



More Choices, More Chances:

A Strategy to Reduce the Proportion
of Young People not in Education,
Employment or Training in Scotland

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Employment or Training in Scotland

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Ministerial Foreword

Since devolution, the Scottish Executive has maintained a strong focus on tackling poverty and disadvantage. Substantial investment in social inclusion and strategies for enterprise and lifelong learning¹ centring on the critical interface between learning, social inclusion and economic competitiveness have altered the landscape of opportunity for young people in Scotland dramatically. Scotland has, for instance, one of the highest rates of employment for 15-19 year olds in the OECD². Yet we still have too many young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET).

Against this background of historically high-levels of employment and low levels of unemployment, Scotland faces a challenge in the proportion of its 16-19 year olds who are NEET. In NEET status we often see the product of earlier disadvantage. The young people experiencing NEET today are more likely to become the economically inactive of tomorrow. This is a challenge which requires specific attention if we are to achieve our vision for a strong, ambitious Scotland as its characteristics are distinctive and its impact far-reaching.

Our stretching targets on *Closing the Opportunity Gap* (CtOG) provide a fresh opportunity to redouble our efforts for these young people. CtOG sets out a renewed focus on tackling poverty in Scotland and demands action to turn around some of the most damning features of the country's profile within the next five years. Overall, in its aspirations for educational attainment, care leavers and children's services, CtOG places particular importance on the needs of young people. In doing so it recognises, as this strategy does, the importance of early intervention to support those who are at risk of experiencing disadvantage in later life.

The impact of NEET is twofold: it stands in the way of individuals and society achieving optimum economic productivity and social inclusion. This is a strategy for both the current stock of young people who are NEET, and for those many more thousands who are at risk of falling into this group if we do not get better at linking opportunity with need. Given that low attainment is a characteristic of this group, it recognises that participating in education and training – rather than employment in jobs without training – is the most effective way of enabling these young people to access and sustain employment opportunities throughout their adult lives.

Our objective is to eradicate the problem of NEET in Scotland. Our commitment and impetus to tackle this will be reinforced by a national partnership of business and education leaders who will help us get to the heart of the challenge. The actions put forward in *More Choices, More Chances* are intended to underpin the efforts required across government to turn the problem on its head and realise the potential of these young people. They are undoubtedly challenging. But the economic, social and human cost which NEET represents is simply too great to ignore.



Nicol Stephen MSP
Deputy First Minister
and Minister for
Enterprise and
Lifelong Learning



Peter Peacock MSP
Minister for Education
and Young People

¹ *Smart Successful Scotland: An Enterprise Strategy for Scotland* (Scottish Executive 2000, refreshed 2004); *Life Through Learning, Learning Through Life: The Lifelong Learning Strategy for Scotland* (Scottish Executive 2003)

² *Education at Glance, 2005*

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Executive Summary

The starting point for this strategy is that, for young people, being NEET represents an unacceptable waste of potential. NEET sells young people short; economically and socially it makes no sense.

Our objective is to eradicate the problem of NEET the length and breadth of Scotland. This is a national priority demanding a national effort.

Government cannot alone tackle this issue. The NEET strategy demands action from a range of agencies in every local authority area in the country. Our engagement with Scotland's business people is absolutely central to this effort. They can provide an expertise, resources and the opportunities to help young people. So we are delighted that a group of Scotland's most senior business people and respected educators have come together under the chairmanship of Sir Robert Smith to work with us in a unique and important partnership to tackle NEET.

The strategy is being published alongside *Workforce Plus* the Scottish Executive's Employability Framework for Scotland. The NEET strategy and Employability Framework are complementary; coherent in their aim and underlying principles (entering the labour market as a realistic option for those who are currently furthest away from it through appropriately designed support and opportunities), but with important differences in terms of scope and audience (this strategy's emphasis on prevention, with related action for the pre 16 system).

The NEET group

We have a headline figure of 35,000 (13.5%) young people in Scotland between the ages of 16 and 19 who are NEET. That said, there is evidence to suggest that a truer figure for those who will need some additional support to access and sustain opportunities in the labour market is around 20,000.

We explain that this statistic represents a wide range of circumstances. For some young people being NEET is a finite, transitional phase, ending in a positive outcome. For others, NEET is both a symptom of disadvantage and disengagement in earlier years and indicates a lifelong disengagement from actively participating in and benefiting from a prosperous society.

The strategy presents a detailed analysis of the NEET group, recognising that definition is important in order to determine where government funded interventions should be targeted. We show that NEET status represents a dynamic group: whilst the overall numbers NEET remains broadly static, many of the actual individuals within the group are changing at a rapid rate; but that within this there is a core cohort who do not change over time.

Target areas and target groups

We propose seven NEET hotspot areas (Glasgow, West Dunbartonshire, North Ayrshire, East Ayrshire, Clackmannanshire, Inverclyde and Dundee) where NEET is a particular challenge and where reducing NEET locally would make an impact at the national level. But while we identify these seven areas where targeted action will make a substantive difference, we make clear too that we need action from all partners in every local authority in the country.

This strategy goes on to identify the sub-groups we know are most likely to be, or become, NEET: care leavers; carers; young offenders; young parents; low attainers; persistent truants; young people with physical/mental disabilities; young people misusing drugs or alcohol. We also show that the groups can be broken down into young people with few or no additional support needs; those with intermediate needs and those with very complex needs.

Overarching aims

Throughout the strategy we make clear that the range of policies and programmes aimed at these sub-groups – for example, in health, housing, social care - need better to engage with the concept of employability to enable the individuals concerned to progress towards the labour market, regardless of their starting point.

The Executive's significant investment and strategic direction on early years, education, children's services, regeneration, enterprise and lifelong learning are providing exactly the right foundation for turning the NEET problem around. We are already beginning to link the focus on employability in disadvantaged neighbourhoods through our use of Regeneration Outcome Agreements (ROAs). The Executive spends well in excess of £4 billion on a range of mainstream and targeted policies which invest in young people, and their employability - over £4bn this year on our schools; £534m on further education colleges; £75.5m on activity aimed at young people through the enterprise networks; £59.5m through Careers Scotland; £50m of the Community Regeneration Fund to get people of all ages back into work; £6m on improving employability outcomes for looked after children; £2.75m through our Youth Crime Prevention Fund; up to £12m on improving all young people's life chances through Schools of Ambition and £22m on Determined to Succeed, our strategy for enterprise in education. The strategy makes clear that the challenge is in delivering the benefits of these policies to all young people, even those who are most disengaged. As such, the overarching aims of the strategy's approach are to:

- Stem the flows into NEET – prevention rather than cure;
- have a system-wide (pre and post 16) focus on, ambitions for, ownership of – and accountability for – the NEET group;
- prioritise education and training outcomes for the NEET group as a step towards lifelong employability, given their low attainment profile;
- position NEET reduction as one of the key indicators for measuring the pre and post 16 systems' success.

The strategy presents a range of specific actions aimed at achieving the Closing the Opportunity Gap (CtOG) target 'to reduce the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training by 2008'. Reflecting the five key areas in which we need to make a difference, the strategy identifies five key areas of activity:

Pre 16 (opportunities for young people of school age)

Wide-ranging action is needed across the education and wider children's services to improve the educational experience of all children, especially those most at risk of disaffection and under achievement and of leaving school with few or any qualifications. Learning experiences have to be transformed to ensure they are tailored to individual needs and are designed to enable every child to develop their potential regardless of their personal circumstances. Action is needed to ensure schools support all children in raising their own expectations of what they can achieve and to fulfil these expectations throughout their school career and beyond.

Transforming the learning environment: the Schools of Ambition programme to bring about a step change in ambition and achievement to transform educational outcomes for all children in those schools; a new excellence standard for school and local authority inspections to support the drive for excellence throughout the education system, and wide ranging action to improve the quality of leadership at all levels in education;

Flexible, personalised learning opportunities with appropriate recognition: a radical overhaul of the curriculum and qualifications framework and a new approach to assessment, to support schools in tailoring teaching and learning experiences to the needs of individuals, whatever their circumstances, to ensure they enjoy the opportunities and support they need to both develop their potential throughout their school career and to prepare them for their chosen career path on leaving school;

Recognition of wider achievement: giving credit to different skills, abilities and achievements;

Support for learners: a new framework to ensure that all children who require additional support to benefit fully from school get that support both from schools and wider children's services;

Developing employability: to better prepare all young people for the world of work and improve school leaver destinations;

A focus on outcomes: Renewed emphasis on the responsibility of schools and local authorities to consider the outcomes for all children, including appropriate monitoring as part of performance management arrangements for schools and local authorities.

Post 16 (post compulsory education and training)

Services have to fit together to help those 16+ who are already NEET to engage with education, employment or training and ensuring young people in education, employment or training are supported to sustain and progress from these opportunities as opposed to falling (back) into NEET.

More choices and more chances, with guaranteed options: to make a clear commitment to young people about the routes to education, employment or training which are on offer to them;

Supported transitions and sustained opportunities: expanding choice and building the quality of education and learning options for young people to improve the long-term employability of group by focusing on sustainable outcomes and progression;

Engaging employers: working with public and private sector employers to improve employment and work-based training opportunities for young people.

Financial incentives (education, employment and training as viable options)

Just as government cannot 'do nothing' about the NEET issue, 'doing nothing' is not an option for young people if we ensure that 'doing something' is a viable route.

Ensuring learning is a financially viable option: testing new financial incentives in order to remove financial barriers in progressing towards the labour market.

The right support (removing the barriers to accessing opportunities)

Young people must get the personal support they need to find out about, engage with and sustain education, employment and training options.

One to one support where needed: to make accessing the guaranteed options a reality for all young people as well as offering an element of challenge to young people to help them move on.

Building the skills and employability focus of a range of providers who deal with young people who are, or are at risk of becoming, NEET: encouraging other services (health, housing, social care) in the pre and post 16 sector seeing post 16 education, employment or training as an integral part of personal planning, not a stage that follows it.

Joint commitment & action (national & local leadership, planning & delivery)

Clear leadership and better partnership are essential features of future action. At a national level, we will build on the Executive's unique national partnership approach with business and education leaders offered by The Smith Group. Additionally, all local partnerships across Scotland will be expected to drive forward collaborative action on NEET.

Ambitious about what we want to achieve: setting stretching local and national targets;

Joining up delivery to meet the challenge: local partners to collectively plan and develop the service infrastructure required to meet the needs of the NEET group, building on existing frameworks like ROAs.

Conclusion

We have identified the problem. We have set out the responsibilities the Executive and its various partners face. We know that a range of solutions are in place or in development. But we know too that more action is needed. Our ambition is to begin now to eradicate the problem of NEET from Scotland and to do so in a manner that is progressive and sustainable.

Why are we concerned about NEET?

1. In the context of a strengthening labour market in the UK and expanding education and training opportunities, the rate of NEET in Scotland has remained unchanged for the past decade.
2. Looking at how Scotland stands internationally in terms of the labour market engagement of its young people reveals an interesting profile. Of course there are many variables bound up in this comparison, different school leaving ages and benefits systems for example, but as another perspective on Scotland's relative strengths and challenges it constitutes an important part of the picture.
3. The proportion of 15-19 year olds who are NEET in Scotland is high on an international comparison.³ A breakdown of these figures, however, reveals a more complex picture of how Scotland performs. OECD data shows that, although Scotland has a high proportion NEET compared to other OECD countries, Scotland also has the highest employment rate for 15-19 year olds out of OECD countries. This apparent disparity is caused by lower education participation within Scotland compared with OECD countries. Further detail on this can be found at appendix 4.
4. The economic and social cost of NEET extends well beyond a young person's nineteenth birthday. Research indicates that young people who are NEET for a prolonged period are most likely to encounter persistent problems of worklessness and social exclusion in later life. Successfully tackling this deficit is a priority for the Executive, both to prevent enduring disadvantage in adulthood and to improve Scotland's future economic competitiveness.
5. The cost of NEET impacts on the individual, government and society as a whole. A study by the DfES published in 2002⁴ estimated that the present value⁵ of the additional resource cost associated with being NEET amounted to £45,000.⁶ The resource cost represents the cost to the economy as a whole of failing to help a 16 to 18 year old out of the NEET group over their lifetime. The estimate attempts to place a value on additional costs of unemployment, under employment, crime, poor health, substance abuse, premature death and early motherhood.⁷
6. The DfES report also sought to examine the additional cost to government of a NEET individual. This was estimated as a present value of £52,000. This figure represents the cost to government of providing the services required to support the group and provides an estimate of the value to government of addressing the NEET issue. It is important to note that this figure should not be added to the resource cost figure above as that would lead to double counting.⁸

3 Note that 15-19 year olds are used rather than 16-19 year olds as this is the European convention.

4 Estimating the cost of being 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' at age 16 to 18 DfES Research Report RR346.

5 Present value represents the worth today of a stream of benefits extending into the future

6 2000/01 prices.

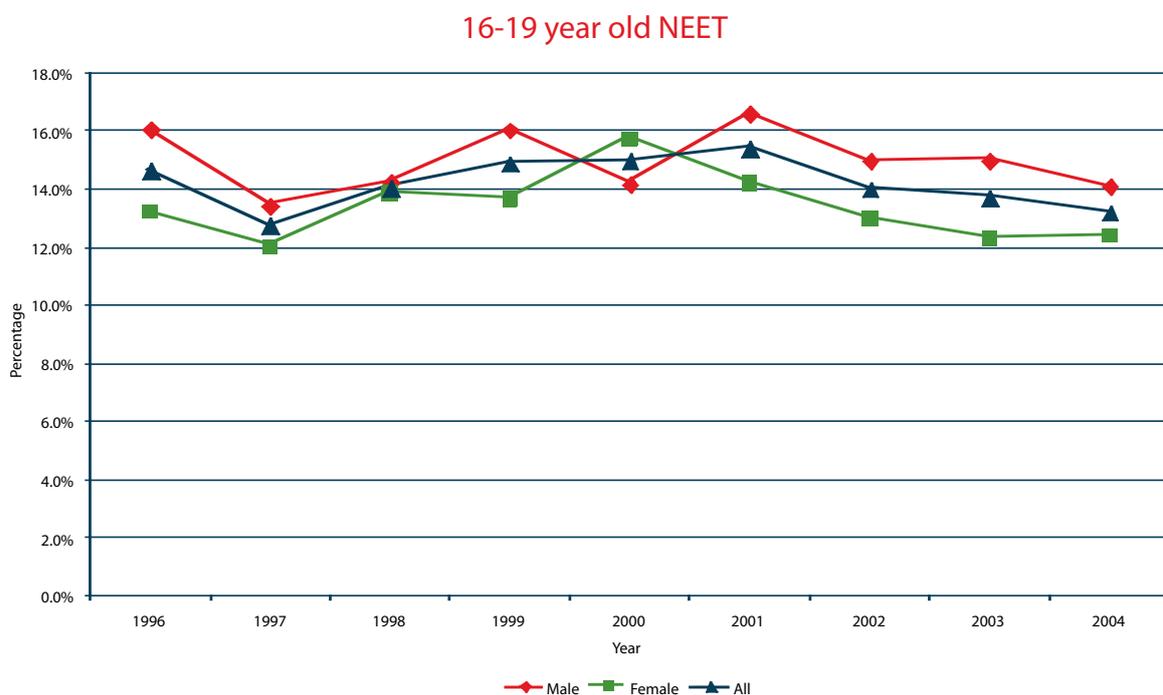
7 This should be considered a lower bound estimate as it was not possible for the report's authors to identify all the costs (for example information was not available on the extent to which the NEET group are more likely to suffer additional smoking and alcohol problems).

8 To see why this is so consider, as an example, the costs of unemployment. The resource cost of unemployment is the output forgone considered in this study to be lost wages, the cost to government is the benefit paid out and the tax revenue forgone. The net economic impact is the sum of the impacts on the individual and the government; so while a benefit saving is a gain to the government, it is a cost to the individual (the first chunk of their earnings simply replaces the benefit forgone). As a result the net impact in this case is equivalent to the additional output.

What is the nature and scale of the problem?

7. If we are to target policy effectively to reduce the size of this group, we need a more refined understanding of its make up. This is a considerable challenge: the Scottish Labour Force Survey (LFS) headline figure of 35,000 represents a wide variety of individuals, from those with multiple barriers to those who are simply on a gap year.
8. The following graph⁹ shows that the proportion of young people NEET has remained broadly unchanged since 1999. In general the cohort is male dominated, reflecting the gender spilt in both under achievement in school, and unemployment in the adult population.

Chart 1



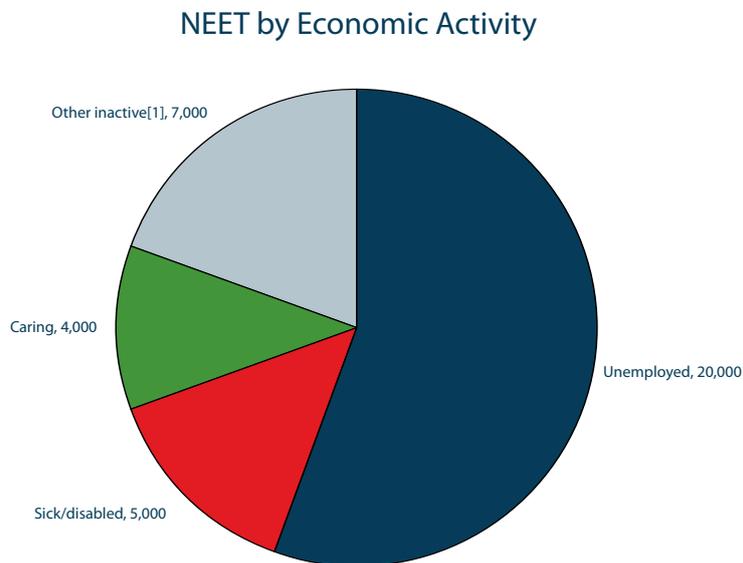
9. LFS data also shows that the proportion of young people NEET increases with age: 10% of 16 year olds compared to 17.5% of 19 year olds are classified as NEET. This trend is similar for both males and females, although at 19 a greater proportion of females (19.5%) than males (15.6%) are NEET, due possibly to child and other caring responsibilities.
10. Chart 2 shows the breakdown of NEET by activity,¹⁰ and identifies that over half the NEET group are actively seeking work (ILO definition of unemployment), while 44% are economically inactive because they are sick, disabled, or have caring responsibilities.¹¹

⁹ Annual Scottish Labour Force Survey 2004

¹⁰ Annual Scottish Labour Force Survey 2004

¹¹ The chart also shows 20% of individuals as 'other inactive', which includes individuals awaiting results of a job application; have not yet started looking for employment or who have not given a reason.

