



# Get Young People Working – the Youth Offer

## Final Evaluation Report

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# Glossary of Acronyms

<b>Term</b>	<b>Acronyms</b>
ADHD	Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
AFD	Attention Fixation Disorder
CBT	City Bridge Trust
CV	Curriculum Vitae
EET	Employment, Education and Training
ESF	European Social Fund
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
FYA	Fitzrovia Youth in Action - a VCS provider
HNAG	Hounslow NEET Action Group
LA	Local Authority
MI	Management Information / Monitoring Information
NEET	Not in Employment, Education and Training
P3	People, Potential, Possibilities - a VCS provider
PBR	Payment by Results
RAG rating	Red, Amber, Green rating
VCS	Voluntary and Community Sector
VSO	Voluntary Sector Organisation

# Foreword

- 1.1** This year, City Bridge Trust celebrates 20 years as a funder - working for a fairer London by supporting disadvantaged Londoners. The Trust has a privileged position amongst funders in London: having the City of London Corporation as its sole Trustee helps us to connect with city businesses, local authorities, and London's voluntary and community organisations - in other words, with the public, private, and non-for-profit sectors.

In 2013, we launched our Youth Offer - to tackle one of London's most intractable problems: the number of young people who are not in education employment or training (NEETs). Over a two year period, we allocated £3.28m - to support London's local authorities, working in partnership with the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), with the ambitious aim of helping 1,000 young people, across the capital, to move into employment, apprenticeships or vocational training. I am delighted to report that over 2,500 young people have progressed into full-time employment, education and training and over 200 into part-time employment, education or training.

In designing this initiative, the Trust's conviction was that local organisations are best placed to understand and tackle social issues in their own areas - and the condition that local authorities worked in partnership with one or more VCS organisations reflected our desire to bring together two forms of local expertise. Our aim was, also, to provide the opportunity for new relationships to be created - particularly important, at present, as these are likely to become an increasingly important part of the delivery of local services. Each local authority was given the freedom to shape its programmes, both responding to local need and drawing on local knowledge.

A rich and diverse range of programmes has been funded, providing a variety of different interventions - for example, identifying previously unknown NEETs and working with specific cohorts of young people (such as young offenders or young disabled people). Some of these groups are, by definition, some of the most difficult to reach - and making comparisons between programmes can often be difficult.

Our evaluation has, however, identified both success factors and challenges in supporting NEET young people into employment, as well as in capturing participants' views on the programme. There are important lessons for the VCS, local authorities, and for funders about the most effective ways of devising, delivering, and funding such programmes, which can be found in the Executive Summary and, in detail, in the main body of the report.

Jeremy Mayhew, M.A., M. B. A.  
Chairman  
City Bridge Trust

## 2 Executive Summary

**2.1** Get Young People Working – The Youth Offer is a £3.28m two-year programme funded by City Bridge Trust (CBT). Grants have been made to London’s 32 Local Authorities (LAs) with the aim of helping 1,000 young people across the capital not in Employment Education and Training (NEET) gain employment, an apprenticeship or vocational training. The intention of the programme has been to increase their employability, adding value to existing programmes and contributing to an evidence base of what works for this group. Every London LA was awarded a grant of up to £100,000, with the freedom to decide on the most appropriate spend in the light of local circumstances. The only condition was that the LAs worked in partnership with one or more Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisation(s) to deliver the projects. The outcomes achieved exceeded the target, set for itself by City Bridge Trust, with 2,522 participants moving into full-time employment education or training and 214 into part-time education or employment. The individual projects were valued by participants, with a high level of satisfaction among those interviewed or surveyed.

### Delivery Models

**2.2** The Youth Offer projects followed one of three main approaches:

- Focusing on identifying highly disadvantaged groups, e.g. young offenders and gang members, and supporting them with intensive interventions.
- Finding young people, suspected of being NEET, who had disappeared ‘off the radar’ and then referring them to existing support services. A variant on this approach was co-ordinating access to these services via a Hub or a network of support.
- Providing support with wider eligibility criteria and identifying and filling gaps in local provision.

### Partnership Working

**2.3** CBT believed that strong partnerships between LAs and VCS organisations would achieve the best attainable outcomes for young people in the Youth Offer projects. How the partnerships worked in practice is a key focus of this evaluation.

**2.4** LAs’ local knowledge meant they were well placed to act as the accountable body for the Youth Offer in their area. This role was valued by LAs as it allowed them to influence what was delivered and how it was delivered.

**2.5** LAs appreciated the light touch monitoring by CBT, which allowed them to focus on the delivery of the Youth Offer. They generally also viewed CBT as approachable, helpful and responsive.

**2.6** A few aspects of the relationship between CBT and LAs could have been improved:

- CBT’s monitoring and management requirements were not clearly communicated at the start of the programme. Reaching contractual agreements with CBT was a lengthy process



although, in at least one case, this appeared to reflect the LA's own decision-making processes.

- Staff turnover within some LAs created difficulties. This led to a loss of knowledge within the LAs and adversely affected their partnership with CBT and with VCS organisations.

## Impact on Participants

**2.7** A total of 5,939 young people started on the Youth Offer programme throughout the two years of the programme. Males formed a slight majority of participants (53%). There was a broad spread of participants by age with around a third aged 16-17, another third aged 19-24, and a fifth aged 18. Age was not recorded for around one in six participants. The disability status of participants was unknown for just over a quarter of participants. Less than one in ten participants were known to have some form of disability. White participants made up nearly two in five of participants (37%), nearly a third were of African-Caribbean ethnicity (30%) and around one in ten (11%) of Asian ethnicity. One in six participants (15%) were of mixed ethnicity or from other ethnic groups and ethnicity was not recorded for 8% of participants.

**2.8** Of those who started on the Youth Offer 4,545 were recorded as having left the programme (either as early leavers or having completed their project activities). Of these leavers, the highest proportion (42%) moved into full-time education or training (1,927 participants). 15% became NEET after leaving the programme (676), 13% moved into full-time employment (595), 4% obtained an apprenticeship (183), 3% moved into part-time employment (145), 2% moved into part-time education or training (69), 1% obtained a traineeship (59), 1% became self-employed (35), and 1% moved into voluntary work (28). There was no information on post-project outcomes for 18% of leavers (828 participants).

**2.9** Projects that focused on mentoring and one-to-one support were relatively more successful at securing entries into full-time education for their participants as opposed to entries into full-time employment. Projects that focused more on employability had higher entry rates into full-time employment than full-time education.

## Success Factors

**2.10** Overall, projects that had clear aims and focused rationales were able to target their resources effectively. This led to successful implementation of projects and fewer difficulties between partners or gaps in provision. We have identified the following critical success factors for ensuring clarity of purpose:

- A strong partnership – typically through established relationships or excellent processes of communication and consultation.
- Excellent planning systems - typically with a strong local authority project manager.
- Realistic targets and project scale.

**2.11** Success factors pre-delivery:

- The design of the programme reflects the vulnerabilities of the target group.

- The budget reflects the time and resource intensive nature of working with young people NEET.
- There is a sufficient lead-in period, and funding, prior to delivery to build relationships between the LA and their VCS partner(s) and to find and recruit participants. This may require significant outreach activity.
- Providers' detailed delivery plans and resources are in place before funding.

### 2.12 Success factors for implementation:

- High intensity, low volume projects that can deal with the multiple needs of young people NEET.
- Being embedded in existing local service support structures: this enabled the provision of a holistic offer (via links to other services) and access to local work and training opportunities for participants.
- A clear offer to participants.
- A structured programme and professional staff.
- Flexibility: crucial for successful delivery, especially when participants have multiple barriers to employment.
- Services tailored to individuals' needs.
- Mentors providing persistent and tailored support that addresses both employment-related and personal barriers.
- Partnerships that are realistic about the number of outcomes that can be obtained with the resources available.
- Effective employer engagement: work experience opportunities for young people NEET can be very effective at helping them move into work.
- Partnerships that can provide paid work placements and job brokerage are more effective than those offering volunteering opportunities.
- Partnerships that minimise potential participant attrition have better outcomes. This can be done through: case management (e.g. a key worker, advocate or mentor acting as co-ordinator of services); co-location or by providing warm handovers between support services.
- Offers that provide peer interaction and networking opportunities: these are associated with improved levels of confidence, motivation and trust with the Youth Offer service.

### 2.13 Success factors for partnerships:

- Equal partnerships between LAs and VCS organisations are the best way to provide support to young people NEET.
- Regular review meetings allow partnerships to discuss progress, address any operational issues that arise and increase confidence between the partners.
- Early engagement in the design of services by VCS partners has benefits. However, there is a clear tension between the use of normal competitive procurement processes and such involvement

- Capacity building of VCS by their LA partner.
- Engagement with organisations outside the partnership. This increases the opportunities for referral and access to wider services.

## Legacy

- 2.14** LAs reported a strengthened relationship with their VCS partner and, in some cases, a generally better relationship with the local voluntary sector. The projects also improved local young people's perceptions of the partners. They became interested in the support on offer after their peers, who were participants, recommended these services.
- 2.15** A number of VCS partners believed they had benefitted from the relationship with the LA, as it had enabled them to get employers involved in their projects. Several VCS organisations had an improved profile as a result of the Youth Offer, increasing the likelihood of obtaining future funding and attracting partners.
- 2.16** Some partnerships had already managed to obtain future funding from other sources to continue similar services to those they had provided under the Youth Offer.

## Lessons for the Future

### Pre-delivery of projects

- 2.17** It is important that time and effort is put into providing the conditions for successful delivery. These include: relationship building; participant recruitment; planning or shaping the services to be offered; finalising funding and organisational details and establishing what data are required for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

### Delivery

- A focus on more intensive, low volume projects gives better outcomes, as these can offer the degree and range of services that many young people NEET need: employment is often only one of the problems that they need to overcome.
- Mentoring was successful in offering one to one support and a positive relationship. More vulnerable or challenging participants require the support of professional mentors. Volunteer mentors are more effective with participants who are closer to the labour market.

### Partnerships

- 2.18** In future, LAs should find a better balance between building on existing relationships and establishing new ones. Relying on existing relationships gives little room for innovation.
- 2.19** LAs should take the opportunity to learn from their VCS partners as well as using their expertise to build capacity within local VCS organisations

- 2.20** LAs should use their own workforce, their contacts with employers and their contracting to provide more opportunities for work experience.
- 2.21** Multi-VCS partnerships work well only when there is clarity as to the partners' respective roles and no overlap. This aids collaboration between them and the integration of their service offers, giving participants access to a wider range of expertise.

## 3 Context and Youth Offer

### Labour Market and Other Context

- 3.1** Prior to the introduction of the Youth Offer by City Bridge Trust (CBT) there was growing consensus that, unless action was taken, the UK risked a “lost generation” of young people – shut out of the labour market and increasingly detached from work and learning<sup>1</sup> and more recently research has reported that the UK was experiencing a youth unemployment crisis.<sup>2</sup>
- 3.2** When the Youth Offer programme was devised in 2012, 132,000 young people aged 16-24 were classified as not in employment, education and training (NEET) in London, the equivalent of 14.9 per cent of 16-24 year olds.<sup>3</sup> Despite economic growth and evidence of a reduction in young people NEET in London, the most recent figure (Q2 2015) for young people NEET in London is 106,000 or 10.8%.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, in 2013, 43% of young people NEET did not claim any out of work benefits<sup>5</sup> and so had no connection to the available national support systems; demonstrating further the need for alternative support services for this group.
- 3.3** In 2014, the youth unemployment rate in London was significantly higher than the national average, at 25%, and there were sharp differences across the city. Although boroughs in the eastern part of Inner London continue to have high youth unemployment, outer London boroughs now register some of the highest rates; “reflecting wider changes in the distribution of unemployment, poverty and deprivation throughout London.”<sup>6</sup>
- 3.4** There are multiple funding agencies, as well as duplication of provision, which has led to significant overlaps in the services on offer. Numerous government departments and agencies influence different areas of Youth Employment Policy, including the Department for Education, the Department for Work and Pensions and the Skills Funding Agency. Similarly, at a local level, many organisations operate to support 16-24 year olds in achieving an employment, education or training (EET) outcome. This has resulted in a complicated landscape for young people and employers to navigate and make sense of, whilst accountability for who should be supporting this group can easily get lost.
- 3.5** LAs have been subject to substantial funding cuts and their direct control of young people’s services has become extremely limited, partly because of government reform and simplification. Consequently, many LA controlled services were ended, including Young Apprenticeships, Entry

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<sup>1</sup> Wilson et al. (November 2011), Youth unemployment: a million reasons to act?, Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion

<sup>2</sup> Crowley, L., and Cominetti, N. (April 2014), The geography of youth unemployment: a route map for change, The Work Foundation

<sup>3</sup> Young people not in Employment, Education or Training, Borough, Department for Education

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

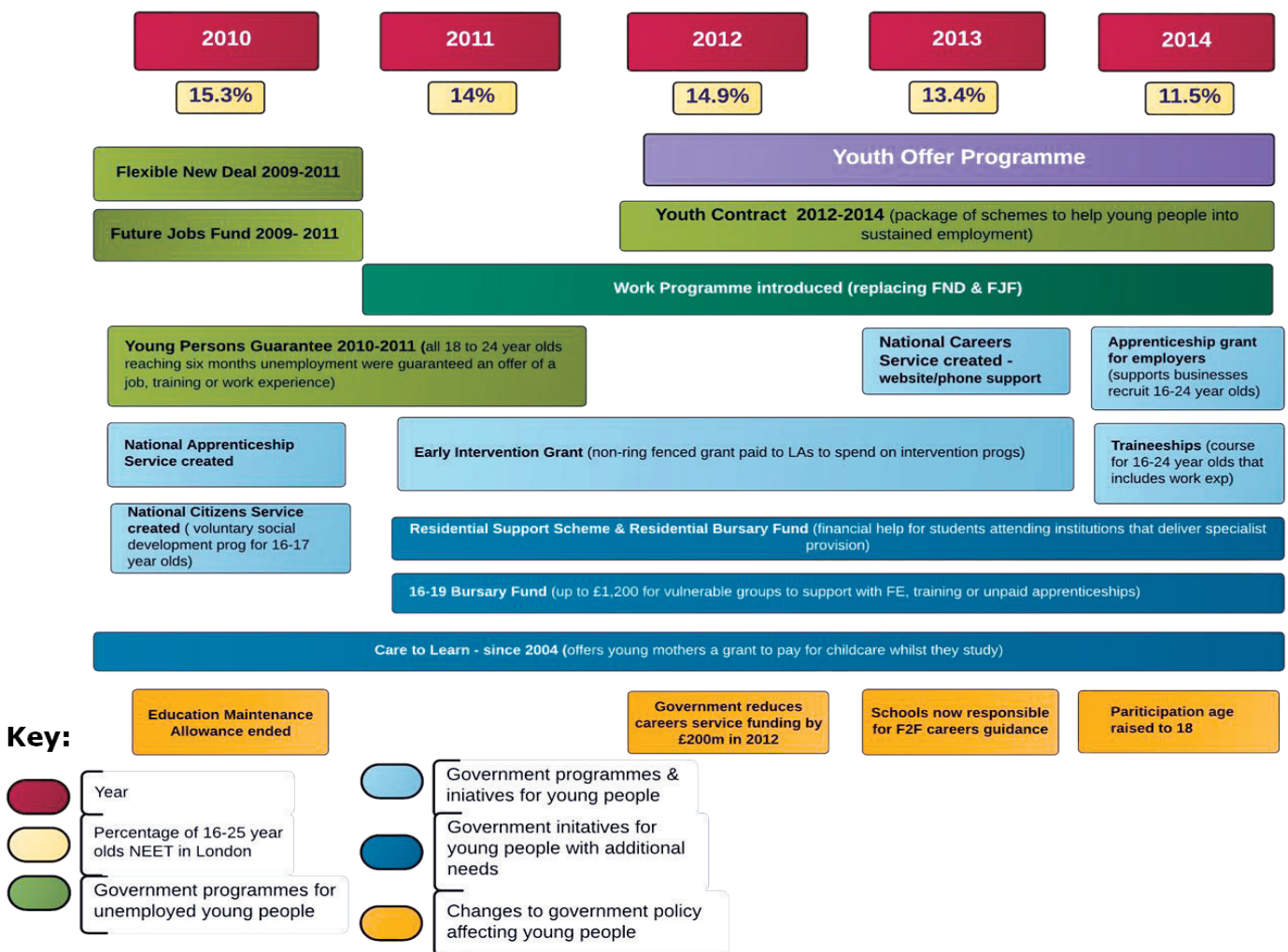
<sup>5</sup> Cooke, G. (2013), No more NEETS: a plan for all young people to be learning or earning, IPPR

<sup>6</sup> Hughes C. And Crowley, L. (April 2014), London: A Tale of Two Cities Addressing the youth employment challenge, The Work Foundation

to Employment, and the Future Jobs Fund, whilst the new grants offered noticeably less funding than in previous years.

**3.6** Control by LAs of Careers Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) has also reduced, after responsibility for face-to-face provision was transferred to education institutions. These changes in the nature of careers' services have become crucial because of the increase in the participation age in education to 18 and reform of the vocational education system. As an *Inclusion* report on youth unemployment highlighted "the effectiveness of skills and education reform critically depends on young people making the right decisions and understanding what employers need"; making high quality careers guidance crucial.<sup>7</sup>

### The Youth Employment Landscape 2010 - 2014



**3.7** Previous *Inclusion* research found that provision of employment services in some London boroughs was not well targeted at young people's needs or well understood, and that outreach and innovation was needed to address this.<sup>8</sup> This was important in the context of the funding

<sup>7</sup> (2011) Youth Unemployment..., *Inclusion*

<sup>8</sup> Wilson et al. (January 2014), Talent Match London, Supporting research and analysis on target boroughs and young unemployed Londoners aged 18-24, Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion

cuts described above, because young people NEET are more likely to experience multiple barriers to employment.

**3.8** Although the London Labour Market has seen strong growth in professional and business support services, these often require a high level of qualifications. People with an ordinary or higher degree hold just under half of all the jobs in London.<sup>9</sup> A significant proportion of young people NEET will require some form of support to enable them either to gain sustainable employment in London or to participate in education or training, increasing their chances of finding work in the long-term.

## The Youth Offer Programme

**3.9** Get Young People Working – The Youth Offer is a £3.28m two-year programme funded by CBT. Grants have been made across London's 32 boroughs with the aim of helping 1,000 young people in the capital gain employment, an apprenticeship or vocational training. Thirty-one grants were given, including a joint grant between Haringey and Enfield. The intention of the programme has been to tackle the number of young people NEET in London by increasing their employability, adding value to existing programmes and contributing to an evidence base of what works for this group. This was important considering the evidence that being NEET has an adverse impact on young people's health and wellbeing, future employment prospects and skill set.

**3.10** The Youth Offer programme is distinct from other funding offers available through national and international bodies and from other CBT grant programmes and open grants rounds. CBT's open grants are competitive and tied to specific criteria and outcomes. For the Youth Offer, applications were restricted to LAs, with a bidding process through which plans and outcomes were agreed with CBT before grants were awarded. CBT monitored the LAs against these plans and outcomes. Each London LA was awarded up to £100,000 and was able to focus how the grants were spent in the light of the particular issues facing them.

**3.11** A condition of the Youth Offer grants was that LAs had to work with Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisation(s), as CBT saw partnership working as essential to obtaining the best outcomes for the young people participating in the projects. Partnerships had to present plans showing how additional resource would lead to young people achieving EET outcomes. Funded projects had to be additional to any existing programme (rather than being used to top up government programmes or as a stand-in for activities affected by public expenditure cuts, such as directly replacing Connexions services).

**3.12** Many of the projects within the Youth Offer Programme targeted highly disadvantaged groups that are more likely to be NEET, such as teenage parents or individuals with learning disabilities.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, different projects implemented elements that were also recommended by a report on addressing the youth employment challenge in London, including access to

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<sup>9</sup> GLA Economics (April 2013), London Labour Market Projections, Greater London Authority

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*

discretionary funds and job matching services.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, in several cases the programme filled gaps in support for high need groups and provided support that is evidence based.

**3.13** We have found that LAs appreciated the relationship with CBT. Offering grants and not imposing a Payment by Results (PBR) structure provided LA partners with an opportunity to be flexible, foster innovation and provide additional support in response to local need. However, as the LAs were not used to being grantees to independent funders, with their more flexible structures, they struggled to understand the monitoring requirements that they had to fulfil. Therefore, some wanted to revert to PBR, a system with which they were more familiar. This demonstrated some inability to adjust their approach to the flexibilities of the Youth Offer.

## Evaluation Outlined

**3.14** This evaluation has used a mixed methods approach over two waves to assess: the success of the Youth Offer programme in reducing the number of Young people NEET in London; the value of facilitating LA and VCS partnerships and the effectiveness and sustainability of different approaches to working with young people NEET. It has also aimed to provide learning for delivery partners, CBT, other funders and statutory and VCS organisations seeking to support young people NEET. Both waves have included case studies, exploring projects in-depth, as well as online surveys for participants, analysis of Quarterly Management Information (MI) and semi-structured interviews with one VCS and one LA partner in each borough.

**3.15** There was a range of different models of Youth Offer support across the boroughs, reflecting the flexibility offered by CBT. However, while a benefit operationally, a multiplicity of distinctive programmes made the evaluation and measurement of outcomes difficult, as projects were not directly comparable. Benchmarking was more complex as a result and therefore success must be measured within each project's own terms.

**3.16** There were also inconsistencies in the data received, and gaps in the MI. Delivery partners did not always follow guidelines on what they were expected to collect, and, in some instances, where several VCS organisations were involved in delivery, not all recorded this information. Therefore, detailed quantitative analysis of the programme has to be limited.

## Scope of the Report

**3.17** This final report has built on our interim findings on delivery models, partnership working and the impact of the Youth Offer on participants. Importantly, the research has also considered the sustainability and legacy of the Youth Offer and drawn lessons for the future for CBT, LAs and VCS organisations. Further information on the evaluation approach, projects funded through the programme, detailed case studies of seven projects and participant outcomes can be found in the appendices.

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<sup>11</sup> Hughes and Crowley (April 2014), London: A Tale of Two Cities...



## 4 Delivery Models

### Aims, objectives and priorities

**4.1** This chapter reports our critical analysis of the Youth Offer partnerships' aims and priorities. Overall, we have found that projects that had clear aims and focused rationales have been able to target their resources effectively. This led to successful project implementation and fewer gaps or difficulties between partners.

**4.2** We have identified the following critical success factors for ensuring clarity of purpose:

- A strong partnership - typically through established relationships or excellent processes of communication and consultation.
- Excellent planning systems - typically with a strong LA project manager.
- Realistic targets and project scale: these should take into account the characteristics of the target group and the challenges of reaching them, in order to come up with realistic engagement and outcome targets, as well as feasible timescales for completion of outcomes.
- Flexible programmes that allow for quick changes to the delivery model when it is not successful, without losing focus of the main aims and objectives of the programme.

### Mapping Support Interventions

**4.3** Our research has identified three main approaches that Youth Offer partnerships took to reduce the number of young people NEET. Firstly, some partnerships focused on identifying highly disadvantaged groups and supporting them with specialist services. Secondly, a number of partnerships sought to find young people, suspected of being NEET, who disappeared 'off the radar' (unknown NEETs) and to refer them to existing support services. A variant on this approach was initiatives designed to support specialised Hubs or networks of support for young people NEET, or those at risk of becoming NEET. Lastly, a number of partnerships sought to provide support with wider eligibility criteria, identifying and addressing gaps in local services.

#### 1. Targeting highly disadvantaged groups

**4.4** These included participants with disabilities or learning difficulties, or participants who had a history of offending. The programmes required the delivery of more intensive and bespoke support than those that targeted less hard to reach participants.

*"... they would meet with [name of mentor] then they'd have a full one-to-one assessment of where they're at and their needs and their barriers and their aspirations then there would be an action plan and then they'd start working through the action plan and [name of mentor] would put them onto appropriate training or short courses or job applications or traineeships depending on what the need was." (VCS representative)*

*"So [we were] able to develop something which specifically was available for that target group and allowed us to better understand the issues around what is stopping these young people finding work and sustaining work."* **(LA representative)**

- 4.5** Young people identified a range of barriers that prevented them from moving on into EET. Participants in the Brent focus group identified the following barriers: fear of rejection; attitude; self doubt; stubbornness; lack of confidence; unsure of what to do next; mental health; financial stability; lack of faith in self; family matters and motivation. They affirmed that the provider helped them to make decisions and gave them a clearer idea of what they wanted to do in life.

