

**NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**11 June 2010**

**Covering Report of the Scrutiny Review**

**Supporting Young People into Education, Employment and Training**

**1. Purpose of Report**

This report asks the Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee to:

- Discuss and note the information in the draft final report on ***Supporting Young People into Education, Employment or Training*** (attached at Annex A)
- Consider the recommendations to the Executive in the scrutiny review set out on page 4 and page 22 of the report.

**2. Introduction**

The Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee agreed that in the current economic downturn a Task Group should be established to examine the levels of young people in North Yorkshire who are not in education, employment or training and the range of services offered to meet their needs.

**3. The Task Group**

The Task Group was chaired by County Councillor Liz Casling, working with County Councillor Tim Swales, County Councillor John Batt and County Councillor David Blades.

**4. Objective of this Review**

With the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) continuing to rise the aim of this in-depth scrutiny review is to consider whether the County Council and its partners are doing all they can to support young people NEET in North Yorkshire.

**5. Financial & Legal Implications**

The scrutiny review did not undertake any detailed financial assessments or legal implications.

## 6. Recommendations

The Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee is recommended to agree the final report and the recommendations of the ***Supporting Young People into education, employment or training*** Task Group to be presented to the Executive.

**HUGH WILLIAMSON  
HEAD OF SCRUTINY & CORPORATE PERFORMANCE  
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Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2010

Background Documents: none

Annexes: Annex 1  
Supporting Young People into education, employment or training  
Scrutiny Review – draft final report



**Young People Overview & Scrutiny  
Committee**

**Supporting Young People into  
education, employment or training**

**Draft Final Report of the Task Group  
June 2010**

## Chairman's Introduction



*I am pleased to present to you the Task Group's Report on Supporting Young People into Education, Employment or Training.*

*Historically North Yorkshire has done well in reducing the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training (NEETt). But with growing concerns about the number of young people nationally and locally who are not participating in learning together with the impact of the economic downturn the Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee agreed to undertake a scrutiny review into this important issue. Our purpose was to explore the arrangements for 16 - 18 year olds who were Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET). In undertaking this scrutiny review our overarching aim is to make recommendations that add value to the work of the Council, raise the profile of the issue, encourage and support partnership working.*

*Providing opportunities for our children to succeed in life is on every parent's wish list. It is so important for young people to achieve their personal level of attainment and for those who choose to "drop out" between the ages of 16 and 18 there is support and guidance which recognizes their needs and the differing motivations required to help them re-engage. We believe all young people have much to offer and given the right opportunities to achieve they will bring their own brand of enthusiasm and new skills to our communities and local economy.*

*Research tells us that being NEET can have a negative affect on life outcomes for young people and that the average length of time recorded being NEET is nine months. But for those young people more predisposed towards not being in education, employment or training for whatever reason this may be longer.*

*Whilst researching the support available for this group of young people who are going through a period of indecisive about what they do next, it is important that we highlight the fact that education participation levels in North Yorkshire continue to rise across the County.*

*I would like to personally thank members of the Task Group C Cllr Tim Swales, C Cllr John Batt, C Cllr David Blades for their involvement and contribution;, the young people we met at Connexions; Officers from Integrated Youth Support, representatives from the Prince's Trust and the Youth Justice Service for their help and guidance through this complex area.*

*County Councillor Liz Casling  
Task Group Chairman*

## **Review Process**

With the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) continuing to rise the aim of this in-depth scrutiny review is to consider whether the County Council and its partners are doing all they can to support young people NEET in North Yorkshire.

The Review explored the following areas:

- Section One: Demographic profile of young people 16 – 18 year olds across North Yorkshire and their current situation
- Section Two: Why young people fall into the NEET Category
- Section Three: The services and support available to young people NEET in particular including the more vulnerable groups, and the actions being taken to reduce the number of young people NEET
- Section Four: Local Policy and local area agreement performance targets
- Section Five: National policy and guidance regarding young people NEET

### **Related Local Area Agreement performance indicator:**

NI 117- Reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training.

NI 45 - Engagement in suitable full time ETE (education, training and employment)

### **Relevant Children and Young Peoples Plan objectives:**

3.3, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5

### **Process:**

In order to conduct this Review on the topic of 'NEETs' in North Yorkshire the Task Group undertook an evidence gathering process, desk-top research, and discussions with stakeholders and other local authorities, a visit to a Connexions Hub.

The review will address equality and diversity issues by ensuring that vulnerable groups of young people and the rurality of the County are considered; the equality of support and provision available to all 16 – 18 year olds.

## **Executive Summary: Conclusions of the Task Group**

Young people given the opportunity will bring a variety of skills, their own brand of enthusiasm and productivity to North Yorkshire's economy. The challenge for North Yorkshire County Council, together with partner agencies is to provide a wide range of activity and interventions, to increase participation, raise levels of attainment and self-confidence and thereby reduce NEET levels.

The priority placed on increasing the engagement and participation of young people in learning we believe is a priority in North Yorkshire. We are reassured by the objectives set out in the Children and Young Peoples Plan, the multi-agency partnership working to implement the Action Plan of the NEET Strategy and the emphasis that has been placed on preventative activity underpins this focus. The make up of the NEET Strategy Group is broad but there would seem to be no representation from our health colleagues.

