

## Increasing Participation A Strategy for Cambridgeshire



**Raising the Participation Age  
(RPA)**

**Summer 2012**

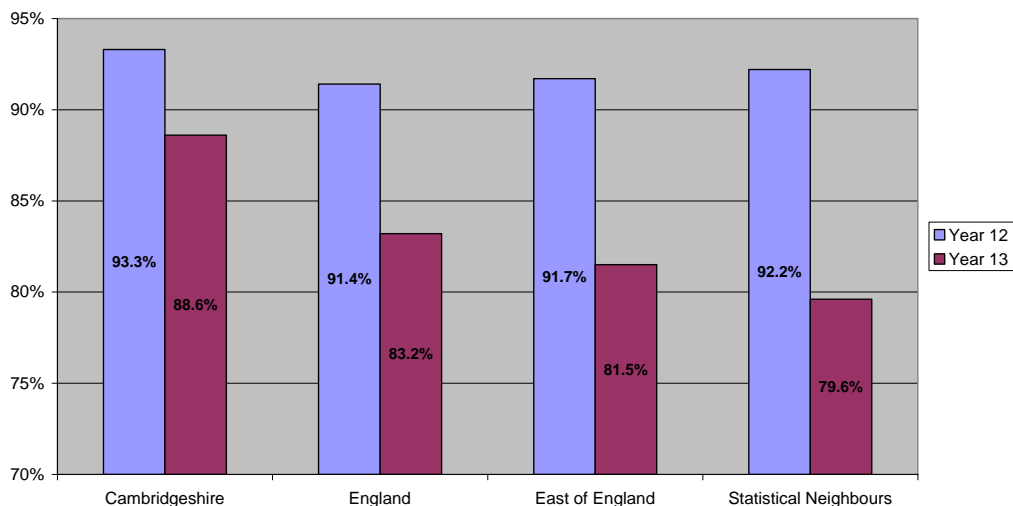
## 16-18 Year Old Participation in Cambridgeshire

### 1. How We Are Doing (November 2011)

Participation of young people aged 16 -19 in education or training in Cambridgeshire is higher than the national and regional averages and the average for our statistical neighbours:

93.3% of 16 year olds and 88.6% of 17 year olds are in learning (including work based learning such as Apprenticeships, but not including independent schools).

**In Learning Comparative Data  
November 2011**



Numbers of young people starting Apprenticeship programmes have been growing year on year, although there is a need to increase them even more. Generally, the proportion of young people participating in Apprenticeships increases with age<sup>1</sup>:

2.6% of young people aged 16 & 17 are currently participating in Apprenticeships (1.9% of 16 year olds; 3.0% of 17 year olds).<sup>2</sup>

There are a number of young people in jobs with training, either to NVQ 2 or higher, or on locally recognised programmes, and it would be good to increase these too.

2.4% of young people aged 16 & 17 are in jobs with training.

However, there is a similar percentage of young people in employment without training, and these could be converted into jobs with training or Apprenticeships:

2.3% of 16 & 17 year olds are in employment without training.

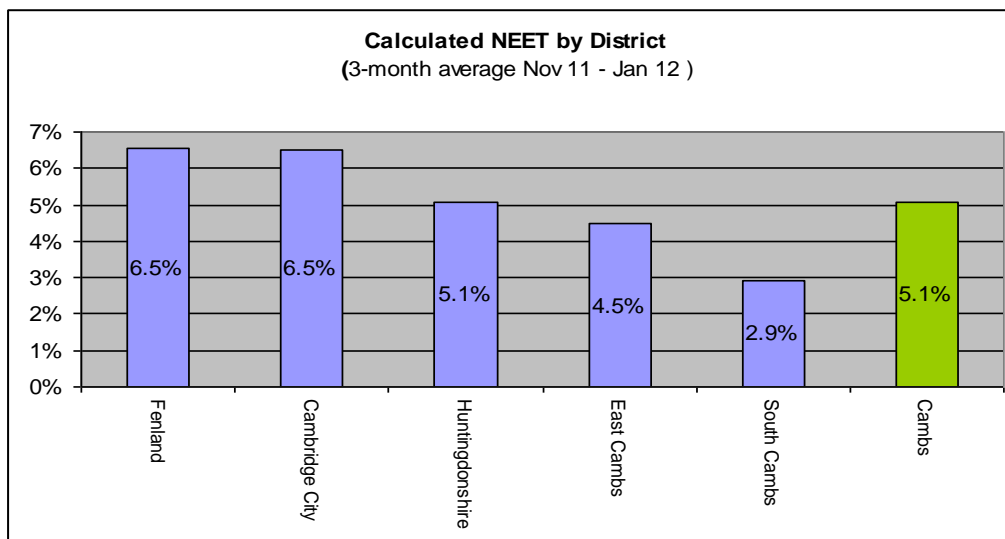
The percentage of young people who are NEET<sup>3</sup> varies across districts and increases with age:

