

## PRD project – case study

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

**Project title – Enhancing partnership practice to engage and support young people aged 18-24 into employment and apprenticeships**

**Worth reading if you are interested in:**

### **Contact information**

**Main contact:**

**Name of Peer Review and Development (PRD) group:**

**Participating organisation(s):** Darlington Local Authority, North Yorkshire Local Authority

### **What the PRD group set out to do and why**

#### **Introduction**

The aim of this project was to establish key barriers that two different local authorities face when working to engage and support young people aged 18- to 24-years-old to progress to employment, including apprenticeships. The two partners involved with this project were Darlington Local Authority and North Yorkshire Local Authority.

The project was carried out between February 2012 and July 2012 and involved meetings with both partners individually and as a group. The first activity of the group was to establish quantitative data on the number of young people in their authorities Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) aged 18-24. The group then went on to explore their key barriers, looking at both similarities and differences in the barriers they face. A meeting also took place with the Jobcentre Plus in both local authorities to establish their views.

A questionnaire (Appendix 1) was then sent out to several young people in

both Darlington and North Yorkshire who were identified as NEET, aged 18-24. The aim of this activity was to collate their views on the availability of information, advice and guidance in their area and what barriers they face when working to progress to employment.

The group had a further meeting to identify areas of good practice that were happening within their local authorities again looking at both similarities and difference in practices.

Finally the group explored the findings and made recommendations on how the identified barriers could be overcome in both local authorities together and individually. The proposed solutions to the barriers will enable effective practice when working to support and engage with more young people.

The following sections provide more detail about numbers of NEET young people, the barriers to sharing data and other forms of information, and those aspects of good practice to engage young people.

## **DATA**

Darlington and North Yorkshire, like much of the country, has experienced increasing numbers of young people (18-24 year olds) not in education, employment or training.

As of January 2012 approximately 4.1% of 18- to 24-year-olds in Darlington had been claiming Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) for 6 months or more. This is a 2.7% increase since January 2011. This increase has seen Darlington's rate rise so that it matches the North East rate and sits significantly above the English rate.

Numbers of JSA claimants across North Yorkshire rose by 54% during 2008 alone and have continued to rise year on year. As at July 2012 there were 2,240 JSA claimants who are aged 18 to 24. The unemployment rate among 18- to 24-year-olds is 4.8% compared to a national figure of 7.3%.

Approximately 3.2% of 18- to 24-year-olds in North Yorkshire have been claiming Jobseekers Allowance for 6 months or more.

*(Graphs and tables can be seen in the Appendix 2)*

## **BARRIERS**

The project group identified five key barriers to engaging and supporting young people.

1. data Sharing;
2. databases;
3. funding;
4. lack of clarity about initiatives; and
5. lack of Employers.

### **1. Data Sharing**

National statistics on NEETs focus on young people aged 16-18 years. However, at age 18, young people are also classed as unemployed and will count in 18-24 unemployment statistics. This is in part due to an overlap in government responsibilities for young people aged 18, for example, the Connexions service works with young people to the age of 19, while Jobcentre Plus starts working with unemployed young people at the age of 18. This overlap affects government statistics regarding the number of NEETs and the number of young people unemployed, because young people are counted twice.

This issue of double counting is one of the key barriers to sharing information within Darlington and North Yorkshire and indeed across the country. In meetings held as part of the project both local authority representatives identified their main barrier as the lack of data sharing between themselves and the Jobcentre Plus. This was regarded as being due to the difference in government requirements for the JCP and Connexions. Connexions are responsible for tracking, monitoring and supporting all young people until the age of 19, and reporting this information back to the government to show the number of young people who are NEET. The JCP, however, is not responsible for sharing data to the same level of detail with the government and only provide the minimum information requested.

Once a young person turns 18 and becomes a JSA claimant the local authority, in particular the Connexions services, find it very difficult to keep in touch and track their progression. This is due to the JCP not informing Connexions of the details they hold regarding young people aged 18 and 19 who are claiming JSA. Connexions may hold information stating a young person was in employment or on an apprenticeship, but if this has ceased and the young person reverted back to JSA, then Connexions have no way of knowing this because information has not been shared. Information that Connexions staff believe should be shared by the JCP focuses on:

- data on young people who have gone into employment;
- data on young people who have gone on to training;
- data on young people who have left employment and rejoined JSA;
- data on young people taking part in JCP employment programmes working in partnership with employers and other organisations.

