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Newham Additional Provision

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1. Introduction

This report has been commissioned from the Institute of Education by the London Borough of Newham 14-19 team and seeks to identify and describe the contribution made by alternative providers (APs) in Newham in preventing young people from disengaging with education and become 'not in education, employment or training' (NEET). Newham provide vocationally based education for Year 10 and Year 11 pupils in all its schools under the Newham Additional Provision (NAP) scheme. This report focuses on three APs which contribute to NAP, *APE Media*, which trains both young people and adults in music and radio technology, *Pitstop* which trains young people in car mechanics and *Peacock Gym Academy* which provides a range of vocational studies based in an East London boxing gym.

2. Method

The objective of this review was to understand the ways in which NAP and the APs who are part of NAP operate, and compare this to the policy agenda regarding alternative provision. The focus of the research was: what APs provided for young people and which was not provided by mainstream schools or other parts of the education system, how progress of learners was monitored and recorded, how the provision was funded, whether the APs were sustainable and how AP might play a part in the rapidly changing education policy landscape.

Since the amount of quantitative data available from the APs is small, the research method was of necessity largely qualitative. The researcher visited each provider in order to interview the owner/manager, other teaching or support staff and students, as well as to observe sessions in progress. The Newham 14-19 team were also interviewed in some depth. Where possible other stakeholders were spoken to, including senior teachers at schools, parents of students and local councillors.

Although providers have supplied some information on qualifications and progression, this is not always easy to access given that all of the students in AP are still on the roll of a local school or Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). The study also collected case studies, press releases and any other relevant data from providers.

A full list of those interviewed is presented in Appendix E.

3. Policy context

The coalition government took an early interest in the behaviour of pupils at school. In September 2011 the Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, made a speech about the 'educational underclass', by which he meant those pupils who are outside the mainstream education world who fail to achieve academically and grow up without the skills to become successful adults and members of society. As a result of this, Charlie Taylor, the Government's expert advisor on behaviour, was asked to produce a report on improving alternative provision¹.

¹ 'Improving Alternative Provision', Charlie Taylor. Department for Education, 2012.

A key document underlying this report was the June 2011 Ofsted survey of Alternative Provision. This report points out that alternative provision is a largely uninspected and unregulated sector with no requirement for the majority of alternative providers to register with any official body and no consistent arrangements to evaluate their quality. Ofsted found that despite this lack of regulation and accountability, some students spend a significant proportion of their week away from their school or unit attending an alternative provision. It can be the case that the school's or unit's staff visit infrequently or not at all and occasionally, students were placed with an alternative provider full time and played no part in school life.

Alternative provision can be set up by the public, voluntary, and private sectors. Some local authorities hold a database of provision which they have selected and which they believe to be of suitable quality for their schools and pupil referral units to use. However, this is not the case in all areas. There was not a consistently effective approach to assuring the quality and usefulness of the alternative provision.

At its best alternative provision was selected carefully by schools and units, was used well to support learners as part of their whole curriculum, and was valued by the students. However, some of the schools and pupil referral units visited saw alternative provision as very separate from their own work and as a 'last resort' for a challenging student. These schools and units were less effective at fitting placements into the rest of their students' timetables, and made poor arrangements for them to catch up with work they had missed from their core subjects.

The key recommendations in the Taylor report relevant to this report are:

- That all children who are referred to AP should continue to receive appropriate and challenging English and Maths teaching. All providers should offer this provision, or arrange it in partnership with other providers or the school if the child is educated in more than one place.
- That schools, LAs and PRUs as commissioners should set up local systems for quality assuring the AP in their area, so they can place children in the right provision.
- That over the mid-term LAs should work with schools to begin to devolve the funding they currently use for this purpose to schools.
- That the regulations on how long pupils can stay in AP are relaxed. Children directed to AP by the school should be able to stay for as long as is necessary, providing the placement is appropriate, is meeting the child's needs and that progress is regularly monitored.
- That schools work in partnerships with PRUs and LAs to develop funding systems for AP that enable them to use provision flexibly and responsively whilst still supporting sustainability and growth of quality.
- Ofsted ensures that inspectors continue to pay close and consistent attention to how well schools take account of the needs of children in AP.
- All PRUs should have the opportunity to apply to convert to Academy status through any suitable route either independently, with a sponsor or as part of a federation.

This account, both of AP in Newham, a complex London borough with high levels of deprivation, and of the individual providers examined, should be seen in the context of the above policy agenda and recommendations to Government.

4. Alternative Provision in Newham

4.1. NAP

Newham Additional Provision (NAP) was set up 7 years ago and was initially focussed on Newham College of Further Education. Once it became clear that there was a demand for this provision it was recognised that greater choice was required and NAP was expanded to include *Pitstop* and the *Building Craft College*. Since then NAP has continued to expand both in pupil numbers and in the range of providers. Currently NAP includes the following providers: *APE Media, Building Crafts College, MEX, Betts activity centre, Newham College of Further Education, Laings, Pitstop, Docklands Riders, Class Racin and Peacock Gym Academy*.

4.1.1. Ensuring Quality of NAP providers

Newham has a formal quality assurance procedure applicable to all APs prior to them being placed on an approved list. The first compliance stage is done by the council and comprises formal checks of technical quality criteria such as Health and Safety policies, finance and business records and references. Once on the approved list APs are subject to an area wide Quality Assurance group which requires annual visits by a range of senior leaders, from the 14-19 team and a seconded teaching assistant. This less formal quality assurance process means that Newham staff are inside APs most weeks, an essential way of ensuring quality and of rapidly identifying any developing issues. Participating students are also surveyed to find out their reactions to NAP provision, and Newham intend to add a survey of parents when funding allows.

4.1.2. Publicising the NAP Offer

Newham 14-19 team visits every school in the borough during January and February, meeting senior staff and discussing the current offer and how it may be improved for those schools. They often attend school option evenings and parents' events and they may be invited to talk to groups of students. Each year NAP needs to be seen within a different context as education policy changes. So while NAP was considered an essential part of the vocational offer, it must now claim its role in a new era of EBACs and GCSE reform, changed inspection regimes, increasing 'academisation' and the trimming of vocational courses in the wake of the Wolf Report². It is important for schools to see how NAP can help them in their own need to maintain standards and hit targets.

4.1.3. Take up of NAP

Newham 14-19 Partnership includes 15 secondary schools, of which just two have never taken up the NAP offer. The attitude of Senior Leadership is vital for school involvement in the scheme. In one school a change of Head meant that the school stopped using NAP. However, the borough PRUs are now also taking up NAP provision.

² 'Review of Vocational Education: The Wolf Report', Alison Wolf. Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2011.

The introduction of the 14-19 Diplomas caused a dip in the numbers taking up NAP, since at this time schools had alternative ways of offering highly vocational education. However, the current decline in the numbers taking the Diplomas is reciprocally reflected in the rise of NAP provision.

Newham has two academy schools which are not under local authority control. However, the academies still consider themselves as part of Newham borough and continue to subscribe to joint initiatives including NAP. It seems that these schools recognise that without local authority involvement it would be financially impossible to provide such extensive alternative provision as NAP provides. It is interesting to note that even the schools which have yet to take up the NAP offer continue to contribute towards the scheme in recognition of its importance.

The borough is also expecting a number of Free Schools to open later this year, although a University Technical College (UTC) which was planned is not currently going forward. The 14-19 team will endeavour to engage with these new schools and hope they will also become part of NAP.

Newham 14-19 Partnership take a pragmatic view of NAP. If the schools want it and are prepared to pay for it then it must be effective. After seven years, take up has never been higher, so they view NAP as continuing to be a successful part of the Newham schools provision.

