

Post-16 Strategic Board Careers Strand

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Careers Network

Careers activity in schools

For a decade Secondary schools and colleges have held a duty to provide Careers Education to all their young people KS3 to KS5

Gatsby Benchmarks

- 1 A stable Careers programme (includes having a Careers Leader)
- 2 Learning from Career and Labour Market Information
- 3 Addressing the needs of each young person inc challenging stereotypes, Destinations data
- 4 Linking Curriculum learning to Careers
- 5 Encounters with employers and employees
- 6 Experiences of workplaces
- 7 Encounters with Further and Higher Education
- 8 Personal Careers Guidance

The Benchmarks were given greater clarity and higher expectations last year – most notably for #5 and #6

Careers Network

What we set out to achieve

Avoid duplication – there is an existing network for schools, TVCA / CEC’s Careers Hub. We were asked to do some time-specific pieces of work with our schools and colleges.

Specific focus and support – SBC is facilitating and supporting the schools and colleges; it is schools and colleges who deliver Careers Education so how can we best help them learn from each other and achieve better outcomes for our young people?

Identify and fill gaps, share good practice on the areas of greatest priority for our schools and colleges.

Bring innovative and inspiring opportunities to the group, for them to decide if and how it fits into their school or college.

Careers Network

Key priorities for schools and colleges

1 Build a directory of businesses who engage well with school aged young people and can deliver various engagement activities

Progress = TVCA is relaunching their Business Directory, Network updated March 2026 & discussed how our schools and colleges could influence how this works

2 Key Stage 3 “Work Experience week” activities to inspire and inform young people in Years 7-9

Progress = “roadshow” activity utilising development of the Tees Valley Care and Health Innovation Zone and Regeneration work at Tees Central, and building on Skills For Success

3 Key Stage 4 Work Experience week support including identification of duties, contacts with businesses, potential coordination of weeks across schools

Progress = had further meetings, shared “how to” guide with schools, arranged TVCA Work Experience Coordinator meeting with the Network March 2026

