



# Young Lives

## NEET Survey & Research

### February 2014

This research engaged with 315 young people (16-24) from across West Yorkshire to enable them to share their experience of Not being in Employment, Education or Training (NEET). This research asked young people to share their views on the barriers faced by NEET young people in finding employment or appropriate training/education, it asked how being NEET can impact on their personal lives and their opinions on what is the best type of support to enable NEET young people find employment, education or training.



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## Foreword by Lord Mayor of Leeds



Over a long period of time, years, youth unemployment has remained persistently at high levels. This timely piece of research has enabled young people to have their say about the support they need.

This report will be important in providing messages to inform providers of support, funders and politicians in helping them remove barriers and provide more opportunities on young people's journeys into work. The vast majority of who, as this report shows, would like to see themselves working twelve months from now.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'T. Murray'.

Lord Mayor Cllr Thomas Murray

## Young Lives NEET Research Project

### Key Findings

- This research shows that most young people Not in Employment, Education or Training do not have low aspirations; overall the majority of young people taking part in this research believed they would be working twelve months from now. Also nearly three quarters of young people taking part in the research felt *“given the right support I could contribute a lot more to society”*. More than two thirds of young people also said *“I have support from family and friends to help plan for my future”*.
- However this research has also identified the fact that young people NEET are not a homogenous group, but a group with diverse needs. It shows that within the NEET cohort there is a significant polarisation amongst NEET young people. One glaring example of this is that just under half of young people **NEET for a year or more** felt they would be working a year from now and just over half said they felt they had little chance of ever getting a job.
- This research also highlights the negative consequences of being NEET upon a young person's health and well-being, for example more than half of young people identified stress, anxiety or depression as a negative consequence.
- Another key finding from this research is the link between the amount of time a young person is NEET and their sense of dis-empowerment. When analysing responses from young people NEET for a year or more it shows that nearly six in ten said they *“I often feel I am not in control of how my life will turn out”*, more than four in ten said *“I feel like I'm not part of society”* and only one in five said they intend to vote at the next General Election.

## Key actions resulting from this research

- One of the main aims of this research was to provide an opportunity for young people to share their experiences of being NEET and to give their opinions on the best type of support to enable young people to move into employment, education or training. To make sure as many people as possible hear young people's opinions and views, this report will be widely distributed and to different audiences. An example of this is that Leeds City Region Employment & Skills Officers Group has asked for copies of this report, as has Big Lottery, Elected members, Local Authorities across the West Yorkshire region and many diverse organisations that currently provide training and support for NEET young people.
- Jenny Dobson, Funding Officer from Big Lottery, has said about this research: *"Through this piece of research Young Lives Leeds, Bradford and Wakefield have given young people across West Yorkshire a voice. Young Lives have set out a hard hitting partnership approach giving young people the opportunity to see themselves as influencers – working with those voluntary groups and local businesses to help address barriers faced by NEET young people across West Yorkshire. This detailed research will help create a shared understanding of young people's concerns together with the support and services they need - and more importantly help young people to remain engaged and realise their full potential"*.
- This research has highlighted additional needs/challenges/barriers/obstacles faced by NEET young people, particularly those that have been NEET for a year or more. From April 2014 Talent Match, a £6.7 million Big Lottery programme for young people NEET for a year or more, will begin delivery across West Yorkshire. As part of the development of this programme three meetings for perspective providers of services for Talent Match has taken place across West Yorkshire and a presentation on this research was given to potential providers at these meetings. Wendy Green, Assistant Chief Executive (Programmes) from Your Consortium, who is managing the Talent Match programme, said:  
*"The results of this survey, and previous mapping exercises, have fed into the design and launch of the project ensuring this is very much young people led. Given the results of this survey and the implications on health, social interaction and aspiration once a young person reaches 12 months of unemployment, it is vital that the Leeds City Region Key Workers are fully versed in provision such as health, social issues etc. in order to address central barriers and move young people closer to the job market better equipped and more resilient to deal with the issues they face."*
- Some of the issues highlighted in this research are complex, for example why is the number of young people identifying a need for *"better English, maths or computer skills"* more than three times higher than the numbers identifying it in recent national research undertaken by ComRes (UCU NEET's Survey 2013) . Also finding solutions to some of the issues raised in this research will be complex and require a diverse range of partners. Conversations around ways of doing this have begun in the different areas of West Yorkshire, for example this report will be discussed *at Leeds City Council 11-19 (25) Learning & Support Partnership* and in Bradford at the Bradford NEET Providers Network.
- Young Lives Leeds, Bradford & Wakefield will ensure that conversations and discussions around this report happen at both a strategic and operational level. An update to this report and an update on progress made in responding to this report will be published and distributed in May 2014.

## Acknowledgments

The organisations coordinating this project would like to acknowledge the support given by many organisations in helping to carry out this research project. This includes many third sector organisations from across West Yorkshire (a full list of those organisations is included at the end of this report), Ingeus, ComRes, Big Lottery, Your Consortium and above all, to all the young people that have willingly participated and given their time to this research.

## Background & Objectives

- Young Lives Leeds, Bradford, and Wakefield, with support from Kirklees Job Fund, led and coordinated a research and consultation project that aimed to engage with young people (16-24) to share their experiences of Not being in Employment, Education or Training (NEET). All three of these organisations are third sector infrastructure support organisations and they worked in partnership with their member organisations and other partners to carry out this research and consultation.
- An important objective of this research was to enable young people to share their views on the barriers faced by NEET young people in finding employment or appropriate training/education, how being NEET can impact on their personal lives and their opinions on what is the best type of support to enable NEET young people to find employment, education or training.
- We have chosen not to make recommendations as a result of this research as it is hoped that this research will stimulate discussions that will lead to recommendations and actions.

### Objectives of this research

- To profile 16-24 year olds in West Yorkshire who are Not in Education, Employment or Training.
- To understand the barriers to work, education and training that they face.
- To enable young people to share the impact of their situation as a “NEET” on their personal lives.
- To enable young people to share their ideas, views and experiences of what is the best type of support and initiatives that can help them find employment, education or training.
- To use the information from this research to inform: providers of support/activities for NEET young people, funders, politicians, the community and young people themselves.

