

Children's Trust Statutory Board Report to Statutory Board Meeting	
Section 1 – General	
Date of CTSB Meeting	14 th September 2010
Title of Report /Agenda Item	NEETs Report - Devon Report of Chief Executive of Careers South West
Author	Jenny Rudge
Presenter	Jenny Rudge
Section 2 – Report Detail	
Report is for:	
Info <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Decision: <input type="checkbox"/> Endorsement <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion <input type="checkbox"/>	
Recommendations:	
<p>The Children's Trust Board</p> <p>note the report especially the views below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - that the needs of young people are best met through an independent IAG service. If resources were allocated to schools we would see less effective guidance, increased drop out from courses and increased levels of NEETs; - that the work on pathways for vulnerable young people in Devon needs to ensure that as well as providing therapeutic services to meet needs, adequate attention and resource is provided to positively build resilience. Central to this is tailored learning provision. With the ending of Newleaf and Activity Agreement there is a gap in this area and dedicated resources need to be found to fund provision which provides that first step to engagement; - that economies of scale can be reaped through using a single database for tracking young people through educational transitions - the CCIS database has facility to do this as it is doing for young people with LDD through the YPIT project (Young People in Transition). 	
Summary:	

We have seen a significant fall in young people 16 - 18 not in education, employment or training (NEET's) at the key counting points this year from 6.4% to 5.7%. At the same time "not knows" have also been reduced from 1.0% to 0.8%. The proportion in learning has risen from 76.4% to 80.2%.

Report :

NEETs Report - Devon

Report of Chief Executive of Careers South West – Jenny Rudge

1. Recommendations:

The Children's Trust Board

note the report especially the views below:

- that the needs of young people are best met through an independent IAG service. If resources were allocated to schools we would see less effective guidance, increased drop out from courses and increased levels of NEETs;
- that the work on pathways for vulnerable young people in Devon needs to ensure that as well as providing therapeutic services to meet needs, adequate attention and resource is provided to positively build resilience. Central to this is tailored learning provision. With the ending of Newleaf and Activity Agreement there is a gap in this area and dedicated resources need to be found to fund provision which provides that first step to engagement;
- that economies of scale can be reaped through using a single database for tracking young people through educational transitions - the CCIS database has facility to do this as it is doing for young people with LDD through the YPIT project (Young People in Transition).

2 Executive Summary

We have seen a significant fall in young people 16 – 18 not in education, employment or training (NEET's) at the key counting points this year from 6.4% to 5.7%. At the same time "not knowns" have also been reduced from 1.0% to 0.8%. The proportion in learning has risen from 76.4% to 80.2%.

3 Detailed report

- 3.1 The formal count of 16-18 NEETs takes place across November, December and January of each year. Raw figures provided by Connexions are adjusted at a national level by having a proportion of the 'not knowns' who are estimated to be NEET to the NEET figure. This adjustment works in favour of those areas with high levels of 'not knowns' and against areas, such as Devon, with very low levels.
- 3.2 For the three months from November 2009 – January 2010, Devon's adjusted NEET figure was 5.7%. This compares favourably with the figure for 2008/09, showing a 10.9% reduction on the figure for 2008/09 of 6.4%. The average figure in 2009/10 for the South West was 5.6%.
- 3.3 Devon reported an average 'not known' figure of 0.8% across the three months. This compares favourably with the figure reported in 2008/09 showing an 18.9% reduction on the 2008/09 figure of 1.0%. This compares very favourably with the South West average of 2.4%.

- 3.4 The proportion of young people 'in learning' across the three months in 2009/10 was 80.2%. Again this compares favourably with 2008/09, showing a 5% improvement from 76.4%. While this is lower than the South West average of 83%, a significant number of Devon learners are included in Plymouth (83.9%), Torbay (87.9%) and Somerset (86.3%).
- 3.5 There is an annual cycle to the levels of NEETs measured using Connexions methodology and in a typical year number rise towards the end of the academic year. Figures become very volatile over the summer prior to Connexions having to reconfirm the status of all young people during the Autumn Term.
- 3.6 Looking at more recent figures for June 2010, when comparisons are made with statistical neighbours, Devon's NEETs are higher at 5.9% than the mean of statistical neighbours at 5.6%. However, the breakdown across the ages provides an interesting contrast. At age 16 Devon has higher NEETs than its statistical neighbours while at age 18 Devon has lower levels of NEET. This might suggest that we have lower drop-out rates than our statistical neighbours. When 'not knowns' are compared with statistical neighbours, Devon performs significantly better (Devon 1.9%, statistical neighbours 3.1%). Devon's figure for young people 'in learning' of 80.5% is slightly below that of statistical neighbours at 83.9%. What is not clear is the impact of "occupancy" on statistical neighbours' figures. However, Devon's figure for the proportion of young people entering learning at the end of year 11 in 2009, at 91.7%, is also behind Plymouth, Cornwall and Torbay.
- 3.7 A further dimension to add into the report is that there has been a significant decline in the proportion of 16–18 year olds in employment of around 16% compared to June 2009. This change has put significant additional pressure on capacity within full-time learning and makes the reduction in NEETs an even more significant achievement. This change has had a particular impact on some of our targeted groups such as offenders and care leavers where we find a higher proportion seeking only work. This is reflected in the numbers of care leavers who are NEET which is slightly higher than in 2009.
- 3.8 Looking forward there are a number of significant concerns over the reduction to the type of learning provision which is provided for some of our most vulnerable young people. Provision funded through the "LSC Fighting Fund" in Devon providing tailored programmes for teenage parents ended on 31st March 2010. ESF funded provision delivered by Connexions as newleaf in Devon took its last recruits in June 2010.
- 3.9 The Activity Agreement will cease at the end of December 2010. While it was a contract requirement that the young people who have participated in Activity Agreement remained in the NEET group while on this project, it has provided a very useful step up to the more mainstream provision for those who are not ready to engage. The loss of this provision will mean that the gap between disengagement and engagement is too wide for many young people.

