

PRD project – case study

Building effective practice in partnership working to support young adults (18- 24) to progress to employment, including apprenticeships



Project title – Squaring the Circle

Worth reading if you are interested in:

- Collating and extending NEET provision by extending into new networks
- Using networks to identify and develop provision for NEETs

Contact information

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Name of Peer Review and Development (PRD) group: Cumbria Youth Alliance

Participating organisation(s):

Cumbria Youth Alliance
NACRO
Rathbone UK
Cumbria Business in Education Partnership
Living Well Trust

What the PRD group set out to do and why

We set out to map/collate existing provision for NEETs in the county, to increase understanding about what different providers do and to develop communication between separate networks. We wanted to give providers a platform to say what they do that works in terms of engagement with NEETs. We wanted to give employers an opportunity to comment on current provision and make suggestions. By exploring new networks we set out to consider whether we were working with the right partners. We set out to give learners and NEET young people a chance to input to the discussion. We also set out to collate countywide NEET provision in the context of the local authority developing a plan for post 16 education and training; to establish links with other PRD groups including colleges and work-based learning providers.

What has been achieved so far

- Four events have been held, 'NEET Providers' Forums', each hosted by one of the partners in different parts of the county; 59 people attended in all.
- The first forum was held at NACRO in Barrow. Sixteen people attended. Young people at NACRO running a cafe as part of a social enterprise project did the catering. This was a practical demonstration of something that is successful in engaging NEET young people. Local providers Leonard Cheshire, JHP, CADAS, described their specific range of projects, CYA illustrated our provision with one of our projects, MyBnk. NW Prisons took part and this was the first of several new links to other PRD groups. Inspira (Connexions) gave their overview of a key role in identifying NEETs and signposting. Cumbria Adult Education Service described their range of provision for 19+ unemployed people.
- The second forum was organised by CBEC in Kendal and was attended by a mixture of local employers and providers. We heard from JobcentrePlus and National Apprenticeship Scheme on the latest developments in government programmes. We also heard from Cumbria County Council Post 16 team setting provision in context with statistics and local authority strategy. NACRO and Living Well Trust described some of their local provision.
- The third forum was hosted by Rathbone in Workington. A variety of providers taking part in Future+, an SFA funded NEET project, described their recent work, eg NACRO and Millom Network Centre, and Practical Alternatives to Custody were welcomed to the group. CPDA and CYA described how they use the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme successfully to engage with NEETs. We were joined by GEN II a work-based learning provider and this also formed our second link to another PRD group. The local authority post 16 strategy and statistics formed the context for a lively discussion of issues.
- The fourth forum was hosted by Living Well Trust in Carlisle. We heard from seven organisations about their work including Carlisle Youth Zone, and Conservation Volunteers (formerly BTCV).
- Meeting held with NW Prisons Head of Education and Training at Lancashire Farms Young Offenders' Institute to establish working relationship with them as part of NEET provision eg referral of young offenders before release back to Cumbria to connect them with appropriate providers in their area.
- Agreement reached with Inspira (Connexions) to take part in the next project.
- Working relationship established with CBEC employer network with 5,000 members.
- Working relationship established with Cumbria Adult Education Service development workers in each district for 19+ curriculum development.

What still needs to be done

The report collating diverse provision will be circulated to all stakeholders.

Resources to be shared with the sector

Final Report

Key learning points:

- A variety of networks exist as separate silos and can benefit from connecting to one another for strategic level decision making and also for practical assistance, eg in course development at local level between providers from different networks.
- Engagement with employer networks could be better developed over time.
- Engagement of young learners and NEETs in discussion over curriculum design would need to be pro-actively carried out as part of a task and finish project.
- The PRD process works and the group needs to evolve.
- One PRD member, Living Well Trust has developed a mentoring course (Coach) previously used as informal learning with NEETs. It has now been mapped to accreditation at level 2 via Open Awards and will be used to train 43 staff and volunteers who will work with NEETs around Cumbria, particularly young people leaving care, in partnership with Brathay Trust. We are now exploring whether this training of 19+ unemployed volunteers can be funded as part of the developing partnership with Cumbria Adult Education Service. I think this is one example of the sort of outcome of the networking being undertaken in this project.