Chart 2



11. Other snapshot information about the group tells us more about the profile of, and barriers facing, individuals who are NEET:
 - 37% have low level qualifications (below SVQ level 2), including 28% who have no qualifications;¹²
 - 39% of the NEET group have never worked;¹³
 - 14% of NEET suffer from Limiting Long Term Illness.¹⁴
12. Whilst this headline data is helpful in providing a broad segmentation of the group, it does not capture what are the key characteristics in determining government intervention in NEET – duration and/or frequency.
13. The 35,000 figure from the LFS does not tell us to what extent the group is made up of a changing set of individuals flowing in and out of NEET status over time. Understanding the rate of churn is crucial, because a short term NEET period is not the core problem government needs to address. Rather it is either (a) sustained NEET status over an extended period (with 3 months commonly cited as significant);¹⁵ or (b) frequent repetition of NEET status between short, episodic spells of labour market engagement.

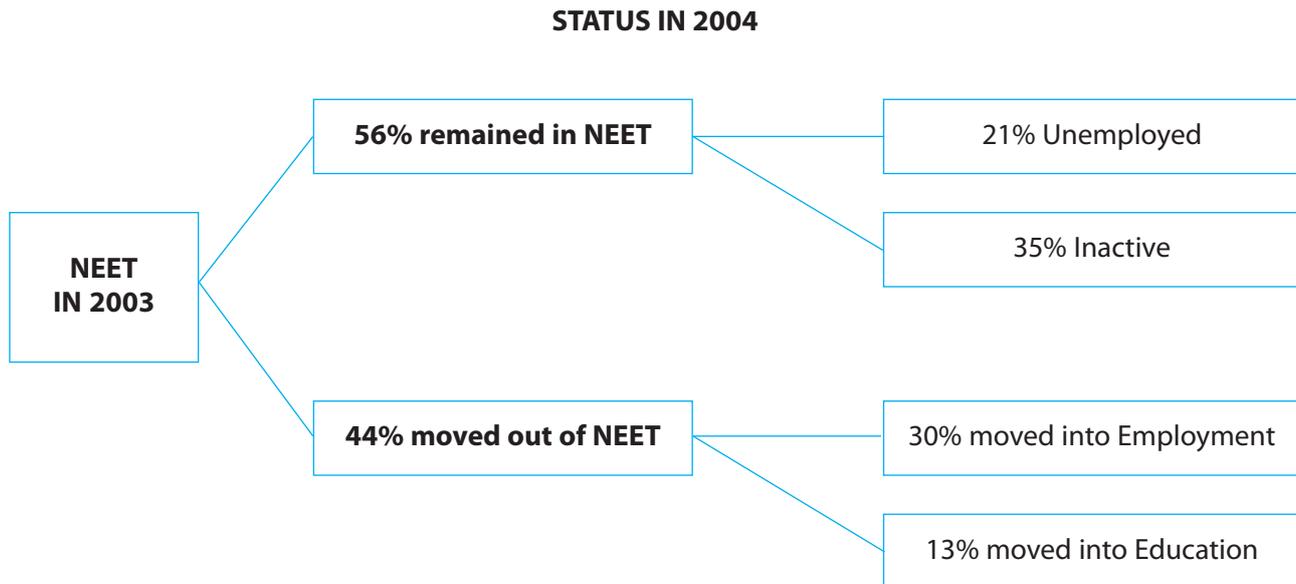
12 Scottish Annual Labour Force Survey, 2004

13 Analysis of 16-19 year olds not in education, employment or training in the 2001 Census, Scottish Executive 2004

14 Analysis of 16-19 year olds not in education, employment or training in the 2001 Census, Scottish Executive 2004

15 Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training: an Analysis of the Scottish School Leavers Survey, Linda Croxford and David Raffe, Edinburgh 2000

14. This strategy is for those young people who need some degree of additional support combined with accessible, appropriate opportunities to improve their employability, their transition to adulthood and therefore their life chances. So we need to know to what extent the NEET group is dynamic, made up of different individuals flowing in and out over a shorter period and to what extent it is made up of a core of individuals who remain NEET over a medium-long term period. Data on churn within the group is limited, but the diagram below summarises the main flows in and out of the NEET group¹⁶ between 2003 and 2004:



15. This shows that:
- of those that were NEET in 2003, 56% remained NEET and 44% moved on to employment or full-time education;
 - of those that remained NEET, a larger proportion were inactive.
16. Key messages in framing a response to the NEET challenge are:
- **A dynamic group:** whilst the number of 16-19 year olds NEET remains broadly static, many of the actual individuals within the group are changing at a rapid rate;
 - **But with a core cohort who do not change over time:** persistent long term NEET status is a problem for a significant number of young people, but by no means 35,000. This is reinforced by the Scottish School Leavers Survey, which shows that for those aged 17 in 2003, 7% of the 2003 survey group were NEET for 6 months or more;
 - **And a profile which suggests inactivity is a more pronounced feature of long term NEET than unemployment:** with 70% of those 16-19 year olds claiming inactive benefits doing so for over 6 months, whereas approximately 13% of 16-19 year olds who are registered unemployed remaining so for over 6 months.

¹⁶ Labour Force Survey, Spring Quarters 2003, 2004

17. It is clear that the number of young people NEET in Scotland which should be of concern – in terms of those young people who might need targeted support and opportunities from government in order to progress towards the labour market – is considerably less than the 35,000 headline figure from the Labour Force Survey.
18. Later in the strategy, we will discuss the need for a national database of all 14-19 year olds in order to gauge the scale and nature of NEET in Scotland as effectively as possible. However, in the absence of such a comprehensive measure, it is still possible to arrive at a more accurate count of the 'hard core' NEET group – those who actually need support. Taking the key features identified in paragraph 16 as a starting point, we can use the Labour Force Survey to identify young people who are unemployed for 6 months or more and those who are classed as inactive and require support. On this basis, we estimate that there are around 20,000 young people NEET in Scotland who will most likely require some additional support in order to access and sustain opportunities in the labour market.¹⁷ And it is a reduction from this baseline which we should consider a success in turning the NEET challenge around.

Who do we mean when we refer to young people who are, or are at risk of becoming, NEET?

19. There are misconceptions – as well as hard realities – about NEET status to be overcome. Some commonly held negative perceptions about young people who are NEET, most evident in 'feckless young tribe' headlines, are so persistent as to constitute barriers in their own right and an effective response must respond to them as such. Understanding better the profile of young people classed as NEET is critical if we are to target interventions more effectively.
20. The NEET group is a heterogeneous one. An individual classed as 'NEET' might be a young parent whose parental responsibilities are their key barrier to work; a young person with physical disabilities or behavioural difficulties; a young person who is the main carer for a family member; a young person on a gap year before entering university; or one who has dropped out of a college course but has yet to decide on next steps.
21. As highlighted previously, there is one sub-group of young people who are NEET who need not concern us. When the NEET experience is a benign one: a finite, transitional phase ending in a positive outcome (for example, a gap year before entering further or higher education), no intervention is required.
22. The so-called NEET group, and the challenges facing individuals within that group, might therefore be broken down as follows:
 - **The hardest to help young people** – with complex needs which are often clearly defined and which require intensive levels of support. The existing legislative and policy¹⁸ framework provides a strong foundation for supporting these needs.
 - **An 'intermediate' group of young people** – less likely to be on the radar in terms of other more specialist or targeted interventions. This group may be 'quietly disaffected' and commonly have issues around motivation, confidence and soft skills. Less intensive, appropriately tailored support and interventions could make a massive difference to their outcomes on leaving school.

¹⁷ Appendix 5 provides more detail on the methodology used to arrive at this figure.

¹⁸ For example, *Implementing Inclusiveness: Realising Potential*, The Report of the Beattie Committee, Scottish Executive 1999

- **The 'transition/gap year' group** – includes young people taking time out before progressing to a further or higher education opportunity; or in voluntary or part-time work.¹⁹ This group – although captured in the headline NEET figure – have a benign experience of NEET.

23. Meeting the NEET challenge therefore means providing the intensive support required by the hardest to help young people, but it also means providing appropriate support and opportunities for those who are disengaging from school, and for those young people who have only been NEET for a short period but are at risk of falling into long term inactivity or into a pattern of intermittent labour market engagement.
24. Ensuring interventions are targeted effectively requires drilling down further to the characteristics and circumstances of those young people most likely to experience a negative NEET experience. In doing so, what emerges is that young people who are NEET and those at risk of becoming NEET do not spring up out of nowhere – they are likely to be on other radars: for example, non-attenders and/or low attainers will be known to schools; looked after children to social work services; young offenders to youth justice services. None of these categories are mutually exclusive and, indeed, will often overlap.²⁰
25. Evidence suggests that the two main factors relating to NEET are disadvantage and educational disaffection manifested by truancy, exclusion, low attainment.²¹ There are also a series of individual circumstances and barriers which are strong indicators of NEET or at risk NEET status. Based on the current available evidence, we recommend that the following characteristics and sub-groups, many of which are linked, should be targeted:

CARE LEAVERS: *Only 1% of looked after children go onto university compared to 50% of the general population.²² The Executive has a CtOG target which commits to 'by 2007 ensure that at least 50% of all looked after young people leaving care have entered education, employment or training'. At 31 March 2005, 59 % of care leavers whose economic status was known, were reported as not being in employment, education or training. However, there were 1,015 care leavers (45% of all Care Leavers), who were entitled to aftercare support but for whom we did not know their economic status.²³*

CARERS: *1,898 16-19 year olds are young carers and NEET – around 5.8% of the total group.²⁴*

YOUNG PARENTS: *In 2002/03 there were 8,519 teenage pregnancies among 16-19 year olds.²⁵*

OFFENDING: *63% of young offenders were unemployed at the time of arrest.²⁶*

LOW ATTAINMENT: *37% of young people who are NEET have low level qualifications (below SVQ level 2), including 28% who have no qualifications.²⁷*

PERSISTENT TRUANTS: *Research²⁸ from England shows a quarter of those who truanted persistently in year 11 (equivalent to S4 in Scotland) were not in education, employment or training the following year.*

PHYSICAL/MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS: *around 9% young people who are NEET are inactive as a result of illness or disability.*

DRUGS OR ALCOHOL ABUSE: *Approximately 1,100 under 19s are in contact with drug treatment services.²⁹ Only 10% of those in contact with drug treatment services are in employment.*

19 UCAS data shows there are approximately 1,400 gap year students per annum.

20 For example, young carers are twice as likely as their peers to have mental health problems.

21 *Bridging The Gap: New opportunities for 16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training* – Social Exclusion Unit 1999

22 *Extraordinary lives: Creating a positive future for Looked after Children and Young People in Scotland*, Social Work Inspection Agency, forthcoming.

23 Children's Social Work Statistics 2004/05

24 2001 Census

25 Information Services Division of NHS National Services Scotland

26 Reducing Re-offending by ex-prisoners – Social Exclusion Unit 2002

27 Scottish Labour Force Survey, 2003

28 *Bridging the Gap: New opportunities for 16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training* – Social Exclusion Unit 1999

29 Information Services Division of NHS National Services Scotland

26. Available evidence on key sub-groups, and the size of these groups, who may be overrepresented in the overall NEET group is limited. For example, recent research highlighted a data gap on young black and ethnic minority people in relation to NEET.³⁰ Smaller numbers, together with a different composition of the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) population in Scotland, makes data from England inapplicable. Such data gaps will be addressed as a matter of priority; and the proposed target sub-groups may change in the future as our analysis of the group's composition and their distinct needs – and the actual NEET profile – is refined over time.

The Geographical Profile of NEET in Scotland

27. This strategy is intended to kick start a redoubled effort across Scotland to reduce the size of the NEET group in every local authority area. That said, young people aged 16 to 19 living in the 15% most deprived areas in Scotland are less likely to be in education, employment or training than those in more advantaged areas,³¹ and so it is possible to identify 'NEET hotspots' across Scotland.³²
28. This analysis took five indicators which were the strongest predictors of the relative problem of NEET in a local area. Using a range of indicators is necessary given the limitations of the NEET headline data explained previously. These were: the percentage NEET (census data), benefit claimant rates, school leavers destinations, attendance rates and exclusion rates. Analysing these indicators produce a composite measure that gave a clear picture of seven areas whose NEET and related characteristics profile was significant enough to suggest they should be singled out. Based on this analysis, further detail of which can be found in appendix 2, the local authority areas proposed are Glasgow, Clackmannanshire, Dundee, East Ayrshire, North Ayrshire, Inverclyde and West Dunbartonshire. The activities anticipated in these areas are considered in Section 5.
29. A high proportion of young people NEET is a clear indication of significant structural problems in the local area. It may reflect a number of factors: deprivation; gaps and/or weaknesses in the local infrastructure for children and young people; a lack of buoyancy in local labour markets. Looking at the proportion of 16-19 year olds NEET in an area in this way starts to tease out some important differences between the national and the local NEET context.
30. A geographical targeting of NEET brings a necessary focus to those areas where making reductions locally will have a significant impact at the national level. Each local authority hotspot area will set challenging local targets for reducing NEET and, in order to meet these targets, join up approaches and funding across policy and practices for this group.³³ The Executive will make available some capacity building resource to support this activity.

Tackling worklessness for the long-term – More Choices, More Chances and Workforce Plus: an Employability Framework for Scotland

31. The challenge to reduce NEET sits within the response to the UK Government's targets on increasing engagement in the labour market and eradicating child poverty. For the Scottish Executive, it is part of the wider Closing the Opportunity Gap context which brings together targets on worklessness; health inequalities; rurality; financial exclusion, community regeneration; low attaining in school and NEET, including reducing NEET outcomes for care leavers. This strategy details the efforts required to make an impact on these last three targets in particular, all of which are focussed on ironing out inequalities in young people's prospects.

³⁰ Literature Review of the NEET Group, York Consulting, Scottish Executive 2005

³¹ Social Focus on Deprivation, Scottish Executive, 2005

³² This is consistent with the approach taken on CtOG target A to 'reduce the number of workless people dependent on DWP benefits' which focuses on seven local authority areas: Glasgow, North & South Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire & Inverclyde, Dundee and West Dunbartonshire in Scotland.

³³ In this context, Regeneration Outcome Agreement (ROAs) are an essential framework towards improved links between community regeneration activity in the most deprived areas and activity which will directly support those in the NEET group. The Community Regeneration Fund (CRF), alongside other partnership resources, is addressing national priorities in these areas: with a focus on improvements in education, employability and engaging young people.

32. *More Choices, More Chances* – and the actions it demands – has been developed to meet the Executive’s target to reduce the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training by 2008.³⁴ It has been produced in parallel with *Workforce Plus: an Employability Framework for Scotland*. In striving to turn around the great waste of potential and the barriers to economic growth which NEET and worklessness can represent, their aims are one and the same. As with the Framework, the actions proposed in this strategy will work together with the UK government’s plans for welfare reform set out in the Green Paper ‘*A new deal for welfare: Empowering people to work*’.
33. *Workforce Plus* sets out the fundamental principles which must underpin, and the practices which should be characteristic of, all services on offer in Scotland to help individuals enter, stay in and progress within the labour market. And, in as far as the NEET strategy tackles making employability and related services more effective for those individuals who may have most difficulty in accessing them, the messages from *Workforce Plus* resonate throughout it.
34. The NEET strategy draws heavily on the emphasis which *Workforce Plus* places on embedding the concept of employability in all relevant Executive led strategies; developing approaches which centre on the individual’s needs; improving and getting better at sharing client data; the importance of measuring distance travelled towards the labour market, and the need for local partners to work together in joining up the efforts of mainstream and specialist services.
35. Like *Workforce Plus*, this strategy is grounded in the principles of sustainability, and stresses the changes required to turn this problem around and improve young people’s life chances for the long-term. To achieve this – to tackle the NEET and indeed the worklessness challenge in the long term – it must have relevance for a wider audience than adult employability and related services. Because our approach here is both to support young people who are NEET to move closer to the labour market AND – critically – to prevent them from becoming NEET in the first place, much of the action demanded in the strategy is for organisations within or aligned to the education and children’s services sectors to take forward.
36. The priority in this strategy is given to progressing young people who are NEET into education and training, rather than into jobs without training. This is the appropriate response to the low attainment characteristics of the NEET group, recognising that it is through developing their skills that young people are improving their chances of sustainable and fulfilling engagement in the labour market in the long term. And although the influence of financial reward is by no means unique to young people, in seeking to incentivise education and training opportunities at the stage when young people are taking that first step towards adult life and work, the role of financial incentives play a distinctive part in meeting the NEET challenge.
37. In short, meeting the NEET challenge means delivering in five key areas:
-  (i) Pre 16
 -  (ii) Post 16
 -  (iii) Financial incentives
 -  (iv) The right support
 -  (v) Joint commitment and action