In our report we have mentioned our concerns about vulnerable groups of young people who have health issues and who may not be available to the labour market. We are unsure whether our health partners realise the possible impact that depleted health services and resources might have on young people NEET and there might be an opportunity to engage with health partners on the NEET Strategy.

### ***Recommendation 1:***

***Opportunities are considered which look to include and involve our health partners with the NEET Strategy.***

The quality and independence of information, advice and guidance given to young people is a key factor in maintaining engagement, and re-engaging young people who have become NEET. We would like to acknowledge the work of the Integrated Youth Service, the Connexions team, who are a key support service to young people NEET in North Yorkshire and the commitment of all staff involved with reducing NEET levels.

North Yorkshire has not experienced as great an impact as some other areas, nevertheless there has been some. Achieving the Local Area Agreement stretch target NI 117 of 3.6% in the light of the economic downturn was ambitious but North Yorkshire has managed to keep NEET levels well below the national average. The target for 2010/11 is even more ambitious at 3.3% and all efforts and actions will therefore need to remain focused.

Local Employer Engagement is really important and we were pleased to note that each local area Connexions team has an employer engagement plan. Within the plan the Connexions team visit employers based on analysis of the occupational aspirations of young people who are NEET. Their work also includes industrial mapping. As opportunities are developed these are matched to the NEET young people who are advised of opportunities.

**Recommendation 2:**

***Efforts continue to engage with local businesses to try and help young people find employment.***

We return to our comment about the different pockets of information collected on young people's status. How this is shared or should be shared between departments and partner agencies is not clear and we recommend that this is an area for further development with a framework agreed for sharing appropriate information.

**Recommendation 3:**

***Consideration should be given to developing a clear framework for sharing information between departments and partners of young people at risk of becoming disengaged with learning.***

Young People have differing views about information, advice and guidance available to them and it is important that their views are listened to. We welcomed the input from the Young People Development Workers Hub Assessment questionnaire which asked 128 young people for their views. The four actions drawn from this piece of work are fully supported by the Task Group.

In particular, the matter of opening hours was raised by the Task Group and whether this met the needs of young people using the Integrated Youth Support Hub. We suggest that this matter is considered further but recognise it has staff resource implications.

**Recommendation 4:**

***Integrated Youth Support Hub opening hours are considered in meeting the needs of young people who use them but within available resources.***

We know that particular groups of young people such as looked after children, young offenders, teenage parents and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities make up some of the most vulnerable young people and account for a significant number of those who fall, or have the potential to fall out of education, employment or training. We also acknowledge that engaging with the most vulnerable groups is a challenge, but it is important that we continue with efforts and partnership working to improve ETE participation and engagement for young people who commit crime

**Recommendation 5:**

***Efforts are continued to improve the participation and engagement of young people who commit crime with Education, Training and Employment.***

**Recommendation 6:**

***The Head Teacher ELAC virtual School progress their discussions with the looked after children's lead in Children's Social Care to consider how they could become more involved with post 16 educational progressions.***

We are aware that a small number of young people facing difficulties at school in the last two years of compulsory education may benefit from development programmes. We suggest that there might be an opportunity for schools to engage with the voluntary and community sector to deliver a variety of development programmes in partnership.

***Recommendation 7:***

***Consider engaging with the voluntary and community sector to deliver a variety of localised personal development programmes for young people at risk of disengaging.***

draft



## Background

The Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee agreed that in the current economic downturn a Task Group should be established to examine the levels of young people in North Yorkshire who are not in education, employment or training and the range of services offered to meet their needs.

Reducing the proportion of young people NEET is a priority for the Government who have developed a number of strategies, incentives and initiatives to encourage young people back into education, employment or training. They have also set a national target to reduce the proportion of 16- 18 year olds NEET to 7.6% by 2010. Many experts in the field have predicted that as the recessionary impacts take hold many councils' who had set this as an LAA target, would find it more and more of a challenge despite putting in some incredible work tackling NEET levels.

As a Task Group we quickly became aware that the issue of young people disengaged with learning remains a persistent challenge and spending any length of time NEET may lead to health problems, long term unemployment, poverty and criminality. We understand that a small but significant number of young people face complex and multiple barriers to employment and training and require targeted and specialist support.

The definition of young people who are not in any form of employment education or training is commonly referred to as 'NEET'. Defining the NEET group is not easy, but a variety of indicators show that this group is much less likely to have good economic and social outcomes than peers who continue in education or enter the world of work. It has been said that young people without a job, training course or study may run the risk of becoming involved in crime and antisocial behaviour, they find it harder to get a job without the formal qualifications or skills needed and risk a 'revolving door' of unemployment and low-paid jobs. The personal cost to these young people is significant.

Why do young people become NEET? From the evidence we have examined there would appear to be a variety of reasons why a young person may not be engaged in education, employment or training (EET).

But young people can be NEET for different periods of time: some young people are NEET for a very short period, while they transfer from one opportunity to another; some will transfer in and out of the NEET cohort multiple times; other young people may experience multiple barriers to engaging in education, employment or training and are likely to be NEET for a longer period of time and need more support.

