

Understanding NEETs – lessons for policy and practice



15 early lessons

Impact on providers

This is much more than a research project!

1. Developed and utilised research skills with direct implications for their work.
2. Developed partner relationships.
3. Created a community of interest.
4. A field led innovation in addressing a key and challenging social policy.
5. Providers and practitioners need to be aware of, and understand policy, in order to communicate it well.

What do the data tell us about young people?

6. Motivation is curriculum.
7. The NEET label masks a wide range of diversity.
8. The route from non-participation into learning and employment isn't a simple or a straightforward one.
9. Schools can damage your learning health.
10. Catch people when they are ready to learn.

What do the data tell us about adults?

11. If we think that young people are diverse, then adults are even more so.
12. People with the lowest skills have the longest journeys to sustainable work.
13. Displacement from the labour market can seriously damage your life chances.
14. Opportunities to learn informally affect attitudes towards formal learning.
15. Big chunks of learning are difficult to fit into busy lives.

The cost of NEETs

designing a whole service approach

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Coventry, Warwickshire and Solihull Total Place NEETs Work

Financial Headlines

- In February this year there were 1,989 young people aged 16-18 in Coventry, Warwickshire and Solihull who were NEET.
- Agencies within the three Local Authorities spend a total of £14.8 Million (per annum) supporting these young people.
- The total cost to the sub-region of these young people being NEET is between £56.7 million and £66.2 million.
- Source: Price Waterhouse Coopers

What are we doing that's new / different ?

- More on prevention – especially around transition. With the help of LSIS we are developing new models of transition from school to Further Education.
- Better information sharing, especially with JobCentre Plus for 18 years using both services.
- Developing a Zero Tolerance to all 16-18 year olds not in learning. With LSIS we are helping three FE Colleges to have zero drop out of learning i.e. a common approach to “wrap around” support to colleges and managed moves.

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Interviews with young people and adults

Interviewees

- Recent school leavers
- Parents and carers
- Pregnant women
- Ex-offenders
- Graduates
- People from black and minority ethnic communities
- People living alone/ Foyers
- Health problems/ disability
- Few or no qualifications
- Individuals made redundant

Current Activity

- Job hunting
- Temporary work
- Volunteering
- Applying for courses
- Learning
- Accessing support
- Looking after children/ others
- Interests and hobbies
- Spending time with friends
- Stay at home

“I got into the habit of doing creative projects when I was at University and that hasn't really stopped since then, even though I'm not formally working I'm always working on projects”

“When you’re 16 how do you know what you want to do in your life? I’m 19 and I still don’t know what I want to do with my life. I have phases of what I want to do and what I don’t want to do. I don’t know what job I want to settle down with”

Aspirations

- Paid work
- Set up own business
- Travel/ work abroad
- Learning – FE, HE, workplace
- Money to buy own home/ car
- Unsure about long-term goals

“My long-term goal is to have a qualification eventually and be happy in a job”

“I’d like to be able to help a mum or a family that are struggling to cope, a family support worker”

“When I get a job I am going to get my own business. I am going to have a youth centre...It’s all about youths getting together. I think that’s good. It keeps youths off the street. They moan about youths doing things but they should do something about it”

Barriers

- Lack of good IAG/ support
- Insufficient qualifications
- Prior educational/ work experiences
- Difficulties with peers/ teachers
- Shortage of money
- Other priorities/ responsibilities
- Health/ disability
- Lack of local job opportunities
- Low levels of confidence/motivation
- Lack of direction

“The only thing that could hold me back is to get someone to look after my son so it’s trying to get in to a course at the same times from when he’s at school”

“I think because I haven’t got enough education I might not be able to get in there”

“I really didn’t take school that serious...I think like in Year 11 they should be taught about their future, actual life outside school”

“Once I’m through the doors I’ll be fine, it’s just making that initial step”

Triggers

- Good IAG/ tasters
- Interesting learning opportunities
- Tailored approach
- Good teaching
- Supportive learning environment
- Practical support – childcare, money
- Support from family/ friends
- Improved job prospects
- Personal motivation
- Different types of learning
- Role models
- Time out/ no activity

“Before I met Connexions I just couldn’t be bothered but then they showed me that I really need to go, and they don’t just help with jobs...say that I was upset they’ll help me with that as well, and you’re with the same person so you can get close and you don’t have to like... get to know a new person every time”

“They need to find more ways to connect with the youth of today...If you can't bond with the students you are not going to be able to teach”

“It's a sense of achievement for me, to make me proud and to show my daughters that if I can do it they can really do well at school as well”