

SOUTH TEES JSNA

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

JUNE 2024

MISSION

We want to improve education, training and work prospects for young people

GOAL

We will significantly reduce the number of NEETs in South Tees by preventing disengagement and reducing/removing barriers to engagement in employment, education and training.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Mission led approach.

The South Tees Health & Wellbeing Boards have agreed to a “mission-led” approach, structured across the life course. Each mission is a response to a significant local challenge, one where innovation, working together and aligning resources has a big part to play in driving large-scale change. The Missions each have a set of ambitious goals that further articulate and explain the Mission.

The JSNA will provide the intelligence behind the Mission(s) – it will develop our collective understanding of the Mission(s); the issues behind and the broad contributing factors to the current outcomes experienced. We are working across the Tees Valley authorities to develop a process on that footprint that facilitates deeper engagement from the ICB.

The vision and aspirations under the life course framework already exist following previous development sessions of the LiveWell Board. The life course framework consists of three strategic aims – start well, live well and age well.

| Vision | Empower the citizens of South Tees to live longer and healthier lives | | |
|-------------------|---|--|---|
| Aims | Start Well | Live Well | Age Well |
| Aspiration | Children and Young People have the Best Start in Life We want children and young people to grow up in a community that promotes safety, aspiration, resilience and healthy lifestyles | People live healthier and longer lives. We want to improve the quality of life by providing opportunities and support so more people can choose and sustain a healthier lifestyle. | More people lead safe, independent lives. We want more people leading independent lives through integrated and sustainable support. |

1.2 Start well strategic aim.

There are three missions within the start well strategic aim. **The first mission relates to narrowing the outcome gap for children growing up in disadvantage, the second mission relates to improving education, training and work prospects for young people and the third mission relates to improving young people’s mental health.** The second goal within the second mission and the focus on this needs assessment, looks at reducing the number of NEETS in South Tees.

| Aims | Mission | Goal |
|------------|---|--|
| Start Well | We will narrow the outcome gap between children growing up in disadvantage and the national average by 2030 | We want to eliminate the school readiness gap between those born into deprivation and their peers. |
| | | We want to eliminate the attainment gap at 16 among students receiving free school meals |
| | We want to improve education, training, and work prospects for young people | Extend offers of apprenticeships, training and work placements for young people to make the most of current and future local opportunities |
| | | We will significantly reduce the number of NEETs in South Tees by preventing disengagement and reducing/removing barriers to engagement in employment, education and training. |
| | We will prioritise and improve mental health and outcomes for young people | Embed sustainable school based mental health support and support education partners in the establishment of whole school-based programmes |
| | | Improve access to mental health care and support for children, young people and families, led by needs. |

2. What is our mission and why do we need to achieve it?

We want all children to have the best possible start in life and to be able to thrive and achieve their goals. Improving education and training prospects for young people is crucial for fostering a skilled, adaptable and innovative workforce that can drive economic growth and societal progress. Education equips young people with the critical thinking, problem solving and technical skills which prepare them for adult life and the challenges which they may encounter. Effective training programmes bridge the gap between academic knowledge and application, ensuring young people are job ready and capable of contributing to various industries and sectors. By investing in these areas we are empowering the young people of South Tees to not only achieve personal success but also actively participate in their communities, reduce local inequalities and improve health and wellbeing outcomes.

Failing to improve education and training prospects can have severe repercussions. Without access to quality education and relevant training, young people are more likely to face unemployment or under employment leading to economic instability and limited social mobility. This can perpetuate cycles of poverty and inequality, as marginalised groups remain trapped in disadvantaged positions. We need to ensure that we have a generation trained for the current and future job market locally, regionally and nationally. Social issues such as increased crime rates, poor health outcomes and mental health challenges can also arise from a lack of educational and employment opportunities further widening the existing inequalities locally.

3. What is our goal and why do we need to achieve it?

3.1 Why improve Education Training and work prospects for young people to prevent NEETS?

We want all children to have the best possible start in life and to be able to thrive and achieve their goals. Creating a system where we work together to ensure that children, young people, and families feel a sense of belonging and pride in their communities and benefit from the opportunities being created in the sub-region. We want children and young people not only to attend school and college well but also to enjoy education and engage in learning. If children and young people remain in education or training for longer, their socio and economic prospects considerably improve through higher earning jobs and wider social networks and friendships, in addition to better physical and mental health.

Public Health England (PHE) found that spending time not in employment, education, or training (NEET) has been shown to have a detrimental effect on physical and mental health. This effect is greater when time spent NEET is at a younger age or lasts for longer. They found that time spent NEET increased the likelihood of unemployment, low wages, or low-quality work later in life. It is also suggested that being NEET can also have an impact on unhealthy behaviours and involvement in crime, as well as having a place-based impact. These negative effects do not occur equally across the population, as the chance of being NEET is affected by area deprivation, socio-economic position, parental factors (such as employment, education, or attitudes), growing up in care, prior academic achievement, and school experiences. Being NEET therefore occurs disproportionately among those already experiencing other sources of multiple disadvantages and wards with the highest levels of deprivation also have the highest numbers of young people who are NEET.

3.2. What are the duties on Local Authorities?

In 2013, the Government introduced the Raising Participation Age (RPA) Policy, requiring all young people to continue in learning until their 18th birthday. Most Redcar and Cleveland and Middlesbrough young people continue in education after year 11 and this enables them to gain the skills and qualifications that employers and higher education providers require.

Young people who are NEET are at risk of not achieving their full potential both economically and socially and some of these are the most vulnerable young people in our communities, including those with special education needs and disabilities (SEND), young people leaving our care/care leavers and those with long-term health conditions, including poor mental health.

Since April 2017 the Department for Education (DfE) has monitored NEET differently. Previously the percentage of NEET young people was calculated in years 12 to 14 and did not include young people whose destination was unknown to the local authority; categorised as 'Not Known.' Some areas of the country had very low NEET numbers but high numbers of Not Knowns. Measuring now includes the sum of the unadjusted NEET young people plus the Not Known percentage and only includes Year 12 and Year 13.

Local Authorities (LA) have a range of statutory duties which are set out in the DfE Statutory Guidance in the delivery of education and training provision for young people (16- and 17-year-olds). The legislation that this guidance relates to is sections 18 and 68(4) of the Education and Skills Act 2008 (ESA 2008) in relation to sections 10, 12 and 68 of that Act. This guidance is for all LAs in England, it sets out guidance to LA staff responsible for promoting participation of young people and tracking and supporting young people's activity.

Tracking young people's participation is a key element of these duties, and LAs are required to collect information about young people so that those who are not participating or are NEET can be identified and given support to re-engage. Robust tracking also provides the LA with information that will help to ensure that suitable education and training provision is available and that resources can be targeted effectively. In addition, the ESA 2008 places two duties on local authorities regarding 16 and 17-year-olds: Local authorities must promote the effective participation in education and training of 16 and 17-year-olds in their area with a view to ensuring that those persons fulfil the duty to participate in education or training. A key element of this is identifying the young people in their area who are covered by the duty to participate and encouraging them to find a suitable education or training place.

The DfE monitors the performance of all LAs in delivering these duties, specifically in tracking and supporting 16 and 17-year-olds using data submitted to the National Client Caseload Information System (NCCIS) monthly.

There is no blueprint to how LAs fulfil their duties and in South Tees both Redcar and Cleveland and Middlesbrough LAs have had resources reduced over the past few years, so that once well-resourced Connexions services have become much smaller teams, however both LAs fulfil their duties by:

- Ensuring that every young person leaving year 11 and year 12 has a September Guarantee: a suitable offer of education and training by the end of September.
- Undertaking monthly tracking to capture information on those young people who are participating in education or training and those who are NEET.
- Providing bespoke support for those young people who are NEET to support them to move back into education or training.
- Submitting monthly performance data to the DfE and the annual activity survey (with the latter identifying the destination of every year 11 leaver on November 1st each year).
- Working closely with schools, colleges and training providers and wider partners to fulfil these duties.

The statutory guidance for local authorities can be found here;

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/660e971663b7f8001fde187f/Participation_of_young_people_in_education_employment_or_training.pdf

3.3 Post-16 Progression Routes

There is a broad range of high quality vocational (e.g. BTECs) and academic options (e.g. A Levels) for young people in the South Tees area with further education and skills provision rated (in the main) as good or outstanding by Ofsted. The main post-16 progression routes for young people include:

Redcar and Cleveland

- Redcar and Cleveland College
- Prior Pursglove Sixth Form College
- Nunthorpe Sixth Form College
- Middlesbrough College
- Askham Bryan College
- Northern College of Arts
- Macmillan Academy Sixth Form
- Kings Academy Sixth Form
- Trinity Catholic College Sixth Form

In addition to work-based learning and apprenticeship provision, with fewer numbers of young people taking up full-time employment combined with training.