<sup>1</sup> 16, 17 and 18 year olds in this strategy are defined by academic age Year 12, 13 and 14 respectively.

<sup>2</sup> 3-month average for Nov-Jan

<sup>3</sup> NEET – young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training

Overall, 5.1% of young people aged 16-18 are NEET<sup>4</sup> (3.7% of 16 year olds; 4.9 of 17 year olds and 6.6% of 18 year olds).



However, there are particular vulnerable groups who are more at risk of becoming NEET – notably, young people with learning difficulties or disabilities; children who have been looked after/care leavers; teenage mothers.

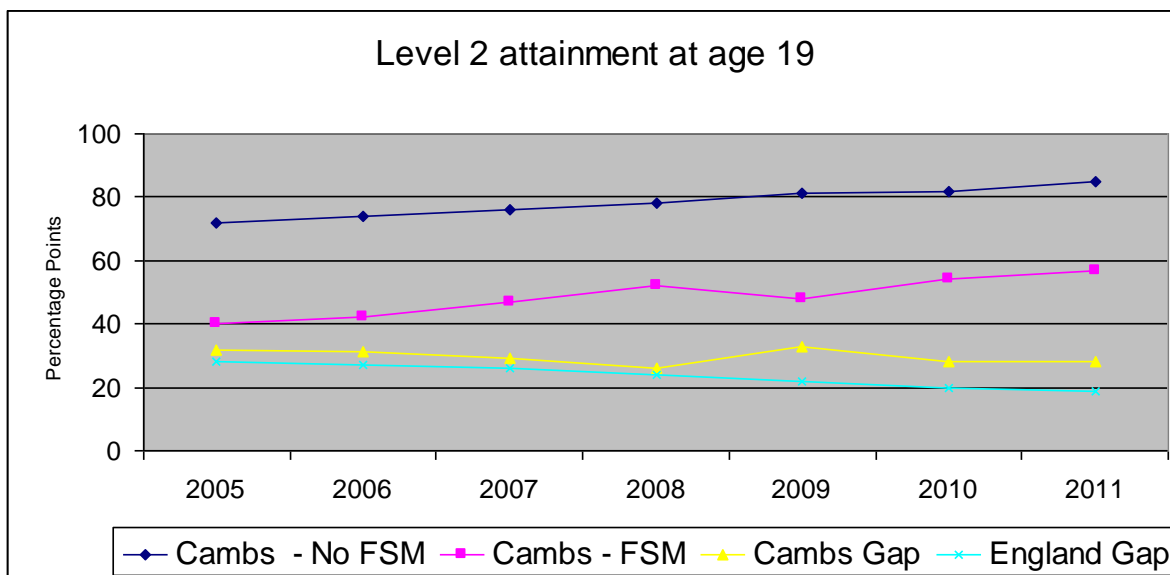
8.3% of 16-18 year olds with learning difficulties and disabilities are NEET.  
27% of looked after children are NEET.  
51.7% of teenage mothers are NEET.

Another factor that has been linked to young people at risk of becoming NEET is their level of achievement in primary school (Year 6, Key Stage 2).

