



## **NEET (Not in Employment, Education and Training)**

### **Introduction**

In June 2015, Public Health England produced their annual Child Health Profile for local authorities:

<http://www.chimat.org.uk/resource/view.aspx?RID=101746&REGION=101633>.

The report is designed to help local authorities and health services improve the health and wellbeing of children and tackle health inequalities. Annual NEET figures are published as an indicator on this report, and are classified in the 'wider determinant of ill health' category. The figures on the latest Child Health Profile represent data from 2014. They show that Bedford Borough's average for that year stood at 5.5%, which was significantly higher than the England average of 4.7%.

In March 2016, the government published the annual national non-participation figures for 2015, drawn from data collected by local authorities. The national figures showed that for those who were academic age 16-18, the number of young people who were NEET compared to the previous year fell by 10.6%, with the annual figure for 2015 standing at 4.2%. However, in Bedford Borough, there was only a reduction of 1.8%, showing that the NEET rates in Bedford are not reducing at the same rate as the national decline.

It is important to note here, that the above figures, and any other figures in this report, are representative of those young people who are academic age 16-18. This includes young people who are 16, 17, 18 and some 19 year olds. Other reports and documents may refer to cohorts of young people who are 16-18 year olds or even 16-24 year olds as NEETs, so it is important to understand who the cohort are that are being addressed before making comparisons between data sets regarding NEETs.

In the 2008 Education and Skills Act, the government set out its intention to raise the participation age (RPA). Since 2013, all those up to the age of 17 have been required to take part in some kind of 'appropriate' education and training. From 2015, this extends up to the age of 18. Participation figures both nationally and locally have risen since the introduction of RPA, ultimately impacting on the NEET figures.

However, even with the introduction of RPA, there is still a need for targeted, individualised support and programmes for those who are most in need or who are particularly disengaged from education or training. In the 2014 report produced by Public Health England on 'reducing the number of young people NEET', the report states that spending time unemployed has been proven to have a detrimental effect on physical and mental health. For example, the increased likelihood of depression as a result of unemployment is amplified for unemployed young people. A NEET status is also strongly associated with poorer health, substance misuse, youth crime and mental health problems. The effect is greater when the time spent NEET is at a younger age and lasts for longer. Crawford et al, 2011, stated that almost half of those who are NEET at age 17-18 are still NEET one year later, and those who are NEET at age 18-19 are 28% more likely than others to be unemployed five years later. This increased likelihood of long-term unemployment is of particular concern for public health.

It is vital for local authorities to hold good information on who their NEETs are and ensure that



the time spent disengaged from education or learning is as little as possible in order to reduce long term effects. Robust tracking and monitoring systems are therefore needed in order to obtain accurate information on the destinations of our young people in a timely manner. The Department for Education recognises this and are now placing more and more emphasis on the need to reduce the number of 'unknown' young people in each authority. Bedford Borough is currently in the top 40% of local authorities in the country with the lowest rate of unknowns, indicating that we are in a good position to analyse our NEET cohort carefully and understand what the needs may be and how to intervene.

In 2014, the Private Equity Foundation, Impetus, published a report entitled 'Make NEETs history in 2014'. In their report, they stated that not only does being NEET have long term impacts on young people themselves (it is estimated that any young person who spends a period of time as a NEET is likely to lose up to £50,000 in earnings over their working life compared to someone who is not NEET) but also on society, such as lost taxes and additional public costs. It is thought that the cost of young people being NEET is in excess of £77 billion each year. Such figures highlight the need for a greater focus on those young people who could become long term NEETs in the future, in order to ultimately reduce costs to society in the future. But what do we need to do in order to reduce the chances of a young person becoming NEET in the first place? The Marmot Review, 'Fair Society, Healthy Lives' talks about the need for early help and intervention in order to improve the life chances of our children and young people. The issues around young people becoming NEET are no exception to this. There are no factors in any young person's background that guarantees their educational and employment prospects for the future, and it is important to remember that indicators of risk are not the same as determinants. However, we already know a lot about which factors predict the likelihood of a young person becoming NEET and confronting these predictors is vital to finding solutions. This is where early help and intervention comes in.

### **Review of Recommendations from last year's JSNA Chapter on NEETs**

Over the past year, significant progress has been made to begin to achieve some of the recommendations from the last JSNA chapter, although there are still some areas that continue to be worked on and improved on moving forward.

It was identified last year that more training programmes and courses that start in January were required, in order to fill the gap between the New Year and September each year. This gap was addressed by Education Support Service in conjunction with Bedford College, and in response to conversations between the two, Bedford College agreed to offer a 12 week programme starting January 2016 called the Gateway to Progression course. This course was specifically set up to target those young people who had dropped out of learning in the first academic term of the year, and it aimed to offer taster sessions to students in different occupational areas on the college campus, alongside functional skills in maths and English. This meant that some learners were able to remain participating over the Spring and Summer term, when ordinarily, they would have been left with little provision to choose from over this period of time. The course continues to run in 2016/17.