*"When I started coming here, I got to make my decisions to choose what I wanted to do with life and I think if I didn't have people like [name of mentor] and [name of delivery organisation] helping me make my decision, I would end up in a rubbish job because I didn't like school"*

**(Participant)**

## 2. Identifying unknown NEETs

- 4.6** These types of interventions could be described as more of a data collection exercise. VCS organisations concentrated on finding out what the young people whose NEET status was unknown were doing. If, among these young people, they found some who were NEET then they would refer them to existing support services. These interventions were characterised by high volumes of participants and low levels of support per participant.

- 4.7** Partnerships recognised that the work was time intensive and much less likely to produce direct EET outcomes for young people in the borough, though most suggested that the work would create longer-term gains, as a percentage of these otherwise unknowns could go on to access existing local authority services. The impact, however, was difficult to assess in the absence of a longitudinal study following such individuals over time.

- 4.8** In one of the case studies the VCS organisation found that the use of outreach to locate and enlist these individuals was an effective way of ensuring service provision was delivered to those who most needed it. They believed that this could be rolled out further in the future. The VCS organisation also acknowledged the enormous challenge of recruiting individuals once they were located.

*"I think it's worked really that we've managed to get youth workers going out there and finding those clients, where you can find them at the youth centre, you might find them at a football field... so they can engage with them, because they're like your little lost souls really, no-one knows about them and I think that's the main impact that we're actually starting to touch individuals' lives out there"* **(VCS representative)**

- 4.9** One VCS representative identified a cohort of young people "who aren't doing anything" and aren't signed up with support organisations, including Jobcentre Plus and who could only be contacted via outreach. One LA representative suggested that successful engagement with these kinds of young people could be achieved via activities that young people take part in.

*"So we've got a gap of people that no-one knows about where they are, we're not tracking them properly from schools and within the support services out there for them to make sure that we know exactly what's happening." (VCS representative)*

*"I think in some ways things like the volunteering project which is trying to catch some of the people who are almost traditional NEETs who don't use a lot of services... I think you probably have to do it through youth provision, like football or dance classes or a youth club and try and get them that way" (LA representative)*

### **HUBs or networks of support**

- 4.10** A variant of this type of intervention was creating HUBs or networks of support, since the objectives of this kind of support were outreach, advice and signposting for young people. It targeted those furthest away from the labour market, including those whose education, employment and training status was 'not known'.
- 4.11** This support model joined up the customer journey; resources were invested in a co-ordinator to create a 'hub' where young people could access support. The approach can also be seen as a 'network' since it sought to link young people to other types of existing support.
- 4.12** The LA provided VCS organisation(s) with a list of names and addresses and the funding was used to employ a caseworker, who knocked on doors/did independent investigation/street work to find and identify hard-to-reach young people NEET. These were referred to a Hub for information on education, training and guidance.
- 4.13** LAs ran the Hubs (support was provided by the Hubs, not as part of the Youth Offer programme) and their role was to provide young people with information on training, education and help applying for jobs.

*"We've recognised actually that while it's very time consuming, it's actually a very good use of resource because compared to other forms of contact, to get a 50% hit rate is really very good." (LA representative)*

*"In terms of this time last year compared to where we were, I think probably we've got 200 less not-known young people at this point in time, so actually that's a really very big improvement for us and I think that largely a lot of it's down to them going out and doing the door knocking." (LA representative)*

*"If for example a young person, if the Council doesn't know what they're doing and they are maybe 18 or 19 and their last address is unknown [our case worker] would go to the last address, establish if they are there or go to the school and go to that house, find out what they are doing. If she discovers that they are NEET or a young girl is pregnant or a teenage mother she would then take a name and address, get them information about the nearest hub and then pass that information over to the hub as well so they can follow up where that young person is and get advice and information to help them go forward" (VCS representative)*

### 3. Wider eligibility criteria

- 4.14** These types of interventions were characterised by offering services not previously available in the area. The idea behind most of them was to use the funding to try to create a new way of supporting young people for whom previous standard support services have not worked.

*"And it provides a particular client group with an option that isn't available anywhere else really as far as I'm aware, certainly not in our borough, it's quite unique really the offer that they have."* **(LA representative)**

- 4.15** One LA was providing horticultural-related work training comprising of a series of 10 week courses on all aspects of local food growing, as well as identifying placements, mentoring support and business start-up partnerships for 60 young people aged 16-24 years old who are not in education, employment or training. In 2013, this LA had one of the highest rates of youth unemployment in London, so reducing it was a strategic target for it. The project was the result of the LA looking at different ways of engaging this hard to reach group.

*"This support is more of a sort of strategic input really in terms of what the issues are in the borough, as well as actually managing and monitoring the contract."* **(LA representative)**

### Conclusion

- 4.16** The research found that, in general, the rationales that were given for the design of Youth Offer programmes prioritised meeting current local needs, rather than seeking to test new or significant innovations in approaches to support. Youth Offer funding provided an opportunity to expand or scale up programmes that were already seen to be working well on a small scale and/or added value to existing local support.

### Implementation: what has worked

- 4.17** The evaluation has identified a number of success factors that transcend the very different approaches and support interventions. These are detailed below.

#### Success factors

- Youth Offers that were deeply embedded in the existing local service support structures and local economy were particularly successful at providing a holistic offer (through links to other services) and could better support young people to access local labour market opportunities.
- The flexibility of the programme was crucial for successful delivery, especially when participants were facing multiple barriers. It was important to tailor services specifically to the individual in order to gain the young person's trust and understand the young person.

*"So, I think that's definitely one thing for making a successful programme, it has to be flexible. It has to be tailored to the individual person and it has to be one to one support at the beginning to gain the young person's trust and make sure that they're going on a journey that's going to be right for them and having a range of offers at the start. Understanding the young person, having*

*the time to work with them and that, unfortunately, can't really be done cheaply and quickly a lot of the time."* **(LA representative)**

- Youth Offers that developed a full (holistic) customer journey, could support a variety of different needs (including for those most hard-to-reach) and were more likely to be able to demonstrate and record education, employment and training (EET) outcomes. For instance, programmes combining their main support intervention with job brokerage were much more effective than those working in isolation. Those offers that could provide support to sustain EET (through in-work support) were also found to be effective over the longer term.

*"There needs to be engagement of other partners in this type of programme and this type of model, because the young people are presenting situations and issues that are beyond our remit. So things, like housing, some of them are having issues with housing, and if they're not stable with housing, they're very difficult to contact or to keep abreast of. Some of them are registered as unknown, as in no fixed abode."* **(VCS representative)**

- Mentoring by well-trained mentors was extremely effective.

**4.18** Participants were particularly positive about the nature and structure of the support, finding the persistent and tailored support of mentors, much more valuable than previous programmes they had been involved in. Mentors were able to address both sides of the barriers identified; employment-related and personal issues and, as a result, boost participants' focus, drive and independence whilst better preparing them for finding employment by improving their experience and skill set.

*"If I've had problems outside, in my family and so on, I've just felt really good, I've been able to offload to [the mentor] and that's really helped me manage things. I've felt like I've offloaded, I can move on, I felt fresh"* **(Participant)**

*"He's really helped me improve my CV, and English and maths, I've been studying further here, which is helpful... loads of experience that I've gained from this six months here. I've learnt a lot and yes it's helped me"* **(Participant)**

- Partnerships that were realistic about the number of outcomes that could be obtained with the resources available were effective and successful as these were able to provide the level of intensity needed to support young people NEET (who typically have multiple needs).
- A clear offer to the young people – which helped to ensure engagement and set clear expectations of what would be expected from them.

*"I didn't like that you tend to turn up at the site and then find out on the day what we're doing."* **(Participant)**

- Partnerships that could minimise potential participant attrition had better outcomes. This could be done through: case management (e.g. a key worker, advocate or mentor acting as co-ordinator of services); co-location or by providing warm handovers between support services.

### Quality indicators for different support interventions

**4.19** Relating to the previous factors identified which made the programmes successful, we present the following quality indicators for different support interventions:

- Projects that based their support model on existing evidence of what works were more likely to succeed. For instance, mentoring programmes that used professional mentors with hard-to-reach groups (e.g. young offenders) were more successful than those using volunteer mentors. This also suggests that harder to help young people NEET need help from trained professionals and it is not enough to use volunteers with good will.<sup>12</sup>

*"[Relationships between] participants and their external mentor were fraught with difficulties. Sometimes, the participant might not show, so it's difficult for the mentor to build a relationship. Sometimes the mentor wouldn't be able to meet the participant at a convenient time, because of the nature of the mentors; they may be working themselves and be doing this from a voluntary perspective. And sometimes it's just the nature of the client group means that mentors really need certain skill sets to engage in a meaningful way."* **(VCS representative)**

- 4.20** Indeed, one of the case studies showed that business-focused mentoring led by professionals worked best with young people relatively close to the labour market, but less well with those with higher or pressing basic needs.

*"We were attracting a lot of young people that needed a lot more support than a professional mentor. At first the young people who were getting referred to us had more basic needs. So meeting a mentor to talk about their career once every two weeks for an hour it's not going to help because first they've got to sort out their housing or other really basic things or they had like five key workers in their life and the last thing they needed was another appointment with another worker."* **(VCS representative)**

- Complex needs require well-resourced programmes. Working with each participant was very resource intensive and time consuming, since their advisors/mentors need to come up with a bespoke support plan.

*"I think the delivery component has worked very well because of the intense engagement that's going on, but also the coaches operate slightly... not outside their remit, but they go above and beyond with the participants. So there is a lot more intense one-to-one work that might need to take place, a lot of hand holding."* **(VCS representative)**

- Those partnerships that could provide work placements and job brokerage were more effective than those offering volunteer experience opportunities, especially at getting young people into employment rather than into education.
- A consistent offer for the young person that could provide stability over the period of support intervention, typically provided by a mentor or a key worker (case management system), was more effective than short courses and limited one-to-one contact. This was exemplified in the Camden case study, which showed that the way the support was split in half, with two different delivery organisations supporting participants at different points broke the participants' journey.

*"I think the way that the programme was split doesn't work as well as it could... the split in terms of the participant journey. We built these relationships and then we hand them over and they*

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<sup>12</sup> For more information on the role of mentoring in the UK, what good mentoring involves see the following report from the Centre for Policy Studies:  
<http://www.cps.org.uk/files/reports/original/111027170001-20080911SocialPolicyYouthMentoring.pdf>

*meet people they've never met for their training. Then we have to be liaising to see what's going on with them, so that's not coherent."* **(VCS representative)**

**4.21** The Lewisham case study also shows the difficulties of the multiple VCS model. There were challenges with recruitment in that borough. Initially young people were going to be referred through an organisation different from the delivery partner. However, this did not work. Instead, the delivery model was changed so that referrals were made directly to the delivery partner. This made the process much quicker and reduced the chance of any young person getting lost in it.

*"We actually had a referral process, so they were supposed to go through [name of referring organisation] and see a specialist one-to-one worker who would then pass them onto [name of delivery organisation]. It was putting too much, another hurdle in the way, young people need, if they're ready or they've come to you or you've found them, to have something happen quite quickly or else they will disappear again"* **(LA representative)**

- Offers that provided peer interaction and networking opportunities were also more successful. Across the sample of young people interviewed, the great majority valued social interaction and this was associated with improved levels of confidence, motivation and trust with the youth offer service

*"Yeah I'm not the most confident of people but now that I've been doing this more and more, I'm getting back into the whole talking to people and socialising now, especially when we do markets on the weekend that helps a lot to build up self-esteem and confidence and talk to random strangers."* **(Participant)**

- Giving young people experiences outside their normal context is associated with positive changes in attitude towards employment and progression.

*"My mentor himself, he inspired me, because he was a very hard working man. He was very high up and he gave me the confidence to apply for more jobs."* **(Participant)**

**4.22** Overall, this evaluation has found that successful programmes for young people NEETs require professionalism and coherent programme design. However, an important caveat to these findings is the difficulty of measuring the success of interventions that have developed HUBs of support or approaches to identify unknown NEETs. Here any outcomes are not attributed to the Youth Offer but to the services that young people NEET access.

# 5 Partnership Working

## Introduction

- 5.1** CBT's expectation at the time it launched the Youth Offer was that strong partnerships between LAs and VCS organisations would be key to achieving the best attainable outcomes for young people. Hence there is a strong focus on how the partnerships between the LAs and the VCS organisations have worked in practice. In addition, where relevant to the success of the Youth Offer, we comment on the partnership working between CBT and the LAs.

## The role of the Local Authority as accountable body

- 5.2** This section reports on the role of the LA as the accountable body in the programme funding structure. The main benefit identified by the majority of LAs of being the accountable body was the ability to influence what was delivered and how it was delivered. They were able to use their local knowledge to identify and address local needs and provision.

*"We understand the target group – what their needs are, where the demand is and where there are gaps... We have a good oversight of regeneration in the borough ... Hence the local authority is in a better position to forward plan"* **(LA representative)**

- 5.3** LAs generally appreciated their relationship with CBT, in particular the lighter touch approach to the oversight and monitoring requirements compared to other funding sources such as the former London Development Agency (LDA) and, most notably, funding from the European Social Fund (ESF). LAs viewed this 'hands off' approach positively as allowing them to get on with managing their projects, and allowing their VCS partners to focus on delivery rather than a plethora of reporting.

*"I think, for those programmes [other provision being contrasted with the Youth Offer], you [i.e. the delivery organisation] end up all of your time doing admin and servicing the claim and having to have people who just focus on compiling and submitting claims, whereas that's not really an appropriate use of funding."* **(LA representative)**

- 5.4** LAs generally saw CBT as approachable, helpful and responsive when they had raised queries and issues with them. For example, one LA representative mentioned that an issue with payment had been quickly resolved by CBT.

*"The key contact at CBT is very responsive and helpful. She is very quick to deal with queries and iron out any issues."* **(LA representative)**

- 5.5** There were a couple of exceptions to the positive views above with one LA seeing CBT as slow and another that CBT had been inflexible in considering alterations to the provision on offer. In this context, it should be noted that CBT accepts that its procedures are not flexible, but with over 600 grants to administer standard procedures are almost inevitable.



- 5.6** Some LAs specifically mentioned and strongly welcomed CBT engaging with the projects in their area. CBT itself also valued the introductions to new VCS organisations via the Youth Offer and the potential to build new longer-term future relationships from these introductions.

*"[CBT is] showing an interest in our programme in the community... there was an event which was based around a match day fixture at the football club where the young people had an opportunity to give a presentation on their journey and where they were before they started the course and where they are now. City Bridge Trust did bring one of its representatives along which was nice."* **(LA representative)**

- 5.7** The aspects of the relationship between CBT and the LAs that seemed to work less well related to some lack of clarity at the start up phase. A number of LAs stated that the monitoring and management information requirements were not set out at the start of the programme and this created problems later on. A few of them also mentioned the length of time it took to reach the contractual agreement with CBT, although in at least one case this appeared more to do with that LA's own internal decision making processes. Time needs to be taken before the start of programme delivery to ensure that this preparatory work happens, and that funding supports this.

- 5.8** CBT itself noted some initial difficulties due to the involvement of different LA staff members from different departments in developing and agreeing their bid specifications. This delayed responses from these LAs and held things up. Similarly, each LA has different procedures and is structured differently. This meant CBT had to deal with different departments of LAs for each grant, each with their own approaches and priorities.

- 5.9** There were also difficulties for both CBT and the VCS organisations flowing from staff turnover within LAs. Their replacements had to be acquainted with the details of projects. In a number of cases this transition was not handled well, notably proper handover arrangements did not appear to have happened and this led to a loss of knowledge to the LAs concerned and to the partnerships more generally.

*"There still could be some changes because of how the austerity measures are impacting and people that we're working with one minute really well, they've gone, replaced by somebody else so that doesn't help, but I think by and large we've navigated this."* **(VCS representative)**

- 5.10** The light touch approach to monitoring discussed above also meant that LAs were generally happy being the accountable body. The role was not burdensome and they took the view that the benefits of this role outweighed any small costs.

- 5.11** However a small number LAs saw themselves more as 'middle men' between CBT and the VCS delivery organisations and did not see themselves as having effective control of delivery to go with their formal accountability.

*"Well, the accountability's with one body, the Local Authority, yet the delivery is being done by somebody else ... If it's about delivering a programme to young people then I suggest you join the accountability with the delivery arm."* **(LA representative)**

- 5.12** A number of LAs also saw benefits from being the accountable body as it enhanced their ability to work with VCS organisations and gave the impression that they were interested in partnership working with smaller voluntary organisations in their locality.

*"The fact that we brought in a VSO I think was beneficial, it's good for us as a borough because joint working is always a good idea."* **(LA representative)**

### Local Authority and VCS organisations partnerships

- 5.13** Good relationships between the LAs and their VCS partners typically built on existing relationships. A number of VCS partners stated that this relationship had been deepened as result of their involvement in the Youth Offer. Projects' successes were seen as dependent on the effort spent to build partnerships. In one case both the LA and VCS organisation wanted to build on the lessons learnt so far and continue working with more voluntary sector groups that work with young people NEET and maybe link with private sector organisations as well.

*"But I think what we've learnt is that the model has worked because what we've not tried to do is just to run a programme that is just another employability programme that has a start and has an end. I think doing all the ground work around building the partnership, I think ultimately that's the lesson learned, if you put the work in, and try and develop that and give people some ownership of it and input into it, that actually that has the potential to run the course and have a greater impact in the long-term."* **(LA representative)**

*"If there were any further funding at all, we would want to continue the partnership with the local authority and build up more network links with other voluntary sector groups, with employers and with private sector training providers..., there's a real need for a broker role"* **(VCS representative)**

- 5.14** Regular review meetings were a common feature and were beneficial to the partnership, allowing discussion of progress, operational issues that had arisen and general relationship building. One VCS partner that did not have regular meetings with their local authority, but would have liked to, felt the lack of meetings was symptomatic of their relationship with the LA, which was more of a purchaser/provider split rather than a true collaboration.

*"If you've got a flexible local authority and you've got voluntary sector groups who are committed to helping NEET young people, then working together in the partnership or consortium is a key lesson that that's the way to do it. So the way to actually provide the best service for NEET young people is for there to be an equal partnership between the local authority and voluntary sector groups working in a consortium."* **(VCS representative)**

- 5.15** VCS organisations preferred LAs that were able to support the partnership positively: in particular this helped in building credibility with other organisations, including with employers and Jobcentre Plus.

*"... so I think they bring credibility if you're working with a council people recognize then that you have credibility and you have the capability of doing that."* **(VCS representative)**

- 5.16** Partnerships benefitted when the LA could assist the VCS partner by providing access to, or information from, their systems and sharing their expertise. Information sharing often took place at the regular review meeting between the local authority and the VCS partner(s).

*"So it really helps us build on their expertise because they have a lot of experience in working with NEET projects. We get that type of help and support from them."* **(VCS representative)**

*"...just being flexible enough to, sort of, work with us on the scope of the project... we know, if there's any issues, we can just pick up the phone and say, look, this is going on, we need your support or help in this and that, and they will do that"* **(VCS representative)**

- 5.17** VCS organisations also benefitted from LA assistance with employer engagement, linking them in with employers with which the local authority had a relationship. Another VCS organisation had engaged directly with their local Chamber of Commerce in order to facilitate work opportunities for their participants.

- 5.18** However, the reverse transfer of knowledge from VCS organisations to LAs seemed very largely absent. In one counter example, the LA lead person was able to learn about youth work. Another exception was an LA that asked the VCS to help them improve the services they deliver. For the other LAs, this suggests a missed opportunity.

*"So they want us as part of those processes, to try and improve their own services that they deliver and I absolutely think that's brilliant, I really do. So it gives us a unique opportunity of being able to hopefully inform decisions in the right way."* **(VCS representative)**

- 5.19** One area where the partnerships did not work as well as they might was over access to work experience opportunities within LAs directly, or where contractual relationships might allow them to influence contractors to offer such opportunities. A number of VCS organisation commented that LAs had the potential to offer such work experience but that this very largely did not happen. This appears to be another lost opportunity.

## Organisation of partnerships: structure, roles and communication

- 5.20** The involvement of VCS partners in the bidding process was useful as it meant that the VCS partners could be more realistic about what they could achieve. However there is a clear tension between the use of normal competitive procurement processes and such involvement. Where competitive procedures were used, then the specification of the services that could be delivered was typically set out in bids to CBT and the procurement exercise was undertaken after this.

- 5.21** Partnerships worked well when there was clarity about partners' roles, without overlap, and when partnerships were organised in a collaborative fashion. In one LA, three VCS organisations worked successfully in close collaboration. One organisation provided support and mentoring, and signposting to training and other services. This support continued in order to help sustain the young person's employment. Another partner provided intensive support for those furthest from work and the last engaged with employers, provided job brokerage and prepared the young people for job interviews. In a counter example, a lack of co-ordination between the VCS

partners in a multi-agency delivery model led to a paucity of outcomes and this model of delivery had to be abandoned in favour of delivery via just one organisation.

- 5.22** In Wandsworth, one of our case studies, the benefits of engaging with organisations outside the immediate partnership was demonstrated. The delivery team worked with police in the local area to identify potential programme participants, using the police's assessment of who in the local area, was thought to be involved in gangs and who was most likely to be at risk of offending. These cases were discussed during local multi-agency meetings, which occurred approximately every six weeks.
- 5.23** LAs choosing partners with whom they had an existing relationship applied both where a competitive procurement exercise was undertaken and where non-competitive processes were used. There was one example of a completely new local authority VCS relationship. This VCS partner was chosen via a competitive procurement process because they had a track record of delivering services for the project's target group (disabled young people NEETs especially those with learning difficulties). This project was successful at getting close to 70% of its participants into work (including apprenticeships) despite targeting a very difficult to help group. Hence opportunities may have been lost in only working with established partners.
- 5.24** While there were successful partnerships with more than one VCS partner, there is an upper limit to the number of VCS partners that could successfully be included in a partnership of this financial scale. Where the £100,000 grant per borough was divided into small parts, it led to a lack of critical mass and problems with coordinating a number of small-scale activities.

## Funding structures

- 5.25** There were a mix of funding models (including payment for activities/outcomes, profiled payments or monthly/quarterly grant payments) and there were no clear differences in levels of success according to the funding model established by the LA.
- 5.26** Overall the funding of the programme was well received. In most cases LAs were positive about the CBT funding processes, which allowed them to transfer money quickly through to their VCS partners and which they recognised was helpful to their partners' cash flow positions. Also important for VCS cash flow were payment systems from local authorities with front loading or, more generally, a payment schedule that aligned with when the costs of delivery were incurred. Grant funding was also favoured because it created less pressure for immediate results and so space for innovation.

*"So through this model you can try things to see what works and what doesn't, looking towards the end, how you can continue it and it be sustainable and that's been really great."* **(VCS representative)**

- 5.27** Pure PBR, i.e. payment only for outcomes and not for any services provided to achieve these outcomes, was not seen as suitable for working with young people NEET, who often need considerable support before outcomes can be achieved and 'cherry picking' was perceived as one result of such an approach. One VCS, which was paid largely via payment by results / for outcomes, believed this would leave them unable to claim for much of their work as many of the young people NEET they were working with would not achieve outcomes by the end of the

contract period. Some VCS organisations would not have become involved in the Youth Offer if there had been a payment by results funding model in place.

### Performance monitoring and support

- 5.28** Partnerships have taken different approaches to monitoring and management. At one extreme, one LA required European Social Fund standards of evidence. Collecting this evidence was burdensome and time-consuming for staff. At the other extreme, an LA imposed no reporting requirements on their VCS partner, which therefore developed these themselves. More generally there has been variation in terms of the frequency of reporting (mostly either monthly or quarterly) and the coverage of the data that has to be provided.
- 5.29** In general, the VCS partners have not found the LA monitoring procedures to be overly burdensome, especially when compared with other funding sources, and this freed up resources for delivery. One exception is noted above and another was where the LA required two sets of monitoring returns, one for its own internal reporting purposes and another to meet its obligation to provide monitoring returns to CBT.
- 5.30** Some VCS partners supplied their LA with case studies, as well as monitoring figures, to help progress towards employment and softer outcomes. A few VCS organisations were not asked for case studies but would have liked to have provided them in order to more fully demonstrate the impact of their projects. One LA required their VCS partner to comment on what has been working well and what has not. This, together with case studies, appear useful ways of capturing information that can be used to adjust the provision if necessary.
- 5.31** Partnerships that retained a small percentage of the budget to resource their project management had a greater chance of this being effective. Having a strong project manager lead in the local authority was important to address any implementation difficulties.
- 5.32** Finally, there was some confusion amongst both LAs and VCS partners between the information that was required by CBT for its monitoring and programme management function and that collected by Inclusion as part of its evaluation of the Youth Offer.

