

PRD project – case study

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



Project title – CENTER – Capacity for Enterprise

Worth reading if you are interested in:

NEETs, design thinking, change management, engagement and progression

Contact information

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Name of Peer Review and Development (PRD) group: City College Norwich

Participating organisation(s):

Organisations participating in the original E4FE programme: New College Nottingham, Warwickshire College, North Herts College, Gateshead College

Organisations invited to the CENTER Workshop:

Action Community Enterprise (apologies)
ALM Training
Benjamin Foundation (apologies)
CfBT (apologies)
City Child in Need
City College Norwich Safeguarding Officer
Culture Works East (apologies)
Essex County Council
Genesis Housing Association Hostel
Great Yarmouth College
Great Yarmouth Community Trust
Hertford Regional College
JobCentre Plus
Mancroft Advice Project
NACRO
Norfolk County Council Children's Services
Right Direction Training
The Consultancy Home Counties
West Suffolk College

What the PRD group set out to do and why

The proportion of 18- to 24-year-olds not in employment, education or training (NEET) has risen to 18.4%. This figure, published recently by the Department for Education, is the highest for the second quarter since 2006 and up from 16.3% last year. 19- to 24-year-old NEETs are recorded at an even higher 19.1%. Traditional learning and skills focused on learner volumes and attainment of qualifications is no longer fully sufficient in ensuring our learners are best prepared for a successful and productive working life. This economic reality questions the traditional model of further education wherein students study, gain a qualification and go straight into employment; are we preparing students for career pathways into work which no longer exist?

With rising NEET figures, traditional routes no longer having the relevance they used to and funding bodies supporting larger contracts we felt it was an opportune time to engage our networks, our partners working with NEET groups, to refocus on these emerging challenges and ask how they, as practitioners and organisations, could respond.

Part of our PRD activity was to engage our NEET networks in the 'design thinking' process of 'inspiration' (the problem/opportunity that motivates the search for solutions such as how do we best support NEETs to progress into employment and Apprenticeships), the 'ideation' (generating, developing and testing ideas that may lead to solutions) and 'implementation' (charting the path to market). For many organisations, this in itself will be challenging and the feedback will add significant value to the process.

What has been achieved so far

We have completed the E4FE activities planned for April. During this period, the EFA released the Youth Contract, a significant programme aimed at 16- to 17-year-olds who fail to achieve a GCSE at A-C levels. CCN led a wide partnership bid representing the East of England but the contract was secured by TCHC.

Based on feedback from our E4FE partners and further research, we opted for a combination of 'design thinking' and 'change management' materials for the PRD activity. We invited a wide range of partners, as listed above, all of whom we are either currently working with or we know to be working with NEET target groups. As can be seen from the attendees, this was a regional invitation not merely confined to the county.

Organisations were invited to a day's workshop on Monday 23 July. The College offered to support travel costs for any organisation that would find attendance difficult otherwise.

We used a variation of the Price Babson design thinking exercise to identify our colleagues as creative thinkers or focused completers. We suggested that partners could either use this with their teams or with their NEET groups. It is a very simple technique for identifying how people react to a situation and their preferences for resolution.

We then introduced 'Create Tomorrow' and ran through three brown papers – swim lanes, fishbone and 5 whys. As a practical example we looked at how we engage NEETs and in the afternoon we split into two groups to look at How do we progress

NEETs into employment and How do we progress NEETs in Apprenticeships. The groups fed back to each other afterwards.

In terms of the general feedback, we collated the following feedback from our evaluation:

Q: How useful was the day? 14% Not much; 22% Moderately; 64% Very useful

Q: How beneficial was the designing thinking exercise? 7% Not much; 57% Moderately; 36% Very beneficial

Q: How beneficial was the change management exercise? 14% Not much; 36% Moderately; 50% Very beneficial.

Q: Which ideas from the day are you the most excited about sharing with your team? 42% Design thinking; 7% Networking; 7% What Went Well, Even Better If; 7% Change Management; 7% Discussions on Apprenticeships; 30% did not answer

Q: How relevant, realistic and applicable do you think the ideas generated today are? 64% Some of it; 36% All of it

Q: How would you rate the networking opportunities available? 14% Not too bad; 50% Fairly useful; 36% Excellent

Q: How many colleagues within your organisation do you plan to share your experience of today with? A total of 120 recorded.

Q: In the next month how many students or service users do you hope will benefit in some way from your experience of this workshop? A total of 456 NEETs recorded.

Q: Is there anything in the workshop that you feel we did not cover or that you would have liked to spend more time on? 2 people asked about government policy, everyone else said 'no'.

Q: Do you have any other feedback or comments?

Empowering exercises

A great day!

I felt very looked after

A very useful day

What still needs to be done

We will send our partners copies of the PowerPoint presentation of the day plus the input from the two change management groups.

Resources to be shared with the sector

All resources will be shared with our partners.

Key learning points

We originally thought that staff participating in the E4FE programme would continue to work on CENTER. However, in many cases this has not been possible due to work commitments. We do feel however that our attendees are the most appropriate.

We had a few 'no shows' on the day which was disappointing and a couple of attendees left at lunchtime saying they felt they were 'strategic' and we were offering an 'operational' workshop! It is however very much a workshop that we would run again as it produced some really positive ideas from the two groups in the afternoon.

Appendix 1

How do we progress NEETS into apprenticeships?

Swim lanes

What's working well?

Personalised approach in supporting young people to access NAS

Providing bespoke support for young people to dip into

Real opportunities and towards employment

Building soft skills

Offering our students apprenticeships within the college

Enabling young people to perceive apprenticeships as employment and prepare according for work through 1-1 work

Links between work experience and apprenticeship tasters

Progression

Recruitment

What we could do if only

School concentrate on what they can't do not just on what they can!

Job Clubs in all High Schools

Alter application process – not restricted to NAS route

Effective links between work experience, tasters, apprenticeships with employers

Risk Taking

Jobs at the end!!!

Challenges

Lack of support in the work place

Time constraints

Quick Wins

NAS website not targeted to specific employment

Employers, quality

Appendix 2

Fish Bones

Taking the issue of 'young people do not engage' we used the fishbone technique to identify some of the reasons why.

Lack of Motivation

Lack of self-belief
Fear of failure

'Lost Generation'

Negative outlook
Negative experiences

Education

Bad experience
No qualifications

Homelife

Homeless
Peer group
Parents
Outside influences

Health Issues

Young parents
Drugs and alcohol
Emotional
SLDDs