The lack of ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) provision was addressed by Early Help and Intervention in conjunction with Bedford College. A pre entry ESOL course was set in response to interviews that were carried out with 37 young people in local hostels and supported accommodation. The interviews aimed to establish what factors contributed to young people becoming NEET, and one particular theme that kept cropping up was the



language barriers. Previously, there was no pre-entry ESOL provision in Bedford for young people. This meant that young people had to make do with courses which were not appropriate to their needs. The ESOL provision currently offered in Bedford was often at too high a level for those young people who had very limited English to begin with. September 2016 saw the launch of the first programme with six young people attending the course, four of which were asylum seekers, one learner was from Poland and other from Romania. Learners attended for six hours per week, with four hours being spent on English and Literacy and two hours a week on numeracy. The course runs for 24 weeks, and embedded in the programme is Citizenship, British values and employability skills.

The number of young people who suffer with mild to moderate mental health illnesses continues to rise each year, with the number that contribute to the NEET group increasing each year. The need for more meaningful interactions with such young people is beginning to be addressed by Early Help and Intervention. Solution Focused training has been delivered to many professionals over the past year who come into contact with such young people, in order to better equip them to deal with some of the underlying mental health needs that they may be experiencing.

Early Help and Intervention has also joined the local IAPT (Increased Access to Psychological Therapies) Collaborative, and as part of this collaborative an opportunity has arisen for a select number of staff members within Early Help to undertake training to achieve a Graduate or Postgraduate Certificate in Enhanced Evidence-Based Practice for Children and Young People. The programme aims to support staff to learn and implement brief therapeutic interventions for children and adolescents with mild to moderate anxiety or depression.

The Risk of NEET Indicator (RONI) tool is now fully implemented, and is being used to support the introduction of the Student Transition Passport. The passport aims to better support student transitions from upper school to their post 16 provision such as college or 6<sup>th</sup> form. The passport is completed by the young person themselves in Year 11 and passed across to their new post 16 provider in order that they have a better understanding of any support needs that the young person may have. The RONI tool is used to identify the young people in Year 11 who are most at risk of becoming NEET post statutory school leaving age, and it is these young people who complete the passports.

Apprenticeship opportunities and take up of apprenticeships are on the increase. The overall percentage of those who are academic age 16-18 and who are undertaking an apprenticeship in Bedford Borough has been increasing since January 2013 and is now the highest it has been in the past 4 years. Bedford Borough compares well with the national figures. Education Support Service within Children's Services and the Economic Development department have worked together to promote apprenticeships within all upper schools and to develop apprenticeship group work sessions that have been delivered to young people within schools. Apprenticeship Ambassador network meetings are also held regularly with good attendance from local employers. Employers are vital to supporting the increase in apprenticeship opportunities and the promotion of the benefits of taking on a young apprentice to local businesses is much more powerful when it comes from other businesses.

and reduce barriers to becoming NEET. A mentoring programme is also in place to provide 1-1 coaching and support for those young people who need it most.

The following report outlines the nature of the young people who make up the NEET group locally and compares the national figures with the local ones. It focuses on young people of



academic age 16, 17 and 18. The report also looks at some of the barriers to participation and the impact of Raising the Participation Age.

**What do we know?**

**Facts, Figures, Trends**

**The NEET picture in 2015/2016**

In England during 2015/16, the national figure of young people in years 12, 13 and 14, who were not in education, employment or training was 4.2%. This was a 10.6% reduction on the 2014/15 of 4.7%.

In the East of England area, the 2015/16 figure was 4.2%, which was a reduction of 6.7% on the 2014/15 figure of 4.5%.

Bedford Borough also saw a reduction from 2015/16 to 2014/15 of 1.8%. The average annual figure for 2015/16 was 5.4%, compared to the 2014/15 annual figure of 5.5%.

These figures demonstrate an improving landscape across England, the East of England and Bedford Borough, which reflects the improvement in the national employment figures.

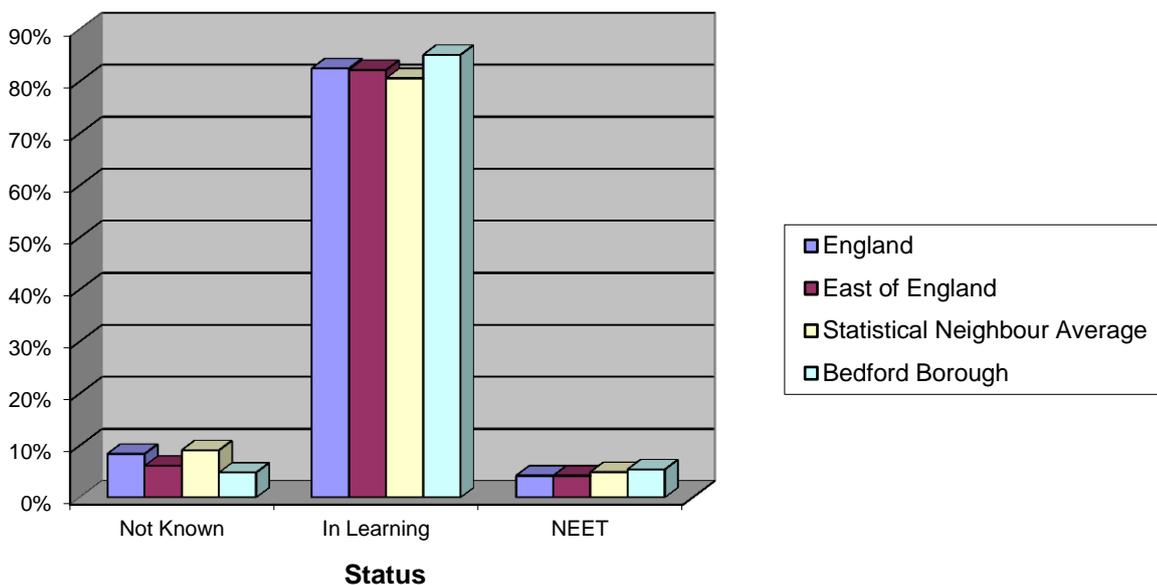
**This report reflects the year groups 12, 13 and 14 (Academic Ages 16-18)**