## METHODOLOGY

315 young people from West Yorkshire, aged 16-24, with current or recent experience of Not being in Education, Employment or Training took part in this research from October – December 2013.

The following is a breakdown of where those taking part live in West Yorkshire:

Area	Sample (n)	As %
Leeds	205	65%
Wakefield	45	14%
Kirklees	32	10%
Bradford	20	6%
Other areas of West Yorkshire	12	4%

The design and analysis of this research study were informed by a previous study conducted by the research agency ComRes for the University and College Union (UCU). We should stress, however, that ComRes played no role in the fieldwork or analysis of this current study. [The ComRes research](#) (1)

interviewed 1,004 UK 16-24 year olds online who were Not in Employment, Education or Training between 24 June and 4 July 2013.

The questionnaire for this research was available online and also via a paper based version. As well as a questionnaire NEET workshops and focus groups with young people took place across the region.

## The Research Cohort

The data for this research was not weighted and the following is a breakdown of the research cohort.

Research Cohort	Sample (n)	As %
Female	174	55%
Male	139	44%
Transgender	2	1%
Aged 16 - 18	125	40%
Aged 19 -24	185	60%
<b>Young People identifying themselves from a BME background<sup>1</sup></b> <small>Those taking part in this survey were asked to self identify their ethnicity. Of the 315 people that took part 93% (293) identified there ethnicity, of this 24% (69) were identified as being from a BME background</small>	70	24%

### Young people's current living situation

- 61% of young people said they were living with their parent(s)/carers, 17% living in rented accommodation, 11% living in social housing and 7% of young people said they were homeless.
- The number of young people that said they live with their parents(s)/carers reflects the national picture. The Office for National Statistics said that in 2012 an estimated 64% of 16-24 year old 1 lived in their parental home.<sup>(2)</sup>

### How did young people describe their current situation?

- 61% said they were looking for work.
- 22% said they were looking for a college or training place
- 11% said they were currently volunteering.

### How many of the young people taking part in the survey were currently NEET?

- When planning this research it was felt important not to exclude young people who had recent experience of being NEET but had recently secured themselves a training place or employment. Also it was felt useful to compare the responses of young people currently in work, education or training with those currently NEET. In addition a control group of young people currently in work or on a job guarantee programme (Kirklees Jobs Programme) took part in this survey to act as a comparison with those young people identifying themselves as being NEET. In Leeds only 3% of young people taking part in this survey said they were working 30 hours or more and overall 67% of those taking part said they were currently looking for employment and/or a college or training place.

### Comparisons with the ComRes survey

- This report makes comparisons with a recent national NEET survey (ComRes, July 2013), this comparison has highlighted some areas where the findings are very similar and others where there are significant differences. The ComRes research though was carried out by participants completing a questionnaire online while in this research only about 5% of young people completed their questionnaire online. In this survey participants were told their answers were anonymous but many of the participants had support in completing their questionnaire. Because of this there may be an expectation that participants in this survey may have been more hesitant in sharing some of their

personal experiences of being NEET, this may be particularly true for example when asked to share the effects of being NEET upon their health & well-being. A report for Department of Business Innovation and Skills <sup>3</sup> (NIACE Feb, 2011) said *“The stigma and discrimination that is often attached to mental illness can stop young people from declaring their needs”*.

- Most young people taking part in this survey were engaged with a third sector or other support organisation which is unlikely to have been the case with the ComRes survey. As a result of this it possible that participants in this survey may have been more positive in their responses.

## Summary of Findings

- Overall 65% of young people said they would like to see themselves working 12 months from now; this is very similar to the 68% that said the same in the national ComRes research.
- Overall 57% of young people thought they would be working 12 months from now; this compares to only 41% saying the same in the national ComRes research.
- While 62% of young people NEET for one year or more said they wanted to be working 12 months from now, only 47% thought that they would be working 12 months from now.
- Overall young people are most likely to say their *“lack of experience”* (58%) is the main barrier or obstacle preventing them moving into education, employment or training. *“My skills and qualifications aren’t good enough”* (40%) and *“I lack confidence”* (35%) were also seen as significant obstacles.
- Young people said *“advice about applying for jobs”* (44%), *“better English, maths or computer skills”* (39%) and *“boosting my self confidence”* (39%) are the three best ways to help them get into work, education or training.
- *“Stress and anxiety”* (42%) and *“depression”* (29%) were the most commonly mentioned negative consequences on well-being as a result of not being in work, education or training. Other consequences mentioned included *“rarely leaving the house”* (25%), *“smoking too much”* (25%) and *“eating unhealthily”* (22%).
- More than two thirds of young people (68%) agreed that *“no matter what politicians do, there will always be lots of young people not in employment, education or training”*. Although more than seven in ten (73%) agree that *“given the right support, I could contribute a lot more to this country”*. More than seven in ten (71%) said they felt *“my full potential is not being used”* and more than a third (35%) feel they have *“little chance of ever getting a job”*.
- More than half of young people (52%) who have been NEET for a year or more felt they have *“little chance of ever getting a job”* and more than four in ten (42%) agreed that *“I feel I’m not part of society”*.

- Nearly half (46%) of young people working full time said they planned to vote at the next General Election, which compares to just over one in five (22%) of young people who have been NEET for a year or more.
- Nearly half of young people (48%) felt that a job or training guarantee was the best way of helping young people into work or training; this was followed by financial support to get to college or work (16%)
- Young people thought the best two ways of letting young people know about the support and training available in helping them into employment, education and training was by advertising on Facebook (52%) and through Job Centre Advisors (52%).