4 Parent & Carer guide to Careers with tips on how to prepare young people for life after school

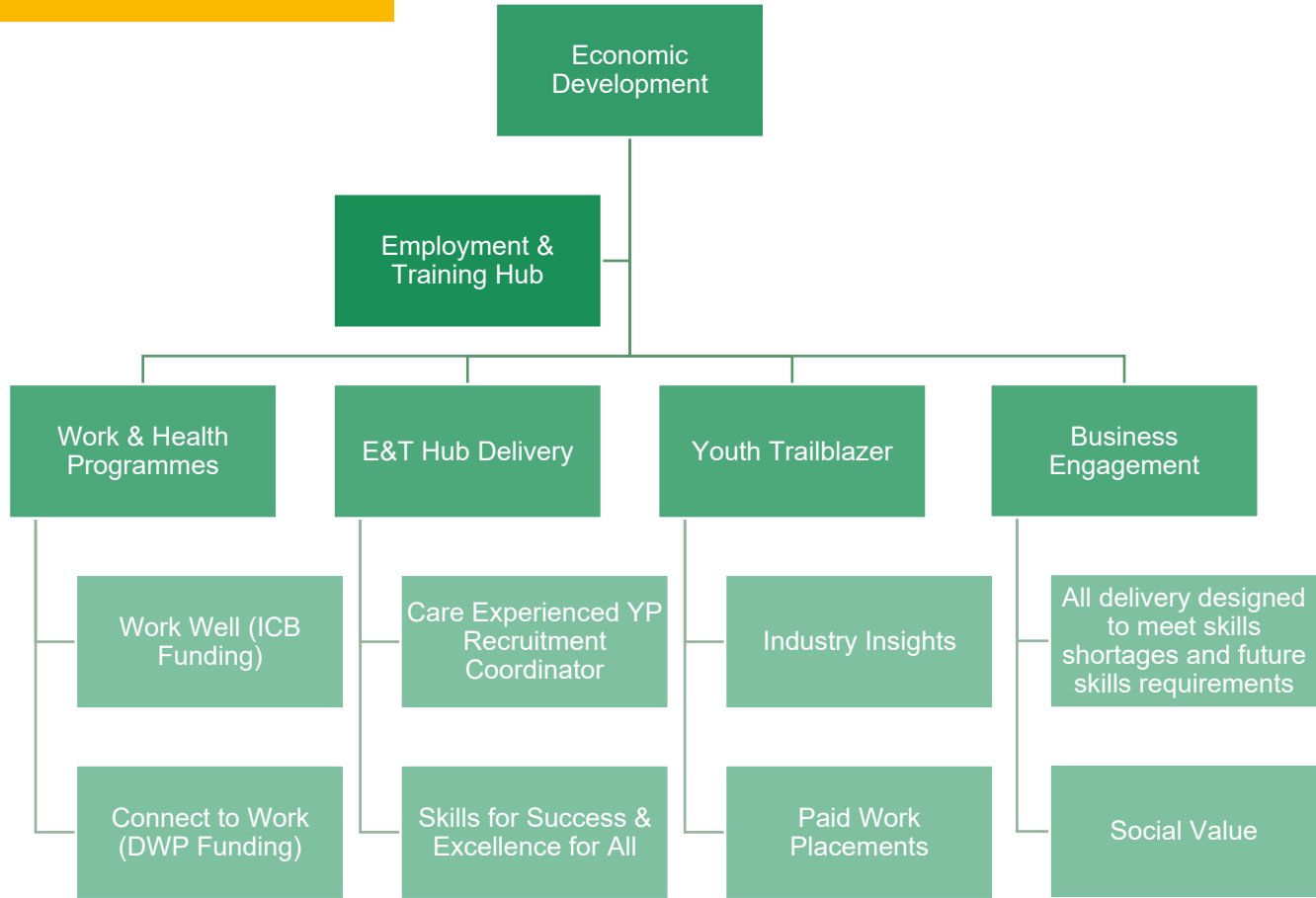
Progress = content agreed with Network, working with Comms group to design and produce guide

5 Careers Into The Curriculum support in developing “off-the-shelf” resources, how do skills and qualities advanced by each subject translate into the world of work?

Progress = lowest priority for the Network, not yet started; TVCA already provide support with this, including resources through www.teesvalleycareers.com

