached) referring to seeking ‘improvements’ within social housing, and ‘increasing’ the stock and take-up of childcare (numerical targets for standard of living only appear where there are also numerical targets for EET – i.e., a whole plan approach).

Overall, 17 different targets appear within ‘Achieve Economic Wellbeing’:

- The most common targets, covered under ‘Achieve Economic Wellbeing’, appearing in almost two-thirds of plans, relate to 16–19 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET) (occasionally measured as 16–18 year olds, and/or as those in EET).
- Targets citing achievement at 19 (including Level 2 and Level 3 NVQ equivalent) appear within ‘Achieve Economic wellbeing’ in two-fifths of the plans.
- Other targets usually found within ‘Achieve Economic Wellbeing’ (although also within other outcomes) include: in more than a quarter of the plans, homes of decent standards and the number of young people homeless and/or in temporary accommodation. Also featuring in a quarter of the plans are targets relating to the take-up of childcare by families. Targets around access to transport and measures of child poverty (other than housing and workless households) feature less often.
- Targets to measure key groups NEET/EET aged 16+ are found for LAC in more than two-fifths of plans, for young offenders in a third of plans, and for CLDD in almost a third of plans. Targets for other key groups NEET/EET include those for teenage mothers, teenage parents, young homeless, young people in low income families, young men, and the parents of the young people themselves.
- In addition to targets relating to NEET/EET, within this outcome there are targets specifically relating to LAC 16+ accommodation for LAC within this outcome in just under a quarter of plans.

Lead agencies

Overall, just under half of the CYPPs explicitly identify a lead agent responsible for specified actions within ‘Achieve Economic Wellbeing’, although this identification is slightly more frequent in relation to EET than standard of living.

The plans specify a range of lead agencies in relation to ‘Achieve Economic Wellbeing’. The ten lead agencies most commonly mentioned in relation to ‘Achieve Economic Wellbeing’ are, in order of frequency:

- Connexions
- Children and Young People’s Service/Trust
- Learning and Skills Council
- Housing
- Education
- Early Years Partnership (including childcare)
- Youth Service
- Neighbourhood, communities and regeneration
- Local business and development agencies.



Specific lead agencies are referenced in relation to each priority area: Connexions, Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and Education in relation to EET; and Housing and Early Years Partnerships in relation to standard of living.

Other lead agencies include transport, adult and community learning, the Youth Offending Team, Job-Centre-Plus, and groups/partnerships which focus on the 11–19 age range (e.g. a 14–19 partnership, and an 11–19 Executive).

Notes

- 1 When interpreting these findings from analysis of 75 plans, it is necessary to bear in mind that LAs had freedom to draft their CYPPs in order to meet their needs and circumstances best. Therefore, there would be no imperative for every plan to include all the pieces of information and detail discussed in the findings in this paper.

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