



champs
public health collaborative service

CPH | CENTRE FOR
PUBLIC HEALTH
LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY



Evidence Briefing: Supporting employment among young people aged 16 years and older

The problem of youth unemployment

Unemployment amongst young people aged 16-24 is an increasing problem which can have detrimental impacts on health and future employment prospects. Young people experience a range of barriers to employment and have been disproportionately affected by the current economic downturn.



How much of a problem is youth unemployment?

- An estimated 15.0% of people aged 16-24 in England are 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' (NEET). In the North West 14.0% of young people are NEET¹.
- The total cost of youth unemployment in England in 2012 has been estimated at £15 billion in benefits claimed, foregone taxes and lost output to the wider economy².
- High youth unemployment rates in the North West are associated with areas that are urban, have high levels of deprivation and have low employment opportunities³.
- Several local authority areas in Merseyside and Cheshire contain youth unemployment 'hotspots', where an estimated one in four young people are NEET².
- Youth unemployment disproportionately affects certain groups. This includes young people with disabilities, those from less well-off and less qualified families, teenage mothers and ethnic minorities. Unemployment among these groups further limits their social mobility².

The impacts of the economic downturn on young people and employment

- Young people have been disproportionately affected by the recession since 2008 as they have had to compete with more qualified and experienced candidates for fewer jobs³.
- Public sector cuts have restricted youth services and the government's capacity to help young people NEET move into employment, suggesting the NEET rate among young people is likely to continue to rise⁴.
- Efficiency savings in schools are likely to have an adverse impact on academic outcomes and young people's access to higher education⁵.
- Tax and benefit changes are predicted to increase child poverty, which may in turn have a negative impact on school performance⁶.

The impact of unemployment on young people

Youth unemployment has been shown to have negative impacts on young people's health and future employment prospects, which may be long-lasting or even permanent⁵⁻⁷. Youth unemployment has been associated with:

- Future unemployment.
- Lower earnings.
- Lack of direction and future plans.
- Increased risk of mental ill-health, e.g. low self-esteem, stress, depression.
- Poor physical health, e.g. heart attacks in later life.
- Higher likelihood of involvement in anti-social activity and crime.

These impacts are likely to have associated costs in the future, such as increased benefit claims, reduced taxes paid and the costs of poor health and involvement with the criminal justice system².

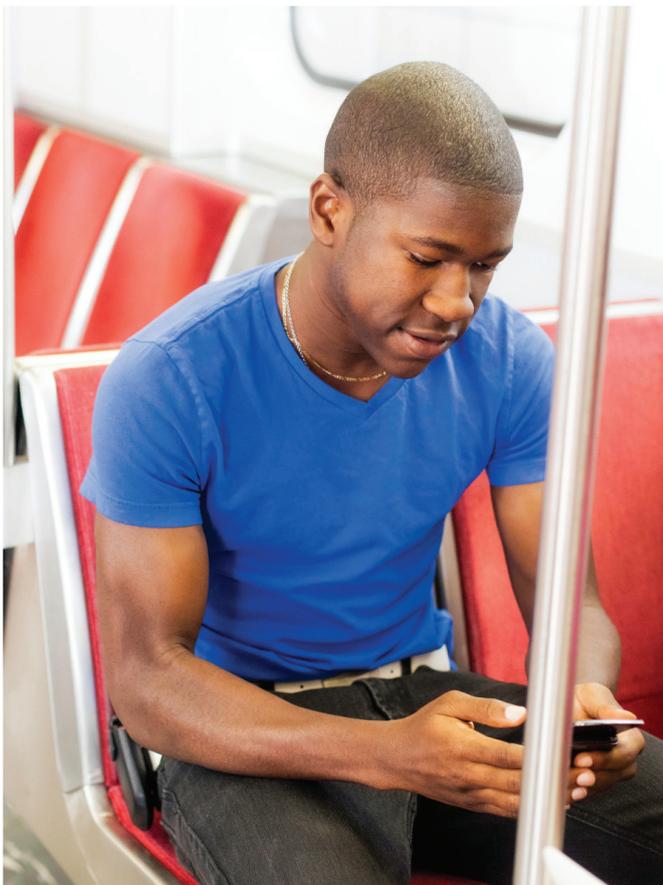


The problem of youth unemployment

The importance of access to transport

Lack of access to affordable transport is a barrier for young people accessing education, training and employment. Transport is most likely to be a barrier to young people from lower income families; who are more reliant on public transport and more likely to find it less affordable⁸.