³⁴ Closing the Opportunity Gap, target B

(i) Pre-16

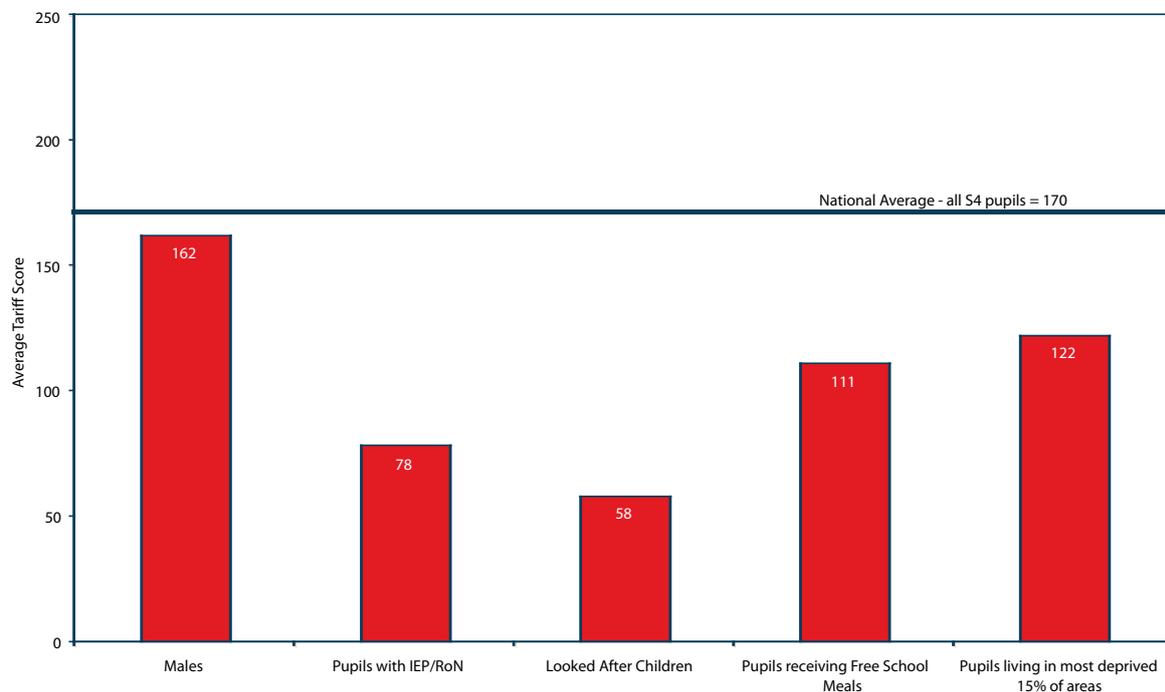
The challenge

38. Tackling the NEET challenge does not start at sixteen. We know that poor attainment at school and socio-economic disadvantage are closely interrelated and are key determinants of being at risk of NEET at 16. We also know that over 35% of the workless population has no qualifications³⁵ and raising the attainment of young people will have a significant impact on reducing the risk of worklessness. Ministers see tackling these challenges as a key priority for our education system and wider infrastructure of services for children and young people.
39. We have a high performing education system – only three OECD countries significantly outperform Scotland in each of the key measures of maths, science and literacy.³⁶ By the time they are 15 our young people are among the best in the world. High investment in education since devolution is paying off. Universal access to early years education and targeted support for vulnerable families with young children are ensuring the best possible start in life while more teachers, better paid and motivated, and improved school buildings are pushing up overall attainment levels. More pupils are gaining 5 or more qualifications at standard grade at credit or equivalent – up 9% since 1999, and fewer pupils are leaving with no qualifications. However, the performance of the lowest attaining 20% of pupils has remained static over recent years and turning this around is the single biggest challenge facing our education system.
40. Tackling this requires an understanding the profile and challenges facing the group of young people in the lowest attaining 20%. We have looked at characteristics of the lowest attaining 20% of pupils through the analysis of tariff scores (derived from pupils' performance in Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) courses). The table below illustrates the difference in attainment between the different groups of pupils, compared to the national average. Overall, looked after children are the lowest attaining sub-group, followed by pupils traditionally classified as having special educational needs (i.e. having Individual Educational Programmes (IEP) or Record of Needs (RON) – replaced as of the Additional Support for Learning Act 2004 by Co-ordinated Support Plans and a wider definition of additional support needs), pupils who are entitled to free school meals and pupils who live in the most deprived areas of Scotland.

³⁵ Final Report of the Workless Client Groups Workstream, Scottish Executive, August 2005

³⁶ Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2003

Average Tariff Scores of S4 pupils in 2003/04



41. If we look at the proportions of S4 pupils who do not sit any exams, and the proportions of school leavers who have no qualifications, in all cases the proportion of the population with no qualifications is higher among those from the 15% most deprived areas than from the rest of Scotland. As the table shows, 5% of those pupils who left publicly funded secondary schools in Scotland in 2002/03 did so with no qualifications. For pupils from the 15% most deprived areas this figure was 11%. In 2003, 25% of 16 to 19 year olds living in the 15% most deprived areas were NEET compared to 11% of those living in the rest of Scotland.³⁷

Leavers with no qualifications – publicly funded secondary schools, 2004/05³⁸

Percentage of all leavers

	15% Most Deprived	Rest of Scotland	Scotland
Total	10	3	4
Males	12	3	5
Females	8	3	4

³⁷ Social Focus on Deprived Areas, Scottish Executive, 2005

³⁸ School management information systems/Scottish Qualifications Authority

42. As illustrated above, there is a complex range of factors underlying poor attainment at school. Low parental qualifications and aspirations, lack of local employment, education and training opportunities, a culture of worklessness, poor health and inadequate housing can all mean that children from poorer households are less likely to achieve their potential. 40% of the lowest attaining pupils in Scotland live in the 10% most deprived communities. Breaking the cycle of deprivation and under-achievement is the key challenge, requiring concerted effort across a range of agencies to enable all children and young people to achieve their full potential at and beyond school. This involves starting early, for some children soon after birth, to support the strengths and address the difficulties at appropriate points of the individual child, family and wider community, and recognising the interplay between these factors in young people's lives, when taking action that will make a difference.³⁹

Responding to the challenge

43. Within the partnership context, schools clearly have a vital role to play in supporting young people to leave school for a positive outcome. In *Ambitious, Excellent Schools*⁴⁰ we have an agenda for action to raise ambition and equip all young people with the knowledge, skills, confidence and self-esteem to enable them to achieve their full potential. *Ambitious, Excellent Schools* is delivering major planks of reform in the education system which will impact on the challenges associated with deprivation and underachievement to:
- focus on outcomes
 - provide flexible, personalised learning opportunities with appropriate recognition
 - develop employability
 - support learners

A focus on outcomes

44. Transition from secondary to post-school is a critical time; in common with other transitions it is a point at which many young people are vulnerable. In addition to being a vulnerable time for young people, negotiating the boundaries between child and adult services can mean that this is a time when young people fall out of the system. We need to ensure that services are joined-up to achieve positive long term outcomes for young people – both in terms of meeting the range of needs across services and in managing the progression from child to adult services.
45. *For Scotland's Children* published in 2001 recognised the need for an integrated approach by a range of services to tackle complex barriers to improving life chances for children and young people. Since then much has been done already and work is ongoing to improve the framework for integrating children's services at local authority and neighbourhood level and to improve assessment and planning for individual children.
46. National guidance on planning and reporting for improvement across education and children's services, and emerging approaches to self-evaluation and inspection emphasise the need to focus on post-school outcomes. These developments are promoting shared ownership and responsibility for the outcomes of the whole population of young people at a community or neighbourhood level, whether they are in or outwith school. The framework is right but more needs to be done to develop the focus on post-school outcomes as a benchmark for success at a local level.

³⁹ For example in North Ayrshire, the Community Regeneration Fund is supporting a targeted approach on the NEET group through activities like the targeting Young People Initiative in partnership with James Watt College.

⁴⁰ *Ambitious, Excellent Schools*, Scottish Executive 2004

Emerging practice

In many areas across Scotland, local authorities and other partners are putting in place effective local mechanisms to ensure the strategic objectives of multi-agency integrated children's services plans are delivered. Often operating on a cluster basis, schools are coming together with pre-school and post-school providers, community learning and development, health and social work services, police, voluntary sector organisations, parents and community representatives to develop shared objectives and plan what is delivered respectively and together in order to meet the needs of children and young people. In some areas where 'NEETness' is a particular issue, we are seeing local partners prioritising and developing shared responsibility for post-school outcomes, using data to set targets and track progress, and pooling and targeting resources to address the issue together.⁴¹

47. We are working with local authorities and HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) to understand and deploy data on the lowest performing 20% more intelligently, to develop an understanding of the scale and nature of the problem, and to identify good practice. HMIE's recent report *Missing Out*⁴² provided a useful starting point, highlighting the need for high expectations for **all** young people, strong leadership, early identification of risk, pupil tracking and monitoring, smaller class sizes and targeted out of school hours activities. We will continue this work to support more effective targeting of resources both at national and local level and development of good practice to tackle low attainment.

Flexible, personalised learning opportunities with appropriate recognition

48. We need to ensure all young people have access to learning opportunities which will re-engage them and provide appropriate skills and recognition of achievement. The ability to match a young person's needs with the right learning opportunity is compromised when there is a limited and/or uncoordinated local infrastructure. Notwithstanding considerable development of vocational options and partnership working to engage with young people who are disaffected both within and outwith schools (see below), the information we have suggests that we currently have a mixed model of patchy provision which limits the options that can be offered to young people.⁴³

Emerging practice

Many schools and authorities have developed fruitful partnerships with FE colleges and voluntary sector organisations to broaden the range of learning opportunities available to pupils, and to tailor these more specifically to meet their needs and motivations. Feedback on these sorts of tailored learning opportunities shows that programmes both within and outwith school can have a positive impact with groups at risk of NEET.⁴⁴

Almost all secondary schools now have a pupil support base, and these have been used creatively for focussed programmes of group or individual work with pupils, in particular those most likely to disengage from school.

Careers Scotland and organisations such as Right Track, Fairbridge and the Princes Trust, in partnership with schools, are now delivering a range of products aimed at pupils as young as S2. Although their scale is relatively modest, there is evidence to suggest that such early intervention programmes are succeeding, in particular with the 'intermediate' at risk of NEET group whose levels of engagement and confidence are low. Local authorities are also designing models better suited to the needs of young people and that these are producing encouraging results.

41 As well as supporting activities to support the NEET group with Community Regeneration Fund and other partner resources a number of Community Planning Partnerships are aiming to deliver specific outcomes to reduce those classed as NEET in their areas.

42 *Missing Out: A report on children at risk of missing out on educational opportunities*, HM Inspectorate of Education, 2006

43 *Working Together: Cross Sectoral Provision of Vocational Education*, HM Inspectorate of Education, 2005

44 *Mapping Employability and Support Services for Disengaged Young People*, Adams and Smart, Scottish Executive 2005

Glasgow's Enhanced Vocational Inclusion Programme (EVIP)

Glasgow's EVIP offer 64 full-time places to young people aged 15+ who have experienced severe problems in their lives and who, as a result, do not access the opportunities typically available to their peers. The target group includes young people who are looked after or looked after and accommodated, and young people with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. EVIP provides access to a range of vocational options in growth employment areas, a programme of core and life skills, integrated literacy and numeracy support, opportunities to undertake additional accredited qualifications; and, as such, acts as a springboard to further progression routes. A dedicated vocational coach supports a specific group of young people, co-working with college lecturers and providing feedback to parents, carers, referrers and schools. Currently, it is funded through Changing Children's Services Fund, Community Regeneration Fund, City Vision and European Social Fund.

49. The *Curriculum for Excellence*⁴⁵ represents a radical restatement of the purpose of education, with the young person at the centre of the curriculum. The work of the Curriculum Review Programme Board, encapsulated in a recent report, *Progress and Proposals*⁴⁶ proposes a way of looking differently at the curriculum, suggesting that, at all stages from the early years to S6, the curriculum should include learning through the ethos and life of the school as a community, curriculum areas and subjects, interdisciplinary projects and studies, and opportunities for personal achievement. It recognises that all young people need experiences to equip them with firm foundations, including in literacy and numeracy, for the next stage of learning, and for life. Greater flexibility in the curriculum, for example through developing thinking on the proposals on choice in learning in S1-S3, and personalising learning through *Assessment is for Learning*⁴⁷ will enable all young people to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors and achieve positive outcomes on leaving school.
50. The challenge will lie in ensuring that the curriculum is flexible and personalised enough to cover the full spectrum of needs and abilities of our young people in or out of school, so that no one is missing out. At times, provision outwith school may best meet a pupil's needs. We must ensure that learning opportunities, wherever they take place, are of the highest possible quality, considered an integrated part of mainstream education and effectively linked to schools, associated with appropriate support for pupils, and that learning and achievement is accredited or formally recognised. Interruptions to learning for vulnerable or disaffected pupils may lead to disengagement. Education authorities must ensure that they have provision available for pupils who need short-term support to continue learning while excluded from school, and that pupils removed from the register are placed promptly in a suitable school or other provision, to reduce the difficulties associated with reintegration and lost progress.
51. The ongoing work on the *Curriculum for Excellence* and *Assessment is for Learning* will focus on exploring alternative ways of recognising achievements. The Curriculum Review Programme Board has, for example, proposed an achievement framework which is coherent from 3-18, based on experiences and outcomes. The framework recognises that children and young people will progress at different rates; the framework should be designed, amongst other aims, to support teachers in planning for progression, enhancing experiences within levels as well as providing for progression to the next level. Attainment **and** achievement are important as are high expectations for all young people. The proposed levels are not there as hurdles to get over as quickly as possible, but rather as staging posts on a journey which offers opportunities for challenge and depth. We will continue to engage with teachers, schools and others in exploring how these ideas can be developed ensuring that all of these programmes and initiatives focus on improving the quality of learning and teaching and professional practice in the classroom.

45 A Curriculum for Excellence, Scottish Executive 2004

46 A Curriculum for Excellence – Progress and Proposals, Scottish Executive 2006

47 Assessment is for Learning is a national initiative which aims to provide a streamlined and coherent system of assessment for school-age pupils ensuring that parents, teachers and other professionals have the feedback they need on pupils' learning and development needs.

52. We are currently developing Skills for Work courses for pupils over 14 of all abilities (including school leavers and adult learners) in subject and occupational areas where assessing and certificating competence in practical and other employability skills is the key to progression. The new courses will be recognised in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) as full qualifications at the level studied. It is expected that successful pupils will progress on to further learning at school, further education or higher education or into employment. While the Skills for Work courses are not developed exclusively for young people at risk of becoming NEET, we believe that they will represent additional opportunities to suit pupils' interests and inclinations, and could contribute to improved outcomes for young people post 16 by providing a pathway from school to education, employment or training.

Developing employability

53. Low attainment is also often accompanied by a similar lack of generic skills for life and work – recent research found that 43% of employers felt school leavers they had recently recruited were poorly prepared for the world of work.⁴⁸ We need to ensure that learning opportunities support the development of both hard (i.e. qualification based) and softer (i.e. time keeping, team working) skills.
54. The need to prepare all our young people for the world of work, through equipping them with both hard and soft skills is at the heart of our Enterprise in Education strategy, *Determined to Succeed*.⁴⁹ Working with Local Authorities – who have the key role to play in determining local provision – *Determined to Succeed* is helping develop enterprise and employability skills for all young people. It also recognises the need for robust partnerships between schools and employers to help contextualise the learning experience. Local authorities are therefore continuing to develop new partnerships between schools and local businesses and while the Executive's target of 2,000 such partnerships by 2006 has already been met, we need to continue to build such relationships. The Executive will therefore continue to lend strategic support to the school/business partnership agenda; and our relationship with The Smith Group will further strengthen the unique approach involving business and education leaders developed under *Determined to Succeed*. *Determined to Succeed* can also engender, encourage and reinforce enterprising approaches to learning and teaching that will be critical in supporting the move towards *A Curriculum for Excellence*.

Emerging practice:

Xlerate with XL – operated jointly by the Prince's Trust Scotland (PTS) and Young Enterprise Scotland (YES)

Funded by *Determined to Succeed* and The Hunter Foundation, Xlerate with XL is improving educational and employment outcomes for young people who are less motivated by the traditional formal curriculum.

Developed by the Prince's Trust for Scotland (PTS), Young Enterprise Scotland (YES) and the Prince's Scottish Youth Business Trust (PSYBT), the in-school programme sees disaffected young people in S3 and S4 taking part over 2 years in a combined personal development, citizenship and enterprise course.

The course, which includes a 12 week enterprise module based around the YES franchise product, involves the young people in all aspects of business from product costing and business planning to manufacturing, sales plans, financial controls, training and customer satisfaction.

Involving the business community through enhanced work placements and business advice, Xlerate with XL is an options choice in S2 and is currently set to support some 2,100 young people across Scotland.

The programme has been independently monitored and evaluated⁵⁰ to assess its ability to be made available for many more of Scotland's educationally disengaged young people.

48 Futureskills Scotland, *Scottish School Leavers and their Understanding of the World of Work*, April 2005

49 *Determined to Succeed: A review of enterprise in education*, Scottish Executive 2002

50 *National Evaluation of Xlerate with XL*, Durham University, forthcoming

55. The current and – increasingly – future workplace demands that people not only have occupational knowledge but also the skills to plan and manage choices about personal development and future career opportunities. With the likelihood that a person will change careers, far less jobs, 5-7 times in their working life, it is essential that they are in control of these choices and options and have the necessary decision-making skills to maximise their potential in the workplace. Employability is therefore not just about getting entry to the first occupational area; it is also about having the skills and understanding to construct a career path and take appropriate decisions to aid progression and sustainability. Careers Scotland, through careers advisers, key workers, and other staff and services, plays a central role here: a role which must be fully exploited.
56. Moreover, Careers Scotland plays a key role in ensuring an integrated approach to supporting young people in order to maintain a focus on employability. Both *Additional Support for Learning* and forthcoming *Getting It Right for Every Child* legislation are strengthening existing partnership approaches, clarifying the co-ordination role of ‘key workers’. Within this context, it will be important for Careers Scotland advisers and key workers to build stable and continuous relationships with young people.
57. We also need to work with local authorities and other partners to build skills and capacities around employability in the wider workforce. The new (post McCrone Teacher’s Agreement) contractual commitment to continuing professional development for teachers and the development of leadership in schools offer significant opportunities for raising awareness of issues and approaches around low attainment, deprivation and NEET.