Study Programmes provide a springboard to higher level learning for young people below a level 2 qualification (offered by many of the local colleges and independent training providers) and combine a technical qualification/s, with a substantial period of work-experience and maths and English.

The area has a strong track record of encouraging high volumes of apprenticeship participation but since the introduction of the levy and new process for apprenticeships, there has been a significant reduction in the overall number of apprenticeships created nationally and in the Tees Valley.

In Redcar and Cleveland, young people have less choice within their own Borough and are more likely to need to travel to education or training due to the diverse geography of the Borough (which includes rural and coastal areas). The high cost of public transport, lack of transport and long journey times in some areas causes significant issues to young people with limited finances, thereby reducing opportunities for young people in rural areas. Inadequate transport connectivity has been shown to contribute to a loss of productivity, with research suggesting that for cities in the North of England the cost of this is more than £16 billion. The Intergenerational Foundation found that young people in Britain are being unfairly disadvantaged by cuts to public transport services, according to this study which was undertaken on IF's behalf by Richard Bourn of the Campaign for Better Transport, this report particularly looked at the relationship between changes in public transport policy and the declining employment prospects of large numbers of young people. Young people now travel 15% less on average than they did 15 years ago. The report argues that with over a million NEETs and two million young people living in low-income households, there is likely to be a direct relationship between lack of access to transport and difficulties with finding

employment. The report recommended that transport policy should be seen as one of the tools which can be used to help reduce unemployment and that young jobseekers should be given free transport to help them gain access to work.

In Redcar and Cleveland training provision has been reduced in the past 2 years, with the loss of two specialist independent training providers – Shape and YH Training (which Middlesbrough young people also accessed). The Prince’s Trust provision only runs in Middlesbrough and through the loss of European Social Funding, there is now limited re-engagement programmes that Careers Advisers/other Key Workers can refer young people to.

Re-engagement provides a bridge from being NEET to participating in education, training, and employment opportunities and in Middlesbrough the re engagement offer includes a range of provision, including Thirteen Housing Employability Hub, Middlesbrough Community Learning Employment Hub and Evolve as part of the Prince’s Trust.

Both Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland have felt the loss of the Youth Employment Initiative which provided bespoke employment focussed support and brokerage for young people between 15 and 29 years.

Higher Level Learning

At a higher level, there are fewer options for young people who complete level 3 qualifications to progress further if they do not wish to undertake an academic route and go to university. There is an increasing need for higher skill levels with over half of the net job opportunities (56%) and 90% of new job opportunities requiring a level 4 qualification or above. Higher and degree level apprenticeships are growing but there is a lot of competition for these.

Participation in Higher Education is slightly above the national average however, performance is below average with graduates more likely to move out of the area to find employment.

Wider policy to increase participation in education, employment and training includes support to help young people find and sustained employment, the expansion of apprenticeships through the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy, reforms to technical education, improved careers advice and the abolition of Employer National Insurance Contributions for young people under 21 years.

3.4 Causes of young people becoming NEET

The causes of young people becoming NEET are complex and impact young people in different ways, for example some may have chosen the wrong course and withdrew, these tend to be transient NEET young people and may find alternative education, employment, or training reasonably quickly. Due to the cost of living rises, we are seeing more young people leaving education for work, without training. There are specific groups of young people more at risk of becoming NEET and these are the young people who require more intensive support; Careers Advisers and Practitioners have seen an increase in young people with more complex barriers over the past few years.

In 2010, the Audit Commission produced a report, *Against the Odds*, contained in the report is the table which summarises the increased likelihood of young people becoming NEET over a longer-period associated with certain risk factors, as shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Factors contributing to NEETs

| Factor | Increased chance of being NEET for 6 months or more |
|---|---|
| Being NEET at least once before | 7.9 times more likely |
| Pregnancy or parenthood | 2.8 times more likely |
| Supervision by the Youth Offending Team | 2.6 times more likely |
| Less than three months in post-16 education | 2.3 times more likely |
| Disclosed substance abuse | 2.1 times more likely |
| Responsibilities as a carer | 2.0 times more likely |

Source – Audit Commission

Other risk factors include:

- Low educational attainment at GCSE
- A range of personal risk factors including health problems, caring responsibilities, and difficult family circumstances
- Structural risk factors including difficult labour market conditions, a lack of training and apprenticeship opportunities and welfare support providing a higher income than potential wages.

The Youth Futures Foundation on behalf of the National Centre for Social Research published a report in December 2023 ‘Risk factors for being NEET among young people.’

<https://youthfuturesfoundation.org/news/new-research-identifies-the-key-risk-factors-for-young-people-becoming-neet/>

This report explores the extent and degree of overlap between different forms of marginalisation among young people (aged 13 to 25) in England, and how experiencing multiple types of marginalisation may increase the risk of young people not being in employment, education, or training (NEET). This study was conducted using Next Steps, a national longitudinal cohort study following a sample of people born in 1989-90 from age 13/14 through to the age of 25, this covers the years 2004 to 2015.

Five domains of marginalisation were explored covering 19 individual risk factors:

- Education: having a special educational need, absence from school, suspension or exclusion from school, low parental involvement in education and low academic attainment (by age 25).
- Family circumstances: having caring responsibilities after the age of 16, having a parent with a disability, having lived in a single parent household, neither parent having a qualification, having been in care or lived apart from their birth parents in childhood and having had a child of their own.

- Health: having had a limiting disability or health condition and having had a mental health problem.
- Living standards: having lived in social housing while growing up and having lived in a household where either parent was unemployed.
- Risky behaviour: engaged in anti-social behaviour, had their parents contacted about their behaviour by either the police or by a social or educational welfare service.

Analysis – main findings

Descriptive analysis was conducted to explore the prevalence of each of the 19 risk factors and their association with a young person’s likelihood of being NEET. Most of these young people experienced at least one risk factor, only 8% of young people experienced none, 14% experienced only one, 52% experienced between two and five risk factors and 23% experienced over six risk factors, the average number of risk factors experienced by these young people was 4.

The preliminary descriptive results showed that each individual risk factor was associated with an increase in a young person’s likelihood of being NEET. They also showed that as the number of risk factors a young person experienced increased, their likelihood of being NEET increased also. For example, among young people with zero risk factors only 5% were NEET, increasing to 18% among those with 2-5 factors, and 74% for young people with 10 or more. Risk factors for NEET status did overlap among these young people, and that the overlap of multiple risk factors is associated with an increased risk of NEET status.

The importance of different risk factors for someone’s likelihood of being NEET changed once the influence of the others was controlled for using a logistic regression model. The model identified seven risk factors which were no longer associated with an increased risk of being NEET once the role of the other risk factors was adjusted for. Five of these were indicators related to behaviour, including the three risk factors belonging to the ‘risky behaviour’ domain, as well as two related to behaviour at school – whether the young person had been suspended /excluded from school or been absent from school. The two other factors which were no longer associated with NEET status were low parental involvement in education and having a disabled parent in the household.

The remaining twelve factors were all associated with a statistically significant increase in risk of NEET status in the logistic regression model, of these, the six risk factors which were found to be most strongly associated with NEET status, once the others had been controlled for, were not having an academic qualification above level 1, having a limiting disability, having a child before age 21, having a child between age 21 and 25, having poor mental health and having been identified as having SEN.

Following this, to identify whether certain types of risks factors were more likely to be found together, a cluster analysis was conducted, six distinct clusters were identified, containing between 2 and 3 risk factors (outlined in Figure 2 below).

