

Improvement Priority – LN-1d. Increase the proportion of vulnerable groups engaged in education, training or employment

Accountable Officer – Sally Threlfall

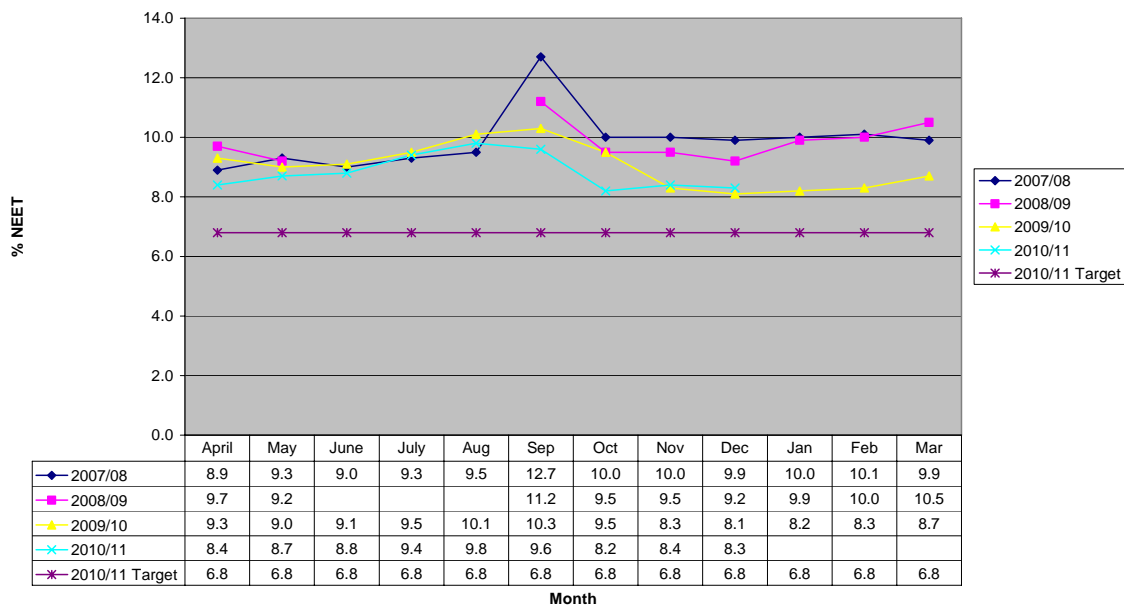
Overall Progress



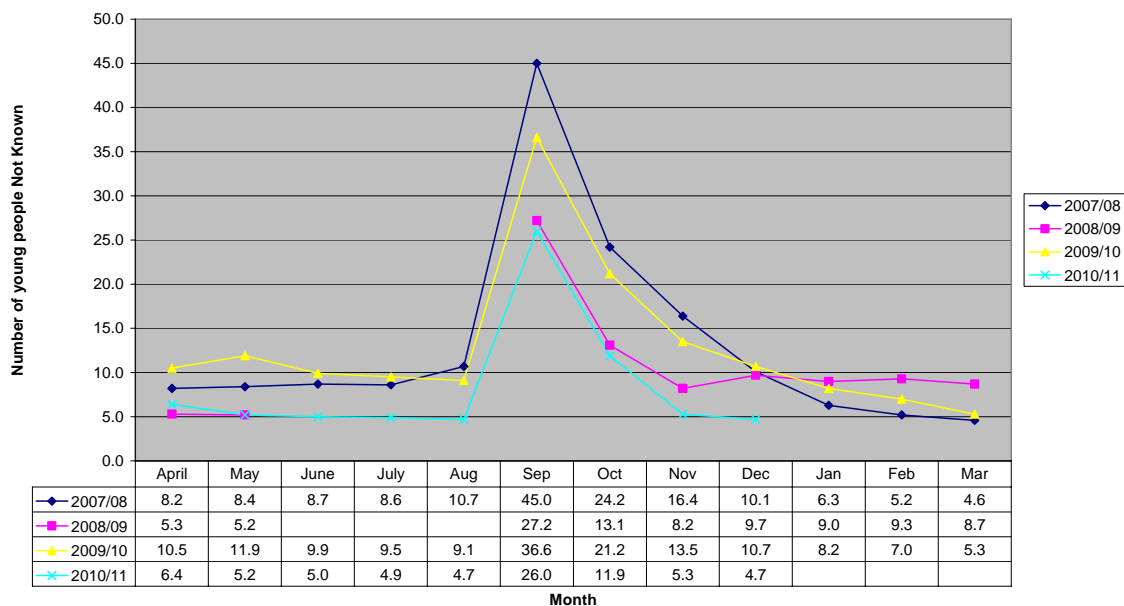
Why is this a priority

Ensuring young people are in education or work helps increase their confidence, prospects and economic independence. Doing this supports the city's overall economic performance. By targeting groups and areas where being out of education, employment or training is a particular challenge, we can raise aspirations and support informed decision making. The current economic downturn presents particular challenges for young people looking to enter the workplace for the first time and needing help to do so.

Leeds Adjusted NEET (monthly %)



Leeds Not Known (monthly %)



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Overall Progress to date and outcomes achieved

Overall Summary

The December NEET level is 8.3% (1821 young people) and the Not Known level is 4.7% (1056 young people).

The level of NEET has remained in-line with the reduced figure achieved last year for November, this has happened at the same time as a significant reduction in the number of young people whose status is Not Known. Not Known has fallen significantly in the quarter, following the yearly cycle, and is the lowest figure recorded for Leeds in November.

This significant reduction can be attributed to the work done by the Connexions Service to improve tracking processes and recording practice. The rate of NEET and Not Known is now better than a couple of statistical neighbours, and getting closer to the mean indicator for statistical neighbours in November 2010 which was 7.5% NEET and 4.4% Not Known, compared to 8.4% and 5.3% respectively for Leeds.

Improvements in recording on the Connexions database are demonstrated by the reduction in Not Known figures. The reduction in Not Known means that there is clear information available on the young people who are NEET, previously the adjustment of the NEET figure to take account of Not Known meant that we were unclear about which young people made up the NEET cohort. A better understanding of the needs of this cohort of young people will enable the partnership to put in place appropriate support and options for young people to increase engagement in learning.