Support for learners

58. Every child and young person faces choices and experiences which can be challenging and require the friendly support of an adult, for example making transitions from nursery to primary, primary to secondary and beyond, making subject and career choices, coping with deadlines, tests and exams, and taking personal responsibility. Some young people will be faced with challenges that are much more troubling, for example -coping with bereavement, bullying, domestic abuse, drug misuse in the home or teenage pregnancy. These challenges, left unaddressed, would limit their capacity to learn and succeed later on in their life.
59. The standards for personal support in schools are set out in *Happy, Safe and Achieving their Potential*,⁵¹ the report of the National Review of Guidance. This report emphasises the role of all teachers in promoting positive relationships and for specialist guidance staff in co-ordinating integrated approaches within the school and with external partners.
60. The *Additional Support for Learning Act 2004* requires education authorities to identify the children and young people who, for whatever reason, have additional support needs and take specific action, where necessary with the support of appropriate agencies to help these young people to benefit from learning and make the transition from school to post-school life successfully. The Act also aims to ensure that the likely provider of post-school provision has access to relevant information about the support needs of that young person prior to the period of transition, thereby ensuring a smooth transition from school to post school life.

⁵¹ Happy, Safe and Achieving their Potential, Scottish Executive 2005

61. Within the group of young people at risk of low achievement and becoming NEET, looked after children and young people have been identified as particularly vulnerable. 24% of children looked after away from home and over 42% of children looked after at home leave school with no qualifications, compared to around 4% of all children in Scotland.⁵² 59% of young people leaving care, who had a known economic activity status, are in the NEET group.⁵³ We have set a target to ensure that by 2007 over 50% of all looked after young people leaving care have entered education, employment or training and the Minister for Education and Young People has established a short life working group to consider what more can be done at a national level to improve educational outcomes for looked after children. A report of the group's discussions is due shortly.
62. Within this framework much good practice is developing in creative approaches to supporting learners – see below. The key to preventing young people becoming NEET is to identify those at risk as early as possible and have sound structures and processes in place to intervene effectively and promptly. It is essential that there is good communication between the child or young person and parents and all supporting agencies and information is shared promptly and effectively.

Emerging practice:

Supporting the whole child in the early years

The early years are a period of rapid social and cognitive development, and can have a major influence on outcomes later in life. Surestart Scotland funds a range of projects which support vulnerable children and their families in the early years. It places a strong emphasis on co-ordinated approaches to bring together education, social work and health services to create a package which addresses the full range of barriers a family may face.

Early intervention

In the early primary years, the Executive is supporting a small number of education authorities working to develop nurturing approaches, with children whose home experience or slower development has led to a need for more intensive work on their social, emotional and behavioural skills. Studies of the approach elsewhere suggest that this early intervention has a sustained impact in later years and makes a vital difference to a child's ongoing inclusion in a mainstream school.

Supporting pupils and families

Restorative approaches are helping pupils to reintegrate into school following exclusion and Solution Oriented approaches are bringing an emphasis on problem-solving with pupils and families. Many education authorities have also been developing the role of family support worker or home school link worker to enable the relationship between home and school to be developed and for support to be provided when there are difficulties. In many areas this practice has been successful in tackling chronic non-attendance and negotiating reintegration into learning when relationships have broken down.

We recognise the vital role that parents play in their children's education and learning and the critical importance of involving parents from as early as possible. We are introducing a Parental Involvement Bill which will promote involvement of parents and encourage them to do what they can in their circumstances to support their own children. The Bill will place a duty on education authorities to draw up strategies for parental involvement in its widest sense, taking account of the specific needs of Looked After Children.

⁵² SQA attainment and school leavers qualifications in Scotland: 2004/05

⁵³ Children's Social Work Statistics 2004/05

Tracing missing pupils

We must continue to ensure that interruptions to learning or gaps in school attendance are minimised. The mobility of some families with high support needs is of concern and we are working closely with schools and education authorities to improve practice on tracing children who appear to drop out of the education system. We are promoting early follow up and national co-ordination of tracing to ensure that families are re-engaged with services in their new location, and that children are re-registered with schools, as soon as possible, with efficient transfer of their records so that professionals can plan support and learning quickly.

Whole school approaches

There are strong correlations between non-attendance and low attainment. The Scottish Executive continues to work in partnership with education authorities to develop new approaches to promoting positive behaviour and attendance. It is vital to develop a school ethos where there is both high expectation and high support for pupils whose behaviour or attendance is causing concern. The development of a whole school approach to the curriculum extends beyond the classroom and core school time. Out of school hours activities can be effectively targeted to help re-engage and motivate young people at risk of becoming NEET.

Supporting transitions

In addition to the crucial secondary to post-school transition, earlier transitions are also vulnerable points for young people. We know that attainment levels of primary pupils drop on transfer to secondary school. Alongside increasing support for P7 and S1 to improve the transition between sectors, a number of initiatives are being piloted during 2004/06, promoting wider opportunities for teachers to teach across sectors. It is hoped such initiatives will keep pupils engaged and motivated at school.

Targeting looked after children and young people

We are piloting initiatives in 17 local authorities which aim to improve the educational outcomes for looked after children. We are also funding a Care Leavers Leadership Academy at Columba 1400 with the aim of equipping young people with the necessary life skills to assist them in making the successful transition from care to independent living. Both initiatives will be evaluated to help establish what works and why.

ACTION: PRE 16

We are transforming the opportunities for and expectations of all pupils, including and especially those who are at risk of becoming NEET through a mix of action across mainstream education and specific targeted measures. Key actions include:

Providing flexible, personalised learning opportunities and developing employability:

- (i) Implementing A Curriculum for Excellence to improve choice and flexibility and develop the wide range of capacities young people need to succeed in the modern world, and ensure they remain fully engaged throughout their school career.
- (ii) Implementing Assessment is for Learning to ensure high quality learning and teaching tailored to the abilities, preferences and life circumstances of every child.
- (iii) Recognising young people's wider achievements through giving credit to their different skills and abilities.
- (iv) Simplifying the structure of qualifications to widen opportunities and improve progression for all our young people through reviewing Standard Grade and its links with other National Qualifications.
- (v) Developing suitable models and expanding choice for work-related vocational learning, including Skills for Work courses, within schools, colleges and partner organisations in order that all young people can develop their vocational and employability skills.

Ensuring appropriate support for all learners regardless of abilities, needs and wider circumstances:

- (vi) Additional Support for Learning to ensure that the support needs of all children are properly assessed and monitored and appropriate support is put in place.
- (vii) Targeting additional action for those groups who currently do not benefit appropriately from school. Including implementing the forthcoming recommendations of the Ministerial working group on improving outcomes for looked after children, in order to improve the achievements and employability of looked after children and care leavers.

Transforming the learning environment:

- (viii) Investing in the Schools of Ambition programme to bring about a step change in ambition and achievement to transform the educational outcomes for all children in those schools.
- (ix) Highlighting and promoting excellence throughout the system through the adoption of the new excellence standard in school and education authority inspection and supporting that through extensive guidance and good practice resources.
- (x) Establishing a broad programme of leadership development to foster talent and improving the training and development opportunities for teachers.
- (xi) Investing further new resources for new teachers, including taking account of severe deprivation to allow local authorities to address the link between deprivation and low attainment.

Focus on outcomes:

- (xii) Modernising the improvement framework to focus on securing better outcomes for children, requiring the adoption of more flexible performance indicators which track and monitor the achievement of individual children, support a culture of innovation in schools.
- (xiii) Ensure better support for children across services through integrated planning, a single assessment framework, and the introduction of inspection of integrated children's services.
- (xiv) Careers Scotland will review its current deployment of resources (generic careers advisers and specialist key workers) in order to improve school leaver destinations and pilot an enhanced careers resource for selected schools in selected NEET areas which have high negative school leaver destinations.

(ii) Post-16

The challenge

63. An effective long-term strategy for reducing the size of the NEET group must stem the flows into the group. It is vital to prevent young people falling out of the system in the first place, both for individual well-being and because it is more difficult and costly to re-engage people at a later stage.
64. However we cannot ignore the current cohort of young people who are NEET, nor gloss over the reality that there will always be young people age 16+ who struggle with the transition to adulthood and who will require high quality support to enable them to make that transition a positive one.
65. Our strategies for enterprise and lifelong learning⁵⁴ rightly focus on equipping all individuals in Scotland with the ambition and skills they need to achieve and sustain employment in a growing economy. Yet it is self evident – in the unchanging proportion of young people NEET in Scotland over the past decade – that there is still some way to go in providing the high quality, appropriately designed opportunities and support needed to make this a reality for all young people.
66. Given the low attainment levels of young people who are NEET, this strategy intentionally prioritises education and training over employment as desired outcomes for the NEET group. Ensuring their long term employability is more likely to be secured through furthering their education and training, whether through formal or informal learning. Fast tracking these young people into low skill/low paid jobs without appropriate training and support is only likely to see them churning back into the NEET group.
67. That said, there will be some young people for whom work is their first choice, and here the challenges are around supporting them – and, where appropriate, their employers – in entry level jobs in order to sustain work and progress to higher paid and/or higher skilled employment.

Supported transitions and sustained opportunities

68. In recent years we have developed a much clearer picture of what works in relation to helping young people who are not in education, employment or training to engage with activities which will support them to move closer to the labour market. The range of agencies and interventions underpinning this progress is as broad as the needs of the individual young people. Looking across the statutory and voluntary sector it is possible to identify the common elements of what works well:⁵⁵
 - **Adopting a client-focused approach** – capable of addressing the complexity of issues some young people bring.
 - **Addressing barriers in a holistic way** – through offering a comprehensive, co-ordinated service or good signposting to other support agencies.
 - **Providing high quality and ongoing assessment and action planning** – client focussed, ideally using approaches which are shared by other relevant agencies.

⁵⁴ *Smart Successful Scotland: An Enterprise Strategy for Scotland* (Scottish Executive 2000, refreshed 2004); *Life Through Learning, Learning Through Life: The Lifelong Learning Strategy for Scotland* (Scottish Executive 2003)

⁵⁵ *Mapping Employability and Support Services for Disengaged Young People*, Adams and Smart, Scottish Executive 2005; *Evaluation of the New Futures Fund Initiative*, Training and Employment Research Unit, Cambridge Policy Consultants & Simon Clark Associates Limited, 2005

- **Supporting clients through advocacy** – most notably through the provision of key workers who can provide continuity and trust during key transition points.
- **Offering flexibility in programme duration** – recognising that the intensity and length of support necessary will vary hugely within this highly diverse group.
- **Focusing on progression** – participants should be supported to move to the next progression point as quickly as possible.
- **Anticipating vulnerability at times of transition** – ensuring that services work together effectively to support continuity and progression.
- **Recognising that progression may not always be linear** – and that dealing with set-backs is a key part of the learning process.
- **Ensuring high quality and defined aftercare** – in order to sustain progress towards employability.
- **Engaging employers** – and embedding a focus on employment at the start of the process.
- **Demonstrating clear evidence of impact** – as well as the established ‘harder’ outcomes this should include reliable means of gauging distance travelled by clients.
- **Involvement of young people in service design** – too many assumptions are made about what young people need – the most effective approaches are informed by client views.

69. Across Scotland we are fortunate to have a range of pioneering organisations, such as the Prince’s Trust, Fairbridge and a host of smaller organisations, which show what can be achieved. The voluntary sector is key to delivering the improved life chances we want for these young people. It can have a particularly important role to play in re-engaging the NEET group, some of whom may have an inherent mistrust of the statutory sector or of government. Moreover, a recent report from the UK Government⁵⁶ highlighted the importance of services that explicitly focus on young people’s thinking and behaviour as a foundation or first step on the road to engagement with the education or labour market. Such services are currently more common in the voluntary sector.

70. These agencies therefore make an invaluable contribution to working with young people and improving their life chances both directly through the services they offer; and through what they can teach other organisations and government about their experiences of working with this group. The following case studies, from national initiatives and local innovations, illustrate what makes up a successful intervention.

Youthstart

Youthstart is about helping young people aged 16-24 make the transition to independent living and supporting them to access and succeed in education, employment or training. It targets homeless young people and young people who are residential care leavers.

Youthstart works on the principles of Supported Employment and is holistic in its approach, recognising that the person’s whole life be taken into consideration when making choices relating to their education, training or employment. The team relies heavily on collaborative partnership working, recognising that working with young people with a wide range of barriers means that no one agency can give the support and specialist services required. They adopt the co-ordinating role to bring the partners together to ensure that the young person has the appropriate supports in place to allow them to make the transition to the labour market and are able to sustain their opportunity. Aftercare is a key component of the service.

⁵⁶ Transition: Young Adults with Complex Needs, Social Exclusion Unit, 2005, found that the way young people behave and think is highly relevant to shaping their life chances. But some young people particularly those from disadvantaged groups are often least equipped with the skills they need to make the choices that influence their futures.

Youthstart recognises the importance of distance travelled in focusing on both hard outcomes in terms of progression, and on soft outcomes such as improvements in confidence and motivation. Over the last three years the Youthstart project has assisted 683 vulnerable young people, achieving impressive results – 290 moving on into work and 219 going into further training or education. It is exemplary in the importance it places on supporting and tracking the sustainability of positive outcomes. Feedback from the young people themselves also makes for positive reading with many staying in touch with the project saying that without the support of Youthstart they would not have been able to stabilise their lives.

It has recently been adopted as a mainstream service of South Lanarkshire Council.

Careers Scotland Supported Employment Pilots

To stimulate a greater number and variety of employment options, CS developed 7 supported employment pilots at the end of 2002 – a model not readily available to clients other than those with learning disabilities.

Thanks to the pilots, which were independently evaluated in 2004, a composite model of supported employment has emerged with characteristics and potential strengths which include:

- preparation for employment such as confidence building, careers guidance, job search and presentation skills
- opportunities for clients to engage directly with employers and to experience labour market features such as job interviews
- significant support in the initial, high-stress, phase of the placement such as accompanying the young person to work
- a less intensive and discrete form of job support than the traditional job coaching model e.g. telephone and texting
- an individualised approach to engaging with employers
- an emphasis on after-care.

The evaluation showed that clients valued and benefited from the supported employment experience in many ways – in terms of soft and vocational skills and also in terms of developing a better understanding of the world of work and their options within it. Client satisfaction levels were good and there was evidence of client progression – even in instances where the type of work undertaken proves not to be that ultimately sought by participants. Benefits which arose because of clients valuing the employability focus of the support were:

- improved confidence and self awareness
- improved vocational skills including the use of IT
- enhanced presentation of assets for clients, e.g. clients developing their own CV and having a better idea of what a job interview might be like.

A total of 342 clients participated in the Careers Scotland Supported Employment Pilots in 2003/04, 146 of whom entered a supported employment opportunity of which 90 were sustained for at least three months.

The evaluation concluded that Careers Scotland should consider the scope for building the skills/tools of the Supported Employment Advisor (SEA) into the remit of those staff carrying out Key Worker type functions rather than continue with stand alone SEA posts. Careers Scotland is currently taking forward the mainstreaming of this approach nationally with a particular focus on the transition to employment and other opportunities and working with partners to ensure sustainability.

71. At the national level, the Beattie Report⁵⁷ put better transitions from school for young people firmly in the spotlight. This has led the training and further education sectors to make their provision much more responsive to young people with a range of needs.
72. Skillseekers and Get Ready for Work (GR4W)⁵⁸ – our national training programmes – play an important role in tackling NEET in Scotland, creating pathways into employment for young people and ensuring they have the competencies to progress once in work. GR4W, in particular, is a significant improvement on previous approaches being more customised, flexible and client-focused.
73. There have been particularly impressive strides made in improving access to further education (FE) for young people with disabilities; and some notable successes with hard to reach groups such as refugees and ex-offenders have also shown how to engage effectively with particular sub-groups within the NEET population⁵⁹. As the latest evidence from the sector makes clear⁶⁰, key challenges for the future are around improving support for transitions and boosting retention and achievement – with NEET reduction an important indicator in measuring the sector's success.
74. Of course, valuable opportunities post school go beyond participating in a national training programme or FE. For example, becoming involved in volunteering directly can bring great benefits to young people themselves in terms of the skills and experience they can gain, and to the wider community. Such opportunities are now widely accessible to young people through Project Scotland, a scheme which facilitates and supports high quality full time volunteering opportunities for 16-25 year olds.
75. It is vital that all of these opportunities are designed and delivered in a way which makes them accessible to as many young people as possible. Although in its infancy, services across the board are being strengthened by the extension of local authority psychological services to post-school. Post School Psychological Services⁶¹, through work with individual young people and organisations, are making an important contribution to improving interventions and sharpening up practice by developing the skills of professionals from different disciplines (e.g. Get Ready for Work training providers, Careers Scotland key workers and further education teaching and support staff) and advising on strategies for meeting the needs of particular NEET sub-groups.
76. However, not all young people are fortunate enough to have high quality provision available to them. Recent research⁶² has shown that in many Scottish localities the services and support options available for the NEET group can be very limited, and the quality uneven.

Guaranteeing options on leaving school

77. The fact we have national organisations and programmes making provision for this group and the legacy of a Youth Training Guarantee⁶³ should allow for consistency of the level and quality of services for young people. There should be no automatic assumption, however, that this is in fact the case.
78. For example, we know that there are significant regional variations in GR4W in terms of target client group, performance, and delivery of Lifeskills – a key component of the programme. Progression between our national programmes i.e. from GR4W to Skillseekers and the availability of suitable progression routes from our programmes are also patchy. This post-code lottery is unacceptable.