### **Impact of the economic downturn**

The effect of the economic downturn was already in evidence in NEET statistics by the end of 2008. Each June, the DCSF publishes a Statistical First Release (SFR) containing data on 16-18 engagement. In June 2009 the SFR showed that

in England the 16-18 NEET rate increased from 9.7 per cent at the end of 2007 to 10.3 per cent at the end of 2008.

As the recessionary impacts affect the economy and redundancies and unemployment levels increase in North Yorkshire we are also seeing an increase in young people NEET. It is therefore becoming increasingly more of a challenge for the County Council together with its partners to meet the Local Area Agreement stretch target NI 117 of 3.6% NEET and 3.5% not known by 2009/10.

## Section One: Profile of 16 – 18 years olds in North Yorkshire

The numbers of young people who have chosen to continue their education beyond the age of 16 has risen steadily for a number of years, but there remains a proportion of 16-18 year olds who for various reasons have become disengaged with learning; or perhaps require further information advice and guidance to help them decide or have complex needs that must be tackled before they can progress to education employment or training.

The profile of young people aged 16-18 years by gender across North Yorkshire set out in Chart one is a snapshot of data in April:

	Female		Male		Cohort	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
16	1204	16.1%	1338	17.8%	2542	17.0%
17	3063	41.0%	3034	40.4%	6097	40.7%
18	3209	42.9%	3136	41.8%	6345	42.3%
<b>Cohort</b>	<b>7476</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>7508</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>14984</b>	<b>100%</b>

Chart two shows the cohort profile by Centre:

	Age			Cohort
	16	17	18	
Coast	557	1305	1345	3207
Craven	332	766	702	1800
Harrogate	781	1817	1802	4400
Hamb & Rich	400	1072	1180	2652
Other	1	2	1	4
Ryedale	167	347	459	973
Selby	304	788	856	1948
<b>North Yorkshire</b>	<b>2542</b>	<b>6097</b>	<b>6345</b>	<b>14984</b>

Chart three shows the situation regarding the number of young people engaged IN education, employment, training (EET) and the number of young people NOT engaged in education, employment or training (NEET), Other and Unknown

**Chart 3 - Situations by Centre %**

	Situation							
	EET		NEET		Other		Unknown	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Coast	3002	93.6%	179	5.6%	14	0.4%	12	0.4%
Craven	1740	96.7%	44	2.4%	2	0.1%	14	0.8%
Harrogate	4238	96.3%	137	3.1%	13	0.3%	12	0.3%
Hamb & Rich	2446	92.2%	188	7.1%	3	0.1%	15	0.6%
Other	1	25.0%	3	75.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Ryedale	921	94.7%	45	4.6%	4	0.4%	3	0.3%
Selby	1829	93.9%	96	4.9%	7	0.4%	16	0.8%
North Yorkshire	14177	94.6%	692	4.6%	43	0.3%	72	0.5%

***Comment from the Task Group:***

Information in Chart 3 shows there are distinct pockets of need in some areas but appreciate that these figures change constantly due to seasonal impact and educational start dates.

Information regarding the vulnerability of young people across North Yorkshire is recorded from age 13 – 19 years of age and is approximately 2.5% of the total North Yorkshire cohort. (Females – 2.7%, Males - 2.3%) However, we are informed that this data is not necessarily a complete picture as the data is reliant on self declaration by the young person - it is not a requirement for them to declare their vulnerability or disability.

Vulnerable groups identified across North Yorkshire: care leavers, teenage parents, ethnic minorities, young people with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD), young people with mental health problems, travellers, young offenders and young people with drug and alcohol dependency, teenage pregnancies, make up some of North Yorkshire's most vulnerable young people and account for a significant number of those who fall, or have the potential to fall, out of education, employment or training.

***Comments from the Task Group:***

North Yorkshire has historically made good progress in lowering NEET figures and has not experienced as great an impact as some other areas. Nevertheless as a result of the economic downturn there has been some impact in the availability of training and employment opportunities.

We are concerned about vulnerable groups of young people who have health issues and problems and who are not available to the labour market. We are unsure whether our health partners realise when some health resources are depleted the possible impact these reductions may have on young people NEET.

The reduction of young people who are NEET is a North Yorkshire LAA stretch target (NI 117). The target for 2009/10 is 3.6% as an average taken from the months November 2009, December 2009 and January 2010. The target for 2010/11 is 3.3%. There is also a requirement for the 'not knowns' (young people who are recorded on the Management Information system as having no contact within a defined time period) to be below 3.5%.

draft

## **Section Two: Why do young people become NEET?**

Ending up NEET for some young people may be the result of a complex set of individual circumstances. The reasons why young people are not working or learning will vary greatly depending on where they live and the opportunities available to them.

Care leavers, teenage parents, ethnic minorities, young people with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD), young people with mental health problems, travellers, young offenders and young people with drug and alcohol dependency, teenage pregnancies, make up some of North Yorkshire's most vulnerable young people and account for a significant number of those who fall, or have the potential to fall, out of education, employment or training.

Across North Yorkshire other factors impact on the likelihood of young people becoming NEET. These include having a negative experience of schooling or post-16 education, having differential access to the labour market, being a member of a deprived community or living within an area that has a limited infrastructure.