4.1.4. Funding NAP

When NAP was initially set up, Newham borough used a variety of existing funding schemes. There was some Government pathfinder funding which went to PRUs first, but was redirected back to the LAs for alternative provision, and this was combined with funding from the Dedicated Schools Budget and the Learning and Skills Council and retained applied learning grant money. This was sufficient to set up NAP in the early years.

Currently, the 14-19 team submit a bid for central funding of NAP from the dedicated funding budget. This results in the LA paying the majority of the costs of NAP, with schools paying around £850 a day, per pupil, per year ie schools know what it costs per pupil day to send them to NAP. As indicated above, although not all schools take up this offer, all have so far supported the cost of it. Without this central subsidy it is likely that the cost of NAP to individual schools, both in terms of finance and organisation, would be prohibitive.

4.1.5. NAP Success criteria

Newham 14-19 consider that overall NAP continues to be a successful initiative. While there are inevitably some individuals for whom NAP does is not effective; those unable to cope with greater freedom and need to continue to be in school and others may be better off in a PRU. The 14-19 team consider that NAP works best where the school ensure the provision is offered to the most appropriate students and the school actively support those students when off site. Feedback from schools, young people and their parents is positive and as long as take up remains high, Newham aim to continue supporting it.

4.1.6. Longer term alternative provision

Some APs, most notably Peacock Gym Academy, take young people for more than the single day a week facilitated through NAP. This extended provision is entirely personalised, but in some cases may mean that students attend the alternative provider up to 5 days a week. This option is generally taken only when a student is in danger of imminent permanent exclusion. It is important to note that none of the APs in this report are schools and are therefore unable to take on that responsibility. Even where young people attended alternative provision for five days a week the student remains on the school role, their achievements go to the school and they will receive their qualification certificates from the school. The school has, however, arranged for the education of this group to be conducted outside of the school premises but this in no way reduces the responsibility the school has to those students.

While in some cases a student will finish compulsory education while attending an AP, more usually the young person can be successfully reintegrated into school after a period in alternative provision. There may be any number of reasons why a young person may be able to rejoin nearly normal school provision after a period of time away, and these are well illustrated below. From the provider's point of view, the continuing link with the school is paramount. Their aim is reintegration of the young person to the school and all providers agreed that it is in the interests of the young person involved to remain genuinely attached to the school.

This concern is shared by Newham 14-19 Partnership. They are concerned that those who are not attending school at all may too easily lose that link; they feel that there are few cases where the student will not gain anything from attendance at school. However, the concern is that schools should not disengage with their students rather than with APs not wishing to maintain those links.

4.2. Capturing success

At a time when all public bodies require reliable data as evidence of success or improvement, finding ways of capturing success is vital. While all interviewees stated how important and successful the work of Newham AP providers was, it was much harder to find records which quantify that success in any way recognisable to an external body.

Perhaps the most useful quantitative evidence comes from attendance. A comparison of attendance at NAP compared with attendance at mainstream school is an important indicator of the NAP's success. With some young people involved in extended provision that comparison can be startling, as in the case of one young person who failed to attend school at all the previous year, but is now attending Peacock three days a week with few unauthorised absences.

Progression at the age of 16 is also an important indicator. Given the nature of the cohort, every young person who progresses to a job or further education or training has to be seen as an achievement. Many of these young people are on the verge of disappearing from the system. One of the school leaders was clear that without NAP they would have had 5 young people drop out of the education system all together each year. The providers work with

Newham Personal Assistants continually reviewing progression for their young people and aiming to get them into employment, apprenticeship or a college course.

While qualifications are not the only focus of NAP, qualifications do represent a very important achievement for these young people and for the providers. Often qualifications gained at APE Media, Pitstop or Peacock are the only ones a young person gains before leaving school, while in other cases they make a significant contribution to their overall collection of qualifications and may bring them up to the Further Education requirement of 5 A*-C GCSE's. In some case the vocational qualifications gained through NAP may actually lead to NAP students being ahead of their peers if they go on to take vocational subjects at college.

Anecdotally, an increase in confidence is reported as a significant factor for many young people attending NAP. However, it remains difficult to reliably capture objective measures of growth in confidence or maturity. All the providers create case studies, and some evidence can be gained from student attitudinal surveys, such as the one conducted by Peacock (See Appendix A). However, these surveys would need considerable adaptation to become a more useful tool for capturing attitudinal data and other 'soft' evidence of progression.

Some of the young people who participate in NAP come from very challenging family backgrounds; attending NAP every week keeps them engaged with education and the wider systems. Many of the young people themselves are very clear that without Pitstop or Peacock or APE they would already be in a Young Offender Institution and looking forward to a future revolving round regular spells in custody. In general it does appear that remaining engaged with education through NAP or extended provision does help keep a young person out of the custodial sector. This is the reason why Inspector Declan Kinsella said in the early days that "What every community needs is a Peacock Gym on every corner"³.

The impact of NAP is also felt inside the families of young people. An improvement in aspiration can have a dramatic effect. Young people in NAP are generally expected to take on more responsibility and are treated like young adults, which helps them take more responsibility for themselves.

4.3. Three Alternative Providers

4.3.1. APE Media

Apple Pie Media (APE Media) was started in 2004 by Trevor Blackman and provides a range of courses centred on radio and TV broadcasting. Trevor had previously run a programme for Newham for children at risk of exclusion, but had become frustrated at the quality of the available alternative provision.

³ A view endorsed by another former Metropolitan police inspector, Fred Cutts.

APE Media offers qualifications in Creative Skills Towards Enabling Progression (Step-UP), a range of credit-based qualifications developed to accredit a wide variety of activities engaged in by learners aged 14 years and over. The qualifications are approved within the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) at Entry Level 3 and Level 1 and encompass the principles of Foundation Learning.

APE Media focuses on working with young people from deprived backgrounds who have difficulties at school and need a combination of vocational and life skills in order to progress. The APE approach considers knowing how to set up a bank account or to be able to talk to people clearly and fluently as just as important as more formal qualifications. Despite this, the centrepiece of APE Media provision is the ability to gain qualifications through both OCR and City & Guilds. APE aim to set up a holistic programme of integrated skills development, and the involvement of parents is a key factor. If students miss one session parents are called, if a student misses a subsequent one, parents are visited so all three parties can sit down and discuss what the young person needs and is prepared to do.

4.3.2. Offer & Cohort

Although APE does take some young people from PRUs and from mainstream schooling on a longer term basis, the aim is always to support them back into mainstream schooling. Success is for the young person to be able to re-enter school able to prosper and succeed.

Trevor Blackman considers that problems with pupils often come when they feel they are unwanted or undervalued by the school. APE attempts to rebalance this issue by intervening and building up a young person's confidence and self esteem. Trevor is particularly concerned about the progression of black males, who have a very poor record in Newham, although it is noted that white working class boys share a similarly poor record in educational outcomes. APE Media work with these groups in the community and through voluntary programmes as well as through NAP.

APE Media have a number of different cohorts. Currently they take both year 10 and year 11 NAP students, largely from Little Ilford School, Cumberland School, Eastlea School and Royal Docks School. They also take students from The Eleanor Smith School which includes some young people with severe behavioural and emotional difficulties. On top of these cohorts there is a group of young people who have been permanently excluded as well as students attending directly from schools in other boroughs. The year 10 students study Entry level 3 and Level 1 Creative Media from OCR and by the end of year 11 they will have taken this to a Level 2 qualification⁴. These qualifications are industry standards recognised across the media profession.

APE Media regard it as important that students who attend NAP do so through their own choice rather than the schools deciding for them. Young people select APE in order to gain a realistic insight into the media industry and so it is important that industry professionals do the training sessions.

⁴ Level 2 is the adult level equivalent to a GCSE Grade C or above.

