

## **FAQs about NEET in Leeds**

### **What is NEET and how is it measured?**

NEET stands for Not in Education, Employment or Training. The term is applied in different ways to different age groups of young people. It is generally used for young people rather than the adult population.

The DCSF publishes figures for the percentage of 16-18 year olds in each local authority in England who are NEET. Previously Connexions partnerships were set targets to reduce the number of young people NEET, targets are now set for each local authority.

There are different definitions of NEET that have been used. The Connexions definition of NEET did not include young people in personal development opportunities, such as volunteering. This was used for Government measurement of NEET until November 2006. Since November 2006 the Local Authority definition of NEET has been used, which counts young people in personal development opportunities as NEET. Both monthly and quarterly figures are produced, the current DCSF figures that are published are the average of the November, December and January counts for each local authority.

### **Why does NEET matter?**

The number of young people NEET is of concern because being NEET is an indicator of underlying problems in a young person's life and of future social exclusion. Young people are more likely to achieve economic well being in their adult life if they are engaged in EET.

There is increased focus on the number of young people in learning, either in full time or part time education or training opportunities. This is due to the increasing importance of Level 2 qualifications in predicting future economic well being. The recent DCSF announcement on raising the participation age will have a profound impact on the way we view NEET in future. The raising of the education or training leaving age, to 17 by 2013 and to 18 by 2015, will be a major priority for the local authority over the coming years.

The Raising Expectations paper can be viewed at:

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/conResults.cfm?consultationId=1474>

### **Why do young people become NEET?**

There are a variety of reasons why a young person may not be engaged in education, employment or training (EET). Every individual will be NEET for their own specific reasons.

Young people are 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 young people will transfer in and out of the NEET cohort multiple times; and other young people will be NEET for a long period of time.

There is a link between young people NEET and other social deprivation factors. Young people who are experiencing multiple barriers to engaging in EET are likely to be NEET for a longer period of time and need more support. The development of

multi-agency support models recognises the benefits of treating young people's support needs holistically, dealing with all of the factors that affect their lives.

### What solutions bring young people in to EET?

There is no single solution to engaging young people in EET, being NEET may be the result of a complex set of individual circumstances. The right support and opportunity must be found for individual young people.

Every young person should be able to make the choices that are right for them and have the aspirations and motivation to build a positive future. Raising a young person's aspirations and motivation are key to helping them overcome barriers to engagement in EET. A wide range of factors and experiences in a young person's life will impact on their aspirations, motivation and self esteem.

Young people are entitled to support to make positive choices both within school and about their progression after Year 11. Young people need access to the skills and support to manage transition. Young people should have access to the information, advice and guidance they need to make choices and have access to appropriate support.

It is important to tackle the underlying causes of a young person's entry in to the NEET group to ensure they are given the skills to enter and sustain a place in EET.

### What are the targets for Leeds?

The target rate of young people (aged 16-18) NEET is 6.8% for Leeds in 2010, this will be measured at the end of January 2011.

### Which young people in Leeds are NEET?

#### **The cohort of young people NEET is not a static, homogenous group.**

A recent study of young people leaving learning in West Yorkshire found that 19.8% of young people age 16-18 had some experience of being NEET. The membership of the NEET group changes, with some young people moving in and out of EET multiple times. Young people can be NEET for varying lengths of time and for varying reasons. NEET is a description of a young person's situation rather than a set of defining characteristics.

Some groups of young people have higher NEET rates than the general population.

These groups are:

- young offenders
- looked after children/care leavers
- teenage mothers
- young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD)
- young carers

Other groups of young people are being considered in research funded by the LSC into the make up of the NEET cohort in Leeds.

### What is happening in Leeds to reduce the number of young people NEET?

A partnership approach across the public, private and VCF sectors has meant a more coordinated approach to the tracking of young people and work to reduce the numbers NEET.

The establishment and embedding of Connexions over the past 5 years has seen an increased awareness of and interest in the issue of young people NEET.

A NEET Strategy and action plan exists for Leeds, to guide work to reduce the number of young people NEET. The action plan is overseen by the multi-agency NEET Strategy group and guides the work of the NEET Coordinator. The action plan is reviewed and updated quarterly and comments/suggestions are always welcome.

Copies can be viewed at:

<http://www.educationleeds.co.uk/14to19/index.aspx?pageno=511&np=1>

### Why might not all young people in Leeds be in EET?

It may be necessary for some young people to have a gap in their formal learning, due to their circumstances. Our work is to ensure being NEET is a temporary situation and young people are supported to enter EET when they are ready to do so. Young people should be able to choose the pathway that is right for them. Eg for a young mother it may be appropriate to spend some time as a full-time parent and engage in formal learning, possibly part-time, when their child is old enough to access childcare.

All young people are entitled to access learning that meets their needs and future aspirations.