## Full Results

### Working History of the young people taking part in this survey

- Overall 34% of young people had no experience of being in a paid or unpaid role; this compares to 21% saying the same in the national ComRes research. Nearly half (48%) of young people NEET for a year or more had no previous experience of being in a paid or unpaid role.
- Overall 19% have experience of working part time; this was significantly lower than the national ComRes survey that showed 32% having experience of working part time.
- Overall 21% of young people said they had experience of being an unpaid volunteer; this is less than the national average for 16-24 years. The Office for National Statistics says that 28% of 16-24 year olds volunteered during 2012.
- Only 13% of young people NEET for a year or more had experience of working full time; this compares to 23% of them having experience of volunteering.
- 27% of females aged 19-24 had experience of volunteering and 25% of males aged 19-24.

### Effects of being NEET on young people's health and well-being.

In the NEET questionnaire young people were asked, *"Has being out of work, education or training had any of the following effects on your well-being?"* Young people were asked to identify, from a list, any that applied to them.

This research clearly identifies the link between being NEET and its effects on a young person's health and well-being; this is also something that was recently identified in research from the [Prince's Trust \(Macquarie Youth Index 2014\)](#).<sup>(5)</sup> This national research reveals that long-term unemployed young people are more than twice as likely as their peers to have been prescribed anti-depressants. One in three has contemplated suicide, while one in four have self-harmed.

***“Being NEET can impact on a young person’s relationships because of stress and money, can make mental health worse as you need to be better to get a job/education and idea of getting better puts extra stress on a person.***

Young person participating in a NEET Workshop

- [A recent report from the World Health Organisation](#) said: “Unemployment may be falling in the UK, but persistent high levels of the number of young people over 18 not in employment, education or training is storing up a public health time bomb waiting to explode”. <sup>(6)</sup>
- The World Health Organisation [defines good mental health](#) as: “A state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community”. <sup>(7)</sup>
- This research showed that stress (42%) and depression (29%) were the two most identified negative effects of being NEET on a young person’s well-being; this is similar to the national ComRes survey that showed 39% (stress) and 33% (depression). In this survey half of young people (50%) identified either/both stress and depression as an effect of being NEET. 42% of both males and females identified stress as an effect of being NEET, nearly half (49%) of females aged 19-24 identified stress, with 46% of males aged 16-18 identifying it.

***Can make you down and add to mental health problems e.g. no job can equal mental health problems.***

Comment of young people participating in this research

- Overall 29% of young people identified depression being an effect of being NEET on their well-being. The two groups of young people being most likely to identify depression were those NEET for a year or more (35%) and females aged 20-24 (49%).
- Overall one in four young people (25%) said that rarely leaving their house was an effect of being NEET; this is less than the 37% that said the same in the ComRes survey. This difference may be explained by the fact that most young people participating in this research were engaged with a third sector or other support organisation while those participating in the ComRes took part anonymously and on-line. In this research nearly one in three (31%) of males identified rarely leaving their house compared to just over one in five (21%) of females.
- Overall one in four young people (25%) said smoking too much was an effect of being NEET; this compares to a lower 16% in the ComRes survey. One in three males (33%) identified smoking too much compared to less than one in five (19%) of females identifying the same. Nearly half (49%) of males aged 16-18 identified smoking too much compared to just over one in five (21%) of females the same age.
- In this survey, overall, 22% of young people said they had eaten unhealthily or comfort ate as a result of being NEET, this compares to 26% of young people saying the same in the ComRes survey. The number of males identifying this (23%) was nearly the same as Females (22%). The least likely groups to identify unhealthy eating as a consequence of being NEET were females aged 16-18 (16%) and those NEET for a year or more (16%).

*I went through a bad time with drugs and partying but my Connexions Workers have helped me sort my life out. I am now starting college in January and looking for a job.*

Comment of young people participating in this research

- Overall 14% of young people said an effect upon them of being NEET was that they had taken drugs; this is more than double the 6% saying the same in the ComRes research. When looking at different groups of young people who identified taking drugs there are significant variances. For example nearly one in five (19%) of males said they had taken drugs compared to less than one in ten (9%) of females. Nearly one in three (30%) of males aged 16-18 identified taking drugs as a consequence of being NEET compared to less than one in thirty three (3%) of young people working full time.
- Overall about one in twelve (8%) young people said they had self-harmed as a consequence of being NEET; this figure is exactly the same (8%) as the ComRes research. Females (11%) were more than twice as likely as males (5%) to identify self-harming. 14% of young people NEET for a year or more identified self-harming compared to 3% of those working full time.

**Table 1: Has being out of work or training had any of the following effects on your wellbeing?**

Effect	Overall	National ComRes	Working full time	NEET 1 year +	Male	Female	Male 16-18	Female 16-18	Male 19-24	Female 19-24
Stress or anxiety	42%	39%	34%	42%	42%	42%	46%	35%	41%	49%
Depression	29%	33%	17%	35%	25%	32%	27%	29%	25%	34%
I very rarely leave the house (e.g. playing video games/watching TV)	25%	37%	35%	20%	31%	21%	24%	21%	33%	21%
Smoke too much	25%	16%	21%	27%	33%	19%	49%	21%	27%	17%
Eat unhealthy foods/comfort eat	22%	26%	31%	16%	23%	22%	19%	16%	24%	27%
Drink too much alcohol	15%	7%	14%	15%	19%	11%	19%	12%	20%	10%
Taken drugs	14%	6%	3%	17%	19%	9%	30%	9%	15%	9%
Self harmed	8%	8%	3%	14%	5%	11%	8%	11%	3%	11%
Have become physically ill	6%	5%	3%	9%	5%	6%	5%	5%	5%	7%
None of the above	25%	34%	31%	22%	19%	29%	13%	32%	22%	27%

## Where do you think you *will* be a year from now?

## Where would you *like* to be a year from now?

In the NEET questionnaire young people were first asked “Where would you *like* to see yourself in a year’s time?” and were then asked “Where do you *think* you will be in a year’s time?” Young people were given a list to choose from and asked to select one response only.