Figure 2: Clusters of marginalisation

| Cluster | Risk factors forming each cluster: |
|---------|---|
| 1. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspension or exclusion from school • Parents contacted by the police about young persons' behaviour • Parents contacted by social or educational services about young persons' behaviour |
| 2. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having had a child before age 21 • having had a child between age 21 and 25 |
| 3. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lived in a single parent household • Lived in socially rented accommodation • Engaged in anti-social behaviours |
| 4. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special educational needs • Low academic attainment (does not hold a qualification at Level 2 or higher) |
| 5. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a parent with a disability • Having two parents with no qualifications • Had caring responsibilities after the age of 16 |
| 6. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limiting disability or health condition • Having experienced a mental health problem |

Source – Youth Futures Foundation

This report concluded that there was substantial overlap among different forms of marginalisation in the form of risk factors, each risk factor was individually associated with an increased risk of a young person being NEET and having multiple risk factors was linked to a cumulative increase in their likelihood of being NEET. This shows that paying attention to the collective impact of different factors in a young person's life is important to understanding how at risk they may be of poor employment and education outcomes, using the NEET Risk Index, it is possible to identify broad groups of young people who may be at heightened risk of being NEET, as well identifying the risk faced by individuals based on their unique combinations of risk factors. Although more research will be needed to explore this area, for example, considering the role of timing, when the young person experiences a risk factor and whether this may change its effect, **this study highlights the importance of taking a multidimensional approach to understanding labour market exclusion.**

The report mirrors the characteristics of the NEET population in Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland and demonstrates that a one size approach does not work and that earlier identification of risk and targeted intervention is required to prevent some young people from becoming long-term NEET. In Redcar and Cleveland, a risk indicator has been introduced with all schools/academies to identify those young people who are at most risk of becoming NEET to provide a multi-agency and disciplined approach to support transition from pre-16 education to post-16 education or training however, this is not completed until the end of year 10/beginning of year 11 and with higher levels of need and less resource, early intervention for all young people who would benefit is difficult to achieve.

In Middlesbrough, there are similar approaches with those young people who are at risk of NEET are identified in partnership with schools, however this approach is focussed on year 11 pupils only due to limited resources and would have a greater impact on outcomes if interventions were provided earlier.

Highest Scoring Local Authorities

From the report, Figure 3 below shows the local authorities that scored the highest weighted average of NEET factors, higher values indicate regions where young people have a higher likelihood of being NEET.

Figure 3: LA weighted average scores

| Local Authority | Weighted Average |
|-----------------------------|------------------|
| Blackpool | 1.88 |
| Middlesbrough | 1.63 |
| Knowsley | 1.53 |
| Redcar and Cleveland | 1.46 |
| Great Yarmouth | 1.42 |
| Hartlepool | 1.38 |
| Stoke-on-Trent | 1.23 |
| Sunderland | 1.20 |
| Halton | 1.16 |
| Rotherham | 1.15 |
| St. Helens | 1.14 |
| Burnley | 1.13 |
| Doncaster | 1.12 |
| South Tyneside | 1.11 |
| Kingston upon Hull, City of | 1.07 |
| North East Lincolnshire | 1.04 |
| Hastings | 1.04 |
| East Lindsey | 1.03 |
| Barnsley | 0.99 |
| Thanet | 0.98 |

Source - [Risk of NEET Factors - Youth Futures Foundation](#)

4. Key data and drivers for change?

4.1 Who are NEET and what is the local picture?

The Definition of a NEET young person is aged 16 and 17 years in Year 12 and 13, with the local authority duty to track their participation up to their 18th birthday, but this includes the end of their academic year 13.

Figure 4: September Guarantee 2023

| Area | 16 and 17 year olds | Offer made (%) | Is the proportion of 16/17-year-olds receiving an offer higher than in 2022 | Offer not appropriate (%) | No offer (%) | Not recorded (%) |
|----------------------|---------------------|----------------|---|---------------------------|--------------|------------------|
| ENGLAND | 1,259,400 | 94.6% | Yes | 1.3% | 1.0% | 3.1% |
| NORTH EAST | 58,880 | 95.7% | Yes | 2.2% | 1.1% | 1.0% |
| Middlesbrough | 3,490 | 95.2% | No | 1.4% | 2.3% | 1.2% |
| Redcar and Cleveland | 3,380 | 97.0% | Yes | 1.8% | 1.2% | 0.1% |

Source – DfE

The local authorities work closely with education providers and every young person of school Year 11 and Year 12 is entitled to have an appropriate offer of education, employment or training this offer needs to be in place by the end of the September when they would enter Year 12 or Year 13 and is called the September Guarantee. Both Redcar and Cleveland and Middlesbrough do well in relation to the September Guarantee as depicted in the latest data above in Figure 4, Redcar and Cleveland is higher than both the national and regional figure and has increased in comparison to last year (2022). Offers need to be RPA compliant and although young people are made an offer, some may not accept these, so monthly tracking is important, for Year 11, the Annual Activity Survey determines where every young person is on the 1st of November.

Annual activity survey 2023

The Annual Activity Survey 2023 data shows that participation in education or training was 96.4% for those young people who left year 11 in Redcar and Cleveland schools and and 96.8% in Middlesbrough

NEET data December 2023 to February 2024

The DfE measure the performance of every English LA but an average measure is taken across a 3-month period between December and February to provide the most accurate picture of the number of NEET and Not Known young people in each local area.

Figure 5: NEET numbers

| Area | Academic Age 16 -17 (year 12-13) NEET numbers | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|--------|--------|------|-------------|--------|--------|------|---------------|
| | 2023 - 2024 | | | | 2022 - 2023 | | | | Change in Avg |
| | Dec-23 | Jan-24 | Feb-24 | Avg | Dec-22 | Jan-23 | Feb-23 | Avg | |
| ENGLAND | 3.1% | 3.2% | 3.3% | 3.2% | 2.7% | 2.8% | 2.9% | 2.8% | 0.4% |
| NORTH EAST | 5.2% | 5.1% | 5.0% | 5.1% | 4.8% | 4.6% | 4.7% | 4.7% | 0.4% |
| Middlesbrough | 4.3% | 3.7% | 3.6% | 3.9% | 4.3% | 4.0% | 4.0% | 4.1% | -0.2% |
| Redcar and Cleveland | 6.0% | 6.2% | 6.1% | 6.1% | 7.2% | 6.4% | 5.9% | 6.5% | -0.4% |

Source – DfE

The 3-month average above in Figure 5 shows the percentage of NEET young people across the 3-month performance period and compares the academic year 2023/24 to same period in 2022/23. Redcar and Cleveland’s NEET numbers have dropped by the greatest percentage on the previous year but are still higher than both the England and Northeast average, whilst Middlesbrough has also dropped and is lower than the Northeast and only slightly above the national figure. NEET numbers were particularly high in Redcar and Cleveland in the first quarter of 2022/23 with this group of young people impacted most by COVID, both areas have high levels of multiple deprivation in specific wards but the geography in Redcar and Cleveland includes coastal and rural areas with excess of 45% of young people who are in post 16 education or training needing to travel outside of the Borough. In Redcar and Cleveland there is limited roll on/roll off employability provision with the loss of ESF and 2 established training providers having closed over the last 2-3 years.

Higher levels of drop out from education and training in Redcar and Cleveland (specifically FE) also impacts on NEET numbers, between September 22 to August 23, 352 young people joined the NEET cohort in Redcar and Cleveland (182% of the average number of NEET young people across the year) whilst in Middlesbrough this figure was 195 (139% of the average number of NEET young people across the year). 240 young people were moved into positive outcomes and out of the NEET cohort in Redcar and Cleveland between September 2022 and August 2023; 151 in Middlesbrough.

A lot of hard work is being undertaken to move young people from the NEET cohort into positive outcomes but young people not sustaining these outcomes is having the most impact on NEET numbers, with multiple causal factors parallel to those highlighted earlier and impacting some young people’s resilience in education/training and their ability to remain engaged over the longer-term.

NEET and Not Known data December 2023 to February 2024

Figure 6: NEET & not known numbers

| Area | Academic Age 16 -17 (year 12-13) NEET and Not Known numbers | | | | | | | | Change between avg |
|----------------------|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------------|
| | 2023 - 2024 | | | | 2022 - 2023 | | | | |
| | Dec-23 | Jan-24 | Feb-24 | Avg | Dec-22 | Jan-23 | Feb-23 | Avg | |
| ENGLAND | 6.0% | 5.3% | 4.9% | 5.4% | 6.0% | 5.1% | 4.6% | 5.3% | 0.1% |
| NORTH EAST | 6.1% | 5.8% | 5.5% | 5.8% | 5.4% | 5.1% | 5.1% | 5.2% | 0.6% |
| Middlesbrough | 4.5% | 3.7% | 3.6% | 3.9% | 4.7% | 4.2% | 4.2% | 4.4% | -0.5% |
| Redcar and Cleveland | 6.0% | 6.2% | 6.1% | 6.1% | 7.2% | 6.4% | 5.9% | 6.5% | -0.4% |

Source – DfE

The 3-month average above in Figure 6 shows the percentage of NEET and Not Known young people across the 3-month performance period and compares the academic year 2023/24 to the same period in 2022/23. When comparing the national combined figure to NEET alone it is clearly visible that there are many not known young people across the country (those young people who are unknown to a local authority, therefore verification of their education or training participation status cannot be checked) and there are likely to be ‘hidden NEET young people’ in these numbers. However, in the South Tees area, both Redcar and Cleveland and Middlesbrough identify where all young people are through monthly robust tracking processes with no Not Known young people remaining in the above figures. Close partnership working supports this with monthly lists provided by every college and training provider so that young people who have withdrawn from education or training provision can be identified quickly and assigned to a Careers Adviser or Practitioner to provide support to find alternative education or training.