Ideas to improve access to transport for young people include subsidising fares for those seeking employment, in education or non-paid work, and encouraging community transport initiatives. Encouraging cycling or offering incentivised rates for leasing cars and bikes can lead to a reduced reliance on public transport. It is important to consult with young people about transport to ensure that any initiatives will appeal to them and accurately reflect their needs^{8, 9}.



Barriers for young people

Young people experience a range of barriers to education, employment and training^{10, 11}, including:

- Lower-level or no qualifications.
- Low post-16 aspirations.
- Lack of availability or awareness of education and training opportunities.
- Financial hardship or poor socio-economic background.
- Lack of social capital (the resources one can draw from their relationships with others).

Where unemployment and financial hardship is common in a young person's family, peers or community, the young person may develop low aspirations, poor confidence in their ability to succeed, and a lack of knowledge about what career options are realistic and available. This is known as generational unemployment and suggests that youth unemployment is both a cause and consequence of unemployment as an older adult.



What works in supporting employment among young people

The following section contains evidence on approaches that can help to prevent young people from becoming NEET; through improving their aspirations, career prospects and rate of employment. Also included is specific evidence on strategies designed to re-engage young people NEET. This section has been constructed from a review of published research reports, journal articles, literature reviews and guidance documents.



What works in supporting employment among young people



Engaging young people at school in post-16 learning

- Individuals form attitudes towards work and careers and make decisions about their futures at a young age, therefore it is important that schools provide their pupils with guidance on educational pathways, training opportunities and careers. Solid aspirations are typically formed from 11-14 years so it is crucial that guidance starts in this period if not earlier^{12, 13}.
- Guidance may take the form of careers events, personal advisers and written information and should be high quality, impartial, realistic and personalised^{12, 14}. It should be provided throughout secondary school education with clear progression pathways leading to opportunities for further education, employment and training.
- It is important for schools and colleges to work together with businesses, training providers and local authorities in providing and developing guidance, this ensures it is relevant to local opportunities and creates opportunities for work experience^{14, 15}. Work experience must be relevant to the young person's interests if it is to have a positive impact.
- Colleges play a key role in retaining young people in education by offering a range of pathways for learning. Education and training provided by colleges needs to be responsive to learners' and employers' needs¹⁶.
- Involving young people in decision-making about their future is a key enabler to engaging young people in learning¹².
- Financial incentives can have a positive impact on continued participation in learning¹². Young people and their families need to be made aware of the financial assistance available to them when making choices¹⁵.

“Work experience must be relevant to the young person's interests if it is to have a positive impact”



Encouraging participation in extracurricular activities

- Participation in extracurricular activities from a young age has been associated with a range of positive outcomes including: educational aspirations, engagement in further education, academic achievement, general wellbeing and reduced anti-social behaviour^{17, 18}.
- Extracurricular activities associated with positive outcomes are typically school-based and structured activities, but community-based activities run by youth or church groups can also be beneficial¹⁹. For example, The Scout Association has been shown to help young people develop key skills and build relationships²⁰ and 'myplace' youth centres have successfully engaged young people in positive activities that support their personal and social development²¹.
- Key elements of successful activity programmes include: structure, sustained participation, emphasis on outcomes, well-prepared staff, and strong partnerships between families, schools and other community institutions¹⁸.
- Contextual factors such as strong relationships with adult significant others and social networks promote the positive outcomes of extracurricular activities¹⁸.

Increasing family involvement in young people's education

- Parents are the most influential factor on a child's aspirations. Young people whose parents have higher aspirations and expectations are more likely to have high aspirations for themselves^{12, 16}.
- It is important to improve a parent's engagement with their child's learning, to raise parent aspirations and to improve knowledge about the education system; this will enable them to provide high quality and impartial advice. Providing parents with information about their child's progress at school, alongside more general information about parenting and support groups, is predicted to improve parental engagement¹².



