

Not participating in learning (16-18 years of age)

Headlines

Engagement in learning and educational attainment is critical if young people are to make a success of their lives.

The number of 16 and 17-year olds who participate in learning is increasing and in June 2012 rose to 86.9% (the same as England). But there are still too many young people in Kirklees who are choosing not to continue in learning beyond the age of 16, or are dropping out between the ages of 16 and 18. They do not acquire the skills they need for successful employment, and they become NEET (not in education, employment or training).

From 2013 young people completing year 11 education must stay in learning until the end of the school year in which they turn 17 years of age and from 2015 will stay in learning until their 18th birthday.

Locally, our Raising Participation Age (RPA) strategy promotes engagement in learning from year 12 to year 14 post-secondary education in order to minimise the number of young people across this age group who are NEET to meet new RPA statutory duties and increase participation in learning.

Why is this issue important?

Engagement in learning and educational attainment is critical if young people are to make a success of their lives. The number of local 16 and 17-year olds who participate in learning is increasing in Kirklees; from DFE published participation data in June 2012 participation was up 1% since last year to 86.9% (the average for England is also 86.9%). The number of young people whose current activity was “not known” was 4% in Kirklees (the average for England is 5.4%).

Numbers of young people 16-18 known to not be in education, employment or training (NEET) in March 2012 was 7.2% (1,038 young people), down from 8.1% in March 2011.

The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) Children’s Services Statistical Neighbours placed Kirklees sixth out of 11 comparable local authority areas in March 2012 and at 7.2% below the average for its statistical neighbours of 7.5% and equal to the average for Yorkshire and Humber.

Our ambition is to ensure as many young people as possible are engaged in education and training. The aim locally is that 98% of young people aged 16-18 years of age are engaged in learning (assuming that some young people are unable to participate due to illness or other extenuating circumstances which have been defined as a reasonable excuse for non-engagement and with an expectation that young people will continue in learning after their 18th birthday to complete their learning outcomes).

What significant factors are affecting this issue?

Those factors which influence participation of 16-18 year olds are the same as those that influence participation in those under 16. Young people who do not participate or fall out of education, employment or training after they have left the compulsory education system, often have health and other personal issues to deal with. Those who are unlikely to engage post-16 are likely to display some of the following factors:

- Poor achievement at school pre-16.
- Have a history of school exclusion or poor attendance at school.
- Are on an alternative curriculum.
- Have home or care issues.
- Are teenage parents or pregnant teenagers.
- Are supervised by youth offending teams.
- Have substance misuse problems.
- Are looked after or are care leavers.

Emotional, social and behavioural difficulties are common factors across those in these groups who are NEET.

From CCIS data, in December 2012, 1 in 5 (18%) of [looked after children/care leavers](#) were NEET, 1 in 3 (34%) of those supervised by the Youth Offending Team and 1 in 2 (47%) of teenage parents.

Non-participation in learning increases linearly from 16 years of age and beyond. Health outcomes for young people who are not engaged are likely to be poorer and will become sustained where they are unable to progress beyond 18 years of age into good work outcomes. Those becoming NEET in 2012 after completing year 11 has reduced, down to

2.85% overall. However amongst those who have been in alternative key stage 4 education (i.e. not in mainstream schools) the rate is 22% from local activity survey data.

The Government is increasing the age to which all young people in England must continue in education or training, requiring them to continue until the end of the academic year in which they turn 17 from 2013 and until their 18th birthday from 2015. Raising the participation age does not mean young people must stay in school; they will be able to choose one of the following options post-16:

- Full-time education, such as school, college or home education.
- An apprenticeship.
- Part-time education or training if they are employed, self-employed or volunteering full-time (which is defined as 20 hours or more a week).

It is anticipated that those currently at risk of becoming NEET will still be those at risk of not participating once the changes take effect.

Which groups are most affected by this issue?

See above

Where is this causing greatest concern?

There are a number of hotspots where the risk factors are more common and there is a higher rate of non-participation, for example, Dalton, Rawthorpe, Kirkheaton, Thornhill, Savile Town, Chickenley, Earlsheaton, Ravensthorpe, Dewsbury Moor and Batley account for more than half of all those young people who are NEET (when reporting NEET).

Views of local people

Those who are not participating or at risk of becoming NEET report facing a multitude of issues including chaotic lifestyles, inertia, homelessness, bad decision making, criminality and emerging [mental health](#) concerns. Unresolved family breakdown, lack of positive role models, unwillingness or inability to take risks for positive change, dependency on [alcohol](#) or [drugs](#), laziness, bad parenting and a determination not to take a place in the

mainstream are also among the barriers some young people report facing when working with advisers.

Young adults also report that finding work was one of their major concerns and the stress of job hunting and financial insecurity can have a significant effect on their emotional and physical wellbeing. Some young adults had little motivation to find work due to a lack of financial commitments, as they were living with parents or because they receive “free money” through the benefits system and report abandoning education or training because there is no immediate financial reward. At the same time the cost of training or education was seen as a major issue, particularly for those who lack parental support or those with young children as they felt the need to earn a steady income was more important than developing their skills.

What could commissioners and service planners consider?

- The provision of personalised support and guidance covering:
 - o Good quality, impartial information, advice and guidance (IAG).
 - o Financial support.
 - o Targeted early intervention with those at risk of NEET pre-16 and those who are engaged in learning but are at risk of dropping out.
- Targeted support and specialised provision for young people with specific vulnerabilities, including teenage parents, young carers, care leavers and LAC, young offenders, young people with special educational needs and young people with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties (ESBD).
- The provision of flexible learning opportunities such as volunteering, support to young people in jobs without training, apprenticeships and flexible starts (throughout the calendar year) in post-16 learning.
- Other Raising Participation Age priorities:
 - o Preparing young people with employability skills through work experience and work related learning.
 - o Post-16 progression planning and pathways ensuring young people are able to progress and follow relevant learning programmes.

- o Ensuring young people have the necessary English and maths skills and delivering functional skills in creative and imaginative ways.
- Improving employment links beyond age 18:
- o Links with Job Centre Plus provision and services.
- o Programmes to support 18-25 year olds into work.
- o See also: work section of JSNA.

References

1. The Department for Education DfE Client Caseload Information System (CCIS). Available from: <http://www.education.gov.uk/a0064101/16-to-18-year-olds-not-in-education-employment-or-training-need>
2. Kirklees Raising Participation Strategy.
3. DfE Client Caseload Information System (CCIS).
4. Marmot Review

Date this section was last reviewed

09/07/2013 (PL)