

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

2nd September 2014

16-19 year old NEETs (Not in Education Employment or Training) Performance Update 5

Recommendation

That the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers the latest Department for Education (DfE) published NEETs performance data for Warwickshire and agrees the need for continued support for tracking all young people aged 16-19.

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 In 2013/14, Warwickshire saw an apparent increase in the number of young people aged 16-19 not in education, employment or training. There was also a significant fall in the proportion of young people whose post 16 situation is not known, due to more effective tracking. This reduction contributed to the rise in the NEET figures, as did a change in the DfE reporting methodology.

2.0 Purpose of the report

- 2.1 The Committee has received regular progress reports on young people not in education, employment and training (NEET) since 2012. This is the fifth report presented to the Committee.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 The NEET performance report 4 tabled in January 2014 to the Committee set out the policy context in which the Authority is working with young people who are NEET in Warwickshire. It outlined the Raising the Participation Strategy, had a focus on the employment aspects of NEETs and work with the Local Enterprise Partnership and considered the impact of the Area Behaviour Partnerships on reducing the number of NEETs.
- 3.2 The number of NEET young people aged 16-19 remains a key performance measure for the County Council within the new One Organisational Plan 2014-2018.

- 3.3 The Local Authority's statutory duties are to:
- encourage, enable and assist the participation of young people in education or training, including the most vulnerable and those at risk of disengaging;
 - promote the effective participation in education and training of young people covered by the duty to participate (RPA); and
 - have in place arrangements to identify those who are not participating.

3.4 On a monthly basis, local authorities are required to track and report to the Department for Education (DfE) the status of all young people in post-16 destinations until the end of the academic year in which they reach 19 years of age (or up to 25 years of age for those young people with learning difficulties). Local authorities also need to have arrangements in place to ensure that 16 (year 11) and 17 (year 12) year olds have received an offer of a suitable place in post-16 education or training by each September (known as the September Guarantee).

4.0 Overview of NEETs and situation 'Not known' in Warwickshire

4.1 The term NEET refers to the group of 16 to 19 year olds who have left school and are not engaged in any form of further education, employment or training, this includes those who are actively seeking help via other agencies¹.

4.2 The term 'situation not known' refers to young people aged 16-19 who are believed to be resident in the area but whose current activity is not known, this can be due to the following:

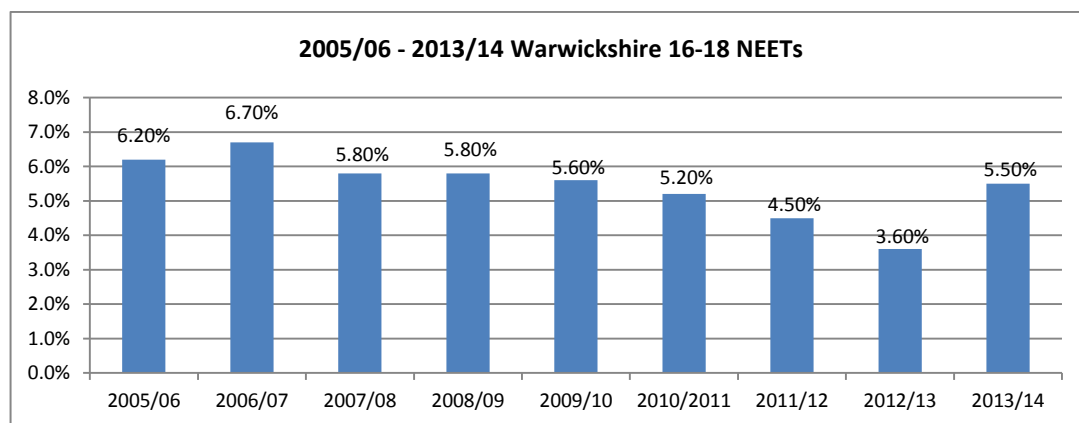
- current situation is not known
- the young person cannot be contacted (e.g. may have moved out of area or abroad)
- the young person refuses to disclose

4.3 Research shows that disengagement at this age in a young person's life is disastrous in personal terms for them. A young person who experiences a period of NEET will, on average, lose up to £50,000 in earnings over their working life when compared to a peer who has never been NEET. They will lose up to £225,000 over the same period when compare to a peer who has never been NEET and who has graduated from university. The long-term scarring of a period of NEET to a young person's future life is dramatic². This has long term effect on society as a whole in lost taxes, additional public services costs and associated impacts such as youth crime and poor health.