**National, East of England and Statistical Neighbour Comparisons**

**2016 Annual Data**

	Not Known	In Learning	NEET
<b>England</b>	8.4%	82.5%	4.2%
<b>East Of England</b>	6.1%	82.2%	4.2%
<b>Statistical Neighbour Average</b>	9.1%	80.6%	4.9%
<b>Bedford Borough</b>	<b>4.8%</b>	<b>85.1%</b>	<b>5.4%</b>

**Bar chart to show comparisons for the not known, in learning and NEET figures**





**Raising of the participation age (RPA) data**

The Department for Education publishes annual participation data in order to show the impact that RPA has had. The data can be seen below:

	Dec -12	Mar -13	Jun -13	Dec -13	Mar -14	Jun -14	Dec -14	Mar -15	Jun- 15	Dec -15	Mar -16	Jun -16	% change in last 12 months
National	87.9	88.9	88.4	89.8	90.3	89.7	90.2	90.6	89.5	91.2	91.5	91	1.7
Regional	87.5	88	87.9	90.5	89.9	90	89.5	89.5	89.3	92.1	91.7	91	1.9
<b>Bedford Borough</b>	<b>91.9</b>	<b>91.7</b>	<b>91.2</b>	<b>93.3</b>	<b>92.4</b>	<b>91.3</b>	<b>92.3</b>	<b>92.3</b>	<b>91.2</b>	<b>92.9</b>	<b>92.9</b>	<b>92.1</b>	<b>1</b>

**Bedford Borough Annual NEET Data**

Up until September 2016, all young people in Bedford Borough were tracked and monitored from the age of 16 up to the age of 20. Young people who are not participating in any form of employment, education or training are actively contacted to encourage, enable and assist them to participate under our statutory duties in the Education and Skills Act 2008. Those young people who require more intensive support are offered 1-1, face to face contact to support them with their career progression.

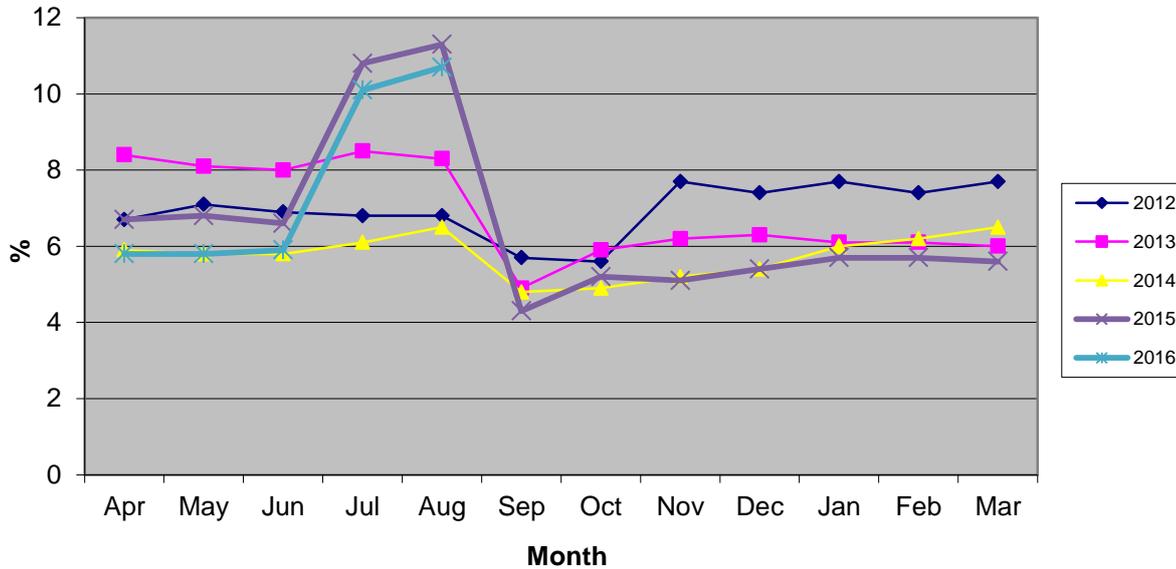
The NEET figure is monitored monthly. The table below shows the progression of the NEET figure since 2012.