Sharing of this data would reduce the number of 'Current situation not known' and 'Cannot be contacted' NEETs significantly in both local authorities. Sharing would also free up personal advisors to concentrate their work on the young people they do know are still NEET and looking for employment.

During one meeting it became apparent that JCP did not see data sharing as a barrier and confirmed that all their data is available to view on the national website, <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk>. Examples of the data can be seen in the Appendix 2.

Further details on data sharing can be found in Appendix 3-*The Department*

*for Work and Pensions (DWP) guidelines.*

Data sharing is indeed a barrier to engaging young people, especially when seeking personal information about the current number of NEETS 18-24. This data was particularly important to facilitate the sending out of questionnaires to young people to capture their views about information, advice and guidance. Unfortunately both local authorities were unwilling to provide this data to a third party. The success of this project then had to rely on Connexions and JCP personal advisers in their relative authorities sending out the questionnaires on our behalf. The lack of response to this questionnaire has resulted in the project being unable to collate and summarise any views from the young people themselves.

## **2. Databases**

In both local authorities, the information about young people is on several databases held by different organisations, for example, Connexions, the Youth Offending Team, Drug and Alcohol Services, Employment Projects etc. Such organisations rarely share information and there is no common approach to checking the quality of the data.

## **3. Funding**

Both Darlington and North Yorkshire local authorities are using various different sources of funding to provide flexible support to young people 18-24 into employment, for example, European Social Fund (ESF) and Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) finance. This money is short term and project-specific which results in many initiatives not recruiting and so not being delivered due to their rigid nature and lack of progression. This has been the case where funding requirements state a programme must be a minimum or maximum length of time, therefore imposing restrictions on delivery hours, staffing and resources. Other restrictions relate to the progression of young people within a minimum time in order to receive full payment for an initiative.

## **4. Lack of clarity about initiatives**

Several different organisations are providing initiatives that individually do not have the collaborative networks or shared focus to succeed. Such initiatives include short courses, taster days and intensive programmes which may work initially at engaging young people and helping them to secure employment, but the whole process raises the question: are these initiatives really providing young people with the skills and qualities employers are looking for? Both partners in this project believe that when a young person is working with so many different organisations and have completed project after project with either no employment at all or no sustained employment then they become disheartened and disengage once again.

Across local authorities and related organisations in Darlington and North Yorkshire, there is no single definitive list of all projects that are being undertaken to work with young people. In effect, a complete and comprehensive understanding of interventions and outcomes remains unknown.

## **5. Lack of Employers**

Both local authorities were firmly committed to the need to establish more effective working relationships with employers in order to support young people. Employers were recognised as key to helping engage young people through, setting up work placements, work trials and employment and apprenticeship opportunities.

Darlington is mainly comprised of small and medium enterprises (SME's) with very few large organisations. As a result of this there is a history of high-level academic achievers leaving town for employment. More work needs to be done with the large national businesses, such as Morrisons and Asda, that are located in Darlington. There also needs to be further work done with businesses offering real apprenticeships and not just short programmes without any real substance. In Darlington opportunities for this include working with Orange and the Student Loans Company.

Small businesses and the public sector dominate North Yorkshire's economy. Although the area is mainly rural, only a small proportion of the population works in agriculture. More people are employed in manufacturing and shop work but the biggest employer is the public sector. There needs to be further work done getting access to the bigger employers for young people that live in the rural areas including better public transport links.

Support for small business in both local authorities comes from Government funding. David Cameron has announced that small firms will be offered an incentive of £1,500 to take on their first apprentices.

Thousands of employers with up to 50 workers that do not currently hire apprentices will be encouraged to take on a young person aged 16 to 24. An initial payment will be made two months after the individual has started their apprenticeship with the balance paid after the apprentice has completed and the trainee has progressed into sustainable employment.