The sessions take place in an environment which is both a leaning space and also a professional business. Students at APE work to professional criteria, always aiming at an output which can be broadcast by professional radio stations. Students know they are researching a feature to a deadline and that there has to be an output. APE report seeing students grow while they are attending sessions there, and this is often from a very challenging starting point - APE Media take any young person who wants to attend, no matter how challenging their behaviour, and feel they rarely fail.

APE Media capture the progress of students both visually and in written form, via half termly reports, records of progress and their own self evaluation and reflective diaries. They also have a record of their audio work which is itself a record of student progression.

4.3.3. Student experience

The students spoken to during this research were extremely challenging in their behaviour. Nonetheless they were engaged by the tasks they were set and the processes they were undertaking. They were keen to master the technical aspects of the course and to complete their assignments. The tutor provoked a passionate debate about the impact of the Olympics on Newham with almost all contributing, prior to their starting work on making a radio documentary programme.

Students expressed great enjoyment for the course and showed great support to the tutor and for APE in general. While their behaviour was difficult, attendance for this group was high and the level of engagement impressive. The group was still in its early days of attending APE and the tutor felt they were settling in well and most would see it through and gain the qualification at the end of the course.

4.3.4. Progression and Impact

APE Media has a considerable impact on the wider local community. Outside of their education remit, they work with local adult volunteers and create reports on local events which are broadcast from their radio station. As an example, there is a drop-in group on Wednesdays for local adults to come and do work experience as a way into broadcasting; while there is no accreditation, volunteers are able to learn how to use the equipment and create a showreel. The young people often highlight events in the local area, and stories from APE Media are often picked up on BBC London. As an example, two of APE Media's students were caught up in the London disorders in 2011 and broadcast their views through the radio station.

In the last completed NAP cohort, all had positive progression outcomes, with five going on to do further broadcasting studies and the others entering college to take up a range of options including retail, music and manufacturing.

4.3.5. Finance & Sustainability

Each cohort comes with its own income stream. The NAP cohort is paid for by Newham 14-19. This provides APE a dependable income stream, and they appreciate the work done by Newham to provide two year contracts as opposed to the previous one year contracts. APE

also have contracts with Hackney for 16-19 provision and Waltham Forest for 19-24 year olds.

APE are a registered charity and have received money from Royal Victoria Trust, The Media Trust, and have received a number of grants for short films. Although they have sufficient income to continue their core courses, lack of money prevents them doing more of the trips and visits which they think are important such as master classes, concert visits and field trips. Having been in business since 2004 APE however, they consider themselves reasonably sustainable.

Trevor is concerned that schools and other sections of the local authority do not recognise the importance of the work APE does. While schools do send students to FE Colleges as 'alternative' provision, Trevor worries that there is inadequate support for this cohort at College, and that schools need to take greater responsibility for supporting their students when they are away from school.

4.4. Pitstop

Pitstop, albeit in an earlier incarnation, was one of the first to provide alternative provision for Newham 14-19. Pitstop work from a fully professional garage in which they teach basic car maintenance to young people and deliver the City & Guilds Diploma in Vehicle Systems Maintenance. They stress the real vocational and commercial nature of the setting, dealing with real cars, real clients and real suppliers. As with APE Media, they take Year 10 and Year 11 school students through the NAP initiative as well as pupils from other boroughs and local PRUs. Pitstop have a maximum class size of eight, but in general try to keep groups to six.

Pitstop have three members of staff, two trained mechanics and an office manager together with an internal verifier. As well as their work at Pitstop they also support two satellite centres at the Peacock Gym Academy and Docklands Riders.

4.4.1. Offer & Cohort

Pitstop start assessing vocational skills as soon as possible after the NAP cohort start. This means that the year 10 students who start in September will have gained some qualifications by Easter. The Diploma in Vehicle Systems Maintenance is a QCF qualification⁵ which allows a great deal of flexibility for different cohorts. The NAP cohort which starts in year 10 are all expected to gain the full Diploma, but because of the flexibility of QCF other groups, such as those from PRUs, who might attend for much shorter periods, will generally gain a qualification during their time at Pitstop. As with most vocational qualifications designed for adult learners, students get a rapid response to their assessments, either an immediate pass or an explanation of why they have failed to gain the standard; most students do gain their unit qualifications albeit not at their first attempt.

⁵ There are 10 units in the qualifications, with each unit valued at 4 or 5 credits. When a student has gained 13 credits they get an award. 25 credits gains a Certificate and 45 credits gain a Diploma.

Students often work on vehicles brought in for commercial work, an important feature of the vocational experience, since real vehicles have real life problems. For instance, a 'demo' engine at a college has been taken apart so often all the bolts are worn and easy to loosen, while in the real world screw threads are worn, bolts are jammed on and things do not work by the textbook. Pitstop do have their own car, however and one incentive is that students can take the car to a private road for driving lessons.

Pitstop are concerned that while some schools offer NAP to those students who would benefit from it or who are keen to experience the particular vocational area of car mechanics, they feel that this is not always the case. In some instances Pitstop have refused to accept students who have no interest in the provision, since this is preventing another student from participating who would benefit. The only occasions where students have proved disruptive have been those that did not wish to attend in the first case. PRU groups are generally less problematic as they are more likely to have chosen to attend.

Pitstop Case Study 1
From The Newham Recorder, 2011

How did you feel when you were informed that not only did you pass your City & Guilds in Motor Mechanics, but was possibly one of the first in the country to do so?

Nicola:

"I cried! I was so proud of myself! In year 9 I hated school and just wanted to leave. Nothing at all was of interest to me. Then in my options interview when I was asked what I wanted to be I said motor mechanic. The school sent me on a taster day to Pitstop and I was transformed. Suddenly learning was fun. I was outside the classroom being treated like an adult and getting my hands dirty. It was the best thing that ever happened to me, and because I was happy I found school so much easier and have now completed successfully and am taking my GCSE's. I am now hoping to go into Health and Social care. The Motor Mechanics course has shown me what I can achieve and given me the confidence to pursue it".

Postscript:

Nicola was on the verge of exclusion and when she first attended Pitstop and had very low esteem – behaviour which is often a cover for their perceived inabilities. However, once she was won round things just clicked and she seemed to change almost overnight. She has gone on to college and the Health and Social Care course she wanted to do.

The vast majority of students attend regularly⁶, enjoy the experience and acquire a much more mature attitude. Pitstop identify a number of reasons for this: students are treated like adults in a working environment, but also have a very consistent discipline imposed on them. As an example, the interviewer noted that learners arriving for a session voluntarily dropped

⁶ Attendance at NAP is monitored via a computerised online register.

their mobile phones into the office for safe keeping. This was not because there was a 'rule' but because they have understood that this is a principle of business and that using mobiles while working in the garage environment is not professional practice.

Another key attribute of the workplace is the requirement for punctuality. Pitstop ask all parents of their students to sign an agreement about behaviour and attendance. If students are late, they go back to school. In return parents are invited to attend Pitstop at any time to see their children at work. Having a good relationship with parents is a key component of Pitstop's success.

Clearly, many young people thrive under this regime. They respond well to being treated as employees not as children where discipline is not 'for its own sake' but imposed because it is the discipline of the workplace.

4.4.2. Student Experience

Students attend Pitstop in small groups which allow them to spend most of their time doing practical work. Those spoken to all enjoyed the 'hands on' aspects of Pitstop, and the ability to succeed in tasks such as changing tyres on a car. They appreciated the responsibility of working on client's cars and how important that was. Several expressed a wish to go further in car mechanics and hoped to make this their future career. The atmosphere was described as not being like school, they reported feeling that they were in a workplace and enjoyed being in small groups. Being treated like adults was also a frequent comment. Students felt that without places such as Pitstop they would not have maintained much link with education, and several spoken to had already encountered the judicial system and suggested that Pitstop was a good influence in helping to keep them away from more antisocial activities.