In Learning December 2023 to February 2024

Figure 7: In learning

| Area | Academic Age 16 -17 (year 12-13) In Learning | | | | | | | | Change between avg |
|----------------------|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------------|
| | 2023 - 2024 | | | | 2022 - 2023 | | | | |
| | Dec-23 | Jan-24 | Feb-24 | Avg | Dec-22 | Jan-23 | Feb-23 | Avg | |
| ENGLAND | 91.6% | 92.0% | 92.2% | 92.0% | 91.5% | 92.2% | 92.4% | 92.1% | -0.1% |
| NORTH EAST | 90.2% | 90.4% | 90.6% | 90.4% | 91.1% | 91.1% | 90.9% | 91.0% | -0.7% |
| Middlesbrough | 94.5% | 95.2% | 95.3% | 95.0% | 93.7% | 94.1% | 94.0% | 93.9% | 1.1% |
| Redcar and Cleveland | 91.6% | 90.9% | 90.8% | 91.1% | 89.5% | 89.9% | 90.0% | 89.8% | 1.4% |

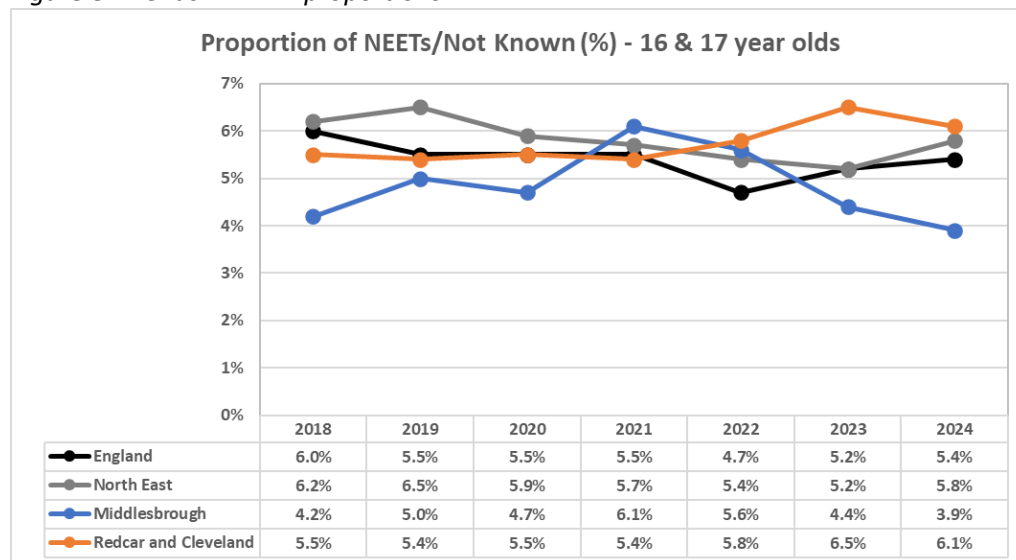
Source – DfE

The 3-month average above in Figure 7 shows the percentage of young people in learning across the 3-month performance period and compares the academic year 2023/24 to the same period in 2022/23. Participation in learning must be RPA compliant so this doesn’t include young people in part-time work or part-time education or those in employment without training, therefore the number of NEET/Not Known and in learning young people will not total 100% as some young people in both Redcar and Cleveland and Middlesbrough will

not be meeting the duty to participate as they are in non-compliant RPA provision. Redcar and Cleveland saw a 1.4 percentage point increase in the numbers of young people participating in education or training over the past 12 months and Middlesbrough by a 1.1 percentage point increase, this compares well to a national and regional drop.

Figure 8 below shows proportional NEET numbers for 16 and 17 year olds in Redcar and Cleveland and Middlesbrough against the national and regional figure.

Figure 8: Trends in NEET proportions



Source – DfE

4.2 Deprivation Overview

Middlesbrough

The ONS reported that the Northeast is the most deprived region in England, based on Census 2021. Middlesbrough ranks highly for poverty and deprivation, with a significant proportion of residents having never worked or being long-term unemployed. High deprivation levels mean thousands of Middlesbrough families will fall well below the government's official threshold for those who are living in poverty, it highlights the structural nature of the social and economic problems that continue to face a very large proportion of the town's population. Changes between 2011 and 2021 show that the rates of poverty and deprivation in Middlesbrough have decreased during the past 10 years but there has been very little change in the general pattern or polarisation of poverty and deprivation across Middlesbrough during this time.

There are very wide and persistent variations (or inequalities) in poverty and deprivation at ward level in Middlesbrough and in certain parts of the town the rates of poverty and deprivation are critically high.

Middlesbrough is very diverse with 55 different languages being spoken from 49 different countries, a factor that must be reflected and considered in services and provision for young people. It is the sixth most deprived local authority area in the country. Eight neighbourhoods in Middlesbrough are in the top 10% most deprived areas in the country and over half of Middlesbrough's children (63%) live in the top 20% most deprived wards. Deprivation data is

taken from the Census and combines a range data including economic status, employment, and health. [Exploring local income deprivation \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

Over the past five years there have been major research studies on the relationship between child poverty and child and adolescent neglect. Deep poverty has increased rapidly in the past five years and in England this has been accompanied by record levels of children in out-of-home care. Poverty affects every aspect of family life and is inextricably implicated in other factors which increase the risk of harm: including domestic violence, poor mental health, and substance use. Children and young people's age and ethnicity interact with poverty in ways that increase inequalities and likelihood of poor outcomes including NEET.

In England, children in the most deprived deciles were around thirteen times more likely to be on a Child Protection Plan (CPP) and over ten times more likely to be looked after (CLA) than a child in the least deprived decile. Around one child in thirty-six in the most deprived 10% of neighbourhoods were either on a CPP or CLA on the census day in 2015: but only one in 426 in the least deprived neighbourhoods. Over 50% of children subject to these interventions were from families in the most deprived 20% of neighbourhoods; only 5% were from the least deprived 20%.

Nuffield Foundation : [New evidence on the relationship between poverty and child abuse and neglect - Nuffield Foundation](#)

Joseph Rowntree Foundation: [The relationship between poverty, child abuse and neglect: an evidence review | Joseph Rowntree Foundation \(jrf.org.uk\)](#)

Dartington Research in Practice: [frontlinebriefing-neglectmay19_web-2.pdf \(researchinpractice.org.uk\)](#)

Redcar and Cleveland

Redcar & Cleveland is one of the 20% most deprived districts/unitary authorities in England. Life expectancy for both men and women are lower than the national average, life expectancy is 11.0 years lower for men and 7.3 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Redcar and Cleveland than in the least deprived areas, Grangetown is ranked as the eighth most deprived ward in the country. The situation with regards to health deprivation is particularly stark within the borough, with five wards appearing within the 10% most deprived wards in the country in terms of health deprivation and disability (Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2019), four in ten children in Redcar and Cleveland are growing up in poverty which directly impacts their education and life chances.

5. What are our key issues?

Upon speaking to stakeholders, LA Professionals, and the Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) the following key issues were highlighted regarding NEET young people.