## **What has been achieved so far**

### **Good practice**

There were four identified areas of good practice, three of them are taking place within both local authorities and one is currently specific to Darlington.

- central co-ordination of programmes;

- Jobcentre Plus partnerships;
- central bases; and
- Foundation for Jobs.

### **Central co-ordination of programmes**

Within Darlington and North Yorkshire all programmes funded through European Social Fund (ESF) are centrally co-ordinated. They administer and manage progress, training, health & safety checks, mentoring support for young people, tracking of young people and funding claims. They also co-ordinate a monthly monitoring group whereby all organisations that run ESF programmes come together to share information, including raw data of learners' names and addresses, and to review, for example, progress and good practice. This is an excellent example of good practice that helps remove one of the main barriers to data sharing. It also helps to reduce the duplication of programmes and offers made to young people by the different organisations.

Although this area of good practice may seem to contradict barrier number four, lack of clarity about initiatives, this approach is only adopted on ESF programmes due to their less flexible guidelines and more strict requirements on funding eligibility.

### **Jobcentre Plus partnerships**

Across the North East, North Yorkshire and the Humber, Jobcentre Plus are offering grant funding to organisations for activities that aim to improve employment outcomes and remove barriers to work.

The claimant group they are looking for organisations to work with are those who may be either on Jobseeker's Allowance (pre-Work Programme), Incapacity Benefit or Employment and Support Allowance (work-related activity group).

The activities offered can include accredited and non-accredited qualifications, taster sessions or work placements, counselling support and independent living support programmes.

(Further information can be found in Appendix 4)

### **Central bases**

With the reduction in Connexions services more barriers are arising for young people to access good information, advice and guidance. What both local authorities have continued to provide as an example of good practice is a central base for their personal advisors. This allows young people instant access to the advisers and since no appointments are required, young people can simply walk in off the street. Local authorities, JCP personal advisers and employers also have the same instant access which makes for effective working relationships.

## **Darlington Foundation for Jobs Campaign**

Foundation for Jobs is a Darlington Partnership initiative that was launched on 26 January 2012. The aim of the campaign is to establish formal links between schools and employers, and to encourage employers to offer internships, increase the number of apprentices, encourage young entrepreneurs and showcase young job seekers.

One of the key related organisations locally is the Northern Echo Newspaper who actively work to generate as much publicity as possible to promote job-seekers programmes, and encourage further employers and agencies who provide vocational support.

(For further information visit <http://www.darlington.gov.uk> )

## **What still needs to be done**

### **Recommendations**

The final part of this report makes four recommendations to better share good practice and improve communication.

#### **Create a single but integrated and centralised database**

Connexions services, schools, colleges, Jobcentre Plus, youth support services, employers and target funded groups do not collaborate effectively. It is recommended that on a local and even regional level these services create an integrated and centralised database for sharing information to improve services to young people and reduce waste and duplication. This database will help to track the young people by collating information regarding the services and agencies involved, and the work, learning status and opportunities for employment that young people have. Informed consent and restricted access protocols would protect confidentiality.

#### **Implement more robust monitoring systems**

Currently in Darlington and North Yorkshire there are many different organisations offering programmes and initiatives to young people without any central co-ordination. There is no definitive list of who is doing what and more importantly who is taking part. In both local authorities there is a need for a centrally co-ordinated approach where each organisation is known and details of their programmes are shared. Although Darlington and North Yorkshire have elements of this in their ESF-funded programmes it is still an area that needs developing across the local authorities for all programmes, training opportunities and employment. Organisations should be required to sign service level agreements which require them to share data, attend review

meetings and work collectively with the council, JCP and employers to reduce the number of 18- to 24-year-olds not in education, employment or training.

From this centrally co-ordinated approach reports can be produced, examples of good practice shared and ideas about innovative new schemes, projects and funding opportunities happening in one local authority can be shared with another.

### **Promote further education for young people, but in particular for those 19+**

Young people with poor qualifications can be disadvantaged within the job market. Young people returning to education can be faced with several barriers that they do not know how to overcome. Finance can be seen as one of the barriers, particular those aged 19+. With the right support and guidance financial barriers can be overcome. Local authorities, Connexions services, JCP and education providers all need to work harder at promoting the financial assistance that is available to young people who wish to return to education. More financial support needs to be available to provide courses that offer the skills employers are demanding and training/college courses need to be more flexible in their structure, with more frequent start dates, intensive programmes and tailored programmes for employers.