### VCS partners

- 5.33** A number of factors were associated with successful VCS organisations:
- Organisations with experience and expertise in the local area: this provided additional value for partnerships as VCS organisations were able to draw on other relationships they had in the local area. Most LAs stated that this expertise and experience was their primary reason for choosing their particular VCS partner(s). Overwhelmingly, this led them to choose VCS organisations they had worked with previously. This had the benefit of ensuring that the VCS partners had a proven degree of competency. Did this preference for working with established partners militate against picking the best partner? Unfortunately, it is very difficult to answer this question because we only have one example of a genuinely new local authority – VCS partnership. This new partnership was successful.

- Ability and willingness to deliver the agreed services with agreement between the local authority and their VCS partner(s) on: the design of services; the local socio-economic context and resulting needs; aims and priorities and effective regular communication mechanisms between partners. In general, there were differing but positive degrees of consensus between the LAs and their partners on these issues. However, in one instance where this was clearly not the case this led to a disconnect between the services provided by the VCS organisation and those that the LA had expected.

*"We've got a very good relationship with our partner at the council, and I'm very open so if we're struggling I will say we're struggling and if we're working really well she will make sure that she knows what we're doing as well so there's no issues"* **(VCS representative)**

*"I think the key is being able to deliver what we say we're going to deliver and being upfront enough to say what we can't do. It's about honesty and integrity, openness and transparency."* **(VCS representative)**

- Remaining in contact with young people after the lifetime of the project: this was useful to LAs as they could then more easily engage with these young people in future.
- A willingness to engage with other VCS providers: where VCS providers could build co-operative relationships with other providers, based on clear distinctions as each organisation's role, then young people had better experiences.

## 6 The impact of the Youth Offer Programme on participants

**6.1** This chapter presents a summary and discussion of the impact that the CBT Youth Offer programme has had on participants. All the information referred to in this chapter is drawn from the Management Information (MI) collected by partners from the beginning of their projects until September 2015. At the point this evaluation report was finalised, some projects were still delivering services so the numbers in this chapter will not completely reflect the impact of the programme. It is worth noting again that, due to the amount of missing data, results must be interpreted with caution.<sup>13</sup>

### Participant engagement

**6.2** A total of 5,939 young people started on the Youth Offer programme during the two years of the programme. These starters were more or less evenly split between young people NEET and young people “at risk of NEET”; 37.3% were young people NEET (2,214), and 31.1% were “at risk of NEET” young people (1,848). For the remaining 31.6% of participants their status at the moment of joining the programme was not recorded.

**6.3** The number of participants varied considerably across the individual projects, but the numbers of participants engaged is not an indicator of relative success. The three LAs with the highest number of participants were Bromley, (1,693 starters), Lambeth (1,298 starters), and Tower Hamlets (501). These LAs’ interventions were aimed at reducing the number of “unknown NEETs” (those whose NEET status was unknown because they had “disappeared off the radar”) in these boroughs. The large number of participants is explained by the fact that these approaches were more of a data collection exercise linked to referrals to youth services outside the Youth Offer rather than direct participation in services funded by the Youth Offer. Some other boroughs had very low numbers of participants but this was generally because they engaged with harder to reach and more disadvantaged participants, who required more intensive support.

**6.4** When engaging with participants, delivery organisations have to be persistent and have a long-term approach in engaging with them.

*"There's one young man that I'm working with now he was referred to me, there was numerous attempts to sort of get him to engage. He then went into prison, he's come out of prison, and now he's said, yes I want to engage, and we got him onto a programme and he's doing well. So sometimes it's having that long-term approach and not being too worried about the fact that somebody hasn't engaged at one point, because you just say, okay I'm still here, so any time you*

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<sup>13</sup> These figures contain the latest reported data up to September 2015, except for the following boroughs, for which the data was not received in time to be included in the analysis: Brent, Islington, Lambeth, Lewisham, and Richmond. Our cut-off point was Noon on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

*need you can come back. I think for young people that's an approach that works," (VCS representative)*

**6.5** Moreover, once an organisation has managed to engage with a young person it is important to start the support journey straight away, as participants might otherwise disengage.

## Demographic Profile

**6.6** The demographic profile of participants was broadly:

- A slightly higher proportion of males than females were recruited onto the programme, 52.7% males as opposed to 47.2% females. 33.4% of starters were aged 19-24, 30.7% were aged 16-17, and 20.4% were aged 18. There is no information on age for 15.5% of participants.
- Information on lone parent status is missing for 39.2% of participants (2,330 participants). 2% were recorded as lone parents (116 participants). Just over 1% of participants were carers. There was no information on carer status for 62.9% of participants.
- In total, 8.3% of participants who started on the programme were disabled, of whom 4.7% of participants had a learning difficulty/disability, 3.0% had a mental health condition, and 0.6% of participants were disabled with a physical impairment.
- 63.9% of participants were not disabled, although there was no information collected on disability status for 27.8% of participants.
- On the ethnicity profile, 36.8% of participants were white, 29.5% were black, 10.6% were Asian, 8.3% were of mixed ethnicity, and 6.8% belonged to "other ethnic groups". Again, information on ethnicity was missing for 8.0% of participants.

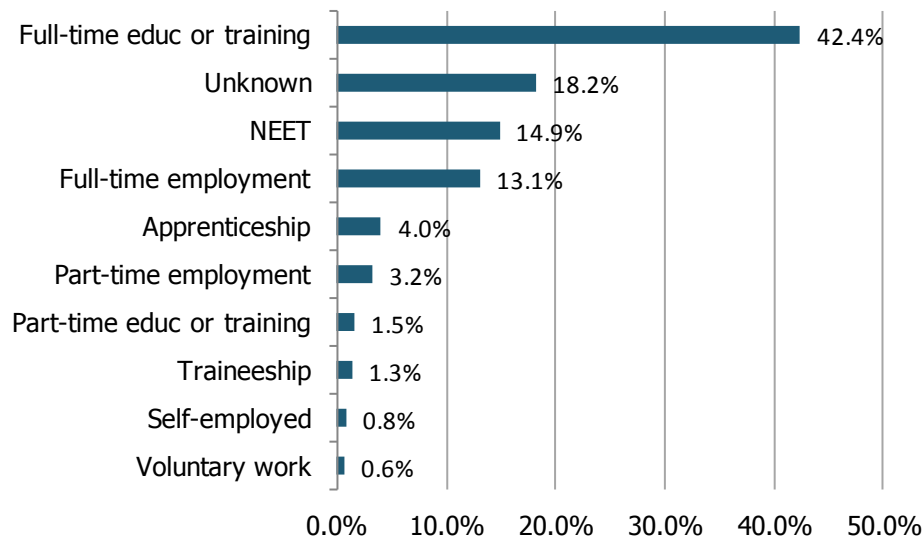
**6.7** More information on the demographic profile of participants, leavers who became NEET and leavers who went into EET can be found in Appendix 4. The word "leavers" we use throughout the report refers to "early leavers" (participants who left the Youth Offer programme early) as well as "completers" (participants who left after completing the whole programme).

## Outcomes

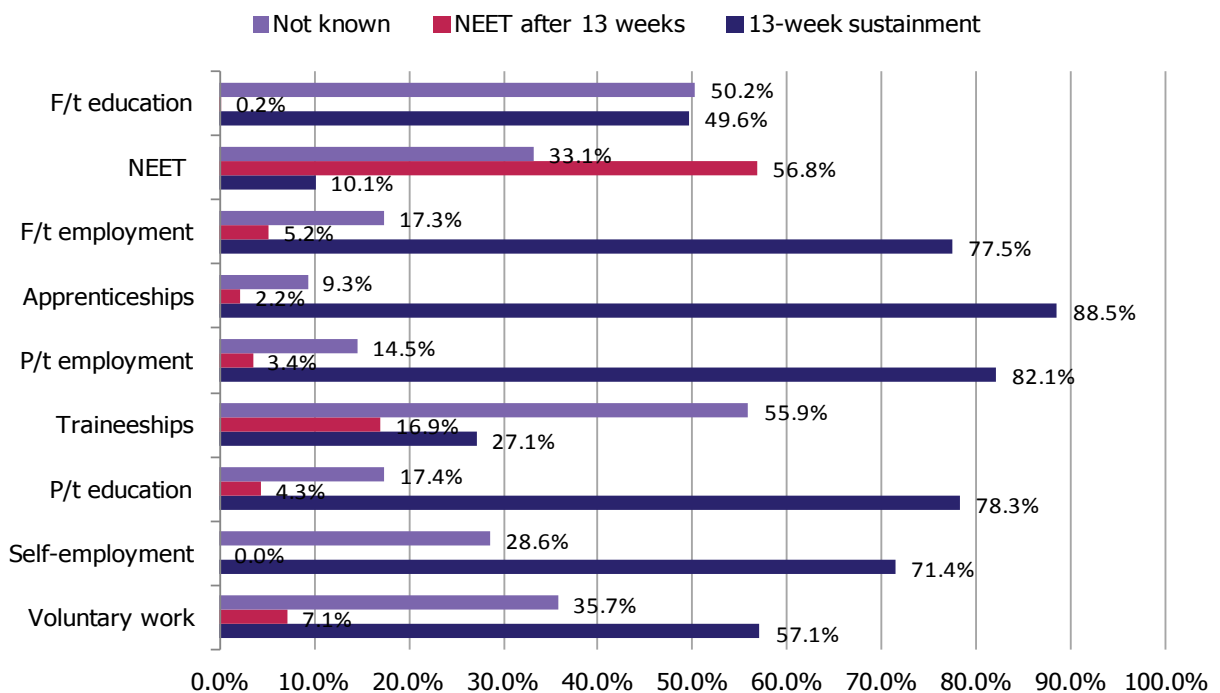
### Outcomes from the MI analysis

**6.8** Of the 5,939 young people who started on the Youth Offer programme, 4,545 were reported as having left the programme up to the date of this evaluation. Of these leavers, the highest proportion (42.4%) moved into full-time education or training (1,927 participants). 14.9% became NEET after leaving the programme (676 participants), 13.1% have moved into full-time employment (595), 4.0% obtained an apprenticeship (183), 3.2% moved into part-time employment (145), 1.3% got a traineeship (59), 1.5% moved into part-time education or training (69), 0.8% became self-employed (35), and 0.6% moved into voluntary work (28). There was no information on destination outcomes for 18.2% of leavers (828 participants).





**Figure 6.1: Outcomes for leavers.**



**Figure 6.2: 13-week sustainment.**

**6.9** The figure above shows the percentage of participants who sustained their outcome for 13 weeks and the percentage that become NEET 13 weeks after securing their outcome (whether it was a job, entry into education, into an apprenticeship, etc.).

**6.10** Of those participants who went into full-time education 49.6% were still in education after 13 weeks. There is no information on sustainment for 50.2% of participants who went into full-time

education. Of those participants who went into full time employment, 77.5% sustained it for 13 weeks and 5.2% had become NEET. Of those who went into an apprenticeship, 88.5% of them sustained it after 13 weeks and only 2.2% had become NEET. Of those who went into part-time employment, 82.1% were still in part-time employment after 13 weeks. Of those who went into traineeships, 27.1% of participants sustained that traineeship for 13 weeks, and 16.9% had become NEET, although there is no information on sustainment for 55.9% of participants who went into traineeships. Of participants who went into part-time education, 78.3% of them sustained that outcome for 13 weeks. Of those who went into self-employment, 71.4% of them were still in self-employment after 13 weeks. Finally, of those who went into voluntary work, 57.1% were still in voluntary work after 13 weeks. 7.1% had become NEET.

### Outcomes by type of support

- 6.11** Classifying the 31 different projects by theme is very challenging given how different the support offered across LAs has been, and sometimes even within them, when there have been multiple VCS organisations delivering the project. We have nonetheless attempted to classify the projects by scale (low, medium or high level of engagement with participants) and by typology of support offered (pure mentoring, employability training or identifying “unknowns”).
- 6.12** Classifying projects in this way and analysing the resultant outcomes of participants into full time employment and full time education should give an indication of which types of projects were more or less successful at securing EET outcomes for participants. Large-scale projects did not really offer direct support to participants but referred them to existing services. So it would not be valid to compare their outcomes against those of smaller projects offering intensive support. Additionally, low scale projects tended to engage with very disadvantaged and hard-to-reach participants. Hence outcomes from these projects will be more difficult to achieve. Thus, even though the data suggest that low scale projects were relatively more successful at getting EET outcomes for participants this can only be concluded cautiously.
- 6.13** Having noted these caveats, we can conclude that projects that focused on pure mentoring and bespoke one-to-one support were relatively more successful at securing entries into full time education for their participants as opposed to entries into full time employment (23.6% average entry rate into full time education as opposed to 13.0% average entry rate into full time employment). In contrast, projects that focused more on employability training (e.g. including some type of paid or unpaid work experience) had relatively higher entry rates into full time employment than into full time education, on average (30.7% as opposed to 11.8%). More details can be found in Appendix 4. Therefore the design of projects should reflect whether the desired outcomes are more focused on education as the immediate destination (presumably as part of a journey that leads ultimately to employment) or on entering employment directly.

### Targets

- 6.14** From the (MI) analysis it is clear that most LAs were reaching their targets. From the qualitative interviews we found out that a minority of LAs and VCS organisations felt the targets set initially were unrealistic, given the difficulty of reaching and engaging young people NEET. As a consequence, a number of projects changed their targets during the programme. The emphasis on targets illustrates the difference in expectations between CBT and LAs. CBT appreciated the

difficulties in working with young people NEET and therefore expected lower targets, but it was the LAs that initially set the targets for the VCS organisations to meet.

### Perceived impacts of the programme by participants

**6.15** This section presents the barriers participants faced to entering employment or education (as explained by them in the face to face interviews and the focus groups) and how the support received helped them tackle these barriers.

**6.16** According to the responses received in the online survey<sup>14</sup>, the most important thing participants wanted to gain from the programme was finding a job (mentioned by 29% of participants). 31% of participants said that they had fully achieved the goal they were hoping to achieve from participating in the Youth offer and 56% said that they had made a lot of progress on this.

### Barriers faced and support received by participants

**6.17** The main barriers participants faced were: lack of confidence in themselves; lack of motivation; lack of knowledge and information on what options they had and lack of working experience and qualifications for those looking for a job.

*"Before joining the programme it was cr\*p really. Well I was having panic attacks and anxiety and all that sort of stuff and I was basically just stuck at home."* **(Participant)**

### Support received

**6.18** The support they received varied from LA to LA but overall included the following: one-to-one support sessions; CV and cover letter workshops; day courses and other types of training leading to recognised qualifications etc.

**6.19** What young people valued most from the support received was:

- Tailored and personalised support as opposed to the support received from other places, like the Job Centre. Most participants felt that the support received through the project was markedly different and much better and they felt their mentor genuinely wanted to help them.

*"And they give you the time of day ... and if you break down they'll understand. If you start crying they'll understand because they care about you; they want to help you."* **(Participant)**

*"Having a mentor who really does have your back...Especially when it comes to having your rights and how you should be treated and what someone should do and if I never had a mentor I would not have known anything."* **(Participant)**

- Having someone who believed in them, and to whom they were able to talk. Having someone who genuinely cared about them and motivated them.

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<sup>14</sup> We only received 39 responses from participants to our online survey. While this means that the results are not statistically representative some of the results come through strongly enough to be worth reporting.

*"The thing that helped me aspire to be great is that they created something for me that means everything's achievable as in like we did mini goals, we worked through every single thing how I would reach what I want to be."* **(Participant)**

- Having a purpose for waking up in the mornings and a schedule for the day, sometimes also providing them with some sort of social life.

*"Before joining the programme I didn't have any plans whatsoever, I didn't have an idea what I wanted to do or anything but after actually sitting at home for three years doing nothing but movies and snacks, that's my past story, I actually feel guilty and got annoyed with it."*

**(Participant)**

*"Yes, and not just that, I've also met you know, really good friends that I think I will be friends with for life."* **(Participant)**

- Meeting with other young people who were in similar circumstances to them: they enjoyed being part of group activities.

*"They're also my second family, because I think for some of us we've had difficult home, life situations... actually coming here is a haven for a lot of us because we get to be with people that get us and don't judge us."* **(Participant)**

- Knowing that they had options and that they "own" their future and being provided with some sort of guidance on what options they had and what path they could follow.
- Having a "role model" (their mentor), someone who is successful and who can guide them on what steps they need to take (some participants do not necessarily have that in their family or friends).

*"When you have a mentor it helps you stay committed and it helps you keep focused as well."* **(Participant)**

**6.20** Overall, most participants were very positive about the programme. The majority of those we interviewed believed that they would have not achieved these outcomes without the support received through the Youth Offer Programme. All of them would recommend it (or already had) to young friends/family who are unemployed.

**6.21** Mentoring was especially helpful for participants but also important was giving them a structure and a plan. These supported them in tackling the barriers (soft or hard) that were preventing participants from entering education or employment.

### Soft outcomes

**6.22** From the two waves of qualitative fieldwork we undertook, it became apparent that the Youth Offer programme achieved multiple soft outcomes as well as hard outcomes (entries into employment education or training). The projects worked on increasing participants' confidence and self-belief and mentors helped to open up new ideas of possible career paths that participants had not previously considered. Therefore some VCS organisations would have liked more emphasis on soft outcomes, such as increase in confidence and self-esteem, and less on numbers going into EET. However this would have required a method for measuring these soft

outcomes and also some way of measuring the contribution the project had made to the "distance travelled" by each participant, put in place from the outset of the projects. Such measures exist but they tend to be commercial products that have to be licensed and doubts remain as to their predictive power for eventual employment outcomes.

*"The main thing is not just getting them into the job, you want to see that they actually progress and they move onto something else further on, because that's what it's all about, that's why we all do the job is to make sure that our guys can progress and actually make something out of their lives."* **(VCS representative)**

- 6.23** The online survey (bearing in mind the small number of replies) suggests that the programme improved a range of soft outcomes. Before the programme, most survey respondents had low levels of confidence, motivation, organisation, job readiness, and ability to manage money. This contrasted with the situation at the time they responded to our survey, when they had higher levels of these softer skills. In addition, more respondents reported better team-working skills. 82% of respondents thought that these changes had mostly been the result of their participation in the Youth Offer programme.

## Success Factors

- 6.24** Every project in the Youth Offer programme differed in some way: in the target group they aimed to reach; in the way each VCS organisation engaged with the young person NEET; the involvement of the LA and the support offered. In general, VCS organisations believe that young people NEET are very difficult to reach, engage and support. Their support needs are very uncertain (a priori) and they may have underlying barriers which mentors and support workers take time to uncover. However, we have been able to identify some key success factors behind the projects that were the most effective in securing EET outcomes for the young people:

- 6.25** The most successful projects were the ones that were working more intensively with smaller volumes of clients, compared to high volume and low intensity projects.

*"[We work with] young people with disabilities and complex needs and hence the low numbers of young people compared to other London boroughs and nationally, in [name of borough]. But they are predominantly those with additional needs so that's why we wanted to focus the project on where the need was."* **(LA representative)**

- 6.26** Participants also benefited from having a structured programme and "timeline" for support and progress. Programmes that had clear objectives, a clear structure and participant journey and professional workers were more successful. However, this has to be balanced against the need for flexibility in interventions and ways of providing support for this group of young people.

*"On other occasions we're flexible enough that if they do have high anxiety getting to the centre, that might be a big problem for them, I would go and meet them in the local library or, you know, at the school they used to go to sometimes, it's going to them or them coming to us, it's worked well."* **(VCS representative)**

- 6.27** The value of bespoke support and one to one mentoring is a recurring theme throughout the evaluation. In the online survey 94% (17 out of 18 respondents) thought that mentoring was

very useful and 91% (20 out of 22 respondents) found the one to one support very useful. At the end of survey, participants were asked for any comments they wished to make. Of the 13 respondents from Hillingdon 10 mentioned (in various ways) the positive influence and impact on them a particular mentor/support worker who was mentioned by name. Asked about what they had liked most about the programme participants mentioned the following:

*"I was treated with respect and I was very welcome when I met with [name of mentor]."*  
**(Participant)**

*"Helped me build the skills and confidence to get into work. It also helped me to get motivated and start doing something."* **(Participant)**

*"It was professional, helpful, friendly, with up-to-date knowledge that enabled the provision of relevant information and guidance. Very approachable too!"* **(Participant)**

*"[I especially liked] the commitment from my mentor."* **(Participant)**

*"[I especially liked] being given a chance."* **(Participant)**

**6.28** Finally, young people seemed to respond better to having just one centre to go to and one single point of contact. Some participants took time to get familiar with the way there, the place itself and the staff. Changing this halfway through their support journey made them confused and created the risk of participants disengaging halfway during their support journey.

*"I think the way that the programme was split doesn't work... I went into it a little bit in terms of the split in terms of the participant journey, we built these relationships and we hand them over and they meet people they've never met for their training and then we have to be kind of liaising to see what's going on with them, there's not a coherent thing."* **(VCS representative).**

## 7 Sustainability and legacy of the Youth Offer

- 7.1** The November 2014 Learning Event brought together the LAs and VCS partners from across London to discuss lessons. It provided an opportunity for LA staff who were most involved with the Youth Offer projects to meet (as opposed to more distant senior managers). This event also facilitated learning between LAs and VCS organisations. The final Learning Event is due to take place in December 2015.
- 7.2** Overall the views of the participants corresponded with the findings of the evaluation. In addition, partners expressed gratitude for the flexible funding and the two-year time period, which meant that they could meet the needs of service users and could develop their delivery accordingly, rather than working to meet short-run targets. Attendees also gave examples of relationships that had been established with local education institutions and more focused advice and guidance within statutory organisations as consequences of the programme.
- 7.3** Concerns were raised (during the learning event and second wave of research) regarding gaps in the service at the end of the two-year funding period. Some projects have since sourced funding to continue the projects, from ESF or Big Lottery funding streams, and this has been an important legacy of the programme, but the majority of partnerships are still working to source additional funding.
- 7.4** The Youth Offer has enabled LAs and VCS partners to enhance the support available to young people NEET in their local area, to reduce the number of young people NEET and to fill gaps where provision did not exist.

*"It's giving us peace of mind that those young people that we're perhaps not able to work with, or have the capacity to do this sort of level of detail with, that there was provision that would work with and support them."* **(LA Representative)**

- 7.5** The evaluation found that the LAs were most effective where they could provide capacity building opportunities, networking and ensure that the VCS partner was able to access LA support or potential participants by referring young people to the programme. Integration and cooperation were vital to successful multi-partner delivery. For example, one LA developed in-house services to refer young people to the project; in another, the project enabled the VCS partner to become more integrated in the local economy as partnering with the LA enabled them to create links with local employers and other voluntary organisations. One VCS representative spoke of the LA facilitating wider employer engagement links and a relationship with the local Chamber of Commerce. Through working with a greater number of employers, VCS representatives also spoke of an increased understanding of employer needs and requirements.

*"This project has meant that they've developed a network of connections and partnerships with the local authority, with DWP, with other local voluntary sector organisations, with employers. So they're becoming much more integrated into the wider borough and economy."* **(LA Representative)**

**7.6** LAs also reported a strengthened relationship with their VCS partner and, in some cases, a better relationship with the local voluntary sector more generally. Furthermore, the projects were seen to improve some local young people's perceptions of the partners. They became more interested in the support offered after their peers, who had engaged, spoke highly of the services they had received.

*"It allowed us to build a relationship with our voluntary sector...we weren't chasing them all the time saying, where's your output? We were talking to them about how is this working, how can we help you with this or would this person be a good person [for the project]" (LA Representative)*

*"News really spreads quite quickly if a programme doesn't work or if it's not worth going on or if the young person perceives it as, cheap labour. But equally, news spreads just as quickly if something does work, so it's actually the reputational gains..." (LA Representative)*

**7.7** Several VCS representatives felt that their organisation now had a raised profile as a result of the Youth Offer, increasing the likelihood of obtaining future funding and working in partnership, especially as the project had added to their delivery portfolio and enabled them to grow their capacity. The projects also improved partners' monitoring processes and increased staff expertise in working with young people.

*"[Our organisation] is now seen as a good place to send young people, who require specialist help to get them ready for employment or education." (VCS representative)*

**7.8** The programme has increased LAs' knowledge of what has been happening in their borough and what services are available. One LA reported that they have now been able to identify distinct groups of young people that need support in the area.

**7.9** Going forward, VCS providers felt that an area that LAs could build on would be to extend internal opportunities for work placements for project participants and, when this did occur, the local authority reported a positive experience. There was also a general desire for LAs to respond to the VCS providers' experience and/or learning in supporting young people in their respective areas into EET outcomes.

