

# ENGAGING YOUTH ENQUIRY

## New Approaches to Engaging Youth: Understanding the problems and implementing the solutions

July 2007 – October 2008

### Briefing Paper 2: The Life Circumstances of Young People

*February 2008*

#### Introduction

A better understanding is urgently needed of the young people who are the ‘targets’ of the current policy to reduce the so-called ‘NEET’ figures. This urgency is based on the difficulties faced by individuals who disengage from education, training and employment, for whatever reason, and are at risk of social exclusion. It is, however, also based on the perceived need for a significant reduction in the proportion of young people who are classified as ‘NEET’ (Not in Education, Employment or Training), because of the fact that they are less able to contribute to the wider economy and to wider society if they are outside education

and training, and therefore less likely to progress to employment which offers them a so-called ‘family-sustaining wage’.

Who are these young people? Why do they leave the education and training system? What are their aspirations and characteristics, and what do they see as their needs? What kinds of strategies for supporting these young people are successful, and what is the role of voluntary sector organisations in supporting these young people? Is the way that they are perceived by, for example, policy makers, teachers, employers, the youth justice system, voluntary sector organisations and other practitioners

accurate, or is there a need to rethink the current approaches to offering them support and guidance? If the so-called policy ‘target’ has been misunderstood, at least to some extent, then there is an urgent need to improve the understanding of those young people. If policy misconstrues these young people then it will miss the target for at least some young people, some of the time and under some situations.

### **The contribution of the Engaging Youth Enquiry**

The combination of the areas of expertise of the Nuffield Review and Rathbone provides a potentially new insight into some of the issues surrounding the debate on ‘NEET’, which is currently high on the political agenda. The methodology of the Engaging Youth Enquiry approaches the issues through participatory discussion, and open debate, with young people, practitioners, government departments and voluntary and community sector organisations. It welcomes comments and evidence from all interested parties.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Please submit any evidence and comments to: [engaging\\_youth\\_enquiry@education.ox.ac.uk](mailto:engaging_youth_enquiry@education.ox.ac.uk)

In the first of its series of workshops, the Engaging Youth Enquiry examined issues surrounding the life circumstances of young people. Discussions took place with young people at the Rathbone centre in Manchester, and a workshop was held in Manchester involving a wide range of practitioners with experience of working directly with young people who are classified as ‘NEET’. These included: practitioners working with schools, the youth justice system, magistrates, housing provision, drug and alcohol support services, youth offending teams, Connexions and the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme.

The workshop generated debate on the following six overarching themes:

- Life circumstance issues
- Communication with young people
- The provision available for young people
- Terminology
- Practical issues
- Policy implications

This briefing paper examines each of these issues in turn, and closes with the key policy recommendations put forward by

the practitioners at the workshop.<sup>2</sup> The young people's voices are present in the paper through the inclusion of illustrative quotations from those young people who participated in the youth workshop.<sup>3</sup>

### Life circumstance issues

This broad theme includes interlinked features of young people's lives, including: housing, the diversity of young people who are classified as 'NEET', their levels of academic attainment, the ways they choose to use their time, their experience of school, use of drugs and alcohol, the need for role models and self-confidence.

- Housing

At the workshop, practitioners emphasised the need for security, safety, warmth, access to facilities and support for young people.<sup>4</sup> All of these factors are arguably pre-requisites for these young people to achieve in terms of education, training and employment, and for them to progress into stable employment and stable housing. Not all of these factors are available or accessible for young people who are outside employment, education and training. Those young people who are looked after, in temporary or vulnerable accommodation, officially homeless or living with unsupportive families or carers, may be particularly at risk.<sup>5</sup>

There are specific periods of risk for looked after young people, including finding suitable accommodation after a period in prison. For example, they may be placed in bed and breakfast

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<sup>2</sup> Direct quotations from the practitioners are sourced from the full set of notes taken at the workshop. Before the workshop began, the practitioners were assured that they would not be named in any quotations, and also that their institutional or organisational affiliations would not be given, in order to guarantee anonymity and open discussion.

<sup>3</sup> 10 young people participated in the workshop on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2007. It was run by three Rathbone staff based in Manchester who work with these young people on a regular basis and have built up relationships of trust with them. Full notes were taken of the discussion, and these are the source of the direct quotations from the young people included in this paper. The group included four young people from Bury and six from Manchester. Nine of them were young men. Their ages ranged from 16 to 18, and they all had been classified as 'NEET' at some point, although they were not necessarily aware of this fact. The Nuffield Review has analysed the fully anonymised data collected by Rathbone.

