

*Research and Library Services*



Northern Ireland Assembly

**16 November 2009**

**Young People not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs)**

*Research Paper prepared for the Committee for Employment & Learning*

**Dr Robert Barry**

This paper describes the characteristics of the group of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs) and outlines recent strategies in England, Scotland and Wales for dealing with the problem. No specific NEET strategies appear to exist in Ireland (North or South).

The paper also attempts to demonstrate the extent of the problem across Europe and highlights the high economic, social and personal costs associated with it. A number of recommendations arising from a recent OECD Ministerial meeting are also included in the paper for consideration.

Library Research Papers are compiled for the benefit of Members of The Assembly and their personal staff. Authors are available to discuss the contents of these papers with Members and their staff but cannot advise members of the general public.

## Table of Contents

Key Points.....	3
Introduction .....	4
NEETs in Northern Ireland.....	8
NEETs in OECD Countries .....	9
The Cost of being NEET .....	11
NEET Policies and their Effectiveness.....	14
Recent NEET Strategies.....	19
Conclusion .....	25
ANNEX A: OECD Countries – Percentage of young people not in education, employment or the labour market .....	26
ANNEX B: NEET policy interventions in Scotland and the UK.....	30

## Young People not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs)

### Key Points

#### NEET Characteristics

- The NEET group is a very mixed group of young people, almost half of whom are 'inactive' (i.e. not registered as unemployed and not seeking work).
- More than a third of these young people have low level qualifications (below NVQ 2).
- Around one in seven NEETs suffer from limiting long term illness.

#### Extent of NEET Problem

- The number of NEETs varies depending on which age group we look at, but taking account of recent rises in youth unemployment, it is likely that there are currently over 40,000 NEETs in Northern Ireland in the 16-24 age group i.e. close to one in five of the age group.
- The most recent figures for the 16-19 age group would suggest that the proportion of younger NEETs in NI is lower than other UK regions. However, the figures for NEETs in Ireland and most of the rest of Europe are much lower.

#### Cost of being NEET

- The economic cost of youth unemployment alone, in Northern Ireland, is now probably somewhere in the region of £250 million per year.
- The social cost includes increased levels of underachievement, cultural disaffection, poverty and crime.
- The personal cost includes wasted potential, low self-esteem, depression and, in some cases, early death.

#### NEET Policies

- A review of the literature, carried out in Scotland, highlights the importance of family and peer influence, and rational decision-making by young people, in contributing to the effectiveness of policies for addressing the problem of NEETs.
- Policies in England, Scotland and Wales focus on improving monitoring systems, more flexible provision, improving advice and support, and more financial incentives for young people.
- In April 2009, the Chancellor also gave a guarantee (from January 2010) of a job, training or a work experience placement for young people unemployed for over a year.
- The Department for Children, Schools and Families in England has also indicated its intention to introduce legislation to make education and training compulsory up to age 17 from 2013 and up to age 18 from 2015.
- The Committee may wish to consider what is being done in England, Scotland and Wales; what is being done in Northern Ireland; and also some of the recommendations arising from a recent OECD Ministerial meeting to address the problem of "youth left behind".

## Young People not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs)

### Introduction

A lot of work has recently been done by the UK Government, and the devolved institutions in Scotland and Wales, in an attempt to build up a better picture of young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs).

A strategy document produced by the Scottish Government describes them as follows:

“The NEET group is a heterogeneous one. An individual classed as ' NEET' might be a young parent whose parental responsibilities are their key barrier to work; a young person with physical disabilities or behavioural difficulties; a young person who is the main carer for a family member; a young person on a gap year before entering university; or one who has dropped out of a college course but has yet to decide on next steps.”<sup>1</sup>

A recent UK Government publication attempts to describe the profile of NEETs, and points out that there are no 'typical' NEETs. Young people who are NEET are likely to be in one of three categories:<sup>2</sup>

- Core NEET – those with social and behavioural problems including those who come from families where worklessness is the norm.
- Floating NEET – comprising young people who lack direction, motivation and tend to have spells of being NEET in between further education courses or employment with no training. This group contributes to the issue of *NEET churn* (repeated failure and drop out from education/training/work back into NEET status).
- Transition/gap year NEET – those young people who have often chosen to take time out before progressing onto further or higher education opportunities, and are likely to return to education, training or employment, but it is not always clear when this will occur.

Some group characteristics were also observed as follows:<sup>3</sup>

- Boys are more likely than girls to be NEET, but a higher proportion of girls are 'inactive' – that is not looking for work or learning (this description is used to include those who are mothers or carers - an estimated 20,000 teenage mothers in the UK are NEET).
- Young people with no GCSEs and persistent absentees from school are much more likely to become NEET (Persistent absentees from school are seven times more likely to be NEET at age 16).
- Young people with learning difficulties and disabilities are twice as likely to be NEET as those without.

---

<sup>1</sup> Scottish Government, June 2006, 'More Choices, More chances: A Strategy to Reduce the Number of Young People not in Education, Employment or Training in Scotland' - <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/06/13100205/3>.

<sup>2</sup> Department of Communities and Local Government '[Digital Exclusion Profiling of Vulnerable Groups - Young People not in Education, Employment or Training \(NEET\): A Profile](#)'

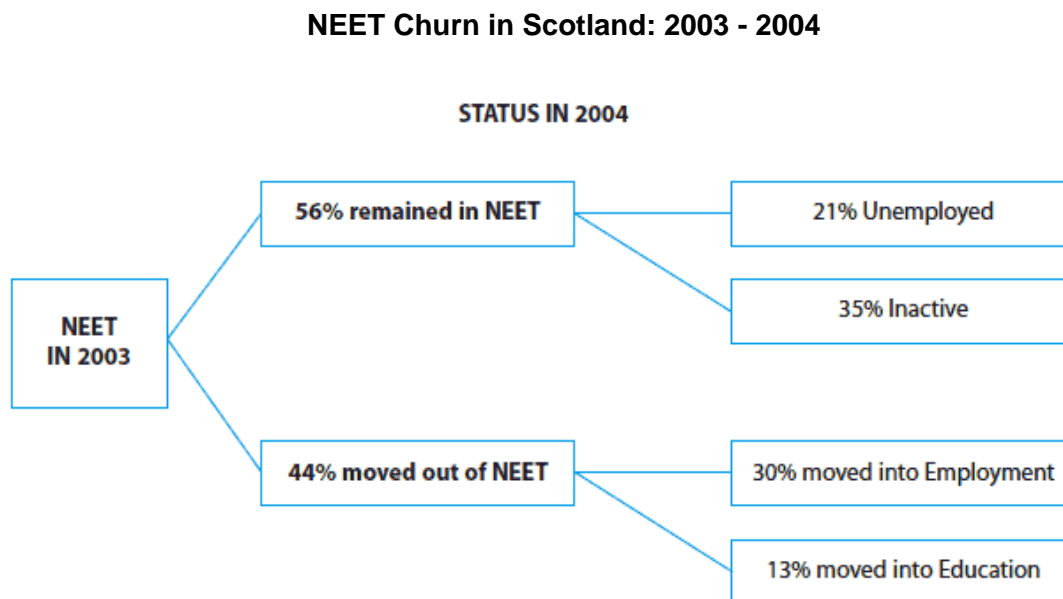
<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

Statistics produced by the Scottish Government offer some further insight into the nature of the NEET group:<sup>4</sup>

- 37% have low level qualifications (below SVQ level 2), including 28% who have no qualifications (this is similar to the figure of 39% of 16 year old NEETs with no GCSEs quoted by DCSF<sup>5</sup>);
- 39% of the NEET group have never worked; and
- 14% of NEETs suffer from Limiting Long Term Illness.

Figures published recently by the Welsh Assembly Government, show that while most NEETs in Wales fall into the unemployed category (57%), a large proportion of them (43%) are inactive (due to long-term illness/disability, family/home commitments, or other reasons).<sup>6</sup> The figures also show that around 39% of NEETs were unemployed for more than 6 months.

Data on churn within the group is limited, but the diagram below summarises the main flows in and out of the NEET group in Scotland between 2003 and 2004, and suggests that over half of NEETs are still NEET one year later:<sup>7</sup>



<sup>4</sup> Scottish Government, June 2006, 'More Choices, More chances: A Strategy to Reduce the Number of Young People not in Education, Employment or Training in Scotland' - <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/06/13100205/3>.

<sup>5</sup> Department for Children, Schools and Families, 'Reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET): The strategy', 2008 - [http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/documents/neet\\_strategy\\_0803.pdf](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/documents/neet_strategy_0803.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> Welsh Assembly Government, Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, 'Reducing the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training in Wales', April 2009 - <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/090430youngpeoplenotineduen.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Scottish Government, June 2006, 'More Choices, More chances: A Strategy to Reduce the Number of Young People not in Education, Employment or Training in Scotland' - <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/06/13100205/3>.

A more detailed qualitative picture of NEETs is provided by a study commissioned a few years ago by the Scottish Government.<sup>8</sup> The study involved a literature search, undertaken via a range of sources including a list of core 'experts', stakeholders and service providers working within the NEET arena. The search sought to include all relevant Scottish literature as well as a range of English and UK documents in order that lessons could be learned about policy effectiveness outside of Scotland.