57 *Implementing Inclusiveness: Realising Potential*. The Report of the Beattie Committee, Scottish Executive 1999

58 Get Ready for Work is for 16-18 year olds; Forthcoming Evaluation of Get Ready for Work, Scottish Enterprise

59 Implementing Inclusiveness in further education: the response of the FE sector to the Beattie Report, HM Inspectorate of Education, 2004

60 *Learning for All: The Report of the SFEFC/SHEFC Widening Participation Review Group*, October 2005

61 The evaluation of Post – School Psychological Services Pathfinders in Scotland (2004-06), forthcoming

62 Mapping Employability and Support Services for Disengaged Young People, Adams and Smart, Scottish Executive 2005

63 The Youth Training Guarantee was a policy introduced by the UK Government, following the withdrawal of unemployment benefits from 16-17 year olds in the Social Security Act 1986.

79. To expose and then remedy such gaps – and, indeed, overlaps⁶⁴ – we propose that the agencies responsible for delivering key national programmes for the NEET group, set out what they will deliver at a local level and for whom. The local offer of national programmes must be developed in such a way as to ensure greater consistency of opportunity across Scotland, whilst taking account of local needs. As such, it needs to be developed in the context of the local framework for employability and support services proposed in this strategy. There is also a need for greater transparency about the rationale for the deployment of resources locally and the opportunities – where these exist – for these to be enhanced, should local partners agree.
80. The partnership approach we recommend in the later section on ‘joint commitment and action’ recognises that it often takes a wide range of support to enable some young people to progress to the labour market. In doing so, it challenges local partners to focus on young people who are, or who are at risk of becoming, seriously disengaged.
81. Getting this right involves sorting (i) the infrastructure, within and between mainstream and specialist provision; and (ii) the quality of what is provided, across the board. This presents significant challenges at two levels.
82. At a **strategic level**, a major, early task for local partners is to assess whether the services on offer, including national programmes, are sufficient to meet the needs of their NEET population. As we know, the picture differs from area to area: in some, the landscape might need to be simplified; in others the mix of provision might not meet local needs or there may be significant gaps in services.
83. We are aiming for an aligned suite of employability and support services, capable of promoting the engagement and sustained progression of young people, including those who are most disengaged. Local partners must establish, as *Workforce Plus* proposes, a better and shared understanding of the scope of employability services and the need for employability to be joined up with other services (e.g. education, housing, health, social care). Given the attainment levels of the NEET group, the local post-16 offer needs to support achievement of a SVQ level 2 qualification (or equivalent) and, as such, must include appropriate stepping stone provision, which promotes lifeskills and personal and social development. As another section of this strategy details the right support, too, must be on offer.
84. At an **operational level**, partner agencies should ensure that services fit together and that there are effective mechanisms in place – for referrals, assessment and tracking – to facilitate this. But we are aware that a number of barriers can stand in the way of this: many front line services providing care and support for those most disengaged do not understand employability and see it as too distant to their client’s current situation to give it any attention.⁶⁵ Moreover, there is a commonly held view that employability is something to be introduced only when a client is ‘ready’ for it.
85. The table on the following page maps Edinburgh Cyrenians’ provision in facilitating the journey from homelessness to a settled working life. It offers appropriate ‘step on’ provision for people who are prone to slip through the net and who may reject, or may be rejected by, mainstream services. At the same time, sustained employment is in sight, building on earlier opportunities to develop a range of ‘soft’ and harder skills. Employability is introduced right at the start of contact, as an integrated part of personal planning, alongside housing, health and other services. As such, it is part of stabilisation: not a stage that follows it.

64 There is also evidence from the same report that in some areas the provider landscape is cluttered, with clients (and providers themselves) struggling to understand everything that is on offer.

65 Mapping Employability and Support Services for Disengaged Young People, Adams and Smart, Scottish Executive 200. ; Evaluation of the New Futures Fund Initiative, Training and Employment Research Unit, Cambridge Policy Consultants & Simon Clark Associates Limited, 2005

1. Motivation & personal planning	2. Personal & social development	3. Education & 'soft' training	4. Pre-vocational further education & training	5. Employment access	6. Consolidation support, sustained employment
			People with Potential programme		
Cyrenians New Futures					
Supported volunteering at Fairshare					
Opportunities development, activities programme, health promotion, volunteering, farm work, etc.					
Key worker support – Careers Scotland and other agencies – to remove barriers and support through transitions					

Losing no-one

86. A major early task for the local partnerships will be improving local data on the NEET group. As previously stated, an effective future response to the NEET issue is critically dependant on better intelligence on its causes; the characteristics and numbers in the key sub groups; the stock and flow; and improved long term tracking of young people to further understand patterns of NEET and their consequences.
87. This data is absolutely essential at both a local and national level in order to better target resources and better measure the impact of policy and practice on reducing the size of the group. In many ways, we know what we are aiming for – the Connexions service in England, for example, has established a broad, robust database of all young people from 14 upwards. We see Careers Scotland, in developing its client information system 'Insight', as leading this work. Without a better appreciation of where we start from, and the indicators we need to change, measuring the impact of action taken at both national and local level will be fundamentally comprised.

Supported transitions and sustained opportunities

88. As has been highlighted previously, the core NEET problem which government needs to address is (a) sustained NEET status over an extended period or (b) frequent repetitions of NEET status between short, episodic spells of labour market engagement. As well as getting the infrastructure right, this means getting far better at minimising churn within the post-16 system. Neither can be done without raising the quality of service providers.
89. The understanding and skills of individuals working effectively together with the NEET group at the front line of services are probably the most influential factors in determining positive outcomes for these young people. Improving quality overall will require higher levels of support and professional development for front line staff, who should expect such input in recognition of the key role they play. Consistently, evaluation evidence highlights the importance of having the right people delivering services to the NEET group. To support this, focus must be retained on building the capacity of those agencies that can deliver the goods.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ In the important area of developing literacy and numeracy, this will involve working with Communities Scotland to build on work to engage young people in literacies learning. The roll out to learning providers of the Scottish Curriculum Framework for adult literacy and numeracy will also enhance the skills of practitioners.

90. But the bottom line is that providers must improve their engagement, retention and progression rates for young people some of whom – but by no means all – may face significant barriers. This latter point is crucial given what this strategy has said about the varying levels of need across the NEET group. Relatively small levels of extra – and timely – support for some young people may well make the difference between sticking at it, or dropping out.
91. Underpinning all of this is the need to produce evidence of the impact of interventions and their contribution to a young person's long-term employability. This will mean more rigorous tracking of clients than is currently the case. Many of the current performance mechanisms, and financial reward structures, focus too strongly on measuring inputs and outputs, rather than the *outcomes* of the intervention.⁶⁷ Even then, the focus tends to be on hard rather than softer outcomes. But it is the latter that represent the small, but often vital, steps of progress.
92. A move towards better tracking of clients is likely to be particularly challenging not only because of the inherent difficulties in measuring 'distance travelled' but also because of the perception – rightly or wrongly – that increased data collection will simply generate greater levels of bureaucracy, diverting time and resource away from the client. However, such rigorous assessment of progress and outcomes is non-negotiable in any serious attempt to improve our response to the NEET group.
93. One of the important measures of the success of the post-16 system is the extent to which it helps our lowest attainers and other vulnerable sub-groups get into, stay in and progress between education, training and employment. This means achieving a high quality range of post-16 services by tackling structural weaknesses, building on what works well and sharing good practice throughout Scotland. It is simply not good enough to offer these young people anything less.

ACTION: POST-16

Guaranteeing options on leaving school:

- (i) Scottish Enterprise (SEn) and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), including Careers Scotland (CS), will continue to build on the success of – and strengthen linkages between – GR4W (including Lifeskills) and Skillseekers. SEn and HIE should further consider how the national training programmes can be developed to improve vocational pathways pre and post-16.
- (ii) The Scottish Executive (SE) will review the Youth Training Guarantee (YTG) with a view to developing a new guarantee for school leavers, together with an improved vocational training model, testing out these approaches in the 10 schools participating in the CS pilot in NEET target areas.
- (iii) Local authorities, together with their partners, will collectively plan and articulate the training and support for 16-19 year olds they will guarantee to deliver in their area. Building on their statutory duty to plan for the employability of young people who will cease to be looked after, this will make specific reference to the support and provision available to care leavers.
- (iv) Project Scotland will set out its proposals for ensuring that young people NEET/at risk of becoming NEET can engage with and sustain volunteering opportunities.

⁶⁷ *Workforce Plus: an Employability Framework for Scotland*

Losing no-one:

- (v) The SE will specify the core management information required – at a national and local level – from CS on young people NEET, recognising that local partners may wish further enhancements.
- (vi) CS will take lead responsibility – at a national and local level – for working in partnership with the SE, local authorities and other agencies to establish and maintain a national 14-19 database, building on their client information system, Insight.

Supported transitions and sustained opportunities:

- (vii) The SE, to build improvements into policies and practices at points of transition and across the post-16 sector, will roll out Post-School Psychological Services to those NEET target areas not currently covered by Pathfinder activity; with a view to further considering national roll out.
- (viii) SEn and HIE will support – through contract management and quality improvement processes – the professional development of service providers in order to raise the quality of what's on offer across the board.
- (ix) The SE will support the Scottish Funding Council to implement the action plan in Learning for All to continue to improve engagement, retention, and progression in further education.
- (x) The SE will develop an employer engagement strategy, complementing other activity with employers, aimed at increasing the range and type of work-related and job opportunities for young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET.

(iii) Financial Incentives

The challenge

94. Financial constraints and opportunities determine, to a very large extent, the choices people make. This is as true for young people who are not in education, employment or training just as it is true for young people weighing up the relative financial incentives and disincentives in undertaking study in either further or higher education. A fear of accruing debt through undertaking education is a prominent characteristic of young people in the NEET group.⁶⁸ Recent research from England⁶⁹ indicates that although the NEET group understand the benefits of staying on to improve their qualifications, a relatively high proportion opt to look for work.
95. We also know that the benefits system influences the decisions of many disadvantaged young people after they have left school. Research⁷⁰ and anecdotal evidence tells us that losing benefits, particularly housing benefit, acts as a disincentive for several of the NEET sub-groups to move out of NEET status. At the very least, many benefit clients have the perception that they would be worse off working.⁷¹ As the Employability Framework makes clear, we will work with the UK government on its proposals in the Green Paper *A new deal for welfare: Empowering people to work*.

Ensuring that learning is a financially viable option

96. Although there are many financial support mechanisms underpinning the range of education, employment and training options available to young people, feedback from stakeholders, including young people themselves, suggests the current system is too complex, confusing and hard to navigate. The Executive has made significant progress to improve the information, advice and guidance available to potential learners⁷² and will continue to work closely with stakeholders to develop this.
97. The student support system in Scotland, Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs), Individual Learning Accounts and UK measures such as introducing a national minimum wage rate for 16-17 year olds all contribute to making education, employment or training more accessible for young people. But the fact remains that we need to tackle some of the anomalies within the financial support system, and to employ a more comprehensive set of levers to influence the behaviour of young people who are NEET.

68 Mapping Employability and Support Services for Disengaged Young People, Adams and Smart, Scottish Executive 2005

69 Young People not in Education, Employment or Training: Evidence from the Education Maintenance Allowance Pilots Database: Rennison J et al 2005

70 For example, Literature Review of the NEET Group, York Consulting, Scottish Executive 2005 *Bridging the Gap: New opportunities for 16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training* – Social Exclusion Unit 1999

71 Report of the National Employment Panel's Working Group on New Deal 25+, DWP, 2004

72 Review of Funding of Learners, Scottish Executive, 2004

98. The current disparities between payment levels on national training programmes and education schemes influence progression choices in ways that may not always be helpful. For example, young people leaving GR4W for a college option may face a reduction in income because the training allowance is worth more than the financial support they would receive in FE. It is worth noting that the highest proportion of outcomes from GR4W is into direct employment. Although this appears as a positive step, as the progressions onto Skillseekers are low, we can assume that a high proportion of these job outcomes have limited levels of in-work training, with the risk that these young people have limited development options in the workplace and become caught in a series of low paid, low skilled jobs and the likelihood of episodic NEET status.⁷³
99. In England, the UK Government has taken steps to tackle these issues through its review of financial support for 16-19 year olds, published alongside the 2004 budget. The revised system seeks to simplify administration and to improve accessibility. March 2005's pre budget report introduced a wide range of new mechanisms designed to deliver parity in financial support for those in non-advanced education and unwaged training (named Government training programmes). These include:
- the removal of the Minimum Training Allowance and extension of Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs) to 19 year olds in non-advanced education and unwaged training;⁷⁴ extension of Child Benefit to families of those young people engaged in these activities; changes to Child Tax Credit and Income Support Regulations in support of the age extension;
 - the allocation of £60 million over two years to pilot Activity Agreements and an Activity Allowance to 16 to 17 year olds not in employment or learning in eight pilot areas from April 2006;
 - the allocation of £80 million over two years to pilot negotiated Learning Agreements for 16 and 17 year olds in work with no training in eight pilot areas from April 2006.
100. This represents an attempt to introduce parity within the financial support framework whilst making it more transparent and comprehensive. The issues which it tackles are also pertinent north of the border and the Executive will examine the feasibility of delivering financial parity across all types of non-advanced education and unwaged training participation for 16-19s in Scotland.
101. In the same way that the strategy recommends an approach which sees 'NEET-proofing' of mainstream policies in the pre and post-16 systems, there is clearly a case for probing what impact mainstream financial support and incentive measures are having on enabling young people to engage in education, employment or training and so reducing the size of the NEET group.

The 'something for something' approach

102. EMAs represent the government's response to evidence which showed that finances are the main barrier to young people staying in and/or furthering their education. Originally piloted in Scotland in East Ayrshire, Glasgow, Dundee and West Dunbartonshire, and now rolled out nationally, EMAs provide a weekly cash allowance (of up to £30) linked to school or college attendance, combined with a series of bonuses linked to retention and achievement.

⁷³ Final Report of the Low Paid Low Skilled Work Workstream, Scottish Executive, August 2005

⁷⁴ In Scotland, young people in unwaged training will continue to receive a Minimum Training Allowance, notwithstanding the replacement of MTAs with EMAs in England from 1 April 2006.

103. EMAs – earning while learning – are based on a principle of providing financial reward to young people in exchange for their participation in a pre-agreed activity (in the case of the current EMA scheme, attendance at school or college with bonuses linked to achievement as set out in a learning agreement). Their demonstrable success in meeting their stated objectives suggests there is merit in exploring the extension of this principle to a wider range of young people, in a wider range of settings than simply school or college.⁷⁵ The Activity Agreements to be piloted in England – where young people who are not in school, not in work or lacking basic skills will sign contracts agreeing to participate in education or receive skills, including life skills, and pre-vocational/vocational training in return for financial support – will test this out. We will undertake a similar pilot exercise in Scotland to test out the potential contribution of such a scheme.
104. EMAs have proved to be effective in achieving their primary objectives of increasing participation and retention. Evidence from evaluation of the pilots in Scotland found a 9% increase in participation in post-compulsory education, particularly amongst low-income families and an increase in retention, reducing the number of winter leavers and augmenting the numbers completing S5. There is also evidence which clearly illustrates increased attainment amongst the EMA group.⁷⁶
105. While EMAs have the primary policy objective of increasing participation and retention, an analysis of EMA related reductions in the NEET group allows for an indication of the potential long-term impact of achieving these primary objectives. It would enable the policy to be tested against a measure that reveals whether EMAs are enabling at risk young people to enter education, employment or training or whether they are simply deferring a ‘NEET’ outcome for those same young people.
106. Research from England showed a 2.4 percentage point reduction of NEET among those eligible for EMA and 1.3 percentage point reduction among all 16 year olds as a direct impact of the introduction of their EMA pilots.⁷⁷ In Scotland, during the time of the East Ayrshire pilot, the proportion NEET increased both in the pilot area (East Ayrshire, where EMAs had been introduced) and the control area (North and South Lanarkshire, where EMAs were not introduced at that time). Assuming no other influences, the EMA pilot in East Ayrshire is associated with a lower increase (by 1.2 percentage points) in the number and proportion of school leavers NEET, compared to the control area.
107. In examining the efficacy of mainstream financial supports, we should not overlook the importance of small-scale discretionary funding to allow organisations that provide an employability service to purchase the services and products which are needed to progress clients towards employment and which are not immediately available through an alternative source of funding. Research has highlighted that such flexibility is particularly effective in working with the most disadvantaged individuals.⁷⁸
108. Better understanding of how financial support mechanisms – both at individual level and at the level of examining how financial supports interrelate – influence the choices made by young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET, is critical if we are to ensure resources can be more fairly, and more effectively, targeted.

⁷⁵ Transition: Young Adults with Complex Needs, Social Exclusion Unit, 2005 found that young people, particularly those from disadvantaged groups, are often least equipped with the skills they need to make the choices that influence their futures. Thus, sanctions or incentives are likely to be less effective than they would otherwise be.

⁷⁶ Education Maintenance Allowances: Attainment of National Qualifications in the Scottish pilots; Croxford and Ozga, University of Edinburgh, 2005

⁷⁷ Department for Education and Skills

⁷⁸ Report of the National Employment Panel’s Working Group on New Deal 25+, DWP, 2004

ACTION: FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

Ensuring learning is a financially viable option:

- (i) The Scottish Executive (SE) will review the financial support arrangements for 16-19 year olds in Scotland, in the light of the UK Government's recent review, addressing the specific issue of parity for young people in education and those in vocational training.
- (ii) The SE will consider ways to promote progression from informal to formal learning and to improve training for those in low-paid low-skilled work, specifically through the development and piloting of Activity Agreements and Allowances for 16/17 year olds who are NEET and Learning Agreements for 16 and 17 year olds in work without training.
- (iii) The SE will commission further research to test the impact of EMAs on changing outcomes for young people at risk of becoming NEET and will assess ways in which to maximise the potential of EMAs to encourage retention, attainment and progression for young people in sub-groups who are known to be at risk of becoming NEET.

