

Youth Unemployment

Initial Briefing Note

1. The Current Situation

1.1 The **Not in Education, Employment or Training** (NEET) figures for January – March 2012 is **5.1%**. This figure relates to 16-18 year olds based on residency (i.e. young people who lives in Torbay) and is the new way of producing the figures for the Department for Education as opposed to occupancy (i.e. young people who study in Torbay) which stands at 4.7%, down from 5.9% at the same time last year.

1.2 Young people are more likely to be NEET at 17 (i.e. a year after mandatory school leaving age) and even more so at 18:

NEET at 16 = 3.0%

NEET at 17 = 4.6%

NEET at 18 = 5.9%

1.3 At any time this means that **around 200-220 16-18 year old young people are NEET** but the population keeps changing so some young people start a course of education, then drop out and become NEET for 1 or 2 months then get a job or start another course. They may become NEET again in a few months, others may be NEET for several months then start a course and are not NEET again. This is called NEET churn and up to 900 young people may be NEET for at least 1 month in any year. Of these the main groups within the NEET population are young carers, most of whom are teen parents and those with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities. Other vulnerable groups are represented in the NEET population in small numbers. Some young people in the NEET group are not available (either have recently become parents or are medically unfit due to long term illness). Many of the NEETS are either looking for a Level 2 course, having completed Level 1 study but perhaps are deemed unlikely to succeed, or are looking for employment. 3.9% of the EET cohort are in jobs without training.

1.4 Torbay Council has commissioned Careers South West (CSW) to track young people post-16, to support various teams in Children's Services in early intervention work to prevent 16-18s becoming NEET and to support young people who are NEET to move into EET. The number of "Not Knowns" is very low for Torbay (currently 1.2% (54 young people)). The performance of the provider against contract is monitored quarterly and there are regular meetings of CSW staff with various council staff teams such as Youth Offending, Young Carers, Targeted Youth Support, Teen parents, 14-19 and Raising Participation.

1.5 In March 2012, 4.9% of Torbay's working population were in receipt of **Job Seekers Allowance** compared with 2.9% in the south-west and 4.1% nationally. For males the figure is higher than for females with 6.9% of men claiming compared with 2.9% females. This is a similar split to the national picture. Torbay's economy based

around tourism means that many jobs are seasonal and therefore the percentage of claimants rises in the winter months.

- 1.6 From Jan 2009 the percentage of the working age population claiming Job Seekers Allowance in the Bay rose sharply from under 3% to over 4% reaching 5% in February 2012.
- 1.7 Through effective partnership working the percentage of 16 – 18 year old Not in Employment, Education and Training has remained low, with Torbay being one of the best performing areas in the country, however this does not translate into good employment prospects for 18-24 year olds. In March 2012, 1,125 of 18-24 (10.6%) year olds in the Bay were in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance compared with 6.2% in the south-west and 8.3% nationally.
- 1.8 225 (2.4%) have been claiming for between 6-12 months and 85 (0.8%) for over 12 months.
- 1.9 Claimant rates for the 18-24 year olds rose above 8% in December 2008 peaking at 11.2% in February 2010. Torbay's claimant rate in April 2011 was the highest in the South-west. Although a relatively small proportion of 18 to 24 year olds remain on job seekers allowance for more than 12 months, this is still higher than the South-west average and may reflect the seasonal nature of employment along with initiatives to support young people into work.

2. Benefits available to young unemployed people

- 2.1 If a young person wishes to claim benefits and they are aged 16-17, providing they are eligible, they will claim **Hardship** paid at £56.25 for a single person per week for up to 9 weeks. Once the 9 weeks has passed, the claimant needs to re-apply. There are currently 8 Hardship claimants in Torbay, with a further 2 pending. Numbers of claimants fluctuate greatly over a year (during July 2011 numbers were significantly higher as young people completed one academic year and may not have had a place in learning for the next year).
- 2.2 Once a young person reaches 18 years of age, providing the eligibility criteria is met, they can claim **Job Seekers Allowance**. There are currently 112 eighteen year olds claiming JSA and 171 nineteen year olds claiming JSA.
- 2.3 Careers South West work closely with Job Centre Plus to ensure young people claiming benefits receive advice, guidance and support with the aim of the young person moving into a positive outcome (Education, Employment or Training (EET)). The agreed procedures are as follows:
 - Careers South West to refer any young person to the under 18s Adviser at Job Centre Plus to make a hardship applications
 - For any young person wishing to claim JSA, a Careers South West Adviser will complete an ES9 with the young person. Part of the ES9 form is about an agreement between the young person and Careers South West which outlines how the young person will attend a weekly appointment to discuss EET options.

- Once the claim has been processed the Job Centre will fax through names of 16-18 year old claimants on a weekly basis. We inform the Job Centre whether we have seen the client. The Job Centre will sanction those young people who do not adhere to their claim terms and conditions. Any interventions with a young person with regard to any benefits or claims are recorded on CCIS (the tracking system for 16-18 year olds).

2.4 Job Centre Plus are now offering an 8 week work experience placement for any claimant aged 16 or over. In Torbay and South Devon 42% of those who have completed work experience, have progressed into employment.