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<sup>4</sup> See Ford, J., Rugg, J., and Burrows, R. (2002) Conceptualising the Contemporary Role of Housing in the Transition to Adult Life in England. *Urban Studies*, 39 (13) 2455-2467.

<sup>5</sup> Figures in a personal communication from the DCSF show that of 3,620 19 year old care leavers known to Connexions services and recorded on CCIS, some 2,060 were known to be in education, training and employment, meaning that a significant proportion of this group was classified as 'NEET'. (December 2006)

accommodation in an unfamiliar area, which puts them in a highly vulnerable situation.

When asked about the environment they live in, the young people at the workshop were critical of the local amenities and highly sensitive to the perceived lack of positive features of the areas they lived in.

Young people’s descriptions of where they live included:

**‘Smackheads, gunshots, dirty shops, drug users.’ (M, 17)<sup>6</sup>**

**‘It’s a dump, my estate.’ (M, 16)**

**‘It’s just a dump, really.’ (M, 17)**

A question about positive features of where they live led to the following responses:

**‘Nice people.’ (M, 17)**

**‘It’s alright. Cheap night out.’ (M, 18)**

**‘They just opened a new ASDA.’ (M, 16)**

**‘Entertainment by TWOC(ers).’<sup>7</sup> (M, 16)**

**‘Ain’t no positive things.’ (M, 16)**

**‘Only positive thing is Chris, the Outreach worker.’ (M, 16)**

The question of what they would change in their area elicited the following responses:

**‘Whole estate. Flatten everything and rebuild it, and let new people come in.’ (M, 16)**

**‘I’d stop gun crime.’ (M, 17)**

**‘Stop the ten year-olds being out at 12 o’clock at night terrorising everyone.’ (M, 17)**

- The diversity of those young people classified as ‘NEET’

<sup>6</sup> The comments from the young people are reported anonymously, but include an indication of their gender (M/F) and age.

<sup>7</sup> Taking Without Owner’s Consent (reference to car crime)

The practitioners emphasised that some young people have seemingly intractable issues in their lives, while some of them may be struggling with temporary, short-term setbacks. This calls for a tailored, case-specific response to the particular needs of each individual. The so-called ‘NEET group’ is in fact very diverse, and young people who are in different circumstances may all be classified together in this ‘group’. For example, young people who are classified as so-called ‘core NEET’ (those who are ‘NEET’ for extended periods, and struggle to move out of ‘NEET’ status) require more sustained input and support in order to progress to what are termed ‘positive outcomes’, than those who are so-called ‘churn NEET’, meaning that they are in and out of short-term periods of education, employment and/or training. However, the difficulties faced by the latter group cannot be under-estimated, as prolonged periods of ‘churn’ also prevent long-term, meaningful and sustainable progression from taking place. Indeed, in this sense it may be possible to talk of interaction between the two groups, if young people become so-called ‘core

churn NEET’ once they have been experienced ‘churn’ for a significant amount of time. There seems to be a need for a more nuanced understanding of what it means for young people to be classified as ‘Not in Education, Employment or Training’, and of the heterogeneity within this ‘group’.

- Low levels of academic attainment

For some young people who are classified as ‘NEET’, one of the key barriers they face is that they hold few qualifications, or qualifications at a low level. This means that they are unable to access certain courses they might be motivated to attend.

Experiences of school:

**‘Got kicked out, didn’t I? I got kicked out of every primary school – about eight.’ (M, 16)**

**‘Went to primary, but played truant a lot at secondary.’ (M, 18)**

**‘I didn’t really like it. Didn’t get on with any of the teachers – all stuck-up.’ (M, 18)**

**‘I never went. Couldn’t be bothered to**

**go. You learn more when you are not in school.’ (M, 16)**

**‘It was boring.’ (M, 17)**

**‘Fighting with people, and me getting expelled all the time. Think the staff had something against me. Think it was because I gave them abuse all the time.’ (M, 17)**