¹ The NEET DfE published figure is an average of the number of NEETs at the end of November, December and January. Three month averages are less prone to statistical blips and provide a more robust assessment of year-on-year performance. From 2011/12 the figures include young people resident in Warwickshire up until the end of the academic year in which they become 19.

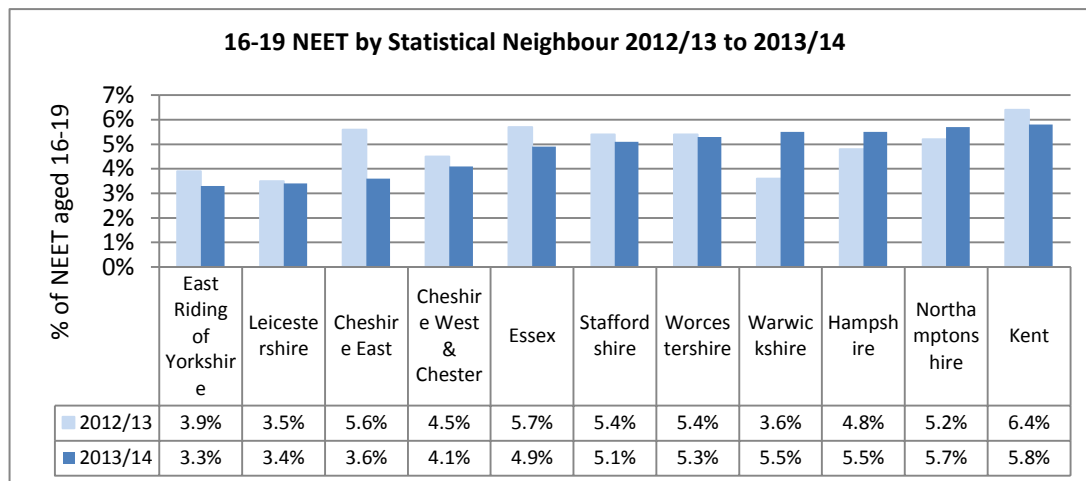
² Make NEETs history in 2014, January 2014, Impetus Private Equity Foundation

4.4 As shown in the following graph Warwickshire has seen the first increase in seven years in the numbers of young people aged 16-19 who are NEET. Latest data published by the DfE in May 2014 shows the proportion of young people in Warwickshire who are recorded as NEET has increased to 5.5% (1,010 estimated young people) from 3.6% (660 estimated young people) in 2012/13.



Source: DfE

4.5 The following graph shows Warwickshire placed joint 8th within its group of 11 statistical neighbours (those local authorities deemed to have similar characteristics and used for benchmarking progress) compared to being placed 2nd in the table in 2012/13.