**7.10** Finally, the legacy of the Youth Offer should hopefully be reflected in the lessons that have been learned for the future, and the practical applications of these lessons.



## 8 Lessons for the Future

- 8.1** We have grouped our findings into lessons relating to matters which should be established before delivery, those relating to delivery and finally for the partnerships that support delivery.

### Pre-Delivery Lessons

- 8.2** The design of the programme should reflect the vulnerabilities of the target group. A lack of employment is very often only one part of a range of problems faced by young people NEET. Projects to assist young people NEET with complex needs require time, a commitment to intensive support to address a range of issues and well-trained professional staff and mentors.
- 8.3** Work with young people NEET is resource-intensive and the funding and staffing available need to reflect this.
- 8.4** It is important that there is a sufficient lead-in period before the delivery of services to young people NEET begins. This is required to build the relationship and understanding between the LA and their VCS partner(s) and, in those cases where provision is aimed at more hard to reach young people, to find and recruit the young participants. This may well require significant outreach activity.
- 8.5** Providers' detailed delivery plans and resources, especially staff, need to be in place so that project delivery can proceed as funding is received.
- 8.6** The Youth Offer provided funding to LAs to address the problems of young people NEET with very few limitations about how this funding was to be used. It is not clear that this degree of freedom was optimal (for example, there were only limited attempts to use the money innovatively and to learn from this experience). If funders wish to see specific types of activity or exclude other activities, then some degree of greater prescription is required in invitations to tender or similar guidance to bidders.
- 8.7** LAs can be compartmentalised and this leads to difficulties and delays with agreeing funding. LAs should bring together specific bid and then delivery teams with reach across departments and the ability and authority to co-ordinate bids / delivery.
- 8.8** The time profile of funding should have a front loaded element to cover set up costs. More generally the time profile of payments should align with provider spend to avoid cash flow pressures on small providers, including VCS providers.
- 8.9** The information requirements, both for performance monitoring and evaluation purposes are best established before provision starts. This avoids confusion and ensures that the right information is collected. These information requirements need to be suitable for the model of provision.
- 8.10** The light monitoring both of LAs by CBT and of VCS organisations by LAs has been popular with those being monitored and ensures that monitoring requirements do not consume resources that

might otherwise be used for delivery. This needs to be balanced against the requirement to collect sufficient information to ensure effective performance management and evaluation.

- 8.11** As well as hard outcomes/numbers, case studies could be used to assess progress on soft measures. Simple measures of self-efficacy (confidence, motivation etc.) with a longitudinal element could also be used.

### Lessons for Delivery

- 8.12** Local delivery of projects via LAs that act as the accountable body can be effective.
- 8.13** The Youth Offer Programme has shown that it is possible to work successfully with hard to help young people NEET. For example, one project was successful at getting close to 70% of its participants into work (including apprenticeships) despite targeting young people NEET with learning difficulties and other disabilities - a very difficult to reach group.
- 8.14** Projects which are more focused, providing more intensive support to a smaller volume of participants are more effective than higher volume projects offering less intensive support.
- 8.15** Support tailored to the individual needs of young people NEET is more successful, particularly with the most vulnerable groups.
- 8.16** The desired outcomes from a project should influence the focus of its services. Evidence from this evaluation suggests that there is a relationship between the type of project and the outcomes that can be expected. Projects with a focus on mentoring were particularly successful at helping young people NEET move into education and training, whilst those emphasising employability (for example work experience) were more successful in moving them into employment.
- 8.17** Engagement with employers is essential. Work experience is effective at helping young people NEETs subsequently move into work. LAs are large employers both directly and potentially, via their contracting arrangements. They should utilise these to provide work experience to young people NEETs who are being assisted via projects.
- 8.18** Paid work experience is more effective than voluntary work opportunities in preparing young people for employment.
- 8.19** Mentoring appears to be successful and participants were positive about the benefits that mentoring had given them. These include the personal relationship with an adult as well as the formal support. Professional mentoring is needed for the hardest to help young people NEETs. Volunteer mentors are more appropriate for NEETS with less deep seated problems.
- 8.20** VCS organisations have the ability to engage with hard to reach young people NEET. A corollary of this is that young people NEETs' deep seated and wide-ranging needs mean that they need to engage with other VCS organisations to fully address these needs. In doing so they need to ensure that the transfer of clients is done in as seamless a way as possible, for example, via co-location of different services. NEET clients can easily be lost if they are expected to move from receiving services from one location and organisation that they have become comfortable with, to a new organisation in a new location.

## Lessons for Partnership

- 8.21** LAs have built partnerships with VCS organisations mainly on the basis of established relationships. This was done for good reasons: to work with those they know were effective. However this has meant that the chances to build new relationships and try out new ways of working have not been as extensive as it might. A better balance between building on existing relationships and establishing new ones should be taken.
- 8.22** Early collaboration in service delivery design by local authorities with VCS organisations may be helpful, particularly where the provision is for especially hard to reach groups. However, there is a clear tension between such early VCS involvement and standard competitive local authority procurement procedures. Local authorities need to weigh the relative advantages of these two approaches.
- 8.23** Local authorities are able to build capacity within local VCS organisations, in particular, by helping to build their credibility with other organisations, assisting them with employer engagement via their existing network of employer contacts and passing on their experience of working with young people NEETs. However local authorities in the Youth Offer have not fully exploited the opportunity to learn from their VCS partners.
- 8.24** Effective local partnerships are based on a shared understanding of the local socio-economic context and resulting needs and a consensus as to aims and priorities. Regular meetings between local authorities and VCS organisations are central to information exchange between them and general relationship building.
- 8.25** Multi-VCS partnerships worked well when there was clarity as to the partners' respective roles. This gave participants access to a wider range of expertise. The involvement of too many organisations can, however, lead to disconnection of services and few positive outcomes.

## 9 Appendix 1: Evaluation Approach

- 9.1** The Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion (*Inclusion*) was commissioned to evaluate the Youth Offer Programme in July 2013.
- 9.2** The aim of the evaluation has been to assess the success of the programme in achieving the aims and objectives; to assess the value of the specific partnership approach used, to explore the added value of a VCS partner and to assess the effectiveness of different approaches to working with young people NEET.
- 9.3** The evaluation will contribute to a wider set of evidence on what works in supporting young people NEET into education, employment or training, and will provide new learning on how to identify and engage with young people NEET whose activity is not known. The evaluation also aims to provide learning points for CBT and the City of London Corporation, in awarding grants to LAs as 'the accountable body'.<sup>15</sup>
- 9.4** Prior to conducting fieldwork there was a scoping stage of research that involved agreeing an evaluation methodology, exploring local partnership models and data collection and creating a monitoring and evaluation framework. To do this the *Inclusion* team undertook desk-based research, such as reviewing funding bids and analysing existing literature, to provide the context for the evaluation to identify issues that could be explored in greater detail, and conducted short scoping telephone interviews with each of the 32 LAs to get to know the partnership better and to see whether the initial themes identified were correct. Parameters for data collection could then be set and a programme 'logic model', which served as a framework for assessment of the causal connections between inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts, could be created.
- 9.5** The full programme review, which took a mixed methods approach, involved two waves of fieldwork. The first included an online survey of 117 young people participating in the programme, telephone interviews with one LA partner and one VCS partner in 13 of the boroughs<sup>16</sup>; case studies in two boroughs, which involved face-to-face interviews with the local authority partner and with all VCS partners and a focus group with young people.
- 9.6** The second wave included semi-structured interviews with one LA partner and one VCS partner in the remaining boroughs; seven case studies (in the same format as the first wave) and another online survey to examine the progress of both the participants and the programme.
- 9.7** *Inclusion* worked alongside CBT to decide which partnerships were appropriate to use as case studies.
- 9.8** Both waves of fieldwork have been underpinned by Quarterly Management Information (MI) Data provided by the partnerships. This data aimed to summarise performance against success

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<sup>15</sup> Grants are usually awarded directly to charities and VCS organisations.

<sup>16</sup> Boroughs were randomly split between year one and year two of the evaluation but those prioritised for year one included boroughs which were due to complete after year one and those with more established delivery.

measures (such as job entries) and therefore assess the effectiveness of various delivery models. It has also enabled an assessment of the success of the programme in achieving its goal of getting 1,000 young people NEETs into jobs or apprenticeships over two years.

- 9.9** To facilitate the dissemination of learning and best practice and to provide an opportunity to reflect and feedback on the Youth Offer, the evaluation process has also involved two learning events. The first, at the end of year one (and following the completion of the interim report) involved two sessions, one on getting to know other youth projects and another on working with young people NEET or at risk of NEET. A second is to be held in December 2015, and the interviews with LA and VCS representatives in the most recent round of fieldwork included a question about what they would like this event to cover.

## 10 Appendix 2: Detail of the projects undertaken

<b>Borough</b>	<b>Project Summary</b>
Barking & Dagenham	Community-based engagement with at least 100 workless 18-24 year olds from across the borough, including Barking Foyer. The project offered a range of training and support with employability, job search and work placements. The aim was to move 50 young people into work.
Barnet	A preventative one year Education Transition mentoring programme that supported 80 young people 'at risk' of gaining NEET status to move into jobs, apprenticeships, traineeships, training programmes or further education.
Bexley	Aiming to provide 60 volunteer mentors for 60 disadvantaged young people NEET to help them navigate local opportunities: aiming for 30 moving into education, employment or an apprenticeship.
Brent	Training, mentoring and brokerage for 60 16-24 year-olds. The project hoped to support 16 young people into apprenticeships with local employers. One-to-one, group support and employability skills (CV writing, mock interviews, etc.) were also available.
Bromley	Support for 500 young people whose education, employment or training status was 'not known', with a target of approximately 150 to take part in intensive one-to-one and group support.
Camden	Business and peer mentoring for 60 young people NEETs aged 16-24 to support them into apprenticeships (and occasionally self-employment), using volunteer mentors.
Croydon	A pre-engagement programme of outreach, training (including sports, media and music) and mentoring aiming to support 30 young people who were furthest away from the labour market.
Ealing	One-to-one guidance for 100 young people NEET, with a minimum of 28 going into a programme of pre-employment support including mentoring, job search skills, work experience or volunteering and an intensive course.
Greenwich	One to one mentoring and support for the most disengaged young people for six months to get them into volunteering placements. Mentors were drawn from a pool of trained volunteer adult mentors.
Hackney	SkyWays Growing programme of practical work and tutorials for a target of 120, 17-24 year-olds on food growing, production, processing and marketing.
Hammersmith & Fulham	Intensive programme of employer engagement, coaching and mentoring to help 50 young people into jobs or apprenticeships at the Westfield shopping centre.
Haringey and Enfield	Joint programme between Enfield and Haringey for 130 young people providing support for self-employment and community work placements for 18-24 year-olds, and targeted employment support for 16-17 year-olds.

Harrow	Pre-employability support including personal development, mentoring and qualifications for 80 young people including those with special educational needs, excluded from school or involved in the social care or criminal justice system.
Havering	Four-month paid work placements and support for 20 young people NEET over the long-term, including 'looked after' children.
Hillingdon	Programme of engagement, goal setting, learning, volunteering or work taster placements and support for 180 16-18 year-olds who had complex barriers to accessing the labour market.
Hounslow	A partnership board and programme of activities (including gardening experience) for 50 young people aged 16-24 NEET. The second year the programme focused more on 19-24 year olds.
Islington	Personal and employment support for 50 young people aged 16-24, including those with mild to moderate learning difficulties, young parents and those with ESOL needs.
Kensington & Chelsea	A new Youth Employment 'IntoWork' Development Officer to support at least 10 young people NEET to become 'employment-ready', in-work mentoring and support for 16-24 year-olds and support and training for employers.
Kingston upon Thames	Preventative support for a minimum of 10 young people at risk of gaining NEET status including care leavers, and pilot outreach work to find and engage 16-19 year-olds across one ward to support them into employment.
Lambeth	An apprenticeship fund for 36, 16-24 year-olds, a 'ready to work' programme for 200 young people, and a 'Let's Do Business!' education-business link activity for three schools.
Lewisham	Connecting more than 200 vulnerable young people NEET, including young carers, looked-after children and teenage parents with existing employment and training services through training and mentoring in an attempt to get them into employment, training or volunteering opportunities.
Merton	Intensive training and support that aimed to place 10 young people NEET with learning difficulties or disabilities in paid employment for nine months.
Newham	Intensive personalised support and two months of paid employment for a target of 40 young people aged 16-24 with gang affiliation or who have been involved in crime.
Redbridge	Bespoke and intensive support including on-going mentoring and job-coaching for 25 young people aged 16-24 with complex needs, particularly those with learning difficulties and disabilities.
Richmond upon Thames	Four pre-employment courses including an Educational Development International course, work experience and mentoring for 40 young people.
Southwark	Reducing the number of young people whose employment status was 'not known' through outreach, traineeship and supported apprenticeships for 150, 16-19 year-olds.

Sutton	A new Employment Engagement Worker and web portal to coordinate and share existing advice, information and support to 60 young people NEET
Tower Hamlets	Outreach, advice and signposting for 70 young people furthest away from the labour market, including those whose education, employment and training status was 'not known'.
Waltham Forest	Horticultural-related work training comprising of a series of ten-week courses on all aspects of local food growing as well as identifying placements, mentoring support and business start-up partnerships for a target of 60 young people aged 16-24 NEET
Wandsworth	Targeted interventions for young people at risk of entering gang culture or of becoming involved in crime, with a focus on the construction industry and sports coaching, and the development of a 'Risk of Gang and Crime Indicator' database.
Westminster	A new Workplace Coordinator to broker at least 53 employment opportunities for young workless people and provide support to remain in the workplace, targeting those who have already accessed significant job preparation support.



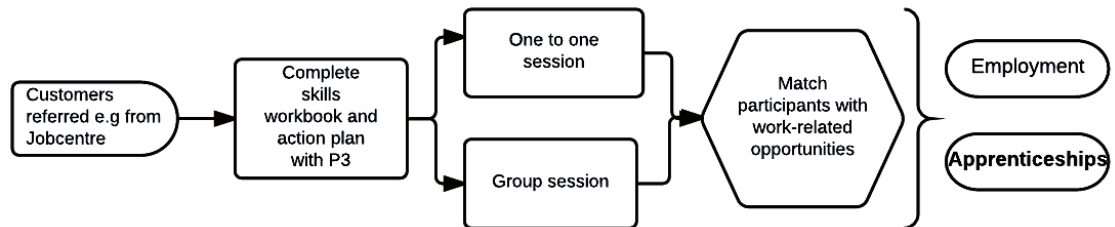
# 11 Appendix 3: Case Studies

## Case study 1: Brent

**11.1** Brent LA worked with P3 (People, Potential, Possibilities) to provide a generalist employment programme that would support 16-24 year olds who were NEET and residents in Brent into training, mentoring, apprenticeships and employment. Initially, the project also involved the Brent Adult and Continuing Education Service (BACES) and Brent Start, who delivered training to participants before they moved on to work with P3. However, this was changed after the first year to P3 being responsible for all delivery. The project aimed to help young people who had few skills, or identified with social difficulties, to establish themselves in the labour market and help them to understand more about employment. P3 offered young people a range of activities including CV writing, mock interview training and job searching. Brent funded P3 on a payment for activities / by results basis.

### Delivery model

**11.2** Young people were referred to the programme in a number of ways: word-of-mouth; from a psychotherapist; social workers; Job Centre Plus; Youth Offending Teams and several organisations that had established working relationships with the VCS. The first stage of a participant's journey involved the young person completing a skills development workbook and an action plan with P3. Staff would then offer young people support according to their specific needs to assist their progress into sustainable EET outcomes.



*"Once the person comes on they'll do a skills development workbook with us and an action plan and then we tailor it to the young person. So it might be some group sessions they get to do as well as part of their training or might be one on one. It might be here, it might be outside in the community. We literally go on what the young person needs and asks for and what we might identify to help move them forward, motivational stuff, realise what they're interested in and then finally help them gain an apprenticeship with a job outcome." (VCS representative)*

### Project outcomes

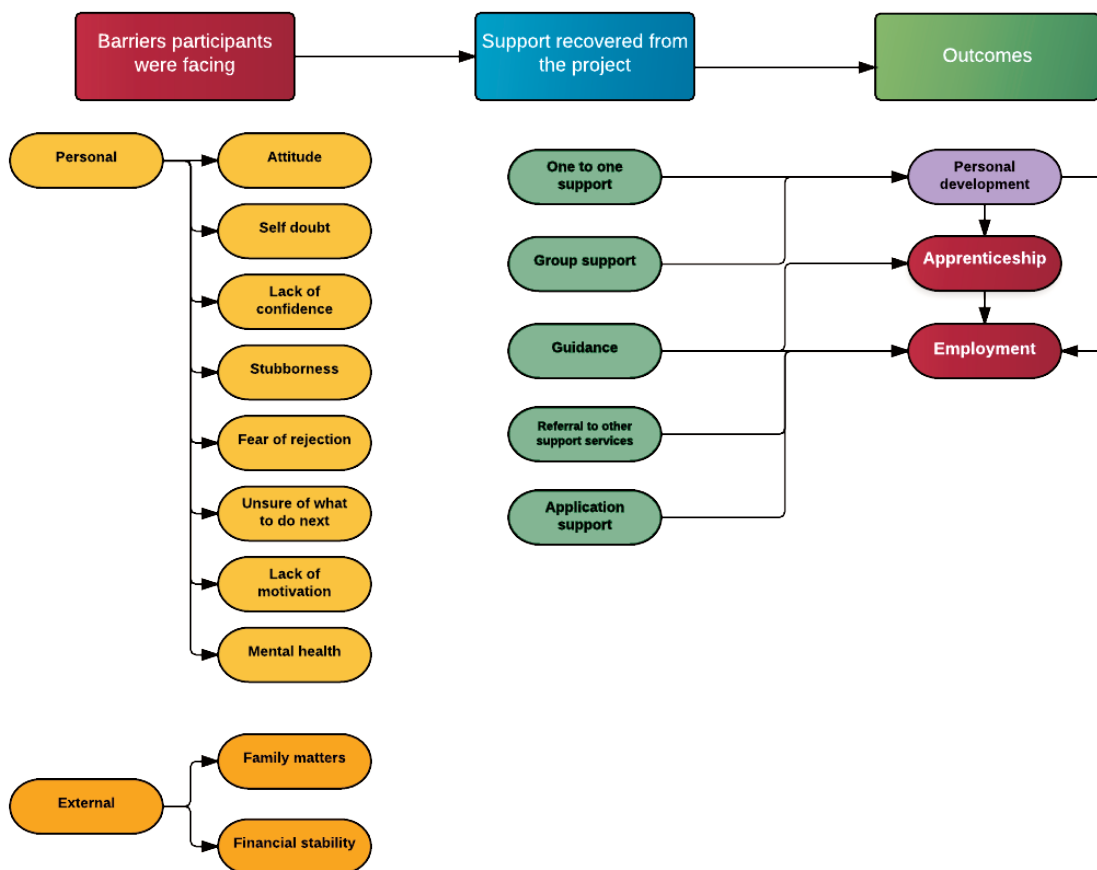
**11.3** The project widely impacted the lives of young people in Brent not only by enhancing the provision of employability skills and their transition into EET, but it also sought to transform their lives more broadly by addressing other wider needs. The generalist nature of the project enabled it to offer a range of services for young people who suffered from individual barriers to support. A client who had experienced domestic violence is an example of this.

*"We have a DV client getting herself sorted and moved out and not having to face her environment. We supported her with getting her housing and what have you so now that that's sorted out, she's safe and then she can now focus on progressing and moving on as well so I think that was definitely a good result in that respect."* **(VCS representative)**

**11.4** Whilst young people identified a range of different barriers that prevented them from moving on into EET: fear of rejection; attitude; self doubt; stubbornness; lack of confidence; unsure of what to do next; mental health; financial stability; family matters and motivation, they confirmed that the provider helped them to make decisions and gave them a clearer idea of what they wanted to do in life.

*"When I started coming here, I got to make my decisions to choose what I wanted to do with life and I think if I didn't have people like [name of mentor] and P3 helping me make my decision, I would end up in a rubbish job because I didn't like school"* **(Participant)**

*"I've found more of a motivation in my life after coming to this place."* **(Participant)**



**11.5** Overall, the programme had a total of 60 starters. Of this number, 27 have left the programme - 5 (18.5 per cent) went into part time employment and 3 (11.1 per cent) went into an apprenticeship scheme. The destination of 19 (70.4 per cent) participants is unknown. So it is impossible to judge the success of the project on the basis of this quantitative data.

## Delivery lessons

- 11.6** The LA found that the flexibility of the programme was crucial for making the programme successful. It was important to tailor services specific to the individual in order to gain the young person's trust and understand the young person.

*"So, I think that's definitely one thing for making a successful programme, it has to be flexible. It has to be tailored to the individual person and it has to be one to one support at the beginning to gain the young person's trust and make sure that they're going on a journey that's going to be right for them and having a range of offers at the start. Understanding the young person, having the time to work with them and that, unfortunately, can't really be done cheaply and quickly a lot of the time." (LA representative)*

- 11.7** Initially, with Brent Start and BACES involved, P3 were unable to receive referrals directly. Instead referrals went to Brent Start and BACES for initial training before moving on to P3. Brent Start and BACES were not running their courses that frequently. This meant that P3 had little control over throughput and outcomes, which meant a lack of payments to them.

*"The main one is, for me, is to have more control over the payments by results because relying on the partner agency and if it's not a real even split where we can achieve some of the results, 100 percent of the results have to go through that way." (VCS representative)*

- 11.8** Nonetheless, after re-evaluating the project the LA agreed that P3 would be solely responsible for delivery.

*"They responded when we needed them to and changed ideas ... we gave it a try and it didn't work, Brent listened and then worked with us to support us to do it in-house." (VCS representative)*

*"We re-evaluated the project with Brent who agreed then that we could solely deliver it so we could be in control of getting people through the courses and then delivering the job and apprenticeship outcomes. Since January it's been rolling like that and we're now delivering the outcomes we should be." (VCS representative)*

- 11.9** This was an example of a multi-VCS partnership that did not function effectively, because of problems with co-ordination between the partners, and which necessitated a move to a single delivery organisation.

## Partnership model

- 11.10** The success of the partnership between the VCS partner and LA was mixed. The partnership underwent a lot of challenges that emerged initially from the LA wanting a different delivery model. This caused there to be friction because of the low outcomes that resulted from the lack of throughput from Brent Start / BACES to P3. P3, however, was very committed to continuing their work to help young people achieve positive outcomes:

*"We're a social inclusion charity and this is what we're passionate about, it's what we'll keep doing. I mean the impact for us is we get to see the results of when a young person has been able to achieve that and now starting to support themselves and stuff, that's what we do it for. And being able to live like independently and move on." (VCS representative)*

- 11.11** Despite having to catch up, any issues that were raised have now been resolved. This was particularly attributed to P3 wanting to make the programme a success once given the opportunity to redesign it and take full responsibility on delivery.

*"Working through it in partnership has been what's made it the success that it is now, which is really great and P3 have actually been really, really supportive" (LA representative)*

*"You know, they've really wanted to make it a success once we gave them the opportunity to redesign the programme." (LA representative)*

### Legacy and sustainability

- 11.12** Brent operated a payment for activities / by results model.

*"Payment by result, so a breakdown for when we sign someone up, for when we complete training, for when we complete some skills development, when we get them an apprenticeship, job outcome and then mentoring." (VCS representative)*

- 11.13** As P3 had previously been involved in projects that used this approach, they felt able to assess the risks prior to getting involved in this project. However, the initial delivery model had given them insufficient ability to deliver outcomes, which made funding via a payment for activities / by results model problematic. Hence a key lesson was to have delivery model that fitted with the funding model.

*"The first model when we weren't in control of achieving outcomes, that's when it was really frustrating but now we've got control to sign up, deliver, define the outcomes and then mentor, it makes payments realistic." (VCS representative)*

- 11.14** The intention was to continue the project in a different way as it would have different requirements and sources of funding (which are yet to be secured).