In addition to the 'General NEET group', a number of NEET sub-groups were identified in this study as follows:

- 'At-risk' of becoming NEET (e.g. still in school and persistent truanting);
- Young care leavers;
- Young carers;
- Additional Support Needs - including disabilities; learning needs; language / communication disorder; social / emotional needs; individuals where first language isn't English / bilingual;
- Young offenders;
- Drug / substance misusers;
- Low attainment / education disaffection / truancy / school exclusion;
- Teenage parents;
- Limiting long-term illness;
- Asylum seekers;
- Black and ethnic minorities;
- Educational attainment of parents / socio-economic status of parents (i.e. inter-generational impact);
- Emotional and behavioural difficulties;
- Positive NEET group (NEET out of individual choice, 'taking a year out', etc.).

The 'at risk' group refers to those young people who are either of compulsory school age and are at risk due to e.g. low attainment or who are currently not NEET but who risk becoming so (e.g. in a low skilled, low waged job with little or no training opportunities). This group is made up of sub-groups such as children in care, low attainers, truants, young offenders, substance abusers, teenage parents. These groups are not mutually exclusive.

The 'positive' NEET group includes those who are NEET out of individual choice and opportunity. Examples of positive NEET behaviour include travelling, voluntary work and working part time. It is worth noting that this type of NEET activity is not associated with individuals from a disadvantaged background. Furthermore, these young people are at no greater risk of a future NEET spell than those who have never been NEET. This group of young people take planned breaks in their educational or labour market careers, and there seems to be little reason for including them in indicators of a policy 'problem'.

The research findings suggest that for all groups there are recurring themes of risk factors associated with:

---

<sup>8</sup> Scottish Government, 'Literature Review of the NEET Group', October 2005 - <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/10/27175707/57078>

- Deprivation;
- Financial exclusion (including financial constraints and the benefits trap);
- Debt-aversity (especially in deciding whether to 'invest' in post-16 education or training and impacts of dropping-out);
- Low attainment;
- Weak family support 'networks' and the role of 'others';
- Stigma and the attitudes of others.

More specifically, for NEET sub-groups, the following risk factors appear to be most prevalent:

- Additional Support Needs - ineffective inter-agency support; low educational attainment; access to information and support (especially for those with disabilities at the transition from school to FE);
- Educational disaffection - truanting and reproduction of educational disadvantage across generations. However, it should be noted that the literature points to disaffection as an effect of a range of barriers working together, rather than a cause;
- Family disadvantage and poverty - unskilled manual backgrounds and deprived communities;
- Limiting Long-Term Illness - workplace pay and conditions; stigma and low levels of skills;
- Substance abuse - personal attitudes; stigma and the benefits trap;
- Young Care Leavers - behavioural problems; stigma and poor attainment;
- Young offenders - truancy and social exclusion.

In 1999, the Cabinet Office's Social Exclusion Unit published a report entitled '*Bridging the Gap: New Opportunities for 16 –18 Year Olds Not in Education, Employment or Training*'.<sup>9</sup> This report identified **educational underachievement, family disadvantage, and family poverty** as the three main factors associated with being NEET. Educational underachievement was often evident throughout the school career, often accompanied by a history of persistent truancy, and possibly exclusion from school. It appears that some young people may face an additional barrier of worklessness as a generational element. A recent report by the Institute for Employment Studies comments that 'It can be said that cultures of worklessness *may* exist in some areas, within which worklessness, in some cases, is intergenerational.'<sup>10</sup>

Research indicates that it is possible to recognise at an early age, even in primary school, when a young person is in danger of entering the NEET group in the future. Other research indicates that the average age when young people in this potential NEET group stop 'trying at school' is between 14 and 15 and that more help with deciding options, along with other support and interventions needs to be provided earlier.<sup>11</sup>

Other issues which may contribute to the problem include bereavement, mental health problems, emotional, drug, health (including obesity caused by unhealthy diet), disability

<sup>9</sup>[http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/cabinetoffice/social\\_exclusion\\_task\\_force/assets/publications\\_1997\\_to\\_2006/bridging\\_gap.pdf](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/cabinetoffice/social_exclusion_task_force/assets/publications_1997_to_2006/bridging_gap.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Department of Communities and Local Government '[Digital Exclusion Profiling of Vulnerable Groups - Young People not in Education, Employment or Training \(NEET\): A Profile](#)'

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

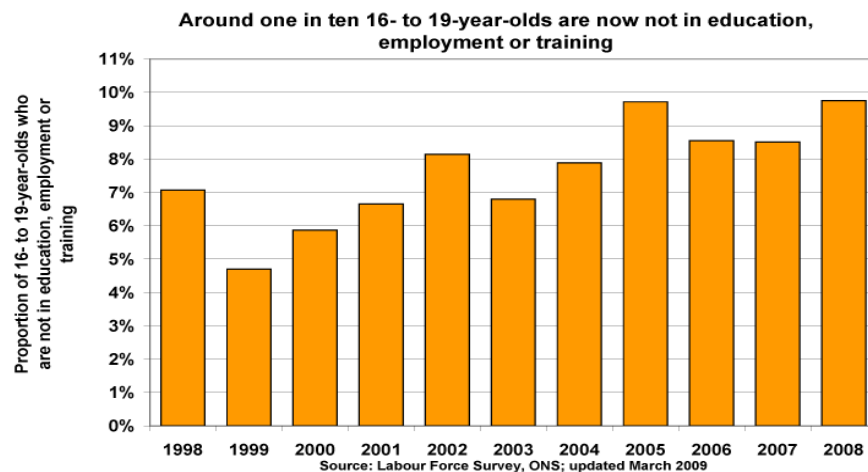
or alcohol problems either for the young person or in their immediate family, and offending behaviour leading to involvement with the courts.<sup>12</sup>

## NEETs in Northern Ireland

Based on the most recent figures, around one in ten 16-19 year olds in Northern Ireland are not in education, employment or training (NEET). The proportion of 16-19 year olds who are not in education, employment or training is lower in Northern Ireland than in any of the regions of Great Britain.<sup>13</sup> However, it should be noted that in both NI and GB the NEET situation is worse than it is in Ireland and most of the rest of Europe (see chart for OECD countries below and Annex A).

Estimates of the number of NEETs depend on how the relevant age group is defined. The OECD figures, for example, are based on three age groups of young people: 15-19; 20-24; and 25-29. UK figures for NEETs most often refer to 16-18 or 16-19 year olds. In response to a question in the Assembly on the number of NEETs in Northern Ireland in October 2007, the DEL Minister reported estimates of 34,000 (or 15%) for the 16-24 year old group, 19,000 (or 15%) for those aged 16-20, and 9,000 (or 12%) for the 16-18 age group.<sup>14</sup> However, given that youth unemployment has virtually doubled in the last two years, the current size of the NEET population (particularly the 18-24 age group) is probably much greater.<sup>15</sup>

The following charts, reproduced from the Poverty Site ([www.poverty.org.uk](http://www.poverty.org.uk)), summarise the position in Northern Ireland with regard to the younger group of 16-19 year old NEETs.



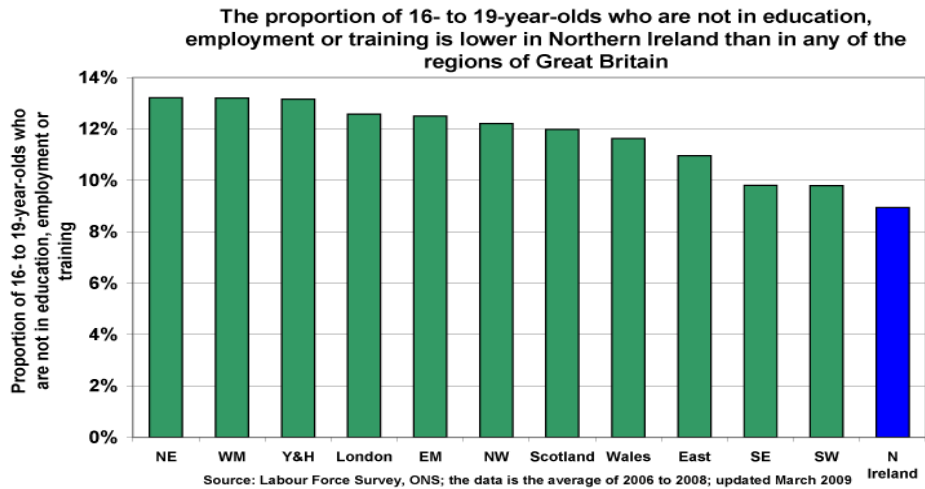
<sup>12</sup> Department of Communities and Local Government '[Digital Exclusion Profiling of Vulnerable Groups - Young People not in Education, Employment or Training \(NEET\): A Profile](#)'

<sup>13</sup> Source: The Poverty Site – [www.poverty.org.uk](http://www.poverty.org.uk)

<sup>14</sup> AQO 480/08 from Mr. Attwood. The figure of 9,000 for 16-18 year olds was also quoted in response to a written question (AQW 5789/08) from Mrs D. Kelly in April 2008.