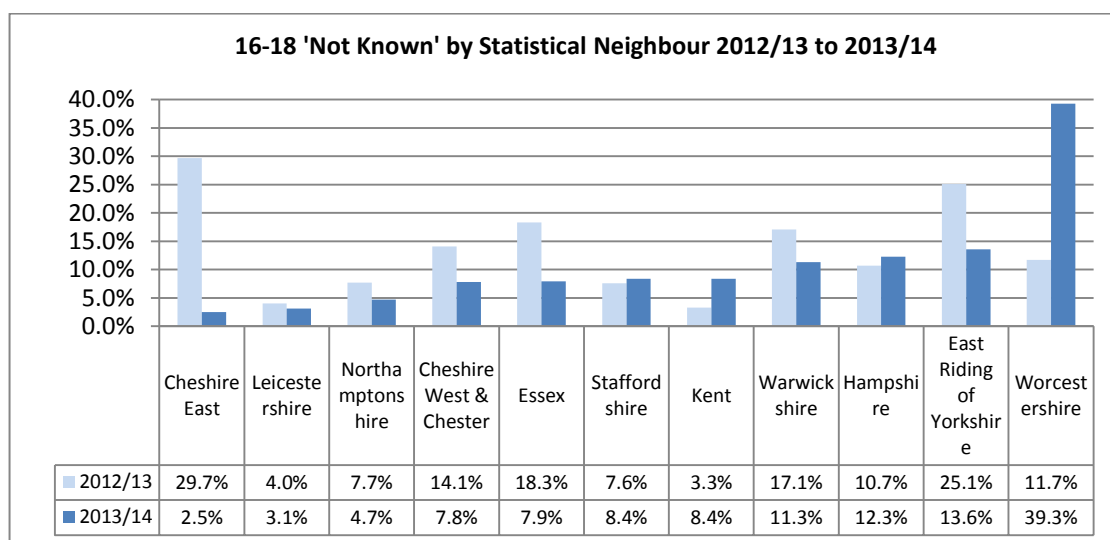


Source: DfE

4.6 There has been a change in the methodology used to calculate NEET figures, from April 2013 young people who are recorded as NEET but whose records have lapsed will no longer expire from being NEET but remain NEET until they go into a positive destination. Despite this change eight statistical neighbour authorities still saw improvement in their NEETs figures from 2012/13. We will be contacting these authorities to compare practise and identify any further areas for improvement. Two other authorities, Kent and Hampshire also saw increases in their number of NEET young people.

5.0 Tracking of young people

5.1 The increase in numbers of NEET has partly resulted from more effective tracking of young people which has reduced the number of young people with a current activity status of 'Not Known' from 17.1% (3,135 estimated young people) last year to 11.3% (2,075 estimated young people) this year. This proportion of 'Not Known' places Warwickshire 8th within its statistical neighbours.



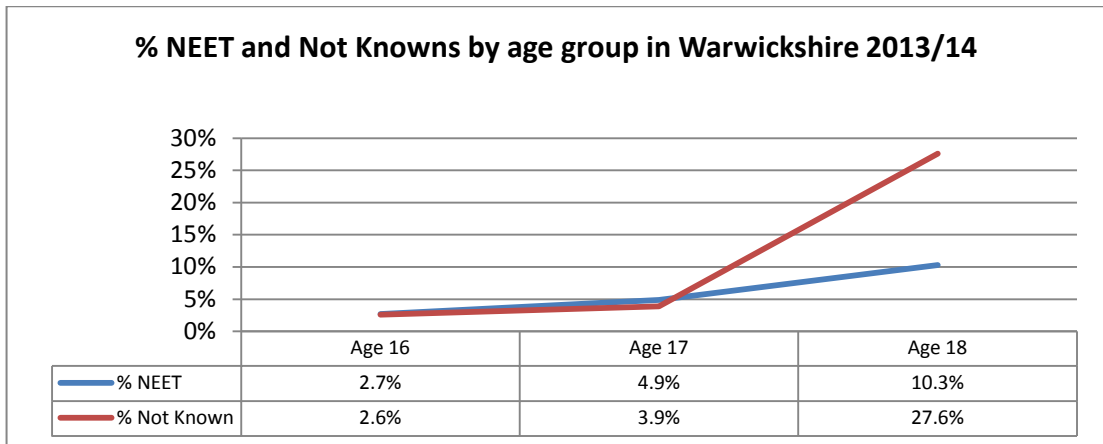
Source: DfE

5.2 Regular tracking is a vital element of this work so that we know young people's destinations each month. The cohort is identified (set) through data from the school census and regularly updated through on-going reporting from schools, colleges and providers. The Local Authority (LA) also works with other organisations such as the voluntary sector and Job Centre Plus to share information about young people who they know about and the authority may not. Information about the characteristics of the young people are recorded, such as RONI ratings, GCSE achievement, looked after children etc. This allows the LA to track the destinations of vulnerable young people and allows for sign posting more targeted to support with re-engagement work when appropriate.

6.0 NEET by age

6.1 Percentages of NEETs at age 18 in Warwickshire are significantly higher at 10.3% than at age 17 (4.9%) and age 16 (2.7%). Disappointingly compared to statistical neighbours Warwickshire has seen the largest increases in the NEET numbers across all three age ranges.