**Annual Adjusted NEET % for those Academic Ages 16-18 (average of Nov, Dec and Jan)**

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Actual	Annual Target Set
<b>2011</b>	7.2	7.4	7.6	9.7	10.6	8	7.6	<b>7.6</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>6.8</b>	6.8	6.9	<b>7.2%</b>	<b>8.2%</b>
<b>2012</b>	6.7	7.1	6.9	6.8	6.8	5.7	5.6	<b>7.7</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>7.7</b>	7.4	7.7	<b>7.6%</b>	<b>7.2%</b>
<b>2013</b>	8.4	8.1	8	8.5	8.3	4.9	5.9	<b>6.2</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>6.1</b>	6.1	6	<b>6.2%</b>	<b>8.5%</b>
<b>2014</b>	5.9	5.8	5.8	6.1	6.5	4.8.	4.9	<b>5.2</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>6</b>	6.2	6.5	<b>5.5%</b>	<b>7.5%</b>
<b>2015</b>	6.7	6.8	6.6	10.8	11.3	4.3	5.2	<b>5.1</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>5.7</b>	5.7	5.6	<b>5.4%</b>	<b>5.8%</b>
<b>2016</b>	5.8	5.8	5.9	10.1	10.7	-	-							



**Bedford Borough Adjusted NEET% Years 12, 13 and 14 Year Groups (this includes 16, 17, 18 and some 19 year olds)**



In 2015, the Department for Education requested a change to the dates that young people end their courses. In previous years, young people who were studying full time courses were recorded as on their course until the end of August. However, the new requirement is that course end dates should be during July. This change has therefore affected the adjusted NEET figure in July and August 2015.

**Annual actual number of NEETs and Cohort size (average of Nov, Dec and Jan)**

	<b>Annual Actual Number of NEETs</b>	<b>Annual Actual NEET %</b>	<b>Annual Overall Cohort Size</b>
<b>2011</b>	393	7.2%	5381
<b>2012</b>	399	7.6%	5349
<b>2013</b>	342	6.2%	5597
<b>2014</b>	313	5.5%	5795
<b>2015</b>	303	5.4%	5877



Even though the overall cohort size has increased since 2012, the actual number of NEETs has decreased significantly. This shows that even with an increase in the number of young people as a whole, more and more of them are actively engaged in a positive activity each year.

The following data provides a breakdown of the characteristics of the NEET group on the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2016 with some comparisons made with the same period in previous years to show areas of progression and change.

**Academic Age**

**Actual number of NEETs broken down by year group**

	<b>Yr 12 Cohort (16/17 year olds)</b>	<b>Yr 13 Cohort (17/18 year olds)</b>	<b>Yr 14 Cohort (18/19 year olds)</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Adjusted NEET %</b>
Jan-16	57	103	166	326	5.7%
Jan-15	60	93	192	345	6.0%
Jan-14	54	117	167	338	6.1%
Jan-13	69	111	241	421	7.7%
Jan-12	66	129	176	371	6.8%

In terms of age, the greatest proportion of NEET's is historically those who are aged 18 and 19. In January 2012 and 2014, just under half of the NEET group were made up of mainly 18/19 year olds. In January 2015, the number of those in year 14 made up 55.7% of the overall NEET group and in 2016, the Year 14s made up 50.9% of the NEET group.

**Gender**

**% of NEET group who are male and female**

	<b>Male (%)</b>	<b>Female (%)</b>	<b>% gap between NEET % of males and females</b>
Jan-16	53.4	46.6	6.8
Jan-15	57.7	42.3	15.4
Jan-14	57.4	42.6	14.8
Jan-13	52	48	4



Jan-12	55.5	43.6	11.9
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Traditionally, males have always made up a higher percentage of the overall NEET group. This year, the gap between the number of males and females who made up the NEET group has reduced.

**Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LDD)**

**Number of NEET group who have an LDD**

	Year 12 Cohort	Year 13 Cohort	Year 14 Cohort	Total number with LDD in NEET group	% with LDD in NEET group
Jan-16	4	10	14	28	8.6%
Jan-15	8	7	23	38	11%
Jan-14	3	11	17	31	9.2%
Jan-13	0	3	12	15	7.1%
Jan-12	0	5	6	11	3%

The number of young people with an LDD who make up the NEET group has steadily increased over the years, although in January 2016, this number decreased.

**NEET Status – Availability to the Labour Market**

The NEET group is differentiated by those young people that are ‘available to the labour market’ and those that are ‘not available to the labour market’ due to their personal circumstances.

The following table shows that in January 2016, 82.2% of the NEET group were available to the labour market and actively seeking employment or training.

A high proportion of the ‘NEET- not available to the labour market’ group are made up of teenage parents and those young girls who are pregnant, however, the percentage of teen parents and pregnant females that make up this group has decreased over the years from 74.4% in January 2012 to 57.1% in January 2015 to 55.2% in January 2016.

There has been an increase over the years in the number of those young people who are not available to participate due to illness. In January 2016, 29.3% of the NEET-not available group were made up of young people who had an illness. This was a 50.3% increase on January



2015's figure.