Research carried out by *Children and Young People Now – the NEET debate* asked young people how they feel about their situation - "young people believe it is the economic downturn that is preventing them from finding employment; that a lack of work experience also contributes to them being out of employment or training; the cost of transports is a barrier and some thought employers favoured economic migrants. *\*extract taken from Children & Young People Now NEET debate*

Whilst each young person in the NEET category is an individual with their own unique set of characteristics and circumstances, there is strong evidence that certain categories of young people are over-represented in the NEET group: young people in care, care leavers, young people with learning difficulties and young offenders. It is also important to remember those young people with a poor school attendance record, young people from black and minority ethnic (BME) groups, teenage parents, young carers and young people whose parents are unemployed or in low or unskilled occupations.

National research suggests that children entering the care system are characterised by having a more negative experience of school and higher levels of truancy and exclusion.

The young people interviewed in the study said that they tended to be less optimistic about the future and suffered a loss of confidence in being able to carry on with their studies. Other young people talked about school not being right for them and that they struggled to understand or see the point in studying subjects that would never use. They also mentioned:

- being placed away from their home area
- bullying at school due to them being looked after

- after being excluded it was much harder to go back

It is said that young people who commit crime fair less well against some or all of the 'Every Child Matters' five outcomes and that they are four time more likely to become NEET. Studies show that between 20% and 50% of young people who offend may be dyslexic compared to 10% in the wider population and over 60% have a statement of special education needs. Young people in custody with an average age of 17 years showed that 50% had literacy and numeracy levels below what is expected nationally of an 11 year old and over 25% had numeracy levels equivalent to those of an average 7-year old. Re-engaging these young people in learning requires dedicated input from the Youth Justice Service and other partners.

Young People who are not available to the labour market for example young carers or teenage parents are still kept in touch with by Connexions to offer support or the opportunity to look at development areas if this is what they want.

***Comments from the Task Group:***

Re-engagement in participation is a crucial part of the support and guidance offered to young people who are not participating in any form of learning.

No one service can tackle this enormous challenge so it is ever more important to strengthen partnership working with a significant emphasis put on preventative activity which stops a young person from becoming disengaged with participation and learning.

There would seem to be a lot of information collected on young people's status. How this is shared between departments and partner agencies seemed a little unclear and we would suggest that this is an area for further development. The sharing of information between departments and partners of young people at risk of becoming disengaged with learning is important and in turn contributes to a cohesive approach which provides early identification of a young person who may potentially be at risk of disengaging. There may also be opportunities to learn from some of this information which could be helpful to others in planning an improved way forward.

A young person the Task Group met during our visit to an Integrated Youth Support Hub told us they had left school disengaged with learning and with no clear idea of what they wanted to do. The help offered by Connexions when they attended with a member of their family was very positive and the young person was offered enrolment on the Entry to Employment (E2E) work scheme. (E2E scheme enables young people to progress to an apprenticeship, further learning or a job).

Another young person told us that their work experience was 'a waste of time and they hated it'. Their careers advice 'did my head in'. But they were very complementary about the Connexions Advisers who were supporting them applying for jobs, writing a CV etc.

## **Section Three:**

### **Services and support available to young people NEET**

#### **Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)**

The importance of good quality, impartial Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) which helps young people to become self-reliant and better able to manage their personal and career development, including learning is clear and a high priority for the Government. It is an umbrella term that covers a range of activities and interventions.

In this economic recession, with increased unemployment amongst young people it would seem very sensible to ensure that young people have access to good quality comprehensive and impartial Information, Advice and Guidance. This should help them to make the right learning and career choices so that they can succeed in work. It may also help them find answers to the questions and issues that can arise in their personal lives.

Local Authorities assumed responsibility for commissioning and managing IAG services in their areas in 2008. This was previously provided by the Connexions Partnership which has now been integrated into local authorities.

#### Connexions

The Connexions team provide information advice and guidance to young people from Integrated Youth Support Hubs and other access points across the County for example in libraries and youth centres. They are a key support service for young people who are NEET.

All young people in North Yorkshire between 13 and 19 are able to access help from a Connexions Adviser if they need one, either in their learning institution or through High Street offices. To increase awareness of the work of Connexions for young people and parents this is promoted through the NY Times monthly.

Connexions Careers Advisers complement what schools and colleges already do, through the careers education curriculum and their guidance and pastoral systems. They offer help and support to promote participation in learning, ranging from careers advice to arranging specialist help to tackle barriers to learning such as homelessness, truancy or health problems.

North Yorkshire commissions Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) in schools and colleges and *igen ltd* have been contracted to deliver Connexions Careers Adviser time in schools and colleges until 2011.

Connexions Careers Adviser (CCA) time provides an opportunity for young people to access one to one support from a trained guidance professional. Young people are prioritised according to need for example young people at risk of

disengagement, young people in care who may be new to the school. There is also a statutory requirement to support young people with an educational statement of need with a transition plan.

### Employer Engagement

Employer engagement work is essential to support the development of employment opportunities and gain Labour Market Information (LMI) to inform the guidance provided to young people.

