

The Prince's Trust response to:

**The Children Schools and Families
Select Committee**

**Inquiry into Young People Not in
Education Employment or Training
(NEET)**



Prince's Trust

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The Children, Schools and Families Select Committee Inquiry into
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1. Strategies for the identification of young people at risk of falling into the NEET category

1.1 The Prince's Trust works with, on average 40,000 young people a year, all of whom at one stage or another have been or are NEET. The experience of the Trust is that young people most at risk of becoming NEET may well have expressed dissatisfaction in, or disengagement from, learning while at school, for example by truanting, disruptive behaviour or low educational achievement.

1.2 The Trust would emphasise that identification of young people at risk of becoming NEET should begin well before young people leave school, and that school records should be used in this identification process. This will allow for the possibility of alternative support and/or provision to be in place before young people reach school leaving age, thus limiting the numbers of young people becoming NEET when they reach the post-Year 11 transition stage. This is why The Trust's XI clubs were set up, supporting "at risk" young people during their last 2 years of mandatory schooling.

1.3 Effective information sharing between organisations can also allow young people at risk of becoming NEET to be identified and effectively supported. The Trust has a Memorandum of Understanding with Jobcentre Plus, helping to ensure that young people are referred to the Trust's 'Team' programme before they become long-term NEET. Feedback from Team Leaders to JCP staff also ensures that young people at risk are known to JCP and that further strategies of support, informed by well-rounded knowledge of the individual, can be put in place if necessary.

2. Services and programmes to support those most at risk of becoming NEET, and to reduce the numbers and address the needs of those who have become persistently NEET

2.1 The Prince's Trust has a range of programmes to support young people who are, or at risk of becoming NEET and those who have become persistently NEET. The Trust's programmes are designed to trace a learning journey, beginning with the informal 'Get Started' for the hardest to reach right through to programmes for the job ready. The effectiveness of all programmes are measured by how many young people make the transition into education training or employment, three months after leaving the programme. See below for details on the % of young people who move out of NEET and onto ETE.

2.2 'Get Started' is aimed at young people who are persistently NEET. It is a short, motivating programme (generally 5 – 8 days in length), which engages young people using sport or the arts, and uses these activities as a vehicle for personal development. It culminates in a final challenge or celebration such as a

performance or sports coaching session, when the group brings together the skills they have learnt. Participants then receive three months progression support to move into training, education, employment, further programmes such as Team or volunteering. 73% of young people finishing Get Started move into employment, education or training.

2.3 The XL programme runs in 569 schools and centres, 23% of which are in Pupil Referral Units and Young Offenders Institutions. This 2 year programme delivers five modules to under-achieving 14-16 year olds, including personal skills, citizenship, a community project, enterprise and entrepreneurship and preparing for the world of work. Young people involved in XL have shown great success in navigating the transition from school: 85% go on to employment, self-employment, education or training. 25 centres are currently piloting QCF units with the intention of developing a qualification which will sit within the Foundation Learning Tier – at either award, certificate or diploma level.

2.4 'Team' is a twelve week programme which supports 16-25 NEET young people to develop skills, motivation and confidence. Young people take part in team building activities, including a community project and residential, and are given work experience opportunities. Team delivers a QCF qualification in vocational skills and is currently piloting a QCF qualification in functional skills to be embedded into existing provision. From September 2010, personal and social development skills will be accredited with a QCF qualification. Young people on Team are helped to move into education, employment or training on completion of the programme. The effectiveness of Team is made clear by its outcomes, with 72% of young people who take part moving into education, training or employment.

2.5 'Get Into' allows NEET young people to experience and develop their skills in vocational careers. It is targeted at those young people who are job ready. 'Get Into' programmes include construction, sport, catering, retail, social care and maritime and deliver Level 2 industry-recognised qualifications. The Prince's Trust has developed relationships with prominent employers in each sector, thus ensuring opportunities which are both meaningful and desirable. Six months of ongoing support on completion of 'Get Into' means that young people are able to access personalised advice from a single, consistent source as they look to move into education, training or employment. 75% of young people involved in the Trust's 'Get Into' programmes moved into education, training or employment

2.6 The 'Business Programme' aims to support young people interested in self-employment to explore and test their business ideas, write business plans and start their own businesses or achieve alternative outcomes in education, training or work. 90% are employed or self employed three months after finishing the programme.

