

# WHAT WORKS

**ENCOURAGING ASPIRATION,  
EMPLOYMENT AND  
CAREER PROGRESSION  
AMONG 18-24 NEET  
YOUNG ADULTS IN  
GREATER LINCOLNSHIRE**

**SUMMARY AND  
RECOMMENDATIONS**

**SEPTEMBER 2018**

One in a series of employment and skills reports commissioned by the Greater Lincolnshire LEP  
Funded by the European Social Fund and the Education and Skills Funding Agency



**European Union**  
European  
Social Fund



**Education & Skills  
Funding Agency**

# ‘WHAT WORKS’

## - KEY RECOMMENDATIONS



- 1** Develop a full **careers education curriculum** that is integrated across programmes for the unemployed incorporating the Gatsby Benchmarks, especially encounters with employers, employees and the workplace.
- 2** Ensure that young learners aged 18-24 on career development programmes have **multiple encounters with inspirational employers**, employees and workplaces.
- 3** Acknowledge that **experience and confidence are mutually-enhancing** and therefore provide a wide range of new experiences for the NEET 18-24 group, emphasising the workplace but also community and simulated teamwork activities, so that they can develop social skills, integration and confidence.
- 4** **‘Start from the dream’** – use the positive energy from existing aspiration and make it part of Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) and careers development; define the steps required to bridge the gap between the ‘now’ and the ‘dream’ while ensuring that a variety of options are made available.
- 5** Seek to make employability programmes like Career Net for 18-24s sustainable, recognising that they can act as a ‘second chance’ and **‘trigger for change’** in the lives of NEET young adults.

## Additional recommendations

- > Ensure learners aged 18-24 have access to **high quality employability skills** - with tangible, specific skills such as tailored CVs and interview practice, but also more general developmental elements such as training, supportive staff and an environment in which to develop confidence
- > Interview technique workshops have proven to be an essential element – in securing a job and in building confidence
- > **Careers education and guidance must carry on into adulthood** because too many young people feel that they did not receive good careers advice and/or were unclear about their career direction at 18 years old; work with the National Careers Service to ensure that all Greater Lincolnshire learners have access to careers guidance
- > Recognise the value of group-based **aspirational projects** in the development of leadership skills, teamwork and confidence
- > Expand the number of **inspirational employer events** showcasing the variety of jobs and career structures within a single organisation
- > Increase motivation by including **a range of employment-related short qualifications** as part of employability programmes
- > Provide young people with better awareness of **local labour market intelligence** – including the career opportunities available within the Greater Lincolnshire priority sector
- > Recognising the popularity of **Engineering and Manufacturing** with this age-group, explore access to training provision that would facilitate their access to this sector
- > Enable all young people aged 18-24 **to access some paid work** (43% in our survey sample had no paid work experience at all); also promote the **value of unpaid work experience** in career development, especially targeting those young people aged 18-24 who have never experienced voluntary work (26% in our sample)
- > Career development and employability programmes benefit from being **group-based** - having to meet new people was mentioned several times as a challenge, a benefit and good preparation for work - **combined with high quality, intensive personalised support**
- > Agree a **definition of ‘aspiration’** in careers and working life and explore how this might be promoted to all young people, taking into account both prior attainment and gender
- > Explore the introduction of **a recognised ‘top-up’ programme** for young people who have made their first progression – to keep alive the concept of career development and sustainable work.

# BARRIERS

## - KEY BARRIERS



**1** **Lack of experience** - note that young people see lack of experience as a key obstacle to good work opportunities. We need to focus not only on providing more and wider experiences but ensuring that these are 'high-value' in terms of the benefits that are gained and extracted from opportunities that are offered.

**2** **Availability of transport and the cost of travel** are major barriers – the critical importance of being able to drive and having a car cannot be overlooked if programmes like Career Net are serious about aspiration. A car/youth insurance scheme, linked to getting a job, would be innovative and invaluable to explore further.

**3** **Gender differences** - to acknowledge, explore further and seek to address persistent gender differences and disadvantage as the survey suggested gender role stereotyping, less paid work experience, confidence and lower levels of aspiration among women in the sample.

**4** **Lack of confidence** is a barrier to employment progression - we need to unpick the concept of confidence and address this issue that is holding some young people back. Note that while 73% of the cohort was educated to Level 2 and above, low confidence was reported across the attainment range.

**5** **Feelings of 'being judged'** is one aspect of low confidence which has been identified as an obstacle to applying for jobs and going for interviews; use programmes like Career Net to address self-image, social skills and confidence through new experiences, teamwork and interview practice.

### Additional barriers

- > **Online gaming obsession or addiction** – keep alert to this activity when it seems to interfere with engagement with education and employment
- > **Convictions** - recognise that convictions may be a perceived or actual barrier for a significant minority of learners.

THE PRINCE'S  
TRUST  
MACQUARIE  
YOUTH INDEX  
ALSO FINDS  
A GENDER  
DIVIDE IN  
RELATION TO  
PAID WORK  
EXPERIENCE  
AND  
CONFIDENCE

# ESF CAREER NET 18-24 PROGRAMME

## CAREER NET 18-24 - SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT



Career Net 18-24 was funded by the European Social Fund in Greater Lincolnshire to deliver inspirational and aspirational IAG (Information, Advice and Guidance) programmes to NEET (not in employment, education or training) young people aged 18 to 24 years.

In commissioning the project, the Greater Lincolnshire LEP stressed the importance of learners having inspirational contact with employers and that the project took account of the priority industry sectors in the Greater Lincolnshire LEP area. Although Greater Lincolnshire has an obvious urban/rural structure with areas of low population size, its rate of inactive 18-24s is 4.2% (August 2018) which is higher than both the East Midlands region and national rates.

The Greater Lincolnshire LEP also requested that a research report was written as part of the project, exploring barriers facing local NEET young adults and 'what works' to inspire them into sustainable employment. The current research has tended to emphasise looking at 'what works' but has not shied away from the challenges faced by this often overlooked group.

Indeed, one of the strongest messages from the project has been the critical importance of focusing on the NEET 18-24 group as a distinct group over the long-term.

## RESEARCH PROJECT



The research project involved five elements:

- > A short overview of the existing policy position with regard to developing careers education policy and the position of NEET young people 18-24 years
- > A sample survey of 87 young people on the Career Net 18-24 programme
- > Ethnographic face-to-face interviews with 20 young people who had engaged with the Career Net programme
- > A short investigation into the use of Work Star (copyright Triangle Consulting) to conduct initial assessment/IAG and distance-travelled
- > Observations of 'what works' and 'barriers' encountered through the practical delivery of the ESF Career Net 18-24 Programme.

**THE RESEARCH  
PROJECT WAS  
UNDERTAKEN  
BY COMMUNITY  
LEARNING IN  
PARTNERSHIP  
(CLIP) WITH THE  
SUPPORT OF  
PARTNERS ABBEY  
ACCESS TRAINING  
AND TAYLORITEX  
CIC**

A copy of the full report is available at [www.greaterlincolnshirelep.co.uk](http://www.greaterlincolnshirelep.co.uk)





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