1. **COVID/disruption to education** – This has impacted on post-sixteen participation, in November 2022 R&C NEET numbers were higher than they had been for several years with more young people impacted by poor mental health and anxiety, poor behaviour, declining attendance and lacking maturity.
2. **Provision** – with the loss of the European Social Fund we have seen a decline in NEET specific re-engagement programmes and the loss of the Youth Employment Initiative that provided a bridge from NEET to EET, these have not been replaced by the UK Prosperity Fund which is much smaller in terms of funding.
3. **Cost of living crisis** – some families on low income cannot afford for young people to do unpaid education or training and therefore are entering work without training.
4. **Post sixteen funding** – some independent training providers are finding it difficult to survive financially in line with what is expected by the ESFA and several specialist training providers have had to close as a consequence of this, this leaves less choice for young people who do not want to go to FE or have withdrawn from college and need an alternative. In Redcar and Cleveland there is very limited training provision in the East of the Borough.
5. **Post sixteen funding restrictions** – the restrictions on how and what must be delivered means the delivery is very inflexible, it is almost impossible to put on part time/flexible responsive programmes that meet the needs of very disengaged/low ability young people. In Redcar and Cleveland specialist social emotional and mental health (SEMH) provision has been commissioned by the LA, but it is costly for a small number of young people and we have several young people waiting for places.
6. **Post sixteen provision start dates** – few starts after September/October, so if someone becomes NEET mid-year there is very little to refer them to, they can enter work but if it does not include training it is not RPA compliant and the career prospects for the young person is more limited. Middlesbrough College have a start date offered throughout the Year for the Steps Programme and this is successful in reengagement of some young people into post sixteen learning.
7. **Maths and English requirements for apprenticeships** – a barrier for some young people is the entry levels of maths and English required, also the lack of availability and competition for specific apprenticeships, e.g. Engineering. Some young people can't afford to undertake an apprenticeship if they are not living at home and are being supported by the family.
8. **Limited Educational Attainment** – both areas struggle with low educational attainment levels, resulting in young people being ill-prepared for transitioning into further education

or the job market. Factors such as elevated levels of poverty, low parental aspirations and limited access to quality educational resources contribute to this issue.

9. **High Unemployment Rates** – the area experiences higher than average unemployment rates which then affects young people disproportionately. Lack of job opportunities within the region contributes to the challenges faced by NEET young people, hampering their chances of securing stable employment.

10. **Social Deprivation** – the area faces high levels of social deprivation which can have a significant impact on young people's well-being and prospects. Factors such as poverty, limited access to support services and a lack of positive role models can contribute to disengagement from education and employment. A recent study conducted by The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2023) found Middlesbrough has been ranked as third in the UK for levels of destitution. If people do not have the most basic necessities to keep themselves fed, warm, housed and safe then this is a real indicator of the levels of poverty families are facing.¹

6. What can help prevent young people becoming NEET?

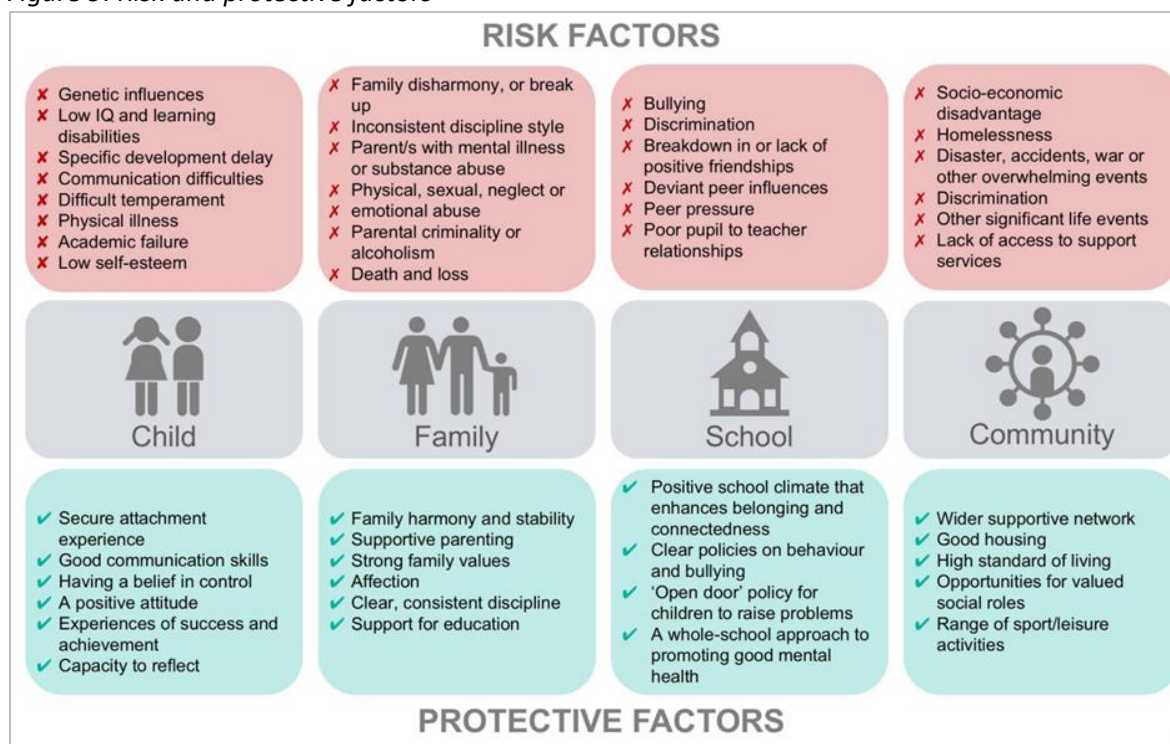
6.1 Early intervention

Early (targeted) intervention is the single most effective way of reducing the chances of young people becoming NEET and addressing the overlap of multiple risk factors, creating the conditions and a system where children and young people and their families feel a sense of belonging and get the right support, promptly when they need it, 21% of Redcar and Cleveland young people who are NEET have Special Educational Needs (SEN) support needs and in Middlesbrough 7% of 16- and 17-year-olds who are NEET have an EHCP, this is likely to be higher, with other young people having an undiagnosed support need. Those young people with SEN support are much more likely to be receiving free school meals, be persistently absent from school (missing 10% or more of their education) or severely absent (missing 50% or more of their education), have multiple suspensions from school or have been permanently excluded. Greater numbers of young people are suffering with anxiety and mental health, and this increased further following COVID. Funding has been reduced over many years and early intervention services have been impacted by local authority funding cuts, specifically in relation to youth services, early help, and careers, this makes it even more important for services to work together and align resources.

Early Help services within the Borough are delivered by a broad range of organisations and both Local Authorities deliver the Supporting Families Programme and Outcomes Framework as set out in the Early Help System Guide ([Early Help System Guide \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)) This creates a system-wide approach to earlier support and intervention for families following statutory guidance on multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children and young people ([Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)).

In Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland Children and Families Service, a Relationship First Practice model has been adopted, using strengths-based, trauma informed approaches to identify early risks. Earlier, impactful intervention builds sustainable resilience in families, so that problems are tackled before needs escalate and crises occur, which may lead to costly specialist interventions. The visual below highlights how the partners in the system can collaborate to reduce the risk factors that could lead to young people becoming NEET or unemployed in the future.

Figure 9: Risk and protective factors



Source – OHID

6.2 Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance

High quality careers education and guidance in school or college is critical to young people's futures, it helps to prepare them for the workplace by providing a clear understanding of the world of work including the routes to jobs and careers that young people might find engaging and rewarding, it also supports them to acquire the self-development and career management skills they need to achieve positive employment destinations. Schools and colleges have a responsibility to set young people on the path that will secure the best outcome which will enable them to progress in education and work and give employers the highly skilled people they need, following the implementation of the Careers Strategy 2017, England now has the foundations of a coherent and well-established careers education system. The DfE expects all secondary schools and colleges to use the internationally recognised Gatsby Benchmarks [6144 Gatsby career 2014 AW.indd](#) to develop a careers programme that increases opportunities for students to access everything from experiences of the workplace and personal guidance with a Careers Adviser to engagement with employers, colleges, training providers and universities. In South Tees, schools are supported by Tees Valley Careers, partly funded through the Careers Enterprise Company and the Tees Valley Combined authority to help implement good quality careers programmes and measure success against the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Research by Education and Employers 2012 found that young adults who recalled 'four or more employer contacts' are five times less likely to be NEET than those who have had no involvement, 26.1% of young people who could recall no contact with employers whilst at school went on to become NEET, this reduced significantly to 4.3% for those who had taken

part in four or more activities involving employers. For some young people, encounters and opportunities are reduced if they don't attend school regularly or where careers programmes don't afford the opportunity to have multiple encounters with employers.

6.3 Good Quality Education

A good education acts as a foundation for personal growth, critical thinking, and academic success, it equips young individuals with the necessary knowledge, skills, and ethical values to navigate the complexities of the modern world. Quality education not only imparts subject-specific knowledge but also fosters creativity, problem-solving abilities, and effective communication skills, it promotes social cohesion, tolerance and democracy. There is substantial evidence that school experiences and achievements affect the chances of becoming NEET. Reports show that those who are NEET at the age of 18-19 had the lowest results in exams at age 11 and GCSE,² and that those who are NEET tend to have had lower academic attainment and low levels of literacy and numeracy.