(iv) The right support

The challenge

109. These young people are individuals at one of life's biggest transition points – between childhood and adult life – and the value of high quality, appropriately delivered support in altering outcomes for them cannot be overstated. Most young people, supported by parents, friends and school, manage the transition successfully. But this support is simply not available to all young people. A key component of the infrastructure required for the NEET group is, therefore, the support services available which can help prepare them for, signpost them to, and sustain them in potential education, employment and training opportunities, often within an integrated service approach.
110. There is much recent thinking and activity to build upon. In 1998, the Beattie Committee was charged with presenting government with a set of recommendations to improve transitions to further education, training and employment for young people who require additional support. One of the most valuable lessons from Beattie has been the importance of vulnerable young people having access to a trusted adult to advocate on their behalf, giving them one-to-one support to access the services they need to progress towards the labour market. Such individuals can help ensure there is continuity of support, and promote trust between the young person and particular services.⁷⁹ But the role of the trusted adult goes further than acting as a co-ordinator and a 'friendly ear': it must offer some element of challenge to young people and to help them move on in their thinking.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Transition: Young Adults with Complex Needs, Social Exclusion Unit, 2005

⁸⁰ Transition: Young Adults with Complex Needs, Social Exclusion Unit, 2005

One to one support from key workers

111. Recognising this need, the Beattie Committee proposed the concept of a key worker:⁸¹ someone to support a young person before, during and after the critical transition stage and to ensure the relevant additional and, very likely, specialist support to meet that individual's needs is secured.
112. The evaluation of the Beattie Inclusiveness projects⁸² which piloted Careers Scotland's delivery, in partnership with other organisations, of key worker support to young disadvantaged clients has underlined the success of this approach and the potential for its future development.⁸³ Between April 2004 and March 2005 over 2000 NEET clients were supported by key workers into sustained education, employment or training outcomes.⁸⁴
113. Recent research⁸⁵ into the services for disengaged young people in three areas across Scotland echoed this finding and concluded that key workers fulfil a pivotal role between existing services. Operating at full potential, key workers have been the mortar between the bricks of the service offer – sharing information, ensuring other services join up and helping their clients to navigate often complex systems.
114. We must exploit and develop this success. Careers Scotland should play a central role in taking this agenda forward given the breadth of experience that now resides within the organisation in successfully engaging and supporting the NEET group. Key workers continue to play a vital part in assisting successful post-school transition. In supporting the key worker approach and encouraging its extension, there are capacity issues which must be addressed. Key worker support is highly resource intensive and not all of the NEET group require this level of input.
115. Although there has been concern⁸⁶ about Careers Scotland shifting its key worker emphasis in an attempt to refocus resources on individuals who do not require as intensive support to progress towards the labour market, recent work for the Executive⁸⁷ has reinforced the importance of retaining the focus on the least engaged. While key workers have been shown to have an important part to play in helping those in the NEET group who are closer to the labour market to progress into positive outcomes, the nature of the key work role – proactive, client-focused and holistic – was shown to be particularly important for successfully engaging with harder to reach clients. It is therefore important that it remains focused on those young people who are most in need.
116. Building on this approach, we recognise that there are many good examples of Careers Scotland working well with key worker provision located within community based organisations, within some of which key worker provision is located. This has helped to ensure that employability support gets to the most disengaged young people. These first step agencies are often critical points of front end engagement - familiar with the young people for other reasons - and viewed as a less formal or intimidating point of initial contact.⁸⁸

81 Implementing Inclusiveness: Realising Potential, The Report of the Beattie Committee, Scottish Executive 1999

82 National Evaluation of the Careers Scotland Inclusiveness Projects: SQW 2004

83 Moreover, as well as mainstreaming within Careers Scotland, the national evaluation highlighted the potential for the key worker approach being adopted across a wide range of providers of services for excluded or potentially excluded young people

84 Data from Careers Scotland. Definition of sustained is 3 months+.

85 Mapping Employability and Support Services for Disengaged Young People, Adams and Smart, Scottish Executive 2005. The areas covered were: Drumchapel, East Lothian and Lochaber.

86 National Evaluation of the Careers Scotland Inclusiveness Projects: SQW 2004

87 Mapping Employability and Support Services for Disengaged Young People, Adams and Smart, Scottish Executive 2005

88 This approach has also proven effective in many of the projects supported by the New Futures Fund

Building the skills and employability focus of a range of providers

117. *Workforce Plus* focuses on our ability to engage, sustain and progress people who are outside the labour market. Evidence⁸⁹ suggests that for young people in the NEET group this approach will work only if it leads, and is part of a bigger effort across the piece to build, a more effective interface between specialist and mainstream employability agencies. In some places these links are well-established, whilst in others, there is some way to go. Strengthening local partnership approaches will assist with this and we see Careers Scotland's key workers remaining at the heart of the local offer in each area.
118. That said, there is scope to strengthen the role and deployment of key workers. The issues are 4-fold:
- A clearly defined **lead worker role** particularly in response to young people with multiple needs. Whilst there are many good examples of partnership working, the role of Careers Scotland key workers in relation to other support is not yet uniformly well established. Clarity about the Careers Scotland key worker role, where this begins and ends, is vital. It will minimise the potential for duplication of effort or confusion about the roles and responsibilities of each agency involved in supporting the young person's progression. And, crucially, it will ensure that key workers do not get out of their depth on issues outwith their remit.
 - The **delivery capacity** of key workers and spread of best practice. The introduction of key workers has placed considerable demands on agencies, most notably Careers Scotland, to recruit a significant number of suitable staff. Careers Scotland have brought in a raft of staff from new and varied backgrounds to address the key worker challenge. Future developmental work must ensure a suitable supply of appropriately skilled people; the net should continue to be cast wide. Moreover, there is a need to develop quality standards and accreditation in what is a growing area of work in the employability field in order to develop a greater consistency of quality support and to give key workers proper recognition for their skills and expertise.
 - Improved **common assessment** between agencies. The importance of a co-ordinated planning process, with effective information sharing and a shared focus on outcomes, cannot be overstated in terms of underpinning efforts to provide an improved service offer to the NEET group. Although a considerable challenge, work has been underway in many areas for some time on integrated solutions, e.g. Post-School Psychological Pathfinder services supporting the development of shared protocols across agencies at the point of leaving school. Such efforts, as detailed in *Workforce Plus*,⁹⁰ should be continued and extended.
 - **Joint training** and development in order to develop common understandings amongst both operational and managerial staff in partner agencies. Some excellent examples exist. Equally, however, too many staff have limited and sometimes out of date knowledge of partner activities and, too often the different disciplines and perspectives of staff led to widely varying progression routes for young people. This is, at best, confusing for the clients, and ultimately contributes to cluttered and uncoordinated services, and poorer rates of labour market progression. A comprehensive programme of joint training and development, linked to development of an accredited networking/partnership working qualification, is essential. Local partnerships should lead work in this area, possibly linking with partner agencies' ongoing approaches to Continuing Professional Development.

89 E.g. from the NEET workstream key witness consultations and from evaluations including the Evaluation of the Get Ready for Work Programme: Smart and Adams for the Enterprise Networks 2003

90 *Workforce Plus*: an Employability Framework for Scotland

119. Careers Scotland's key worker services are not the only feature of support which young people in the NEET group will require in order to access education, employment or training opportunities. Earlier on (in pre-16s), we highlighted Careers Scotland's wider role, through careers advisors, key workers and other staff, in building stable and continuous relationships with young people to maintain a focus on employability.
120. Moreover, the Executive is committed to increase by 15,000 the number of parents from disadvantaged areas and groups who enter or move towards employment by removing childcare barriers. For many young people who are NEET, particularly females, parental responsibilities can act as a barrier to accessing these opportunities. We need to bring action on these targets together to ensure that the policy responses on childcare are targeted in a way that reflects national priorities in NEET reduction.
121. The needs of many young people are such that they have support, quite appropriately, from a range of agencies. Though it may seem far removed from the critical human interface that best characterises this kind of support, leadership and a common understanding, backed up by shared assessment and training are all vital components of effectively supporting a young person through the transition stage.

ACTION: THE RIGHT SUPPORT

Intensive, one to one support from key workers:

- (i) Careers Scotland (CS) will continue to provide a highly accessible, highly skilled, key worker service to young people who most benefit from intensive support in order to progress towards the labour market.

Building the skills and employability focus of a range of providers who deal with NEET and at risk NEET:

- (ii) CS will build the capacity of the whole organisation in working with the NEET group and those at risk, recognising that a range of responses is needed in order to meet the needs of these young people.
- (iii) CS will take the lead in building the capacity of – and strengthening operational links with – specialist services (e.g. social, health and voluntary sector services) in order to promote employability as an integral part of personal planning – not an add on.
- (iv) The SE will support local partnerships to further develop common assessment processes, and will request details of proposed action to progress this within local delivery plans.

Losing no-one:

- (v) CS, with local authorities and schools, will provide a systematic follow-up service for school leavers who do not have a positive outcome on leaving school, and those who do not go to or who drop out of secondary school.
- (vi) CS will undertake a follow-up survey of school leavers (a) tracking leavers with negative destinations in the October and then (b) tracking all school leavers, following the annual School Leaver Destination Report, in order to better track progress in the post-school transition year.

(v) Joint commitment and action

The challenge

122. Currently, no-one really owns NEET. The Scottish Executive's Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning (ETLL) Department leads on reducing 'the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training by 2008', a CtOG target. The Enterprise Networks and Careers Scotland – have a specific remit to target 16-19 year olds NEET as a priority group. But in practice, young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET may well be in contact with – and receiving support from – a number of agencies and services (e.g. school; college; social work services; youth justice services; voluntary sector organisations; housing providers; Jobcentre Plus; GP and other health services). This is entirely appropriate, and each service required by the young person is critical to an effective response. But there is no one body acting as the champion for this group, taking an overview of the services and support on offer and ensuring there are no gaps or weaknesses in the overall provision required.
123. To achieve significantly higher levels of performance and create a coherent response across Scotland to young people who are NEET and those at risk of becoming NEET, we need to put in place action that will drive and support delivery. Underpinning this, at a national and local level, are two essential features of future action: **clear leadership** and **better partnership**.
124. We propose to do this in three ways:
- by building on the unique **national partnership** between the Executive and business and education leaders, to spearhead efforts to reduce the NEET group;
 - by supporting **local partnerships**, working in local labour markets and working together to achieve shared objectives in terms of both outcomes and a managed local service infrastructure;
 - by setting up a **NEET Delivery Team** which will direct policy and practice, monitor and review the overall performance of the NEET strategy against agreed indicators, identify and help to scale up and roll out practices that work and to support the piloting and evaluation of new and existing services.

National partnership

125. Tackling NEET is a national priority. Within the Executive, Ministers for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning (ELL) will continue to lead in the context of an explicit collective Ministerial commitment to – and ownership of – the NEET strategy, with Education Ministers fronting up the action required of the school and integrated children's services systems.
126. The First Minister has underlined the Executive's commitment to the NEET challenge with the announcement of a major extension to the unique partnership approach with business and education leaders, set up under the leadership of Sir Robert Smith, to deliver *Determined to Succeed* in Scotland, the Executive's strategy for enterprise in education. The Smith Group (TSG) will build on that approach by taking oversight of, and providing strategic direction to, the Executive's efforts to tackle the NEET agenda, with a particular focus on stemming flows into NEET. Strong stakeholder buy-in and engagement is essential. TSG membership will therefore remain flexible to ensure the involvement of those with a direct contribution to make on 'pre-NEET' issues such as social work, health and the voluntary sector, as well as other committed business figures.

Local partnerships

127. Locally, we believe that the issue of lack of real ownership of, and locus for, the NEET agenda can be addressed only by one organisation taking lead responsibility within the context of a – most likely pre-existing – forum of local partners. Given their remit for many aspects of the required responses to the NEET challenge – including improving attainment, transitions practices and post-school outcomes⁹¹ – we believe that local authorities are best placed to take on this lead role working closely with a wide range of community planning partners.⁹²
128. Local partnerships, with local authorities in the lead, will be responsible for driving forward collaborative action and delivery on NEET, accountable locally to their parent organisations; and, to the Executive through existing frameworks. The latter reflects the Executive’s commitment to streamline planning, reporting and quality improvement arrangements.
129. Given the strategy’s emphasis on both NEET prevention (pre-16) and reduction (post-16), the inter-relationship between existing planning structures and roles these imply for a range of agencies is vital. These need to be used and brought together in a effective way in order to provide the right ‘fit’ for the broad agenda and broad range of partners that will be involved in local delivery on NEET. Local partnerships might therefore wish to bear in mind the Executive’s guidance to local planners which clarifies that Integrated Children’s Services Plans (ICSPs) should form part of community planning and link with local community planning priorities. ICSPs are effectively the children and young people’s element of local community plans. Integrated children services planning, which forms part of the Executive’s wider integration agenda for children’s services,⁹³ therefore has the potential to offer a solution. Local partnerships should also aim to build on employability action set out in their Regeneration Outcome Agreement (ROAs). But ultimately, it will be for local partners to decide.
130. We expect all local partnerships, jointly, to:
- clearly identify the nature of their leadership function, defining who is involved and the nature of support expected from other partner agencies;
 - detail the specific partnership structures that will be responsible for ensuring a comprehensive and co-ordinated local response to NEET and the wider employability agenda;
 - audit activity to better understand local needs (i.e. young people at risk of becoming NEET and those already NEET) and resources (i.e. current level and type of services and how they “fit” with each other);
 - establish challenging local targets for NEET, and processes for monitoring and reporting. This should involve more than the headline NEET figures, and include details of stock and flow (particularly sustained long-term NEET status), and incidence of NEET by the key sub-groups most at risk of becoming NEET;
 - define the local entitlement, including national training programmes, and how it will be delivered, in the context of a coherent framework of employability and support services;
 - detail how the action set out in their ICSP and ROA contributes to the local response to NEET, including preventing the flow into NEET;
 - undertake and use an analysis of current and future employment opportunities, with a view to demonstrating how area-based strategies to tackle NEET will meet the demands of local employers;
 - detail action to build the necessary infrastructure, including joint training and development activities across partner agencies.

91 National guidance on planning and reporting for improvement across education and children’s services, and emerging approaches to self-evaluation and inspection, already emphasise the need to focus on improving post-school outcomes, including initial school leaver destinations.

92 Local partners should include social work, health, housing, voluntary sector, careers, FE colleges, the Enterprise Networks, Jobcentre Plus.

93 The wider integration agenda includes: improving quality assurance systems across integrated services; joint inspection; integrated assessment and information sharing; and development of the children’s services workforce.

131. The actions identified in this strategy are for all local partnerships across Scotland. The Executive will provide further guidance on our expectations and the opportunities available to local partnerships as a result, including the support the Executive itself will offer.
132. We will work with Glasgow, Clackmannanshire, Inverclyde, Dundee, West Dunbartonshire and North and East Ayrshire to develop the partnership approach, build on appropriate existing frameworks, lead developmental work, and learn the potential lessons for effective service responses to the NEET group, both in stemming the flows and helping those already NEET. We see there being wider benefits from this approach as the best practice developed here will be shared across Scotland.

NEET Delivery Team

133. We need improved delivery mechanisms and greater coherence within and outwith the Executive, together with a clear focus on outcomes and front-line activity to support young people. Working closely with The Smith Group, we will set up a NEET Delivery Team in the Executive to work across Departments and its agencies, and to support local authorities and wider delivery partners. To help direct the work of the Team, there will be a secondment – or secondments – from business into the Executive, reporting to a senior level.
134. The Team's main functions will be to:
- monitor and evaluate the impact of the NEET strategy, including progress towards targets;
 - improve national and local data on the NEET group;
 - develop and disseminate a body of evidence identifying effective practice in preventing NEET and working with the NEET group in a variety of settings;
 - guide and support the development of effective partnership working between agencies across Scotland, particularly the local authority areas identified in para 132;
 - account for the use of additional funding to deliver the NEET target in the NEET 'hotspot' areas;
 - work closely with the Workforce Plus Team on wider employability issues;
 - work with the UK Government on issues pertinent to the NEET group which fall within reserved areas of responsibility;
 - further develop the focus on sustainable post-school outcomes through planning and reporting, self-evaluation and inspection;
 - co-ordination and communication across Executive departments and its delivery partners.

Conclusion

135. To tackle the most difficult problems and to ensure our efforts are focussed on closing gaps in opportunities, we need strong leadership, strong partnership and strong accountability, at national and local levels. Additionally, we need to join up work to stem the flow of young people pre-16, with chances, opportunities and support post-16. And, we need the private, public and voluntary sectors to work together, to develop new ideas and to harness Scotland's energy and enterprise. Our strategy brings all these elements together in order to realise our ambitions for this important group of young people.

ACTION: JOINT COMMITMENT AND ACTION

Focusing on where the need is greatest:

- (i) The Scottish Executive (SE) will establish seven NEET hotspot areas – Glasgow, Clackmannanshire, West Dunbartonshire, Inverclyde, North and East Ayrshire and Dundee – to lead developmental work in addition to the series of local tasks detailed in para 130.

Losing no-one:

- (ii) The SE will set a challenging national target – supported by related local targets – for year on year NEET reduction.
- (iii) The SE will undertake research in order to better understand the BME profile of the NEET population in Scotland and the particular barriers facing NEET individuals from an ethnic minority background with a view to improving provision for this particular group of young people.

Delivery which can meet the challenge:

- (iv) Local partners, using existing structures where possible (e.g. Community Planning, Integrated Education and Children's Services Planning, Welfare to Work), will collectively plan and develop the service infrastructure required to meet the needs of the NEET group, and those at risk of becoming NEET, as detailed in para 130.
- (v) Local authorities will lead and put in place a joint delivery plan, integrating with pre-existing plans where possible, for the local NEET target, and account to the Executive on progress.
- (vi) The SE will set up a NEET Delivery Team to support implementation of the NEET strategy by developing and sharing best practice, handling funding incentives, improving the employability focus of specialist agencies, monitoring performance against targets (national and local), and addressing other relevant national issues within the wider Employability Framework.