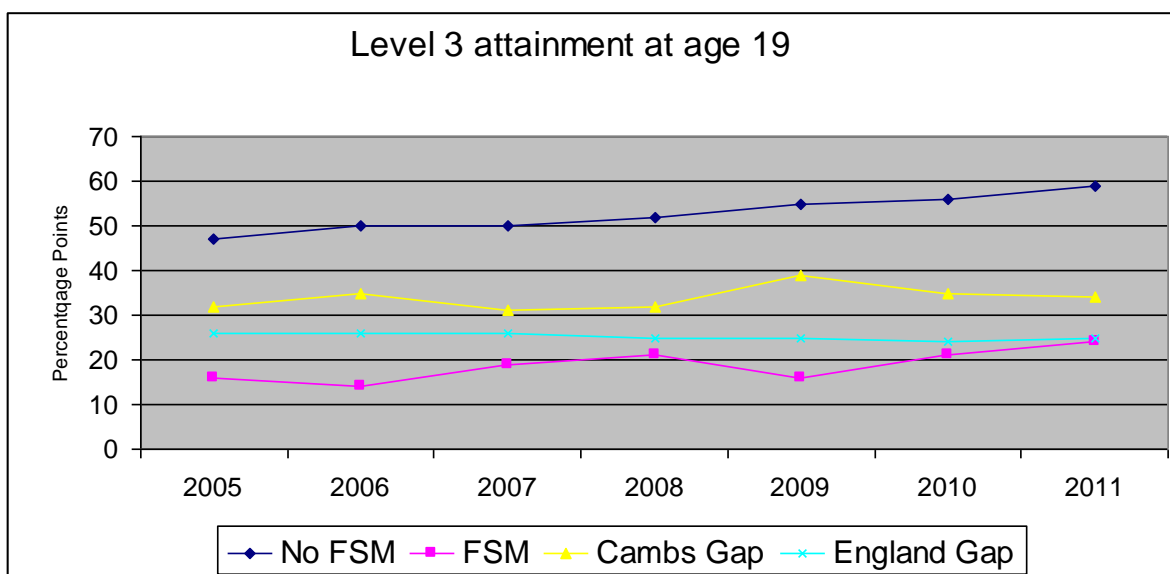
In addition, young people in Cambridgeshire who access free school meals often achieve lower levels of qualifications than those who do not – more than 40% of young people who access free school meals do **not** achieve a Level 2 qualification by age 19 (Level 2 is often seen as an important employability standard). This compares with around 85% of young people who do not access free school meals. The highest proportion of NEET young people have qualifications at level 1 or below and these young people are less likely to be able to gain employment and make a positive contribution to the local economy.

Young people who access free school meals (FSM) are around twice as likely to become NEET as those who do not.

<sup>4</sup> Calculated NEET – ( NEET weighted to take account of learners whose activity is Unknown)



The achievement gap at Level 3 is even greater, meaning that young people who access free school meals have even less chance of entering skilled employment or higher education.



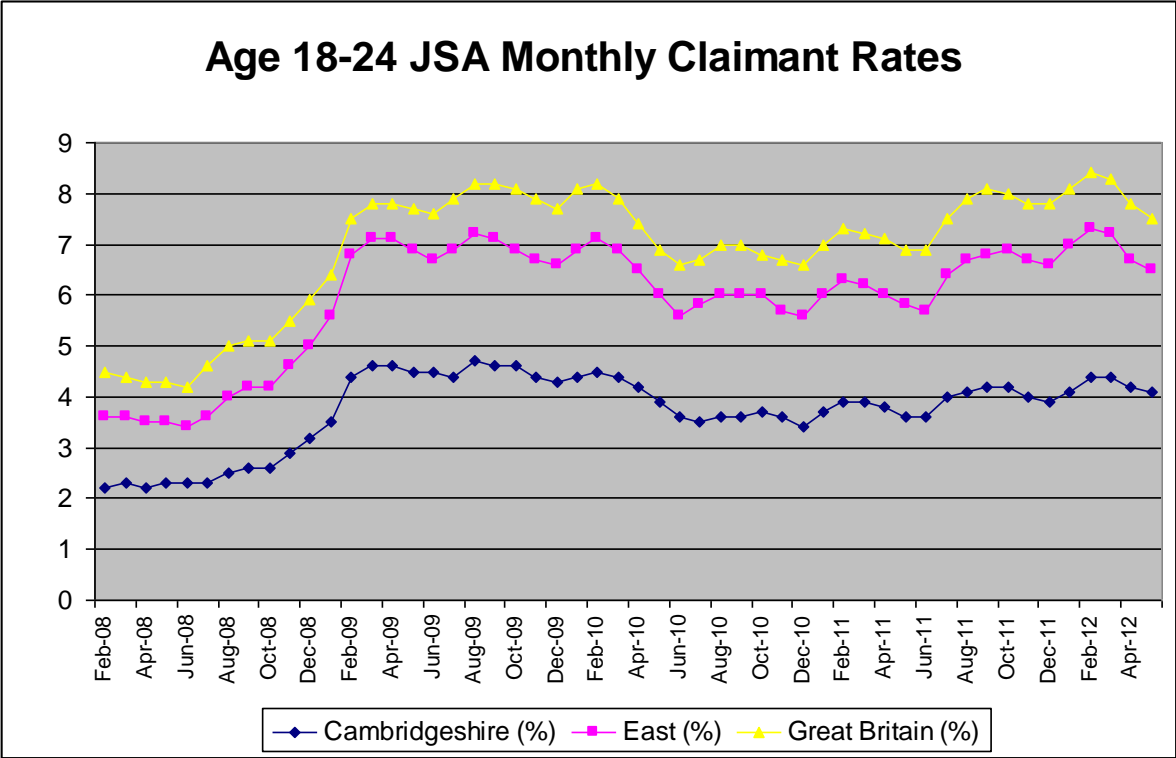
There is evidence that a number of young people drop out of learning aged 17, often without having completed their qualifications, and we need to tackle this too.