3 The Effectiveness of the Government's NEET Strategy

3.1 Tracking

The Prince's Trust has been supportive of the Government's NEET strategy, and in particular its aims to ensure a more personalised approach and a broader range of provision. The Trust's work with NEET young people means that it is aware that reducing the numbers of young people who are NEET is complex and requires a multi-faceted approach

3.2 Tracking to ensure NEET young people are highlighted and appropriate referrals are made is clearly extremely important. While Jobcentre Plus can effectively track many of those young people aged 18 and over who are NEET, young people under 18 may be more difficult to identify. The work of Connexions in tracking this age group is therefore extremely important. Connexions contact with young people during secondary school and beyond means that they are in a unique position to identify and refer 16 and 17 year olds who have become NEET.

3.3 Effective referral procedures which follow on from tracking can mean young people are prevented from becoming long term NEET. The Prince's Trust has close working relationships with both Connexions and the Jobcentre Plus which allows swift referrals to the Trust's provision from each organisation and effective feedback to Connexions and JCP from the Trust.

3.4 The Prince's Trust has developed its own tracking procedures to follow up young people who have taken part in programmes. A range of systems allow for effective tracking, including progression mentors who support and follow young people's progress, outcome forms and text surveys. Quality of service is measured by the Trust's 'Matrix' system which gathers feedback from young people on quality of delivery. The Trust is piloting differing tracking systems using mobile phone technology as not all young people have access to the internet.

4 Personalised Guidance and Support

4.1 The Trust views personalised guidance and support as essential in order to deliver effective provision to young people. A 14-19 prospectus in each Local Authority must ensure that all provision is accounted for and is current. It also needs to be easily accessible to young people, both available online and as hard copy for those young people who don't have access to the internet at home.

4.2 The development of targeted youth services is positive and recognises that some young people will need more intensive input in order to progress positively. The Trust believes that the role of mentoring in ensuring the best quality outcomes for vulnerable young people is also essential.

4.3 The Prince's Trust is working with Clinks, Catch 22, St Giles Trust, Mentoring & Befriending Foundation and Innovation Exchange to deliver 'Gate Mate'. The Trust believes that all young people should be met by a positive role model on their release from custody who can deliver high quality mentoring in order to help ensure that they do not return. Entering education, training and

employment is shown to be a key factor in reducing re-offending and mentoring will play a vital role in guiding young people towards opportunities and offering ongoing support following take up of opportunities.

4.4. The Prince's Trust mentoring project for young offenders on release is called the One to One project. It is currently being piloted in HMP Guys Marsh and HMP Eastwood Park. The project is also being developed in the South East (Reading YOI) and Northern Ireland (Hydebank Wood).

4.5 The Trust is also currently delivering progression mentoring. Progression mentoring focuses solely on helping young people into a positive outcome on completion of a Trust programme, and in supporting them to sustain this activity. Mentors are matched to young people and work with them to determine goals and steps towards their achievement, allowing young people ownership of their progression pathway.

4.6 The Trust also offers targeted support to care leavers via mentoring. Our 'Leaving Care Mentor' projects enable mentors to support young people through the transition from leaving care to independent living. They operate in partnership with social services in the East of England, South East, East Midlands, Wales and the North East of England.

5 Provision of a full range of courses to meet demand

5.1 The Prince's Trust has a long history of providing courses to young people who are underachieving and supports the Government's recognition of the need for a full range of courses to meet the needs of all young people. Many of the young people the Trust works with have been long-term NEET and have benefited from being able to access courses which sit outside of mainstream provision. Young people working with the Prince's Trust have subsequently been motivated to return to more mainstream provision and work as well as developing their own enterprises with support from Prince's Trust grants.

"I'm Lindsay Lyall. I'm 21 and have dyslexia and borderline learning difficulties. I lost myself in an education system that let me fall through the cracks. With support from the Trust I found myself again. The course gave me much more than experience and qualifications – it helped me find myself. The placement I did on the course is where I'm now working – Essential Drug and Alcohol Services. I'm studying Criminal Justice at university as I want to work with young offenders and excluded people."

- Young person who participated in 'Youth Steps'

5.2 Prince's Trust programmes are available throughout the year, allowing young people who have not enrolled in, or have dropped out of, Further Education to access courses before January or September start dates. Young people are able to access tasters and work experience prior to making decisions about mainstream education, training or employment, thus reducing the risk of

repeated drop out which can be significantly detrimental to motivation and progression.

5.3 The Prince's Trust agrees that enabling and accrediting achievement is essential for all young people, and so welcomes the potential of Foundation Learning to cater to those young people working below Level 2. It also supports the possibility of Foundation Learning to give young people ownership of their programme of study. What is absent from the QCF in England (although present in Wales' QCFW) is more informal development opportunities. Informal learning can be especially useful for young people who are particularly hard to reach. The Trust's 'Get Started' programme is an example of a successful informal programme, which acts as a stepping stone towards more formal learning.