### **Match education opportunities to job opportunities**

In Darlington and North Yorkshire the employment opportunities are mainly made up of small and medium businesses. Due to the lack of financial support and the decline in economy they have not been able to support the employment of young people. The government have introduced a new initiative to support small and medium business but in order for this to be successful the young people need to have the required skills, knowledge and training the employers are looking for.

Employer forums can be set up to encourage more employers to invest in their towns by working with the local authorities and education and training providers. These forums will give employers the opportunity to state what skills set they need from the young people of their towns and what education and training may be lacking in the area. Stronger partnerships can be created between the employers, Jobcentre Plus and training education and training providers by attending a central forum where all parties have the interests of the young people and the future economic growth of their town as the key aim.

The local authorities can also take a lead in offering and promoting apprenticeships for young people and encourage other employers to do so. Councils and other bodies can add training requirements to works and service contracts.



## Resources to be shared with the sector

### Key learning points

#### Summary

Taking forward all four of the above recommendations could result in the creation of a highly effective and successful set of good practice models resulting in both local authorities reducing their number of 18- to 24-year-olds not in education, employment and training.

The four recommendations collectively will give correct and up to date information on the young people, the organisations working with them and the outcomes and progression they have achieved. They will be able to track young people effectively and where there is a barrier or need for support this can be addressed quickly and effectively.

More effective working partnerships will see the authorities, employers, JCP and education providers collaborate, working towards the same aims and goals. This can create a worthwhile and meaningful context for young people to engage or re-engage in.

## **Bibliography/Sources**

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Darlington Borough Council 14-19 Team

Darlington Children's Trust Board, 2012, *16-25 Research Project*

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Department for Employment and Learning (2011) *PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS Establishing an initial broad strategic direction and supporting cross-Departmental actions to reduce the number of young people most at risk of remaining outside education, employment or training (NEET)*

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<http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>

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Vasagar (2011) *Number of young people classed as 'neets' hits record 1.16m*, (online) <http://www.guardian.co.uk>

## Appendix 1



### Young People & Employment Questionnaire

Darlington College is undertaking a research project investigating how young people aged 18-24 can be helped to find employment.

We would really like to hear your views/ideas and would therefore be extremely grateful if you could complete the short survey below and return it to college in the pre-paid enveloped enclosed.

**Q1 How old are you?** (Tick one box only)

18-19 years     20-21 years     22-23 years

24 years

**Q2 Are you....** (Tick one box only)

Male

Female

**Q3 Since your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, have you had a period of 3 months where you have not been in employment, education or training?** (Tick one box only)

Yes

No

**Q4 Which of the following is the biggest barrier to training/employment for you?** (Tick all that apply)

Lack of work experience

No/Low grade qualifications

Lack of job-related skills

Lack of job vacancies

Personal skills (e.g. low self esteem)

Cost of transport

Lack of/poor career advice/information

**Q5 Do you know where to go to get career advice/information in your town?** (Tick one box only)

Yes

No

**Q5b If you answered YES please list the names of the organisations you are aware of.** (Write in box below)

**Q6 What do you think about the standard of careers advice/information offered to young people in your area?** (Tick one box only)

Excellent

Good

OK

Poor

Very Poor

**Q7 What do you think about the range of support that is available in your area for young people to access training and jobs?** (Tick one box only)

Excellent

Good

OK

Poor

Very Poor

**Q8 How confident are you about finding a job?** (Tick one box only)

- Very confident
- Quite confident
- Not confident
- Not confident at all
- Not sure

**Q9 How/Where do you find out about training opportunities and jobs in your area? (Tick all that apply)**

- |                 |                          |                     |                          |               |                          |
|-----------------|--------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| Job Centre Plus | <input type="checkbox"/> | Careers Office      | <input type="checkbox"/> | Newspaper     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Internet        | <input type="checkbox"/> | Shop/Office Windows | <input type="checkbox"/> | Word of Mouth | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Town magazines  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Schools/colleges    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Radio         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Television      | <input type="checkbox"/> |                     |                          |               | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Other.....