Pitstop Case Study 2

'Sophie' (not her real name) came to Pitstop from a PRU. She was not attending mainstream school because she had been taken into care 5 years earlier for constant absconding from the family home. Once she arrived at Pitstop, things clicked and she completed entry level 3 at Diploma size. She had to be accompanied to Pitstop and back home each time by her mother who feared she would abscond again. After she had completed, her mother told us that she did in fact run away from home on a day before she was due to attend one of her regular sessions but still managed to get here under her own steam on time the next day!

Sophie has since progressed onto a higher level course in vehicle maintenance with another training provider when she completed at Pitstop. She is currently progressing well and keeps in contact with the Pitstop team.

4.4.3. Progression and Impact

Students who attend Pitstop, either through NAP or from a PRU have a good base to start at College. In a fairly typical year Pitstop would expect most students to go to College and most to study motor maintenance, with a few doing other subjects such as Child Care (see Appendix B for details). The majority go on to gain the City & Guilds Diploma but all will gain at least a certificate. Last year's NAP cohort are typical for Pitstop with two going on to do child care at College and the rest pursuing car mechanics at different local Colleges.

4.4.4. Finance & Sustainability

Last year Pitstop was operational for four days a week to cater for its NAP and PRU cohorts. The number of days Pitstop is operational has been cut this year because some of the PRU cohort, that coming through *New Directions*, has become part of NAP. Although their NAP provision is oversubscribed 3 times, there is little they can do to increase the number of students they work with from these cohorts since NAP provision has to take place on set days across the borough. This will necessitate Pitstop taking young people from other boroughs in order to maintain a business and ensure the space is as productive as possible.

Pitstop owner, Steve Dalton is very aware of the perils of financing the venture. The previous owners of the Pitstop business (a local charity) had to close when their joint tenant reneged on their rental payments causing the company to go out of business. They now have some of the old staff back on board and new premises which they have on an annual lease from a school. Although they have spent over £10,000 on renovating the premises they are unable to look at a lease longer than two years because of the lack of long term commitment from any of their feeder providers.

In an ideal world Steve would like to see the local authority build a vocational centre where they could run a wide range of vocational provision. This would operate as a craft based college and take on those students who naturally gravitate to vocational courses. It should provide real world vocational experience and be run like a business, with real work for real customers. Students would learn how to interact with real customers and others and learn life skills such as punctuality, attendance and understanding how to be told what to do. Steve believes the Pitstop model would work just as well in painting and decorating, and perhaps in other vocational areas such as floristry, butchery or even undertaking.

Obtaining and maintaining awarding body accreditation from City & Guilds is time consuming, but helpful in building income for the company. Seventeen young people are currently registered to Pitstop through the Peacock Academy (cycles) programme and fifteen from both NAP and *New Directions* through Docklands Riders. Overall Pitstop will award over 40 qualifications this year.

4.5. Peacock Gym Academy⁷



While APE Media and Pitstop are both defined by their vocational context, Peacock is largely defined through an ethos and a belief in ‘experiential teaching’. Peacock does offer a wide range of vocational subjects, but its unique approach is based in its location, values and approach.

Peacock Gym in Canning Town, east London, was founded in 1973 when its owners Martin and Tony Bowers were still teenagers. The gym is now home to professional and amateur boxers of all ages and levels (up to and including world champions), it is also a local community gym and includes a cafe for the local population. Peacock Gym Academy has grown out of this sporting centre of excellence and now offers a wide variety of vocational courses. Peacock Gym Academy is both larger than the other APs featured in this report, and far more rooted in the local community.

4.5.1. Offer & Cohort

Since Peacock is not centred on a specific vocational area, it is able to offer a wide range of subjects. At the time this research was conducted these included Construction skills, Hair & beauty, Bicycle repair and maintenance, Horticulture, Sports leadership, Fashion and retail and Performance arts. However, Peacock combine these vocational learning areas with other topics which they consider equally essential. Circle time is a daily PSHCE (personal, social, health, citizenship education) time and helps build the sense of community. Circle time is a very important element of the day for both staff and students, and a key to breaking down barriers. There is a student voice at Peacock with three young people, who are peer mentors, sitting on the academy council which meets every morning at 8.30.

⁷ The Peacock Gym Academy is not an ‘academy’ in the meaning given by government legislation.

The Boxing Coach

I run the amateur boxing side at Peacock gym. I'm here every night, I don't get paid. I have done it all my life. I boxed for England, was a professional and then had a bad accident and done this ever since. I love it. I think the academy is a big part of it all. Everyone is friendly every one works together. So many local people have come here. We don't have a post-code problem here. Some kids wouldn't travel out to places. We have attendance of 82% far higher than most special schools. The brand here is bigger than post code, bigger than any gang. We had a school from Tower Hamlets last year, we have international students... It is not a problem. They love the identity of the Peacock T-shirts – which they have to earn and cannot buy. It can be tough getting the T-shirt and they appreciate it, feel they have earned it. The celebration events are really important. And some of these kids have never got anything before. Parents come down and tell us how the kids have changed. If you have 150 kids like this you are actually working with 150 families...

Diet and exercise is similarly part of the ethos. Peacock consider that every young person is entitled to a healthy lunch as part of the every child matters agenda. However Peacock recognise that young people sitting with adults is an informal learning environment as they are learning manners, social behaviour and how to talk appropriately to staff and adults. Young people see adults talking to each other, shaking their hand, and helping to model the correct way of behaving. Shaking hands is purposely advocated as the correct greeting between all adults⁸.

Exercise is another core value. Every student is invited to take part in physical activity every morning.

Peacock aims to equip the young people with a range of important Lifeskills, providing young people with opportunities to take on responsibilities and prepare them for the world of work. Peacock offer students contracts for work, such as: cleaning, taking charge of the plants and fitness training with other students. Students have to bid for this work, agree a price, terms and conditions and be formally interviewed before being awarded the contract. Programmes like Cycle mechanics, and TV production are enterprise projects. The Hair & Beauty salon has clients, and the cycling group refurbish bikes for re-sale. Peacock aims to offer vocational skills, social and behavioural support and business and life skills. As with the other APs featured in this report, even those young people who attend Peacock five days a week remain on the school role.

4.5.2. Student Experience

It was clear that many students are overwhelmed by the experience of attending Peacock. Young people who had very poor attendance at school spend long hours at Peacock,

⁸ It is for this reason that the student survey includes a question about shaking hands.

arriving early, staying into the evenings and even attending during holidays and at weekends. The Peacock, both the gym and the academy, have become a central core to their often chaotic lives.

The students spoken to were aware of the distance they and their peers had travelled. There was banter about the physical fitness and mental attitudes of others in the group when they had first attended Peacock. One fit young boxer was described as looking like 'a pudding' when he first arrived and another explained how she was headed for a YOI until finding herself at Peacock. Interestingly, several of the young people seem to have 'self-referred' themselves to Peacock, turning up unannounced and being taken in by staff.

Although students appreciated the vocational course, the sport and fitness aspects of Peacock and the ability to gain qualifications, it was the relationships with staff, teachers, coaches and other support workers which was the key factor. Many who lacked role models at home or school have found individuals who they can look up to and model themselves on. This seemed to be the key element for the students. Almost all reported that they expected to enter the criminal justice system and one had already done time at a YOI. All were clear that Peacock had changed that path for them.

4.5.3. Progression and Impact

Gaining qualifications is an important part of the Peacock mix. In 2010-11 the 59 young people attending Peacock gained 99 qualifications⁹. Many of those young people will have gained other qualifications through school and in some cases qualifications gained at Peacock have contributed to students gaining 5 A*-C GCSEs. In other cases, qualification from Peacock are the only ones a young person may have gained by the age of 16.