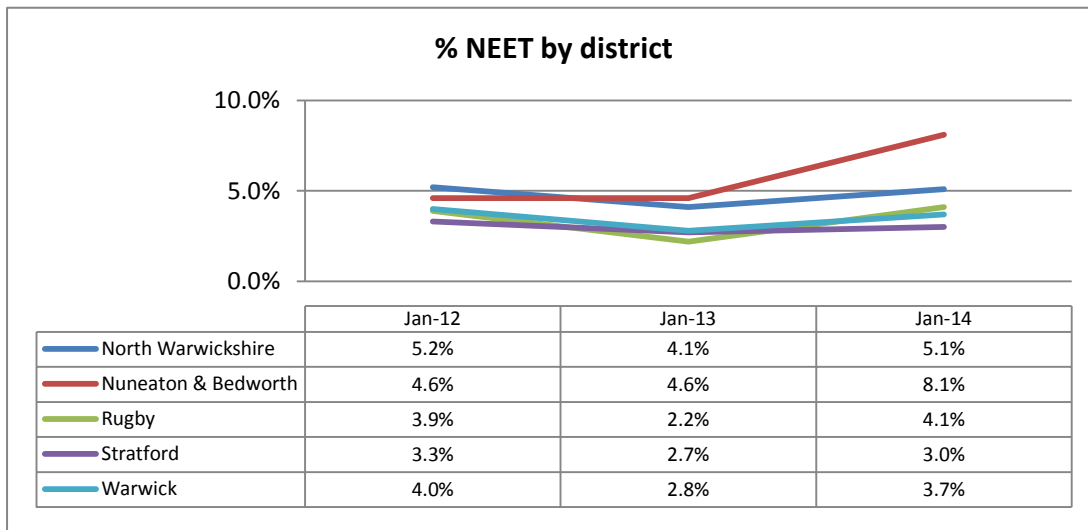
6.2 The percentages of young people with a situation not known also increases by age. At 16 years 2.6%, at 17 year 3.9% and at 18 years this rises to 27.6%.



Source: DfE

6.3 The LA is working with colleagues at Job Centre Plus, through a memorandum of understanding, in order to share data identifying the 18 and 19 year olds that they are currently working with, and therefore would remove them from our NEETs/Not Known lists; this is in line with recent guidance produced by the DWP and DfE.

7.0 NEET by District



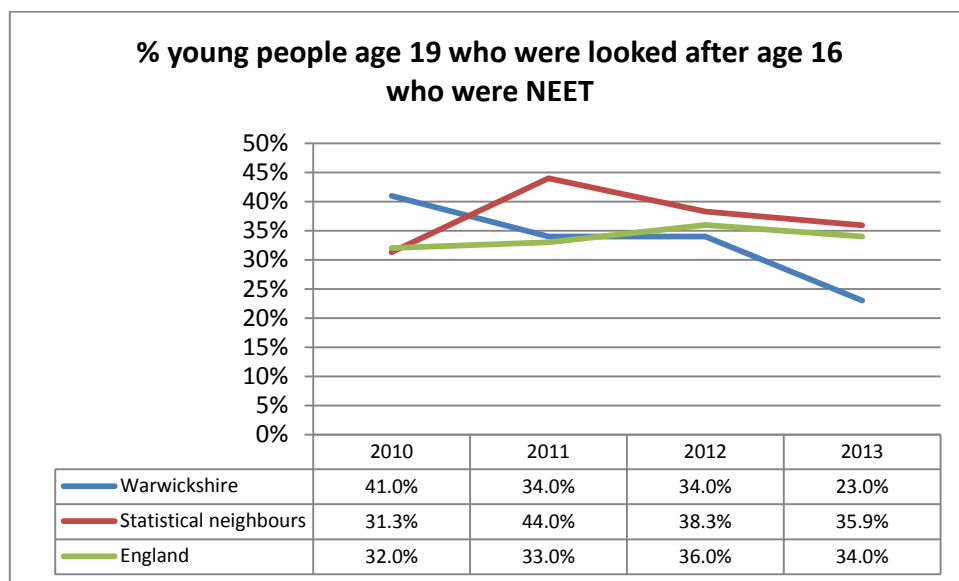
Source: CSWP

7.1 Increases in percentages of NEET young people were seen across all districts in January 2014. The largest increase was seen in Nuneaton and Bedworth with a 3.5 percentage point increase, from 4.6% (224 young people) in January 2013 to 8.1% (381 young people) in January 2014. This was partly due to more effective tracking, as the majority of the young people previously identified as situation not known have now been identified as NEET. The NEETs team is now intensively working with these young people to support them to move onto positive opportunities.