- Ingrained sense of failure

The emphasis on academic attainment and on qualifications, and particularly on the five GCSEs at A\*-C benchmark, in schooling, has serious implications for those young people who do not succeed within mainstream schooling. The practitioners at the workshop commented that some of those who are classified as ‘NEET’ have carried an ingrained sense of failure with them since secondary, or even primary, school. This sense of failure affects the young people’s capacity for self-motivation, and for identifying, realising and implementing their

aspirations.<sup>8</sup> This places demands on the information, advice and guidance (IAG) and careers advice in place for young people, especially once they are outside a formal educational context.<sup>9</sup> This also requires support for the wider family and carers, so that IAG becomes available in a systematic way to the young person and their support network. There may also be a need for case-specific support during transition phases, in order to help young people at risk of become detached from education, employment and training to negotiate their transition between primary and secondary school, for example, and between compulsory education and the labour market. In addition, some young people may have speech and language difficulties, or other learning difficulties, which affect their ability to communicate effectively. They may have received no

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<sup>8</sup> See Archer, L. and Yamashita, H. (2003) ‘Knowing their limits?’ Identities, inequalities and inner city school leavers’ post-16 aspirations. *Journal of Educational Policy*, 18 (1), 53-69.

<sup>9</sup> See Foskett, N. (2004) *IAG (Information, Advice and Guidance) and Young People’s Participation Decisions 14-19 [online]*. At: [www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/cgi/documents/documents.cgi?a=47&t=template.htm](http://www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/cgi/documents/documents.cgi?a=47&t=template.htm).

support at all with these difficulties at primary or secondary school.

the same as for heroin users. They offend to get more cannabis, and their whole lives revolve around this particular issue.

Positive comments on school:

**‘One teacher was different, knew what to say. He taught Maths. He was just normal and down-to-earth.’ (M, 16)**

**‘One was safe. Didn’t shout at you if you did something wrong – took you out of the room to talk to you instead of making you look stupid. There’s always one, though, isn’t there?’ (M, 16)**

The following quotation shows how cannabis can become embedded into the daily routine of some young people:

**‘Get up at 8ish. Have a cig, come to college, earn some dough, have some weed.’ (M, 16)**

- The use of drugs

Drug and alcohol use increases the risks for young people in two ways: firstly, that they will be outside education, employment and training and, secondly, that they will become involved in offending. One of the practitioners at the workshop working in this area with young people commented that the focus is not just on so-called hard drugs such as heroin and crack. This is partly because the patterns of use for cannabis users are

- Lack of role models

The practitioners from the Manchester area commented that, for some young people, nobody in their family or wider context has had a job for two or three generations, no one has been to university, and perhaps no one has completed secondary education. In those circumstances, the life circumstances that lead to becoming classified as ‘NEET’ reflect following a well-trodden path.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Bynner, J., and Parsons, S. (2002) Social Exclusion and the Transition from School to Work: The case of young people Not in Education, Employment or



The group was asked about their role models:

**‘Chris<sup>11</sup> is mine because he was bad in the past, and now he’s good.’ (M, 16)**

**‘My sister because she’s at college now. She’s 23. Problems with drugs. She’s turning it round now. So I think I can do it.’ (M, 18)**

**‘My mate because he is 29 and when he was younger he got in trouble for all sorts.’ (M, 18)**

**‘No role models. No one.’ (M, 18)**

**‘None. My last foster parent. Mum – she sorted me head out a bit. She listened. I come in drunk every night and she was there for me.’ (F, 16)**

**‘Chris. Chris got us off the streets. He got us started on something.’ (M, 16)**

**‘When you speak to him he tells you how his life was.’ (M, 16)**

- Need for young people to value themselves

The practitioners at the workshop argued that young people need to be able to value themselves before they can value educational and employment opportunities, aspirations and goals. This is linked with perceptions of schooling, and the presence of trusted adults or critical friends in their environment. As practitioners argued:

*‘Many NEETs do not have a critical friend. Many do not have people to inspire them, apart from Wayne Rooney, media stars or people on the estate who make loads of money by dealing. They have to feel that the system has a place for them. If that does not happen we will not make any headway.’*

*‘Caring is good, but it is not enough just to care. You will get nowhere with the NEETs unless they have a trusted individual.’*

This argument highlights the need for the caseload of practitioners working with young people with complex needs to be appropriately small. Building up and sustaining trust with often vulnerable young people requires regular contact,

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Training (NEET). *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 60 (2) 289-309.