Each local area Connexions team has an employer engagement plan. Within the plan the Connexions team visit employers based on analysis of the occupational aspirations of young people who are NEET. Their work also includes industrial mapping. As opportunities are developed these are matched to the NEET young people who are advised of opportunities. The Connexions team also receive information from Jobcentre Plus (JCP) on vacancies available (this has been underpinned through a partnership agreement between Connexions and JCP)

Connexions provide a free vacancy service [www.getconnectednow.co.uk](http://www.getconnectednow.co.uk) for employers and have excellent links with the National Apprenticeship Service; Connexions promotes and advertises apprenticeship vacancies. North Yorkshire County Council have a Service level Agreement with the National Apprenticeship Service which enables additional support for young people through information sharing on unsuccessful applications and follow up by Connexions Adviser support.

#### ***Comments from the Task Group:***

As a Task Group we all agreed that we should as a County Council do as much as possible to encourage and support local businesses to try to find jobs for young people.

### What do young people say about the IAG available in North Yorkshire?

We were pleased to become aware of a piece of work being undertaken by a number of Young People Development Workers recently who used a standardised questionnaire based on the 12 IAG standards set by the Government.

The Hub Assessment Tool (HAT) was carried out in each of the Hubs over the 6 Integrated Youth Service areas in North Yorkshire and involved 128 young people aged 11-21.

Young People were asked a number of questions and to add their comments on how they think IAG resources could be improved. The following are just a few examples taken from the full results:



Asked if young people know where to get IAG from – 81% said they did, 19% said they didn't.

What did young people received IAG on - 35% said college courses, 28% on full-time jobs, 29% on part-time jobs.

Asked about their preferred time to access the hub – 12% said morning, 32% said afternoon, 56% said early evening.

The Action Plan draws together the following conclusions:

- Re-addressing the opening times
- Make sure all young people are aware of private appointments rooms
- Better advertising of services that are available to young people from the hubs
- Results will inform a development plan for satellite approaches.

The Task Group wanted to take this opportunity to formally thank all the young people who took part and gave up their time to answer the questionnaire and congratulate the Young Peoples Development Workers on a really useful piece of work.

The full results of the Hub Assessment Tool questionnaire is attached at appendix one.

### Targeted Youth Support

Targeted Youth Support (TYS) in North Yorkshire is available for young people aged 11-19 years old (and up to 25 years for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities). It is aimed at helping vulnerable young people early, and in addressing their difficulties as soon as possible, preventing their problems escalating. This means working with young people who may not meet traditional thresholds for statutory or specialist services.

Identification of these vulnerable young people and their level of need is aided by the use of the Vulnerability Checklist. It is not a crisis service nor does it replace or duplicate the support provided by level 3 and 4 providers.

### Look after Children

National research suggests that children entering the care system are characterised by having a more negative experience of school and higher levels of truancy and exclusion. Looked after children in North Yorkshire are supported with their education by the ELAC Virtual School Service (Access and Inclusion), one of several services within Children and Young Peoples Directorate. The ELAC Virtual School is not a teaching institution, it is a model by which the

authority can provide services and support for the education of children in their care. The service aims to ensure that all children in care are placed on a school roll and have access to an appropriate education. The ELAC Virtual School Service aims to provide short term teaching support at times of transition, specific vulnerability, or when a young person's attainment is falling behind their peers and national expectations.

Currently the service does not advise young people post compulsory school age, but the Head Teacher ELAC Virtual School is consulting with the looked after children portfolio lead in Children's Social Care to consider how to become more involved with educational progression post 16 and those interested in going to University, North Yorkshire's NEET Strategy and Reaching Higher and Aiming Higher projects.

### Young Offenders

Research tells us young people who commit crime fair less well against some or all of the 'Every Child Matters' five outcomes and we understand they are four time more likely to be NEET. Raising their involvement and re-engaging them in learning for this group of vulnerable group of young people is not easy or straightforward.

National Indicator 45 measures North Yorkshire and its partner's performance against the number or percentage of young people supervised by the Youth Justice Service attending suitable full-time Education, Training and Employment. The target is rigid and does not take into account those young people who access a percentage of the 25 hours full time ETE.

The LAA target set for 2009 /2010 of 60% was not achieved and it is anticipated that the target of 64% for 2010/11 is likely to be a real challenge.

*The Youth Justice Service (YJS) is a multi-disciplinary organisation that works both within the Children & Young Peoples Service and the criminal justice system. It acts as an advocate and brokers access on behalf of young people to education, training and employment (ETE). The need to improve ETE outcomes for young people who offend is a priority.*

The Youth Justice Service and the Head Teacher ELAC Virtual School are liaising to consider how they can target support for young people who commit crime and are known to the criminal justice system.

The YJS are represented on the NEET Strategy Group.

### ***Comments from the Task Group:***

We welcome and encourage developments and initiatives that are predisposed to help young people, particularly from the more vulnerable groups, to participate in learning thereby increasing their individual potential and life chances. We also acknowledge that engaging with the more vulnerable groups is a challenge, but it is important that we continue with efforts and partnership working to improve ETE participation and engagement for young people who commit crime.