Young people who do not participate are more likely to have low skills, to go on to be unemployed later, to earn less and suffer from poor health and depression, which can continue to impact on their adult life.

In general, youth unemployment in and around Cambridge has not risen in line with most areas in recent years.

Youth unemployment in Cambridgeshire has grown from 2% pre-recession, peaking around 4% in the six months up to May 2012.

The 12 month JSA claimant rate has grown more significantly than for shorter claim periods, which suggests a growing core of longer term unemployed young people.



The following strategy explains what raising post 16 participation is, what it means for Cambridgeshire and the commitment of the local authority and area partnerships to raise post 16 participation and improve the life chances for young people who live in the county.

## 2. What is Raising the Participation Age (RPA) and Why is it Important?

### What do we mean by raising the participation age?

The Education and Skills Act 2008 increased the minimum age at which young people in England can leave learning, requiring them to continue in education or training until the end of the academic year in which they turn 17 from 2013 and until their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday from 2015. This is the Year 10 and Year 9 cohorts, respectively, in academic year 2011/12.



Raising the Participation Age (RPA) does not just mean that young people need to stay on in school. It means that young people will be able to choose one of the following options:

- Full time education, such as school or college;
- An Apprenticeship or other work based learning;
- Part time education or training if they are employed, self-employed or volunteering for more than 20 hours a week.

It will be the responsibility of young people to participate in one of these options and the local authority also has a duty to support them. Employers do often already support young employees to train alongside their work and they should continue to.

It is likely that a small number of young people will remain NEET who have a 'reasonable excuse'. This would be by individual exception, but is taken to mean they are pregnant, or have a young baby, have a life limiting disability or are seriously ill.

### Why is it important?

Increasing the participation of 16-18 year olds (and beyond) in education, training and work makes a lasting difference to their lives and also supports Government ambitions to improve social mobility and stimulate growth in the economy.



In addition to the impact on skills and employment opportunities, non participation can block social mobility for individuals and families and reinforce intergenerational poverty. Research also suggests that a lack of skills impacts on the productivity gap between this country and some other countries.

In contrast, participating in and achieving qualifications can dramatically increase young people's lifetime earnings – for example, people with an Advanced Level Apprenticeship earn between £77,000 and £117,000 more over their lifetimes than those without, whilst the employment rate of adults with a Level 2 qualification is twice that of those without qualifications<sup>5</sup>.



In December 2011 the Government published a document outlining a new approach to policy for young people: *'Positive for Youth'*, supported by a strategy to maximise the participation of 16-24 year olds in education, training and work, *'Building Engagement, Building Futures'*.

In Cambridgeshire, we are committed to increasing skills by offering high quality information, advice and guidance (IAG) and provision with support that meets young people's needs, and also meets the demands of local employers. There will be targeted support and early intervention to address any issues which could become barriers to participation later. For young people already aged 18-25, there will be increasing work

between Job Centre Plus, colleges, training organisations and local employer organisations to provide bespoke support for young people who are out of work or training.