**Breakdown of the actual numbers in each NEET category**

	Jan-16	Jan-15	Jan-14	Jan-13	Jan-12
<b>NEET - Available to the Labour Market</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>289</b>
Working not for reward (voluntary)	8	4	8	3	0
Other personal development	0	0	0	7	5
NEET - awaiting level 2 training	3	4	0	0	4
NEET - awaiting sub level 2 training	1	1	0	0	0
NEET - awaiting level 3+ training	0	0	0	0	3
NEET - start date agreed for EET	0	0	0	1	0
NEET - seeking employment or training	256	259	268	341	277
<b>NEET - Not Available to the Labour Market</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>82</b>
Not available - other	3	6	3	2	1
Pregnancy	7	12	6	12	8
Teenage Parent	25	32	36	30	53
Young carers	1	0	0	2	2
Illness	17	15	9	11	9
Custodial	4	10	8	9	8
Never economically active	1	2	0	3	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>421</b>	<b>371</b>

**Length of Time NEET**

A RAG rating is used below when considering the length of time a young person has been NEET. Green is used for 0-3 months, Amber for 3-6 months and Red for 6+ months. The following table shows the number of NEET young people for the past 3 years in January and the RAG rating for the length of time NEET.

**Table 21: Length of time young people have been NEET**



	Jan-16	Jan-15	Jan-14	Jan-13
Green (0-3 mths)	65	64	91	152
Amber (3-6 mths)	124	107	119	147
Red (6+ mths)	137	174	128	122
<b>Total</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>421</b>

The latest figures show that 19.9% of the group have been NEET for 0-3 months, 38% have been NEET for 3-6 months and 42% have been NEET for 6+ months.

In January 2016, the number of young people who had been NEET for 6 months or more decreased significantly from the previous year by 16.7%. This means that fewer of our young people are remaining in the unemployed category for longer periods of time.

**NEET Group – GCSE Attainment**

**Table 22: Qualification level attained by the NEET group (%)**

	Jan-16	Jan-15	Jan-14	Jan-13
<b>Entry Level</b>	14.7	20.3	22.2	11.1
<b>Level 1</b>	47.2	46.1	38.5	28
<b>Level 2*</b>	21.5	21.4	26	15.9
<b>Level 3**</b>	11	5.2	10.7	1.4
<b>Nothing Recorded</b>	5.5	7	2.7	43.4

Note: \* Level 2 is equivalent to 5 A\*-C grades at GCSE

\*\* Level 3 is equivalent to A-Levels

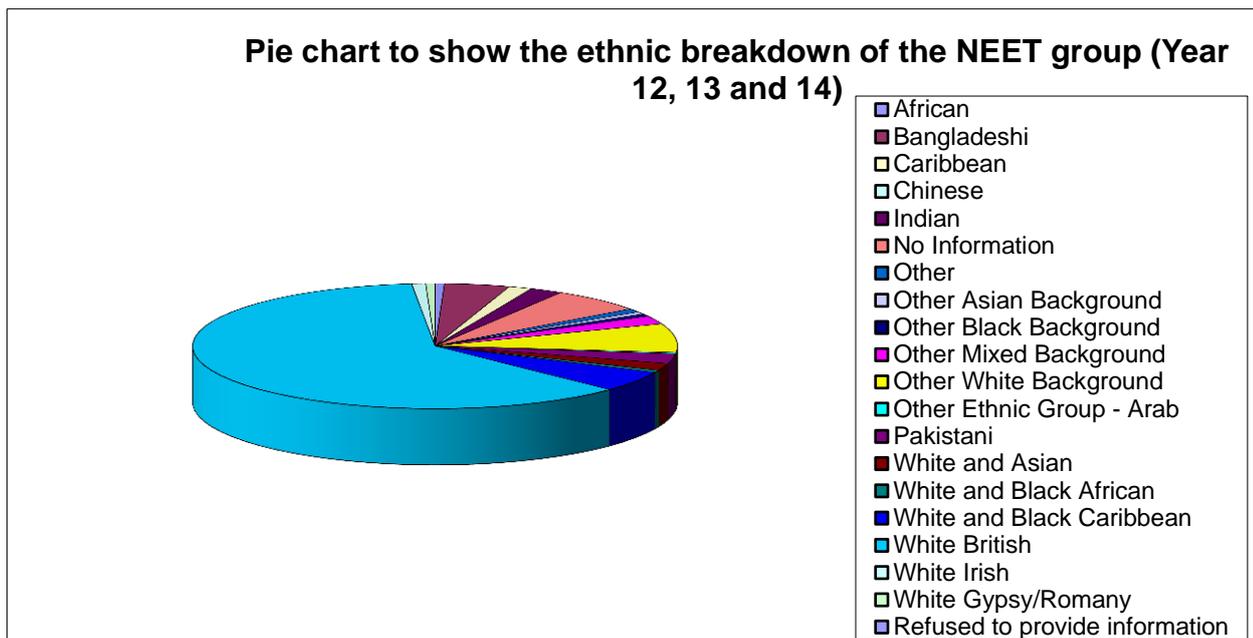
Analysis of the NEET group in January 2016 shows that 32.5% of the young people have a Level 2 or above qualification. This is an increase from January 2015, when just 26.7% of the NEET cohort had achieved a Level 2 or above. This is a positive change for the NEET group, as it means that more of the young people are in a better position to take up opportunities that may require a better basic level of education, such as apprenticeships and higher level courses at college etc.