From this improved position, where Not Known is coming under control, we can now plan to move from improvement and control to aspiration and challenge. Key to the improvement achieved were multi-agency workshops undertaken in January and March 2010. An Outcomes Based Accountability session will be held for key stakeholders in January this year to help this ambition.

Significant reductions in the Connexions budget will have an impact on the service's ability to deliver the same level of outcomes. There will be a reduction in the number of staff employed in Connexions making it difficult to sustain the recent improvements that have been made on NEET and particularly the Not Known level. Contracts with Connexions providers are currently being negotiated, to agree delivery priorities for reduced funding levels.

Lack of clarity on Government policy and funding is still impacting on the ability of services to plan. The announcement of the removal of Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) will leave a big gap in the financial support available to young people to take up places in learning.

There are competing factors having a positive and a negative impact on the number of young people NEET. Improved performance by connexions providers, increased information sharing with other services, improved learning options available to young people have all contributed to reducing NEET over the last 3 years. At the same time the loss of funding for support to young people, including reductions in Connexions budget and ending of Engage funding and Activity Agreement will have a negative impact on NEET. The economic downturn, and consequent loss of employment opportunities for young people, will increase the number of young people NEET, particularly among 18 year olds.

For the reasons outlined above the RAG rating has been set at Amber and the direction of travel set at static. The national indicator target of 6.8% for November – January is unlikely to be achieved. It has always represented a significant challenge for the Local Authority and its partners and especially so in the current circumstances. While remaining an aspiration performance is better judged in comparative terms, as stated above Leeds is improving accepting there is scope to improve further.

Achievements since the last report

- Work undertaken during the quarter to address data quality, so that consistent audit arrangements are now in place, includes:
 - Information from the MI Team being used in Connexions contract monitoring arrangements to ensure accurate recording by Connexions PAs.

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- Insight Audit Toolkit to be used by all Connexions Managers, to check the quality of PA record keeping.