5.4 The three strands of Foundation Learning – skills for work and life, vocational and subject based learning, personal and social development – are included throughout Prince's Trust programmes. It is important that as the curriculum develops in line with 14-19 reform, organisations which have had long-term success in delivering Entry Level and Level1 accreditation are embraced by delivery partners and embedded into options available to young people.

5.5 Key Stage 4 engagement and its potential to prevent young people becoming NEET has long been recognised and practised by the Prince's Trust via its XL programme. Early engagement can be essential in preventing NEET outcomes for school leavers.

6 Rights and responsibilities

6.1 The fast-tracking of 18 year olds to the 'gateway' stage of Flexible New Deal means that JCP staff will need to make immediate referrals to programmes which have been key in engaging young people. Opportunities may be missed if this not the case. The Prince's Trust's Team programme, for example, successfully motivated 72% of young people into education, training and employment last year. The course is twelve weeks long and, as a result, will be inaccessible to young people if referrals are not made swiftly by JCP staff.

6.2 The Prince's Trust supports developments within the Young Person's Guarantee. With a history of offering vocational training, work-based taster opportunities and work experience, it recognises the value of work experience, internships and apprenticeships. Young people, particularly in the current climate, may well struggle to find suitable employment, and the potential of the Future Jobs Fund to aid young people into work is a welcome development.

6.3 The Trust is a keen advocate of volunteering as a means of helping young people to gain vital skills and knowledge, as well as an opportunity to give back to the community. There needs to be clear guidance on benefits for young people who choose to access unpaid opportunities in order to ensure that they do not miss out on financial support when they are entitled to it. Furthermore, it is essential that young people who do have to claim benefits do not miss career

development opportunities that work experience and volunteering can offer. The potential for a gap developing in terms of skills, experience and career development between young people who are financially supported by parents or carers, and young people who are claiming benefits, must not be realised. While the Trust recognises the importance of young people moving into available paid employment, this needs to be meaningful, in line with their career goals, and not at the expense of skills which they may be gaining in an unpaid capacity.

7 The likely impact of raising the participation age on strategies for addressing the needs of young people not in education, employment or training

7.1 The Prince's Trust works with large numbers of young people who have underachieved in mainstream education. Its programmes help enable young people to gain skills, qualifications and experience in key skills and vocational areas. Experience has enabled The Trust to develop programmes which are both attractive to young people and which put them in a position to move forward.

7.2 While the Trust would support moves which help to ensure that young people achieve their potential and do not become 'NEET' at 16 and 17, it would urge the Government to look to organisations such as the Prince's Trust in order to determine best practice for engaging hard to reach young people. Emphasis on vocational skills, enterprise and motivation has proved very successful in moving young people into positive outcomes. Rather than 'criminalising' young people who fail to comply with compulsory education, the Trust would recommend that those young people who don't engage are referred to programmes that fall outside of the mainstream which not only develop motivation, but may also offer accredited outcomes which may be used as Foundation Learning credits.

7.3 Courses offered to young people as part of the raising participation age strategy should have a strong vocational element. The Prince's Trust has supported young people to achieving real success via programmes with a vocational focus. Young people are able to access practical, hands-on experience which can help pave the way for take up of pre-apprenticeship programmes, further education courses and work.

8 The opportunities and future prospects in education, training and employment for 16-18 year olds

8.1 The Prince's Trust has conducted research on potential areas of growth during the recession in order to feed into vocational programmes which will most benefit young people.

8.2 Areas of potential growth identified by the Trust include environmental industries, elderly care and domestic tourism. It would advocate exciting, vocationally based programmes and work experience opportunities for young people to access in these areas. A focus on accredited outcomes will be

advantageous for young people seeking to improve their employability within these areas of potential growth.

8.3 The Leitch Review emphasised the need for highly skilled workers within the changing economy and the Trust would support efforts to address this. With regards to hard-to-reach young people, 'skilling up' needs to be embedded in vocational training opportunities with clear structures, dedicated support and regular recognition of achievement to inspire ongoing motivation. Organisations such as the Prince's Trust can offer these opportunities and could deliver as part of Foundation Learning.

8.4 The Trust has a history of encouraging enterprise via grants, its XL and Business programmes. Supporting enterprise is vital in order to develop a dynamic and innovative work force. Young people who may have under achieved at school are given the opportunity to develop business ideas, fostering their potential and allowing them utilise their own unique sets of experience and skills.

8.5 Volunteering delivers extremely positive results for young people. Not only does it develop skills and work experience, but it can also allow young people to give back to their communities and to develop lasting positive relationships within them. The Prince's Trust would support any moves which help to promote well-supported, carefully structured volunteering. It would be concerned by moves which might discourage take up and/or continuation of volunteering, for example compulsion to move into paid employment for young people claiming JSA.