<sup>11</sup> Rathbone Outreach worker, based in the Manchester area.



significant periods of time, and the long-term retention of staff. These points apply to the young people, but also to their parents and carers, who may find that there is little support for them in their attempts to engage with the young people in their care, and to support them in planning their futures. One of the magistrates even commented on how grateful parents were for the attentions of the court:

*‘Often we are sentencing young people in a way that they will never get a job in the future. Some of the parents are even grateful that the young people are appearing in court.’*

The implications of this requirement for long-term engagement in order for young people to re-engage are: short-term funding arrangements will have little impact; the practitioners working with young people need stable contracts at reasonable levels of pay; and there is a clear need for provision for long-term support and effective and relevant continuing professional development.

## **Communication with young people**

The practitioner workshop was full of references to the need for effective, unbiased and non-judgemental communication with young people, based on a process of negotiation, and listening to their needs, rather than imposing choices upon them. Further, a number of practitioners highlighted the need to avoid a ‘patronising attitude’, which implies that young people are in some way not behaving ‘in the right way’. Further, assumptions, widely reported in the press, that worklessness can be equated with inactivity, must be challenged, as many workless people may lead very busy, productive lives. One practitioner argued in the following terms:

*‘People will see it as us criticising them, and their culture and their way of life, and we are telling them that there is a better way. How can we get around that and change culture and perception without it being them-and-us? Communities have to create a change from within, without us parachuting in with the message that you are not doing it right and don’t know how to bring up your children. In events throughout the city on worklessness, I*

*have never yet met a workless person who was not busy every day. Their lives are full, they are busy doing things. They are not playing Play Station until 3am, as it is stereotypically shown. For many people, the act of going to university is a given – you go to school, go to university. That is a cultural thing, it is just what you do. It is no different for many NEET young people – you pick up a pattern that is a well-trodden path.'*

In terms of the ways in which young people choose to use their time, it became clear at the youth workshop that there were routines and clear patterns to the young people's days. However, it was also clear that much that was 'routine' to these young people involved risky or even criminal activity.

A typical response to the question of what an average day contains was:

**'Wake up at half eight, go to YMCA. Eat at break around 11. Get a kebab when I get in. Make my own money –got my own income. Go home to touch base at 1. See me mum and me nana. Everybody comes to my house. In the afternoon I'm out with the boys on the**

**estate. Chilling – terrorising, tipping stuff off bridges. Go home when everyone else does. Go home about 1, depends. Then I watch a DVD.'** (M, 16)

Practitioners also argued that there is a need to get beyond the illusion of inclusion and of consultation, and genuinely listen to young people. This means that it is important for those practitioners in a position of guiding and counselling young people to have the time available for the young people to reflect upon and discuss their potential progression route, rather than a ready-made solution being 'imposed' upon them.

### **The provision available for young people**

The practitioner workshop emphasised the need for provision, and interventions, to be relevant, high-quality and challenging. It also needs to be case-specific, that is to say tailored to the actual, rather than perceived, needs of individual young people. In addition, it is important to avoid 'ghettos of provision' for some groups of young people, such as young

offenders, and to respect local circumstances, such as young people's (un)willingness to travel to certain areas in their city. This is linked to issues of territorial ownership by certain groups of young people, the presence of gangs, gun crime and other threats to young people's safety.

In terms of provision, there seems to be a gap in provision for pre-level 2 young people, who currently cannot access apprenticeship programmes, although that route may be the most appropriate for them. The removal of NVQs as a stand-alone route, in addition, particularly affects vulnerable learners with low levels of prior attainment.

Further, there is a need for schools and colleges to engage with businesses and with further and higher education institutions, and to have staff who are fully-trained mentors, who can become critical friends to those young people who are at risk of becoming classified as 'NEET'. This would provide a 'network of transition', and information and guidance about the various possible progression routes available to young people. The

imminent Ofsted progression measurement may have a positive impact here (with schools and colleges being held accountable for the progression of learners once they have left the institution), but there is also the danger that this progression measurement may be counter-effective for those most at risk, with schools and colleges eager to break their association with young people who are at risk of not achieving progression to positive outcomes.