<sup>15</sup> NI Labour Force Survey Statistics, Table 2.9, DETI website - <http://www.detini.gov.uk/deti-stats-index/stats-surveys.htm>

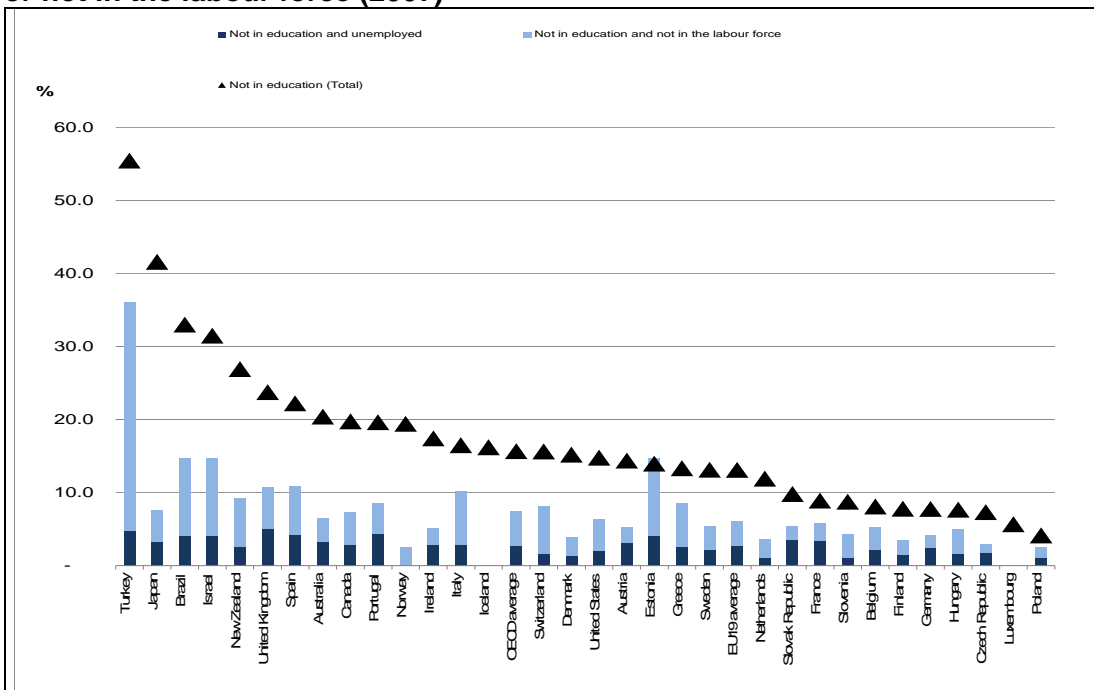




### NEETs in OECD Countries

The following chart shows that the UK has a greater proportion of young people who are NEET than most other European countries, including Ireland.

### OECD Countries - Percentage of 15-19 year-olds not in education and unemployed or not in the labour force (2007)



Notes:

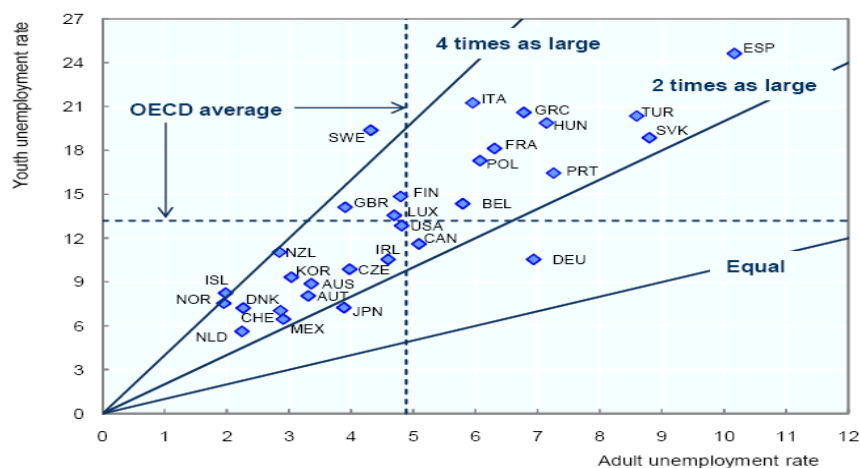
1. Countries are ranked in descending order of the percentage of 15-19 year-olds not in education.
2. Japan refers to 15-24 year-olds.
3. Missing bars refer to cells below reliability thresholds.
4. Source: OECD 'Education at a Glance', Table C3.2a ([www.oecd.org/edu/eag2009](http://www.oecd.org/edu/eag2009)).

Until recently, Europe's youth unemployment rate was mitigated by a boom in short-term temporary contract work. These temporary jobs went, disproportionately, to young people and accounted largely for Europe's job growth in the past decade.<sup>16</sup>

The downside, however, is that these jobs created a generation of young people tenuously employed, with no benefits, severance pay, or guarantees. In France, social scientists call them "Génération Précaire". In Britain, they are referred to as the "IPOD" generation: insecure, pressured, overtaxed, and debt-ridden. In 2007, approximately 6 million young people in the UK worked in temporary jobs.<sup>17</sup> Throughout Europe, around 4 in 10 young people were engaged in temporary employment.<sup>18</sup> These workers have been the first to go in the recession.<sup>19</sup>

There is considerable evidence that the young, the least educated and especially minorities are hardest hit in a recession. Youth unemployment rates appear to be more sensitive to business-cycle conditions than unemployment rates for older workers.<sup>20</sup> The chart below shows that all OECD countries have higher youth unemployment rates compared with adult unemployment rates.<sup>21</sup> The UK youth unemployment rate is almost four times as large as the adult unemployment rate, making it one of the worst in this analysis. Ireland's youth unemployment rate is just over twice the size of its adult unemployment rate.

**Youth Unemployment Rates compared with Adult Unemployment Rates in OECD Countries, 2008**  
As a percentage of the labour force



Note: Youth unemployment rates are for 15-24 yr olds; Adult unemployment rates are for 25-54 yr olds.

<sup>16</sup> Annie Lowry, 'Europe's New Lost Generation', Foreign Policy, 13 July 2009 - [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/07/13/europes\\_new\\_lost\\_generation](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/07/13/europes_new_lost_generation)

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> European Commission Communication COM (2007) 498, 'Promoting young people's full participation in education, employment and society', 5 September 2007.

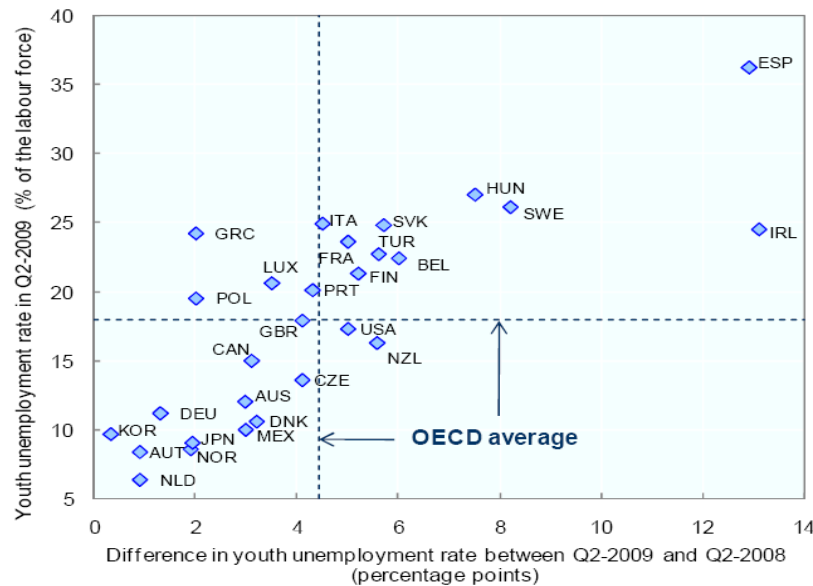
<sup>19</sup> Annie Lowry, 'Europe's New Lost Generation', Foreign Policy, 13 July 2009 - [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/07/13/europes\\_new\\_lost\\_generation](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/07/13/europes_new_lost_generation)

<sup>20</sup> Bell, D.N.F. & Blanchflower, D.G. (2009), 'What should be done about rising unemployment in the UK?', Bank of England - <http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/publications/speeches/2009/speech379paper.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> Source: OECD Labour and Employment Ministerial Meeting 'Tackling the Jobs Crisis', Paris 28-29 September 2009, Background Document 'Theme 3: Helping Youth to Get a Firm Foothold in the Labour Market' - <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/54/50/43766254.pdf> - Figure 2.

The effects of the recession on youth unemployment are now being felt across Europe and the OECD countries. The chart below shows youth unemployment rates in the second quarter of 2009 and also the increases in these rates over the past year in OECD countries.<sup>22</sup> Spain has the highest rate of youth unemployment (now approaching 40 percent). Both Spain and Ireland have seen the highest increase over the past year (around 13 percentage points). Ireland now has around one in four of its young people unemployed. The increase in the UK has not been as dramatic (around 4 percentage points), but its youth unemployment rate is now approaching one in five.

**Youth Unemployment Rates in Q2-2009 compared with Q2-2008 for OECD Countries**



*Note:* Youth unemployment rates are for 15-24 year olds.

In Northern Ireland, the Labour Force Survey showed an estimated unemployment level of 24,000, or 20.4%, among 18-24 year olds between July and September 2009. In the same quarter the previous year, the estimated number of unemployed in this age group was 15,000, or 12.2%. For the same quarter in 2007, the rate was 10.9%.<sup>23</sup> It would therefore appear that youth unemployment has almost doubled in Northern Ireland over the last two years.

These rises in youth unemployment and the shortage of jobs in the current recession will, of course, contribute to the NEET problem, and will make it even more difficult for some of these young people to escape from their situation.

<sup>22</sup> Source: OECD Labour and Employment Ministerial Meeting ‘Tackling the Jobs Crisis’, Paris 28-29 September 2009, Background Document ‘Theme 3: Helping Youth to Get a Firm Foothold in the Labour Market’ - <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/54/50/43766254.pdf> - Figure 3.