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<sup>5</sup> Building Engagement, Building Futures: Our Strategy to Maximise the Participation of 16-24 Year Olds in Education, Training and Work (HM Government, published December 2011)



### 3. What We Commit To Do

We have seen that participation in Cambridgeshire is higher than the national and regional averages and the average for our statistical neighbours, but that we still need to increase this further. We expect to see our 'participation trajectory' rise over the next five years as more young people participate, more do apprenticeships and qualifications whilst in employment, and numbers of young people in jobs without training or who are NEET reduce. The highest proportion of learners is in FE colleges, sixth form colleges and school sixth forms.

In this section, we outline the commitment and objectives of the local authority, working closely with 14-19 area partnerships to raise participation and support young people to progress and achieve. We do not underestimate the challenges this will pose, and we will respond by stretching our ambitions for young people in Cambridgeshire. Whilst the local authority has the duty to ensure sufficient suitable places, many of the levers are with schools and colleges, and localised area partnerships are keen and well placed to lead a joint approach to ensure increased participation. In this context, the objectives that are set out on the next page reflect the over-arching needs that are common to all areas, whilst providing a flexible framework for local support across organisational boundaries and for putting in place the right provision to meet the needs of all young people.





**Objective 1: Getting the data right so that we know where the young people are and how they're doing by**

- a. Developing ways of identifying young people who are at risk of non-participation (Risk of Non-participation Indicator, or 'RONI').
- b. Systematically sharing data with post 16 education and training providers to support young people who are 'at risk' of non-participation as well as those who drop out of education.
- c. Quickly identifying young people who do not progress into further education or training post 16.

*RONI to be developed, tested and ready for use by Autumn 2012.*

*Systems for sharing information and data to be piloted during 2012.*

**Objective 2: Improving support for young people at risk of not participating by**

- a. Identifying young people at risk of non participation early (Year 7 and Year 10).
- b. Having a county wide approach to working together between the local authority, schools and colleges, putting in place targeted support from an early age to those at risk, to ensure successful transition into post 16 learning or employment with training.
- c. Guaranteeing support for young people who are not participating post 16 to ensure they progress into suitable education or training.

*A timeline has to be developed during Spring 2012, outlining the roles and responsibilities of partners working with young people.*

*A county wide approach to targeted support is being developed and tested, with systems in place and being tested further from September 2012.*

**Objective 3: Putting in place the right provision to meet the needs of young people and local employers by focussing particularly on**

- a. Learners in Foundation Learning provision - to support their achievement and progression.
- b. Young people seeking employment or in employment without training – ensuring that support and clear pathways to employment are in place.
- c. Vulnerable groups, including looked after children/care leavers; PRU<sup>6</sup> leavers; teenage parents; young offenders; young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities – ensuring that suitable provision is identified and that young people are supported.
- d. Using data analysis to support partnership approaches to ensure suitable provision is available for all young people.

*Information is being analysed to inform provision from September 2013.*

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<sup>6</sup> PRU – Pupil Referral Unit

**Objective 4: Linking employers with schools and colleges to support the progression of young people into skilled employment by**

- a. Working with the LEP<sup>7</sup> and the 14-19 area partnerships, ensure that every school is linked to one or more new business partners.
- b. Working with employers and the FE sector, improve the offer to young people from age 14 who are looking for employment with training so that they are work ready.
- c. Identifying, supporting and growing the number of employers who employ young people as apprentices or with training.
- d. Supporting and assisting employers who employ young people without training to access suitable provision.

*Partnership project activity started in 2011 and will continue during 2012 and into 2013.*

**Objective 5: Guaranteeing general and targeted high quality information, advice and guidance to all young people by**

- a. Providing supportive arrangements and information to assist schools in meeting their statutory requirements for information, advice and guidance.
- b. Offering a Cambridgeshire IAG Quality Award, to meet the national standard and be made available to schools.
- c. Continuing to monitor the 'September Guarantee'<sup>8</sup>, offering places to meet demand from all young people.