The young people were asked what they were doing at the moment, and this question drew the following responses:

**'E2E since July, gaining qualifications.'**  
(M, 18)

**'On E2E. Waste of my time.'** (M, 18)

**'Rathbone's alright. It's better than school and college.'** (M, 17)

**'Rathbone is like normal people.'** (M, 17)

**'All teachers should be trained youthworkers.'** (M, 18)

**'Obviously Rathbone teaches you. Not**

**schools the way they are.’ (M, 17)**

**‘Need a College of Rathbone. I’ve learned more here than at school. I didn’t breach my ISSP because I liked it.’ (M, 16)**

The young people’s responses to what they would change at school included the following:

**‘Should get EMA at high school.’ (M, 16)**

**‘It should be more relaxed.’ (M, 18)**

**‘No uniforms.’ (M, 16)**

**‘Local teachers.’ (M, 18)**

**‘Less people in a class.’ (M, 16)**

**‘Doing work to do with the job you want to do. All through high school ‘cos when you leave school you’re waiting around for ages to get your qualifications.’ (F, 16)**

**‘You should get to pick what you want to do.’ (M, 16)**

**‘Should have groups of different sizes. Rathbone works because it is small groups. Need for pastoral workers and pastoral care.’ (M, 16)**

**‘Need for continuity of teaching staff.’ (M, 16)**

**‘Sessions should be fun.’ (M, 16)**

### **Aspirations**

The young people who are classified as ‘NEET’ do not necessarily have a dearth of aspirations. As one participant put it:

*‘Actually, in the end, the young people are quite aspirational, and it is about provision and opportunity.’*

On the other hand, another participant commented on the particular issues faced by young people who have multiple disadvantages:

*‘I am finding more and more that young people have multiple disadvantages, and they have poverty of aspiration. There is an absolute and complete lack of hope. They see what is on offer in Manchester, but it is not accessible to them.’*

At the workshop with young people, all of the participants expressed some form of aspiration, many of which were highly specific. These aspirations were potentially very difficult for these young people to achieve, because of the multiple disadvantages they faced (including poor housing, low levels of qualifications, being looked after, being a young parent, having a criminal record, being homeless or coping with psychological problems). However, they were able to express clear and precise aspirations.

When asked about their aspirations for the future, the young people responded:

**‘I’d do my GCSEs again. Graphic designer.’ (M, 18)**

**‘Engineering – cars.’ (M, 18)**

**‘Home improvement business.’ (M, 17)**

**‘Just want money.’ (M, 16)**

**‘I just want a job, me, I’m not bothered what sort of job.’ (M, 16)**

**‘Mechanic.’ (M, 17)**

**‘Joiner.’ (M, 16)**

**‘Run me own pub.’ (M, 17)**

**‘Have me own hair and beauty salon.’ (F, 16)**

**‘Own Amsterdam. Be England manager. Head of the FA.’ (M, 16)**

On the other hand, it was also clear that they did not have a planned trajectory for achieving those aspirations, which is reflected in their projections of where they would be 5-10 years later. This is shown in the quotations below. One participant identified a vicious circle – that, without GCSEs, he would not be able to achieve his aims and, as he did not want to go back to college, he was effectively stuck. This is a perception that must be addressed as a matter of urgency, because young people who do not achieve good GCSEs at school must be offered a suitable second chance, which they perceive to be accessible and relevant to their particular situation. Without a step change in this direction, the focus on GCSE results at 16 in England consigns a high proportion of young people to the

vicious circle identified by this young man.

**They were also asked where they want to be in 5-10 years' time:**

**'Want to have a job and a nice family. Don't want to be living in this hole either.'** (M, 16)

**'Don't know. I've got no GCSEs, so I won't be doing what I want. And I don't want to go back to college.'** (M, 17)

**'In a flat. (Has a 14-month old daughter). In me own house with me own job. Paying me own bills, living a life by meself.'** (M, 16)

**'Prison. Boxing career.'** (M, 17)

**'Joinery.'** (M, 16)

**'Can't see myself running that pub.'** (M, 17)

**'Me own flat or house.'** (F, 16)

## **Terminology**

Practitioners argued that young people who are classified as 'NEET' do not

necessarily know that is the case, and may not be aware of the term. Policy inevitably requires generalisation at some level about these young people, and yet the delivery must be on a case-specific basis. As such, labels such as 'NEET', which are based on broad generalisation about a large and heterogeneous group of young people, are counter-productive.