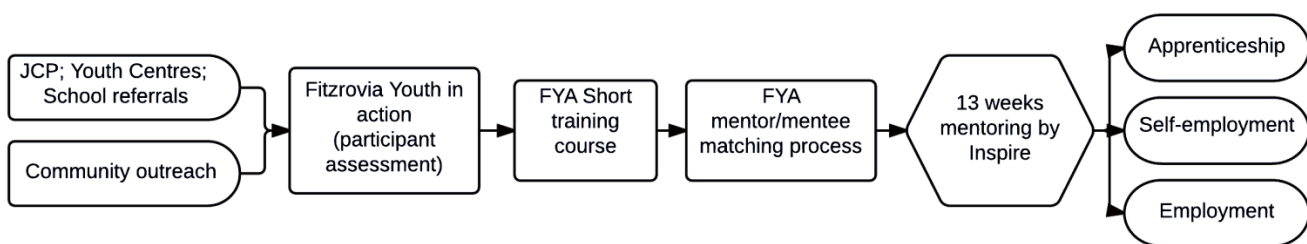
*"We want to continue provision for this group of residents, but it will look slightly different and we can't guarantee it either and that's purely because of funding, which is sad..." (LA Representative)*

### Case study 2: Camden

- 11.15** The aim of the project was to work with 60 Camden residents aged 18-24 (second year 16-24) to support them into apprenticeships or self-employment. The Camden Mentoring Project worked with two VCS Partners, Fitzrovia Youth in Action and Inspire to provide career-focused mentoring for young people NEET in the borough. The project utilised successful professionals from the community on a voluntary basis to support disadvantaged young people needing support to access employment, education or training opportunities. The project leads felt that this model was a good opportunity to test the effectiveness of using successful professionals as volunteer mentors.

## Delivery model

**11.16** As the participant journey diagram below shows, referrals into the programme came from Jobcentre Plus, youth centres, schools and via outreach. Fitzrovia Youth in Action (FYA) conducted the initial assessment of participants, matched volunteer mentors to mentees and delivered a short training course. This was followed by 13 weeks of mentoring support conducted by Inspire, with a view to addressing mentee employment barriers and finding ways to help them access an apprenticeship or job. Mentors on the programme worked to overcome a range of barriers; from simply addressing a young person's attitude or lack of confidence, focus or motivation to more intensive work on issues such as dyslexia, and health problems, such as severe anxiety.



**11.17** The initial targets were to identify 60 young people NEETs aged 18-24 living in Camden and support them into apprenticeships or self-employment. During the second year the age range was extended to 16-24.

## Project Outcomes

The project had a number of impacts for both young people and the broader community.

### For young people

**11.18** Young people felt that their main barriers to employment were a lack of confidence in themselves, which had led to a lack of focus and deteriorating attitude to finding work.

**11.19** They really valued the support they received from their mentors. Just going out for coffee with their mentor once a week gave young people something social and purposeful to do in their week. Some even felt like they had a friend and others felt inspired to be around a successful person:

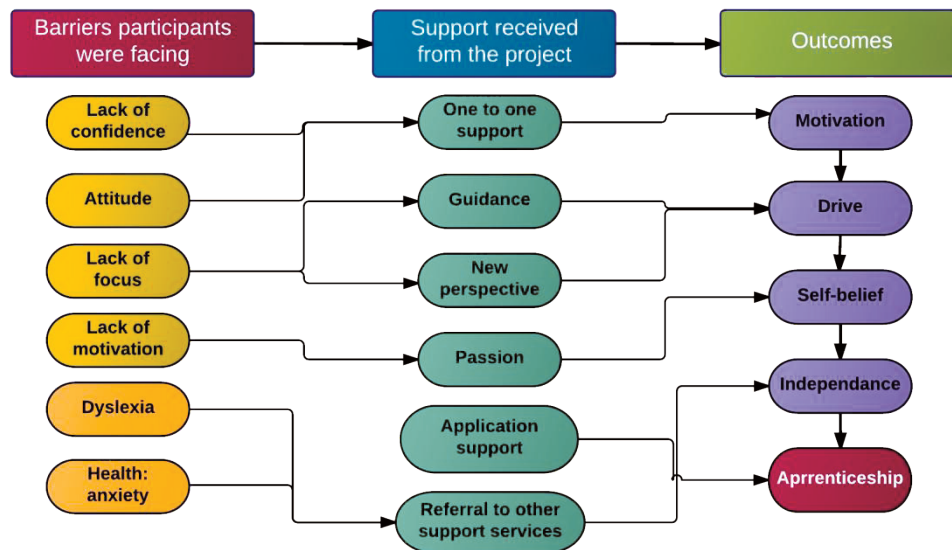
*"Finding someone who's, you know, really successful, is something that I've never had"*  
**(Participant)**

**11.20** For one young person, meeting their mentor increased their sense of self worth and their belief that they would be able to make progress in life:

*"So you think, 'Yes, I met my mentor today and I talked about this'" and you feel proud and you also you're thinking, 'I've been doing something today that means I'll get a job and be productive' so I was more motivated"* **(Participant)**

**11.21** Mentors gave young people a push, made them feel in control of their own future and furnished them with the communication skills to develop "a voice" and assertiveness to access opportunities. Importantly, this meant that young people felt in control of their lives again. The mentor became their first point of contact and offered them networking opportunities that participants would not have had access to otherwise.

*"In terms of networking the young people don't really have networks, most of the ones that we've met. A lot of young people would get work experience because of their parents, it's all about contacts really and so what's really great about this programme is it gives young people contacts."* **(VCS representative)**



**11.22** This mentoring relationship mainly influenced the self-belief and self-esteem of young people. Young people were very positive about their experience with the programme and agreed that their mentor had helped them a lot to tackle the barriers that were holding them back. However, there were a couple of things that participants did not like about the programme overall. Some mentees:

- Did not like the time limit on the programme, they felt that they would have liked longer with their mentors.
- Felt that Inspire was a little "too corporate" and they would have liked to have a more informal relationship with their mentors on occasion.
- Suggested that they would have had liked a little more structure to the programme.
- Felt that their handover between the two VCS organisations was a little disjointed. Many had got used to attending FYA, knew the workers there, felt safe in that environment and then suddenly they had to start going somewhere else.

**11.23** The programme has secured a range of EET outcomes. It has worked with a total of 73 participants to date, all of which have already left the programme. 37 secured an EET outcome (50.7 per cent). 8 participants have gone into full-time employment, 2 into part-time employment, 14 into full-time education, 8 into apprenticeships, and 5 into self-employment.

### Community impacts

**11.24** Project leads felt that the programme had supported intergenerational relationships, changing both the perceptions of young and older people about each other:

*"I think what's really important for the local community is shifting the way that older people are thinking about young people because I think a lot of what's going on for young people is the way that they're perceived. They feel like they're perceived in a certain way."* **(VCS representative)**

### Delivery lessons

**11.25** Overall the project found that this business-focused mentoring led by volunteer mentors in professional occupations worked best with young people relatively close to the labour market, but less well with those with higher or pressing basic needs.

*"We were attracting a lot of young people that needed a lot more support than a professional mentor. At first the young people who were getting referred to us had more basic needs. So meeting a mentor to talk about their career once every two weeks for an hour it's not going to help because first they've got to sort out their housing or other really basic things or they had like five key workers in their life and the last thing they needed was another appointment with another worker."* **(VCS representative)**

**11.26** The project learnt that determining an appropriate scale to the mentoring programme was important to enable good processes and ensure quality mentoring relationships over quantity.

*"I think we were initially a little bit ambitious with our target group, I think and, in fact, it involved us at the end of year one in actually re-scoping the project a little bit"* **(LA representative)**

**11.27** The project learnt important lessons about ensuring a consistent participant journey. Overall, it found that dividing up the journey between two separate organisations was more fragmented than they would have liked. In particular, participants found this discomforting:

*"I think the way that the programme was split doesn't work as well as it could... the split in terms of the participant journey. We built these relationships and then we hand them over and they meet people they've never met for their training. Then we have to be liaising to see what's going on with them, so that's not coherent."* **(VCS representative)**

*"As I said I think the structural design of the project, it just looked good on paper, they're great at that, let's put them together and see what happens and that actually, we should have maybe realised that no, actually, it's going to be fragmented "* **(LA representative)**

*"I think it's clear that [in future] we would amalgamate the training and the recruitment."* (LA representative)

## Partnership model

- 11.28** The project had a successful partnership, with the two VCS organisations communicating well and working effectively together. However, this good relationship was unable to overcome the difficulties caused by the split in delivery.

## Legacy and sustainability

- 11.29** As a result of the project and learning, Camden has been successful at obtaining a Big Lottery grant to continue the programme for a further two years.

*"To be able to continue now with all of this learning for a whole two more years is really fantastic for us because not only is it a really great project that's been recognised as that, it's now our turn to fine tune our processes"* (LA representative)

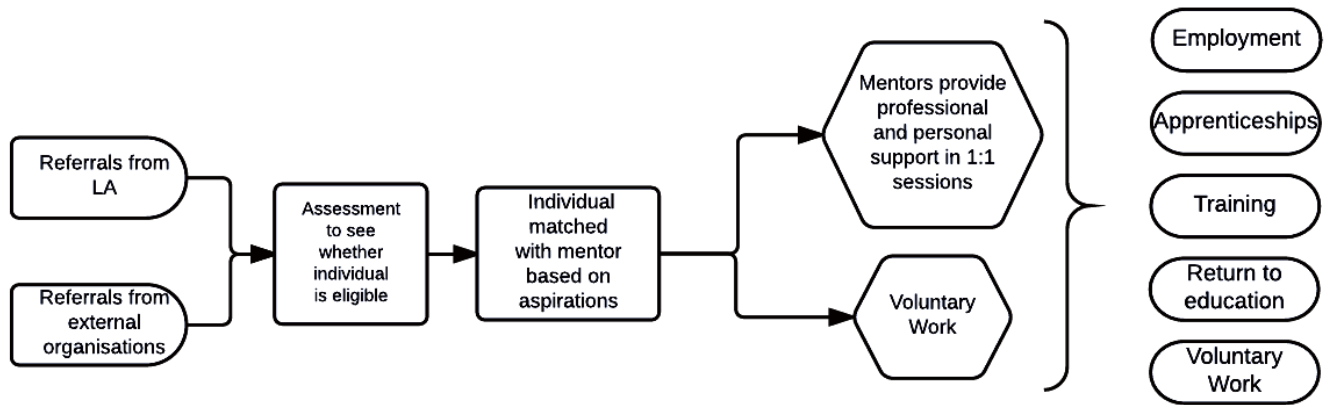
## Case Study 3: Greenwich

- 11.30** Greenwich LA worked with the VCS, Greenwich Volunteer Centre to provide tailored one-to-one support for young people (17-19) with additional needs such as dyslexia, mild learning disability, mild AFD, ADHD or depression and who had been NEET for 3 months or more (originally this was six months). Participants were offered mentoring, alongside the opportunity to volunteer with a charity or business, to help them develop their skill-set and provide them with experience to support them into either employment or further study.

## Delivery Model

- 11.31** The participant journey model below explains the path taken by participants, from joining the programme to the final outcomes. Participants were initially identified as suitable for the mentoring/volunteering support on offer through a referral system. The primary referral body was Greenwich LA, which referred potential participants to the Greenwich Volunteer Centre. Other external services were used to identify young people NEET, including care leaver teams and antenatal clinics, in order to target those with additional needs.
- 11.32** Once participants were identified, they had an initial meeting to discuss their needs and interest areas in order to match them with potential mentors, whilst exploring suitable volunteering roles. Participants could decide to proceed with either mentoring, help with locating a suitable volunteering role or both.





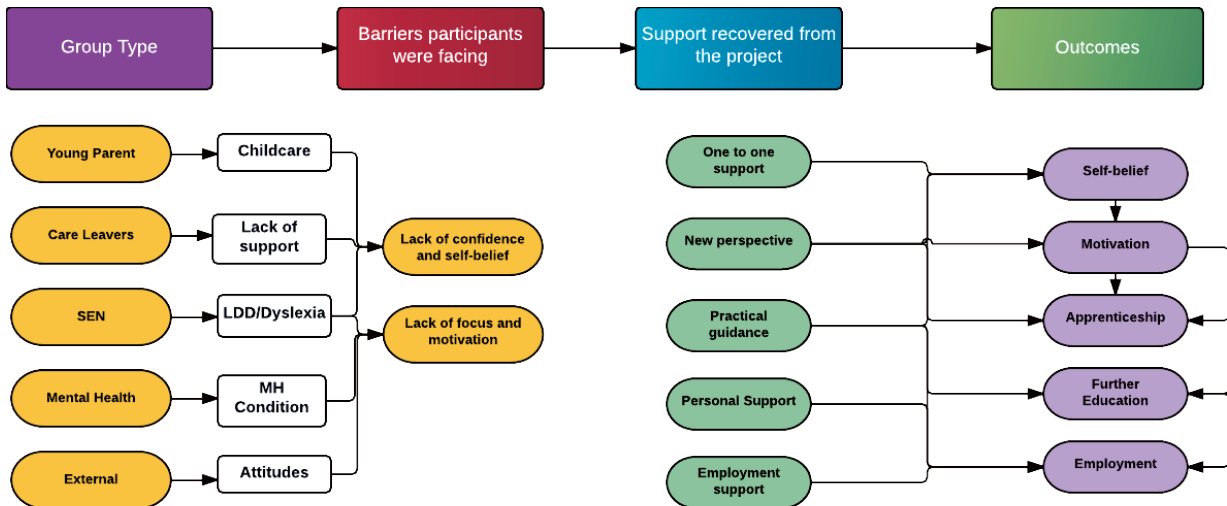
**11.33** A trained pool of volunteer adult mentors delivered one-to-one support with their respective participant, including help with applications, finding volunteering roles/work experience alongside professional and personal encouragement and advice. Mentees were matched to mentors with professional experience in their area of interest, in order to ensure participants were offered the most relevant advice and support, whilst also increasing the likelihood of a lasting and effective relationship developing between the two people. Mentoring was delivered every 1 to 2 weeks for up to 6 months in the form of one-to-one sessions to identify and overcome the complex range of barriers many participants faced. Participants were also offered assistance in their search for relevant work experience and volunteering roles by the Greenwich Volunteer Centre.

**11.34** Greenwich LA remained an active partner during individuals’ engagement with the programme, keeping in regular contact with participants and mentees to ensure that progress was made.

**11.35** The project originally aimed to engage with 20 young people per term; however this was deemed to be unrealistic and was reduced. The original target was considered to be unrealistic for multiple reasons. Firstly, there was a presumption (from the VCS representative) that the target was based on the number of young people who had previously come in to ask about volunteering, but the numbers who acted on their curiosity and sustained a placement were quite different. Secondly, the young people engaging tended to have many barriers to overcome before they could consider volunteering and this was not taken into account. There were also issues with getting referrals through, due to a lack of understanding of the project amongst the local organisations from which the VCS partner had anticipated obtaining referrals. Finally, there was a lack of feedback from young people, who had received support that enabled them to undertake volunteering, but often did not report back on whether they had subsequently undertaken this activity.

## Project Outcomes

**11.36** The project was successful in terms of tackling the barriers faced by the participants and supporting them with both personal and professional advice and motivation, whilst also providing a number of benefits to the wider community through increasing awareness of services that work with young people and volunteering opportunities more generally.



**11.37** As illustrated by the diagram above, participants faced a wide array of internal and external barriers including a lack of experience, employer attitudes and complex additional needs which perpetuated their lack of confidence and self-belief, encouraging a pessimistic mindset when exploring further education or employment.

*"Whenever you apply for a job and you don't get it, that just pulls you down, all the way down low."* **(Participant)**

*"I didn't have any plans whatsoever, I didn't have an idea what I wanted to do or anything."* **(Participant)**

**11.38** Mentor support and volunteering experience was able to break this cycle of uncertainty and disbelief, offering participants the experience and knowledge to grasp the educational and professional opportunities available to them. Participants were encouraged in their search for volunteering roles, with staff able to offer practical and supportive advice to increase their chances of success.

**11.39** This support provided the time and space for participants to explore their potential career pathways, alongside the encouragement and advice of experienced professionals, whilst volunteering provided a welcome boost to participants' confidence and self-belief as well as essential work experience for the future.

*"She helps me to see things that I don't know, so I think it's good for me"* **(Participant)**

**11.40** Further to providing employment and educational advice, mentors also provided the support of an adult, creating informal relaxed relationships with the young participants that helped to address their confidence and other 'soft' problems.

*"Yes, we're actually like best pals... and actually go for coffee at Tesco's once in a while... he does actually help me out [with] a lot of stuff and things like that"* **(Participant)**

*"I can talk to him about stuff as well... he's like a friend I can talk about stuff. So for me it's not a professional thing it's more like a one-to-one chat mostly"* **(Participant)**

**11.41** The programme secured a range of EET outcomes for participants, with 143 participants joining the programme, of whom 64 have completed. Of these 25 became EET. 2 went into full-time employment, 1 into part-time employment, 6 went into full-time education/training, 7 joined part-time education/training. An additional 4 participants began an apprenticeship scheme, 2 participants began a traineeship scheme and 3 went into voluntary work. 22 leavers remained NEET after finishing the programme, whilst 17 had an unknown destination.

### Community Impacts

**11.42** Greenwich Volunteer Centre felt that the programme also benefitted the wider community as a whole, expanding the network between services in the local area, allowing for better service delivery and cohesion between different organisations.

### Delivery Lessons

**11.43** The programme supported young people NEET with a range of complex needs into employment and educational opportunities through volunteering and mentoring.

**11.44** The programme delivery partners agreed that 6 months of mentoring with meetings every 1/2 weeks was essential to securing effective and lasting results. It gave participants the time to build trust with their respective mentor and to identify and overcome key barriers.

**11.45** The opportunity to volunteer within a range of businesses and charities was also a key factor within the project, giving participants the opportunity to gain workplace skills that were relevant to their desired career path. Volunteering within charities with good relations to the project was particularly welcome, as participants were able to follow a fast-track system to ensure they could begin volunteering as soon as possible after applying. Minimising the time between applications and starting the position was essential to prevent loss of interest by participants, who would often drop out if the wait was too long. Having drop-in opportunities was seen as beneficial, because young people appreciated the chance to try things out, without having to commit, which the VCS partner felt led to them making better choices when it came to applying for apprenticeships and jobs, as they had a better understanding of what they wanted to do.

**11.46** At the start of the project, young people were required to have been NEET for 6 months or more in order to qualify for support. However, it was found that these individuals had a range of different challenges, which were heavily entrenched. The support offered by this programme was found to be ineffective for their specific needs, which required a more intensive method of assistance. As a result the project changed its scope to target young people who had been NEET for 3 months or more as they had less barriers to overcome and so the support on offer was more appropriate and expected to be more effective.

*"The needs of the local people are quite challenging and a little bit more extreme."* **(VCS representative)**

**11.47** Given the wider range of issues faced by participants, the style of mentoring shifted from initially being focussed solely on how to improve knowledge and skills related to obtaining employment. This was adjusted to also include help with 'softer' issues which were often more complex, with mentors providing both professional and personal support as a result.

*"So previously it was very much an action plan, let's do things together, let's think this through, you do tasks and bring them to me and we'll go through it, whereas I think it's moved [on] from being quite so career advisory. That element is available but also all the soft stuff" (LA representative)*

### Partnership Model

**11.48** Greenwich LA and Greenwich Volunteer Centre reported a good working relationship, and, as both organisations had worked together in the past, this provided a strong foundation for both organisations to develop ties and understanding.

**11.49** Both delivery partners worked closely to deliver results, sharing information, resources and aiding each other's efforts to provide positive pathways for the young people with whom they worked. At the heart of the relationship were regular meetings and communication.

*"Meet regularly to discuss numbers referred and outcomes, whether referrals were appropriate and where they've moved on to" (VCS representative)*

**11.50** An additional source of the success between the organisations was the active role played by the LA once participants had been passed to the VCS, ensuring that the process was running effectively and smoothly for both participants and their delivery partner. If referrals made by Greenwich LA to the VCS were deemed inappropriate, due to the individuals having more complicated problems and requiring more intensive attention, these would be passed back to the LA who would identify alternative resources, to address their needs.

**11.51** However, one source of tension between the two organisations was the redundancies underway at the LA due to budget cuts, which had a negative impact on the morale of staff. Furthermore, cultural differences between Greenwich LA and Greenwich Volunteer Centre had to be overcome, but this was not seen as a major hindrance.

**11.52** Partnerships were also developed with external services to increase the reach and scope of the project. For example, the VCS partner spoke of attempts to form relationships with the care leavers' team and an anti-natal clinic in the local area to increase referrals. The partners also worked hard to increase awareness of the project in the local community to ensure it was reaching the right people.

### Legacy and Sustainability

**11.53** Greenwich LA is considering whether to extend funding to provide a clearer volunteering option for young people in the borough. Meanwhile the Greenwich Volunteer Centre is bidding to continue to provide the service to young people, with the aim of expanding the service to further accommodate the additional needs of participants, such as mental health.

**11.54** If provision of the service continues, the delivery partners would make a number of improvements. Firstly, both the LA and VCS partner acknowledge the amount of resources and effort that were pooled into attracting young people to participate in the programme. In order to increase the returns, a strategy of active outreach has been highlighted as necessary. Links with external organisations would be broadened to include a wider variety of service clubs/youth

organisations rather than service providers, whilst the value of participation would be highlighted by concentrating on the pathways of past participants.

*"90% of the work was encouraging young people that volunteering was a viable option for their futures, and that's where the difficulties lie"* (VCS representative)

*"I think in some ways things like the volunteering project is trying to catch some of the people who are almost traditional NEETs who don't use a lot of services. I think you probably have to do it through youth provision, like football or dance classes or a youth club and try and get them that way"* (LA representative)

- 11.55** The VCS partner strongly felt that wider age requirements would be needed in future delivery. For example the VCS partner themselves worked with 16-25 year olds and UK Youth works with 9-25 year olds, so they felt that 13-25 would be a more suitable age bracket. This would substantially alter the nature of the programme as it would be provided pre-emptively, tackling issues before they become manifest and led to long-term problems. Expanding the age range upwards would also ensure that young people in their early twenties, who were in need of support, would not be excluded.
- 11.56** Volunteer Centre Greenwich understands that a challenging cohort of participants, with a range of additional problems, requires intensive one-to-one support. As a result, mentors would be given additional training, whilst participants would be given action plans / journey maps which allow their progress to be monitored and reviewed.

## Case study 4: Hounslow

### Overview

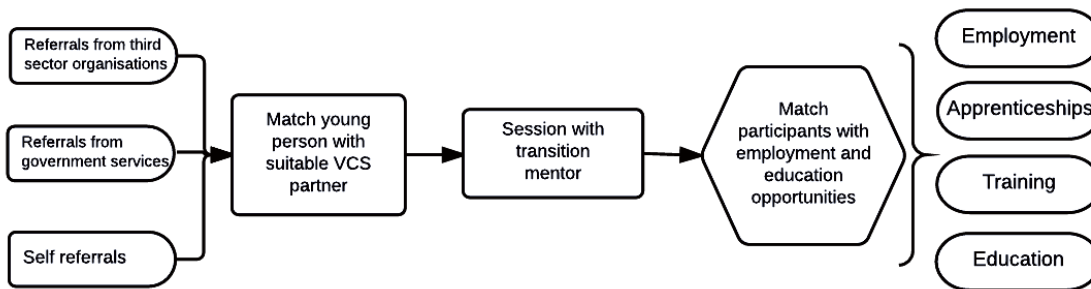
- 11.57** In Hounslow the LA partnered with five VCS organisations: Acton Action, Cultivate London, Green Corridor, Spark and Gabbitas, and the Truman and Thring Educational Trust to form a partnership board and provide a programme of activities for young people NEET. The goal was to work with partners with different expertise to coordinate a range of services that would target the differing needs of young people NEET and match them up to the opportunities that were available in their community. It offered tailored support to help them find relevant education, training or employment opportunities

*"Looking at what support are you going to need, and tailoring that."* (LA representative)

### Delivery model

- 11.58** 16-24 year old young people NEET were initially referred to the programme, mostly through services such as Connexions, Jobcentre Plus, and the LA (social services / offending teams) as well as Third Sector organisations known to the partners. There were also some self-referrals. There was no formal assessment process administered by the VCS partners, as the eligibility of each young person was determined by the referral agency.