- Overall 57% of young people thought they would be working a year from now; this is higher than the 41% that said the same in the ComRes research. 65% of young people who were NEET for less than a year thought they would be working a year from now; this compares to a lower 47% for those NEET for a year or more.
- Only one in 25 (4%) of young people, NEET for less than a year, expected to be in the same position 12 months from now. For those young people NEET for a year or more there was a much higher percentage with nearly one in four (24%) expecting to be in the same position as today.
- When comparing young people's aspirations to be in work (where they wanted to be) and their expectations (where they thought they would be 12 months from now) the most positive was males aged 19-24, with 73% having aspirations of being in work compared to 70% believing they would be in work.
- In all the groups of young people more said they would like to be working a year from now than thought they would actually be working a year from now. These differences between where young people thought they would be and where they would like to be regarding employment was the biggest among those NEET for a year or more and females aged 16-18. 57% of females aged 16-18 wanted to be working a year from now but only 42% thought they would be working, whereas among young people NEET for a year or more 62% wanted to be working a year from now but only 47% felt that they would be working.
- Overall only one in one hundred (1%) of young people thought they would be running their own business 12 months from now; however more than ten in a hundred (11%) wanted to be running their own business 12 months from now. Males (17%) were much more likely to be wanting to run their own business than females (6%) and more than one in five (21%) of males aged 16-18 said they would like to be running their own business 12 months from now.

Table 2. Where do you think you will be in a year's time?	Overall	National ComRes	NEET up to 11 months	NEET 1 year +	Male	Female	Male 16-18	Female 16-18	Male 19-24	Female 19-24
Working full or part time	57%	41%	65%	47%	62%	54%	42%	42%	70%	65%
In full or part time education or training.	17%	22%	17%	16%	16%	17%	33%	22%	9%	12%
Running my own business	1%		3%	0%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	0%
Same as today	11%	18%	4%	24%	8%	13%	7%	16%	9%	10%
Don't know	13%	14%	9%	11%	13%	13%	17%	15%	12%	11%
Other	2%	4%	2%	2%	0%	3%	0%	5%	0%	2%

Table 3: Where would you like to see yourself in a year's time?	Overall	National ComRes	NEET up to 11 months	NEET 1 year +	Male	Female	Male 16-18	Female 16-18	Male 19-24	Female 19-24
Working full or part time	65%	68%	70%	62%	66%	64%	51%	57%	73%	71%
In full or part time education or training.	16%	20%	15%	16%	11%	20%	19%	30%	7%	11%
Running my own business	11%		10%	16%	17%	6%	21%	4%	16%	9%
Same as today	3%	4%	2%	3%	2%	3%	2%	1%	2%	4%
Don't know	3%	4%	2%	2%	3%	4%	7%	6%	1%	2%
Other	2%	4%	1%	1%	1%	2%	0%	2%	1%	2%

## Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

In the NEET questionnaire young people were given a list of statements and were asked to decide whether they agreed, disagreed or neither agreed or disagreed with the statements.

- Overall more than two thirds of young people (68%) agree that *“no matter what politicians do, there will always be lots of young people not in employment, education or training”*. However more than seven in ten (73%) of young people also agree that, *“given the right support, I could contribute a lot more to this country”*. This suggests that despite apparent challenges, the young people taking part in this research do feel they can make a positive contribution to society.
- Overall more than two thirds (68%) of young people said they have the support of family and friends in planning for their future; this is higher than the ComRes research that showed 57% of young people agreeing with this. Looking at all the different groups of young people they are all positive about receiving support from family and friends with 66% - 70% of all the different groups of young people agreeing with this.
- Nearly three quarters (71%) of young people felt that their *“full potential is not being used”*; this compares to a lower 55% of young people saying this in the ComRes survey. Just over half (51%) of young people in full time employment felt that their full potential was not being used; this is significantly lower than both those NEET up to 11 months (81%) and those NEET for a year or more (71%).
- Overall more than half (53%) of young people agreed that *“I often feel that I am not in control of how my life will turn out”*. Females (59%) were more likely to agree with this statement than males (45%) and more than seven in ten females (71%) aged 16-18 agreed with this statement compared to less than four in ten males (37%) aged 16-18 agreeing.

- Overall 27% of young people felt that they were not part of society which is significantly less than the 41% that said it in the ComRes survey. However there are significant differences in the responses to this statement from different groups of young people. Only 8% of young people working full time said *“I feel like I’m not part of society”*, which contrasts sharply with a very much larger 42% of young people NEET for a year or more saying that they didn’t feel part of society.
- Overall more than a third (35%) of young people felt they had little chance of ever getting a job; this is nearly exactly the same as the results of the ComRes survey that showed 36% felt this. More than half (52%) of young people NEET for a year or more felt they had little chance of getting a job, this is nearly double the figure for young people NEET for less than a year feeling the same (27%). More than four in ten females (41%) felt they had little chance of getting a job, which is significantly higher than less than one in three males (27%) feeling the same. Nearly half of females (48%) aged 16-18 felt they had little chance of ever getting a job.

***I feel that unemployed people (especially the young) face a lot of prejudice. Often seen as “lazy”, “aimless” and “apathetic”, young people don’t feel empowered to change their situation and to plan for the future when facing this preconception. I think more needs to make NEET people feel valued in their efforts to find work and education. I am currently working with the help of Kirklees Jobs Fund and I wholeheartedly feel that schemes such as this will be the key to enabling young people to find permanent work. Even if they are on for a shorter period of time: I am on a 6 month contract, with a view to this becoming long-term, but a 2-3 month placement could also be beneficial. During this time, young people would receive a proper wage (not just JSA) and valuable training-plus they would have a recent reference and a log of activity when applying for jobs.***

Comment of young person participating in this research

***Young people felt that in order to overcome prejudice and discrimination towards them when seeking employment, education or training, organisations should have a better awareness about their culture, and a more positive approach rather than stereotyping them and perceiving them in a negative way.***

Feedback from a NEET focus group facilitator.

***It’s hard to get a job because Gypsy/Travellers aren’t understood by rest of society and treated differently. I didn’t go to school from age of 12.***

Comment of young person participating in this research

- Overall just over one in four (26%) of young people felt discriminated against which compares with just under one in three (32%) saying the same in the ComRes survey. However while only 9% of young people in full time employment felt discriminated against, 38% of young people NEET for a year or more felt discriminated against. Another group of young people that felt they faced high level of discrimination was females 16-18, with nearly four in ten (39%) feeling discriminated against.