Monthly monitoring of the qualification levels of NEETs has been developed and the Learner Record Service (LRS) is checked in addition to EPAS data. New NEETs each month are checked for their qualification levels and where relevant young people are referred to the Youth Contract for support i.e. those with 1 or no GCSE grades A\*-C.

**Ethnicity**

The pie chart below shows the ethnic origins of the NEET group in January 2016. Young people from a White British, from another White background and who were White & Black Carribean contributed the most to the NEET group.



In the past 5 years, those young people who were White British, from another White background and who are white and black Caribbean are the only three ethnicities that have always appeared in the top 5 contributors towards the NEET group.

**NEET – Location Analysis**

A location analysis of the NEET group in January 2016, shows that the wards of De Parys (10.3%), Kingsbrook (9.2%), Castle (8.8%), Cauldwell (8.1%) and Goldington (7.8%) have the highest percentage of NEETs.

The wards of Castle and Cauldwell have accommodated the highest number of NEETs for the past 5 years. Castle houses the majority of the Youth Hostels in Bedford Borough, which means that there are likely to be a high proportion of young people who are NEET living in this area.

**Wards with a decrease in the number of NEETs**

Although Cauldwell still has a high number of NEETs living there, the number of NEETs in this ward has steadily decreased with only 8.1% of the young people living in Cauldwell being NEET, compared to 14.7% in January 2013.



Harpur ward has featured in the top 5 wards with the highest number of NEETs from January 2012 to January 2015, however, this year saw a drop in the number of NEETs by 36.4%.

Eastcotts has also seen a decrease in the number of NEET young people living there over the years. In January 2013, 12.5% of the young people living in Eastcotts were NEET, but in January 2016, only 6.5% of the young people living there were NEET.

Goldington has also had a decrease since 2012 in the number of its young people who are NEET. In January 2012, 10% of the young people in Goldington were NEET. This figure has now dropped to just 7.8% in January 2016.

#### Wards with an increase in the number of NEETs

The ward of De Parys saw a significant increase in the number of young people in the area who were NEET in January 2016. This percentage jumped from 2.7% in January 2014 to 9.6% in January 2015 to 10.3% in January 2016. A number of looked after children and care leavers have recently been placed into Bedford Borough from other local authorities with Athena Housing. Athena Housing has accommodation in the De Parys area.

#### **Occupational Areas of Interest of the NEET group**

For the past 4 years, nursery nursing, motor vehicle trades and hairdressing have all been the most popular occupational area of choice by the NEET group. Sales occupations have also been a popular choice over the past 3 years, and in January 2016, bricklaying also became a popular choice.

#### **Overview of the support available for the NEET group**

Education Support Service has a statutory duty to track and monitor all 16 -19 year olds in Bedford Borough, in order to establish who the current NEET young people are, and in order to either support or signpost them to an appropriate service. In September 2016, this duty changed to only track those who are academic ages 16 and 17 (Year 12 and 13 Cohorts).

All 16 and 17 year olds who are not engaged in some form of learning (and who should be under the new RPA guidelines) are offered intensive, ongoing support from a Personal Adviser in order to reengage them. Anyone who is 18 plus and who requires support are signposted to The Jobs Hub in Bedford, where they can receive advice and guidance on the career opportunities that are available to them. Education Support Service consists of one Senior Personal Adviser and one Personal Adviser, with the Personal Adviser picking up majority of the work with 16 and 17 year old NEETs. In 2015/16 at any given time, there was an average of 157 young people who were not engaged in some form of education, employment or training. With this in mind, the amount of support that could be offered to these young people by one Personal Adviser, was not always as intensive or needs specific as may have been needed to engage these young people back into something. With the needs of the NEET group becoming more and more great each year, more specific and specialist support and intervention is required.



## **Local Views**

### ***View of the NEET landscape in Bedford Borough from a local training provider for 16-24 year olds in Bedford:***

*We have seen a real shift in the landscape over the last 4-5 years. We have traditionally offered training and provision for young people at the lower end of the ability and confidence spectrum and that are classed as the most vulnerable young people. With funding being focused more and more heavily on the qualifications much of our provision has had to be reformatted to spend less and less time working on developing provision for the individual learner and working to balance their pastoral needs with achievement and progression. We are now having to spend the vast majority of the time we have with learners in effect preparing them for exam or completing qualification led specifications. This has led to us having to reject learners that are not ready for this kind of learning that we would in the past have been able to work with and support into further education or employment.*

### ***A local view of Education Support Service - the voice of a young service user:***

*[My advisor] is so helpful, friendly, understanding, efficient and reliable. She is so good and I find the service so useful. I feel [she] is very understanding of my situation and gives as much advice, help and support as possible. She has kept my options open for me and helped me so much, especially when I was going through a hard time with hospital effecting college and getting messed on an apprenticeship. I feel the service is great and I wouldn't be anywhere without it. I have gained a brilliant apprenticeship now thanks to my advisor with all her help and advice and my eyes have widened and I am now sticking at it. I feel I have three barriers and that is money, not deciding what to do and personal issues effecting my education. I really appreciate my advisors help she is always available for a call and willing to come and meet me asap. I really appreciate her help and want to continue working with her to get a great education even though I am vulnerable and going through a tough time.*