Appendix 1: Core Group Members

This strategy draws on the report of a workstream established by the Scottish Executive to help develop the NEET strategy in the context of wider work on the Employability Framework for Scotland. The workstream's activities were overseen by a Core Group and informed by a series of 'key-witness' consultations. The process of developing the strategy has included analysis of existing and new research and evidence related to the NEET group.

Tom Watson	Fairbridge Scotland
Des Ryan	Edinburgh Cyrenians
Janette Hastings	JobCentre Plus
Elaine Darling	ENABLE
Isobel Millar	Careers Scotland, West Region
Liz Galashan	Careers Scotland, Head of Services to Individuals, Highlands & Islands Enterprise
Gordon MacDougall	Careers Scotland, Inclusiveness Manager, Scottish Enterprise
Marie Burns	Scottish Enterprise
Isobel McDougall	Association of Directors of Education Services
Gerry McGeoch	Association of Directors of Social Work
Neil Langhorn	Social Inclusion, Development Department, Scottish Executive
Claire Keggie	Further & Adult Education, Enterprise, Transport & Lifelong Learning Department, Scottish Executive
Melanie Weldon	Transitions to Work, Enterprise, Transport & Lifelong Learning Department, Scottish Executive
Danielle Hennessy	Transitions to Work, Enterprise, Transport & Lifelong Learning Department, Scottish Executive
Linzie Wood	Analytical Services, Enterprise, Transport & Lifelong Learning Department, Scottish Executive
Elaine Drennan	Analytical Services, Enterprise, Transport & Lifelong Learning Department, Scottish Executive
Eddy Adams (Co-chair)	Eddy Adams Consultants Ltd
David Smart (Co-chair)	Smart Consultancy (Scotland) Ltd

Appendix 2

Choice of Geographic Areas for NEET Targeting

1. To help identify geographic areas for targeting NEET the following indicators were looked at:
 - Proportion NEET – taken from the 2001 Census
 - Proportion not entering education, training or employment on leaving school – School Leavers Destination 2003/04
 - Benefit claimants per 1,000 population – DWP data
 - Attendance rate – Education Department data
 - Exclusion rate – Education Department data
 - Proportion with tariff score below 50 – Education Department data
2. The relationships between the proportion NEET and the other 5 indicators were investigated to ensure that these indicators would be good indicators to determine any geographic areas to target. All 5 of the indicators were found to be significant predictors of NEET.
3. It should be noted that there is strong evidence that educational attainment is linked to NEET. However, due to the nature of tariff scores it is not appropriate to use this measure for this purpose.¹ This is caused by the fact that although a lot of the NEET population have a low tariff score, having a low tariff score does not accurately predict whether you become NEET. It should also be noted that tariff scores are fairly strongly correlated with exclusion and attendance rates and as these are still included they should represent the educational attainment aspect.
4. As the 5 indicators are different measures and are on different scales it was decided to standardise each indicator. This standardisation produces scores for the 32 Local Authority areas for each indicator (a positive score indicates worse than the Scottish average and a negative score indicates better than the Scottish average). An average of these indicators was taken and the Local Authorities were then ranked based on this average score.
5. After creating these average scores it was agreed that some of these 5 indicators were more directly related to NEET than the others. For this reason it was agreed that a weighting system should be used. After looking at the different indicators it was agreed that NEET scores would be given a relative weighting of 3, the destinations and benefits data would be given a relative weighting of 2 and the exclusion and attendance data would be given a relative weighting of 1. The top seven areas identified using the weighted measure are Glasgow City, North Ayrshire, Dundee City, East Ayrshire, West Dunbartonshire, Clackmannanshire and Inverclyde. Table 1 shows the ranks for the Local Authority areas.

¹ R² value of 0.35. Other indicators had R² values of over 0.59 except the destinations which had an R² value of 0.45.

6. Table 2 overleaf, provides details of the performance on each indicator by Local Authority area.

Table 1: Local Authority Ranking

	Rank
Glasgow City	1
North Ayrshire	2
Dundee City	3
East Ayrshire	4
West Dunbartonshire	5
Clackmannanshire	6
Inverclyde	7
North Lanarkshire	8
West Lothian	9
Falkirk	10
South Ayrshire	11
Renfrewshire	12
Fife	13
South Lanarkshire	14
Dumfries & Galloway	15
East Lothian	16
Angus	17
Aberdeen City	18
Edinburgh, City of	19
Midlothian	20
Highland	21
Moray	22
Perth & Kinross	23
Scottish Borders	24
Argyll & Bute	25
Stirling	26
Aberdeenshire	27
East Renfrewshire	28
East Dunbartonshire	29
Orkney Islands	30
Eilean Siar	31
Shetland Islands	32

Table 2: Summary of Indicators for Geographic Choice

Local Authority Area	% NEET¹	Destinations²	Benefits³	Attendance⁴	Exclusions⁵
Scotland	13.2%	20	82.9	90.2%	53
Aberdeen City	9.5%	25	49.3	91.8%	41
Aberdeenshire	8.7%	16	52.9	93.5%	26
Angus	12.9%	14	77.8	91.6%	42
Argyll & Bute	10.5%	14	36.0	91.9%	49
Clackmannanshire	16.9%	25	73.5	88.3%	46
Dumfries & Galloway	14.9%	15	71.4	92.2%	36
Dundee City	14.2%	22	116.2	88.0%	97
East Ayrshire	16.4%	22	90.3	89.0%	80
East Dunbartonshire	6.9%	12	17.5	91.4%	32
East Lothian	13.0%	19	54.8	91.7%	35
East Renfrewshire	6.5%	19	15.8	93.9%	14
Edinburgh, City of	9.8%	19	64.8	90.3%	37
Eilean Siar	9.3%	7	–	91.2%	6
Falkirk	14.6%	26	65.6	89.0%	48
Fife	13.8%	20	80.5	90.8%	63
Glasgow City	19.1%	30	108.1	86.3%	95
Highland	11.8%	16	41.4	90.8%	25
Inverclyde	15.1%	22	106.1	89.9%	69
Midlothian	11.7%	14	55.9	90.5%	45
Moray	12.2%	16	29.2	92.3%	32
North Ayrshire	17.4%	22	127.0	88.1%	73
North Lanarkshire	15.5%	25	69.6	88.4%	67
Orkney Islands	7.9%	14	–	93.5%	17
Perth & Kinross	9.4%	17	43.7	90.9%	37
Renfrewshire	12.6%	23	72.0	90.0%	74
Scottish Borders	11.2%	14	59.8	93.1%	23
Shetland Islands	7.7%	11	–	93.0%	14
South Ayrshire	14.0%	24	70.2	89.9%	59
South Lanarkshire	12.9%	17	91.8	89.3%	56
Stirling	8.5%	17	38.4	90.3%	16
West Dunbartonshire	15.9%	23	91.5	89.4%	77
West Lothian	15.3%	20	113.3	90.8%	50

1 Proportion NEET – taken from the 2001 Census

2 Proportion not entering education, training or employment on leaving school – School Leavers Destination 2003/4

3 Benefit claimants per 1,000 population – DWP data

4 Attendance rate – Education Department data

5 Exclusion rate – Education Department data

Appendix 3 Action Plan

ACTION: PRE-16

We are transforming the opportunities for and expectations of all pupils, including and especially those who are at risk of becoming NEET through a mix of action across mainstream education and specific targeted measures. Key actions include:

Providing flexible, personalised learning opportunities and developing employability:

- (i) Implementing *A Curriculum for Excellence* to improve choice and flexibility and develop the wide range of capacities young people need to succeed in the modern world, and ensure they remain fully engaged throughout their school career.
- (ii) Implementing *Assessment is for Learning* to ensure high quality learning and teaching tailored to the abilities, preferences and life circumstances of every child.
- (iii) Recognising young people's wider achievements through giving credit to their different skills and abilities.
- (iv) Simplifying the structure of qualifications to widen opportunities and improve progression for all our young people through reviewing Standard Grade and its links with other National Qualifications.
- (v) Developing suitable models and expanding choice for work-related vocational learning, including Skills for Work courses, within schools, colleges and partner organisations in order that all young people can develop their vocational and employability skills.

Ensuring appropriate support for all learners regardless of abilities, needs and wider circumstances:

- (vi) Additional Support for Learning to ensure that the support needs of all children are properly assessed and monitored and appropriate support is put in place.
- (vii) Targeting additional action for those groups who currently do not benefit appropriately from school. Including implementing the forthcoming recommendations of the Ministerial working group on improving outcomes for looked after children, in order to improve the achievements and employability of looked after children and care leavers.

Transforming the learning environment:

- (viii) Investing in the Schools of Ambition programme to bring about a step change in ambition and achievement to transform the educational outcomes for all children in those schools.
- (ix) Highlighting and promoting excellence throughout the system through the adoption of the new excellence standard in school and education authority inspection and supporting that through extensive guidance and good practice resources.
- (x) Establishing a broad programme of leadership development to foster talent and improving the training and development opportunities for teachers.
- (xi) Investing further new resources for new teachers, including taking account of severe deprivation to allow local authorities to address the link between deprivation and low attainment.

Focus on outcomes:

- (xii) Modernising the improvement framework to focus on securing better outcomes for children, requiring the adoption of more flexible performance indicators which track and monitor the achievement of individual children, support a culture of innovation in schools.
- (xiii) Ensure better support for children across services through integrated planning, a single assessment framework, and the introduction of inspection of integrated children's services.
- (xiv) Careers Scotland will review its current deployment of resources (generic careers advisers and specialist key workers) in order to improve school leaver destinations and pilot an enhanced careers resource for selected schools in selected NEET areas which have high negative school leaver destinations.

ACTION: POST-16**Guaranteeing options on leaving school:**

- (i) Scottish Enterprise (SEn) and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), including Careers Scotland (CS), will continue to build on the success of – and strengthen linkages between – GR4W (including Lifeskills) and Skillseekers. SEn and HIE should further consider how the national training programmes can be developed to improve vocational pathways pre and post-16.
- (ii) The Scottish Executive (SE) will review the Youth Training Guarantee (YTG) with a view to developing a new guarantee for school leavers, together with an improved vocational training model, testing out these approaches in the 10 schools participating in the CS pilot in NEET target areas.
- (iii) Local authorities, together with their partners, will collectively plan and articulate the training and support for 16-19 year olds they will guarantee to deliver in their area. Building on their statutory duty to plan for the employability of young people who will cease to be looked after, this will make specific reference to the support and provision available to care leavers.
- (iv) Project Scotland will set out its proposals for ensuring that young people NEET/at risk of becoming NEET can engage with and sustain volunteering opportunities.

Losing no-one:

- (v) The SE will specify the core management information required – at a national and local level – from CS on young people NEET, recognising that local partners may wish further enhancements.
- (vi) CS will take lead responsibility – at a national and local level – for working in partnership with the SE, local authorities and schools to establish and maintain a national 14-19 database.

Supported transitions and sustained opportunities:

- (vii) The SE, to build improvements into policies and practices at points of transition and across the post-16 sector, will roll out Post-School Psychological Services to those NEET target areas not currently covered by Pathfinder activity; with a view to further considering national roll out.
- (viii) SEn and HIE will support – through contract management and quality improvement processes – the professional development of service providers in order to raise the quality of what's on offer across the board.
- (ix) The SE will support the Scottish Funding Council to implement the action plan in *Learning for All* to continue to improve engagement, retention, and progression in further education.
- (x) The SE will develop an employer engagement strategy, complementing other activity with employers, aimed at increasing the range and type of work-related and job opportunities for young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET.

ACTION: FINANCIAL INCENTIVES**Ensuring learning is a financially viable option:**

- (i) The Scottish Executive (SE) will review the financial support arrangements for 16-19 year olds in Scotland, in the light of the UK Government's recent review, addressing the specific issue of parity for young people in education and those on vocational training.
- (ii) The SE will consider ways to promote progression from informal to formal learning and to improve training for those in low-paid low-skilled work, specifically through the development and piloting of Activity Agreements and Allowances for 16/17 year olds who are NEET and Learning Agreements for 16 and 17 year olds in work without training.
- (iii) The SE will commission further research to test the impact of EMAs on changing outcomes for young people at risk of becoming NEET and will assess ways in which to maximise the potential of EMAs to encourage retention, attainment and progression for young people in sub-groups who are known to be at risk of becoming NEET.

ACTION: THE RIGHT SUPPORT**Intensive, one to one support from key workers:**

- (i) Careers Scotland (CS) will continue to provide a highly accessible, highly skilled, key worker service to young people who most benefit from intensive support in order to progress towards the labour market.

Building the skills and employability focus of a range of providers who deal with NEET and at risk NEET:

- (ii) CS will build the capacity of the whole organisation in working with the NEET group and those at risk, recognising that a range of responses is needed in order to meet the needs of these young people.
- (iii) CS will take the lead in building the capacity of – and strengthening operational links with – specialist services (e.g. social and health services, in order to promote employability as an integral part of personal planning – not an add on.
- (iv) The SE will support local partnerships to further develop common assessment processes, and will request details of proposed action to progress this within local delivery plans.

Losing no-one:

- (v) CS, with local authorities and schools, will provide a systematic follow-up service for school leavers who do not have a positive outcome on leaving school, and those who do not go to or who drop out of secondary school.
- (vi) CS will undertake a follow-up survey of school leavers (a) tracking leavers with negative destinations in the October and then (b) tracking all school leavers, following the annual School Leaver Destination Report, in order to better track progress in the post-school transition year.

ACTION: JOINT COMMITMENT AND ACTION

Focussing on where the need is greatest:

- (i) The Scottish Executive (SE) will establish seven geographic target areas – Glasgow, Clackmannanshire, Dundee, Inverclyde, North and East Ayrshire, West Dunbartonshire – to lead developmental work and take forward a series of local tasks as detailed in para 130.

Losing no-one:

- (ii) The SE will set a challenging national target – supported by related local targets – for year on year NEET reduction.
- (iii) The SE will undertake research in order to better understand the BME profile of the NEET population in Scotland and the particular barriers facing NEET individuals from an ethnic minority background.

Delivery which can meet the challenge:

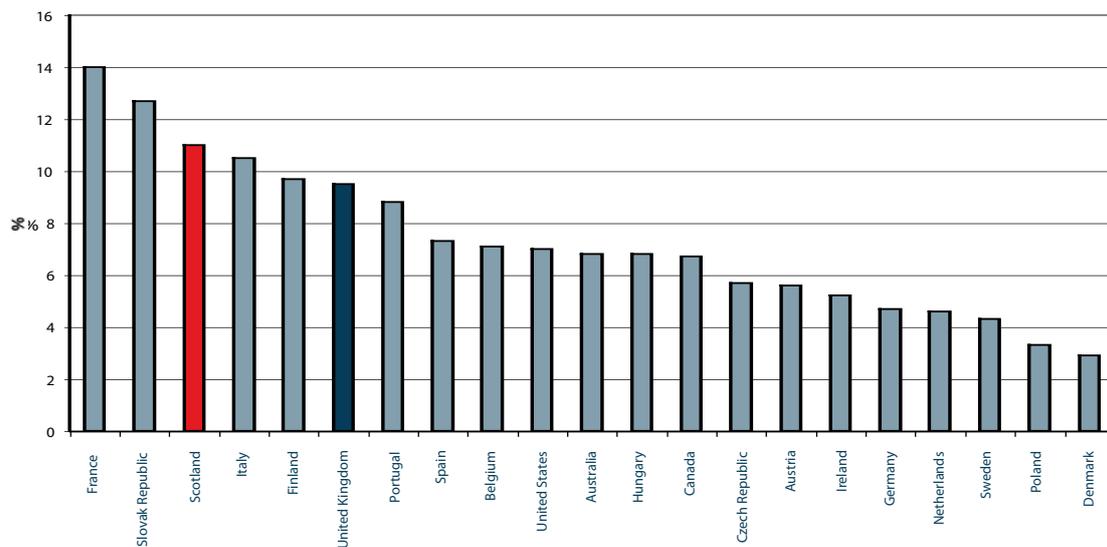
- (iv) Local partners, using existing structures where possible (e.g. Community Planning, Integrated Education and Children’s Services Planning, Welfare to Work), will collectively plan and develop the service infrastructure required to meet the needs of the NEET group, and those at risk of becoming NEET, as detailed in para 130.
- (v) Local authorities will lead and put in place a joint delivery plan, integrating with pre-existing plans where possible, for the local NEET target, and account to the Executive on progress.
- (vi) The SE will set up a NEET Delivery Team to support implementation of the NEET strategy by developing and sharing best practice, handling funding incentives, improving the employability focus of specialist agencies, monitoring performance against targets (national and local), and addressing other relevant national issues within the wider Employability Framework.

Appendix 4

International Comparison of those Aged 15-19¹ and Not in Education and Training (NEET)

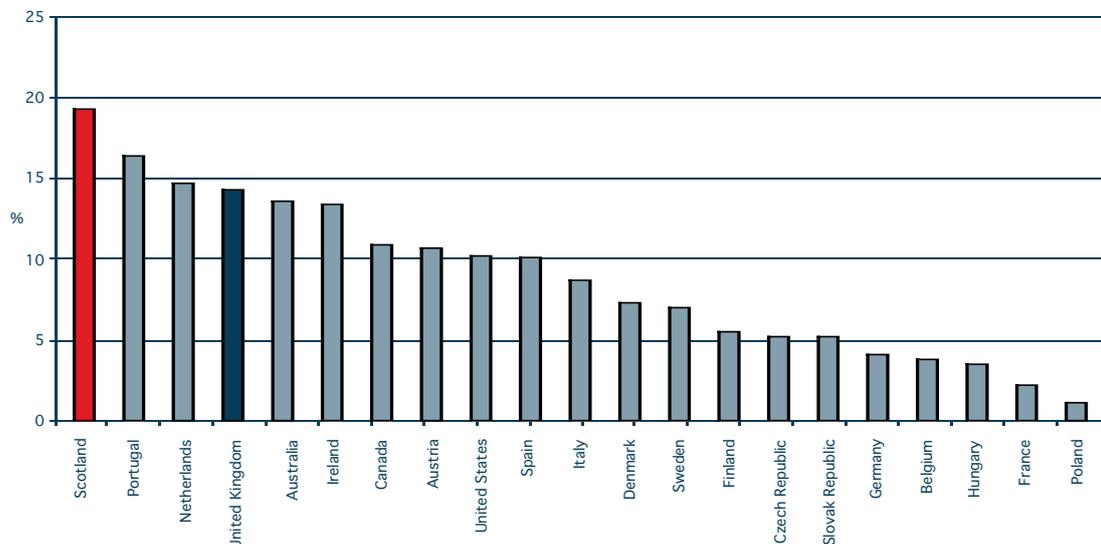
- International comparisons of the proportion NEET show that Scotland has one of the highest rates of NEET in the OECD. Chart 1 shows that only France and the Slovak Republic have higher rates of NEET than Scotland out of the countries shown; with the UK as a whole sitting 6th.