"So, we do it through the agency that does the referral. Obviously, if the Jobcentre refers, they're referring someone who's NEET and in contact with them because they're looking for employment. Connexions will know that someone's NEET" **(VCS representative)**

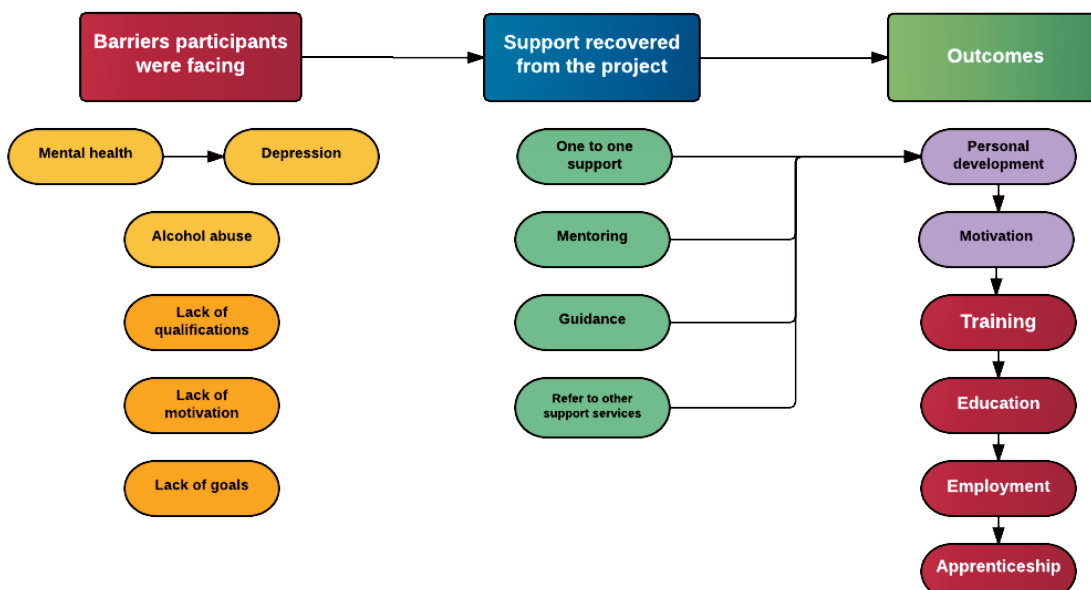


**11.59** Once the young people NEETs were identified, support was delivered by the most relevant VCS provider. Employment opportunities were discussed with the young person, who was then directed to a mentor who helped them come up with a plan they followed over a period of time and were able to sustain.

"The mentor works with young people who are graduating from Cultivate London so they're just about to become NEET, if they haven't already secured an opportunity. So it's about picking them up very quickly and working with them over a period of time to make sure that they're getting support to move into something. Or even if they have secured something, they're still getting that support to sustain that opportunity." **(LA representative)**

**11.60** There were two phases of delivery for this programme. In the first phase of delivery, 16-19 year olds were targeted. In the second phase of delivery, the focus was put more on 19-24 year olds:

"We're particularly, in the second / last phase of the project, looking more at the older ones, the 19 to 24 year olds because a lot of them don't really get the support that they need. Connexions tend to be 16 to 19 year olds. So we work with 16 to 19 year olds but we're making an extra effort to try and engage some of the 19 to 24 year olds." **(VCS representative)**



## Project Outcomes

### Young people

- 11.61** The main impact identified by staff was that the programme helped young people access a wider range of support.

*"The young people get access to a much wider range of support because we're involving other voluntary organisations in the consortium rather than it just being one voluntary organisation, so the young people get access to those resources."* **(VCS representative)**

- 11.62** This was an encouraging outcome as the cooperation between the partners meant that they were able to find opportunities that were most suited for young people.

*"So our approach is more about trying to develop a flexible, holistic approach to helping the young person rather than saying, "Oh, we've only got this project he has to go into that...Because a lot of projects still do that and so you have to fit the young person into the project, whereas our approach is much more about, "Well, what actually are the needs of that young person?"* **(VCS representative)**

- 11.63** Barriers that participants identified were issues related to mental health, such as depression, alcohol abuse and lack of qualifications. They also mentioned that they lacked goals and motivation to seek any EET outcomes.

*"I could just laze about and do this, do that, procrastinate, just step away from the main task because no-one was really pushing me to do anything. I didn't have the motivation myself to move on and get work."* **(Participant)**

- 11.64** The LA was also able to provide information, expertise and data on the young people NEET who needed the most support.

*"They bring a lot of professional expertise, a lot of data... the local authority cover not just NEET young people but NEET young people who are care leavers, there's a real need to do more work with the young people who've got the most barriers to education, training and employment. So that would be care leavers, young offenders, etc. They know these young people and they know that these young people need extra help and support than what they're providing. So it's important that we work with the local authority on that because they know the young people who need the help most."* **(VCS representative)**

### Partnership impacts

- 11.65** Project leads felt that they had benefitted from the collaborative relationships they formed with partners. They gained more experience working with young people and collaboration also presented them with other opportunities to source funding.

*"I think the main impact for our organisation has been being able to get experience through the project of working closely with some other voluntary sector groups, who have got NEETs as their priority, so that's really good. You start to build up a consortium for other opportunities to secure funding."* **(VCS representative)**

**11.66** The project was able to secure a range of outcomes for young people. Of the 51 starters, there was a total of 45 young leavers of whom 27 gained EET outcomes; 4 went into full time employment, 1 went into part time employment, 12 went into full time education or training and 10 went on to an apprenticeship scheme. The outcome of 3 young people was unknown and 17 became NEET.

### Delivery lessons

**11.67** The VCS partner and the LA believed that the model worked because of the groundwork undertaken in building partnerships. In the future both the LA and VCS organisation would want to build on lessons learnt so far and continue working with more voluntary sector groups engaged with young people NEET and perhaps link with private sector organisations as well.

*"But I think what we've learnt is that the model has worked because what we've not tried to do is just to run a programme that is just another employability programme that has a start and has an end. I think doing all the ground work around building the partnership, I think ultimately that's the lesson learned, if you put the work in, and try and develop that and give people some ownership of it and input into it, that actually that has the potential to run the course and have a greater impact in the long-term." (LA representative)*

*"...If there were any further funding at all, we would want to continue the partnership with the local authority and build up more network links with other voluntary sector groups, with employers and with private sector training providers..., there's a real need for a broker role" (VCS representative)*

**11.68** Thus the key lesson learnt was that the best way to provide young people NEET with support was by developing equal partnerships between the LA and VCS's in a consortium.

*"If you've got a flexible local authority and you've got voluntary sector groups who are committed to helping NEET young people, then working together in the partnership or consortium is a key lesson that that's the way to do it. So the way to actually provide the best service for NEET young people is for there to be an equal partnership between the local authority and voluntary sector groups working in a consortium." (VCS representative)*

### Partnership model

**11.69** The overall partnership between the VCS organisations and the LA was very positive and cohesive. Each organisation involved had a part to play that contributed to an efficient design that benefitted young people. A consultation process was initiated to bring all the partners together to deliver the project and provide oversight of the project.

*"We decided that this would be a good idea to bring everybody together and so what we've established is the Hounslow NEET Action Group (HNAG), which is a partnership of all those partners, and we come together in quarterly meetings to review what we're doing." (LA representative)*

*"We collectively developed a delivery plan, and said, okay what are we going to do? We've got to cover all these different elements of what we do within the youth offer and decide how we're going to do that." (VCS representative)*



**11.70** Because of the good collaborative approach they took, all partners agreed that it would be worth maintaining the partnership post City Bridge Trust funding.

*"So that's the approach and it's very much a consortium, that's the key objective for the project, to develop a sustainable partnership that will go on after City Bridge Trust funding is finished between the local authority and the voluntary sector."* (LA representative)

### Legacy and sustainability

**11.71** Although the LA put in a funding bid for a follow on to the CBT Youth Offer, this was not successful. They hope that the VCS partnership with HNAG will yield some future collaborative work.

*"Partnership working, that's been quite a bit of the focus so today we've got our last formal meeting of HNAG which has been part of the youth offer. We're hoping, both myself and also the London Borough of Hounslow colleagues, that partners will want to continue outside of the youth offer to say actually this should be a mainstream bit of work that we're doing"* (LA representative)

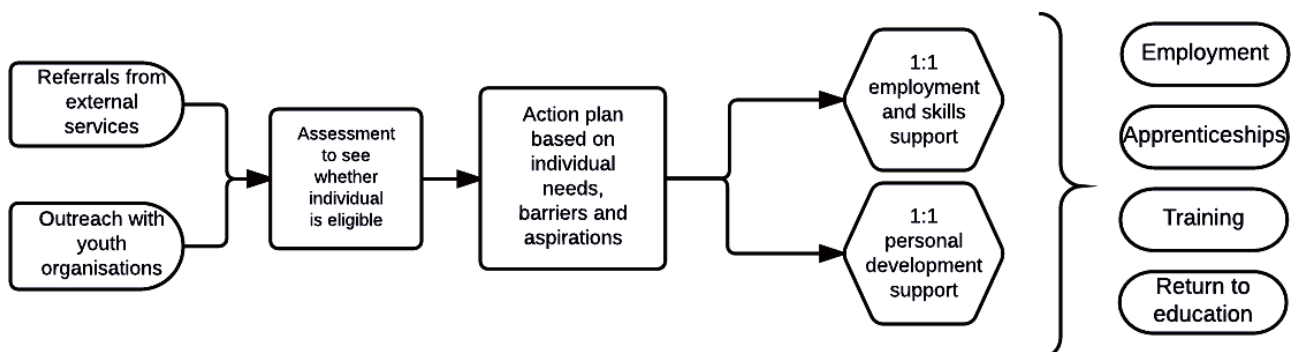
## Case Study 5: Islington

**11.72** Islington LA worked with their VCS partner Groundwork to provide one-to-one support for disadvantaged young people NEET within the borough. The aim of the scheme was to provide support to 50 young people aged 16-24 with a range of disadvantages, such as care leavers or individuals with disabilities, with the goal of assisting participants into employment.

### Delivery Model

**11.73** The delivery team recruited participants from a range of referral sources, including Jobcentre Plus, Youth Offending Teams and active outreach, to identify potential participants at local youth projects. Once referred, Groundwork conducted a one-to-one assessment with the young people to clarify their eligibility for the programme and identify individual needs, barriers and aspirations.

**11.74** Once participants were engaged with the programme, they began a programme of one-to-one support offered by Groundwork mentors, starting with the formation of an action plan. This plan

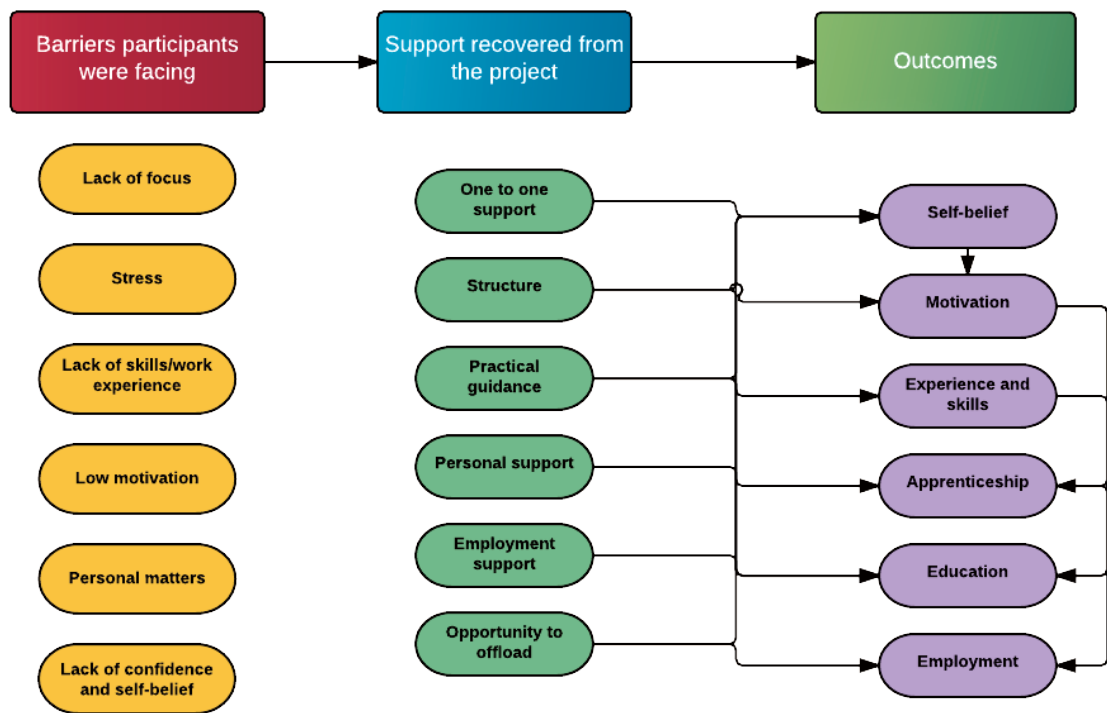


was based on their prior assessment findings, setting out the specific support needed for participants, depending on their current needs and aims. This consisted of a range of employment support such as updating CVs, job applications and mock interviews in addition to participating in short courses, training or work experience depending on the participant. Mentors on the programme addressed issues such as a lack of confidence and motivation, in addition to more complex needs such as mental health, housing or a lack of structure at home.

**11.75** The project aimed to engage 50 disadvantaged young people NEET into the programme, with 40 participants expected to begin work and a sustainment rate of 50%.

## Project Outcomes

**11.76** The project was widely welcomed by participants and providers alike, and it successfully met its engagement target ahead of schedule, as it worked with 58 individuals. Of the 41 completers – 28 went into EET: 10 entered full-time work, 16 part-time work, 1 entered full time education/training and 1 began an apprenticeship scheme. A further 9 remained NEET, while 4 leavers’ destinations were not known.



**11.77** As identified in the chart, the disadvantaged young people involved faced a multitude of barriers to employment including a lack of self-belief amplified by external issues such as health problems and family situations, contributing to participants’ reduced focus and motivation. Additionally, the absence of educational and employment-related support for the young people had led to a series of missed opportunities and a lack of qualifications, skills and employment experience.

**11.78** Participants valued the support offered to them through the project. Participants were particularly positive about the nature and structure of the support, with mentors providing persistent and

tailored support, which they found much more valuable than previous programmes they had been involved in.

*"If I've had problems outside, in my family and so on, I've just felt really good, I've been able to offload to [the mentor] and that's really helped me manage things. I've felt like I've offloaded, I can move on, I felt fresh"* **(Participant)**

- 11.79** Mentors were able to address both sides of the barriers identified; employment-related and personal issues and, as a result, boost participants focus, drive and independence whilst better preparing them for finding employment by improving their experience and skill set.

*"He's really helped me improve my CV, and English and maths, I've been studying further here, which is helpful... loads of experience that I've gained from this six months here. I've learnt a lot and yes it's helped me"* **(Participant)**

- 11.80** Both the LA and Groundwork were confident that one of the main attributes of the project was the fact that it introduced an adult into participants' lives who was able to offer them support and guidance whilst also taking an active interest into their development.

*"Well, for the young people who have benefited from it they've had an adult taking an interest in them and they've had support to get a job"* **(LA representative)**

*"I think a lot of it is actually they feel like they're being listened to and they're being respected"* **(VCS representative)**

- 11.81** Providers were also confident that the advice and support offered to participants made a real difference to the aspirations and capabilities of the young people involved.

*"I think the main thing for me is that seeing that we're actually making a change in young peoples' lives and that there's actually evidence and training and support out there, and that can actually help them change."* **(VCS representative)**

- 11.82** Whilst acknowledging the successes of the programme for those involved, the programme providers do acknowledge that the wider community impact is limited due to the limited provision of the project, when compared to the amount of people it could benefit.

*"We have made quite a small impact compared to the numbers who are out there"* **(VCS representative)**

- 11.83** Participants were equally enthusiastic about the impact of the programme. However, they would like the project to be able to facilitate further work experience that specifically aligns with their career aspirations.

### Delivery Lessons

- 11.84** Overall, the project was viewed as effective by both providers and participants. It provided the range of support required by disadvantaged young people NEET.

- 11.85** Groundwork found that working with a younger age group than usual, they had to deal with them in a different way, adapting their delivery techniques whilst also ensuring that they fully understood their concerns and priorities. It was important to deliver innovative support that

catered to the young people's specific needs. Staff felt that it was important that they offered training and support that was vocational, offering a mixture of physical and academic activities, which would help young people find work via an approach which was not packaged as a standard apprenticeship programme.

*"When you're working with 16 to 18 year olds it's more about understanding how they work and how they think"* **(VCS representative)**

- 11.86** Additionally, Groundwork were concerned that a significant number of individuals who could have benefitted from the project were falling through the referral gap, as they were not currently linked to the external organisations used for referrals.

*"So we've got a gap of people that no-one knows about where they are, we're not tracking them properly from schools and within the support services out there for them to make sure that we know exactly what's happening"* **(VCS representative)**

- 11.87** The use of outreach to locate and enlist these individuals was an effective way of ensuring service provision was delivered to those who most needed it and could be rolled out further in the future, although Groundwork acknowledges the enormous challenge of recruiting individuals once they have been located.

*"I think it's worked really that we've managed to get youth workers going out there and finding those clients, where you can find them at the youth centre, you might find them at a football field... so they can engage with them, because they're like your little lost souls really, no-one knows about them and I think that's the main impact that we're actually starting to touch individuals' lives out there"* **(VCS representative)**

### Partnership Model

- 11.88** Islington LA and Groundwork were able to work effectively to deliver positive results for programme participants. However, the partnership between the two was not without its challenges.

- 11.89** There were concerns that the Youth Offer programme had duplicated provision in the area. Firstly because the grant came at a time when there was a lot of other programmes running in the area and secondly because the short timeframe between planning the service and actual service provision did not allow for effective and thorough planning.

*"Doesn't feel that it gave us that much scope to do exactly what we wanted because we had to get a voluntary sector partner and there was quite a short turnaround so, you know, I think in the end it's ended up duplicating other local provision"* **(LA representative)**

- 11.90** Islington LA reported that, initially, Groundwork were not managing the project successfully and as a result, not delivering the results expected. The reassertion of the results and service expected by the LA and a change of management within Groundwork resolved the problems. Once these were addressed, both partners developed a successful working relationship in order to ensure that individual targets and standards were being achieved, sharing practices and providing updates with regular communication and meetings.

*"We've got a very good relationship with our partner at the council, and I'm very open so if we're struggling I will say we're struggling and if we're working really well she will make sure that she knows what we're doing as well so there's no issues"* **(VCS representative)**

- 11.91** Wider partnerships were formed with external services, including employment, social and probationary services, which meant that disadvantaged young people who had slipped through the 'referral net' could be identified and referred to the programme. Relationships with employers have also aided project staff's ability to locate training and employment opportunities for programme participants.

### Legacy and Sustainability

- 11.92** In the future, Groundwork wants to continue the service, developing existing partnerships whilst also branching into new areas such as creative media, including music and app development.

*"It's also understanding that our young community are very much into the media, music, apps, things like that, so maybe looking at whether we can change what we do at our training delivery to fit in more about that. So it's developing those going forward really"* **(VCS representative)**

- 11.93** A continuation of the project would also witness further changes to the recruitment methods used, with the overall aim of improving participation, identification and engagement and closing the 'referral gap'.

*"Differently, it would probably be more about how we look at engaging youngsters"* **(VCS representative)**

## Case study 6: Lewisham

### Overview

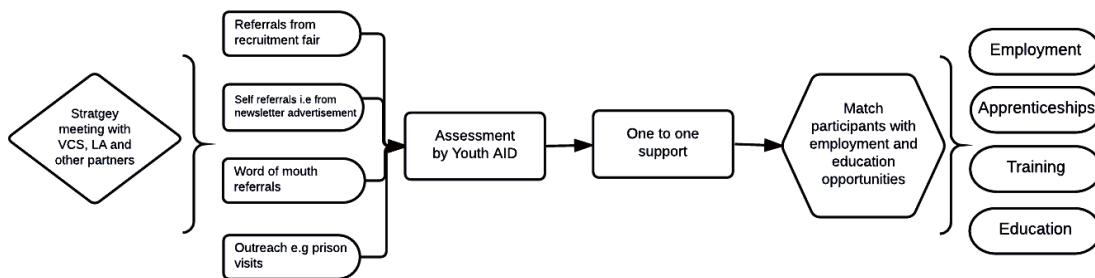
- 11.94** Lewisham LA worked with Youth AID to support 16-19 year olds with a range of needs into employment, training or volunteering. The programme provided young people with support on soft skills such as self-esteem and confidence and helped with any additional barriers they faced.

### Delivery model

- 11.95** As the participant journey diagram shows, young people were referred onto the programme in a number of ways. Youth AID had either monthly or bi-monthly network meetings with close partners, who engaged in work with young people, as a way of communicating the project to providers and enhancing recruitment. Youth AID also visited relevant events, such as Next Step and Post 16 Opportunities, to attract more providers as well as young people. Youth AID developed a newsletter advertising opportunities in an attempt to gain the attention of young people in the local area. Other referral routes that were deemed successful included word of mouth, where young people already engaged on the programme would recommend the service to their peers.

**11.96** There were, however, difficulties in engaging some young people, which required a long term and persistent approach.

*"There's one young man that I'm working with now he was referred to me, there was numerous attempts to sort of get him to engage. He then went into prison, he's come out of prison, and now he's said, yes I want to engage, and we got him onto a programme and he's doing well. So sometimes it's having that long-term approach and not being too worried about the fact that somebody hasn't engaged at one point, because you just say, okay I'm still here, so any time you need you can come back. I think for young people that's an approach that works," (VCS representative)*



**11.97** Once referred Youth AID will offer one to one support to young people and aim to target the specific difficulties they suffer and match them to appropriate support.

*"You've got the mainstream young people who we can deal with that we're seeing all the time maybe, but some of these young people really do need that one-to-one, need that time, need that effort, need to be seen in their territory, all that kind of stuff, and so this kind of project is essential" (LA representative)*

*"In some cases it can be quite intensive, long piece of work with some young people, in other cases it can be a very short, brief intervention, it's very much dependent on their needs." (VCS representative)*

## Delivery lessons

**11.98** There were two key lessons learnt during this project in relation to recruitment and the locality of the project.

### Problems with recruitment and employers

**11.99** There were challenges with recruitment. Initially young people were going to be referred through Baseline, another delivery partner, but this did not work. Referrals were then made directly to Youth AID, which was much quicker and reduced the chance of any young person getting lost in the process.

*"We actually had a referral process, so they were supposed to go through Baseline and see a specialist one-to-one worker who would then pass them onto Youth Aid. It was putting too much, another hurdle in the way, young people need, if they're ready or they've come to you or you've*

*found them, to have something happen quite quickly or else they will disappear again” (LA representative)*

**11.100** Delivery partners also found that some young people had contact with too many agencies. For example, when they targeted specific groups of young people, they realised that other local providers were already in contact with them.

*“There’s only a finite number of teenage parents in Lewisham, or there’s only a finite number of specific groups of young people that are known to the system, and so the risk is that they get bombarded.” (VCS representative)*

**11.101** Nonetheless, Youth AID made progress with recruitment and employers were aware of the programme. An effective method to identify the at risk of becoming NEET’s (14-16 year olds) involved an 'intensive surgery' where Youth AID, the LA and other local providers, as well as schools, would meet to discuss issues.

*“And the risk of NEET I think is really, really important for statutory and large organisations to look at very seriously because the history and the trajectory of where you’re going to end up starts much earlier than at 16.” (VCS representative)*

### Locality of project

**11.102** Where the project was located was an important lesson learnt by both Youth AID and the LA. It was of benefit to them that City Bridge Trust enabled to run the project locally.

*“The benefits have been the results because it’s just meant that we can do something locally. I think benefits also have been that it’s been incredibly flexible, we created a spec and actually there was no opposition to that spec and, actually, I think it’s been really positive that we’ve almost just been able to get on with it.” (LA representative)*

**11.103** This was seen as particularly beneficial because of an initial scarcity of local provision for those individuals who did not fall into a specific group, such as teenage parents or young offenders. The LA representative explained that there was a lack of diverse providers in the area to meet the needs of young people who were particularly hard to find and engage.