## **National & Local Strategies (Current best practices)**

On the 21<sup>st</sup> May 2015, the House of Commons Library produced a Briefing Paper on NEETS:

<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06705/SN06705.pdf>

It provides details of the national policies introduced by government to reduce the number of NEETs, which includes Raising of the Participation Age (RPA), Youth Contract, Apprenticeships, Traineeships, Work Programmes and Mandatory Work Activity. All of these policies help to play a part in Bedford Boroughs attempts to reduce its NEET figure, with support from other agencies and organisations being an essential part of the delivery of these policies.

The Department for Education publish an annual Statistical First Release, which contains data on national and local NEET rates of 16-18 year olds, the link for which is below:



[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/436526/Main\\_text\\_16-18\\_participation\\_SFR19\\_2015.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/436526/Main_text_16-18_participation_SFR19_2015.pdf)

The report also provides summaries of where the falls and peaks have been in participation rates across the UK. Since the government raised the participation age back in September 2013, the report states that there has been a rise in the number of those participating in full-time education and each age (hence, a decrease in the number of NEETS) with the largest increase being for those who are 17. There has also been a continued rise in overall participation in education and work based learning. Bedford Borough Council have worked closely with local upper schools since the introduction of RPA to promote the need for young people to remain in education, employment or training post 16, and local increases in rates are in line with the national increases.

Apprenticeships have also risen in line with national figures and the number of young people aged 16-18 who are engaged in an apprenticeship in Bedford is now the highest it has been in the past 4 years. In Bedford Borough, The Mayor's Apprenticeship Challenge to engage 2016 young people in apprenticeships by the year 2016 has helped to increase these figures, particularly from the point of view of local employers offering more and more apprenticeship opportunities to young people. The Jobs Hub in Bedford Borough has led on the Apprenticeship Challenge and will continue to do so until 2016. As a local authority, Bedford Borough also created 15 apprenticeship opportunities last year, with a further 11 being created this year.

Although Bedford Borough's responsibility to track, monitor and support young people has not fundamentally changed, staffing levels and operational models have. This has meant that as a local authority, Bedford Borough has had to re-assess the support available to NEET young people and how this is carried out. Early intervention whilst young people are still in school is one of the areas in which Bedford Borough is making significant developments with the implantation of the Risk of NEET Indicator tool, as well as building up strong working relationships with schools and other learning providers to identify any students who are at risk of becoming NEET and ensure they are targeted early enough to reduce the possibility of this happening. The newly implemented Early Help Professionals will play a significant role in strategically considering the early help support that is needed to reduce NEET rates further in the future.

There is already evidence based practice from other local authorities which demonstrates that early intervention programmes can play a significant role in helping to reduce NEETs. The programme ThinkForward in East London, has had positive results by working with young people at risk of being NEET from the age of 14 for five years. The programme places coaches in schools who provide 1-1 coaching, and this support is provided long term for up to five years. 88% of the 1,100 young people on the programme had improved behaviour or attendance at school and 95% of participants continued into further education, employment or training at age 16 (ThinkForward, 2013). With this in mind, Bedford Borough's Early Help and Intervention team aim to build on an already established mentoring programme that has been run in Bedford over the past year by the Schools Standards and Intervention Team, the idea being to support students in schools from an earlier age to promote post 16 participation, raise aspirations and encourage young people to make a positive contribution to society in the future.



The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) mentions NEETs under PH17 guidance:

<http://publications.nice.org.uk/promoting-physical-activity-for-children-and-young-people-ph17/considerations>

It states that physical activity is important for children and young people's health and wellbeing and contributes to their physical, social, emotional and psychological development. In particular, NICE suggests that special consideration should be made to certain young people and children when it comes to the need for physical activity, and experience shows that physical activity has been used to get some of these young people back into education, employment or training.

It has also been identified recently that there are vulnerable groups of young people who are more likely to contribute to the NEET group, such as those who are teen parents or pregnant, young carers and those who are looked after children or care leavers to name a few. In July 2015, the National Audit Office warned on a rise in the number of NEET care leavers.

<http://www.nao.org.uk/report/care-leavers-transitions-to-adulthood/>

Nationally, the Department for Education have vowed to support this agenda to reduce the number of NEET care leavers by investing £100m through the Innovation Programme to support vulnerable children, and funding programmes to get more care leavers into apprenticeships. In Bedford Borough, the local authority has funded a local training provider to run a pre-apprenticeship course aimed specifically at engaging NEET care leavers. The programme has seen a positive progression of a number of care leavers on completion of the programme.

### **What is this telling us?**

The estimated numbers of young people in Bedford Borough who are not participating continues to reduce each year.

The number who remain in this category of NEET for significant periods of time has dropped this year, with just 42% being in this group for longer than 6 months.