What works in supporting employment among young people



- Apprentices' experiences of apprenticeships are generally positive and they value the qualifications they receive²³.
- Outcomes are better for learners who complete their programmes, compared to early leavers. Efforts to maximise completion rates should focus on suitability, management of programmes, provision of support for learners, and outcomes²⁴.
- Partnership working between employers and training providers is a crucial element in the delivery of work based learning programmes²⁵.
- Colleges play a major role in delivering work based learning programmes; they provide more vocational qualifications than any other sector in the North West¹⁶.

Re-engaging young people NEET

It is generally harder to engage with young people once they are NEET. Young people NEET often experience a range of personal challenges and have negative attitudes towards education²⁶. Successful strategies for re-engaging young people NEET include:

Improving opportunities for volunteering

- Evidence suggests that volunteering can have a positive impact on young people's aspirations, commitment to education and career prospects.
- Volunteering enables young people to develop work-related skills, gain useful work experience and make contacts which can result in further learning or employment opportunities^{2, 22}.
- It is important to make young people aware of volunteering opportunities and to provide quality and comprehensive support (including financial support) to those undertaking volunteering work²².

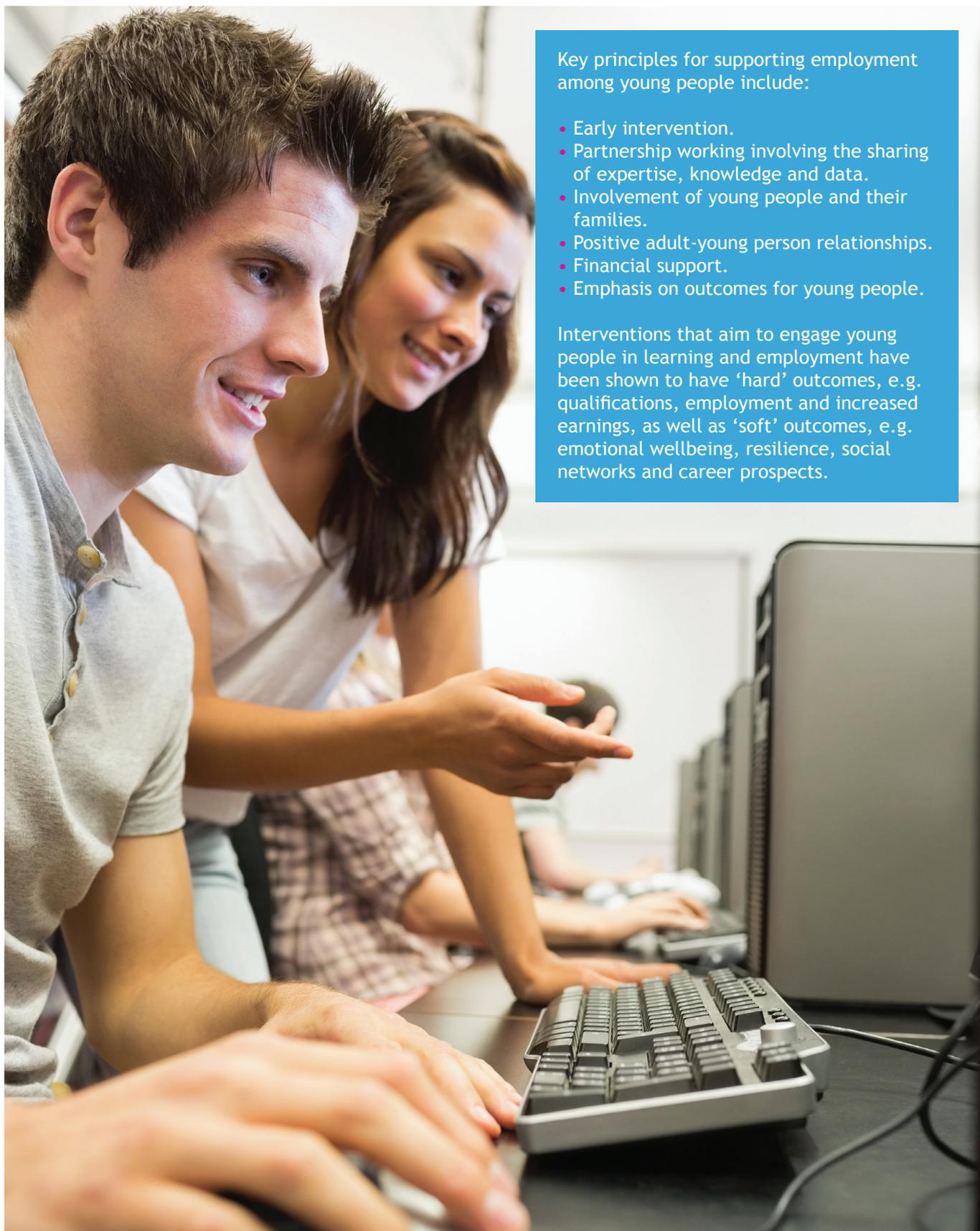
Increasing work based learning

Work based learning generally refers to government-funded work-related education and training for young people, and includes apprenticeships among other forms of learning.

- Work based learning leads to qualifications, further learning, employment, progression and increased wages²³.

- Intensive support delivered by personal advisers, who work on a one-to-one basis with young people NEET, to identify their needs and aspirations and arrange suitable activities²⁷.
- Small allowances and expenses paid to those who participate in learning, to help overcome the financial constraints commonly experienced by young people NEET²⁷.
- Partnership working between Jobcentre Plus and local colleges to engage people who are unemployed in education and training²⁸.
- 'Non-formal learning' which generally takes place in relaxed settings and has an element of structure and planning; aims to help young people to develop attitudes, behaviours and skills necessary for learning and employment²⁹. Community organisations have successfully re-engaged young people through the introduction of informal activities that are of interest to young people³⁰.

Conclusion - key points



Key principles for supporting employment among young people include:

- Early intervention.
- Partnership working involving the sharing of expertise, knowledge and data.
- Involvement of young people and their families.
- Positive adult-young person relationships.
- Financial support.
- Emphasis on outcomes for young people.