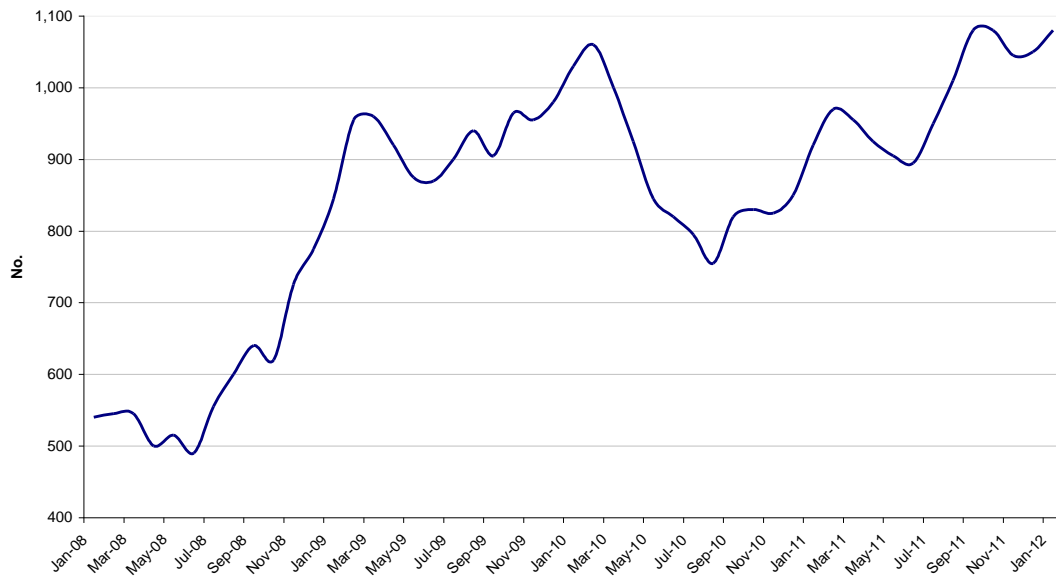
**Q10 In what ways do you think young people could be helped to find training/employment in your area? (Write in box below)**

**Thank you for your time, your comments are greatly appreciated.**

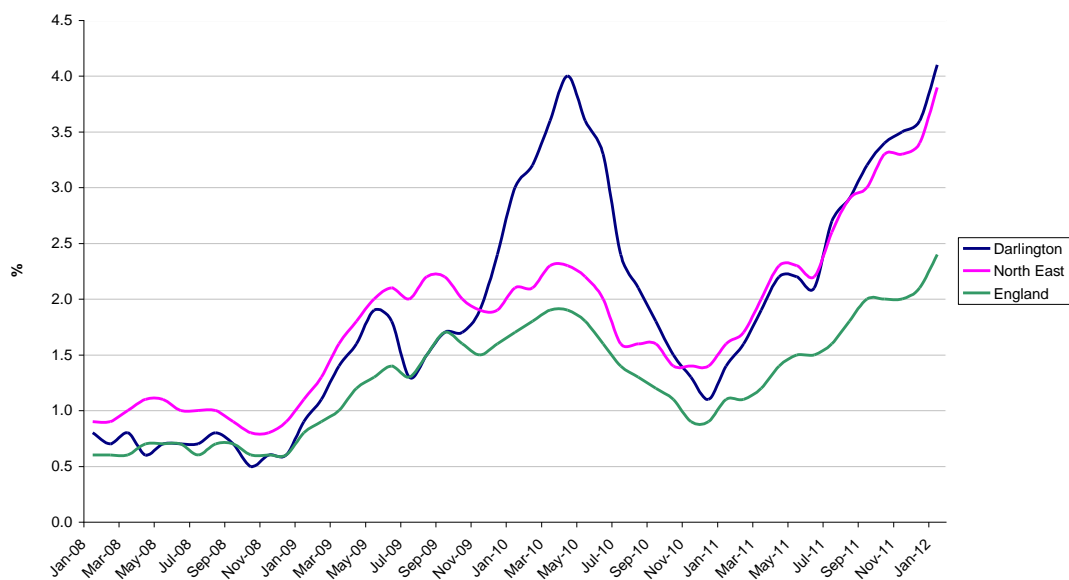
## Appendix 2

### Darlington

Number of 18-24 Year Olds Claiming Jobseekers Allowance in Darlington Jan 2008 - January 2012