<sup>23</sup> NI Labour Force Survey Statistics, Table 2.9, DETI website - <http://www.detini.gov.uk/deti-stats-index/stats-surveys.htm>

## The Cost of being NEET

It's not neat to be NEET. The personal cost is high and the cost to the economy is high. A report published by the Prince's Trust in 2007, in referring to young people aged 18-24, concludes that:<sup>24</sup>

“Unemployment (*of this group*) costs the economy upwards of £90m per week, and youth crime presents a staggering £1bn bill for the taxpayer each year. Depression caused by underachievement at school could cost the NHS between £11m and £28m a year. Social exclusion is evidently a costly problem for the UK. And this is without taking into account many costs that are harder to measure, relating to inactivity, educational underachievement, crime and being in care.”

The figure of £90 million per week quoted above for costs to the economy is made up of £70 million for loss of earnings and £20 million for the costs of benefits.

For Northern Ireland, the costs in benefits for 18-24 youth unemployment is estimated, in this report, at £542,816 per week i.e. about £28 million per year. Assuming a similar loss of earnings as for young unemployed people in Great Britain, a further £100 million per year roughly could be added to this figure for costs to the economy. However, as youth unemployment has almost doubled in Northern Ireland in the last two years, a total estimate of around £250 million per year may be closer to the economic cost of youth unemployment now.<sup>25</sup>

Investigation of the 1970 British Birth Cohort study has shown that being NEET for six months is likely to mean that by the age of 21 a young man is:<sup>26</sup>

- More than four times likely to be out of work
- Three times more likely to have depression and mental health issues
- Five times more likely to have a criminal record
- Six times less likely to have any qualifications

Some key issues facing NEETs were identified as follows:<sup>27</sup>

### *Housing circumstances*

- possibly living with family or foster carers
- possibly living in care home
- 'sofa surfing' (no permanent home)
- possible need for social housing (ie, moving on from family home, foster home, care home)

---

<sup>24</sup> 'The Cost of Exclusion', Prince's Trust, April 2007, p. 61 - [http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/about\\_the\\_trust/what\\_we\\_do/research/cost\\_of\\_exclusion.aspx](http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/about_the_trust/what_we_do/research/cost_of_exclusion.aspx)

<sup>25</sup> See NI Labour Force Survey Statistics, Table 2.9, DETI website - <http://www.deti.gov.uk/deti-stats-index/stats-surveys.htm>

<sup>26</sup> Employability Framework for Scotland: Report of the NEET Workstream, June 2005 - <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/08/30111605/16069#f>

<sup>27</sup> Department of Communities and Local Government 'Digital Exclusion Profiling of Vulnerable Groups - Young People not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET): A Profile'

### *Education/skills*

- sense of 'failure' from previous negative educational experiences (now associated with lack of confidence in relation to learning)
- difficulties with mainstream education (possibly linked to special educational needs, eg dyslexia, behavioural problems, etc)
- likely to need help with basic skills, social skills
- likely to need vocational skills/certificates/qualifications

### *Key life issues/perspectives*

- cultural disaffection (eg, fourth generation benefit recipients)
- boredom/desire to get out of the house/have something to do
- possible restrictions on freedom (linked to youth offending restrictions)
- lack of money
- teenage pregnancy/young parenthood

The European Commission also points to the impact of inactivity on future employability in the following statement:

“Settling into the labour market is often a gradual process, but becomes a problem if non-employment spells are not filled with meaningful activity; this detracts from the individuals’ employability. In many Member States, one in three young people remain jobless one year after leaving education.”<sup>28</sup>

The most depressing and shocking statistic, however, in relation to the social cost of being NEET was recently cited by the Director General of Schools for the Department for Children, Schools and Families. Speaking at a conference on NEETs in August 2009, Jon Coles referred to a piece of research that had been carried out in a city in the North of England on behalf of the Department.

The researchers, he said, "had found one profoundly shocking thing... that of their long-term NEETs of 10 years ago, those who had been outside the system for a long period of time, whether because they were permanently excluded or simply because they had dropped out at the end of compulsory schooling and had not got into anything else, 15% of those young people of 10 years ago were dead by the time that the research was being done."<sup>29</sup>

Economists Bell and Blanchflower have also looked at similar cohort evidence and conclude that “a spell of unemployment when young continues to have a harmful impact in later life” in terms of happiness and life satisfaction. They argue that “youth unemployment creates permanent scars rather than temporary blemishes”.<sup>30</sup> This phenomenon was also recognised at a recent OECD Labour and Employment Ministerial meeting on ‘Tackling the Jobs Crisis’.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> European Commission Communication COM (2007) 498, ‘Promoting young people’s full participation in education, employment and society’, 5 September 2007.

<sup>29</sup> <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/8189498.stm>

<sup>30</sup> Bell, D.N.F. & Blanchflower, D.G. (2009), ‘What should be done about rising unemployment in the UK?’, Bank of England - <http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/publications/speeches/2009/speech379paper.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> OECD Labour and Employment Ministerial Meeting ‘Tackling the Jobs Crisis’, Paris 28-29 September 2009, Background Document ‘Theme 3: Helping Youth to Get a Firm Foothold in the Labour Market’ -

## NEET Policies and their Effectiveness

The literature review undertaken on behalf of the Scottish Government (referred to earlier) provides an excellent overview of the effectiveness of policy interventions designed to tackle the NEET problem in Scotland and more widely throughout the UK (see Annex B for a list of these policies - some of which may have expired by now - by barriers/issues addressed and by target group).<sup>32</sup>

The effectiveness of policy interventions was examined under the following headings:

- Employability Policies
- Information, Advice and Guidance Policies
- Financial Support Policies
- Policies involving Widening Choices at Pre-16
- FE and HE Policies

### Employability Policies

The following issues were identified from the literature, in relation to **employability policies**.<sup>33</sup>

- **Lack of evidence of 'translation' into longer-term, labour market outcomes.** The costs of undertaking such intensive tracking are also very high.
- **The presence of deadweight for some programmes** has also been questioned, whereby some of those participating in employability programmes might have been able to access employment through the more traditional routes, which require significantly less public support.
- The literature also identified some concerns about historical **targeting and incentive structures** which have appeared to 'favour' those with the clearest potential of completing programmes, to the detriment of those who are arguably most in need of such support.
- The literature also noted the **need to explore labour market outcomes** of those individuals with low attainment who leave school early and who have had no 'exposure' to employability programmes or other EET-based policy interventions - in the absence of evidence, it is not clear how such individuals fare in the labour market in comparison to those who do access support through employability programmes.
- The **role of training providers** appears to be very important in influencing completion rates for programmes. However, it is not clear that training providers

---

<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/54/50/43766254.pdf>. See Box 1 'The potentially scarring effects of unemployment on youth'.

<sup>32</sup> Scottish Government, 'Literature Review of the NEET Group', October 2005 - <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/10/27175707/57078>

<sup>33</sup> Scottish Government, 'Literature Review of the NEET Group', October 2005 - <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/10/27175707/57078>

across programmes are appropriately and consistently skilled to deal with the issues of the NEET groups. Despite more recent moves to ensure that programmes consider such barriers and risk factors in programme design (e.g. Get Ready for Work), it was not clear whether or not this had been successful.

- **New Deal for Young People** - the literature, here, pointed to some concerns that (due to labour market constraints) - making young people 'employable' would be insufficient to ensure a successful transition to the labour market, following participation in the programme. Where young people remained unemployed for 6-12 months after participation, there was some evidence that exits to training and education far outweighed effects on employment. The literature also noted a need for more and better data to understand New Deal outcomes. It was also identified that insufficient analysis exists regarding different non-employment outcomes of participants.
- **Modern Apprenticeships** - analysis noted that the age of the apprentice was not found to have an effect on completion. Nor was it proven that non-completion would lead to unemployment. In fact, the literature noted that non-completion does not appear to affect significantly an individual's career progression or their ability to find work. Training providers were found to be a key influence on completion rates. There were some concerns raised regarding the funding system for the programme and that incentives were more positioned towards starting the programme than completion.
- **Skillseekers**<sup>34</sup> - there was some evidence to suggest that participation in Skillseekers is gendered. This is due - at least partially - to the nature of some of the employment placement options and their traditional status as being male-oriented. It seems that schools, employer associations and Sector Skills Councils might have a role to play in addressing this.
- **Get Ready for Work**<sup>35</sup> (based on early analysis only) - there were some early concerns that there were insufficient changes being made to the cultural context of provision, to make the programme effective, in the intended way. This relates to the programme's emphasis on addressing the holistic barriers to progression through, for example, the Life Skills strand. A lack of clarity appeared to exist among providers and stakeholders regarding the 'direction' of the programme.
- **Get Ready for Work and 'transition' to Skillseekers** - It was also noted that the 'jump' from GRfW to Skillseekers was too great and that more support was required before this transition could be considered. There were also some early concerns regarding the purpose of, and responsibility for, assessment tools, as

---

<sup>34</sup> 'Skillseekers' is a vocational training programme for 16 to 19 year olds who want to develop skills and equip themselves for the world of work. It's open to people who have left school and have a job or who are looking for work. However, the Scottish Government indicated in the recent 'Skills for Scotland' Strategy that the Skillseekers programme would be phased out in Scotland as the MA programme is extended to S/NVQ Level 2 (SCQF 5) - <http://www.scottish-enterprise.com/sds-skillseekers>

<sup>35</sup> 'Get Ready for Work' supports 16 to 19 year olds to move into a job, further training or college, by helping them focus on what they want to do. They can also learn new skills and get the confidence they need to move on to further training, learning or into work - <http://www.scottish-enterprise.com/sds-getreadyforwork>



well as lack of clarity regarding responsibility for recruiting young people. There was also felt to be limited access to after-care services. Like the findings related to New Deal for Young People, it was felt that outcomes were largely dependent upon the buoyancy of the labour market.