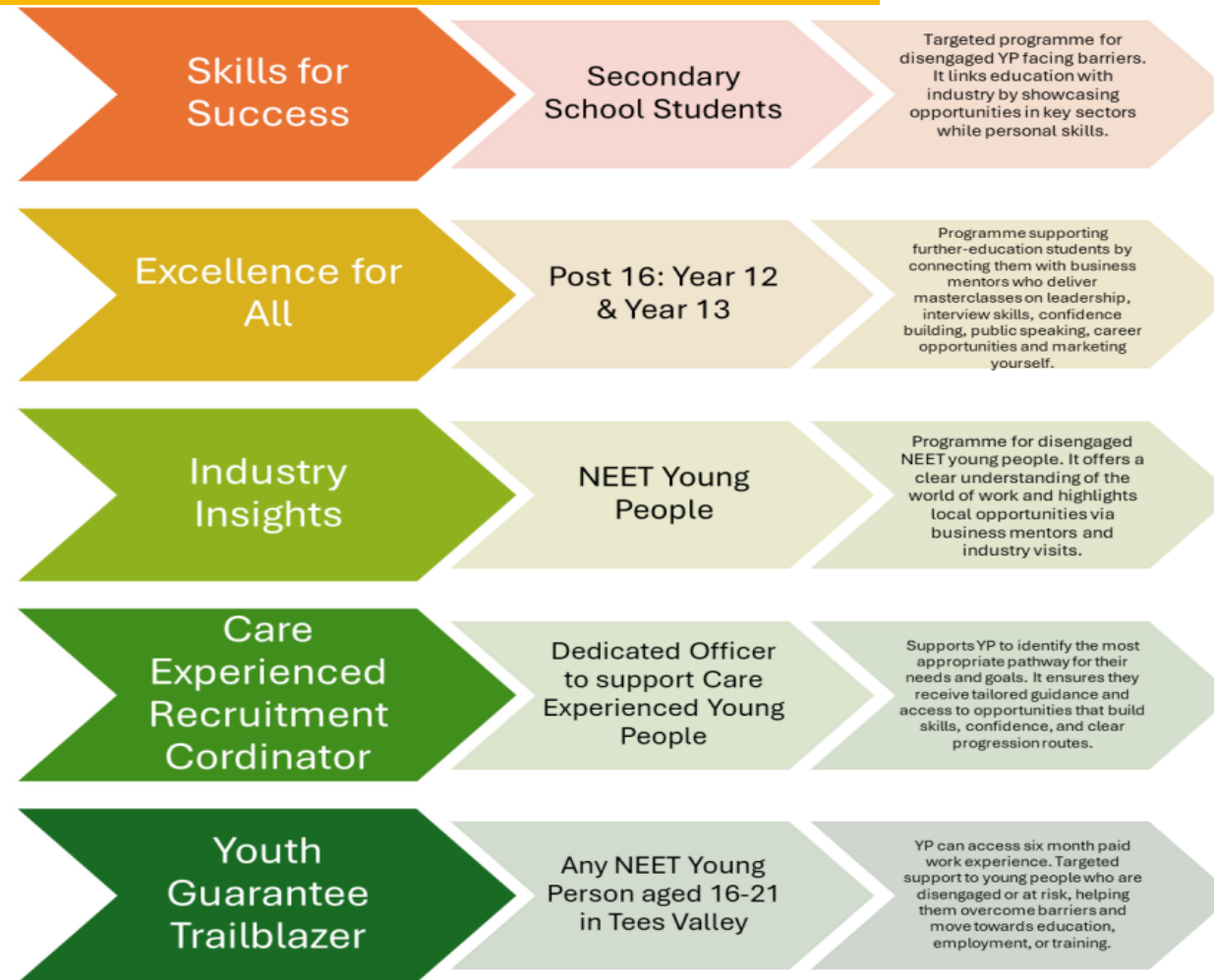
Employment & Training Hub

Project & Programme Overview



Business links