*“I think we in Lewisham have got one of the lowest numbers of providers to be honest. A lot of our young people actually have to leave the borough to go to other places,” (LA representative)*

## Project Outcomes

**11.104** The programme has had a number of impacts for both young people and for the broader community.

### For young people

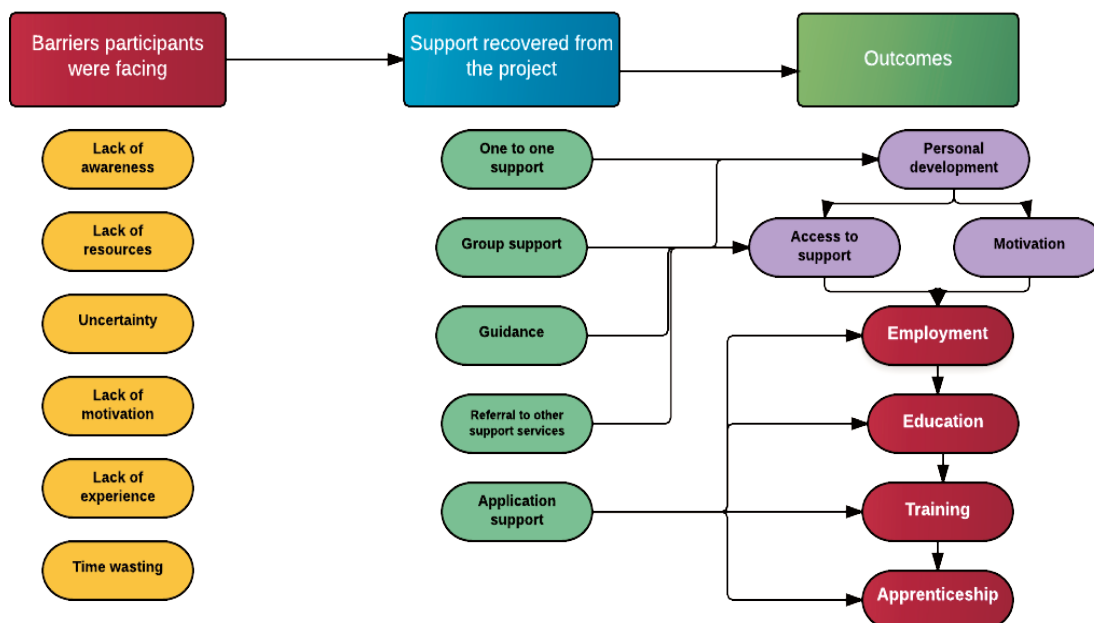
**11.105** The project offered one to one personalised support to participants, as well as daily courses leading to accredited qualifications. This helped participants tackle the barriers that were holding them back. The project specifically had the following impacts on participants:

- Increased participants’ soft skills; including confidence, attitude, and self-belief, as well as making them feeling that they had options in life and that they were in control. This was achieved through the one to one mentoring support.
- Helped participants move into employment, education or training outcomes, or, if participants were not at that point yet, it helped them move one step closer towards achieving these outcomes.
- The programme also helped young people make positive changes in their lives. For instance, it helped a participant who was a young offender realise that he had to stop seeing certain types of people, and helped him break the relationships with people involved in gangs who were having a negative influence on him. He had even started taking a different route everyday to avoid meeting them.

*"My mentor did everything for me. I went and explained my situation. I came back next week and he had a pile of options of what I can do for the next year so he did get me into employment again and he always supported me with application forms and kind of taught me the good and bad of doing my CV."* **(Participant)**

**11.106** Participants found regular contact from the VCS partner extremely helpful. For example subscribers were sent a newsletter by the VCS lead with apprenticeship, employment and training opportunities in Lewisham.

*"It's just like I'd never seen, I think it's amazing, he sent an email every week."* **(Participant)**



**11.107** In general, participants were very positive about the support received and believed that the changes they had made in their lives were exclusively thanks to their mentor. In the future, they would like to see the following changes or additions to the support offered:

- More flexible eligibility criteria – some participants would have liked to refer some of their friends onto the programme but they were older than 19 and thus outside the eligibility criteria.



- More day courses to provide them with official qualifications and specific knowledge.
- More marketing and outreach of the programme to be able to reach and engage the hardest to help.

*"The age limit is 21 or 20, I just think that older people should be able to access the service as well."* **(Participant)**

### For the community

**11.108** One LA representative explained that the project had enabled it to sustain a reasonable NEET figure whilst allowing Youth Offer delivery partners to report and record interventions with young people, enabling a better understanding of provision and gaps in London. A community event provided the opportunity for employers to see young people in a positive light, changing perceptions and matching young people with relevant local opportunities.

**11.109** The programme has secured a range of EET outcomes. It has worked with a total of 234 participants up to date, 83 of which have already left the programme. Of these, 22 participants have gone into full-time employment, 54 into full-time education, and 7 into apprenticeships. Therefore, out of 234 participants, 83 have secured an EET outcome, 35%.

### Partnership model

**11.110** There was a positive partnership between Youth AID and the LA as well as other participating delivery partners. Relations were especially effective with regard to the sharing of information about the local provision available to young people. This database was shared across a number of LAs and contained a list of all the eligible young people in the borough and was useful as it gave providers updated information on young people, and the interventions they had received. The VCS lead was also able to comprise a weekly job list with opportunities for young people.

*"His expertise is second to none, he knows so many different providers and he's made it his duty to compile this jobs and opportunities bulletin which he sends out weekly, and that has also grown his knowledge about what's out there, and also he's able to pass that on to us. So there's quite, a lot of, what shall I call it, cross-fertilisation, sharing a lot of information, so that's really been helpful."* **(LA representative)**

**11.111** All these helped the project, partnership and prospective providers that could help refer more young people.

*"We've also got what we call the NEET traineeship which the Mayor started, that's run by the Youth Support Services, that's quite a good project, because that takes young people who are youth offenders, looked after, that vulnerable group. Again Youth Aid works closely with them to either refer people to that project or they ask Youth Aid to support some of the young people on the project because they just need a little bit more nurturing and support."* **(LA representative)**

*"So we've got that aspect to it, and then the other bit that we do, and I think we do it quite well, is the partnership working, so we've established relationships with loads of providers who know what we do and who we work with and are offering us job opportunities, traineeships, places on training courses"* **(LA representative)**

**11.112** There were some challenges that arose specifically regarding movement and replacement of staff within the LA which required new relationships being formed.

*"There still could be some changes because of how the austerity measures are impacting and people that we're working with one minute really well, they've gone, replaced by somebody else so that doesn't help, but I think by and large we've navigated this."* **(VCS representative)**

**11.113** Nonetheless, if future projects come to fruition, both the LA and Youth AID would be happy to continue a strong working relationship.

### Legacy and sustainability

**11.114** Both the LA and Youth AID, the VCS partner, expressed a desire to continue the project if more funding was made available. They agreed that the grant model was effective because of its flexibility, and would still enable them to receive the same results as a payment by results model, which the LA pointed out that did not reflect the work of the VCS.

*"The grant model that is being used here is actually good because it does give you that liberty to do things and I think the results are quite similar, and you do get the results, but the thing is that the payment by results model doesn't necessarily reflect the reality of the work that you need to do"* **(LA representative)**

They also spoke of increasing the number of staff and widening the clientele by including other groups. However confirmation of future funding is still pending.

### Case study 7: Wandsworth

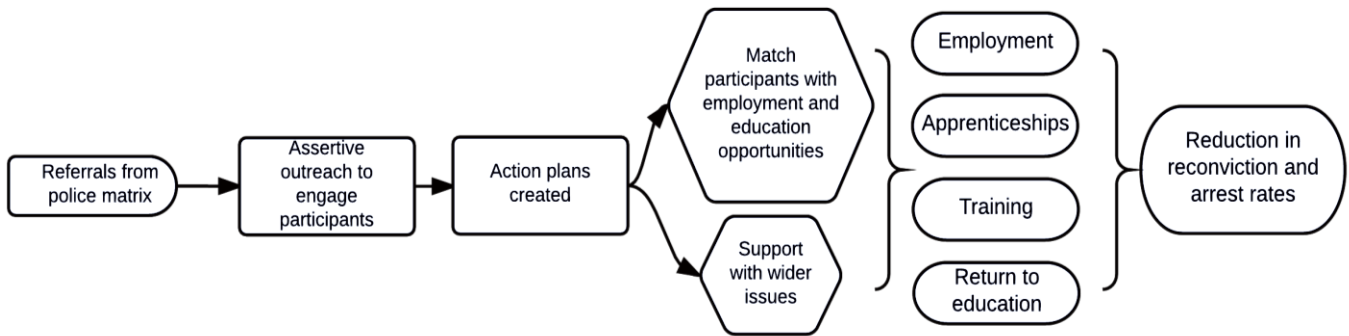
**11.115** In Wandsworth, the LA *Ending Gang and Serious Youth Violence Team* worked with the VCS partner, Catch 22, to support young people NEET who were identified as being in a gang and more likely to commit a crime. Participants were offered a service that focused on making positive changes and leaving the gang by supporting them into an EET outcome and helping them with wider issues such as housing.

### Delivery model

**11.116** The delivery team worked with police in the local area to identify potential programme participants, using the gang matrix, which showed who in the local area, was thought to be involved in gang culture. It also gave each individual a RAG (red, amber, green) rating, in order for the services to work out who was most likely to be at risk of offending. Particular priority was placed on the top 15 individuals identified by the gang matrix information. These cases were also discussed during local multi-agency meetings in the area, which occurred approximately every six weeks.

**11.117** Two key workers (one post funded by CBT) then undertook outreach in an attempt to engage the participants referred to them. The first meeting aimed to establish what the young person's goals and interests were and whether they had a support network around them. An action plan was then created to establish what the young person would work towards and what support they would need; this was reviewed every six weeks.

**11.118** Support thereafter was a mixture of one-to-one sessions and group work, usually occurring at least once a week. Delivery staff acknowledged that this group often have multiple, complex issues that need addressing before they can be supported to enter employment, education or training, especially if they had recently left prison. As the project team was so small they often partnered with other local organisations to source opportunities for programme participants.



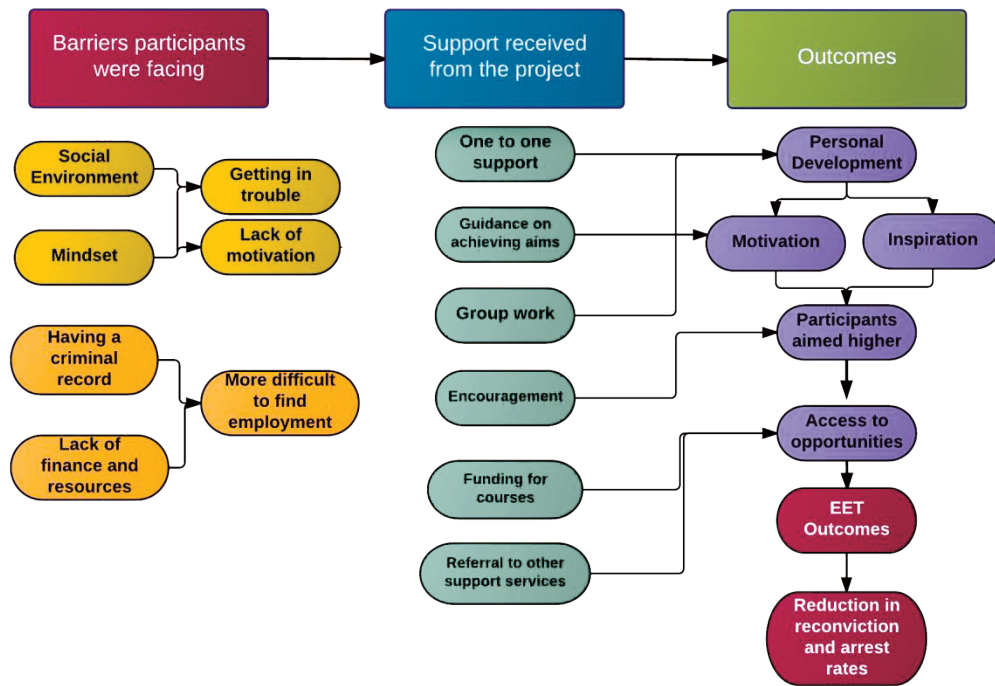
**11.119** The overall aim of the programme was to reduce reconviction and arrest rates amongst young people in the Wandsworth area, whilst simultaneously reducing the number of young people NEET through supporting them to leave gangs and find relevant education, training or employment opportunities.

**11.120** There were around 120 people on the 'Risk of Gang and Crime Indicator' matrix, and the delivery team tried to engage with them all.

## Project Outcomes

**11.121** Despite the recognition that this was a difficult group with which to engage and work, the general consensus amongst staff interviewed was that the project has had a significant impact, both on the number of young people deemed at risk of offending (with a red or amber RAG rating) and on increasing the likelihood of participants making positive changes to their lives, such as finding, or making progress towards work.

*"The way that the police work, they give them a RAG rating and then a zero score so he's a green zero score now so he's not in prison, the whole time he's been out of jail, he's working, he's coming up to doing training so yes, the guys like him, they're fully on board, and we've been able to really support them."* (LA Representative)



**11.122** Barriers identified by participants (as outlined in the diagram above) included their social environment and mindset, which meant that they lacked motivation and made them more likely to get into trouble and not having the necessary finances and resources to participate in courses and to buy items such as appropriate clothing for an interview or uniform for certain jobs. Having a criminal record was also seen to be a significant barrier when applying for work.

**11.123** The support gave participants a confidence boost as well as advice about how they could achieve their aims. The funding for, and quick access to, relevant courses was also seen as an important element of the project, and participants reported that they were inspired and encouraged to aim higher because staff were supportive and receptive to their ideas and helped them to set goals.

*"They want to help with that, I want to do this, cool, let's try and get you on a course or just try and see if we know someone."* **(Participant)**

*"The thing that helped me aspire to be great is that they created something for me that means everything's achievable as we did mini goals, we worked through every single thing how I would reach what I want to be."* **(Participant)**

**11.124** The support received was preferred to other services because the VCS provider was seen as being genuinely interested in helping the participants. It was also interesting to note, that despite the role of the LA, the project was perceived to be separate from national and local government, about which the young people spoke negatively.

**11.125** Through reducing the number of young people at risk of, or offending, the project has also been able to have a positive impact on participant's families and the local community. For example, the delivery staff and the individuals they supported were also recently involved in a community event held for local people and employers to showcase the project and its participants. This was well received and made local businesses more receptive to hiring individuals with criminal

records, as they were able to demonstrate their capabilities. In addition, other providers attended and offered courses and apprenticeships to the young people on the scheme.

**11.126** To improve the project, participants said that would have liked to have met positive role models that they could relate to, who had similar backgrounds to them. They would have also liked to have access to a greater number of work experience opportunities to test out different career paths.

*"A work experience thing, but really good so that they get the hunger to go for it because that's going to be another thing they want to do"* (**Participant**)

**11.127** Overall, 202 people had some type of engagement with the project. Of the 51 people who left the programme, 13 had an EET outcome (25.5 per cent), 20 remained NEET and the destination of 16 individuals is unknown. Broken down, 4 people went into full-time education, 1 went into part-time employment, 2 went into full-time education, 5 people went into part-time education or training, and 1 person entered an apprenticeship scheme.

### Delivery lessons

**11.128** Working with young people who were involved in gang culture and potentially also criminal activity, meant that progress with participants was often slow, due to the number of barriers that had to be addressed before EET outcomes could be considered.

*"Key lessons that I've learnt is that the client groups that we work with are very, I would have said, high risk but there are multitudes of factors that can impact on their ability to progress."* (**VCS Representative**)

**11.129** Over time, staff involved became aware that the young people that they were working with were not quite ready to leave their comfort zone and move into work, as this drastic change in their lives was unsettling and often made them anxious. Therefore, despite having employers lined up that could offer apprenticeships these were not always suitable. It also became clear that some of the young people were ruining the opportunities themselves due to poor attendance or a bad attitude.

*"So we were matching our guys up with these jobs but it was falling apart quite quickly and what we learnt was that some of them are not very resilient. Their comfort zones tend to be fairly small, if they're pushed outside of that they're anxious, or nervous, they're probably not expressing that, quite often they're self-sabotaging [rather than admitting they have a problem]"* (**LA Representative**)

**11.130** To overcome this issue, the support provided by the key workers on the project has attempted to address concerns about starting work or training, and provide regular support, even once participants have achieved an EET outcome. This also demonstrates that it can be more effective to take small steps forward with particularly disadvantaged young people NEET.

**11.131** The ability for key workers to offer tailored support responsive to individual needs quickly was seen as a key success of the project. However, this approach was also challenging as it meant that the project team had to be able to source a range of opportunities in order to meet individuals' varying needs.

**11.132** In the future, they would like to work with women, as this was a gap in their support, and they would like to have more feedback regarding their services and robust evaluation in order to improve delivery in the long-term.

### Partnership model

**11.133** Both the LA and VCS partner reported a good working relationship; they worked closely together and had a collaborative approach to delivery. Through working with the LA on the Youth Offer project, the VCS partner, Catch 22 was able to get involved in and partner with LA projects that they had not worked on before, whilst the LA lead (who had a background in statutory organisations) was able to learn about youth work and the non-statutory approach. There was a split in delivery responsibilities whereby Catch 22 key workers delivered one-to-one support and the LA held group sessions focused around personal development, which was seen to work well.

**11.134** Wider partnerships were formed with social, housing and employment services in Wandsworth, which meant that the young people could be signposted to appropriate support and that information could be shared. Relationships with other providers also enabled project staff to source a wider range of opportunities for participants. Once the participants' support networks were established, professionals working with the individual would meet to establish how they could best support that person.

*"Identifying what is the network around them, and so once we know who is involved with this young person, making sure that we have a review meeting....getting the professionals together is always quite helpful."* **(VCS Representative)**

*"The other bit that we do and I think we do it quite well, is the partnership working, so we've established relationships with loads of providers who know what we do and who we work with and are offering us job opportunities, traineeships, places on training courses..."* **(LA Representative)**

### Legacy and sustainability

**11.135** Following the London Riots, a number of LAs were recognised as having a gang problem, and the government gave them funding to deal with the issue. The project in Wandsworth was initially funded by this money, and, once this ran out, it was able to continue through the CBT grant.

**11.136** The staff interviewed expressed a desire to continue the project if additional funding became available in the future. The three staff members on the project currently have their posts funded until March 2016.

**11.137** Partners believed that the project had proved a need for support for young people involved in gangs and crime and using the police matrix information to identify potential participants ensured that key workers were targeting the right people. Lastly, being a voluntary service, delivered together with a VCS partner was seen to have worked well, as this made the support more appealing to potential participants.

# 12 Appendix 4: Detailed Participant Impact Section

## Participant engagement

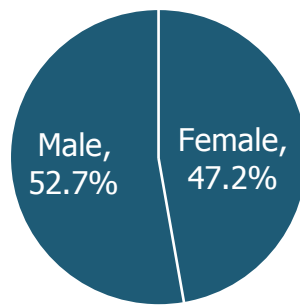
- 12.1** Participants were referred onto the programme from many different sources - through the job centre and from other local organisations and agencies. Some LAs also did their own outreach to participants.
- 12.2** A total of 5,939 young people have started on the Youth Offer programme throughout the two year duration of the programme. These starters were more or less evenly split between young people NEET and "at risk of NEET" young people; 37.3% were young people NEET (2,214), and 31.1% were "at risk of NEET" young people (1,848), although the status for the remaining 31.6% of participants was not known at the point they joined the programme.
- 12.3** The three LAs that engaged with the highest number of participants were Bromley, (1,693 starters), Lambeth (1,298 starters), and Tower Hamlets (501). These boroughs had the following number of leavers: 1,394, 1,283 and 396, respectively. However, these boroughs were examples of interventions that aimed at reducing the number of "unknowns" in their boroughs. Therefore, they were more of a data collection exercise linked to referral to LA service provision and this explains the large number of participants. Other LAs had very low numbers of participants but this was generally because they engaged with harder to reach and more disadvantaged participants, who required more intensive support.

## Demographic Profile

- 12.4** This Appendix presents the demographic profile of all participants who started on the Youth Offer programme, their breakdown by gender, age, whether they were lone parents, whether they had any form of disability, whether they were carers, and their ethnicity.

### Gender

- 12.5** Slightly more Youth Offer participants were male than female, 52.7% as opposed to 47.2%.

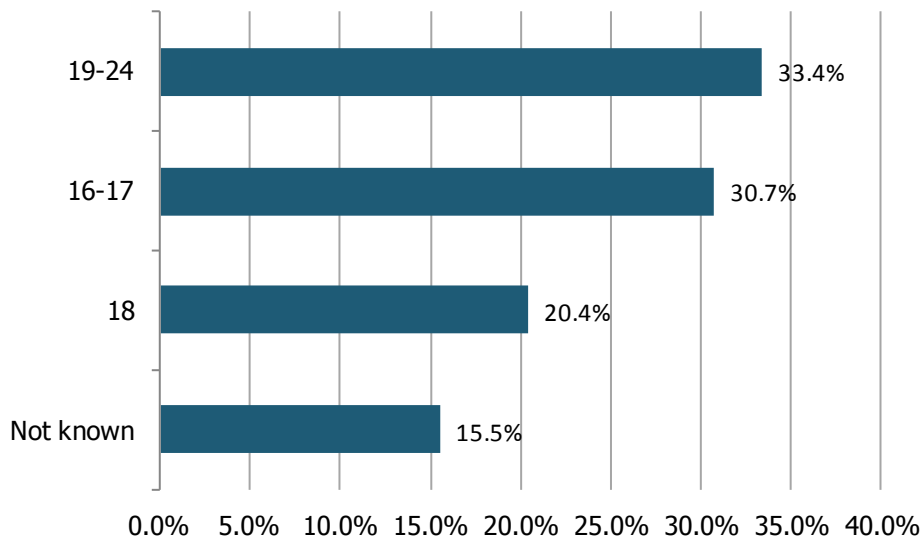


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**Figure 12.1: Gender of participants.**

### Age

**12.6** 33.4% of all starters on the programme were aged 19-24, followed by 30.7% of participants who were aged 16-17. 20.4% of participants were aged 18, and there is no information on age for 15.5% of participants.



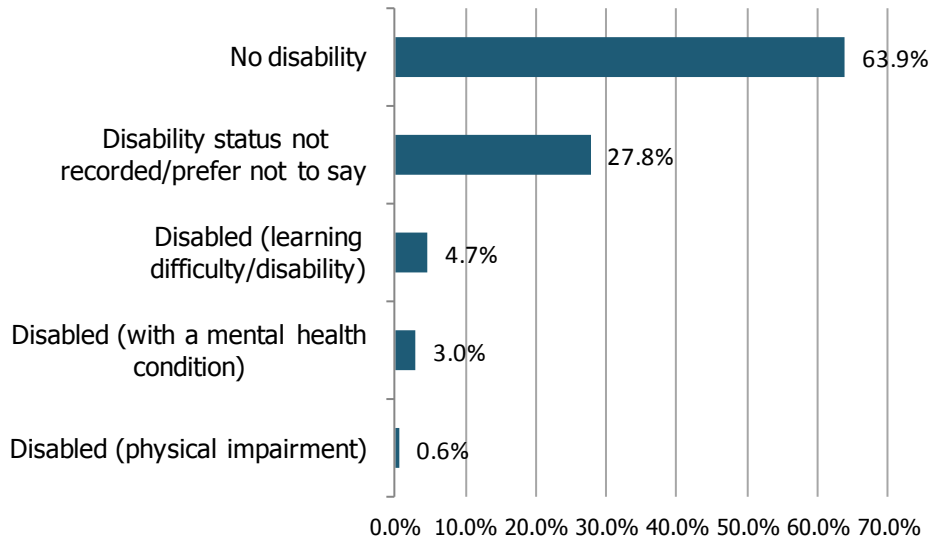
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**Figure 12.2: Age of participants.**

### Disabilities

**12.7** 63.9% of participants were not disabled while 8.3% were. Of those disabled participants, the most common disability was having a learning difficulty. 4.7% of the total number of participants had a learning disability or difficulty. 3.0% of them suffered from mental health problems and 0.6% were disabled with a physical impairment.