Table 5: All those agreeing with the following statements:	Overall	National ComRes	Working full time	NEET up to 11 months	NEET 1 year +	Male	Female	Male 16-18	Female 16-18	Male 19-24	Female 19-24
<b>No matter what politicians do, there will always be lots of young people not in employment, education or training:</b>											
	68%	75%	77%	70%	64%	64%	72%	63%	78%	64%	66%
<b>Given the right support, I could contribute a lot more to this country:</b>											
	73%	71%	86%	72%	74%	72%	74%	61%	70%	78%	78%
<b>I have support from family and friends to help plan for my future:</b>											
	68%	57%	69%	65%	67%	69%	68%	67%	70%	69%	66%
<b>I feel like my full potential is not being used:</b>											
	71%	55%	51%	81%	77%	71%	71%	70%	69%	72%	74%
<b>I often feel that I am not in control of how my life will turn out:</b>											
	53%	46%	41%	51%	59%	45%	59%	37%	71%	49%	49%
<b>I feel like I'm not part of society:</b>											
	27%	41%	8%	24%	42%	25%	29%	21%	37%	27%	22%
<b>I feel that I have little chance of ever getting a job:</b>											
	35%	36%	16%	27%	52%	27%	41%	28%	48%	27%	35%
<b>I feel discriminated against:</b>											
	26%	32%	9%	23%	38%	23%	29%	21%	39%	24%	20%

## MAIN barriers or obstacles preventing young people from getting into work, education or training

In the NEET questionnaire young people were asked “What would you say are the MAIN barriers or obstacles preventing you from getting into work, education or training?” They were given a list to choose from and asked to choose up to THREE responses.

**Difficult to get a job because of my age and experience. Don't get responses from job providers.**

Comment of young person participating in this research

- Overall 58% of young people said their “lack of experience” is the main barrier or obstacle preventing them from getting into work, education or training; this compares to a lower 47% saying the same in the ComRes survey. Males (64%) saw their lack of experience more important than females (54%) and seven in ten (70%) males aged 16-18 saw their lack of experience as the biggest barrier or obstacle.
- Overall 40% of young people thought their skills and qualifications “not being good enough” was a main barrier or obstacle that was preventing them moving from NEET into employment, training or education, this is significantly different from the 17% that identified this is the ComRes survey. More females (47%) than males (32%) thought their qualifications and skills weren’t good enough and more than half (53%) of females aged 16-18 thought their qualifications and skills weren’t good enough.

***When I was NEET my confidence was at an all time low. I believe there is currently a huge stigma attached to not having a job and being on benefits, which all only adds to the feelings of hopelessness.***

Comment of young person participating in this research

- Another important barrier or obstacle was young people's lack of confidence; overall this was identified by more than one in three (35%) young people; this compares to one in four (25%) in the ComRes research. Females (39%) were more likely than males (30%) to identify lack of confidence, with older females (39%) just as likely to identify lack of confidence as younger females (39%).
- The link between lack of confidence and being NEET is something recently identified in research by the Prince's Trust (Macquarie Youth Index 2014), the research says; *"Employment status has the biggest influence on the scores, with young people who are classified as NEETs ranking the lowest in terms of how happy or confident they are in their lives"*. (8)
- Overall nearly one in four (23%) of young people thought *"the lack of suitable, well paid jobs"* was a main barrier or obstacle preventing them from moving into employment, education or training, with males (30%) more likely to see this as barrier than females (17%). Nearly one in three (32%) of males aged 19-24 identified this as barrier compared to less than one in five (19%) females of the same age identifying it. Interestingly only 18% of young people NEET for a year or more saw the lack of suitable well paid jobs as being barrier or obstacle. This is perhaps suggests that this group of young people see their barriers as being more complex than just the availability of jobs, education or training.
- Overall nearly one in five (19%) saw *"financial factors"* as a main barrier or hurdle, with more than one in four (26%) of males aged 16-18 identifying financial factors.

***I want a job really badly but feel I won't get a chance because of my learning difficulties. I'm not that clever***

Comment of young person participating in this research

***Key findings were that young people didn't feel valued and believed they were discriminated against because of their learning disabilities. All young people at the workshop had a history of volunteer work or work experience placements: some had been engaging in volunteer work for almost six years and therefore had a lot of experience behind them. Despite this only one person in the group had experience of paid work.***

Feedback from a NEET workshop facilitator.

- Overall about one in eight (12%) young people identified having a learning difficulty or disability as a main barrier or obstacle. The group of young people that identified this the most was those NEET a year or more with nearly one in five (19%) identifying a learning difficulty or disability. This backs up lots of national research that shows young people with a learning difficulty or disability are more likely to be NEET and NEET for longer than the national average.

***(The) world is built around people who do not suffer from physical /mental disability.***

Young person participating in a NEET workshop

- Overall about one in ten (9%) of young people identified having a mental health condition as a barrier or obstacle, with females nearly three times as likely (13%) to identify mental health than males (5%). As previously discussed, overall nearly a third (29%) of young people identified depression as an effect of being NEET, this is much higher than the 9% identifying “*I have a mental health condition – e.g. depression*” in this question. One explanation of this may be that as soon as the phrase “*mental health condition*” is attached to depression then young people are worried about identifying with it.
- Overall just under one in ten (9%) of young people identified prejudice or discrimination as a main barrier preventing them from getting into work, education or training; this compares to about one in thirty three (3%) in the ComRes research. A significant larger figure, more than one in five (21%) of young people NEET for a year or more saw prejudice or discrimination as a main barrier.
- A recent survey by Time to Change <sup>(9)</sup> showed that 27% of young people with mental health problems under the age of 25 say that the discrimination they face as a result has also made them give up on their life’s ambition.