3. The Council's Role

3.1 In terms of NEETs and pre-NEETs, for young people aged from 16-19 years (or 16 – 25 for LLDD) this includes: working with all local (within travel to learn area) providers to ensure sufficient, high quality and relevant learning provision is available locally to meet learner needs, to ensure the September Guarantee is met (every young person aged 16 or 17 to be offered a place in learning each September) and to promote and facilitate the Raising of the Participation Age to 17 in 2013 and 18 in 2015. In order to fulfil this role we work with schools with sixth forms, the local FE college, providers of Apprenticeship training and delivery partners of specific NEET projects e.g. ESF(which is detailed below). The Council has a duty to track the educational progress of young people from ages 16-19 through a client tracking system (we have commissioned Careers South West to perform this duty using CCIS and to make monthly returns to DfE on our behalf).

3.2 The Council also has a duty to provide education for young people up to the current statutory school leaving age including where they have been excluded from mainstream provision and to provide suitable education for young people with a statement of special educational need up to age 25 where educational progress can be shown. In Torbay much pre-NEET work happens within the Torbay 14-19 Learning Partnership to re-engage young people before they are excluded from school i.e. early intervention with pre-16s providing a range of different learning experiences – see below.

3.3 The Council also has a duty to provide impartial Information, Advice and Guidance and support to vulnerable young people who require greater levels of support to progress in post-16 EET than the National Careers Service (see below) can offer. This includes carrying out Learning Difficulty Assessments (S139a) for young people who are giving up their SEN statement after age 16 to move into FE either locally or at an Independent Specialist Provider. The Council has commissioned Careers South West to provide this service alongside the tracking service.

3.4 In addition, the Council can support 16-24 Youth Employment as an employer by considering apprenticeships and work experience opportunities themselves. It can also support as a partner by spreading the word that young people are worth being given a chance, engaging with businesses in the Torbay area and those considering inward investment. When looking at planning applications, a view on how employment opportunities may figure in any development is helpful with a commitment to employ local people. Jobcentre Plus being cited on proposals at an

early stage is also welcomed, we can then work with colleges and providers to ensure the young people are prepared appropriately for job opportunities as they arise.

4. Responsibilities of schools, further education and higher education institutions

- 4.1 **Schools** (including LA maintained schools, academies, free schools, studio schools, UTCs) provide learning up to the statutory school leaving age (the end of the academic year in which a young person becomes 16). Maintained schools must deliver the National Curriculum, academies and free schools do not have to. Schools, from September 2012, have a duty to ensure universal provision of careers education and impartial Information, Advice and Guidance to young people from years 9-11 in order to help their progression post-16. They will also signpost the new National Careers Service to support this.
- 4.2 **National Careers Service** (info from central government via CSW) was launched in April 2012. Although primarily focused on helping adults aged over 19 in England, it will provide access to information useful to people of all ages – fuelling the potential of millions. The National Careers Service is designed to help people make informed decisions about careers, skills and learning, giving them the best chance of leading fulfilling lives. People of all ages can access the service online or over the telephone and adults will have additional access to community-based face to face advice.
- 4.3 To make this happen, the service has been designed around two core principles:
- The individual customer's needs to shape the delivery of the service.
 - The service will be seen as the 'gold standard' for careers advice.
- 4.4 Customers of the service will benefit from expert, impartial advice on jobs and careers, including Apprenticeships, and the opportunities supported by local, regional and national economies. Customers will also be able to make an informed choice about where they learn (by having access to user-friendly information on courses and providers) and about sources of funding to support their learning and training. The online channel of the service will integrate these sources of information and every adult is encouraged to open a Lifelong Learning Account. A Lifelong Learning account gives clear information on skills, careers and financial support in a single, personalised online space, giving more control over the individual's learning and working life.
- 4.5 Customers who require more support to understand and make use of this information can speak to a professionally qualified National Careers Service adviser either on the phone or, for adults, in a face-to-face community setting. We believe that careers advice is one of the essential keys to unlocking social mobility and increasing aspiration, progression and fulfillment.
- 4.6 Locally the service is offered in local Job Centres, Libraries and other outreach venues. If a young person is 18 and claiming benefits, they are entitled to see a Careers and Skills Advisers through the National Careers Service.

- 4.7 **Post-16 learning opportunities** can be offered by schools with sixth forms, FE colleges and training providers offering 16-18 and 19+ Apprenticeships or other work based learning. Employers should ensure that young people aged 16-18 are offered training (at least 280 hours per annum), whether in full time or part time employment.
- 4.8 **Higher Education** establishments offer a range of generally post-18 courses which meet the needs of young people and, where good practice is developed, also meet some local or national employment need/skill shortage but they are independent of direct government control for their educational offer.
- 5. Responsibility after the age of 19**
- 5.1 The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), through Jobcentre Plus, is responsible for supporting young people aged 18-24 who are claiming a DWP working age benefit. This support includes job search advice, agreeing an action plan towards employment and referring to partner organisations and colleges/providers to overcome any barriers to work, as well as engaging with employers to source work experience and employment opportunities.

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(with input from Job Centre Plus)