- FE Colleges delivered a number of flexible start options for young people in 2009/10. A programme is in place for 2010/11 in a number of FE Colleges to ensure young people are able to access college provision at different points during the year.
- New model for Targeted Connexions has improved partnership working between Connexions providers to develop integrated services to young people. This service is ensuring Connexions representation at Children Leeds panels, to ensure young people receive targeted support from Connexions where appropriate.
- European Social Fund (ESF) funding from the Young People Learning Agency (YPLA) to igen Trust (Future Pathways) has been used to put in place targeted responsive provision and support for young people who are NEET. The full range of courses are now running and Connexions PAs are able to influence delivery to ensure that provision meets the needs of young people who are NEET.
- Connexions contracts have been renegotiated to take account of the reduction of funding in-year. New delivery plans are in place.

Challenges/Risks

- Lack of clarity on government policy around Raising Participation Age and Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) delivery. IAG was not referred to in the Education White paper in the autumn. It has been announced that an all-age careers guidance service will be put in place from April 2012 but details of the LA's responsibility to delivered targeted support to young people are not known. It is also unclear how RPA will be enforced or monitored and the duties on the Local Authority.
- Reduced funding for Connexions delivery, due to the in-year cut in Area Based Grant, will lead to reduced level of service to young people and is likely to impact on NEET and Not Known levels. Uncertainty over the future of Connexions after the introduction of the all-age careers guidance service could impact on the staff currently in those roles, and their delivery of services to young people.
- The deliverability of the NEET Action Plan with reduced funding and the development of the plan with uncertainty around policy direction at a national level.
- Removal of Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) for young people to access learning provision, current learners will keep support until summer 2011 but young people starting flexible courses from January onwards will not be able to access financial support. New arrangements are to be in place from September 2011, with reduced funding, but there is no support available for the rest of this academic year. There is a lack of clarity at the moment on what arrangements will be in place in September 2011, which will impact on guidance given to young people in current Year 11, and may impact on their decision making.
- Uncertainty over future Children Leeds delivery model and budget for 2011/12
- Delayed funding model for 16-19 learning provision may impact on providers ability to put on flexible and responsive provision to meet the needs of young people NEET. New model will mean a significant reduction in funding per learner to certain providers, which may impact on the total number of places available to learners in Leeds from September 2011.

Council / Partnership Groups

<u>Approved by</u> <i>(Accountable Officer)</i>	Sally Threlfall	<u>Date</u>	19.01.11
<u>Approved by</u> <i>(Accountable Director)</i>	Nigel Richardson	<u>Date</u>	03.02.11

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Key actions for the next 6 months				
	Action (Desired Achievements)	Contributory Officer / Partner	Milestone / Actions	Timescale
	NEET is a priority in the new the CYPP. Turning the curve workshops on this priority and the other two top priorities are happening week commencing 24 th Jan 2010. The intention of the workshops is learn new ways of working to improve outcomes in relation to these priorities.			
	Continue to deliver actions identified in the NEET action plan: http://www.leeds.gov.uk/files/Internet2007/2010/39/neet_action_plan_2010_09.pdf	Mary Brittle	As detailed in the plan	

Performance Indicators										
Performance indicators aligned to the Improvement Priority										
Reference	Title	Owner	Frequency & Measure	Rise or Fall	Baseline	2009/10 Result	2010/11 Target	Q3 Result	Predicted Full Year Result	Data Quality
NI 117	16 - 18 year olds who are not in education training or employment (NEET)	Youth Services	Annually %	Fall	9.1% (An average of Nov, Dec 2006 and Jan 2007)	8.2%	6.8%	Annual PI	NA	No Concerns with Data
NI 148	Care leavers in education, employment or training	Children and Younger People's Social Care	Annually %	Rise	70.8% (2006/07)	62.3%	86.8%	Annual PI	NA	No Concerns with Data
NI 45	Young offenders' engagement in suitable education, employment or training	Youth Offending Service	Annually %	Rise	68.2%	74.9%	75.4%	68.5% (595/868)	72%	No Concerns with Data