We cannot underestimate the impact of COVID and in Redcar and Cleveland there was a large spike in young people who were NEET in November 2022 and these were the cohorts leaving school who had been most impacted by the pandemic, the impact of the pandemic on learners and providers in further education (FE) and skills is well documented. In 2020, the DfE published a [series of COVID-19-themed briefings](#), which presented findings from interim visits to providers in the autumn term, leaders told of the challenges of providing practical elements of programmes, including work experience, that they had identified gaps in learners' English and mathematics knowledge and skills, that mental health, well-being and safeguarding concerns had increased and that they were facing growing financial pressures. Attendance in schools has never improved to pre-COVID levels and in both Redcar and Cleveland and Middlesbrough there is ongoing work to significantly improve attendance in schools and colleges, as shown in Figure 10 below where attendance rates are low.

Figure 10: LA absence rates

Redcar and Cleveland – Autumn Term 2023



Middlesbrough – Autumn Term 2023



Source – Local Authority

6.4 Good Quality Training

Complementary to education, training bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, vocational training and internships provide young people with valuable hands-on experience making them adaptable and job ready. Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programmes offer specialised skillsets, catering to industry demand and reducing unemployment rates. By empowering young individuals with technical expertise and training enhances their employability, bridges the skills gap, and encourages entrepreneurship. Good quality training not only provides young people with a purpose and couch it can also provide them with valuable life skills and The Sutton Trust recorded that there is wide recognition of the importance of life skills, with 88% of young people, 94% of employers and 97% of teachers saying that they are as or more important than academic qualifications.³ So crucially, a work placement provides an opportunity for young people to gain experience of the workplace, develop their skills and build their confidence in a safe and supportive environment while also deciding if a particular role, organisation or sector is right for them without committing to a permanent position.⁴ The training or work placement not only provides support, consistency and a goal to the young people, but all can help business tap into resource talent that their company may not necessarily have, it may also contribute to building their own talent and replacing an ageing workforce.

Positive examples of training programmes can be seen through organisations such as The Princes Trust, as shown in their Youth Index Support 2023.⁵ Providing specific focus to programmes and training to build young people's confidence, improving fitness and mental health, the Prince's Trust has helped 1 million young people to date. Over the last 5 years, 3 in 4 young people supported by The Trust moved into work, education or training.

6.5 Access to Employment

Securing stable employment is crucial for young people's economic independence, personal development and social integration. Meaningful employment not only ensures financial security but also provides a sense of purpose and self-worth, it offers opportunities for career advancement and professional growth fostering a sense of accomplishment and fulfilment. Gainful employment reduces the risk of poverty, crime, and other socio-economic challenges, thus contributing to stable and inclusive societies. Figure 11 shows the percentage of 18-24 year olds claiming benefits is high in Redcar and Cleveland and Middlesbrough compared to the England figure and the Tees Valley has been impacted by the completion of the Youth Employment Initiative, funded through European Social Fund, which supported 16-29 year olds to find and sustain work, we do have Hubs in South Tees where DWP Work Coaches are helping young jobseekers access local training and job opportunities as well as a range of services to address wellbeing needs.

Figure 11: Claimant count

| Claimant count - February 2024 (18–24-year-olds) | numbers | % |
|---|----------------|----------|
| England | 246,545 | 5.3 |
| Darlington | 540 | 7.2 |
| Hartlepool | 625 | 8.9 |
| Middlesbrough | 1,035 | 7.8 |
| Redcar and Cleveland | 795 | 8.7 |
| Stockton-on-Tees | 1,030 | 7.7 |

Note: % is number claimants as a proportion of resident population of the same age

Source: ONS Claimant count by sex and age [February 2024]

7. What are we doing already to prevent and reduce young people becoming NEET?

7.1 Redcar and Cleveland

Early Help and Intervention

In Redcar and Cleveland, we have adopted the principle that early help is everyone's business, located in a relationship first, trauma informed practice model. Partners in education and the wider community can identify and support children and families requiring early help. This provides additional support without raising immediate safeguarding concerns. The model has four levels and has been designed to support professionals and services to identify where an individual child's needs lie and the level of response that should be provided. An Early Help assessment can be completed by a partner organisation or an Early Help Worker. An Early Help Clinic operates to provide support and guidance to all practitioners working with children, young people, and families. [*Early Help Strategy – 2021-2025.pdf \(redcar-cleveland.gov.uk\)](#)

Youth Services

The Youth and Community Service is made up of a professional team of youth workers who are responsible for developing trusting and caring relationships with young people, the team also includes four neighbourhood youth officers who manage both youth projects and youth and community centres. The youth service is a key part of the early help offer, giving young people time and somewhere safe to turn, supporting them to cope with difficult life issues and progress positively. Youth workers have experience in adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) awareness, to enable them to become a 'Trusted Adult'. There are nine youth and community centres in Redcar and Cleveland, the council's Youth Service provides generic youth sessions and specialist targeted provision for vulnerable groups of young people and those with SEND.

Multidisciplined Education Team

The Post-16 Progression and Careers Team sits within a multidisciplinary team of education professionals who provide support and guidance to schools, colleges and training providers, children, young people and families. This includes:

- **Achievement and Early Years Team** – working to improve school readiness and outcomes for children and young people.
- **Inclusion** – collaborative activity to reduce suspensions, permanent exclusions, the numbers of young people who are electively home educated and improving attendance.
- **Virtual School** – overseeing the quality of the education for children in our care, monitoring attendance and ensuring personal education plans are in place for every child.
- **SEND** – supporting children and young people with SEND to get the support they need at the right time and providing guidance and support for schools and wider

professionals to ensure they have robust processes and structures in place to support children and young people with SEND and are prepared for adulthood.

- **Post-16 Progression and Careers** – working with all schools to support key stage 4 to key stage 5 transition, ensuring all young people have a suitable offer of education or training in line with the September Guarantee Duty, tracking young people's participation in education or training and providing individualised careers guidance and support for young people who are NEET, this includes identifying their starting point and implementing a collaborative plan to remove barriers and move them into education, employment or training based on their individual needs. Although not part of their statutory duties the Team works with schools to identify young people in Year 11 who are at risk of becoming NEET (all schools have adopted the Requiring Additional Support Indicator – RASI), providing additional transitional support, with schools also encouraged to complete and share robust transition plans with post-16 providers for the most vulnerable young people. Year 11, Electively Home Educated young people are also supported through the team with their transition as most have had no careers guidance.

Specialist support for Care Leavers who are NEET

A specialist officer works specifically with care experienced young people to move them into education, employment or training, in addition to working with the young people directly, they provide employment brokerage and provide guidance and training for employers to enable them to recognise and understand Adverse Childhood Experiences and attachment and learn how to adopt a trauma informed approach to support care leavers in employment. A flexible funding grant has been provided by Anglo American (who are a private sector investor in the area) to be used to remove any barriers a young person may have to entering work, including transport costs/interview clothing.

Transition Mentor

Unique to Redcar and Cleveland, a Transition Mentor is embedded in Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland and Prior Pursglove College, working alongside pastoral and attendance teams to identify and support young people who could be at risk of dropping out of college. Regular meetings are held to discuss concerns about specific young people and particularly the most vulnerable cohorts, this role has helped reduce the numbers of young people withdrawing from college who would have otherwise become NEET.

Business Mentoring Programme

Also funded through Anglo American, the Business Mentoring Programme recruits volunteers from industry, delivers training and undertakes safeguarding checks before matching the mentor to a mentee to support a young person's progression into work, whilst helping to broaden the young person's social networks. This provision prioritises NEET young people, care leavers and young people with SEND, the programme will continue until 2026.

Careers

Working strategically with business partners and the Combined Authority, Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council ensure that Careers Education, Advice and Guidance, including specialist STEM provision is embedded across all schools and colleges (including primaries). The Building Our Future Primary Careers Programme raises awareness and aspirations about the STEM careers that are available now and in the future on the children's doorstep, this is funded through Dogger Bank Windfarm until 2026.

Specialist provision

Through identified gaps in provision, Redcar and Cleveland Council have commissioned specialist provision with both Redcar and Cleveland College and Prior Pursglove College for children and young people post-16 with social, emotional, mental health (SEMH) needs. The Resolve Programme at R&CC offers individualised 1:1 and small group work with young people, providing a graduated approach to re-engaging them back into mainstream provision. The young people build up their hours over time and work towards qualifications in an area of interest, many then progress to Foundation Learning. A specialist SEMH tutor is supported by 2 youth workers and wider learning support, the programme has seen good results over the past 3 years, preventing more than 30 young people becoming NEET. The Endeavour Connect programme works with young people who are socially phobic, so home learning commences first with a view to building the young person's timetable and gradually introducing steps to move them into college in a safe and supportive environment.