### Young Carers and Teenage Parents

Some young people due to their own set of circumstances may not be available to the labour market but they are not forgotten about. Connexions Advisers keep in touch to offer support and offer the opportunity to look at development areas if this is what the young person wants. There are good links between Integrated Youth Service Hubs and Children Centres for teenage parents.

### Local government as a commissioner of 16-19 provision: Meeting the needs of learners and employers

The transfer of responsibility for commissioning 16-19 education from the Learning & Skills Council to local government provides a great opportunity and a significant challenge to local authorities.

The change will allow councils, working with their partners, to plan seamless provision for young people up to the age of 19, and thereby seek to increase the number of young people engaged in education and training. In the development of their 14-19 plans, local authorities will face the difficult task of balancing the needs of employers, with the demand from learners and the capacity of providers to deliver a sufficient number of appropriate courses.

### Voluntary Sector

The voluntary sector play an important role in providing a more flexible, personalised service to meet the needs of young people who are disengaged, or at risk of disengaging.

A representative from the Prince's Trust met with the Task Group and provided us with a comprehensive presentation on the work of the UK's leading youth charity.

Their aim is to work with young people aged 14-30 to develop confidence and skills and to get into education training and development, in particular helping young people who are :

- struggling at school
- in care or leaving care
- long-term unemployed
- in trouble with the law

The Prince's Trust stresses that it can only continue its success by working in effective partnership with many other organisations for example, Youth Justice Teams, local authorities, schools, colleges to name a few.

They run a number of Programmes which included a 12 week personal development programme in Northallerton.

We were particularly interested in a programme for young people aged 14-16 who are facing a range of difficulties at school, including those at risk of exclusion operating in schools on a two year programme.

### Work Experience and Apprenticeships

How has North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) contributed to reducing the number of young people NEET?

NYCC Work Experience Programme provides block and extended work placements, to young people between the ages of 16-24. The programme aims to engage young people, including vulnerable groups and those disengaged from education, in local government through the provision of a wide range of work placements encompassing all service areas and occupational sectors.

Since the Real Start Apprenticeship Programme was introduced in 2006 the recruitment of young people as apprentices in NYCC has increased from 4% to 5.7% and it is anticipated that this will rise considerably further as a result of emerging initiatives such as the Future jobs Fund, Councillor Shadowing Programme, Graduate Schemes and the expansion of apprenticeships for vulnerable young people such as care leavers, young offenders and those with learning difficulties and disability.

The Local Government Councillor Shadowing Programme commenced last November and runs until March 2011 giving 10 young people aged 13 -19 the chance to follow the day-to-day work of their local representatives, get involved in their local democracy and take the opportunity to experience leadership within their local communities.

**Comments from the Task Group:**

The complexity and broad range of services available that support and guide young people who are at risk of disengagement became apparent very early on in our research. With our own self-imposed time restraints it has not been possible to include all the services and support available but more to give a snap shot of what is being done to prevent, help and support young people who become NEET in North Yorkshire.

Connexions is a key support service for young people who are NEET and the issue of opening hours was raised by a member of the Task Group when we visited an Integrated Youth Support Hub in Northallerton who asked if the opening hours met the needs of young people. This is supported by the Hub Assessment 2010 questionnaire which suggests that some young people would prefer different opening hours. However, we do acknowledge that there would be staff resource issues for extended opening hours.

The Prince's Trust XL Club programme was of particular interest to the Task Group and suggest that this programme of personal development for vulnerable groups of young people who may be facing difficulties at school and are in the last two years of compulsory education is looked into further.

The Task Group were pleased to acknowledge NYCC Work Experience Programmes particularly for looked after children, care leavers and young offenders.

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## **Section Four:**

### **Local Policy for young people NEET**

The responsibility for reducing the number of young people who fall, or who have the potential to fall out of education, employment or training is a collective responsibility of the North Yorkshire Children's Trust .

*The Children & Young Peoples Plan (CYPP) 2008 – 2011* under pins the work of the Children & Young Peoples Service, together with partner organisations and sets out a number of priorities to increase the training/employment opportunities for 16-19 year olds. We have listed below some of the objectives included in the CYPP:

- 3.3 Enable children and young people to attend, participate in and enjoy their learning
- 5.1 Deliver 14-19 improvements
- 5.2 Raise aspiration and prepare children and young people to succeed in working life
- 5.3 Improve access to high quality information, advice and support
- 5.4 Development the capacity of children and young people to manage their transitions to adult life
- 5.5. Improve access to education and training for all children and young people

North Yorkshire's Strategy for reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training provides a platform from which a shared and collectively agreed approach for tackling NEET can be developed by the multi agency partnership. The vision of this Strategy is to provide all young people across North Yorkshire with a real and measurable opportunity to succeed and to prosper through access to high quality education, employment or training opportunities. Accountability for delivering the strategy sits with the NEET Strategy Group who report to the Children's Trust Board.

The North Yorkshire NEET Strategy Action plan sets out a number of preventative and intervention actions/tasks that aim to prevent and re-engage young people in learning. A significant emphasis has been placed on preventative activity which stops a young person becoming disengaged from EET in the first instance.