- **Employability programmes outside Scotland** - in line with Scottish policy findings, wider UK policy findings point to the importance of ensuring that training providers possess the right skills and experience to work with the NEET group. There is fairly limited evidence of the 'right' skills sets existing in abundance to support the NEET groups, through employability-based options. Again, the UK literature reiterated concerns relating to incentive structures and the potential for work-based programmes to 'cream' the young people most likely to interact well with interventions, to the detriment of those who would have needed additional support - e.g. the NEET group and sub-groups.

### Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) Policies

The literature pointed to the following policy effectiveness issues, in relation to **IAG policies**:<sup>36</sup>

- **'Formal' and 'informal' channels of IAG support** - formal channels of IAG relate to those offered through the service provider route (e.g. teachers and careers advisers), while informal routes relate to influences about transition decisions stemming from peer groups, parents and guardians. The literature indicates that while more is known about formal routes of IAG, it is likely that informal routes are more influential and may even over-ride the influence of more formal routes. The literature points to a need to better understand how informal routes operate and how the integration of both routes might better serve young people making transition decisions. It was also noted that informal routes are likely to be less supportive or effective in making transition decisions with those young people from some NEET sub-groups (such as young care leavers and long-term unemployed family background). These are the individuals who are, arguably, most in need of robust and effective IAG support routes.
- **Importance of family influence** - connected to the above, some studies point to the importance and influence of family involvement in the decisions and commitment of young people both prior to transition stage and as they work through their options. This works both positively and negatively. In addition, the extent to which the NEET group can address barriers to becoming EET is very much influenced by the family/home environment. There are obvious implications here for those young people who lack this 'resource'.
- **Peer mentoring programmes** - some literature suggests that policies have paid insufficient attention to the promotion of peer mentoring programmes, especially at pre-transition stages. Consideration of such programmes at an early stage, with the NEET at-risk group, and the development of a longer timescale in preparing for transition decisions, might support more effective decision making

---

<sup>36</sup> Scottish Government, 'Literature Review of the NEET Group', October 2005 - <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/10/27175707/57078>



for this group. This could also be considered as part of an 'integrated network' of support for IAG - both formally and informally. Such programmes could also take a more holistic perspective of the risk factors present for some NEET groups and could offer support in counselling and emotional literacy.

- **The role of 'others'** in influencing the NEET status of young people - e.g. training providers, service providers and peers. These can be both positive (e.g. strong support and guidance) and negative (e.g. poor quality training providers, lack of specialist skills of service providers, bullying). These external influences cannot be 'controlled' or managed in a way which would consistently mitigate against negative outcomes, yet these groups can have a significant impact upon the transition to EET. More research appears necessary regarding the effects of bullying at school and the future participation and performance of those pupils being bullied.

### Financial Support Policies

There appear to be relatively few policy interventions addressing this theme either in Scotland or across the UK. However, the literature indicates that financial incentives are important to young people in making decisions, at transition periods. The literature pointed to the following, in relation to **financial support policies**:

- **Financial incentives appear to be important to the NEET group** in encouraging their consideration of EET options. The most recent of these - the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) - has shown early signs of success in encouraging post-16 learners to continue with their education. Early evidence of the effectiveness of EMAs indicates that the policy has had a positive effect on both attendance and the performance of low attainers in absolute terms but this has not yet improved their relative position, in terms of attainment. This suggests the need for further support for those in receipt of EMAs to ensure that attainment can be further improved.
- The literature points to evidence that **young people do undertake 'rational' decision making** in weighing up their options at transition stages. It appears that low prior attainment is a key deterrent in encouraging young people to make any post-16 investments in education or training for fear of the lack of return. In these cases, it appears that a low waged, low skilled job may be the more attractive option.

### Policies involving Widening Choices at Pre-16

The literature pointed to the following, in relation to **policies involving widening choices at pre-16**:

- The **widening choices policy arena is more focused on the pre-16 group** and tends towards universal policy interventions (such as Integrated Community Schools) or initiatives targeted at those 'at risk' (such as the Increased Flexibility Programme in England).

- Many Scottish based initiatives were still in their infancy at the time of the review. However, an early evaluation of Integrated Community Schools indicated the **difficulties in measuring the success of 'holistic' programmes**.
- There are **some indications of a lack of evidence of the success of alternative curriculum programmes** and some concerns that planning infrastructures require some work in relation to a longer-term focus and clarity of purpose for all involved partners.
- There were **some indications of success with the Increased Flexibility Programme in England**, seeking to widen participation for 14-16 year olds (although this programme finished in September 2007).

### FE and HE Policies

The literature pointed to the following, in relation to **FE and HE policies**:

- The literature points to the **need for intensive support in the first year of study**, when dropping-out is most prevalent. There is an apparent lack of understanding of the causes of non-completion at HE, although poor subject choice was cited as a key reason for dropping out, with the literature indicating the need for earlier support to make better choices. The role of social networks was deemed to be very important in a young person's decision to drop out - in the absence of strong, HE-associated networks, young people would be more prone to feeling isolated.
- There is also a **need to understand more about the importance of 'networks' of peer support** in encouraging young people to stay on at FE or HE. There is an apparent lack of understanding of the role of 'support networks' at both FE and HE. Networks of peer support appear to be very important in influencing decisions to stay on. Such networks are often difficult to mobilise for those young people who often stay at home while attending FE or HE. Both transport and logistical issues make it difficult for effective 'integration' and can often lead to the young people - who are most likely to need such support - feeling isolated.
- **Debt-aversity appears to be a crucial determinant in dropping-out**, especially for those groups 'closest' to NEET status. It is clear that the NEET groups are more likely than their peers to be debt-averse (despite similar levels of debt across all groups) and to be less likely than their peers to have effective 'coping mechanisms' to deal with the challenges of finance, study, home life and other commitments. This is further compounded by an apparent lack of support in the provision of IAG and in the complexities of funding and eligibility for, for example, hardship funds.
- The literature has also tended to question the **extent to which FE offers a 'second chance' of attainment for those with low, prior attainment** and whether returns to vocational qualifications are realised. There are some concerns that FE is not always best positioned to address the needs of low

attainers and that there might be opportunity costs in these young people not seeking out the more traditional labour market routes which they might have ordinarily pursued. This relates to how young people assess their options and that FE as a 'second chance' to improve attainment might not always be the best option for some young people who might benefit more from joining the labour market at a young age. There is some evidence that FE attainment (for those who might ordinarily not have joined FE) tends to be on a par with other lower level FE attainers and might not offer an advantage in the labour market. Where FE qualifications are vocationally oriented, there appears to be insufficient evidence of how young people benefit from such attainment, and there is a sense that returns to vocational qualifications might be low. From the opposite perspective, there is also an apparent need to examine how low attainers in the labour market might be competing with those in FE and HE, for part-time work.

- The **widening access agenda within FE and HE** is a clear priority in Scotland, aimed at addressing social justice, education and lifelong learning objectives. The emerging evidence suggests that there is a need for an improved teaching and learning infrastructure, addressing wider barriers to engagement (such as childcare arrangements) and supporting young people to address the significant challenges of juggling study, part-time work, home and family commitments, as well as financial pressures. These issues are apparent across the literature for both FE and HE. The literature also indicates that widening access programmes in HE (e.g. Scottish Widening Access Programme) are perceived to be bureaucratic and lacking in effective support infrastructures. Students still living at home are more likely to be from the NEET group and the literature indicates that - due to their accommodation status - they are 'separated' from the wider student group, making integration more difficult and vulnerability to isolation more obvious. Those in or close to the NEET group often struggle to balance the demands of study, work, family and other commitments.

### Recent NEET Strategies

Since this study was carried out, the Scottish Government has produced a strategy to tackle the problem, based on five key areas of activity as follows:<sup>37</sup>

#### *i) Pre 16 (opportunities for young people of school age)*

- *Transforming the learning environment:* the Schools of Ambition programme to bring about a step change in ambition and achievement to transform educational outcomes for all children in those schools; a new excellence standard for school and local authority inspections to support the drive for excellence throughout the education system, and wide ranging action to improve the quality of leadership at all levels in education.
- *Flexible, personalised learning opportunities with appropriate recognition:* a radical overhaul of the curriculum and qualifications framework and a new

---

<sup>37</sup> Scottish Government, June 2006, 'More Choices, More chances: A Strategy to Reduce the Number of Young People not in Education, Employment or Training in Scotland' - <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/06/13100205/3>.

approach to assessment, to support schools in tailoring teaching and learning experiences to the needs of individuals, whatever their circumstances, to ensure they enjoy the opportunities and support they need to both develop their potential throughout their school career and to prepare them for their chosen career path on leaving school.

- *Recognition of wider achievement:* giving credit to different skills, abilities and achievements.
- *Support for learners:* a new framework to ensure that all children who require additional support to benefit fully from school get that support both from schools and wider children's services.
- *Developing employability:* to better prepare all young people for the world of work and improve school leaver destinations.
- *A focus on outcomes:* Renewed emphasis on the responsibility of schools and local authorities to consider the outcomes for all children, including appropriate monitoring as part of performance management arrangements for schools and local authorities.