The group was asked what they thought NEET meant and how they felt about it:

**'Tidy!'** (M, 16)

**'Never knew what it meant before today.'** (M, 16)

**'I don't like any labels.'** (M, 16)

(All ten voice agreement.)

## **Policy implications**

Workshop participants agreed on the need for young people to benefit from sustainable relationships with significant others who could advise them on progression, engage with them and allow young people to control their next steps. This includes issues of inter-agency

working, and work with families and carers, as well as with the young people on an individual basis. The practitioners at the workshop highlighted some of the problems and challenges involved with inter-agency working (such as conflicting targets, short-term funding and multiple targeting of the same individuals by different agencies).

There are specific problems associated with conflicting targets (such as the 90% engagement in EET target for YOTs, and the raising standards agenda for schools, which means that schools are reluctant to take on precisely these young people). This is linked to the key question of what the inducements might be for providers of EET to engage with these young people and take them on.

Practitioners also argued in favour of moving away from a target-driven<sup>12</sup>, tick-boxing approach to a more case-sensitive approach that allows professionals working with these young people to focus

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<sup>12</sup> See Keep, E. (2004) *The Multiple Dimensions of Performance – performance as defined by whom, measured in what ways, to what ends?* Nuffield Review Working Paper 23 [online]. At: [www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk](http://www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk).

on communicating with them and supporting them, rather than following an ‘audit trail’.

Participants also argued in favour of simplifying the procedure for applying for financial support, as well as in favour of increasing that support. EMA is perceived as problematic because of the high level of bureaucracy, and the difficulties faced by young people whose parents earn above the threshold, but may not have their full support. One participant commented:

*‘EMA is too little – they can get more on benefit. If they live in a hostel they cannot afford to live there if they have work. They have not got the educational attainment to access apprenticeship. Especially for 16+, what can we offer them that they will engage in?’*

### Practical issues

The workshops also highlighted various practical issues that affect young people, such as transport issues and the implications for cost and safety.

Young people’s comments on transport:

**‘We need more bus routes.’ (M, 16)**

**‘More buses. I’m sick of waiting on a**



**bus for an hour. Make it free.’ (M, 17)**

**‘Pensioners get on the buses for free, why not us?’ (M, 16)**

A further practical issue is the need for housing provided for young people to be dove-tailed with training provision they might be offered. A concrete example raised at the workshop was that of a young person offered accommodation and training on opposite sides of the city of Manchester.

With regard to EMA, one practical issue is that some young people, and their families, are reluctant to set up a bank account because they would like to avoid leaving a so-called ‘paper trail’ of their financial dealings, possibly because of fears of changes to their benefits or because of semi-legal or illegal activities. Further practical issues mentioned included managing money in general or preparing for a telephone call with an employer, and being able to use an appropriate register in that conversation.

## Key recommendations

The key recommendations fell into the following categories:

- Provision
- Financial support and funding arrangements
- IAG
- Housing
- Multi-agency working

### Provision

- Increased relevance and quality of the provision available.
- Continuity and sustainability of available provision and support for young people.
- Need for pre-level 2 work-based route opportunities that articulate with apprenticeships.

### Financial support and funding arrangements

- The need for local freedoms and flexibilities in order to allow for inventive and sustainable innovation.

- An approach to financial support for young people which is more case-sensitive.
- Changes to discretionary funding to allow investment in particular issues at the local level.

## IAG

- There is a need to build up case-specific information, advice and guidance provision for young people who are at risk of becoming classified as 'NEET'. This provision needs to be available relatively early, and not just prior to a transition phase for the young people.
- Avoid raising unrealistic or unsustainable expectations.

## Housing

- There is a need for more appropriate supported housing for those who need it, with appropriate consideration of their training needs.
- This applies particularly to young people who, for example, are care

leavers, who have just left custody or who have vulnerable family and social networks.

## Multi-agency working

- More effective multi-agency working (between schools, colleges, employers, training providers, the health service, job centres, voluntary and community sector organisations and so on) will be required if significant improvements are to be seen in the support and guidance available to young people at risk of becoming classified as 'NEET'.

*Engaging Youth Enquiry:* This collaboration between Rathbone and the Nuffield Review reflects their joint interest in analysing the current situation regarding persistently high numbers of young people outside employment, education and training, and in searching for positive, pragmatic and long-term solutions, based on their shared belief that every young person has the ability to learn, to make progress and to achieve.