Peacock staff considers that the single greatest impact on young people who go to Peacock is that they re-engage with education. Many Peacock students arrive with a very poor record of attendance, something that is generally turned round while the young people are at Peacock. The young people themselves attest to their own and their peers change; there may be any number of triggers for this, the vocational subjects, the sport, the atmosphere or the maturity which the centre engenders. Peacock is also able to offer flexible and highly individualised packages. One student currently attending did not attend school at all last year. At Peacock they have set him an initial three day a week target for this year, which he has achieved and from which he can build up to full time.

⁹ 26 gained BTEC Level 2 Work Skills, 11 BTEC Level 1 Sport and Active leisure, 11 City & Guilds Level 1 Building studies, 10 Introduction to Hair and Beauty BTEC Level 1, 10 Skills for Life literacy level 1, 10 Skills for Life Numeracy Level 1, 9 City & Guilds Level 1 Horticulture, 8 Open College Network Soccer Coaching Level 2 and 4 BTEC Level 1 Performance Arts.

The Intern

My volunteering at Peacock academy's TV Project came about through working as an intern at Newham Borough Council. Throughout my time at Peacock Gym Academy my role has been to assist the Technology Tutor, who is a professional film maker and comedian, with the general running of the class and also with the set up of the kit. Since the start of the TV project I have observed a significant increase in the students' confidence in their ability, both with the use of equipment and in their performance skills. Furthermore, during the sessions there has been a noticeable increase in the students' willingness to express their own ideas, offering suggestions for the content of the material, as well as making increasingly mature judgements regarding their own and peers' performances to identify areas for improvement. This confidence is also reflected in wider areas of their education – across other curriculum areas at the Peacock Gym Academy and back at school.

Peacock believes that physical activity, which has to fight for time in the schools sector, is an important factor for this cohort. Peacock provide 2 hours a day doing sport, and this has a real impact on the young people. Staff report seeing a clear difference when competing with other organisations; Peacock students eat better, go to bed earlier and enjoy more exercise.

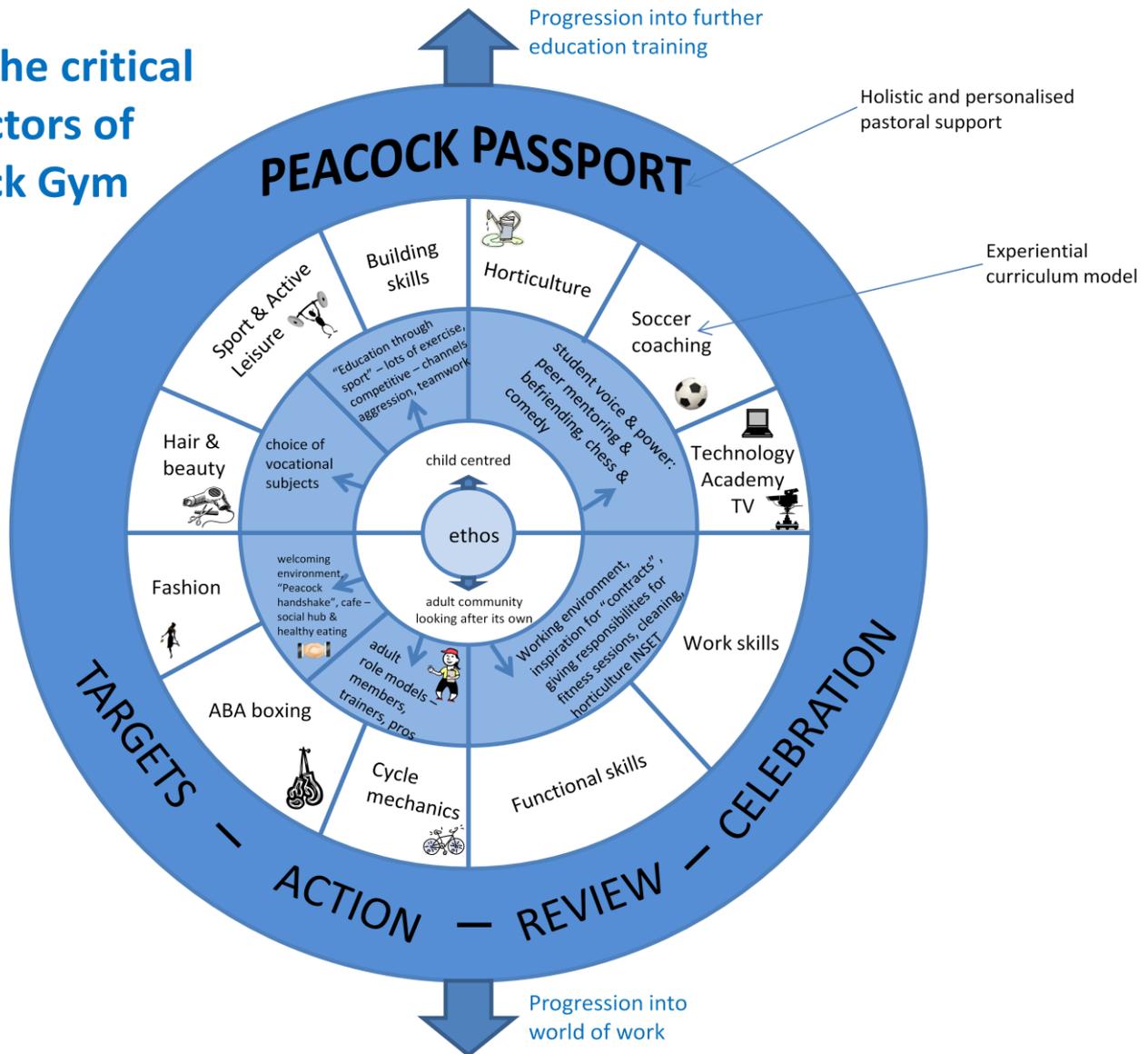
Peacock look to capture success in a range of different ways. They collect data on qualifications, and look at attendance as a key indicator of success. They create case studies, ask for diaries of work and do regular surveys of students. Overall, however, it is through sessions such as Circle Time that Peacock staff get know every student and strive constantly to monitor their progress and development.

4.5.4. Stakeholders and ethos:

It is impossible to separate the Peacock ethos from their perceived stakeholders. The Peacock Gym Academy sees itself as being at the centre of a series of partnerships: with the students, their parents, the schools and PRUs from which they come, Newham Council, the wider local community, staff at the Gym (both working in the Academy and in the gym and cafe) the Metropolitan Police and working with the Peacock Gym charity.

Peacock have attempted to capture the elements that make up their specific ethos, involving the importance of an adult community and role models, the vocational nature of education, the learner voice and responsibility and pastoral support. It looks at two progression routes: progression into work or progression into further education and training.

What are the critical success factors of the Peacock Gym Academy?



Using tools such as the one above, Peacock aim to give all the young people who come to them a sense of worthiness. Most students arrive with an ingrained negative attitude towards the adult world in general and education in particular; students have spent their lives being told that they can't do something, or that they are not good enough. Peacock consider that it is through learning self worthiness and self esteem that they start to mature and become able to deal with different people.

4.5.5. Finance & Sustainability

The only core funding which Peacock receive is the NAP contract. This is, however supplemented by direct income from schools and occasional grants from charitable bodies. The NAP funding, which is significant together with other LA contracts allow for an amount of forward planning for staff and resources. Peacock are have several corporate funders including multinational companies, local authorities, trusts and the National Lottery. Supporters include Clarks, Serco (DIR), Starbucks and Westfield. While many staff at Peacock work on a voluntary basis, all the key staff positions are salaried.

Peacock are keen to look to a future working more formally with a group of schools to help young people who are struggling in mainstream. Schools do recognise that it is to their benefit to have no exclusions and Peacock can help schools to do that. Peacock has recently been accepted onto the Free Schools Programme run by the New Schools Network with a view to becoming an alternative provision Free School opening in September 2014.

