

Meeting: Children's Trust Board 31 October 2011
Outcome 2: Children and young people do well at all levels of learning and have the skills for life
LCC lead: Paul Brennan

Population: Young people of academic age 16, 17 and 18 (age on 31 Aug)
Priority 4a: Increase numbers in employment, education or training (EET)
CTB lead: Martin Fleetwood and Diana Towler

Why is this an obsession Being in EET increases young people's confidence, prospects and economic independence and therefore supports the city's overall economic performance. By targeting groups and areas where NEET is a particular challenge, we can raise aspirations and prospects for young people who often have multiple poor outcomes. The current economic downturn presents challenges for young people looking to enter the workplace for the first time.

OBSESSION
Overall Progress
Amber æ

RAG: Gap to national performance **Direction of travel:** Reducing rates of Not Known and good rates of young people in learning

Story behind the baseline

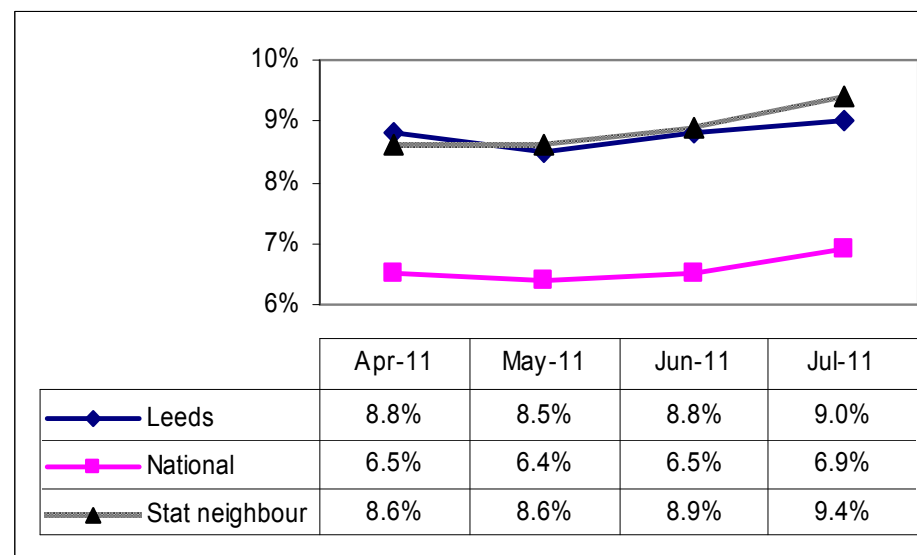
The NEET definition changed in April 2011, and Leeds now has around 400 more young people in the NEET cohort. Leeds has a higher NEET rate than national levels, although it is slightly below the statistical neighbour (SN) rate. Leeds has a lower rate of young people whose status is not known (7.8%) than national (10.4%) and SN levels (9.3%). The rate of young people in learning (77.8%) is above national (76.4%).

Young people become NEET for complex and diverse reasons. NEET levels tend to be higher in deprived areas, and for teenage parents, those with lower school attendance, lower levels of qualifications and young offenders. NEET rates are more than 50% among young people with special educational needs, young parents and pregnant young women.

Improvement plans cover a range of circumstances. Transition between learning opportunities can trigger disengagement; as can missing out on good quality impartial information, advice and guidance (IAG). Family networks have a major influence on a young person's decision-making. Activity is therefore planned with families to ensure young people are positive about their ability to succeed, as well as activity to ensure access to IAG to help choose the right learning pathway; and support at transition points.

Upcoming risks include: changes to the provision of careers education and IAG with more responsibility for schools in September 2012, but without increases in funding; reductions in post-16 funding for all providers, but that will hit schools particularly hard; and changes to which vocational qualifications count in the performance tables. This jeopardises the future of some smaller qualifications that have enabled young people to build confidence and achievement in small steps. It is not yet known how the 16-19 bursary fund will impact on supporting young people to stay in learning.

Curve: Percentage of young people who are NEET ¹



¹ Based on April 2011 definition of where young people live (not where they attend learning) and academic age 16-18, i.e., year groups 12 to 14.

What do children and young people think A diverse group of NEET young people were consulted as part of the development of the Children and Young People’s Plan. Young people said that the current economic climate had a big impact on their employability, however they also experienced other difficulties in finding employment, education or training, such as: difficulties using the systems in job centres; access to IT to apply for jobs or courses; lack of confidence; struggling with interview skills; travel and financial barriers; poor reading and writing skills; and coping with complex personal circumstances.

<p>What we have done</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work has commenced with schools to support them in meeting new statutory requirements for careers education and IAG responsibilities. • Systems are now in place to gain consent from NEET young people to share their contact details with potential learning providers in order to improve recruitment onto programmes. • In 2010/11 NEET data was shared with high schools; allowing schools to see long term outcomes for their former pupils, and helping them to focus resources on current pupils at risk of being NEET. • Leeds Pathways, the online post-16 common application system, allows schools and Connexions to identify young people who have not made an application and target support to them to ensure progression after Year 11. • A protocol is being developed between Housing and Connexions to agree methods for joint working with staff who are working with young people who are homeless or living independently of family. • The Young People Employability Initiative was launched in May 2011 to give young people who are ‘work ready’ an 8 week programme including work experience, accredited training and employability skills. 	<p>New actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the reasons why young people who are NEET do not engage with the current learning offer, using information from Connexions. • Development of models for parental engagement to improve the progression information and advice available to parents through schools. • Work with local authorities across West Yorkshire, as well as the West Yorkshire Colleges Consortium, to ensure learners facing financial hardship in accessing learning receive appropriate financial support, regardless of where they choose to learn. • Develop a city wide strategic action plan that joins up the work of children’s and adult services with 14 to 19 year olds. This will focus on placing NEET in the context of city-wide issues such the raising of the participation age as youth employment, apprenticeships, jobs and skills, and changes to the provision of IAG. • Work in partnership with businesses to develop a model, financially supported by business, to deliver enterprise and skills development programmes in target schools.
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<p>What works locally</p> <p>Accurate data and tracking, increased information sharing and improved learning options have all contributed to reducing NEET. At the same time the loss of some funding and the economic downturn pose major challenges.</p>	<p>Data development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning for systems and data transfer processes in preparation for the end of the Connexions service. • Improved data exchange agreements to reduce the tracking of young people who are in contact with other services, e.g., JobCentre Plus and the National Apprenticeship Service.
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Partners with a role to play Adult social care, schools and FE colleges, Connexions, housing services, young people, parents and family, employers, 14-19 confederations, JobCentre Plus, offsite providers