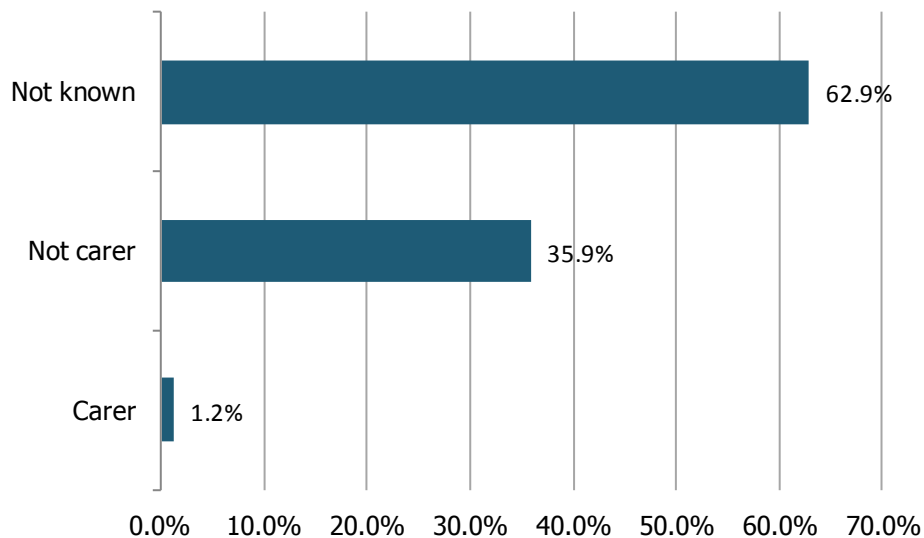




**Figure 12.3: Disabilities of participants.**

## Carers

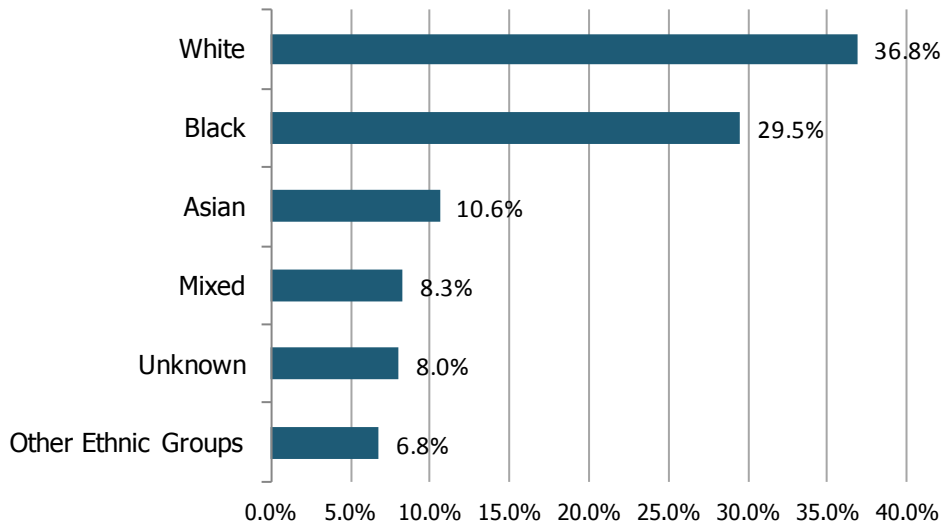
**12.8** Information on whether participants were carers or not was not collected for 62.9% of participants. Bearing in mind this, we know that 1.2% of all participants were caring for someone.



**Figure 12.4: Percentage of participants who were carers.**

## Ethnicity

**12.9** 36.8% of participants were white, 29.5% were black, 10.6% of participants were Asian, 8.3% of mixed ethnicity and 6.8% belonged to other ethnic groups. We do not know the ethnicity for 8% of participants, as this information was not collected.



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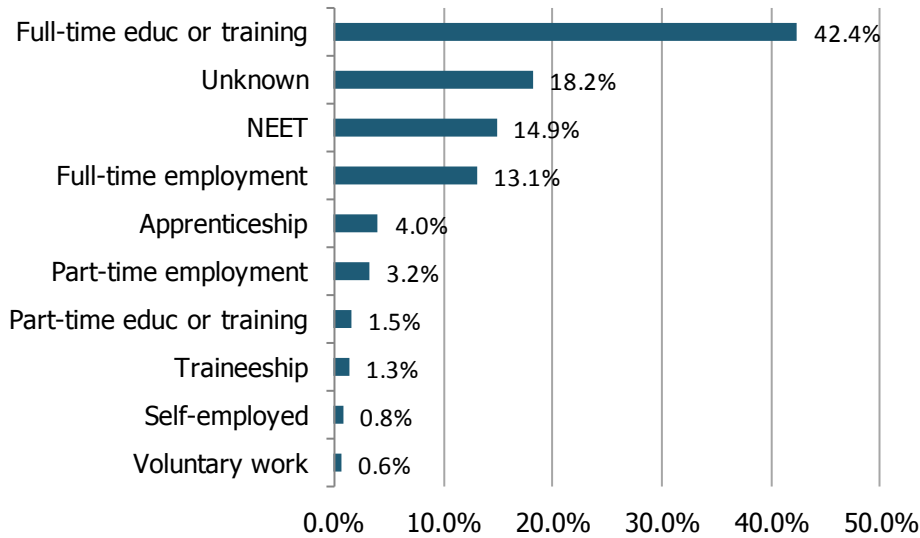
**Figure 12.5: Ethnicity of participants.**

## Outcomes

**12.10** This section presents the destination of participants after they left the Youth Offer programme (either as early leavers or having completed their project activities), and a breakdown of the demographic characteristics of those participants who became NEET and for those who became EET (secured employment, education or training after the programme).

### Destination of leavers

**12.11** Of the 5,939 young people who started on the Youth Offer programme, 4,545 were reported as having left the programme up to the date of this evaluation. Of these leavers, the highest proportion (42.4%) moved into full-time education or training (1,927 participants). 14.9% became NEET after leaving the programme (676 participants), 13.1% have moved into full-time employment (595), 4.0% obtained an apprenticeship (183), 3.2% moved into part-time employment (145), 1.3% got a traineeship (59), 1.5% moved into part-time education or training (69), 0.8% became self-employed (35), and 0.6% moved into voluntary work (28). There was no information on destination outcomes for 18.2% of leavers (828 participants).

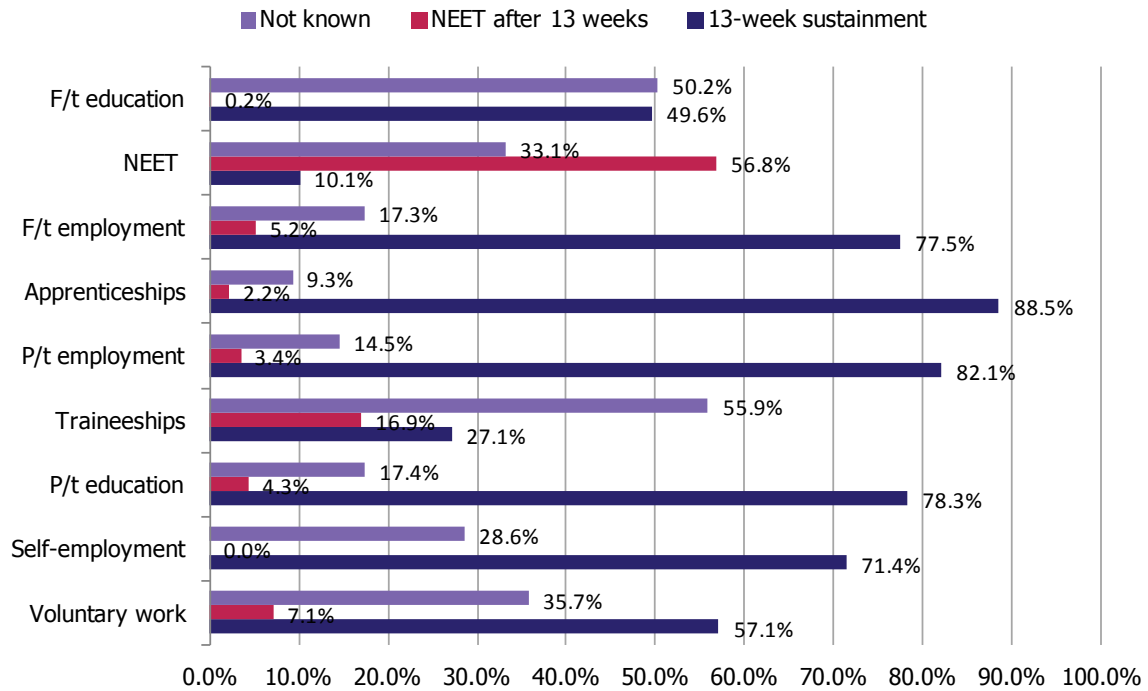


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**Figure 12.6: Outcomes for leavers.**

**12.12** The figure below shows the percentage of participants who sustained their outcome for 13 weeks and the percentage that became NEET 13 weeks after securing their outcome (whether it was a job, entry into education, into an apprenticeship, etc.).

**12.13** Of those participants who went into full-time education 49.6% were still in education after 13 weeks. However, there is no information on sustainment for 50.2% of participants who went into full-time education. Of those participants who went into full time employment, 77.5% sustained it for 13 weeks and 5.2% had become NEET. Of those who went into an apprenticeship, 88.5% of them sustained it after 13 weeks and only 2.2% had become NEET. Of those who went into part-time employment, 82.1% were still in part-time employment after 13 weeks. There is no information on sustainment for 55.9% of participants who went into a traineeship. 16.9% of them had become NEET. Of participants who went into part-time education, 78.3% of them sustained that outcome for 13 weeks. Of those who went into self-employment, 71.4% of them were still in self-employment after 13 weeks. Finally, of those who went into voluntary work, 57.1% were still in voluntary work after 13 weeks. 7.1% had become NEET.



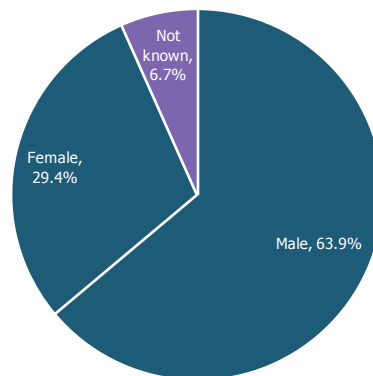
**Figure 12.7: 13-week sustainment figures.**

## Profile of leavers who became NEET

**12.14** This section of the appendix identifies the demographic characteristics of those participants who became NEET after leaving the programme.

### Gender

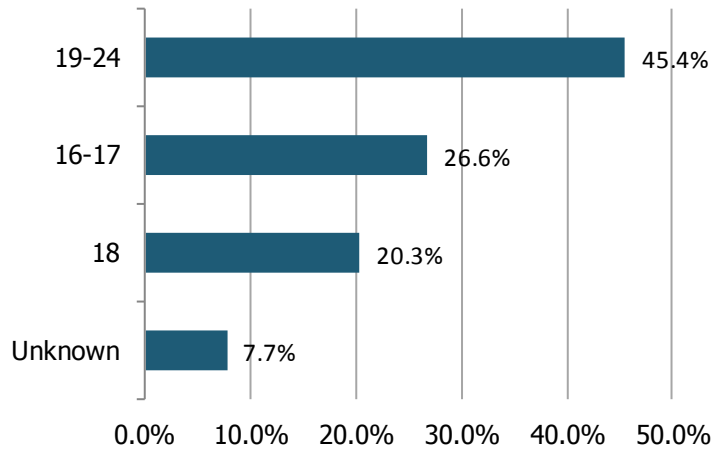
**12.15** Of those participants who became NEET after leaving the programme, 63.9% of them were male while 29.4% were female. This suggests that the programme was relatively less successful for men than for women.



**Figure 12.8: Gender of participants who became NEET.**

## Age

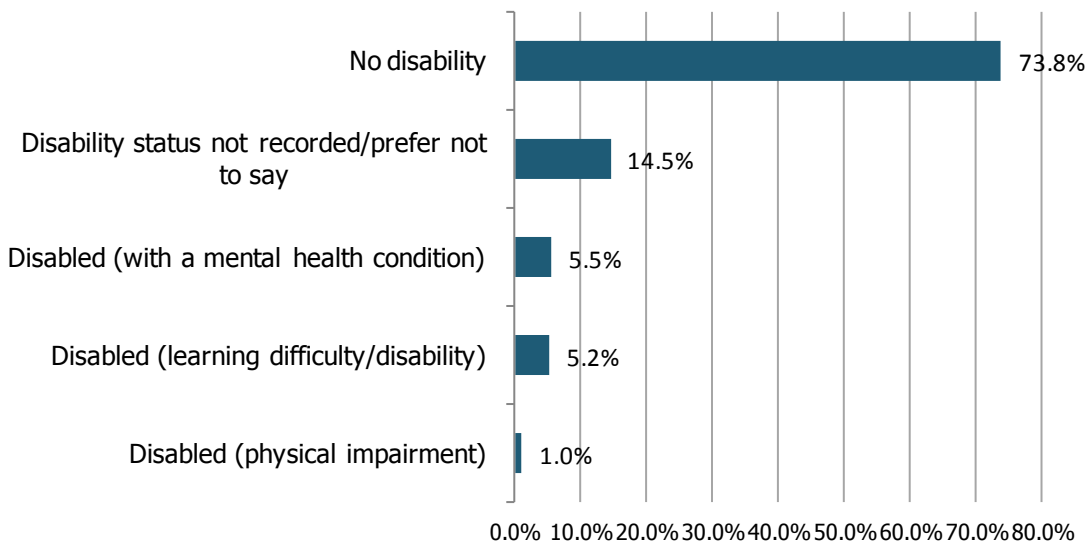
**12.16** 45.4% of participants who left and became NEET were aged 19-24, 26.6% of them were aged 16-17 and 20.3% were aged 18.



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**Figure 12.9: Age of participants who became NEET.**

## Disabilities



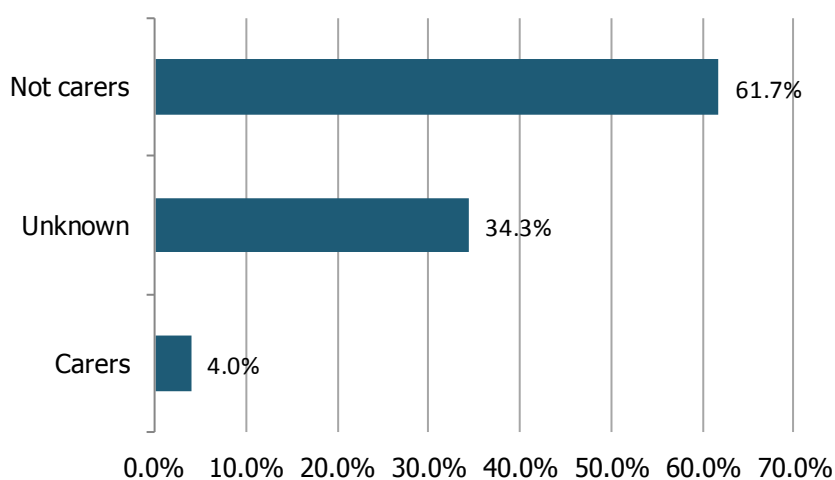
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**Figure 12.10: Disability status of participants who became NEET.**

**12.17** Of participants who left the Youth Offer programme and became NEET, 73.8% of them were not disabled, 5.2% had a learning disability or difficulty, 5.5% had a mental health problem, and 1.0% suffered from a physical impairment. However, it should be borne in mind that there is no information on disability status for 14.5% of participants who became NEET.

### Carers

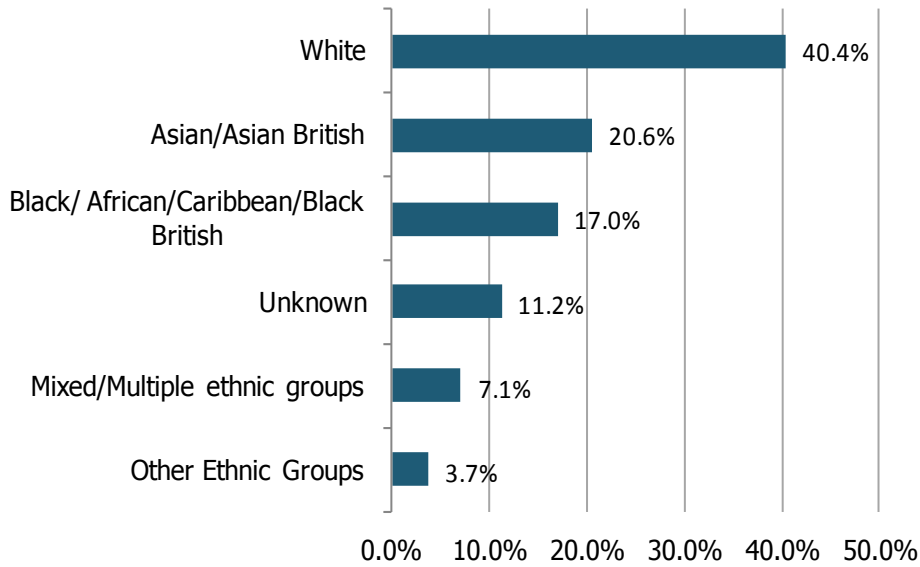
**12.18** Only 4.0% of participants who left the Youth Offer programme and became NEET were caring for someone else. However, there is no information on carer status for 61.7% of participants.



**Figure 12.11: Carer status of participants who became NEET.**

### Ethnicity

**12.19** 40.4% of participants who left the Youth Offer programme and became NEET were white, 20.6% were Asian, 17.0% were black, 7.1% were of mixed ethnicity and 3.7% belonged to other ethnic groups. Given that 29.5% of participants who started on the Youth Offer programme were black but of those who left and became NEET only 17.0% were black, we could infer that the programme was relatively more successful for them than for participants from other ethnic groups.



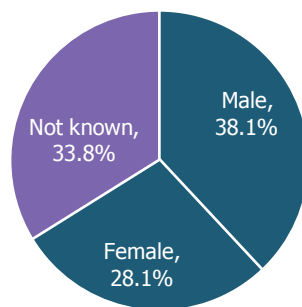
**Figure 12.12: Ethnicity of participants who became NEET.**

### Profile of leavers who became EET

**12.20** This section of the appendix identifies the demographic characteristics of those participants who became EET after leaving the programme; they secured employment, education or training after the programme.

#### Gender

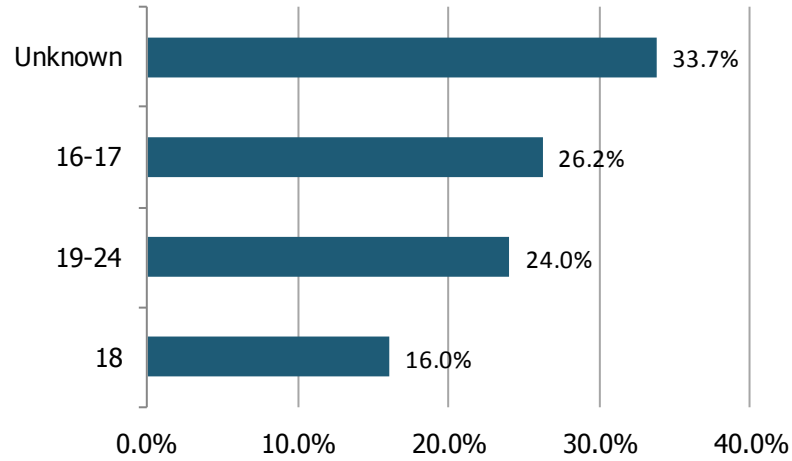
**12.21** Of those participants who left the programme and became EET, 28.1% were female and 38.1% were male. However, these figures are not very conclusive, since we have no information on gender for 33.8% of participants who became EET.



**Figure 12.13: Gender of participants who became EET.**

## Age

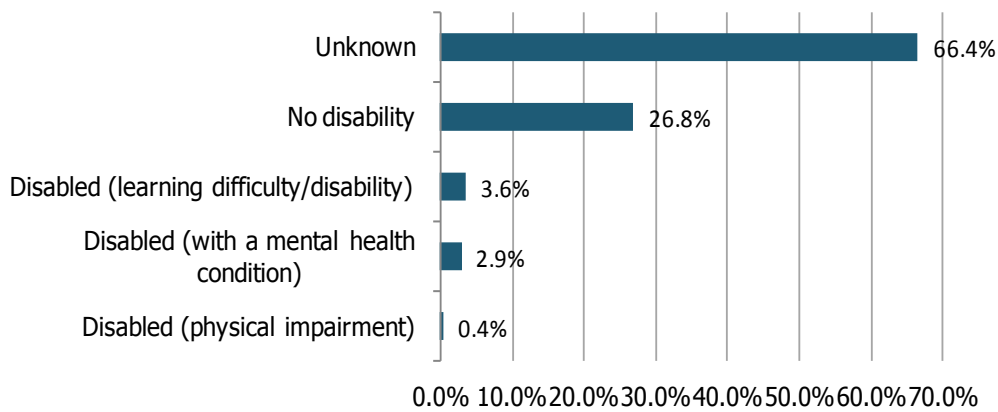
**12.22** There is no information on age for 33.7% of participants who became EET. 26.2% were aged 16-17, 24.0% were aged 19-24 and 16.0% were age 18.



**Figure 12.14: Age of participants who became EET.**

## Disabilities

**12.23** There is no information on disability status for 66.4% of participants who became EET.

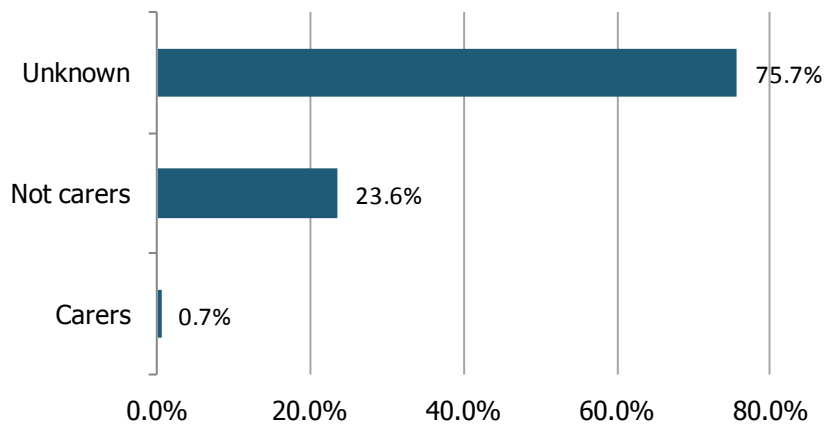


**Figure 12.15: Disability status of participants who became EET.**

## Carer status

**12.24** There is no information on carer status for 75.7% of participants who became EET.

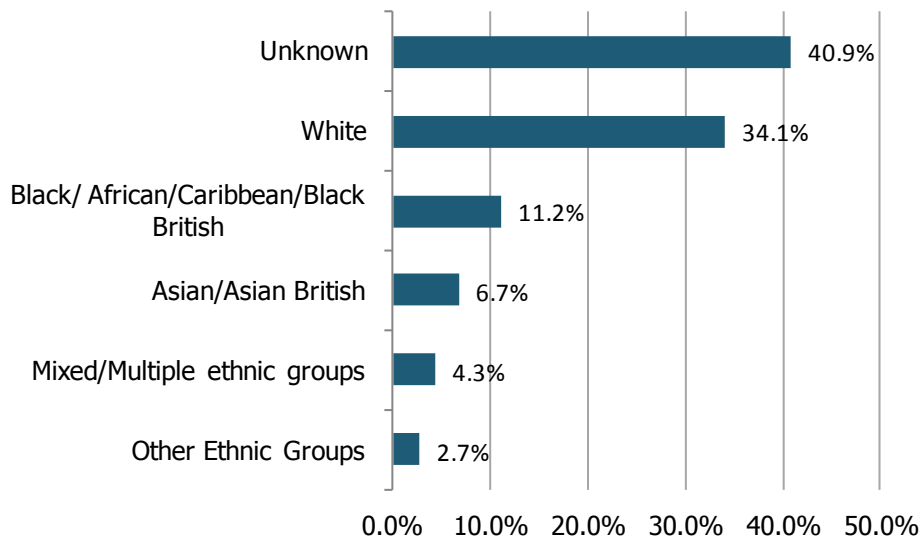




**Figure 12.16: Carer status for participants who became EET.**

## Ethnicity

**12.25** There is no information on ethnicity for 40.9% of participants who became EET.



**Figure 12.17: Ethnicity of participants who became EET.**

## Outcomes by type of support

**12.26** In order to calculate average employment and education entry rates we first excluded projects for which more than 30% of their participants had an unknown destination. We have then classified projects by belonging to one of the three types of support. This gives us three projects which mainly consist on identifying the “unknowns”, 18 projects that offer employability training;

apprenticeship funds, paid or unpaid work placements, business-focused courses etc. and 10 projects that do pure mentoring - one to one bespoke support to help participants tackle the barriers that are holding them back from securing an EET outcome.

**12.27** Projects that focused on pure mentoring and bespoke one-to-one support were relatively more successful at securing entries into full time education for their participants as opposed to entries into full time employment (23.7% average entry rate into full time education as opposed to 12.2% average entry rate into full time education). On the contrary, projects that focused more on employability training (like offering, for instance, some type of work experience, paid or unpaid) had relatively higher entry rates into full time employment than into full time education, on average (30.7% as opposed to 11.8%).

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**Table 12.1: Employment and education entry rates by typology of support.**

	<b>Full time employment avg rate</b>	<b>Full time education avg rate</b>
Mentoring projects (n=10)	12.2%	23.7%
Employability training (n=18)	30.7%	11.8%

### **Acknowledgement:**

We would like to thank Dianna Neal, Mary Vine-Morris, David Pack and Clare Thomas for their assessment work early on; we would also like to thank Martin Hall, Jemma Grieve-Combes and Julia Mirkin for management support throughout the programme. We would like to thank Olivia Dix for management work and editing of the final report.