Table 6: What would you say are the MAIN barriers or obstacles preventing you from getting into work, education or training? Please select up to THREE responses.	Overall	National ComRes	NEET up to 11 months	NEET 1 year +	Male	Female	Male 16-18	Female 16-18	Male 19-24	Female 19-24
My lack of experience	58%	47%	58%	58%	64%	54%	70%	53%	61%	55%
My skills and qualifications aren’t good enough	40%	17%	36%	49%	32%	47%	40%	53%	29%	42%
I lack confidence	35%	25%	31%	36%	30%	39%	33%	39%	28%	39%
The lack of suitable well paid jobs.	23%	28%	28%	18%	30%	17%	28%	16%	32%	19%
Financial factors – e.g. cost of transport, clothes and childcare..	19%	13%	20%	17%	19%	19%	26%	19%	16%	20%
I don’t know how to prepare for a job or qualification.	12%	8%	10%	13%	11%	12%	16%	13%	9%	11%
I have a learning difficulty or disability	12%		12%	19%	14%	10%	16%	4%	13%	15%
I have a mental health condition – e.g. depression	9%	15%	9%	11%	5%	13%	7%	12%	4%	14%
Prejudice or discrimination	9%	3%	9%	21%	7%	10%	0%	18%	11%	3%

## Which of the following do you think would help you get into work or education?

In the NEET questionnaire young people were given a list of different types of support and were asked “Which of the following, if any, do you think would help you get in to work, education or training?”. They were asked to identify ALL the types of support that they felt might help.

- Overall more than four in ten (44%) of young people when asked what they thought “would help you get work, education or training” said they thought “advice about applying for jobs” was the thing that would help the most. More than half (52%) of young people NEET for a year or more agreed with this, as did nearly half (49%) of females aged 16-18. These figures compare with a much lower 29% of young people saying the same in the national ComRes research.
- Overall nearly four in ten (39%) young people thought “better English, maths or computer skills” would help them get into work or education; this is significantly higher than the ComRes survey where only about one in eight (12%) of young people said this. In this survey more than half of females (51%) aged 16-18 thought better English, maths or computer skills would help them as did 44% of young people NEET for a year or more.
- As previously discussed, overall more than a third (35%) of young people saw their lack of confidence as a main barrier or obstacle preventing them from moving into employment, training or education. It is therefore not surprising that nearly four in ten young people thought “boosting my self confidence” was an important way in helping them gets into work or education. More than half of young people (53%) of young people NEET for a year or more thought “boosting my self confidence” would help them move into employment or education, 49% of females aged 16-18 felt the same.
- As well as increasing self confidence, “boosting my motivation” was also seen by young people as an important step in helping them move into employment or education with nearly one in three (31%) identifying this. The two groups of young people that felt they needed the most support in boosting their motivation were males and females aged 16-18, with 43% of both these groups identifying support needs around increasing their motivation.
- Overall nearly one in three (31%) of young people thought “Clear information about education and training opportunities” would help them get into work or education, this is higher than the ComRes survey that showed 23% of young people saying this. In this survey 27% of males thought this would help compared to 35% of females.
- Overall one in five (20%) of young people thought “Guarantee of not losing benefits” was important in helping the move into employment or education, this is exactly the same figure in the ComRes survey.

Table 7: Which of the following, if any, do you think would help you get into work or education? Please select ALL that apply	Overall	National ComRes	NEET up to 11 months	NEET 1 year +	Male	Female	Male 16-18	Female 16-18	Male 19-24	Female 19-24
Advice about applying for jobs	44%	29%	43%	52%	42%	46%	33%	49%	45%	43%
Better English, maths or computer skills	39%	12%	35%	44%	34%	43%	43%	51%	30%	37%
Boosting my self confidence	39%	46%	32%	53%	35%	39%	33%	43%	33%	37%
Boosting my motivation	31%	36%	31%	37%	30%	33%	43%	43%	24%	23%
Clear information about education and training opportunities.	31%	23%	28%	32%	27%	35%	27%	35%	27%	35%
Guarantee of not losing benefits	20%	20%	24%	24%	21%	19%	25%	14%	20%	23%

## What are the best initiatives to help young people get a job or find appropriate training?

In the NEET questionnaire young people were asked, *“Politicians often come up with ideas to help people like you get a job or find appropriate education and training. Which of these ideas do you think would help the most?”* Young people were asked to identify only ONE of the initiatives.

- In this survey nearly half (48%) of young people identified *“a job or training guarantee”*. More than half (55%) of young people NEET for less than a year identified a job or training guarantee which is significantly higher than the 38% of young people NEET for a year or more who identified it. This may be explained by young people who are NEET for a year a more seeing the support needs as being more complex than being offered a job or training guarantee.
- Financial support in helping to get to college, training or work was seen by young people as the second most important initiative in helping young people find employment, education or training. Overall 16% of young people thought *“financial support”* was the most important initiative, this is nearly the same as the 17% that thought the same in the ComRes survey. Nearly one in four (24%) of females aged 16-18 saw financial support as the best initiative.
- 15% of males aged 16-18 saw *“personal mentoring or goal setting”* as the best initiative; this compares to less than half the amount (6%) of females aged 16-18 thinking the same.
- One in ten (10%) of young people NEET for a year or more thought *“Local college or employer open days aimed at people like me”* was the best initiative, this is more than double the 4% of young people NEET for a less than a year thinking the same.
- An important part of the current Government’s strategy in getting more people into work is through reductions in benefits in the belief that this will increase people’s motivation in finding work. This survey found that only 1% of young people thought this was the best initiative to help young people into work, training or education.