- 3.10 Entry 2 employment (E2E) provision is ending. The introduction of Foundation Learning will, we hope, continue to provide a flexible way for young people who are not ready for mainstream provision to access learning. Our concern is that there may be a greater emphasis on academic achievement at an early stage while young people are still adjusting to a new learning environment, thus making it harder to engage “marginal” learners.
- 3.11 Over the summer we have sought to mitigate the effects of these changes as far as possible. One particular initiative has been the placing meetings set up to assist us in meeting the September guarantee. At these meetings Connexions have brought details of learners who do not yet have an offer and learning providers have brought details of provision which they have available and taken away details of the types of provision which is sought to seek to achieve matching.
- 3.12 We remain concerned at the lower levels of provision we have and the reduced level of personal adviser time to support young people arising from the in year cuts. However we continue to support and advocate for young people with learning providers and employers to ensure that every young person has the opportunity of the best possible start in life.

Case Study – Extract from an Express & Echo item on Teen Team, 21 May 2010

Young family are looking forward to happy future

As the Teen Team Awards await nominations from readers, the Echo's Hannah Hope talks to a young couple who have been nominated for the Positive Future award.

At the tender age of 15 J had been kicked out of school with no qualifications and his girlfriend R was pregnant with his baby. The future looked uncertain for the couple as they struggled to come to terms with the fact they were going to have a child of their own to support. Now, both aged 17, they are living in a flat, as a family with their 10 month old daughter A, and have enrolled in vocational courses to set them up with jobs.

This is all thanks to the Connexions service, managed and delivered by Careers South West Limited, which gives 13-19 year olds information, advice, guidance and practical help in preparing for adult and working life and helping them fulfil their aspirations.

"Finding out I was pregnant at such a young age was a really big thing to go through." said R. "It wasn't planned, but I made the decision to go ahead with the pregnancy. I managed to sit all my GCSE exams before giving birth last July – five days after my high school prom – but my grades weren't very good. After Alesha was born we moved between my mum's house and J's mum's house, but we had no home of our own and no real job prospects."

Regular visits to Connexions soon changed the couple's situation. R said, "Connexions helped us find somewhere to live and now we have a flat where the three of us can be together as a family. I've also just finished a life skills course called newleaf, where I met other young mums. I feel much more confident and positive about myself now. I'm enrolling on a beauty course at a local further education college in the future, when A's a bit older. It's something I've always been interested in. Having a baby means you have to grow up fast. It's really matured us and has forced us to think about the future." she said.

J echoes R's sentiments. "When I found out R was pregnant I was pretty scared." he said. "I was worried about how I'd support the baby, especially as I was kicked out of school at 15 for being disruptive. I wanted to be a good role model and realised I needed to grow up and change my ways. ***Connexions has helped me enrol on a chef course the local further education college, as I've always enjoyed cooking. I should be in full-time employment in a year's time when I'm fully trained. I now feel really positive about the future. I'm not getting into trouble any more and am on the straight and narrow.*** I think having a baby was the best thing that could have happened to us."

Case study - NEETs project in Exeter

During the latter part of 2009 and early 2010 Connexions, the Youth Service, the Youth Offending Team and Exeter College have been running a programme for Neet YP in the Wonford and St. Thomas areas of the City. Around 80 Neets YP were targeted. In total 22 YP attended the Wonford sessions and 25 attended the St. Thomas programme. These were young people who were not ready to start a full time college course or engage in work.

Young People were encouraged to start the Asdan qualification and took part in a range of activities including CV and job applications. They also worked towards first aid and health and safety qualifications. In total 7 young people moved into employment, 3 moved on to Activity Agreement, 1 moved to Newleaf and 1 onto the Princes Trust. A number of others have plans to start full time education in September. Staff also worked with the young people on softer outcomes such as substance misuse, sexual health, and trying to raise aspirations.