17.8% of the current non-participants are not available to the labour market because of ill health, pregnancy or because they have parenting or caring responsibilities, as well as other reasons. In particular, the number of young people who are not able to participate due to illness has increased steadily over the years, with there being a 50.3% increase for his cohort of young people on the January 2015 figure.

Around 61.9% have not achieved a level two qualification (5 A\*-C GCSE or equivalent).

14.7% of NEETS are below level one (GCSE grades D-G and equivalent)

The latest participation data tells us that the percentage participating in EET is better than the regional, national average and statistical neighbour average.

The unknown rate for Bedford Borough is also well below the National and East of England unknown rates, indicating that both the participation and non-participation figures for Bedford Borough are more reliable and accurate than other areas with a high unknown rates.

### **What are the key inequalities**



From the table above, it can be seen that De Parys and Castle wards in particular have disproportionately high percentages of young people who are not engaging. These wards also contain Bedford's hostels. It can be the case that homeless young people need support to access opportunities because they have usually experienced a disrupted home life that might have led to low achievement at school and low self-esteem. These issues are generally complex and difficult to address but do not meet current thresholds for organisations like CAMH.

Young people with few or no qualifications are more likely to be NEET. They have often not engaged with learning and school attendance has been erratic. It is hoped that RPA might help these young people to gain qualifications, as post year 11 they will be required to engage with learning and training in order to be working towards achieving a Level 2 qualification, but the opportunities to do this should be wider and more tailored to their needs.

Young people who do not attend school generally do not achieve well. Poor attendance can begin very early, and in order to support parents and their children the Education Welfare Service meet with all parents before their children start school to explain the rules around school attendance to establish good practice. However attendance at these meetings is voluntary and the parents who need this guidance often do not attend. It is well understood that parents who do not support their young children to attend school on a regular basis create a non-attendance habit that follows the pupil through its school life and into the world of work.

Males predominantly make up a higher proportion of the NEET group each year.

Young people who are experiencing mild to moderate mental health issues continue to contribute significantly to the NEET group. Illnesses such as anxiety and depression are on the rise amongst young people, and a lot of young people who experience such issues as these often become NEET after leaving school.

The number of young people in the NEET group who have a Learning Difficulty or Disability (LDD) was continuing to steadily rise each year up until 2015, meaning that the needs of the NEET group are becoming greater. With more and more young people who make up the NEET group having higher needs, it is vital that more specialist support is put into place in order to support these young people to participate. It may be that the traditional way of working with the NEET group needs to be relooked at, and new and fresh methods implemented.

Often, the young people who contribute to the NEET group, have at some point dropped out of post 16 education. Over the past two years, the dropout rates of 16 and 17 year olds from the local college have been quite significant, emphasising that better support may be needed to support young people's transition after Year 11.

### **What are the unmet needs/service gaps?**

In the past, young people have been able to get ongoing and face to face support from a team of Personal Advisers, however, over the past couple of years, it has been less possible to provide this intensive support due to service cuts. Support available is more likely to be offered over the telephone or via email.



There are a lack of flexible opportunities, for example, if a young person drops out of education at Christmas, they will have to wait until the following September to take up another course. The Gateway to Progression course that Bedford College have introduced this year has gone some way to support this gap, however, more choice of provision is needed locally.

There is a lack of support for young people with lower level and moderate mental health issues or general counselling needs to help them to cope with challenging issues. Every day, we are coming across NEET young people who are not engaged due to their mental wellbeing. Anxiety issues, depressions and low self-esteem are all issues which come up time and again amongst the NEET cohort. Until some of these mental wellbeing issues are addressed, it is very unlikely that these young people will be in a position and ready to engage in education, employment or training.

More specialised support for those young people with learning difficulties and disabilities. The opportunities and provision available for this group are very limited. With the college provision for those with additional needs being filled quicker and quicker each year, we are finding more and more young people with an LDD are not always securing a place for themselves on the discrete course

As support for the NEET group post 16 is now very limited, more of a focus on early intervention is vital in order to try to prevent young people becoming NEET post 16. The RONI tool will help in identifying the young people who are potentially at risk of disengaging post 16, and the introduction of the Student Transition passport will hopefully help to support post 16 transition.

**Recommendations for consideration by organisations i.e. BCCG, General Practices, Local Authorities:**

- More training programmes and courses that start in January, in order to fill the gap between the New Year and September each year.
- Better opportunities and more specialised provision for those with learning difficulties and disabilities and also for those with mental wellbeing issues. Work with local providers to ensure the local offer meets the needs of the NEET group.
- Better support for student transitions from upper school to post 16 provision such as college or 6<sup>th</sup> forms.
- Use of the RONI (Risk of NEET indicator) tool to identify potential NEETs and work with them earlier through the Early Help agenda to try to prevent disengagement post 16.
- Continue to promote apprenticeships amongst employers to increase the number of apprenticeships within the Borough. The Apprenticeship Ambassador group, chaired by Economic Development, aims to ensure opportunities continue to increase.
- More specialist support for those who suffer with anxiety and depression and more specialist provision that starts to address some of the these issues that young people face.

**This section links to the following sections in the JSNA:**

- Teenage pregnancy
- Education
- Children in Need



- Youth offending

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