Interventions that aim to engage young people in learning and employment have been shown to have 'hard' outcomes, e.g. qualifications, employment and increased earnings, as well as 'soft' outcomes, e.g. emotional wellbeing, resilience, social networks and career prospects.

References

1. Department for Education 2012. NEET statistics: quarterly brief - quarter 4. Department for Education, Runcorn
2. AVECO 2012. Youth unemployment: The crisis we cannot afford. AVECO, London
3. New Economy 2012. Youth unemployment in the North West: Analysis and best practice. New Economy, Manchester
4. Lee, N. & Wright, J. 2011. Off the map? The geography of NEETs. The Work Foundation, London
5. Winters, L., McAteer, S. & Scott-Samuel, A. 2012. Assessing the impact of the economic downturn on health and wellbeing. Liverpool Public Health Observatory, Liverpool
6. Reitemeier, B. 2011. Statement in response to the Institute for Fiscal Studies' report on poverty and universal credit [press release]. The Children's Society, London
7. The Prince's Trust 2013. The Prince's Trust Youth Index 2013. The Prince's Trust, London
8. Jones, K. 2012. Missing million policy paper 2: Transport barriers to youth employment. The Work Foundation, Lancaster
9. Department for Children, Families and Schools, The National Youth Agency & Department for Transport 2009. Transport guidance: Supporting access to positive activities. Department for Education, Runcorn
10. Spielhofer, T., Golden, S., Evans, K., Marshall, H., Mundy, E., Pomati, M. & Styles, B. 2010. Barriers to participation in education and training. Department for Children, Schools and Families, Runcorn
11. Norris, E. 2011. Not enough capital? Exploring education and employment progression in further education. RSA Projects, London
12. Haywood, N., Walker, S., O'Toole, G., Hewitson, C., Pugh, E. & Sundaram, P. 2009. Engaging all young people in meaningful learning after 16: A review. Equality and Human Rights Commission, Manchester
13. Hughes, D. & Gratton, G. 2009. Careers and guidance-related interventions. CfBT Education Trust, Berkshire
14. McCrone, T. & Filmer-Sankey, C. 2012. A review of careers professionals' involvement with schools in the UK. National Foundation for Educational Research, Slough
15. Hughes, S. 2011. Report to the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister from the Advocate for Access to Education (The Hughes Report). Cabinet Office, London
16. Regional Intelligence Unit 2010. Raising the aspirations and attainment amongst young people, especially amongst 16-19 year olds, and stimulate an interest in and progression towards higher skills. NWDA, Warrington
17. Feldman, A.F. & Matjasko, J.L. 2005. The role of school-based extracurricular activities in adolescent development: A comprehensive review and future directions. Review of Educational Research, 75: 159-210
18. Little, P.M.D., Wimer, C. & Weiss, H.B. 2008. After school programs in the 21st century: Their potential and what it takes to achieve it. Harvard Family Research Project, Cambridge, MA
19. The National Youth Agency & The Fabian Society 2008. The contribution of non-formal learning to young people's life chances: Learning from the evidence. The National Youth Agency, Leicester
20. PACEC 2011. A study of the impact of scouting on the UK's young people, adults and communities. The Scout Association, London