5. Newham Schools and NAP

Although facilitated by Newham 14-19, ultimately the schools pay for NAP and other AP provision. Typically, the schools consulted as part of this report had around 10% of their year 10 and year 11 pupils attending NAP and perhaps a further handful on longer term provision. There was an acceptance from the school managers that there are a number of young people who find the traditional school route extremely hard indeed. They may be those who find academic work difficult or un-stimulating, or those whose attendance is very poor. The school leaders spoken to suggest that the system fails a significant number of young people each year, perhaps as many as 150 across the borough.

School Case Study 1

For these individuals, going to Peacock the stress and strain is taken off. For instance, they don't have to wear uniform. Of the five in our school who are on extended provision at Peacock, with four of them the reason they are not performing is their family background. With one girl, her father has recently died, her mother is terminally ill and school is the last thing on her mind; frankly she has missed so much she is never going to catch up..... so we came up with a plan – which was for her to go to Peacock and do Hair & Beauty. Her attendance is not perfect, but far better than what she was doing here and she is enjoying her course and should achieve. In honesty, Peacock is the only good thing happening to her at present.

NAP provision takes the place of 2 out of 4 academic options in Key Stage 4. This ability to take 2 options outside of the school environment lifts the academic pressure from students for the time they are in school, and staff felt this meant that students did better at their remaining academic subjects. On the whole students succeed in their vocational work, and gain their vocational qualifications; school staff felt that it was very important that those qualifications should have credence and credibility in the vocational sector.

School staff agreed with other parties interviewed in seeing the selection of students who join the NAP programme as key. Those who attend are often those on the brink of exclusion or who have serious attendance problems or a record of exclusions. Their schools proactively decide if the options on NAP are a more constructive option for the students, looking to involve those students who may be helped by the greater emphasis on vocational work or experiential education.

Although APs are not inspected for themselves, school staff thought that a good school inspection should involve any AP, although there was also a feeling that some inspectors would be quite threatened by them.

For the provider, the main advantage of NAP is that the student is not attending the school full time. Many of these young people have a disproportionately negative effect on all those around them. So the days when they are not at school give the staff and other pupils some relief.

On the other hand those students who attend AP are often able to stay for longer hours, students gain structure, listen to other adults, become less argumentative and are able to build social relationships. And that they can achieve; adult qualifications are much better than schools ones for this group. It was generally agreed that after attending NAP, students have a noticeably better attitude to their time in school and are more sociable; students become nicer people, more relaxed and are not threatened by their environment.

It was seen as important that those students attending extended alternative provision should maintain links with the school and not feel rejected. Schools generally have staff members who attend the alternative provision on a regular basis, and keep an eye on the progress of those attending. Remaining on the school roll is extremely important for the young person themselves. Exclusion is associated with a range of very negative outcomes, so maintaining that link with the education service is of central importance to the approach.

School case Study 2

The school had a pupil who was excluded for constant truanting; he seemed to never be there. Actually he was at school, but never arrived in time for registration because he was having to take his younger sister to school and was an unrecognised carer. The pupil was very concerned that if he let the school know the full facts, the teachers would inform social services and they may decide to take his sisters away from home. His story only became clear after attending Peacock and his gaining the trust of the staff there. However much school does, there will always be a need for places like Peacock and the other alternative providers who can engage on a much more individual level.

The key individual for successful involvement in NAP is the teacher responsible for linking with the AP. Unfortunately, there is often limited status attached to this role, and it can be difficult to find the right level of passionate people at a sufficiently senior level.

For the school managers interviewed, the key to sustainability is the buy-in of schools, ensuring schools maintain their link with APs and recognising that the best approach for some young people lies outside of mainstream school. But without the likes of Ape, Pitstop and Peacock, Newham schools would have a lot more students failing to engage and dropping out.

6. Towards sustainability

The local authority maintains an 'approved list' of APs from which they can draw for NAP provision. Currently they have more providers than they are actually using, so have spare capacity. This capacity is important as it means that if a provider folds for any reasons there

are others who can step in without too much disruption. When one provider did recently go out of business, the local authority team were able to work with the redundant staff to re-start the business with minimal disruption to the NAP cohort.

Nonetheless, the local authority staff do appreciate the difficulties for providers in planning for sustainability. The longest contract the local authority can offer to a provider is two years and there is no likelihood of there being able to extend this, despite the providers' demands. The local authority view is that by giving providers the NAP core contracts for two years, providers can then build around that guaranteed income to build and develop their provision for other groups, such as schools from outside the borough, the SkillsJam¹⁰ project for over 16s or by engaging with post 16 funding.

As seen above the APs are frustrated by the limitation of two year contracts, but most do offer their facilities to other cohorts out of borough, to PRUs. APE works extensively with the adult community and Peacock has expanded rapidly to bring in an ever wider range of young people. The APs are also interested in expansion into new businesses. Pitstop's Steve Dalton believes that the same model could apply to other vocational settings while Peacock are interested in exploring if their 'ethos' may be replicable in other places. While Newham would support such expansion, it is equally clear that they are neither able, nor essentially interested in funding such developments. If APs wish to follow that route, they will need to fund it from their own resources.

The future

From summer 2013 Raising of the Participation Age (RPA) will change the way young people move out of school and into employment or further study. It would appear that NAP provision will only become more important for schools and other providers in meeting the challenge of keeping young people engaged in the education system for a further two years. APs will need to work with post 16 students and it is likely that there will be more demand for extended vocational provision for those who are not yet ready to enter the FE environment. The colleges themselves could become future clients for AP. One of the difficulties colleges in Newham have is the rate of drop out after the first term in FE. Local surveys suggest that too many young people decide to go to college because peers were also going to that college, but in reality the college environment is often too big, or the college too far away or they have simply chosen a subject which is not what they thought it was. RPA is likely to mean that schools and colleges will need to work more closely to ensure appropriate progression for young people and Colleges will have to take more responsibility for keeping young people engaged. There is clearly room here for APs to fulfil an expanded role in this process.

Although a planned UTC for Newham is not currently going ahead, there are still plans to open a UTC in Barking and Greenwich. While the establishment of these schools is controversial, a large non FE centre for vocational education nearby will have an impact on educational provision in Newham and it would seem that this may offer potential for the vocationally based APs in the borough.

¹⁰ An ESF funded scheme similar to NAP for over 16 year old NEETS providing free vocational study over the summer period. The eventual aim is to amalgamate NAP and SkillsJam.

7. Findings

APE Media, Pitstop and the Peacock Gym Academy are all very different organisations, with a different focus, history and context. It is instructive to look for the similarities and differences. Pitstop and APE are both centred on a specific vocational setting. Their ethos stems directly from this. The two providers set out to impose not an external school discipline, but the discipline of the workplace. At Pitstop they don't allow mobile phones and none of the students demur. At APE attendance is seen as the starting point for any potential employee, and so this becomes a key requirement for their young people. Although Peacock does not centre on a single vocational area, the disciplines of the workplace are just as essential an element of their approach.

Dealing with adults is important for all providers. At Pitstop young people need to deal with customers and suppliers, at APE they are asked to interview adults and edit reports for potential broadcast on adult stations. At Peacock it could be said that interaction with adults is the key element of their ethos; behaving in an adult manner in the cafe, gym and classrooms is one of the central tenants of the Academy.

Flexibility and individuality are also common factors for all the NAP providers. All offer small enough classes to ensure that each student is viewed as an individual with a particular background. It is not the fault of a school that it cannot offer a flexible way back into attendance for a serial truant, while APs can.

None of the APs has been subject to an Ofsted inspection. However, both school and AP leaders agreed that Inspectors should look at AP as part of the feeder school's inspection process. This is in line with the shared ethos that the young person remains a pupil of the school regardless of the amount of time they spend at an AP. That this does not appear to happen is perhaps surprising.