Chart 1 Percentage 15-19 year olds who are NEET, 2003



- However the fact that Scotland has such a comparatively high level of NEET compared to other European countries does not completely reflect Scotland's position. Looking at the employment rate of 15-19 year olds shows that Scotland in fact has the highest proportion of 15-19 year olds in employment out of all the countries shown (Chart 2).

Chart 2 Percentage of 15 to 19 year olds in Employment only, 2003



¹ Note that 15-19 year olds are used rather than 16-19 year olds as this is the European convention

- OECD data also shows that Scotland has one of the highest rates of unemployment amongst 15-19 year olds (lower than only the Slovak Republic) but has an average proportion of 15-19 year olds who are economically inactive and in fact has a lower proportion than the UK as a whole (Charts 3 & 4).

Chart 3 Percentage 15-19 year olds not in education and unemployed, 2003

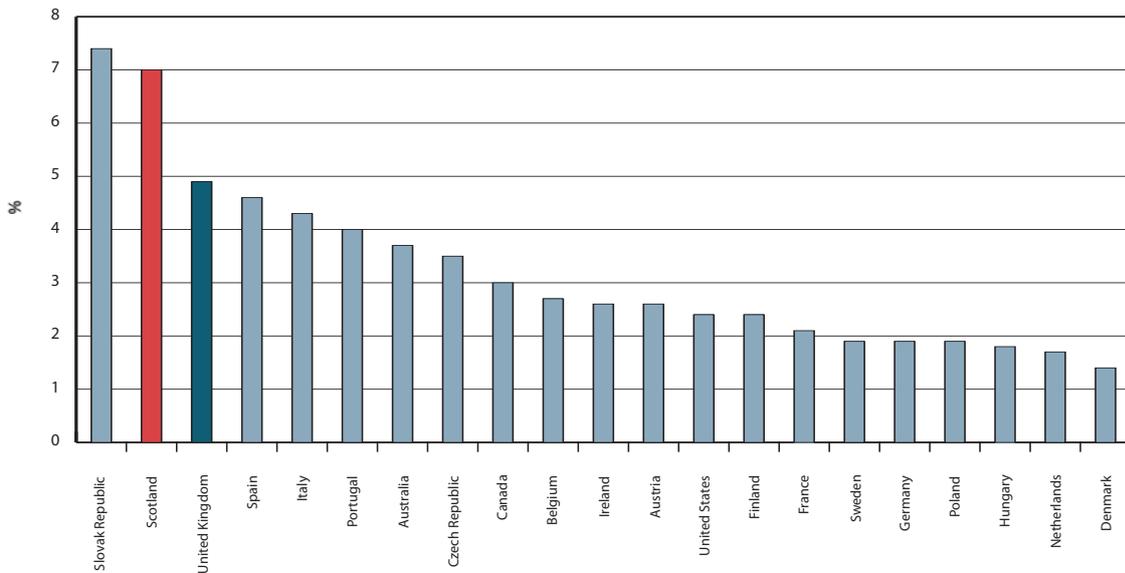
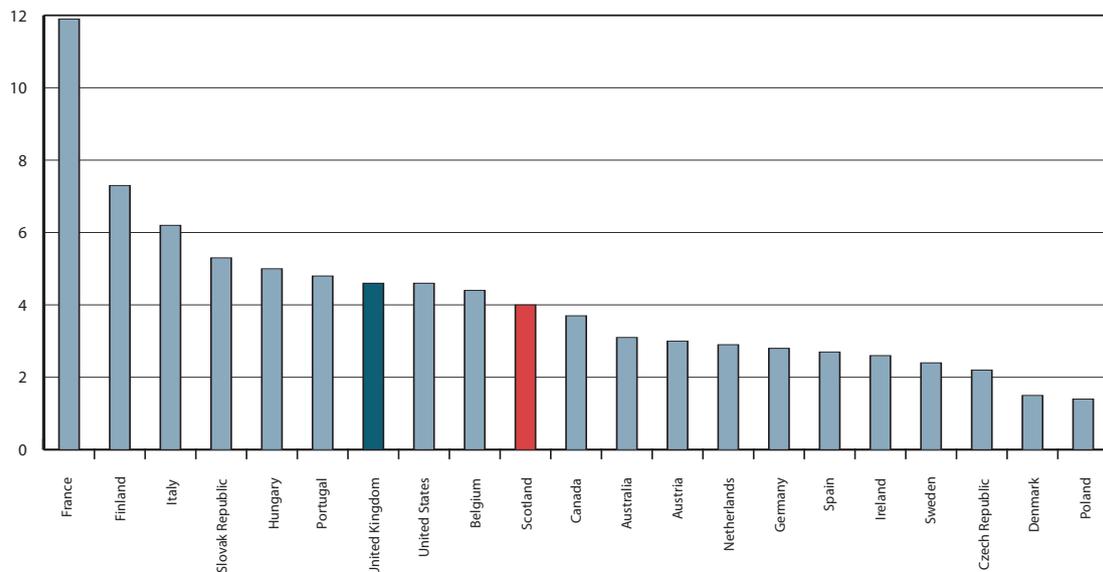
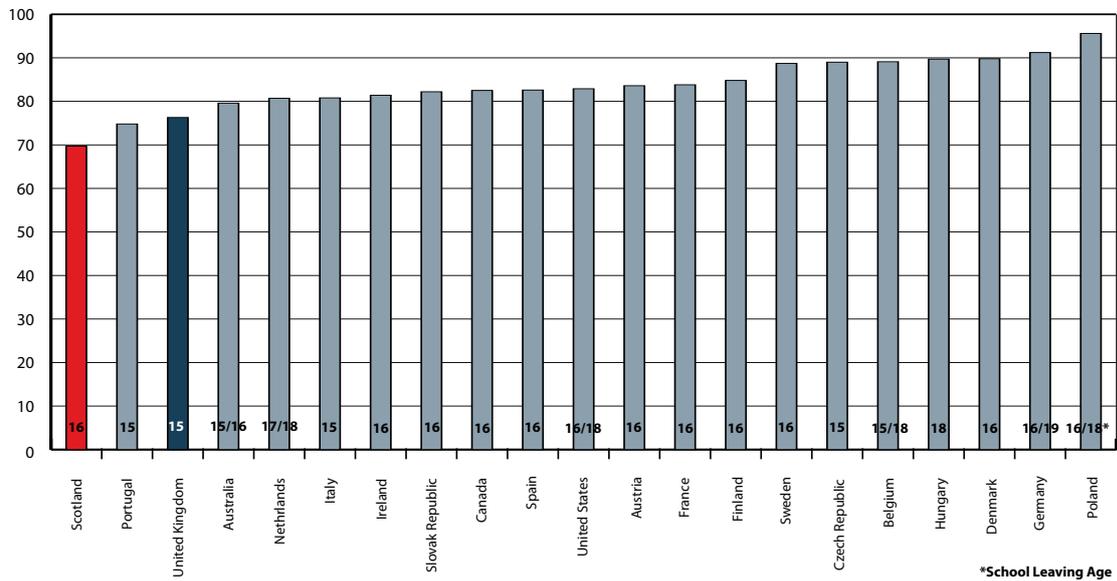


Chart 4 Percentage 15-19 year olds not in education and inactive, 2003



- The fact that unemployment appears to be more prevalent than inactivity amongst 15-19 year olds in Scotland suggests that the issue is not that 15-19 year olds are being 'forced' out of the labour market by ill health or caring responsibilities. This begs the question what is the defining difference between Scotland and other European countries? As shown in Chart 5, data on education participation can start to answer this question.

Chart 5 Percentage 15-19 year olds not in Education, 2003



- Chart 5 shows that, at just under 70%, Scotland has a lower proportion of 15-19 year olds in education than any of the countries looked at. Scotland's low education participation amongst 15-19 year olds appears to contribute to both a high proportion of NEET amongst 15-19 year olds and also a high employment rate amongst 15-19 year olds. This suggests that 15-19 year olds in Scotland are not as engaged with education as other countries and therefore choose to leave education for employment (with a high proportion failing and becoming unemployed).
- It should be noted, however, that the European countries that Scotland is compared to in these charts can have very different schooling systems including differing compulsory school attendance ages. The chart shows that those countries with a high compulsory education age have a high proportion of 15-19 year olds in education, as you would expect. However these are also the same countries with low NEET and particularly with low unemployment amongst 15-19 year olds.

Conclusion

- These international comparisons have suggested that the reason Scotland has a high NEET proportion is because of issues around poor education participation for this age group.

Appendix 5: Measuring the size of the NEET group who need support

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) is currently used to measure the size of the 16 to 19 year old NEET group in Scotland.

In 2004, the size of this group was estimated to be 35,000 or 13.2 per cent of all 16-19 year olds. However, anecdotal and supporting statistical evidence suggest that the size of the NEET group which should concern us – in terms of those young people who might need targeted support and opportunities from government in order to progress towards the labour market – is considerably less than the 35,000 headline figure from the LFS.

In the absence of a national database of 16-19 year olds, it is not possible to directly count those who fall into the “hard core” NEET categories that need support. We therefore provide an interim method for calculating this “hard core” NEET figure using the LFS to identify those who are unemployed for 6 months or more and those who are inactive and require support.

Using this method results in an estimate of 20,000 NEET individuals requiring support.

In this technical note, **NEET** stands for 16-19 year olds Not in Employment, Education or Training. It includes those who are unemployed or economically inactive.

The **unemployed** are those without a job, who are available to start in the next two weeks and who have been seeking a job in the last 4 weeks, or who are waiting to start a job already obtained in the next 2 weeks.

People who are **economically inactive** include people looking after the home or family, people who are permanently sick or disabled and people who are inactive for other reasons.

This is an **interim** measure as a national database of 16-19 year olds is in its early development stages. This database is what might be regarded as the gold standard for measuring the NEET group but will take some time to develop so a measure is required for the interim period.

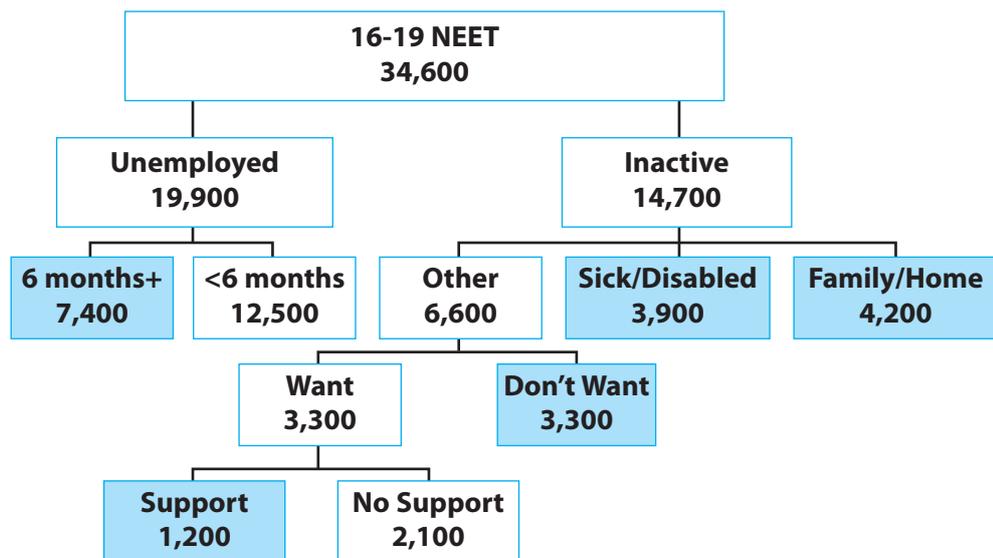
The number of NEET requiring support include those who have been unemployed for 6 months or over, those who are inactive due to being sick/disabled or looking after family/home, those who are inactive for another reason and do not want to work and those who are inactive for another reason and do want to work but require additional support to achieve this.

Looking at the number of NEET who are unemployed for over 6 months from the LFS gives us 7,400 unemployed people needing support (37% of all those unemployed in the group). Assuming that those who are sick/disabled or looking after family/home will need some kind of support to get back to economic activity gives us another 8,100 (3,900 for sick/disabled and 4,200 for looking after family/home).

Those in the ‘other’ inactive group have not given a generic reason for their inactivity (6,600 young people NEET). However, the ‘other’ inactive group do indicate whether they would like to work or not (3,300 want to work and 3,300 do not). Assuming that those who do not want to work need support adds another 3,300 to the total. Analysis of some of the reasons given for inactivity for those in the ‘other’ inactive group (not looked for work yet, believes no job available, waiting for results of job application, etc.) shows that the ‘other’ inactive ‘want to work’ group are akin to the unemployed group. Therefore if we apply the same unemployed needing support proportion (37%) to this group, we have a figure of 1,200 needing support.

This means that we have 7,400 unemployed requiring support, 3,900 sick/disabled requiring support, 4,200 looking after family/home requiring support, 3,300 'other' inactive that do not want to work requiring support and 1,200 'other' inactive that do want to work and require support, all this equates to 20,000 NEET individuals requiring support.

The diagram below shows how this figure of 20,000 requiring support is arrived at, with the shaded cells indicating those who require support:



The Annual Population Survey (APS) is the source of this measure for 2004. The APS is available from 2004; it uses Labour Force Survey (LFS) data on an annual basis. The APS/LFS is carried out by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

For back series data, annual LFS data is constructed by combining the four seasonal quarters of the LFS. From 2003 onwards, the LFS data in Scotland has been boosted from 8,000 to 23,000 households per year.

APS data are available on an annual rolling quarterly basis. The data used for 2004 is the calendar year (January 2004 to December 2004). Data for time series back to 1992 are based on the period March to February, so for example 2003 data cover the period March 2003 to February 2004.

APS calendar year data are available in June each year.

The table below shows that there has been little change in the number of young people NEET requiring support over the last decade. Once we take into account sampling error there has not been significant change in the level of young people NEET requiring support in Scotland over the period.

Total 16-19 NEET and 16-19 NEET requiring support, Scotland, 1992-2004

Year	All NEET	% NEET	NEET Require Support	% of NEET Requiring Support
1992	40,000	15.8%	24,000	60.6%
1993	38,000	14.9%	20,000	54.0%
1994	38,000	15.9%	23,000	60.3%
1995	33,000	13.3%	18,000	56.6%
1996	35,000	14.6%	22,000	60.8%
1997	33,000	12.7%	17,000	53.2%
1998	35,000	14.1%	18,000	51.7%
1999	37,000	14.9%	20,000	54.5%
2000	38,000	15.0%	18,000	46.6%
2001	38,000	15.4%	18,000	47.5%
2002	35,000	14.0%	17,000	49.4%
2003	35,000	13.7%	17,000	49.4%
2004	35,000	13.2%	20,000	57.1%

Source: 1992-2002 – LFS Quarters combined.
 2003 – Annual Scottish Labour Force Survey (ASLFS)
 2004 – Annual Population Survey (APS)
 APS and ASLFS include boosts to the data in Scotland.

Local data on the number of young people NEET requiring support cannot be reliably estimated from the APS/LFS due to the relatively small sample size for which the estimates would be based upon. The 20,000 requiring support could be distributed across local areas using benefit claimant data.

Official statistics produced by the ONS undergo regular quality assurance reviews and are produced free from any political interference.

The Scottish Executive are involved in the quality assurance of the calendar year Annual Population Survey data for Scotland.

Glossary of Terms

ASL:	Additional Support for Learning
BME:	Black and minority ethnic
CPP:	Community Planning Partnerships
CS:	Careers Scotland
CtOG:	Closing the Opportunity Gap
DfES:	Department for Education and Skills
DWP:	Department for Work and Pensions
DtS:	<i>Determined to Succeed</i> , the strategy for Enterprise in Education
ELL:	Enterprise and Lifelong Learning
EMA:	Education Maintenance Allowance
EN:	Enterprise Networks
ETLLD:	Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning Department
EVIP:	Enhanced Vocational Inclusion Programme
FE:	further education
FSS:	Futureskills Scotland
GR4W:	Get Ready for Work
HIE:	Highlands & Islands Enterprise
HMIE:	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education
ICSP:	Integrated Children's Services Plan
ILO:	International Labour Organisation
LAs:	Local Authorities
LFS:	Labour Force Survey
LTLTL:	<i>Life through Learning, Learning through Life</i> , the Lifelong Learning strategy for Scotland
NEET:	Not in Education, Employment or Training
OECD:	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PSPS:	Post-School Psychological Services
ROA:	Regeneration Outcome Agreements
SCQF:	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
SE:	Scottish Executive
SEn:	Scottish Enterprise
SFC:	Scottish Funding Council
SLD:	School Leaver Destinations
SLDR:	School Leaver Destination Report
SQA:	Scottish Qualifications Authority
SSLS:	Scottish School Leavers' Survey
SSS:	<i>Smart, Successful Scotland</i>
SVQ:	Scottish Vocational Qualification
UCAS:	Universities and Colleges Admission Service
UK:	United Kingdom

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