-
21. Durham University & YMCA George Williams College 2011. Myplace evaluation - final report. Department for Education, Runcorn
 22. Newton, B., Oakley, J. & Pollard, E. 2011. Volunteering: Supporting transitions. The National Young Volunteers Service, London
 23. Learning and Skills Council 2009a. The benefits of completing an apprenticeship. Learning and Skills Council, Coventry
 24. Learning and Skills Council 2009b. Maximising apprenticeship completion rates. Learning and Skills Council, Coventry
 25. Ofsted 2010. Good practice in involving employers in work-related education and training. Ofsted, Manchester
 26. Nelson, J. 2011. Strategies to re-engage young people not in education, employment or training: A Rapid Review. C4EO, London
 27. Department for Education 2010. What works re-engaging young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)? Summary of evidence from the activity agreement pilots and the entry to learning pilots. Department for Education, Runcorn
 28. Association of Colleges 2012. Back to work: Colleges supporting sustainable jobs. Association of Colleges, London
 29. Spielhofer, T., Marson-Smith, H. & Evans, K. 2009. Non-formal learning: Good practice in re-engaging young people who are NEET. NFER, Slough
 30. Community Development Foundation 2006. Re-engaging young people: An evaluation of the Neighbourhood Support Fund. Community Development Foundation, London

Acknowledgements

This work was commissioned by the Cheshire and Merseyside Public Health Intelligence Network. The authors would like to express their thanks to the Intelligence Network including, Matthew Ashton (Knowsley Council), Chris Williamson (Liverpool City Council), Sharon Fryer (Knowsley Council), Tim Hall (Knowsley Council) and Ellie McCoy (Centre for Public Health) for their contributions to the work. With thanks also to the champs support team for editing and production of this document.

Authors

Geoff Bates
Helen Baldwin
Lisa Jones

ISBN: 978-1-908929-32-7 (Printed version)
ISBN: 978-1-908929-33-4 (Electronic version)
August 2013



champs
public health collaborative service

CPH | CENTRE FOR
PUBLIC HEALTH
LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY



champs public health collaborative service

Suite 1,
Marwood, Riverside Park,
1 Southwood Road,
Bromborough,
Wirral CH62 3QX

Tel: 0151 666 5123
Email: champscommunications@wirral.gov.uk

Centre for Public Health,
Liverpool John Moores University,
Henry Cotton Campus,
15-21 Webster Street,
Liverpool, L3 2ET

Tel: 0151 231 4535
Email: info@cph.org.uk



find us on
facebook



follow us on
twitter

www.champspublichealth.com

www.cph.org.uk

working together to improve health and wellbeing in Cheshire & Merseyside