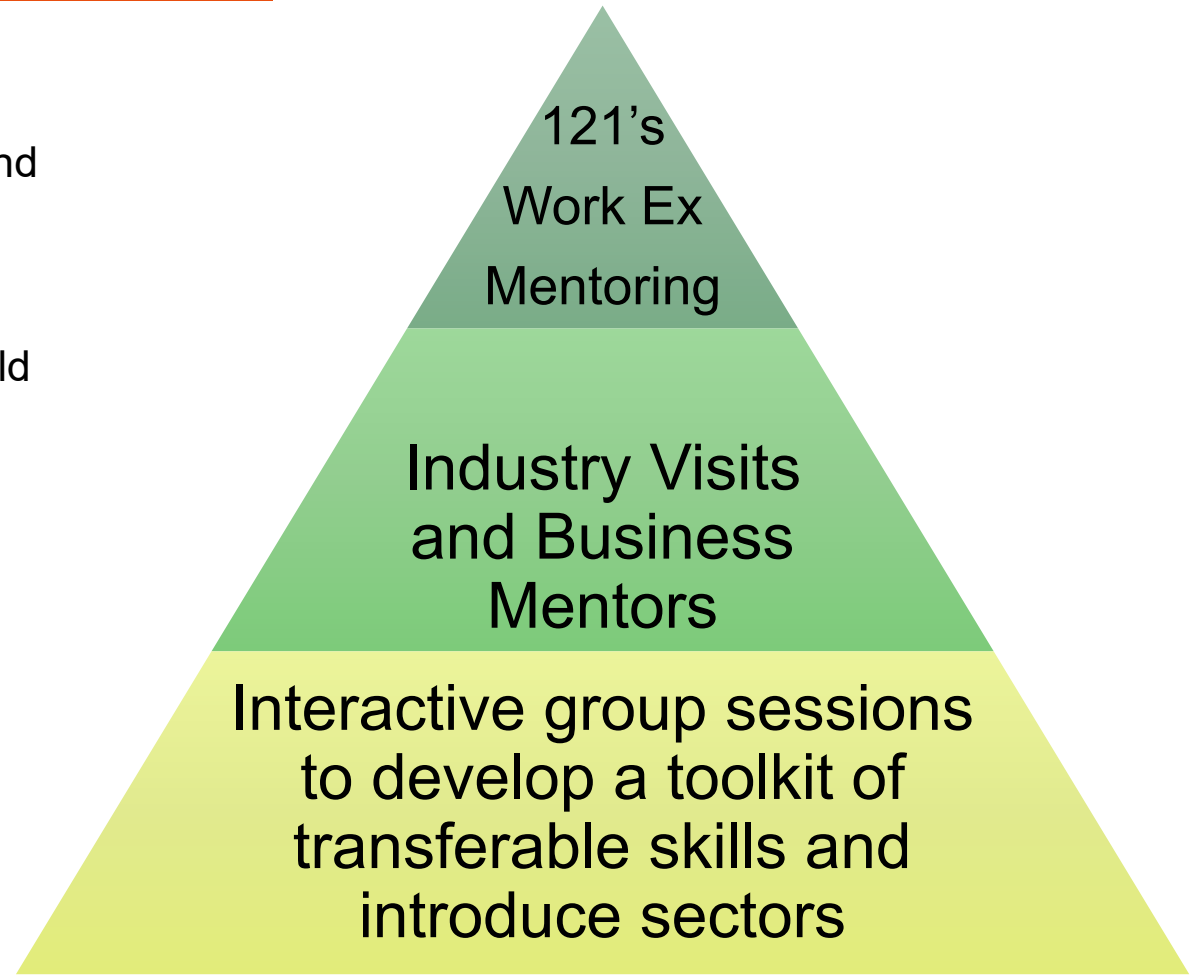
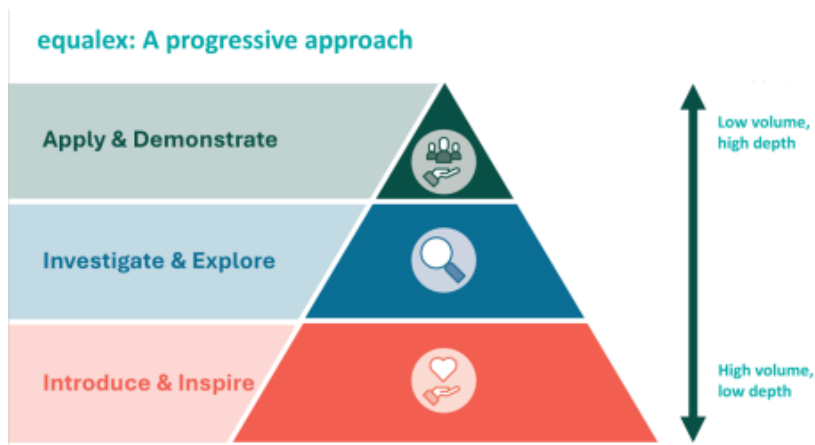
Support for young people through the E&T Hub