#### Local Area Agreements(LAA):

North Yorkshire is one of a number of local authorities who chose NI 117 under the LAA and set this as a stretch target - NI 117 - year one (2008/09) 4.1%, year two (2009/10) 3.6% and year three (2010/11) 3.3%. Performance is judged by using a snapshot during the months November, December and January

Historically North Yorkshire has done very well in achieving national targets that were set for reducing the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and for tracking young people to ensure that their current

situation was recorded (the not known). However this stretch target has been flagged as 'cause for concern' as the recessionary impacts take hold and affect the economy and redundancies and unemployment levels. North Yorkshire in the current climate has managed to maintain a remarkable grip on re-engaging 16-18 year olds but was unable to achieve NI 117 stretch target of 3.6% for 2009/10 despite putting in some incredibly work tackling NEET levels.

National Indicator 45 (NI45) refers to young people supervised by the Youth Justice Service attending suitable full-time Education, Training and Employment. The target is quite rigid in its data collection and does include the numbers or percentage of young people who access a percentage of the 25 hours full time ETE. The LAA target set for 2009 /2010 was 60% which was not achieved and it is anticipated that the target of 64% for 2010/11 is unlikely to be achieved.

Experience has shown that reducing the percentage of NEET young people is complex and difficult. The UK is fifth from bottom in a league table of 28 western countries for the proportion of 15-19 year olds not in education, employment or training. Experts predicted that as these impacts take hold many councils' will find it more and more of a challenge to meet this LAA target.

#### ***Comment from the Task Group:***

The priority placed on increasing the engagement and participation of young people in learning and subsequently reducing the levels of young people NEET is taken very seriously by North Yorkshire County Council and is evidenced by the objectives set out in the Children and Young Peoples Plan and the NEET Strategy.

Although the LAA stretch target (NI 117) was not fully achieved we recognise the considerable effort put in by all levels of staff and partner organisation involved with this group of young people and their commitment to reduce NEET levels.

The Task Group welcome and value the hard work and achievement of the NEET Strategy Group, the collaborative and multi-agency working and support the emphasis that has been put on preventative activity.

The Action Plan details a number of prevention, intervention and retention actions/tasks being used by professionals in the many services to re-engage young people whilst recognising that they are individuals with different and sometimes complex needs.

## **Section Five: National Policy**

In gathering our evidence we came across a number of National Policy developments and initiatives intended to increase the participation of 16-18 year olds, thus reducing the number of young people NEET. The general consensus being applied is that early intervention is key to preventing young people becoming NEET.

Identifying trends and outcomes which relate to young people NEET was undertaken by the National Audit Office:

- A higher proportion of white young people are NEET than is seen among most ethnic minority groups
- Young people who are NEET are more likely than their peers to have a disability or longer term health problem
- Children in local authority care are much more likely than their peers to be NEET
- 16/17 year olds who are NEET are more likely to have engaged in risky behaviours (smoking or vandalism, for example) by age of 13/14
- Disadvantaged in its many forms is a more common feature of early life for 16/17 year olds who are NEET.

The Government's target to reduce the proportion of 16 – 18 year olds not in education, employment or training to 7.6% by 2010 remains a challenge and it would seem that this group of young people are the subject of a growing range of policy interventions.

Public Service Agreement targets to reduce the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training have been in existence since 2004 and the Government has developed a number of initiatives and strategies, including its 2007 publication "Reducing the number of people not in education, employment or training (NEET); The Strategy".

### **The NEET Strategy – Reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training**

In November 2007 the DCFS (Department of Children, Schools & families) published 'The NEET Strategy – Reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training.' The Strategy has 4 key elements:

- Careful tracking of young people to identify their needs, with information used to plan and commission services to meet the needs of all young people;
- High quality information, advice and guidance (IAG) to enable young people to access suitable provision and to tackle barriers to learning;
- A flexible mix of learning provision, both pre- and post -16, designed to meet the needs of every young person in every area;
- A clear focus on rights and responsibilities of young people to engage in education, employment or training.



The NEET toolkit was published in May 2008 - based around the same key themes as the Strategy. It sets out the role of each delivery partner, good practice tips and case studies to support delivery.

### **The Education and Skills Act 2008**

The Education and Skills Act 2008 legislated to raise the education leaving age to 18. From 2013 young people will need to remain in learning for one additional year, and from 2015 must remain in learning until their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. Through the wide-ranging reform of qualifications and the curriculum, the Government is aiming to ensure the right range of courses and qualifications are available so that every young person is engaged and motivated by a comprehensive menu of learning opportunities.

To coincide with these changes, the Government has brought forward a programme of reform of 14-19 education. It anticipates that learning for young people will lead to qualifications from one of four routes Apprenticeships; Diplomas; Foundation Learning and General Qualifications, e.g. GCSE's and A levels.

### **The September Guarantee**

The September Guarantee is an offer, by the end of September, of a suitable place in learning to young people completing compulsory education.

In November 2009 plans were announced to build on the September Guarantee approach by offering a place in learning to all 16 and 17 year olds not in employment, education or training in January. The Guarantee is principally an offer of learning and includes Entry to Employment (E2E) for young people NEET.