*ii) Post 16 (post compulsory education and training)*

- *More choices and more chances, with guaranteed options:* to make a clear commitment to young people about the routes to education, employment or training which are on offer to them.
- *Supported transitions and sustained opportunities:* expanding choice and building the quality of education and learning options for young people to improve the long-term employability of group by focusing on sustainable outcomes and progression.
- *Engaging employers:* working with public and private sector employers to improve employment and work-based training opportunities for young people.

*iii) Financial incentives (education, employment and training as viable options):*

- *Ensuring learning is a financially viable option:* testing new financial incentives in order to remove financial barriers in progressing towards the labour market.

*iv) The right support (removing the barriers to accessing opportunities)*

- *One to one support where needed:* to make accessing the guaranteed options a reality for all young people as well as offering an element of challenge to young people to help them move on.
- *Building the skills and employability focus of a range of providers who deal with young people who are, or are at risk of becoming, NEET:* encouraging other services (health, housing, social care) in the pre and post 16 sector to see post

16 education, employment or training as an integral part of personal planning, not a stage that follows it.

v) *Joint commitment & action (national & local leadership, planning & delivery)*

- All local partnerships across Scotland will be expected to drive forward *collaborative action* on NEET. Local partners will be expected to collectively plan and develop the service infrastructure required to meet the needs of the NEET group, building on existing frameworks such as Regeneration Outcome Agreements.

While there does not appear to be a specific strategy for addressing the NEETs problem in Ireland (North or South), a strategy has recently been developed by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) in England (which has also been adopted in Wales, where a detailed action plan has been developed<sup>38</sup>). The strategy is based on three key elements: careful tracking of young people to identify their needs ('the right systems'); a flexible mix of learning provision designed to meet the needs of every young person in every area ('the right provision'); and good advice and support to enable young people to access suitable provision ('the right support').<sup>39</sup>

In 2008, the DCSF announced that it was going to strengthen this strategy by:<sup>40</sup>

- **Further strengthening the tracking system**, by requiring all learning providers to notify the Connexions service as soon as any young person drops out.
- **Increasing the flexibility of provision**, so that if any young person drops out, it will be easier for them to access an alternative place in learning quickly.
- **Extending EMA**, so that young people on a wider range of courses can receive support; and so that all young people on Entry to Employment courses (which are particularly important for those at risk of being NEET) receive EMA.
- **Extending Activity Agreement pilots**, so that they examine the effectiveness of engaging young people in an activity agreement as soon as they drop out of learning, rather than after an extended period of being NEET.
- **Extending the September Guarantee**, so that 17 as well as 16 year olds are covered.
- **Introducing a fourth 'rights and responsibilities' strand to the strategy**, so that all young people who have been NEET for at least 26 weeks by the time they reach their 18th birthday are fast-tracked to the intensive support and

---

<sup>38</sup> Welsh Assembly Government, Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, 'Reducing the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training in Wales', April 2009 - <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/090430youngpeoplenotineduen.pdf>

<sup>39</sup> Department for Children, Schools and Families, 'Reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET): The strategy', 2008 - [http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/documents/neet\\_strategy\\_0803.pdf](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/documents/neet_strategy_0803.pdf).

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

sanctions regime of the New Deal – so that every day spent NEET before 18 counts towards the eligibility threshold for the New Deal.

In the same strategy document, the DCSF also announced that the government is planning to legislate to introduce a requirement for all young people to participate in education or training until the end of the academic year in which they are 17 from 2013 and until their 18th birthday from 2015.<sup>41</sup>

In April 2009, the UK government gave a guarantee in the 2009 budget that from January 2010 all young people under the age of 25 who have been unemployed for over a year will be offered a job, training or a paid work-experience place. The proposal is expected to benefit 250,000 young people and focus on job creation for young people in areas that have been significantly affected by the recession. Other proposals to help young people who are unemployed include a scheme called CareFirst offering 50,000 traineeships in social care to young people who have been out of work for a year or longer. The government will fund the creation of 150,000 jobs through a new Future Jobs Fund. These jobs will be available from the autumn of 2009 and will primarily be targeted at 18-24 year olds and other disadvantaged groups and areas with high unemployment.<sup>42</sup>

Through this fund, local authorities and third-sector groups will be able to submit bids for jobs to improve their local community. A further 100,000 jobs will also be funded by the government in growing sectors of the future and will be targeted at long-term unemployed young people. The government also made a commitment to ensure that all 16 and 17 year olds who want can stay on in further education for the next two years through the announcement of an extra £250 million funding for schools and further education colleges to fund student places from September 2009.<sup>43</sup>

Most European programmes to promote youth employment are still in their early stages and could take months or even years to implement. It was only earlier this year, for example, that the European Commission recommended that the 27 EU member states create 5 million apprenticeships to help young workers "ride out the storm" and to train young people for growing job sectors, such as green energy.<sup>44</sup>

At a recent OECD Labour and Employment Ministerial meeting held in Paris in September 2009, a number of policy recommendations were put forward to tackle youth

---

<sup>41</sup> Department for Children, Schools and Families, 'Reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET): The strategy', 2008 - [http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/documents/neet\\_strategy\\_0803.pdf](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/documents/neet_strategy_0803.pdf).

<sup>42</sup> OECD Labour and Employment Ministerial Meeting 'Tackling the Jobs Crisis', Paris 28-29 September 2009, Background Document 'Theme 3: Helping Youth to Get a Firm Foothold in the Labour Market' - <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/54/50/43766254.pdf>. Box 3 'The recent UK Youth Guarantee'.

<sup>43</sup> OECD Labour and Employment Ministerial Meeting 'Tackling the Jobs Crisis', Paris 28-29 September 2009, Background Document 'Theme 3: Helping Youth to Get a Firm Foothold in the Labour Market' - <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/54/50/43766254.pdf>. Box 3 'The recent UK Youth Guarantee'.

<sup>44</sup> Annie Lowry, 'Europe's New Lost Generation', Foreign Policy, 13 July 2009 - [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/07/13/europes\\_new\\_lost\\_generation](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/07/13/europes_new_lost_generation)

unemployment during the current recession and to help the group of “youth left behind”:<sup>45</sup>

- *Ensure better co-operation between employment services and the education system to reach youth as soon as possible when risk of disengagement is detected.* Referrals from schools to the employment services are essential if youth disengagement is to be addressed at the earliest opportunity when success is most likely.
- *Provide early guidance to school-leavers in search of a job.* Youth outreach programmes should be used to identify school-leavers who do not manage to find a job.
- *Extend job-search assistance measures for those who are job-ready.* It is essential that access to appropriate job-search assistance, training and similar measures is provided by the employment services in the first weeks of unemployment.
- *Keep hard-to-place young people connected to the labour market.* A shift from a so-called “Work-First” approach to a “Learn/Train-First” approach could be considered for those who have shown major difficulties in finding a job. While it would be important to include an on-the-job component to learning and training programmes, public-sector jobs could also be offered temporarily to disadvantaged youth to acquire skills transferable to private-sector jobs (this is already being done in France, where an emergency plan for youth employment was launched in April 2009).
- *Expand unemployment benefit eligibility conditions to better cover young workers.* It would be a welcome step, particularly in a time of economic crisis, to validate any period of youth employment, such as internships and dual programmes, in order to attain the number of months required to become eligible for unemployment benefits. Any extension of coverage for unemployment benefit, however, should be made conditional on active search following the “mutual obligations” principle.
- *Provide subsidies to promote apprenticeship for unskilled young people and support measures to help apprentices made redundant to complete their training.* Subsidies should be designed to minimise deadweight and/or substitution effects. Measures should be limited to youth without skills and to laid-off apprentices to help them to get a qualification. France and Australia recently announced measures to secure the training of apprentices made redundant.
- *Extend eligibility to social assistance for youth at high risk of marginalisation coupled with a rigorous “mutual obligations” approach.* To reconnect youth at risk of marginalisation, there should be an effective mix of so-called “carrots” (income support and effective Active Labour Market Policies) and “sticks” (activation stance and moderate benefit sanctions).

---

<sup>45</sup> OECD Labour and Employment Ministerial Meeting ‘Tackling the Jobs Crisis’, Paris 28-29 September 2009, Background Document ‘Theme 3: Helping Youth to Get a Firm Foothold in the Labour Market’ - <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/54/50/43766254.pdf>.