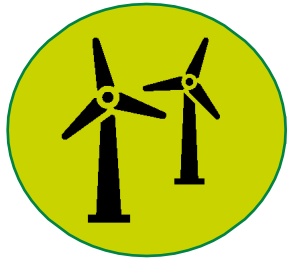
Model of Delivery

The hub approach

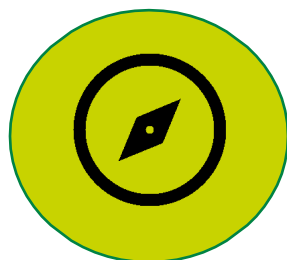
The Equalex framework is a comprehensive, structured, and inclusive model for delivering modern, meaningful careers education. It ensures young people progressively gain the skills, knowledge, insight, and confidence needed to make informed decisions and transition successfully into the world of work.



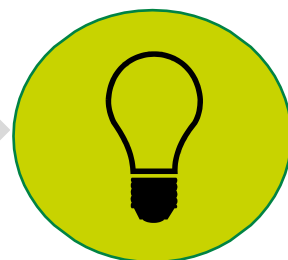
Skills for Success Programme - Secondary School



Masterclass sessions
from UKSTEM &
Businesses



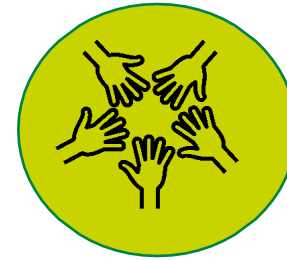
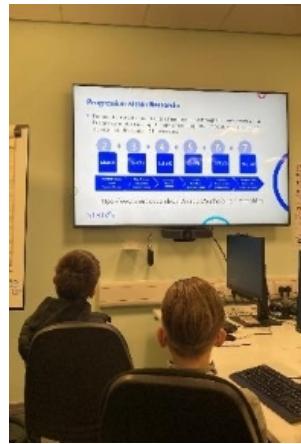
Guidance & Support
from Business
Mentors



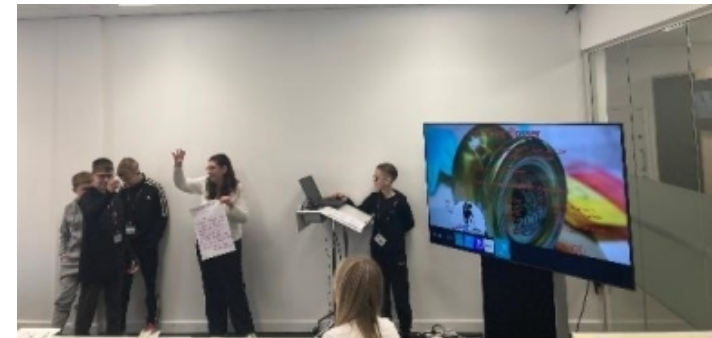
Industry Visits



Sharing Business
Intelligence



Team Building &
Individual Activities



Celebration Event

Student Impact

Attendance

Overall attendance figures increased by 3.6% (with the current average overall figure 93%)

Attitude to Learning

Schools reported that students had improved school attitude and engagement resulting in improved learning and progress.

Positive behaviour points increased by 60%

Negative points decreased by 82%

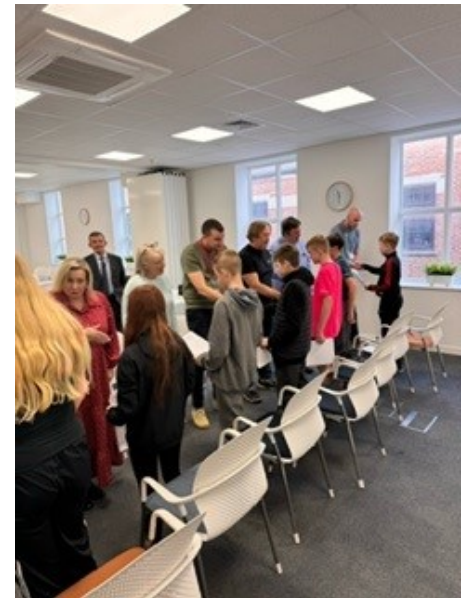
Student Progress

93% of students are now on target in English

71% of students are now on target in maths.