7.2 Rugby district increased from 2.2% (76 young people) to 4.1% (143 young people). Smaller increases of 1.0% or less were seen in North Warwickshire, Warwick and Stratford returning to similar levels to those seen in January 2012.

8.0 Looked After Children who are NEET

8.1 Encouragingly 2013 saw a reduction of eleven percentage points to 23.0% (15 young people) in the proportion of Warwickshire young people aged 19 who were looked after at age 16 and who since have become NEET. This places Warwickshire 2nd amongst its statistical neighbours (whose average is 36%) and well ahead of the England figure of 34%.



Source DfE Local Authority interactive Tool (LAIT)

9.0 Snapshot of characteristics of NEET young people

9.1 National research shows that the majority of young people who are NEET do not face multiple or complex barriers to engagement (such as being a teenage parent or having social care involvement) and could be prevented from falling into this group if they were targeted with the right intervention early on.

9.2 Warwickshire LA has undertaken an analysis of the characteristics of young people in Warwickshire who are NEET. The following summarises the findings from a snapshot of NEET young people as at 2nd May 2014:

- Gender and ethnicity do not appear to contribute to a young person being NEET;
- Having a special education need, disability, being a looked after child (at any point), being resident in a deprived area of the county and

underachievement beginning at key stage 2 assessments were all found to be contributory factors to a young person being NEET.

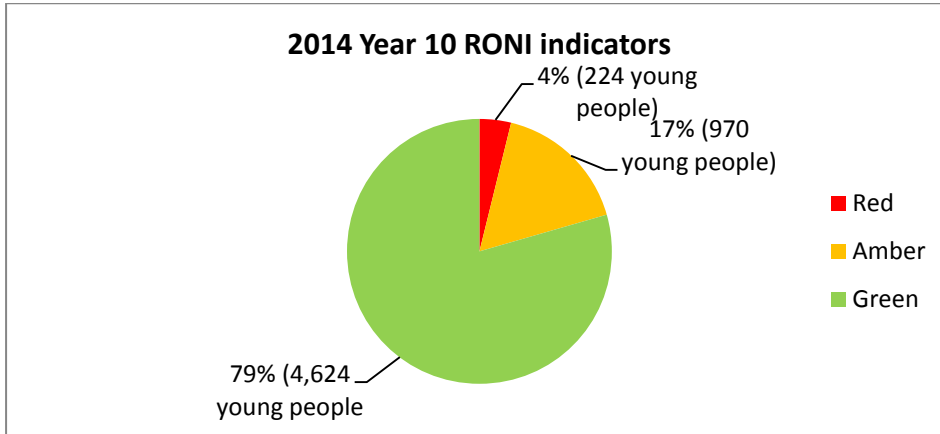
- 9.3 With the exception of residency all of the above factors identified as contributing to a young person being NEET are included in the Risk of NEET indicators. See section 11.

10. 'PRE NEET' activity

- 10.1 Every year CSWP on behalf of the Local Authority undertakes the September Guarantee – a national measure which aims for all 16 and 17 year old young people to receive a suitable offer of education or training for the coming year by the end of September. Since 2008 the September Guarantee has been a key policy measure of the DfE. Reported in the January 2014 NEETs O&S report Warwickshire showed improvements in September 2013 on previous years with 98.8% (6,456) of 16 year old leavers received an offer of education or training and for 17 year olds the figure was 90.1% (5,423). As of the 3rd July this year, year 11 stands at 90% and year 12 at 75% and are both ahead of the same period last year.
- 10.2 Following on from the September Guarantee the Activity Survey reports on how many 16 year old statutory education leavers have commenced a place in training, education or employment by the end of October. In October 2013 the numbers recorded in a positive destination increased from 96.6% to 97.2% (6,351).
- 10.3 The number of young people remaining in full time education increased from 90.7% to 92.6% in 2013 but there were slight falls in the numbers of young people entering employment or vocational training.