- *Make sure that skill-upgrading services offered are tailored to the current profiles of jobless youth.* It is vital to avoid the back-to-the-classroom option as the latter might prove very counterproductive with disconnected youth. Short training programmes taught outside traditional schools combined with regular exposure to work experience may be more effective.
- *Do everything possible to avoid school drop-outs.* No youth should leave the education system without a recognised qualification. This may imply leaving school at 17 or 18 or even 19 in some countries. It would be important to make sure drop-outs receive special attention from the education authorities to ensure they remain engaged in, or re-connect with education through the completion of an upper secondary diploma or its equivalent, preferably with an on-the-job training component.
- *Promote the combination of work and study.* The experience of combining work and study through apprenticeships, internships and student jobs facilitates labour-market entry. School-based education and academic fields of study could be professionalised through the use of compulsory on-the-job internships.
- *Offer every youth a “second chance at a qualification”.* A deferred right to training should exist for young people who have left the school system without basic skills, a qualification and/or a diploma to correct the inequalities inherited from school. Far from correcting those inequalities, the prevailing practice in continuous training usually reinforces them in OECD countries. There is a need to strengthen access to diplomas and to all professional certifications in other ways, in particular by the validation of job experience.
- *Actively encourage the mentoring of young people from immigrant backgrounds.* The programme that has proved most beneficial in the OECD countries is mentorship. Mentors could provide young people from immigrant backgrounds with information about the “rules of the game” and about the way to behave during interviews and on the job, and should reassure employers. Mentorship, which draws on volunteers who are familiar with the world of business or government, should be broadly extended. But it is also important to fight overt discriminatory behaviour directly.
- *Reduce the cost of employing low-skilled youth.* One option would be to introduce a youth sub-minimum wage in those countries with a relatively high and universal statutory minimum wage where such a sub-minimum wage does not exist. Alternatively, a reduction of social security contributions paid by employers for low pay workers could be envisaged, bearing in mind the need to finance such reduction with higher revenue from other sources. Another option would be to promote low skilled youth apprenticeship contracts that provide a wage that is lower than the minimum wage as the contracts imply a training commitment from the employer.
- *Continue efforts to reduce labour-market duality overall.* Reducing the gap between regulations for temporary and permanent contracts will likely contribute to a smoother transition for young people from entry jobs with short duration to more stable jobs that offer a career prospect.



## **Conclusion**

The group of “youth left behind” could find themselves even further behind unless action is taken quickly to implement some of these measures. The current recession has undoubtedly exacerbated the problem, but it could also be viewed as an opportunity – an opportunity to take urgent action to address a problem that has remained unresolved for a very long time.

To some extent, policy makers have been unable or unwilling to focus on the problem of wasted youth during times of economic boom. Now that relatively high levels of youth unemployment can no longer be viewed as a matter of choice, policy makers appear to be waking up to the problem. This, at least, appears to be the case in England, Scotland, Wales and most of the rest of Europe.

In addition to the strategies already undertaken, some of the proposals put forward at the recent OECD Ministerial meeting, referred to above, should be considered as a matter of urgency. It has become clear that further delay in resolving the NEET problem will result in further cost, both at an individual and social level.

## ANNEX A: OECD Countries – Percentage of young people not in education, employment or the labour market

Indicator C3 Indicator C3: How successful are students in moving from education to work?

Version 1 - Last updated: 3-Sep-2009

**Table C3.2a. Percentage of the youth population in education and not in education (2007)**

*By age group and work status*

	Age group	In education					Not in education				Total in education and not in education
		Students in work-study programmes <sup>1</sup>	Other employed	Unemployed	Not in the labour force	Sub-total	Employed	Unemployed	Not in the labour force	Sub-total	
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	
Australia	15-19	7.6	30.9	4.7	36.5	79.6	13.9	3.3	3.2	20.4	100
	20-24	6.2	20.9	1.4	10.6	39.1	50.1	3.3	7.4	60.9	100
	25-29	1.1	11.8	0.7	4.0	17.7	68.0	3.0	11.4	82.3	100
Austria	15-19	25.9	4.0	c	55.1	85.6	9.1	3.2	2.0	14.4	100
	20-24	2.7	10.0	c	19.3	32.5	56.5	5.0	6.0	67.5	100
	25-29	c	8.6	c	5.3	14.2	70.4	4.0	11.4	85.8	100
Belgium	15-19	1.0	2.6	0.8	87.5	91.9	2.9	2.2	3.0	8.1	100
	20-24	c	2.8	0.9	35.0	39.4	45.2	8.5	6.9	60.6	100
	25-29	c	2.9	c	3.3	7.2	75.5	8.8	8.4	92.8	100
Canada	15-19	a	30.2	4.9	45.2	80.2	12.5	2.8	4.5	19.8	100
	20-24	a	19.7	1.3	17.5	38.5	47.8	5.6	8.2	61.5	100
	25-29	a	6.9	0.4	4.9	12.2	72.6	5.5	9.7	87.8	100
Czech Republic	15-19	19.9	0.5	c	72.2	92.7	4.4	1.8	1.1	7.3	100
	20-24	0.9	3.3	0.2	37.6	42.1	46.9	4.6	6.4	57.9	100
	25-29	c	3.7	0.1	5.2	9.0	71.6	4.0	15.4	91.0	100
Denmark	15-19	a	47.1	5.4	32.3	84.8	11.3	1.4	2.5	15.2	100
	20-24	a	31.5	1.6	14.9	48.0	43.8	3.2	5.0	52.0	100
	25-29	a	14.8	1.5	8.0	24.2	66.8	3.0	5.9	75.8	100
Finland	15-19	a	13.4	6.4	72.4	92.2	4.3	1.5	2.1	7.8	100
	20-24	a	20.7	4.2	27.0	51.9	34.8	6.7	6.6	48.1	100
	25-29	a	16.8	1.9	8.5	27.2	59.5	4.8	8.5	72.8	100
France	15-19	5.6	2.0	0.9	82.6	91.1	3.1	3.4	2.4	8.9	100
	20-24	3.7	7.7	1.6	34.1	47.1	37.8	9.7	5.4	52.9	100
	25-29	0.6	8.8	0.6	4.2	14.2	69.0	8.4	8.5	85.8	100

Germany	15-19	18.7	6.8	1.5	65.2	92.2	3.6	2.5	1.7	7.8	100
	20-24	14.2	9.2	0.6	21.7	45.7	39.1	8.1	7.2	54.3	100
	25-29	2.2	7.2	0.6	8.7	18.7	62.8	8.5	10.0	81.3	100
Greece	15-19	a	1.6	c	84.8	86.7	4.8	2.6	5.9	13.3	100
	20-24	a	4.5	1.4	41.5	47.3	35.0	11.1	6.6	52.7	100
	25-29	a	2.3	c	5.1	7.9	70.2	11.7	10.2	92.1	100
Hungary	15-19	a	c	c	92.0	92.3	2.7	1.6	3.4	7.7	100
	20-24	a	4.5	0.8	43.9	49.2	33.9	6.7	10.2	50.8	100
	25-29	a	7.3	0.7	5.9	13.9	63.2	6.3	16.6	86.1	100
Iceland	15-19	a	41.0	c	39.2	83.8	13.3	c	c	16.2	100
	20-24	a	34.8	c	19.8	55.8	37.8	c	c	44.2	100
	25-29	a	19.3	0.0	9.7	29.0	64.3	c	5.6	71.0	100
Ireland	15-19	a	11.0	0.9	70.7	82.6	12.3	2.8	2.3	17.4	100
	20-24	a	7.8	c	17.6	25.9	62.0	4.9	7.2	74.1	100
	25-29	a	1.6	c	3.2	4.9	81.5	4.0	9.6	95.1	100
Italy	15-19	c	0.7	0.2	82.6	83.5	6.3	2.9	7.3	16.5	100
	20-24	0.3	3.8	1.2	36.4	41.7	35.7	8.1	14.5	58.3	100
	25-29	c	4.0	0.7	11.3	16.1	58.3	7.4	18.2	83.9	100
Japan	15-24	a	9.1	0.1	49.2	58.4	34.0	3.3	4.3	41.6	100
Luxembourg	15-19	a	5.3	c	88.7	94.3	2.7	c	c	5.7	100
	20-24	a	c	0.0	53.9	55.1	35.6	5.9	3.3	44.9	100
	25-29	a	c	0.0	6.6	7.1	79.1	8.0	5.9	92.9	100
Mexico	15-29	a	7.7	0.5	25.4	33.7	43.2	2.7	20.5	66.3	100
Netherlands	15-19	a	46.1	5.5	36.6	88.1	8.3	1.1	2.5	11.9	100
	20-24	a	46.1	5.5	36.6	50.8	8.3	1.1	2.5	49.2	100
	25-29	a	15.4	0.4	4.0	19.8	70.6	2.0	7.6	80.2	100
New Zealand	15-19	a	29.9	4.5	38.7	73.1	17.6	2.6	6.7	26.9	100
	20-24	a	20.5	1.2	17.1	38.9	47.5	3.2	10.5	61.1	100
	25-29	a	12.7	1.3	5.1	19.2	65.2	2.5	13.2	80.8	100
Norway	15-19	a	24.3	3.6	52.7	80.6	15.8	c	2.6	19.4	100
	20-24	a	18.0	c	18.7	37.7	53.6	2.9	5.8	62.3	100
	25-29	a	5.3	c	6.4	12.2	77.4	2.1	8.3	87.8	100
Poland	15-19	a	3.9	0.8	91.1	95.9	1.7	1.0	1.5	4.1	100
	20-24	a	15.6	3.9	36.9	56.4	25.2	10.2	8.1	43.6	100
	25-29	a	8.1	0.9	3.8	12.8	62.9	9.9	14.4	87.2	100
Portugal	15-19	a	1.4	c	78.8	80.4	11.1	4.3	4.2	19.6	100
	20-24	a	4.0	1.1	30.4	35.5	49.3	9.2	6.0	64.5	100
	25-29	a	4.5	1.4	6.2	12.1	72.4	9.1	6.4	87.9	100