None of the APs involved in this study was keen to consider seeking academy status. All recognise that their key relationship is with the local authority and see no advantage in any further independence. They are wary of entering further into the educational 'system', all regarding that system as part of the problem they are attempting to rectify. At best seeking academy status is seen as a bureaucratic irritation and at worst as threatening their distinctive ethos. The leaders of all three providers are individualists who believe they are offering young people something not available elsewhere in the system. They react with suspicion to any attempt to coerce them into a closer relationship with that system.

It is also interesting to note that those schools in Newham who have opted for academy status are all still a part of the NAP system. They recognise that they need the scope of local authority organisation to provide provision which they feel is necessary for a small number of their pupils.

Despite being opposed to the idea of attaining academy status, Peacock has now started the process of applying to become a 'Free School'. This approach offers a number of advantages to the largest of the three APs, and they believe it is less likely to require compromises to their approach.

7.1. The role of the local authority

Newham local authority, through the Newham 14-19 Partnership, fulfils a number of vital functions in facilitating additional and alternative provision in the borough. Newham take on the important role of undertaking the essential organisational level Quality Assurance of APs which is essential in giving schools confidence in working with organisations which may be unknown to them. By purchasing large amounts of time through NAP and sharing the costs between the partnership schools, the individual cost to a school is made much more affordable than otherwise. The LA also provides some stability to both the APs and the schools by attempting to manage the supply of APs in the borough. The local authority also has an important role in proselytising the service, convincing schools that young people can move across post code boundaries, for instance, and that NAP and AP provision in general should not be seen as a place to 'dump' challenging young people.

7.2. How the Newham experience equates with Government policy

The evidence gained from NAP supports the Ofsted finding that alternative provision works best when provision is carefully selected by schools and units, used well to support learners as part of the whole curriculum and valued by students. The evidence from Newham identifies the contact between the AP and the school SLT as the key relationship which makes the provision effective for individual young people, particularly when some school students are in AP for extended periods of the week. Similarly, it is clear that Newham local authority offer the sort of supporting role which Ofsted recommends.

The Taylor report recommends that Ofsted inspectors should 'pay close attention' to any AP providers. Both the providers and the schools in this report would agree that inspectors should visit APs if pupils are attending them and would welcome that involvement. We note, however that currently this does not seem to be standard practice. NAP appears to us as a potential model for how local authorities, schools and PRUs can cooperate in setting up local systems for quality assuring AP in an area. The system has many advantages for participating schools and units, not the least being the cost sharing of the QA processes and wide range of vocational provision. However, it seems unlikely that any of the partners are likely to further develop further funding mechanisms that will support sustainability and stimulate further growth. Running AP in Newham is and is likely to remain a matter of hand to mouth funding with no commitment to longer term funding.

The Taylor report accepts the Wolf recommendation that all young people engaged with the education system should continue to receive challenging English and maths teaching. The approach to basic skills education in the providers visited was very much that of the Key Skills approach, embedding literacy and numeracy skills with the vocational content of the course. This 'stealthy' approach to English and maths education is considered very successful by those involved, and to change to a more upfront Functional or GCSE-based approach will represent a challenge for AP with many of their most difficult cohorts.

8. Conclusions

Newham Additional Provision is clearly a successful scheme and is achieving its main ambitions, of keeping a difficult cohort of young people engaged with education. The quality

of the APs involved with NAP is similarly successful, working not just with the NAP cohort but with other boroughs and more challenging individuals through extended provision.

In summary NAP has helped:

- Keep young people engaged in education
- Enabled many students to progress to FE
- Restrict the numbers of young people become early NEETS
- Provided valuable extra qualifications for young people
- Prevent many young people becoming involved with the judicial system.

The quality assurance oversight and organising role of Newham 14-19 is central to this success. Without this central principal it seems unlikely that individual schools or PRU would be able to access the range or quality of APs they are currently buying into. Similarly, without the core funding that NAP provides, fewer APs would be able to continue offering distinctive provision. We conclude that Nap would not function without the involvement of the local authority.

The relationship between the AP and the school SLT is the key relationship in ensuring that the AP is able to give the best possible support to the young person. In several instances, a key member of staff moving on has led to a collapse of a positive relationship, and few schools recognise this liaison role as being one of high status. However, the best results come when the AP and the school are very clear and comfortable with their respective roles. When working with schools, the young person remains on the school role, even if attending AP five days a week. The AP is always looking to return the young person to school if at all possible, as this gives by far the best chance of the young person becoming fully engaged in education as they progress beyond 16. It is important the young person does not feel abandoned by the school, and that schools do not see AP as a way of allowing particular young people to slip off their own radar; out of sight, out of mind.

The factors that make AP successful with these groups of young people are:

- Education within a vocational context with a stress on work skills not academic learning
- The flexibility to offer a radically personalised educational agenda.
- Ability to impose the discipline of the workplace rather than of the school
- Adult role models who command respect
- Ability to increase a young person's self esteem and sense of worthiness.

For schools, alternative providers allow:

- Schools students who would have left education to remain engaged
- An opportunity to avoid having to exclude pupils
- Recognition of qualifications gained elsewhere
- Respite for teachers and fellow pupils from excessively disruptive and difficult students.
- NAP makes alternative provision affordable and easily accessible

The biggest challenges for APs:

- To remain solvent in a time of public expenditure cuts

- To capitalise on the changes resulting from RPA
- To find convincing quantitative ways of capturing success
- To find ways of continuing to professionalise their provision.

9. Appendix A

Peacock Student Questionnaire

Peacock Gym Academy conducted a survey of their students at regular intervals as part of their continuous process of evaluation and improvement. These are the results of the Spring 2012 survey.

Peacock Gym Academy Student Questionnaire 2012 (39 returns)

<u>Gender</u>		<u>Days at The Academy</u>	
male	67%	1	18%
female	38%	2	26%
		3	5%
		4	8%
		5	44%
<u>Ethnicity</u>			
white-british	38%		
black-african	13%		
white-other	13%		
black-caribbean	8%		
mixed	8%		
asian-indian	5%		
white-irish	5%		
asian-bangladesh	5%		
asian-pakistan	3%		

Favourite Activity

hair and beauty	26%
gym fitness	18%
boxing	18%
powerleague football	15%
cycle mechanics	9%
art	3%
academy-tv	3%
sport and active leisure	3%

Quality of Provision

	excellent	good	average	poor
quality of teaching	56%	37%	7%	0%
quality of care	66%	29%	5%	0%
quality of relationships with staff	49%	44%	7%	0%
quality of learning environment	51%	39%	2%	7%

Impact of Provision

	change-	a lot	some	no
shake hands		32%	59%	7%
more sociable		36%	54%	10%
feel more confident about learning		58%	38%	8%
able to concentrate more		46%	46%	8%
more motivated about future		60%	33%	8%
more helpful at home		38%	45%	18%

10. Appendix B

Pitstop progression data, April 2012 – August 2012

Attendance %age	Qualification Achieved.	Destination after course (if known)
NAP	3902-01 City & Guilds Entry level Diploma size	Job/college Refrigeration engineer starting September
NAP	3902-01 City & Guilds Entry level Diploma size	Applied Army career
NAP	3902-01 City & Guilds Entry level Diploma size	Applied new Vic College Motor mechanics
NAP	3902-01 City & Guilds Entry level Diploma size	Applied New Vic College Motor Mechanics
NAP	3902-01 City & Guilds Entry level Award size	Early leaver going to FE Stratford college motor mechanics
PRU	3902-01 City & Guilds Entry level Diploma size	Motor vehicle apprenticeship via Quest training
PRU	Obtained 1 unit certificate and stopped attending (domestic reasons)	Not known
PRU	Y10 student. Completed 3 units, up to award level, will continue at Pitstop in Y11	Continuer
SkillsJam ¹¹ student	Completed short course, obtained City & Guilds 3902-01 Entry level Award	Applied for apprenticeship as an electrician.
SkillsJam student	Working towards short course	Continuer

Pitstop progression data, 2010-11

School	Start Date	What date did they leave?	Qualifications Achieved	Destination (if known)
Cumberland	Sep-10	May-11	City & Guilds Entry Level 3	FE Childcare

¹¹ Skillsjam is an initiative aimed at NEETS.

