

6.2.1 NEET

Why is this issue important?

Engagement in learning and educational attainment is critical if young people are to make a success of their lives. Evidence shows that being not in education, employment or training (NEET) between the ages of 16 and 18 is a major predictor of later unemployment, low income, teenage motherhood, depression and poor physical and mental health. Young people who are NEET are at risk of not achieving their potential, economically or socially.¹

National research by York University suggests that there is a reasonable expectation that one in six young people who are NEET will never secure long-term employment, with the average individual lifetime public finance cost of a young person who is NEET at £56,300 equating to £12 billion across all young people who are NEET. The total associated loss to the economy, individuals and their families is just over £22 billion.²

Key outcomes

- **16 – 18 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET)**

Impact in Brighton & Hove

Brighton & Hove City Council, through its Youth Employability Service (YES), is responsible for the delivery of Targeted Information, Advice and Guidance Support services for 16-18 year olds who are NEET in the city. This contributes to the local authority's strategic priority of providing early support to young people up to the age of 19 (24 if they have special needs) who are most vulnerable, and working with partners to minimise the number of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET). The Department for Education measures a local authority's annual performance against the 16-18 NEET and unknown indicators as an average of November, December and January figures. Figures for 2012 – 2013 show the best 16-18 NEET figures since the Department started to measure annual performance using the three month average in this way (Table 1).

¹ LSN. Tackling the NEETs Problem, LSN Learning, London; 2009.

² The University of York. Estimating the life-time cost of NEET: 16-18 year olds not in Education, Employment or Training - research undertaken for the Audit Commission; July 2010.

Table 1: Annual percentage of 16-18 year olds who are NEET and whose current situation is not known (%), 2004 - 2012

Nov, Dec, Jan average	16 – 18 NEET	16 – 18 Not Known
2004	8.86%	8.08%
2005	10.68%	6.13%
2006	10.85%	10.85%
2007	9.24%	5.29%
2008	7.78%	4.61%
2009	8.73%	3.98%
2010	7.45%	3.60%
2011	7.87%	12.82%
2012	6.65%	4.75%

Source: Brighton & Hove City Council – Aspire database

In March 2012 66 NEET young people completed a *Tell Us What You Think* questionnaire to seek young people's views on the current education, employment and training opportunities available to people aged 16 to 19 in Brighton & Hove and to ascertain their views on the raising of the participation age. This survey was published in March 2012.

Finding work and/or work with training was by far the most preferred option. Only seven (11%) of those interviewed stated that returning to full-time education was their preferred next step and of these most were aged 16. This would suggest that older NEETs are less likely to return to full-time or part-time education.

Almost three quarters (73%) of the young people felt lack of job opportunities was the main barrier to finding work, followed by lack of experience (70%) but very few saw lack of personal skills as a barrier to securing work. However, employer surveys indicate that lack of personal skills is a significant barrier to the selection of young people.³

³ CBI. Education and Skills Survey; February 2011.

6.2.1 NEET

A third of the young people interviewed cited lack of support as a barrier to finding work and when asked what help they would like from the Youth Employability Service the young people stated that they would predominantly like help to find and apply for a job.

Where we are doing well

As well as the NEET percentage itself, it is important to consider the level of 'not knowns' i.e. not knowing what a young person is currently doing: the higher the not known figure, the less valid / reliable the NEET figure. The Department for Education (DfE) considers anything more than 5% not known makes the NEET figures statistically invalid. We can say with justification that in Brighton & Hove we know what 95.25% of our 16-18 population are doing – something which many local authorities cannot claim. We also should bear in mind that DfE changed the way NEETS and not knowns are calculated in 2011, moving from actual age to academic age. In theory this has made it more challenging to achieve these results.

Statistical neighbour figures published by DfE in January 2013 show that Brighton & Hove is on a par with the mean of our statistical neighbours in terms of the NEET figures but better than several individual authorities - Portsmouth (7.8%), Reading (8.3%), Bristol (8%) and Plymouth (7.7%). We are also much better in terms of not knowns so our NEET statistics are seen as very reliable. By way of comparison, Bournemouth 'not knowns' is 17.9%, Bristol 18.6%, and Southampton 8.2%. Locally, East Sussex is 9.1% and West Sussex at 20.8%.

Table 2: NEET and Not Knowns – comparison with statistical neighbours , January 2013

	16 – 18 NEET	16 – 18 not knowns
Brighton & Hove	6.8%	4.2%
Mean for statistical neighbours	6.7%	10.2%

Source: Department for Education

Brighton & Hove has achieved this improvement with a much reduced, reconfigured, and rebranded Youth Employability Service (YES) with a cumulative reduction in funding of over £1.3 million since

Brighton & Hove JSNA 2013

Connexions was restructured in 2010/11. These figures are impressive given the economic climate, and represent excellent value for money.