Slovak Republic	15-19	12.0	c	c	78.0	90.2	4.4	3.6	1.8	9.8	100
	20-24	0.9	3.4	c	24.7	29.4	50.7	10.7	9.2	70.6	100
	25-29	a	3.3	c	3.3	6.8	68.0	9.6	15.6	93.2	100
Spain	15-19	a	3.7	1.4	72.7	77.8	11.3	4.3	6.6	22.2	100
	20-24	a	8.0	1.7	24.8	34.5	48.2	8.4	8.9	65.5	100
	25-29	a	5.3	0.8	4.0	10.0	72.4	7.3	10.3	90.0	100
Sweden	15-19	a	10.4	7.1	69.4	86.9	7.7	2.2	3.3	13.1	100
	20-24	a	11.4	3.7	24.5	39.6	47.3	6.9	6.2	60.4	100
	25-29	a	8.7	1.9	9.6	20.2	69.2	5.2	5.4	79.8	100
Switzerland	15-19	35.6	6.8	2.0	39.9	84.4	7.5	1.7	6.5	15.6	100
	20-24	10.6	16.1	c	13.7	41.0	48.6	5.2	5.2	59.0	100
	25-29	1.5	8.4	c	2.6	12.9	75.2	3.9	8.0	87.1	100
Turkey	15-19	a	2.7	0.4	41.5	44.6	19.3	4.8	31.3	55.4	100
	20-24	a	4.6	1.2	11.8	17.6	36.7	9.1	36.6	82.4	100
	25-29	a	2.7	0.4	1.5	4.7	53.5	7.4	34.4	95.3	100
United Kingdom	15-19	3.4	16.8	4.0	52.1	76.2	13.0	5.1	5.6	23.8	100
	20-24	2.7	12.2	1.5	13.2	29.7	52.3	6.6	11.5	70.3	100
	25-29	1.0	8.0	0.3	3.4	12.7	71.1	3.9	12.3	87.3	100
United States	15-19	a	20.7	3.0	61.5	85.2	8.5	2.0	4.3	14.8	100
	20-24	a	19.7	1.2	14.8	35.7	48.1	5.3	11.0	64.3	100
	25-29	a	8.7	c	3.4	12.4	70.7	3.8	13.1	87.6	100
<b>OECD average</b>	<b>15-19</b>		<b>14.5</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>63.7</b>	<b>84.3</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>15.7</b>	<b>100</b>
	<b>20-24</b>		<b>13.9</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>25.8</b>	<b>41.0</b>	<b>42.9</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>59.0</b>	<b>100</b>
	<b>25-29</b>		<b>8.0</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>14.0</b>	<b>68.9</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>11.3</b>	<b>86.0</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>EU19 average</b>	<b>15-19</b>		<b>10.4</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>71.8</b>	<b>87.7</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>12.3</b>	<b>100</b>
	<b>20-24</b>		<b>11.5</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>30.2</b>	<b>42.2</b>	<b>41.5</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>57.8</b>	<b>100</b>
	<b>25-29</b>		<b>7.3</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>13.6</b>	<b>69.2</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>10.6</b>	<b>86.4</b>	<b>100</b>
Brazil	15-19	a	21.0	6.7	39.4	67.0	18.3	4.1	10.6	33.0	100
	20-24	a	14.9	2.4	7.3	24.6	52.0	8.2	15.2	75.4	100
	25-29	a	8.8	1.1	2.2	12.2	66.0	6.6	15.2	87.8	100
Estonia	15-19	a	21.0	6.7	39.4	86.0	18.3	4.1	10.6	14.0	100
	20-24	a	14.1	c	30.4	45.4	39.3	4.4	10.9	54.6	100
	25-29	a	8.0	0.0	2.1	10.1	71.4	4.6	13.8	89.9	100

Israel	15-19	a	21.0	6.7	39.4	68.5	18.3	4.1	10.6	31.5	100
	20-24	a	11.4	1.1	16.0	28.5	31.9	7.1	32.5	71.5	100
	25-29	a	16.5	0.9	7.1	24.5	52.0	3.9	19.6	75.5	100
Slovenia	15-19	a	7.2	0.4	83.6	91.2	4.5	1.1	3.2	8.8	100
	20-24	a	23.1	2.4	33.2	58.7	30.9	4.5	5.9	41.3	100
	25-29	a	16.8	1.3	7.9	26.1	59.5	8.1	6.3	73.9	100

1. Students in work-study programmes are considered to be both in education and employed, irrespective of their labour market status according to the ILO definition.

Source: OECD. See Annex 3 for notes ([www.oecd.org/edu/eag2009](http://www.oecd.org/edu/eag2009)).

Please refer to the Reader's Guide for information concerning the symbols replacing missing data.

Source: OECD 'Education at a Glance 2009'

See Annex 3 for notes - [http://www.oecd.org/document/24/0,3343,en\\_2649\\_39263238\\_43586328\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/24/0,3343,en_2649_39263238_43586328_1_1_1_1,00.html)

## ANNEX B: NEET POLICY INTERVENTIONS IN SCOTLAND AND THE UK

Table 1. Scotland Policy Interventions Summary - by Barrier/Issue Addressed

<p><b>Employability</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WorkNet</li> <li>• Skillseekers</li> <li>• Modern Apprenticeships</li> <li>• Xlerate to Succeed Programme</li> <li>• Healthy Working Lives</li> <li>• New Deal for Young People</li>   <li>• New Deal for Lone Parents</li> <li>• Progress 2 Work</li> <li>• New Deal for Disabled People</li> <li>• New Futures Fund</li> <li>• Get Ready for Work</li> <li>• Columba 1400 Centre</li> <li>• Activate</li> </ul>
<p><b>Information, Advice and Guidance</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning for post-school under the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act</li> <li>• All Age Guidance Service</li> <li>• Carers Strategy</li> <li>• Local Authority Implementation of Through Care and After Care Regulations</li> <li>• Careers Scotland key worker service</li> </ul>
<p><b>Financial support policies</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education Maintenance Allowances</li> </ul>
<p><b>Policies removing practical or logistical barriers</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extended Schools Childcare Pilot</li> <li>• Working for Families</li> <li>• Widening Participation in Further Education</li> <li>• Review of services for people with a learning disability</li> </ul>
<p><b>Widening choice at pre-16 level</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determined to Succeed</li> <li>• School/College Review</li> <li>• The Discipline Task Group report 2001 <i>Better Behaviour-Better Learning</i></li> </ul>

**Table 2. Scottish Policy Interventions Summary - by Target Group**

<p><b>A - NEET specific intervention</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Deal for Young People</li> <li>• New Futures Fund</li> <li>• Skillseekers</li> </ul>
<p><b>B - 'At risk' of NEET specific intervention</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work Net</li> <li>• Xlerate to Succeed Programme</li> <li>• Carers Strategy</li> <li>• Get Ready for Work</li> <li>• Planning for post-school under the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act</li> <li>• Local Authority Implementation of Through Care and After Care Regulations</li> <li>• Activate</li> <li>• School/College Review</li> <li>• The Discipline Task Group</li> </ul>
<p><b>C - General EET intervention (not specific to 16-19 year olds)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy Working Lives</li> <li>• New Deal for Disabled People</li> <li>• Progress 2 Work</li> <li>• All Age Guidance Service</li> <li>• Working for Families</li> <li>• Widening Participation in Further Education</li> </ul>
<p><b>D - General EET intervention (with potential impact on the 'at-risk' group)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Deal for Lone Parents</li> <li>• Modern Apprenticeships</li> <li>• Extended Schools Childcare Pilot</li> <li>• Review of services for people with a learning disability</li> <li>• Determined to Succeed</li> </ul>

**Table 3. English/ UK Policy Interventions Summary - by Barriers/Issues Addressed**

<p><b>Employability</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Deal for Young People</li> <li>• New Deal for Lone Parents</li> <li>• New Deal for Disabled People</li> <li>• Modern Apprenticeships</li> <li>• Enterprise Education Entitlement</li> </ul>
<p><b>Information, Advice and Guidance</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connexions Service</li> <li>• Youth Service</li> <li>• Children's Trusts</li> </ul>
<p><b>Financial support policies</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational Maintenance Allowances</li> <li>• Connexions Card</li> <li>• Learner Support Funds</li> <li>• Residential Allowances</li> </ul>
<p><b>Policies removing practical or logistical barriers</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vulnerable Children Grant</li> <li>• Sure Start Plus Pilots</li> <li>• Care to Learn?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Widening choice at pre-16 level</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased Flexibility ( IFP)</li> <li>• 14-19 Pathfinders</li> <li>• Entry to Employment</li> <li>• Young Apprenticeships</li> <li>• Key Stage 4 National Curriculum</li> <li>• Neighbourhood Support Fund</li> </ul>



**Table 4. UK / English Policy Interventions Summary - by Target Group**

<p><b>A - NEET specific intervention</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entry to Employment</li> <li>• Educational Maintenance Allowances</li> <li>• Vulnerable Children Grant</li> <li>• Care to Learn?</li> </ul>
<p><b>B - 'At risk' of NEET specific intervention</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modern Apprenticeships (16-19)</li> <li>• Neighbourhood Support Fund</li> <li>• Connexions Card</li> <li>• Youth Service</li> <li>• Children's Trusts</li> <li>• Sure Start Plus Pilots</li> </ul>
<p><b>C - General EET intervention (not specific to 16-19 year olds)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Deal for Young People (18-24)</li> <li>• New Deal for Lone Parents</li> </ul>
<p><b>D - General EET intervention (with potential impact upon the 'at-risk' group)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Deal for Disabled People</li> <li>• 14-19 Pathfinders</li> <li>• Increased Flexibility for 14-16 year olds programme</li> <li>• Young Apprenticeships (pilot)</li> <li>• Enterprise Education Entitlement</li> <li>• Key Stage 4 National Curriculum</li> </ul>