			Diploma. Vehicle systems maintenance.	
Lister	Sep-10	May-11	City & Guilds Entry Level 3 Diploma. Vehicle systems maintenance.	FE Vehicle maintenance
Lister	Sep-10	May-11	City & Guilds Entry Level 3 Diploma. Vehicle systems maintenance.	FE Social care
Lister	Sep-10	May-11	City & Guilds Entry Level 3 Diploma. Vehicle systems maintenance.	FE Vehicle maintenance
Lister	Sep-10	May-11	City & Guilds Entry Level 3 Diploma. Vehicle systems maintenance.	FE Vehicle maintenance
Stratford	Sep-10	May-11	City & Guilds Entry Level 3 Diploma. Vehicle systems maintenance.	FE Vehicle maintenance
Lister	Sep-10	May-11	City & Guilds Entry Level 3 Certificate. Vehicle systems maintenance.	FE Vehicle maintenance
PRU	Mar-11	May-11	City & Guilds Entry Level 3 Award. Vehicle systems maintenance.	Young offenders institution

11. Appendix C

Exporting the Peacock Model

Peacock Gym Academy was the runner up in the 2012 Times (TES) National Teaching Awards 'Outstanding Sporting Initiative or Partnership' and shortlisted for three other national awards for Autumn 2012. They have also been accepted onto the Free Schools Development Programme as one of the six 'most promising' AP Free School Groups.

However, given that one of the keys to successful alternative provision is the personalisation that comes from very small provision, it is clear that an AP such as Peacock cannot simply continue to expand to meet the demand for its services. Therefore, the management of Peacock are interested to identify the features of the Peacock Gym Academy that make it a success, and examine the potential for exporting the Peacock model to other locations, either within Newham or further afield.

Successful features of Peacock Gym Academy

Interviews with a wide range of stakeholders including Peacock teachers, managers, gym staff and coaches, local councillors, students and interns have provided a very full picture of the Peacock ethos. There is a high degree of agreement of the features that contribute to the successful way that Peacock are able to engage with young people and bring them back into the world of education, employment and training.

Adult role models

Many of the young people who attend Peacock have very poor adult role models. This is particularly so for many of the boys who lack positive male role models. Many come from worlds without two parents, where parents do not work, where parents may not even look after themselves very successfully. They lack aspiration because they see no aspiration around them, and they lack a sense of their own worthiness, because no one – at home or at school – has ever suggested they are worth very much at all.

At Peacock, students spend time not just with the education staff but with a whole range of adults – coaches, adult straining at the gym, professional boxers, members of the wider community and so on. One part time tutor is an ex champion cyclist and also a former professional boxer. At 59, well past an athlete's retirement age, yet boxes and trains regularly with the group as well as holding cycle maintenance classes. He is seen by very many young people as a hero figure whom they all look up to. One young person interviewed straightforwardly stated that it was his personality that has kept her out of prison – and she will be representing London in a boxing tournament in India in November 2012. The presence of top professional boxers is impossible to avoid. These men who have no formal connection with the Academy nonetheless take the time to talk to and encourage the young people, who respond with enthusiasm and determination. For others it is the female teachers in Hairdressing, the comedian who works the TV course or the chess-playing teacher. It is not so much that there is one role model but a whole range of positive, dedicated people who show the young people that aspirations are for them and that they are worthwhile people in their own right.

Vocational and experiential syllabus

There is a fine line between having a variety of vocational subjects on offer, and spreading yourself too thinly, a line which Peacock is perhaps close to. By having a range of vocational areas, Peacock opens itself to a wider range of young people. The subjects for study include traditional vocational areas such as mechanics or building, the specific focus of the location with sports management to the fore and also a wide sweep of the creative arts. While not every young person who goes to Peacock finds the right subject, there is enough variety for most to find an area to engage with. Peacock is multidimensional, however, so basic skills (English and mathematics) are embedded in the vocational areas and the daily Circle time is a key feature for everyone, providing an opportunity for group discussion and reflection of common problems and concerns.

Highly personalised programmes

Despite the rhetoric of much of education, Peacock really do treat their students as individuals and do give them highly personalised programmes. Sessions consist of quite large groups of young people who have or were about to be excluded for violence, swearing, non-attendance, aggressive behaviour and so on. Peacock staff quickly get to know every student and monitor their progress at all times. They are not forced to treat everyone the same – the young person who failed to attend school at all for a year is not expected to suddenly attend Peacock five days a week; they are able to set graded targets for his re-engagement with education.

Emphasis on fitness and exercise

The most obvious unique feature of Peacock is the boxing gym that it exists within. Students are expected to start the day with vigorous exercise – boxing, boxing fitness, running etc – and they may well engage in more than one session of exercise each day. Although not forced, that exercise and fitness are the normative state, both of peers and role models quickly has an effect on the young people. There are many proven advantages for young people in engaging with exercise, including improved appetite, sleep patterns and stress. Interviews constantly referred to students growing physically over their time at Peacock, and again this was a feature of conversation with the young people themselves. The healthy eating policy links into this; all students are provided with a token for lunch, which is provided in the cafe on the premises and which only provides ‘healthy’ options – pasta and salad rather than burgers and chips. Teachers spoke of the clear physical differences between peacock students and those from mainstream schools during sporting engagements.

Culture of enterprise

Peacock runs with a great deal of voluntary help and there are services which it would not be economic to source from private businesses. Peacock have turned this to their advantage by offering contracts for services to the students themselves. So the young people can bid for cleaning, or horticultural work in the building, winning both the gains (small payments) and responsibilities for working for themselves. Many of the courses lead to entrepreneurial activities; the bicycles, once repaired in classes, are then sold at markets, hair and beauty have real clients and the TV team aim to sell their services and programmes.

Rooted in the community

Clearly Peacock students gain a great deal by being part of the local community. However, students are also encouraged to give something back. Despite being a charity and operating in a hand-to-mouth basis, they raise tens of thousands of pounds for other charities. Projects include sponsored cycle rides, golfing and other sports events, provide volunteers for local ecological projects and host of other local events. The students at Peacock are constantly encouraged to work for those less fortunate than themselves and to give something back to the community. Students who arrive feeling they have nothing to give and nothing to be proud of are quickly integrated into a culture that sees giving of their time and self as part of their duty towards society.

Model to replicate the Peacock Gym Academy

The above factors which create such a special environment for young people at Peacock essentially distil to two: an existing community centre and extraordinarily dedicated adults – both teaching a peripheral.

Peacock Gym is not a new organisation but has been in the area for two decades. It has a role, a position and an amount of kudos with the local community. It would be very difficult to create Peacock Gym from scratch. Therefore any replication of Peacock would need to be based in an organisation with existing roots in the community, which is open to and frequently used by adults from the local community. Potential organisations might include existing arts or community centres, sports clubs and societies, acting or dance schools, community broadcasting centres or even outreach centres for FE Colleges.

Staffing will, to some extent, follow the choice of centre. It is not easy to find inspirational people to work in a new venture, but if that venture has sufficient aspiration and support it is possible.

Given these two essential features in place, there seems no reason why a similar and equally effective model cannot be built.

12. Appendix D

Participants

The writers of this review would like to thank the following for their assistance during the fieldwork.

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