% 18-24 Year Olds Claiming JSA for More Than 6 Months



Source: Jobseekers Allowance Claimant Count, DWP/NOMIS

## North Yorkshire

### Total JSA claimants

[view time-series](#) [query dataset...](#)

	<b>North Yorkshire (numbers)</b>	<b>North Yorkshire (%)</b>	<b>Yorkshire and The Humber (%)</b>	<b>Great Britain (%)</b>
All people	9,433	2.5	4.8	3.9
Males	6,307	3.4	6.6	5.3
Females	3,126	1.7	3.0	2.5

Source: ONS claimant count with rates and proportions-March 2012

Note:% is a proportion of resident population of area aged 16-64 and gender

### JSA claimants by age duration

[view time-series](#) [query dataset...](#)

	<b>North Yorkshire (level)</b>	<b>North Yorkshire (%)</b>	<b>Yorkshire and The Humber (%)</b>	<b>Great Britain (%)</b>
<b>Aged 18 to 24</b>				
Total	2,420	5.2	8.7	7.5
Up to 6 months	1,485	3.2	5.1	4.5
Over 6 and up to 12 months	590	1.3	2.3	1.9
over 12 months	345	0.7	1.3	1.1

Source: ONS claimant count with rates and proportions-March 2012

## Appendix 3

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) state in their guidelines the passing of individual customer's personal data between DWP/Jobcentre Plus and an external organisation is subject to specific legislative constraints. The Social Security Administration Act 1992 (SSAA) includes important provisions relating to the sharing of information. This makes it an offence for DWP (or Jobcentre Plus) staff to disclose, without lawful authority, any social security information which relates to a particular individual.

There are clauses in the Act allowing some information to be provided to Local Authorities, and to organisations carrying out functions on behalf of the Local Authority, for specific purposes. However, even where data has been legally shared, it could be an offence if that data were then passed on to a third party without appropriate legal authority. This legislation is additional to the Data Protection Act, and is not made obsolete by the Data Protection Act (DPA).

It is the unpublished data the DWP possesses that the local authorities and integrated youth support are pushing for to be shared. Data including:

- secondary analysis of claimant data for the purpose of spatial targeting, strategic planning or identifying 'hotspots'

The advice from the DWP when requesting this data is: In the light of the legal framework, we are not able to share postcodes, names or addresses of benefit recipients for these purposes.

In 2010 they conducted a recent data sharing pilot that identified opportunities to develop data statistic that will provide more fine grained information on benefit claimants than is currently available. This data is still number heavy with not enough personal data.



## Appendix 4

The Jobcentre Plus wants to work together with partners to deliver a service to claimants facing the most complex and intractable barriers to employment. Solutions from partners should be creative, innovative, not duplicate existing provision readily available to DWP customers and achieve sustainable job outcomes. The grant will be made available to the organisation/s that provides the greatest chance of securing sustainable employment for the customer group stated.

Solutions to address customer needs may include:

- Support to improve motivation, confidence and self esteem in order to improve employability.
- Specialist advice, counselling and work related support to overcome specific barriers which impact customers' ability to enter or remain in employment, for example, health, lifestyle, money management, housing or transport.
- Support to address basic skills barriers
- Personal support to develop the individual's interpersonal skills and work ethic
- Life skills or occupational training where necessary.
- Job search and recruitment methods in a digital labour market
- Relevant work experience, volunteering, mock employment interviews, or development opportunities for participants

The following are Minimum Requirements for the partnership:

**70%** of programme participants to progress into jobs or further work focussed activities or provision

**20%** of participants to move into paid employment within 4 weeks of finishing their activity with the Lead Accountable Body. ([www.dwp.gov.uk](http://www.dwp.gov.uk))