Career Aspirations

Students completed a survey at the end of the programme and 100% of the students have a clear aspiration for their chosen career based on the input and visits throughout the project.



Northfield School Quote:

“The impact of this programme on the pupils and their families has been profound. We have noticed improvements in their attendance, engagement and behaviour in school. Over time, this will lead to them making better progress and having higher aspirations for the future”

St Michael’s Academy Quote:

“The impact on the pupils has been great. We have noticed they have improved attendance. They are engaged in their learning and making progress.”

“The cohort have improved their resilience and developed their social skills and life-skills.”

Excellence for All Post 16

The **Excellence for All** initiative is a pilot programme designed to support students in local sixth forms and colleges to achieve their full potential, both academically and personally. The programme aims to bridge the gap between education and the world of work by connecting young people with experienced professionals from our local business community.



Business

- Talent Pipeline Development
- Strengthening Industry-Education links
- Innovation and Fresh Perspectives
- Staff Development
- Corporate Social Responsibility – brand perception



Young Person

- Career Awareness & Inspiration
- Skills Development
- Networking, Connections & Opportunities
- Academic and Career Guidance
- Increased Employability
- Breaks down barriers/ raises aspirations



Wider Economy

- Enhance student outcomes
- Improved reputation
- Economic uplift
- Positive role models
- 'Stockton' brand and awareness
- Reduced NEET
- Future-ready workforce
- Reduced skills shortages

Careers Guidance in schools

Consistent delivery across schools

Targeted support to Year 11s SBC Careers enjoy excellent working relationships in every school where Stockton residents attend – academies, maintained, free, special, PRU, we also support those in EHE, EOTAS, Home & Hospital, Alternate Provision, whether in Stockton or out of the Borough.

This cohort has grown from **325** young people in 2013, to **over 700** this year. Proportion of Y11s Targeted in each mainstream school varies from c.3% to c.40%.

This support is mainly 1:1 Careers Guidance discussions but also includes work with parents and carers, with small groups, home visits, tracking progress, supporting applications and visits to providers, identification of barriers to progression and support to overcome these.

We average 12 interventions per Targeted young person in Y11 through transition into Y12.

That's around 8500 interventions in total, around 4800 of these are 1:1 with young people.

Our activity can support all 8 Gatsby Benchmarks, but we are very focused on:

#3 – identification of needs to facilitate accurate targeting of support (RONI), and providing Destinations data to our schools; and

#8 which is so everyone has individual Careers Guidance by the end of Year 11 (Feb half term really) and Targeted young people will be offered support until settled in Y12.

Careers Guidance in schools

Varied delivery across schools

Universal IAG – schools are required to source this either by directly employing a Careers Adviser, or contracting with a Careers Guidance provider; there are four main providers in Stockton schools

CareerWave – specialist Guidance provider – Grangefield, North Shore, Thornaby

“In house” – school directly employ a qualified Adviser, usually an existing or former member of staff – All Saints, Conyers, OLSB, St Michael’s

Prospects – specialist Guidance provider – Ingleby Manor, Outwood Bishopsgarth

SBC Careers – we offer a traded service – Egglecliffe, Ian Ramsey, Northfield and from Sept 2025, St Patrick’s and Red House

Universal young people should have one Career discussion; some will have access to more, depending on the contract / staff time.

Y12 & Y13 NEET rates for the Universal cohort from schools vary considerably:

External IAG companies = 3.6% NEET

In-house = 2.5% NEET

SBC Careers = 1.8% NEET

Careers Guidance in colleges

Universal and targeted support

All colleges have Careers staff who work across the whole college. Sometimes called Careers, sometimes have other titles or sit in other departments, but all are available for their students. Some are involved in recruitment to the college as well as progression from college to another opportunity.