*The September Guarantee will be monitored between September and December each year. The Cambridgeshire IAG Quality Award will be approved and made available to schools from July 2012. Full quality assurance systems will be in place by January 2013.*

**Objective 6: Making sure that all young people, their families, schools, colleges, employers and providers understand what RPA means for them by**

- a. Making available a range of RPA marketing and resource materials for schools, young people and parents.
- b. Launching a media campaign.

*Literature will be distributed from Spring 2012.  
Media campaign will be launched predominantly from Autumn 2012.*

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<sup>7</sup> LEP - Local Enterprise Partnership

<sup>8</sup> September Guarantee - a process to provide all 16 and 17 year olds with an offer by the end of September of a suitable place in education or training.

## 4. Working Together with Partners

|   | Schools and colleges will   | The LA will  | Partnerships will   |
|---|---|--|---|
| Sharing data  | <p>Schools inform LA of Year 11 leavers' destinations</p> <p>Post 16 inform L.A of offers to meet September Guarantee</p> <p>Post 16 inform L.A of 16 - 19 enrolments throughout the year</p> <p>Post-16 inform LA and school of mid-course leavers</p> <p>Post-16 inform schools of students' results and 18+ destinations</p> | <p>Send Area Partnerships information about at-risk students for them to disseminate to post-16 centres based on expected destinations</p> <p>Annual activity survey – send schools all 16-18 students' situations annually; at-risk students termly</p> | <p>Coordinate transfer of information about at-risk students between pre- and post-16</p>   |
| NEET support  | <p>With localities, refine at-risk list</p> <p>Work with YSS to support at-risk students, pre- and post-16</p>  | <p>Develop and use risk of NEET indicator</p> <p>With schools, refine at-risk list.</p> <p>Provide targeted intervention pre- and post-16</p>  |   |
| Provision   | <p>Post-16 plan provision to meet demand within the context of the needs of all young people in the area</p>  | <p>Provide data on provision needs</p> <p>Ensure that there is a sufficient suitable provision to meet the needs of young people</p>   | <p>Facilitate dialogue between pre-and post-16 on provision</p> <p>Ensure suitable progression routes and facilitate collaboration over these</p> |
| Understanding and connecting with local economies – employer engagement | <p>Engage employers to improve young people's employability</p>   | <p>Maintain a vacancy matching service</p> <p>Support work in partnerships and links with the LEP</p> <p>Promote apprenticeships</p>   | <p>Coordinate employer engagement across the partnership to ensure equal opportunities</p>  |
| IAG   | <p>Provide independent careers guidance</p> <p>Guide students into appropriate post-16 provision, including jobs with training</p>  | <p>Guidance for targeted students</p> <p>Guarantee an appropriate place</p> <p>Offer quality accreditation of schools' IAG</p>   | <p>Facilitate sharing of good practice</p>  |
| Communication   | <p>Inform young people and parents</p>  | <p>Produce generic materials for all stakeholders</p> <p>Inform employers</p>  | <p>Support and facilitate sharing of information</p>  |

**The following have been involved in the production of the Strategy:**

- Cambridgeshire County Council:  
Adult Skills Group  
Area Managers: Locality and Partnership  
Commissioning Enhanced Services  
CYPS Strategy and Commissioning: Planning and Performance  
Infrastructure Service  
Secondary and Special Schools Service  
Youth Support Service  
16-19 Commissioning Service
- LEP
- Schools and colleges
- 14-19 Area Partnership Managers

The local authority and schools, colleges and work based learning providers – through area partnerships – are committed to delivering full participation for all young people across the county. The strategy is supported by a detailed action plan which will be monitored by an established RPA Operations Group, accountable to Children and Young People's Services (CYPS) Management Team and with clear links to Area Partnerships.

**Links to other Strategy Documents**

The RPA strategy has been written with other important strategies in mind, notably:

- The Adult Skills Strategy
- The Apprenticeship Strategy
- The Child Poverty and Worklessness Strategy
- The Narrowing the Gap Strategy
- The CAF<sup>9</sup> Strategy

**Timescales:**

The strategy and action plan outline commitments and activity to ensure that RPA legislation is implemented in time for the requirements by 2013 and 2015.

**For more information contact:**

Natasha Cross  
natasha.cross@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

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<sup>9</sup> CAF – Common Assessment Framework