Table 8: What are the best Initiatives to help young people get a job or find appropriate education or training	Overall	National ComRes	NEET up to 11 months	NEET 1 year +	Male	Female	Male 16-18	Female 16-18	Male 19-24	Female 19-24
A job or training guarantee	48%	38%	55%	38%	52%	44%	37%	41%	58%	47%
Financial support (e.g. to get to college or work)	16%	17%	14%	17%	14%	17%	17%	24%	13%	11%
Individual careers or education advice	7%	10%	4%	8%	6%	7%	3%	8%	8%	7%
Basic classes in reading, writing, maths and computer skills	7%	2%	6%	10%	5%	8%	5%	6%	4%	10%
Personal mentoring or goal setting	6%	7%	5%	9%	7%	6%	15%	6%	3%	6%
Local college or employer open days aimed at people like me	6%	5%	4%	10%	5%	8%	7%	6%	3%	9%
Reducing my benefit payments so that I have greater incentive to work.	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	2%	0%

## Do you intend to vote in the next General Election in 2015?

- The number of young people that vote at General Elections has been declining for many years, the percentage of young people aged 18-24 that voted at the last General Election in 2010 was 44%, this compares to more than two thirds of people aged 65 and over voting at the 2010 election.
- In this survey less than a third (31%) of young people said they intended to vote at the next General Election which is significantly lower than half of young people (50%) that said they intended to vote in the ComRes survey.
- Interestingly nearly half (46%) of young people working full time said they intended to vote at the next General Election, this is double the amount (22%) of young people NEET for a year or more intending to vote at the next General Election.

Table 9: Do you intend to vote in the next General Election in 2015?	Overall	National ComRes	Working full time	NEET up to 11 months	NEET 1 year +	Male	Female	Male 16-18	Female 16-18	Male 19-24	Female 20-24
Yes	31%	50%	46%	29%	22%	34%	28%	37%	17%	34%	38%
No	42%	25%	26%	47%	40%	46%	38%	39%	45%	48%	33%
Don't know	28%	23%	29%	23%	37%	20%	34%	24%	38%	18%	29%

## Comparing the number of young people believing they will be working 12 months from now with those young people believing “I feel that I have little chance of ever getting a job.”

- These two questions have previously been discussed in this report; however it is interesting to compare the number of young people who said they expected to be working 12 months from with the number of young people that said “I feel that I have little chance of ever getting a job”.

Analysing young people’s responses to these two questions highlights the polarisation of the NEET cohort.

- In the ComRes research overall 41% of young people felt they would be working 12 months from now and 36% felt they had little chance of ever getting a job. The total of these responses is 77% meaning that 23% of young people didn’t feel that they would be working within 12 months or didn’t agree that they had little chance of ever getting a job.
- For some groups of young people in this survey the results are very different, for example among young people NEET for a year or more 47% believed they would be working a year from now and 52% feeling they had little chance of ever working, these two percentages total 99%. This seems to be saying that only 1% of young people NEET for a year or more didn’t think they would be working 12 months from now or didn’t feel had little chance of ever getting a job. Similar patterns are seen when looking at the responses Females aged 16-18 and females overall.

Table 10: Comparisons	Overall	National ComRes	NEET up to 11 months	NEET 1 year +	Male	Female	Male 16-18	Female 16-18	Male 19-24	Female 20-24
<b>Number of young people believing that they will be working full time or part time 12 months from now</b>										
<b>%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>65%</b>
<b>Number of young people agreeing with the statement: <i>I feel that I have little chance of ever getting a job.</i></b>										
<b>% Agreeing</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>Total of both responses</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Analysis of results from BME young people.

In this survey young people were asked to self identify their ethnicity with the question; *“How would you describe your ethnicity?”* Young people were not given a list to choose from but asked to record their answer. Of the 315 young people completing the survey, 293 (93%) chose to identify their ethnicity, of these 69 (24%) were identified as being from a BME background. Of all the 293 young people completing this question there were 44 different definitions given by young people to describe their ethnicity.

- Overall 151 (51%) of young people described their ethnicity as *“White British”*, 40 (14%) as *“British”* and 18 (6%) as *“White”*. Looking at the different groups of BME young people the biggest group was those describing themselves as being *“Pakistani”* (20), this included *“Pakistani”* (8), *“British Pakistani”* (7), *“Pakistani British”* (3) and *“Asian Pakistani”* (2). The next biggest group was young people describing themselves as being *“Gypsy”* or *“Traveller”* (15) this category included young people who described their ethnicity as *“Gypsy”* (8), *“Traveller”* (4), *“English Gypsy”* (1) and *“Irish Traveller”* (1).
- Nearly one in four (24%) of young people taking part in this survey identified themselves as being from a BME background, this was larger than expected and may be evidence of the over

representation of BME young people within the NEET cohort. This is further evidenced by the data that shows more than one in three (38%) of young people from a BME background being NEET for over three years, this compares to a much lower one in twelve (8%) of young people from a White background being NEET for three years or more.

- Young people from a BME background (72%) were more likely to be “living with parent(s)/carer(s)” than a young person from a White background (57%). A BME young person was also more likely to identify themselves as being an “*unpaid carer*”, with 28% identifying this compared to a lower 9% for young people from a white background. Also one in four (25%) of young BME people said they were “*looking after a child*”, this compares to a much lower 3% of White young people.
- 63% of BME young people said they were currently *looking for work*, this compares to 58% of White young people describing the same. 43% of BME young people said that they had “*never been in a paid or unpaid role*”, this compares to 30% of young white people saying the same. Also more than a quarter (26%) of young BME people said they had no formal qualifications, this compares to 12% of White young people saying the same.
- 37% of BME young people expected to be working in a year’s time, this compares to a much higher 64% of White young people expecting to be working. Also more than half (51%) of young BME people felt they had “*little chance of ever getting a job*”, this compares to a significantly lower 29% of White young people feeling the same. 42% of young BME people said they felt *discriminated against*, this compares to 22% of White young people saying they felt discriminated against.
- When looking at MAIN barrier or obstacles preventing them getting into work or education, one in four young BME people(25%) identified prejudice or discrimination, this compares to one in twenty (5%) of White young people. More than half (54%) of young BME people said “*my skills and qualifications aren’t good enough*”, this compares to 38% of young White people saying the same.
- 46% of young BME people felt “*my local community centre/community project*” was the best way of letting young people know about the support/training for NEET young people, this compares to 24% of young White people saying the same.

## Analysis of results from young unpaid carers.

**In this research young people were asked to identify if they were an “*unpaid carer*” and overall 46 (15%) of young people identified being an unpaid carer.**

- More than a third (36%) of unpaid carers said they had no formal qualifications; this compares to an overall 16% of young people saying they had no formal qualifications.
- More than half (52%) of young unpaid carers felt that “*boosting my self confidence*” would help them get into work or education; this compares to overall 39% of young people saying the same.