A recent LGA report Hidden Talents II: re-engaging young people, the local offer, published in January 2013, includes a case study on YES and some of the innovative solutions the service has developed to achieve these results. The report is available on the LGA's website: [Hidden Talents Report](#). Following from this, Brighton & Hove, as one of three 'expert councils', was asked to attend an LGA workshop in April to explain to 28 other authorities our approach to reducing NEETs and tracking the not knowns.

Local inequalities

There is strong evidence to suggest that young people in vulnerable groups are more likely to be NEET and to require more concentrated support if they are to move forward into a learning outcome. Young people outside formal education and training often have health and other personal issues to deal with and becoming NEET is a consequence of other factors. Figures for vulnerable groups in February 2013 show:

Age: Although we are currently operating below our target rate for the city across the 16 – 18 age range, it is clear that the NEET percentage increases with age. Table 1 shows the number of NEETs in February 2013 by academic age, which includes some who have turned 19.

Table 3: NEETS by academic age, Brighton & Hove, February 2013

Age	16	17	18	Total 16-18
Number	78	154	207	439

Source: Brighton & Hove City Council – Aspire database

Gender: the NEET gender split is 229 (52%) male, and 210 (48%) female. However, of the 87 NEET young people not available to the labour market, young women make up 86% (75) mainly because they are either young mothers (50) or pregnant (8).

Ethnicity: The ethnic make-up of the NEET population is predominantly White British (87%), reflecting the population as a whole.

6.2.1 NEET

Learning difficulties / disabilities: 75% (330) of the NEET group are classified as having some form of learning difficulty / disability (LDD). Of these, 108 were classified as having emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) and 70 of the total LDD group have had a formal statement of special educational needs of which 38 were for EBD.

Qualification levels: 58% (253) of NEETs available to the labour market have qualifications below NVQ2 (five A* - C GCSE or equivalent). Of these, 38 have no qualifications at all, 115 (26%) have NVQ2 or equivalent, and only six have qualifications above level 2.

Exclusion / attendance: 35 (8%) had a history of exclusion or poor attendance at school.

Accommodation Issues: 36 (8%) have issues with housing, including living in hostels, rough sleeping or sofa surfing.

In care / care leaver: 43 (10%) are either looked after or care leavers.

Offending behaviour: 19 (4%) young people are either supervised by the Youth Offending Service or have an offending background.

Substance misuse: 26 (6%) have self-declared substance misuse issues including alcohol.

Young carers: 6 (1.4%) young people are recorded as a carer for someone other than their own child.

Table 4: Top five wards with the greatest concentration of NEETs February 2013

Wards	16-18 NEETs	% of total
Moulsecoomb and Bevendean	77	18%
East Brighton	61	14%
Hanover and Elm Grove	37	8%
Hangleton and Knoll	35	8%
Hollingdean and Stanmer	34	8%

Source Brighton & Hove City Council – Aspire database

Brighton & Hove JSNA 2013

NEETs by ward: Of the 21 wards in Brighton & Hove, some have much higher levels of NEETs compared with the city average. Table 4 shows the top five wards with the greatest concentration of NEETs.

Predicted future need

The economic climate and government education and welfare policy changes are likely to impact on the NEET agenda in the coming years. In particular, raising the participation age (RPA) to 17 years of age in 2013 and 18 years of age in 2015 may serve to reduce the number of NEET young people. The RPA agenda is a key element in supporting young people in Brighton & Hove back into employment, education and training; the City Council has the main responsibility for achieving this.

The rates of participation in all forms of learning in Brighton & Hove for 16 and 17 year olds (93.8% and 86.4% respectively – DfE March 2013) are relatively strong. However, those who are not participating will frequently have already begun to become disengaged in school or face significant personal challenges. Engaging these young people requires further development of innovative and often non-mainstream provision, pre-16 as well as post-16, and strong mechanisms for early identification and ongoing individual support.

Since September 2012, schools have had the statutory duty to secure access to independent careers guidance for pupils in Years 9 - 11. With the demise of Connexions in schools, supporting pupils to make informed decisions has become increasingly important, especially in light of raising the participation age and the increased range of provision available to young people.

Unlike many other authorities, Brighton & Hove has retained from its former Connexions Service a well-qualified Youth Employability Service (YES) which focuses on supporting those who are NEET, or at risk of becoming NEET, into employment, education and training. Providers work closely with the Youth Employability Service team and recognise it as a single point of contact with these young people.

YES has recently extended its remit to work with more vulnerable groups of young people. This includes linking with schools to offer early help and

6.2.1 NEET

support to young people in year 11 who are at risk of not making a successful transition into employment, education or training at 16. Support is also being offered to young people in care by allocating a YES adviser to the Virtual School for Children in Care. Close working links have been developed with Jobcentre Plus, the Youth Offending Service, the Intensive Team for Families, the substance misuse service (RUOK), the Family Nurse Partnership to support teenage parents and supported housing organisations and hostels.