Supported Internships

Every local authority in England has been awarded a grant as part of the Internship Works Programme, with the aim of increasing the number of supported internships, a supported internship is the most effective way of moving a young person with a learning difficulty or autism into mainstream work. A supported internship is a study programme but most of the learning is delivered through work experience, with additional learning and qualifications undertaken at college. In Redcar and Cleveland, both Redcar and Cleveland and Prior Pursglove Colleges already offer supported internships but have engaged in the programme to improve quality and increase access, with Redcar and Cleveland College delivering the programme through their Prince's Trust programme, numbers of supported internships are expected to double by March 2025.

Council opportunities

The Council and members have made a commitment to providing opportunities for young people in the Borough, with paid work experience available for Year 11 to Year 13 students, work-experience placements available to every school, the Inspiring Women Schools Shadowing Programme (now extended to boys), volunteering and supported internship placements.

System Change

During 2022 to 2023 Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council received funding from Anglo American to enable the LA to work with partners to develop a Theory of Change linked to improving attendance across schools and colleges, this is the first Theory of Change linked to improving severe and persistent absence and we are now working with partners to develop and test solutions. The long-term system change programme is collectively named 'Making Attendance Everyone's Business' and the aim is that in the future it would be highly unlikely for a child/young person to be PA/SA from school/college. All the work undertaken to date can be view through a dedicated website. [Home page \(skyblue.org.uk\)](http://skyblue.org.uk)

7.2 Middlesbrough

Middlesbrough Community Learning

A council run function offers various skills and education training throughout the area with a tailored approach, to meet the various needs of the community. Examples of such are.

Supported Internship

Offers for 16-25yr old young people with Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs), the main focus of the programme is to provide work placements, English and maths skills and preparation for life activities/qualifications. The aim is for interns to gain the skills and confidence to achieve long-term career goals. As part of the national SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan the government are currently running several pilot projects where a young person who has SEND but does not have an EHCP can access a supported internship. Middlesbrough is one of the pilot areas.

Study Programmes

Aimed at 16-18yrs delivered at the Lingfield Countryside Centre, Coulby Newham, is a small discreet provision up to forty young people per year, usually those who have been NEET, Care Leavers, etc.

50 Futures Work Placement

Opportunities within the local authority are in place, this is aimed at 16+ who are not engaged with other services and want to move into work but do not have confidence or even the experience to apply for Jobs, currently we have over 30 Opportunities internal to the council are available.⁶

Apprenticeship Programmes

Available throughout the regions by organisations such as Local Authorities, - A range of apprenticeships on offer from Customer Service to Management.

Employment Hub

Within Middlesbrough an **Employment Hub** is located within the town centre and this creates a one stop shop to support people in Middlesbrough to find work, 1:1 support, advice and support to find work, education, or training.⁷Development within town centre regeneration, within the Tees Valley, is looking to expand with Government and Local Authority funding,

endorsing expansion and relocation of this key features in the town such as the Employment Hub, to enable expansion and progression in this area.

The Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA)

Have a 'Stay Local, Go Far' campaign aimed at retaining young people to stay or return to the area to fulfil their career aspirations.⁸

Early Help and Intervention

Middlesbrough has an effective Early Help and Prevention Service which is supporting children and families to be safe and live well. The service is designed to prevent any escalation of need and risk and is underpinned by a multi-agency Early Help Strategy and the values of relationship-based practice set out in Middlesbrough Children Matter. The work of the multi-agency strategic Family Help Board which oversees the Early Help Strategy has supported to expand the early help offer in Middlesbrough and the range of different services offered from the Family Hubs which provide a single access point, a 'front door' to universal and early help services for families, with co-located services to make it easier for families to access the services they need, including Start for Life services, outreach support and virtual offers. Many early help services offered in the Family Hubs are for families who do not need intensive, whole-family Lead Practitioner support; however, the hubs ensure seamless access to more targeted support where needed. This includes Family Practitioners in the Stronger Families Service who provide interventions for more complex issues. Family Practitioners undertake child-focused assessments which focus on families' strengths alongside any worries and concerns and direct work routinely takes place with children and young people to ensure that their views inform decisions about next steps.

Youth Services

There are three elements to the Middlesbrough Youth Service commissioned model including universal, targeted and transition youth work as follows.

- Linx Youth Project offer open access universal youth provision across six areas of Middlesbrough giving young people somewhere to go and something to do in their local area. The provision regularly engages with approx. 330 young people each month, providing a safe place to meet peers and the opportunity to work with youth workers around a variety of issues.
- The Junction deliver targeted youth support and the provision regularly engages with approx. 380 young people each month and includes 1 to 1 work for young people who have been referred to access support with a specific issue, small structured group work in schools/youth settings around identified specific topics and detached street-based sessions in seven identified areas across Middlesbrough focussing on addressing local issues including anti-social behaviour and exploitation.
- Middlesbrough Football Club deliver transitional youth work to support children and young people who need additional support moving from primary to secondary school, moving between schools and or support with accessing school. The provision regularly engages with approx. thirty young people each month. There is evidence that the work

completed by MFC with young people has enabled many children to remain in school, to achieve and enjoy school.

The three youth service providers are meeting the demand for their services and are contributing to improved outcomes in their respective areas of delivery, for children and young people across Middlesbrough.

The Youth Services have also formed the 'Middlesbrough Youth Mutual' and have developed a strategy, working alongside other voluntary and community sector youth providers to develop a strong and sustainable youth sector.

Education Team

Specialist support for Care Leavers who are NEET

Young people in care who are above statutory school age (i.e. above Year 11) remain part of Middlesbrough's Virtual School as a Post-16 student.

Post-16 students require a Post 16 Personal Education Plan (PEP). A Post 16 PEP is required for all young people in education, employment, or training, as well as for those who are NEET. In Middlesbrough we have a specialised PEP that is designed to ensure root cause analysis.

Young people in care in Middlesbrough who are NEET are referred to other services such as the Virtual School drop-in sessions and the EET Clinic to support them back into education, training, or work.

EET Clinic

The EET Clinic is designed to ensure Care Experienced young people who require additional mental health support, including young people with emotional, behavioural, and social difficulties, benefit from approaches that reflect their needs or circumstances.

Such differentiated approaches include inter-agency working across all relevant organisations, especially engaging CAMHS, adult mental health services and education providers, as well as sources of informal support.

There are 4 Aims of Middlesbrough Education, Employment and Training Clinic:

1. Drive a sector-wide culture of high aspiration for CE-CYP age 16-25
2. Remove barriers for CE-CYP accessing EET
3. Ensure all CE-CYP get the support they need to succeed in EET
4. Create a network of EET providers

The first EET Clinic was held in January 2021. It occurs monthly and usually lasts around 1.5 to 2 hours, virtually via TEAMS. The clinic has grown over the past 2 years in panel members and consists of internal Middlesbrough Council staff and our external partners.

7.3 NHS Trusts and Health boards

Widening Participation Group

South Tees NHS Trust offers volunteering initiatives which are a great way to gain experience and potentially a start to a career, the Prospect Programme based in the Trust has a particularly good record (approx. 80% go into work or further education) of supporting people with multiple barriers to gain experience and enter the sector, they work closely with JCP, the Education and Training Collective (ETC) and a range of other organisations, the Trust also works with Outwood Academy Ormesby to focus on raising aspirations and address local challenges. Other NHS trusts which cover the South Tees area e.g., Northeast Ambulance Service and Tees Esk Wear Valley Trust also deliver volunteering initiatives and a range of community activities to raise interest in and understanding of the sector, there are other sector-based volunteering opportunities e.g., Local authority and Hospice. The Widening Participation initiative also support small projects to increase recruitment to social care based on a values approach, support existing staff who may have additional needs e.g., dyslexia and we have been collaborating with Starfish to support young people to progress to health and social care.

Northeast and North Cumbria Integration Care Boards (NENC ICB)

Have conferred with several partners who are interested in developing a 'Get Into' programme offering people under thirty placements in health and social care to gain insight into jobs and put them in a good pace to apply for any vacancies at the end of the programme. The NENC ICB is currently one of 10 national pathfinders developing a support programme for young people under 25 with care experience to enter employment, education, or training, this is the 'NHS Universal Family' programme.⁹ This is being piloted during 23/24 in Newcastle, Northumbria, and North Tyneside but from April 2024 the expectation is this will be offered in all places covered by the ICB and would include Middlesbrough and Redcar, the NENC Child Health and Wellbeing Network also have an interest in this work.