SBC Careers also have Progression Advisers in colleges. For colleges with low drop out / leave at end of year to NEET rates, we work as and when requested by a student, parent or carer or college staff, but proactively offer this service at the start of Y12 and towards the end of Y12, which are the times we're likeliest to see students becoming NEET. We also have a Guidance contract with SSFC to complement their in-house Careers support.

For the colleges where we see higher rates of NEET we have a weekly presence all year round – Progression Advisers based in the college, working alongside the college's student support or Careers teams. Aiming to develop or enhance systems across colleges where we are made aware of declining attendance, low attainment or behaviour issues early, so we can offer support before crisis or the student leaves – this is not yet consistently embedded across these colleges.

(Not) in Education, Employment or Training

Challenging times

From an all-time best NEET & Not Known performance of **5.0% in 2020**, we saw NEET rise slightly to **5.2%** after the pandemic (**early 2023** data) and then we experienced a very large and sudden increase in **September 2024** to **over 7%**, which rose again to peak at **7.4% last year**, though this has improved to **7.2% currently**, which is 127th of 151 Local Authorities.

For **Care Experienced** young people resident in Stockton, 35.9% are NEET – up from 29.7% last year and up significantly since early 2023's 16.9%. Yet to see impact on %rate of additional staff resource in Leaving Care team and Employment & Training Hub team though there are individual success stories.

For **SEN Support**, NEET has reduced from 21.5% last year to 17.4% but not yet down to 2023's 15.7%.

For those with an **EHCP**, NEET has reduced from 18.9% last year to 16.5%, but not yet down to 2023's 14.7%.

Smaller caseloads and increased proactive support in post-16 are having impact.

Opening the Trailblazer to 16- and 17-year-olds will also create more opportunities for young people with additional barriers to EET.

Context: These groups are affected by an issue facing the whole cohort - the data strongly suggests that we have more NEET because there aren't enough opportunities available for a significantly larger post-16 population...

Our NEET Challenge

Destinations other than Education

Destination comparison	Jan-20		Difference	Jan-26		Change
Full Cohort	4021	% of cohort	+1159	5180	% of cohort	As % of cohort
In Employment	371	9.2%	+37	408	7.9%	Down 1.3%
Apprenticeship	203	5.1%	-12	191	3.7%	Down 1.4%
Work with Study or Learning	125	3.1%	+12	137	2.6%	Down 0.5%
Work without Training	29	0.7%	-17	12	0.2%	Down 0.5%
Other Employment inc part time	14	0.4%	+50	64	1.2%	Up 0.8%
Training	152	3.8%	+63	215	4.2%	Up 0.6%
Reengagement	46	1.1%	-39	5	0.1%	Down 1.0%
NEET	201	5.0%	+167	368	7.1%	Up 2.1%
NEET Available	163	4.1%	+139	302	5.8%	Up 1.7%
NEET Not Available	38	1.0%	+28	66	1.3%	Up 0.3%
Adult Custody	0	0.0%	+1	1	0.0%	n/a
Not Known	2	0.1%	+4	6	0.1%	n/a
NEET + Not Known %	203	5.0%	+171	375	7.2%	Up 2.2%

Our NEET Challenge

Education activity

Destination comparison	Jan-20		Difference	Jan-26		Change
		% of cohort			% of cohort	
Full Cohort	4021		+1159	5180		
In Education	3249	80.8%	+928	4177	80.6%	Down 0.2%
School Sixth Form	597	14.9%	+49	646	12.5%	Down 2.4%
Sixth Form College	872	21.7%	-148	724	14.0%	Down 7.7%
Further Education	1773	44.1%	+998	2771	53.5%	Up 9.4%
Other Education inc part time	5	0.1%	+29	34	0.7%	Up 0.6%
Custodial inc Education	2	0.1%	n/a	2	0.1%	n/a