The work of the YES team also directly impacts on the council's child poverty and the Stronger Families, Stronger Communities strategies. NEET young people within workless households have worse educational outcomes than their peers. The work of the YES team also supports the main preventive agenda for Children and Families. Young people leaving NEET to access work or training are less likely to become involved in anti social behaviour and crime or require costly interventions by the Social Work teams. There are also community cohesion benefits to residents, family and friends in supporting their young people into secure work and training and there will also be a benefit to the community in the reduction in the costs caused by worklessness.

What we don't know

There are gaps in our data around some of the equalities groups.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT): We do not record the numbers of LGBT young people who are NEET but it is recognised that this group of young people often experience disruption to their education / training because they have to leave their family home because of their sexuality and are thereby disadvantaged in their employment opportunities and rates of pay available. The Director of Public Health Report 2008 estimates the number of 13 – 19 year olds identifying as LGBT as between 2,336 to 3,893.

Marital status: This information is not recorded on the Aspire database although it is unlikely to be significant because of the age of the young people we work with.

Religion: This information is not recorded on Aspire.

Brighton & Hove JSNA 2013

Census 2011 data: There may be a discrepancy between the official ONS 2011 Census data and that recorded on Aspire. The difference between the Aspire count and the ONS 2011 Census is because Aspire is updated annually with Yr 7 data from the School Census which excludes young people attending private schools. In addition, some young people move to Brighton after the initial data upload and never come to the attention of services who record on Aspire. It is this latter group who are more likely to be NEET in the city.

Key evidence and policy

Audit Commission: *Against the Odds*, 2010.

www.audit-commission.gov.uk

Department for Education: *Statutory Guidance on the Participation of Young People in Education, Employment or Training for Local Authorities*.

March 2013

<http://www.education.gov.uk/home/schools/guidanceandadvice/g00222993/stat-guide-young-people-edu-employ-train>

Education and Skills Act 2008.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/25/contents>

LGA: Hidden Talents II: re-engaging young people, the local offer. January 2013

http://www.local.gov.uk/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=fe612120-4c27-4d97-a855-74244b511410&groupId=10171

Recommended future local priorities

1. To strengthen links between learning providers, employers and support agencies for NEET young people via the Brighton & Hove Apprenticeship Group (BHAG) and the Investing in Young Brighton & Hove Programme as part of the City Employment and Skills Plan. To include the provision of an annual Brighton Your Futures event in partnership with Brighton & Hove City Council, Jobcentre Plus, National Apprenticeship Service, and other partners. By supporting young people along the pathway to an apprenticeship or other recognised qualification, Brighton & Hove employers will have access to a stronger, indigenous pool of potential employees.

6.2.1 NEET

2. All agencies supporting NEET young people to work within the agreed Single Apprenticeship Pathway for Brighton & Hove. This includes working closely with the new Apprenticeship Training Agency and Skills Shop in Queens Road.
3. YES to continue to develop creative ways of engaging NEET young people in order to encourage and support them to access the learning opportunities available to them across the city. This will include further developing the use of social media, including Facebook and Twitter, for which the service has already gained national recognition.
4. Brighton & Hove City Council to continue to coordinate the introduction of the Raising of the Participation Age (RPA) including the development of 'Awareness Indicators / Risk of NEET Indicators' (RONI) and evaluation of effectiveness, to secure strong and effective guidance, identification and tracking arrangements.
5. Brighton & Hove City Council to conduct an analysis of reasons for drop-out at age 17 and in year, and the development of measures to address these. This includes the Planned Transfer Process whereby YES advisers offer support to young people before they leave post-16 learning early in order to broker appropriate alternative provision to avoid them becoming NEET.
6. Brighton & Hove City Council to work with City College to pilot a broader Vocational Options programme from 2012/13 to address the issue of some learners becoming NEET at 16 in the first six weeks and some learners not progressing and becoming NEET at 17.
7. YES to work within Brighton & Hove City Council's Early Help strategy by building on the RONI and other awareness indicators to offer support to vulnerable young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET via the developing triage / single point of referral structures within Children's Services. This to involve more integrated work with youth services, YOS and the Intensive Team for Families (ITF).

Brighton & Hove JSNA 2013

8. To further develop 'vulnerable learners protocols', which underpin the effective two-way exchange of information between providers so that learners' needs are met. Vulnerable learners include young offenders, young people with learning difficulties, teenage parents and children who are looked after.
9. Brighton & Hove City Council to support children who are looked after and care leavers: through dialogue with children themselves and professionals, identifying and developing the support they need to progress and stay in learning. This to include ring-fenced apprenticeships for care leavers.

Key links to other sections

- Employment and unemployment
- Education
- Child poverty
- Under-18 conceptions and teenage parents

Further information

Brighton & Hove City Council: NEET Performance Improvement Reports April 2012 to March 2013.

Department for Education: NCCIS data on NEETs

http://www.bhlis.org/education_and_learning/

<http://www.bhlis.org/economy/>

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