- Nearly two thirds (64%) of young unpaid carers said that they *“often feel that I am not in control of how my life will turn out”*; this compares to an overall 53% of young people feeling the same.
- Nearly half (49%) of young unpaid carers said they *“feel I have little chance of ever getting a job”*; this compares to an overall figure of 35% of young people saying the same.
- 41% of young unpaid carers thought they would be working a year from now, this compares to an overall 57% of young people thinking the same.
- More than one in four (26%) of young unpaid carers said a main barrier or obstacle preventing them from getting work, education or training was that their *“family life is too demanding – caring for children or relatives”* ; this compares to an overall 7% of young people saying the same.

## Feedback from NEET Focus Workshops

The NEET questionnaire used in this research was an important tool, in gathering evidence for the Young Lives NEET research project. However, as well as this questionnaire, various workshops took place across the region that focused on different aspects and consequences of being NEET. All these workshops were hosted by and delivered by third sector organisations that support and work with young people who are NEET. Below is feedback from some of these workshops, this feedback has not been analysed, it is feedback from the workshop facilitators. It was felt important to include this feedback in this report as these workshops gave young people an opportunity to expand more fully their experiences of being NEET.

## Experiences of young people who are NEET from the Gypsy and Traveller Communities

The following information was feedback from a workshop in which twenty five young people from the Gypsy and Traveller community participated.

### Barriers:

- All young people felt that they had all been treated unfairly at some point due to their culture/ ethnicity when seeking advice and support to become in Employment, Education or Training (EET).
- Nearly all young people said they were uncomfortable going alone to seek advice due to having previously discriminated against. Most saying they had not been given fair opportunities to access programmes or gain support because they were Gypsy/Travellers.
- Some of the young people said they had gained access/support, but felt that once their culture/ ethnicity was discovered they were treated differently and unfairly, making them feel isolated from other young people and causing them to feel uncomfortable with progressing on courses, affecting their confidence and self esteem.
- Some of the young people who were living on the roadside, which is classed as homeless, struggled to gain EET because they didn't have a permanent address they could use apart from Leeds Gate's address. This was frowned upon or appeared suspicious to agencies/organisations as they felt these young people could not give a home address.

- All except one young person wanted to be EET. The young person who didn't, felt they were too afraid to do it and felt they would fail, because they had very low esteem and wouldn't be able to cope, after being constantly knocked back.
- They decided easier access to volunteer opportunities and work experience would help them feel more confident when entering employment, education or training as would more courses that support young people to enter EET, as well as help improve confidence, self-esteem and functional skills that are all relevant to progression.

## Experiences of young people who are NEET and have learning disabilities

The following information was feedback from a workshop in which 12 young people who were NEET and had learning disabilities participated in.

- Key findings were that young people didn't feel valued and believed they were discriminated against because of their learning disabilities. All young people present at the workshop had a history of volunteer work or work experience placements; some had been engaging in volunteer work for almost six years and therefore had a lot of experience behind them. Despite this only one young person in the group had experience of paid work which lasted for a period of two months before being made redundant.
  - Some young people stated that they felt that employers were too scared to give them a job because employers saw them as weak and someone who couldn't do the job properly or safely. Some young people identified that they need more support than others and this impacts on their getting paid work as employers don't understand.
  - Young people felt that people did not understand them, their need or their abilities. One young person commented on how organisations, employers and education providers do not listen to the wants and needs of people with learning disabilities. One young person had expressed how they were forced to undertake literacy and numeracy at college, despite their original application being for health and social care.
  - Young people expressed that they feel angry that they are treated differently. What was interesting was that many expressed they felt 'jealous' of other young people who had a paid job because they felt they could do the job just as well, if not better if they were given a chance.
  - Other emotions felt were 'isolation, frustration, sadness, boredom; embarrassment, worthlessness, tiredness'. Some expressed that they thought others saw them as 'lazy' and this made them feel 'stressed' on occasion.
  - Young people largely felt that more provision was needed for young people, specifically specialist targeted services for young people with learning disabilities. Young people expressed that they wanted more training for professionals and employers who could work with people with learning disabilities.
- Some young people expressed that they needed to improve their own confidence and that this could be done through the improvement of skills and qualifications and taking up leisure activities.

## Experiences of young people who are NEET and dealing with mental health issues

The following information was feedback from a workshop that 12 young people who were NEET and were dealing with mental health issues participated in.

- Mental health lack of self-visual/ confidence/ self-esteem, can have not just a psychological effect but also emotional/physical, intellectual and social damage leading to issues such as insomnia and anxiety attacks. Leading to being alone.
- Being NEET can be difficult to write on a CV and also unsure whether to include disabilities.
- When NEET job centres can offer inappropriate courses to young people, and if the course is not attended benefits cut. Leaving a young person not feeling great.
- Mental and physical illness could make someone isolate themselves from others
- Sick notes, in and out of doctors, you need to explain to a government doctor this invades young person privacy.
- People are more judgemental on young people who have an unseen disability
- If you have gaps in your CV, employers will question this and you then have to confirm your illness, then you will be judged and not get the job.
- Having somewhere to go can help how you are feeling
- Confidentiality needed for people with issues and problems
- Young people need tailored support to help them back into work
- Support with reading, learning to read and reading forms, may be needed. A support worker could help.

### Third Sector organisations that took part in this research

This research would like to acknowledge and thank the following third sector organisations for their help and support in undertaking this research:

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- Brathay Trust.
- Brick House Youth Club.
- Carers Resource, Shipley.
- First Floor.
- FLAGSHIP.
- Igen.
- Learning Partnerships.
- Leeds Gate.
- Mencap, Inspire Me.
- Next Generation
- Princes Trust
- Renew.
- Ryecroft Youth Club.
- Saint Georges.
- Sandale / Fagley Community Centre, Bradford.
- St Giles Trust.

- The Cardigan Centre.
- The Market Place.
- Womens Health Matters.
- Youth Work Company.

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