11.0 Risk of NEET indicator (RONI)

- 11.1 Part of the LAs strategy to reduced NEETs has been to develop an early identification system for young people at risk of disengaging, known as the Risk of NEET Indicator (RONI). It provides an analysis of data held by the LA on young people on roll in Warwickshire schools and identifies characteristics that evidence has shown puts the young person at risk of becoming NEET at age16.
- 11.2 In June 2014 the LA provided each secondary and special school with a RONI report for their current year 10 and year 7 cohorts in order that preventative activity can be targeted at those young people specifically at risk.



Source: WCC Warwickshire RONI Update July 2014

Of the current year 10 cohort there are 224 young people identified at high risk (red) of becoming NEET post 16. A further 970 have been identified at medium risk (amber) of becoming NEET post 16.

- 11.3 The following table shows a district breakdown of those young people identified as most at risk of becoming NEET. The highest proportions are in Rugby district at 23.2% of the current year 10 cohort.

	Year 10 REDs		Year 7 REDs	
	Number	%	Number	%
North Warwickshire	13	5.8%	12	13.6%
Nuneaton & Bedworth	46	20.5%	25	28.4%
Rugby	52	23.2%	8	9.1%
Stratford	46	20.5%	11	12.5%
Warwick	42	18.8%	18	20.5%
Special schools	25	11.2%	14	15.9%
Total	224	100%	88	100%

12. Update on initiatives to engage those young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET

- 12.1 There are a number of externally funded initiatives in the sub-region working towards reducing the number of NEET young people. These were detailed in January's paper and include:

- The DfE Youth Contract: the Youth Contract project runs from September 2012 to March 2016. The programme is for 16 and 17 year olds who have been identified as the hardest to reach/engage and to support them into education, training or employment. Prospects hold the Youth Contract for the West Midlands region; they sub-contract to CSWP for delivery in Coventry and Warwickshire.

- The DfE commissioned a national evaluation of the Youth Contract between October 2012 and March 2014, to identify the impact on the outcomes of the eligible NEET population. It reported (June 2014) that by the end of September 2013, official figures showed that 11,920 young people had started the programme and 4,114 (34.5%) were recorded as initially re-engaged in a positive outcome. It would be expected that smaller numbers would show in the sustained re-engagement data because of the time-lag involved in achieving these outcome, by the end of September 2013, 489 (12%) participants were recorded as having sustained engagement³.
- Warwickshire's Youth Contract target for 2013/14 was to work with 189 young people, the programme exceeded its target and supported 202, of which 76 were able to re-engage into provision; so far 6 of these young people have sustained 6 months in the provision. However, as the programme is able to recruit young people at any point in the year, and due to the time lag, some of the re-engagements and sustainment figures will fall into next year's reporting data.
- European Union Social Fund (ESF) contract (locally called Evolution 3) these contracts support young people who are aged between 14 and 19, and either NEET or at risk of becoming NEET. The young people who access these programmes are more likely be those who face multiple barriers to their participation and need a different type of offer of 14 -19 provision to engage them in learning and keep them engaged. CSWP currently hold this contract in Coventry and Warwickshire, they engage with young people and meet their needs by providing individually tailored solutions locally.
- The Priority Families Programme works systemically with a specified number of families to improve the life chances of the children and young people in those families.

13.0 Conclusion/Next steps

- 13.1 There is a need for continued support for tracking all young people aged 16-19. The LA to develop more robust and effective processes for communicating and sharing data with the voluntary and community sector, who may already be working with a number of the young people identified as current situation not known.

³ The Youth Contract for 16-17 year olds not in education, employment or training evaluation. Research report, DfE, June 2014.

13.2 Working jointly across the council will maximise opportunities, improve co-ordination and engage a range of partners in order to continue to raise the profile of this agenda.

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