### **“Investing in Potential”**

In 2009 the Government published Investing in Potential, its “Strategy to increase the proportion of 16-14 year olds in education, employment or training.” The Strategy announced government plans to increase investment in post16 participation in 2010-11 £202m.

### **Information, advice and guidance**

The Government’s strategy for young people’s information, advice and guidance, Quality, Choice and Aspiration, was published in October 2009. This document sets out the terms of “IAG Guarantee” stating that young people in schools are entitled to:

- Support from a Personal Tutor who knows them well and who can help them to access specialist advice and ensure any learning needs or issues are quickly addressed;

- High quality programmes of careers education which help young people to plan and manage their own careers;
- Impartial information, advice and guidance about learning and work options including about Apprenticeships, Diplomas, Foundation learning and GCSEs/A levels
- Information, advice and guidance about the benefits of higher education and how to access the opportunities that it affords and
- A programme of work related learning (in Years 10 and 11), giving young people direct insights into the world of work.

**Quality, Choice and Aspiration: A Strategy** for young people's information, advice and guidance. Its vision is to modernise access to IAG and careers education, make it accessible for today's generation of young people and keep pace with the rapidly changing economy.

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## **Section Six: Conclusions of the Task Group**

Young people given the opportunity will bring a variety of skills, their own brand of enthusiasm and productivity to North Yorkshire's economy. The challenge for North Yorkshire County Council, together with partner agencies is to provide a wide range of activity and interventions, to increase participation, raise levels of attainment and self-confidence and thereby reduce NEET levels.

The priority placed on increasing the engagement and participation of young people in learning we believe is a priority in North Yorkshire. We are reassured by the objectives set out in the Children and Young Peoples Plan, the multi-agency partnership working to implement the Action Plan of the NEET Strategy and the emphasis that has been placed on preventative activity underpins this focus. The make up of the NEET Strategy Group is broad but there would seem to be no representation from our health colleagues.

We have previously mentioned our concerns about vulnerable groups of young people who have health issues and who may not be available to the labour market. We are unsure whether our health partners realise the possible impact that depleted health services and resources might have on young people NEET and there might be an opportunity to engage with health partners on the NEET Strategy.

### ***Recommendation 1:***

***Opportunities are considered which look to include and involve our health partners with the NEET Strategy.***

The quality and independence of information, advice and guidance given to young people is a key factor in maintaining engagement, and re-engaging young people who have become NEET. We would like to acknowledge the work of the Integrated Youth Service, the Connexions team, who are a key support service to young people NEET in North Yorkshire and the commitment of all staff involved with reducing NEET levels.

North Yorkshire has not experienced as great an impact as some other areas, nevertheless there has been some. Achieving the Local Area Agreement stretch target NI 117 of 3.6% in the light of the economic downturn was ambitious but North Yorkshire has managed to keep NEET levels well below the national average. The target for 2010/11 is even more ambitious at 3.3% and all efforts and actions will therefore need to remain focused.

Local Employer Engagement is really important and we were pleased to note that each local area Connexions team has an employer engagement plan. Within the plan the Connexions team visit employers based on analysis of the occupational aspirations of young people who are NEET. Their work also includes industrial mapping. As opportunities are developed these are matched to the NEET young people who are advised of opportunities.

### ***Recommendation 2:***

***Efforts continue to engage with local businesses to try and help young people find employment.***

We return to our comment about the different pockets of information collected on young people's status. How this is shared or should be shared between departments and partner agencies is not clear and we recommend that this is an area for further development with a framework agreed for sharing appropriate information.

***Recommendation 3:***

***Consideration should be given to developing a clear framework for sharing information between departments and partners of young people at risk of becoming disengaged with learning.***

Young People have differing views about information, advice and guidance available to them and it is important that their views are listened to. We welcomed the input from the Young People Development Workers Hub Assessment questionnaire which asked 128 young people for their views. The four actions drawn from this piece of work are fully supported by the Task Group.

In particular, the matter of opening hours was raised by the Task Group and whether this met the needs of young people using the Hub. We suggest that this matter is considered further but recognise it has staff resource implications.

***Recommendation 4:***

***Integrated Youth Support Hub opening hours are considered in meeting the needs of young people who use them but within available resources.***

We know that particular groups of young people such as looked after children, young offenders, teenage parents and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities make up some of the most vulnerable young people and account for a significant number of those who fall, or have the potential to fall out of education, employment or training. We also acknowledge that engaging with the most vulnerable groups is a challenge, but it is important that we continue with efforts and partnership working to improve ETE participation and engagement for young people who commit crime

***Recommendation 5:***

***Efforts are continued to improve the participation and engagement of young people who commit crime with Education, Training and Employment.***

***Recommendation 6:***

***The Head Teacher ELAC virtual School progress their discussions with the looked after children's lead in Children's Social Care to consider how they could become more involved with post 16 educational progressions.***

We are aware that a small number of young people facing difficulties at school in the last two years of compulsory education may benefit from development programmes. We suggest that there might be an opportunity for schools to engage with the voluntary and community sector to deliver a variety of development programmes in partnership.

***Recommendation 7:***

***Consider engaging with the voluntary and community sector to deliver a variety of localised personal development programmes for young people at risk of disengaging.***

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