Tees Valley Recruitment Campaign

This is currently being developed for the sector with young people being a key target audience, they have also engaged with around 35+ community leads who support people seeking employment and have very limited research directly with people seeking work, for young people the main challenge was that the biggest sector in the Tees Valley (health and social care) is not on their radar or consideration list, many had negative perceptions so ruled out the sector as a whole, some were also not aware of the range of non-direct care opportunities in the sector e.g., admin, IT, they wanted better access to information.

7.4 Community Engagement

Excellent community and youth provision partnerships

Provide youth enrichment activity and programmes to improve children and young people's physical and mental health, create positive peers and role models and raise aspirations and confidence etc., some of these partners include, Youth Focus NE, The Junction, Lynx, Middlesbrough FC Foundation.

The Prince's Trust

Offers programmes across South Tees that develop employability and social skills through team activities, building confidence and motivation in young people, with many young people progressing to further education, training, employment and self-employment.

The High Tide Foundation

A local Teesside charity with a remit around raising aspiration and work experience – they are really keen to collaborate with all local employers and will design and deliver bespoke programmes.¹⁰

The Northeast Raising Aspiration Partnership

Brings together all of the North East to focus on widening participation and encouraging more young people to consider university, one of the current target groups is white working-class young men reflecting the sparse numbers entering university.¹¹

Middlesbrough Football Club Foundation

Currently deliver programmes on behalf of The Princes Trust related to roles in football and social health care, the Foundation are also involved in Coach Core, employing four apprentices per year and partner with The Twinning Project to deliver employability and leadership in Kirklevington Prison. Whilst also having a relationship with British Land to do two projects; education based called Raise Your Game (for young people in a local secondary school) and employability based called Bright Lights to encourage employment in one of the retail partners on Teesside Park. Education is a large provision for the foundations and deliver physical activity and PSHE in thirteen primary schools and mentoring/curriculum support to those at risk of exclusion in thirteen secondary schools (all these schools are predominantly Middlesbrough/Redcar and Cleveland)¹²

8. What are the recommendations?

8.1 Implement early identification systems within schools and communities to identify young people at risk of becoming NEET including; early assessment and tailored support, systems and data sharing, careers awareness and attendance management

We can predict children and young people who are most at risk of potential disengagement / becoming NEET and identification should start in primary school so that multi-agency teams, resources and targeted interventions can be wrapped around the family and the child where required and tailored to their needs.

All professionals working with children, young people and families should identify needs early and those at risk of becoming NEET and know how to undertake an early help assessment (where appropriate). The Early Help Strategies and Practice Models in Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland have different thresholds of assessed need, to identify the most appropriate intervention and service to support children, young people, and families.

Integral to early targeted intervention:

- **Systems and data sharing** - it is widely acknowledged there is a lack of a common case management system or interoperability between case management systems across the Borough. There is a need to invest in data transformation such as data warehousing with automatic feeds between partnership agencies to provide management information to inform our needs analysis and share information about children, young people and families who need the most support.
- **Careers Awareness** - all children and young people and particular those most at risk of becoming NEET should have access to good quality careers education, information, advice, and guidance, informed by labour market intelligence. This should start in early years and continue throughout a young person's education. Children and young people should have opportunities to have multiple contacts with employers and experiences of work, so they know what exciting opportunities will exist on their doorstep, for example on Tees Works and the wider Tees Valley sub-region¹³. Programmes like Building Our Future showcase what a child could be in the future and breakdown some of the stereotypes of who could do these jobs.
- **Through the Making Attendance Everyone's Business**. The first theory of change in England linked to attendance has been developed in Redcar and Cleveland and a long-term plan is being implemented (that has included over 150 partners) to create lasting system change, where it would be unusual for a child or young person not to attend school or college. Several solutions are being explored to improve attendance, including relational/trauma informed approaches, 'team around' models, parental and carer engagement and health and wellbeing support. Learning from pilots undertaken will also feed into the framework for NEET prevention¹⁴.

- **The Middlesbrough the Attendance Strategy** commits to several aims including; to work together to improve attendance across the town, be champions of good attendance, help families to help their children develop good attendance habits, celebrate improved attendance, reduce disruption to learning when children can't attend, remove barriers to attendance whenever we find them and to make sure support is available to help children improve their attendance. The graduated approach is a framework of staged interventions which begin with effective whole-school approaches to managing the attendance of all children. School policies should promote good attendance, make clear what everyone's roles and responsibilities are and clearly outline what action is taken at each stage so that early intervention can take place. An effective whole-school approach will include regular monitoring and reviewing of practice. The graduated approach enables the lead professional – often based within the school – to identify opportunities to work with other agencies as attendance becomes a concern. Rapid and efficient early intervention helps to prevent long term absence from school and reduce the risk of NEET once young people leave school.

8.2 Gain strategic guidance and support to establish a forum with statistically similar Local Authorities to share best practice and learning

Regional NEET management information networks have existed for some time and Northeast local authorities have more recently started to meet to share best practice in relation to increasing participation and reducing NEET young people, however this doesn't extend to close statistical neighbours. Best practice needs to be shared between those areas that are similar, to learn how some areas with the same demographics have managed to reduce their NEET numbers and this can be supported through the DfE and Local Government Association.

8.3 Advocate for, design and implement effective policy intervention and strategies which tackle NEET prevention, look to reengage those young people hardest to reach, improve the employment prospects and job opportunities for young people

The DfE monitor provision sufficiency and activity in local authority areas to support young people who are NEET, LAs have a key contact within the DfE and regular meetings are held between the Director of Children's Services/senior teams and the DfE. These meetings should be used to highlight gaps in provision and where policy intervention is required to prevent and reduce NEET numbers. The Local Government Association can also be used to lobby change and a recent round table event identified that post-16 provision sufficiency was a common concern for several LAs and there is a requirement for more flexible, tailored post-16 provision that would provide a bridge for young people from NEET to EET. In Redcar and Cleveland specifically, the loss of ESF and financial insolvency of some independent training providers has left a gap in re-engagement and employability provision and tailored support for young people who just want work.

Measures designed to reduce the NEET population should include:

- (a) policies which tackle NEET prevention.
- (b) re-engagement strategies for the hardest to reach groups of young people
- (c) active labour market policies for the young unemployed.
- (d) Improved apprenticeship opportunities, particularly the increase of degree level apprenticeships.
- (e) Increased flexibility regarding start dates and entry requirements relating to Maths and English.

By addressing the demand side, active labour market measures can stimulate demand for young people who are 'work ready', these include wage and training subsidies or tax breaks for employers; programmes offering a bridge between education and work; and youth guarantees, which ensure a job offer or an educational/training opportunity.

8.4 Further encourage sustainable investment and opportunities with private sector organisations in conjunction with social value to create more opportunities with children, young people and families

Social value and private sector investment is a way of creating more opportunities for children and young people. When companies bid for work in the region, they are required to demonstrate their social value commitments and in addition some private sector employers have arm-length trusts that provide bidding opportunities for local areas. Anglo American are funding several education, employability and wellbeing programmes in Redcar and Cleveland and SSE/Equinor through Dogger Bank are funding a primary careers programme. This also provides opportunities to create more work experience, apprenticeships, and jobs for young people and particularly for groups of young people who are more at risk of becoming NEET, including those care experienced young people. BP are funding a second round of scholarships through Redcar and Cleveland college¹⁵.

9. References

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- ³ [Life-Lessons-Report_FINAL.pdf \(suttontrust.com\)](#)
- ⁴ [Why Work Experience Matters for NEET Youth \(speakersforschools.org\)](#)
- ⁵ [Document YouthIndex 2023.pdf \(princes-trust.org.uk\)](#)
- ⁶ www.mcls.ac.uk/job-seekers/50-futures/
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- ⁸ [Stay Local, Go Far - Students \(teesvalleycareers.com\)](#)
- ⁹ [NHS Universal Family Programme – One year on | NHS England Events](#)
- ¹⁰ [High Tide Foundation – For Young People on Teesside Working to Inspire and Empower the Teesside of Tomorrow](#)
- ¹¹ [Northeast Raising Aspiration Partnership - NERAP](#)
- ¹² [MIDDLESBROUGH FOOTBALL CLUB FOUNDATION \(mfcfoundation.co.uk\)](#)
- ¹³ [Why Teesworks? - Teesworks: The UK's Largest Freeport](#)
- ¹⁴ [Home page \(skyblue.org.uk\)](#)
- ¹⁵ <https://www.cleveland.ac.uk/news/bp-helps-build-a-talent-pipeline-with-20-further-scholarships>